



City of Santa Barbara
Downtown Parking Committee

Memorandum

DATE: January 10, 2019

TO: Downtown Parking Committee

FROM: Robert J. Dayton, Transportation Planning and Parking Manager
Victor Garza, Downtown Plaza and Parking Manager

SUBJECT: COMMUTER LOT UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Downtown Parking Committee (DPC) receive an update on future plans for the Downtown Commuter Lots.

DISCUSSION:

The stated mission of the City's Downtown Parking program is to increase the economic viability of the Downtown Business District, increase parking availability for customers, provide employees with a wide range of parking and alternative transportation options, and create a better quality of life in the downtown district. To this end, Downtown Parking administers the Commuter Parking Program, which aims to provide available, reliable, and affordable off-street parking for downtown employees in two permit-only surface parking lots.

The Carrillo Commuter Lot has 140 parking spaces and is located at the western corner of West Carrillo and Castillo Streets. Carrillo permits cost \$40 per month and there are an average of 152 monthly subscribers. Carrillo permit sales generate approximately \$72,960 in revenue each year.

The Cota Commuter Lot has 221 spaces and is located at the western corner of East Cota and Santa Barbara Streets. Cota permits cost \$70 per month and the lot averages 382 monthly subscribers. Cota permit sales generate approximately \$320,880 in revenue each year. This is DTP's most popular lot for permit holders, and during 2018 the lot was full and permits were unavailable for approximately five (non-consecutive) months.

Permit parking restrictions are enforced in the Commuter Lots between 7:00 AM and 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday. The lots are available for free public parking during

the off-hours. Both lots provide overnight parking spaces for vehicle dwellers as part of the Safe Parking Program operated by the New Beginnings Counseling Center. On Saturdays, the Cota Lot hosts the popular Downtown Farmers Market.

Recently, the City has proposed alternative uses for both Commuter Lots. The Carrillo Lot was the proposed location for a “tiny homes” emergency housing program, which was to be operated for up to thirty months in conjunction with the Housing Authority and several non-profit organizations. This program would have displaced the Commuter Parking Program from the Carrillo Lot. However, the project did not receive enough Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) grant funding to proceed. This lot will continue to operate as a commuter parking lot. Public Works staff was open to the alternative use of the commuter lot because of its light use and operational expense. The HEAP grant funding would also have had a direct impact to the economic vitality of Downtown by helping homeless individuals on State Street. Other future opportunities could include permanent housing alternatives that would increase the number of people living, working, and shopping in the Downtown.

The Cota Commuter Lot is one of two potential sites proposed for the City’s new police station. Although site selection is not yet final, it is very likely that the Cota Lot site will be selected. If so, the Cota Lot will continue to operate as a commuter parking lot until construction begins in approximately two years. At that time, Cota permit holders would be offered parking spaces in other Downtown Parking lots, as available. DTP has sufficient capacity in the Ortega, Canon Perdido, and Granada Garages to accommodate all Cota parkers, although the Canon Perdido and Granada Garages are quite a bit further in distance. Staff is currently evaluating different potential rate structures that would provide an easy transition for Cota parkers while avoiding significant revenue impacts.