



DOWNTOWN PARKING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, July 9, 2015
David Gebhard Public Meeting Room
630 Garden Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

1) **CALL TO ORDER:** 7:30 a.m.

2) **ROLL CALL**

DPC MEMBERS

Matt LaBrie (Chair)	Present
Trey Pinner (Vice-Chair)	Present
Edward France	Present
Gene McKnight	Absent
Kate Schwab	Present
Sean Pratt	Present
Tom Williams	Excused

Attendance

CITY STAFF PRESENT :

Rebecca Bjork, Public Works Director
Browning Allen, Transportation Manager
Derrick Bailey, Supervising Transportation Engineer
Victor Garza, Parking /TMP Superintendent
Rebecca Jimenez, Parking Supervisor
Dion Tait, Parking Supervisor
Sarah Clark, Parking Resource Specialist
Teri Green, Associate Transportation Planner
Rob Dayton, Principal Transportation Planner
Malcolm Hamilton, Administrative Assistant

LIAISONS PRESENT:

Randy Rowse, City Council
John Campanella, Planning Commission

OTHERS PRESENT:

3) **CHANGES TO AGENDA**

None.

4) **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

5) **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF JUNE 11, 2015**

Motion: To approve the minutes from the regular meeting of June 11, 2015.

Made By: Trey Pinner **Second:** Kate Schwab

Yeas: 4 Nays: 0 Abstain: 1 (France) Absent: 1 (McKnight, Williams)

6) **VALET PARKING**

Derrick Bailey, Supervising Transportation Engineer, presented an update on the City's research regarding options for regulating valet parking.

Public Comment:

Terry Bartlett, representing Young America's Foundation (YAF), said that when the site was purchased in 1997, there was extensive review from City staff. She said the property never had on-site parking, and City staff at the time determined the adjacent parking lot (now called the Depot Lot) was underutilized. The lot would continue to provide sufficient parking given the increase in parking demand from YAF's

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development. Ms. Bartlett said after the Depot Lot was revamped, 80 of the 160 parking spaces were given to Amtrak for employee parking and long-term customer parking. Funk Zone development and the construction of the MOXI Children's Museum will further impact parking availability in the Depot Lot. She added that MOXI will only have two parking spaces on-site for people with disabilities. Ms. Bartlett said the parking availability in the Depot Lot is slowly being taken away, and valet parking has been a solution for YAF. She added that YAF works with Victor Garza and Browning Allen to be a good neighbor and communicate their parking needs. Valet parking provides a significant benefit to their visitors. Ms. Bartlett said they are valet parking 23 cars on average with some vehicles parking in the Depot Lot, and some across State Street in the 90 minute Helena Lot. YAF believes Signature Valet Parking is safe and careful when operating in the public parking lots. Ms. Bartlett concluded that La Entrada was approved with a valet parking service, and she believes the Ronald Reagan Center was approved with the Depot Lot. If YAF is not able to use valet services, it will be difficult to operate events and function as they were told they could in 1997 due to the increasing parking demand from the Funk Zone, MOXI, and Amtrak customers. YAF is looking forward to cooperating further with the City and finding a solution that works for both organizations.

Maggie Campbell, Executive Director of Downtown Santa Barbara (DO), said the position of the DO is that valet can be established as an amenity which brings more choices to patrons if it is managed and regulated correctly. Ms. Campbell said it can become tricky to manage if valet operators are given free rein to set-up curb side stands which pushes them to become very competitive. Citing the City of Pasadena as an example, Ms. Campbell said valet operators became difficult with each other and dismissive of on-street traffic laws in order to gain customers. Pasadena moved to a universal system by soliciting Requests For Proposals and choosing the most capable and compliant valet operator. The universal system provides for efficient management and the ability for customers to drop-off and pick-up their vehicles at separate locations. Ms. Campbell continued by saying that a universal valet system supports the goals of a park-once system. Ms. Campbell said it is important to respect the existing business needs, such as maintaining yellow loading zones for retail and food service deliveries during normal business hours. She said there may be opportunities to use the public parking system if there is excess capacity, but it would be advisable to have an agreement that details reimbursement fees for using public resources.

Mr. Bailey clarified for the committee that staff is considering regulations for on-street valet stands and on-street vehicle storage, but not policies relating to valet operations on private property and storing vehicles in a private parking lot.

Committee Member France asked if the YAF's claim to parking spaces in the Depot Lot would be considered private parking spaces in relation to a future ordinance. Browning Allen, Transportation Manager, said they would have to find a parking lot nearby to store valet vehicles. They have been working with staff to use the Helena Lot, however, if the Depot Lot is at capacity, YAF would have to provide proof they are not using on-street parking spaces. Mr. Allen said the YAF, Children's Museum, and Amtrak do not have private parking spaces in the Depot Lot. Rather, those organizations satisfied their parking demand with the Depot Lot. Victor Garza added that the lease between the City and Amtrak allows for five employee parking spaces, but otherwise all parking is first come, first serve for all customers.

Vice-Chair Pinner asked if staff would approve a request for valet pick-up and drop-off in a surface lot other than the Depot Lot. Mr. Pinner asked if these types of operational issues would be addressed in the valet ordinance. Mr. Bailey said if the City chooses to regulate on-street valet operators, then the question of where to store vehicles becomes an issue. Mr. Allen said YAF's situation is unique because they have no street frontage unlike most businesses downtown. There is currently an ordinance that states the public parking lots owned by the City are only for parking and retrieval of vehicles. If parking staff receives more requests for valet stands inside a public lot or it becomes an issue, staff will revisit the current policy and discuss it with the Downtown Parking Committee.

Chair LaBrie said Downtown Parking's core mission is to provide affordable, convenient, safe, predictable, and accessible parking to visitors, which will be gauged against the experience people have in other cities. Mr. LaBrie asked staff to discuss their research of other cities. Mr. Bailey said most cities have an ordinance that specifically addresses on-street valet operations, although there is a wide range of regulations, policies, and operating procedures. Mr. Bailey said most cities do accommodate on-street valet stands, however, there are various restrictions related to the storage of vehicles.

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Vice-Chair Pinner asked Derrick Bailey, Supervising Transportation Engineer, if he gained any insight into the different issues with enforcement and operations that come from on-street storage of vehicles versus off-street storage in private lots or in public parking lots. Mr. Bailey said it seemed that an experienced valet operator made for minimal enforcement and operational issues, while other cities experienced issues with competitive valet companies operating in close proximity of one another.

Committee Member France said it seems that the City is disinterested in allowing valet operators to store vehicles on-street. From his experience on Coast Village Road, customers are competing with professionals for public parking and it can be an uncomfortable experience. Mr. France said he is interested in exploring a universal valet system that is contracted out to a single qualified operator. He said there seems to be advantages to a universal system for managing traffic safety and enforcing the policies, as well as better control of unique situations such as a business with no street frontage. Mr. France asked if staff sees the contracted option as having more flexibility than other options. Mr. Bailey said working out operational issues would most likely be easier with a single operator. Mr. Bailey said a hybrid option would be to contract with a single operator, but not have set pick-up and drop-off locations, instead businesses would submit an application for specific nights or events.

Vice-Chair Pinner thanked staff for the presentation. Mr. Pinner commented that he believes once an ordinance is crafted and approved, it will likely remain that way for many years due to expectations for the service to continue. He views La Entrada as different because they are providing private parking for their valet parking operations and the project was approved by way of the Planning Commission. Mr. Pinner said it may be difficult to have a general set of rules that works well for each part of town. Valet zones, with different regulations, may better meet the needs and requirements of distinct areas of the city, although it may be administratively difficult to operate. Mr. Pinner said he recognizes the business community preference to offer this service, but he is also concerned about traffic safety issues, such as double parked cars in the bike lanes.

Committee Member Schwab asked where Canary Hotel stores its valet cars. Browning Allen, Transportation Manager, said Canary Hotel has underground parking; however, they park oversize vehicles, such as tall trucks, in the public parking structure next door. Mr. Allen said there have been safety issues due to the valet operators not obeying all traffic policies as well as issues with paying fees due. Ms. Schwab asked if the City has the resources to manage a wide spread universal valet system. Mr. Bailey said resources are a concern and staff is still researching what is needed to effectively manage a universal valet system.

Committee Member Pratt sees street parking as being an issue for enforcement, and he believes there may be safety issues in City-owned public parking lots. He said that customers want the service, and businesses want to offer it, but there are operational details that need to be worked out. Mr. Pratt asked what authority the City has to shutdown valet parking if a business chooses to offer it on-street. Mr. Bailey said the City has no tools at the moment to stop a valet operation on-street.

Browning Allen said the responsibility of managing a valet contractor would most likely fall to the Downtown Parking Program. Downtown Parking would need to hire staff and charge a fee to cover management and administrative costs.

Committee Member Schwab said valet parking would be a great amenity for the whole district not just a benefit to a few businesses.

Chair LaBrie said it is important to balance business concerns with the City's interests, and to support complements to business activities. Mr. LaBrie said it may be possible to contract with several valet operators that adhere to the same rate structure but would rotate in participation similar to Police Department towing services. Mr. LaBrie said he would not support banning on-street valet operations in the City, especially in the downtown core. He said development in the downtown area has evolved and parking has been decoupled from individual parcels to allow for more intense development, so valet parking seems to be appropriate for the downtown commercial district. Mr. LaBrie said he finds Young America's Foundation's situation to be unique, and he hopes that situation will be addressed with flexibility in the future ordinance. He said he would not be supportive of storing valet vehicles on-street or in the public parking lots unless it has been shown that there is significant capacity in the public lots.

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Vice-Chair Pinner asked if the ordinance can be crafted to distinguish between residential and commercial areas of town. Derrick Bailey, Supervising Transportation Engineer, said it is possible, but it can become difficult to manage when a residential zone is directly adjacent to a commercial district. Mr. Pinner said it may possible to use the current zoning to decide which areas are commercial and which are residential.

Councilmember Rowse commented that the valet parking issue has been covered a few times in the past 20 years since Palace Grill made its original request. In the past, the debate has focused on the private use of the public right of way, which may not be appropriate in all situations. There are also traffic safety issues that come from allowing on-street valet stands in addition to the added liability that the City assumes with these operations. Mr. Rowse said he is concerned about the area of downtown where Victoria Street crosses Chapala Street. It will be a desirable location for valet parking operations considering the current and future parking impacts. The surrounding residential neighborhoods will become more impacted with customer parking. City Lots 4 and 5 are impacted by existing businesses through many hours of the day, and the Louise Lowry Lot may be restricted due to underlying park land issues.

In thinking about special events, Chair LaBrie commented that the eight annual events hosted by Young America’s Foundation would be considered special events, movies at a theatre would most likely not qualify as a special event. Chair LaBrie asked staff how they would define a special event. Browning Allen, Transportation Manager, said staff will look at the regular activities of a business or organization to determine if an event is outside their normal operating procedures. Live theatres that plan a season of performances would not receive the special event designation for each of their planned shows.

- Motion:**
 - A. That the Downtown Parking Committee is supportive of a valet parking system concept that allows for pick-up and drop-off of vehicles in the public right of way; however, the committee is not supportive of using public resources, either public streets or public lots, for the storage of vehicles, and recommends that valet operators be required to use private facilities for the storage of vehicles.
 - B. That the committee has no position in regards to having multiple operators or contracting with a single operator for valet services.

Made By: Trey Pinner **Second:** Edward France

Discussion: Committee Member France commented that the motion may be limiting the possibility of using the public parking lots which will be an expectation of valet operators. The valet operators may disregard the policy of not using public parking lots, and it may be better to design a system that deals with this issue upfront.

Amend: Committee Member France requested an amendment that would recommend staff research the possibility of developing a pricing and administrative system to allow valet operators to use the City-owned public parking lots for the storage of vehicles.

Mr. Pinner commented that staff foresees operational difficulties from allowing the use of public parking lots, and at this time, it may be better to start in a more limited capacity by only allowing the storage of vehicles in private facilities. Valet operators will have to show that they can negotiate for the use of private parking spaces which is crucial to the success of a valet parking system. In the future, as the system develops and is shown to be well managed and enforced, then would be the time to discuss the use of public parking facilities.

Mr. France withdrew his amendment request.

Yeas: 5 Nays: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: (McKnight, Williams)

7) OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGETS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2015

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Motion: To defer this report to the regular meeting in September.

Made By: Trey Pinner **Second:** Kate Schwab

Yeas: 5 Nays: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: (McKnight, Williams)

8) SUBCOMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Motion: To appoint Committee Member France to the Finance Subcommittee.

Made By: Matt LaBrie **Second:** Trey Pinner

Yeas: 5 Nays: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: (McKnight, Williams)

9) SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Communications and Operations

Sarah Clark, Parking Resource Specialist, said the COMOPS subcommittee discussed ideas for implementing improved and enhanced communications for the Downtown Parking Program. The subcommittee and staff identified existing communication channels, such as the City News in Brief and contacting businesses directly, also discussed opportunities to modernize communications by using email lists, social media, and further developing relationships with partners such as the Downtown Organization.

10) OPERATIONS UPDATES

August Meeting Schedule - Cancelled

Browning Allen said the regular meeting of Thursday, August 13, 2015 has been tentatively cancelled.

Lot 5 New Kiosk And Exit Lane Project

Victor Garza, Parking Superintendent, said staff received concept approval from the Historic Landmark Commission for this project, and staff will be seeking final design approval in a few weeks.

11) ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:54 a.m.