



Summary of 1/31/18 Parking Workshop

The following represents a general summary of the public workshop that was held on January 31, 2018. The workshop was attended by roughly 30 people representing downtown businesses, customers, and major employers. The summary does not reflect individual comments or discussions that occurred. However, that feedback will be evaluated for incorporation into the recommendation to the City Council. This document is not an implementation plan. Rather, it is the culmination of a formal study, three public workshops, and the work of the Parking Ad Hoc Committee.

Ukiah Parking District: the current conditions:

- Permitted spaces (in lots)
- Parking meters
- Timed spaces
 - Five hour
 - Two hour
 - 90 minutes
 - 24 minutes
- No weekend or evening enforcement

In the downtown core, there are over 1,070 spaces.

The peak time is between 11:00 am and 2:00 pm. During that time, the most impacted spaces are the five- and ten-hour spaces, with the 90-minute spaces close behind. The five- and ten-hour spaces are roughly 77% full at peak time, and the 90-minute spaces are roughly 66% full at peak time.

Permitted spaces, though nearly sold out, are only 60% full at peak time.

There is a significant amount of deferred maintenance, particularly in the parking lots.

Major problems with current conditions:

- Business owners and downtown employees are taking customer parking
- Model is backwards: The closest parking is free, and we are charging for parking furthest away. Therefore, there's no incentive for all-day parkers to park farther away.
- People are parking inappropriately--in privately owned lots and permitted spaces
- People with permits are parking in the free, 90-minute parking—because it's more convenient and free, thereby taking up TWO spaces
- Jurors significantly impact parking, especially the spaces that would be used by employees of the downtown.

- 90 minutes is either too long or not long enough, depending on your opinion.
- The current meters are obsolete and dying.
- Not enough revenue is generated to cover the expenses of the parking district.

Factors that will likely impact parking in the future:

- **Courthouse relocation:** the new courthouse, when built, will also have a dedicated parking lot for employees and jurors. Anticipated completion date—at least five years from now.
- **Downtown Streetscape Project:** Few, if any spaces will be lost. However, State Street will become much safer for pedestrians and there will be additional bike racks and wider sidewalks.
- **Reuse of current courthouse:** the current courthouse is owned by the County and the State, so the reuse of this building will largely depend on those agencies. The use will determine how much traffic is associated with it.
- **Future development:** Whether it's a new hotel downtown or the rehabilitation of the Palace Hotel, future development may impact parking. Any plan developed now will need to be flexible enough to work with whatever happens.
- **Electric vehicle chargers:** Tesla donated four electric vehicle chargers to the City of Ukiah that will be installed in the public parking lots.
- **Central garbage collection:** A goal of the City's is to have one or more centralized garbage locations for downtown businesses who are not able to store garbage onsite. This will prevent dumpsters and totes from being stored on the sidewalks and streets, will keep the downtown cleaner, and will provide a valuable service to the businesses.

For all of these reasons and more, it is imperative that whatever plan gets implemented is flexible.

Parking District 101:

TRUTH:

**There is no such thing as a free parking space.
It is either paid for by the businesses or by the users.**

Ukiah has a Parking District in the downtown area. In this area, parking spaces are paid for by the users. Outside the Parking District, *businesses* pay for the parking spaces.

How does this work? If someone develops a business outside the parking district, they are responsible for providing a specific number of spaces, based on their type of business. Especially for new construction, this can be very costly. For example, if a new restaurant were to be constructed in a commercially-zoned area, they would be required to provide one parking space for every three seats, with a minimum of four spaces. An additional parking space is also required for each two employees at maximum shift.

Inside the parking district, businesses are not required to pay for parking because public lots are provided and fees are collected from the users.

Parking districts are intended to be sustainable, with the fees collected covering the expenses of enforcing, maintaining, and improving the public parking. Ukiah's parking district is not currently sustainable. The annual expenses are not being covered and there is extensive deferred maintenance.

What if we didn't have a parking district? Without a parking district, businesses would pay "parking in-lieu fees," which require businesses to pay for their impact on the parking system. There are various ways to structure this—by number of employees, type of business, per square foot, etc. In-lieu fees around California range from about \$6,000-\$30,000 per space.

- At \$6,000/space under our current C-1 zoning requirements, a 40-seat restaurant (like Patrona or Saucy) would pay \$96,000
- At \$30,000/space, a 40-seat restaurant would pay \$480,000

Ukiah's Parking District costs roughly \$140,000 per year to operate. That includes the parking enforcement officer, vehicle maintenance, supplies, etc. That figure does NOT include maintenance and improvements (pavement, sidewalks, lighting, etc.) in the district, although it should.

The Parking District should be thought of as a separate entity with expenses that match the revenue. However, Ukiah's parking district operates at a deficit of between \$34,000 - \$60,000 per year; additionally, there are no reserves for maintenance or improvements.

These fees would obviously be a huge deterrent to new businesses in the downtown. Plus, it would be unfair to collect from existing businesses who didn't budget for this expense. Therefore, we would not likely generate enough revenue to cover the expenses and maintenance of the district.

The current downtown parking model is not efficient for the users, nor is it generating sufficient revenue. Therefore, we need to create a new model for the parking district that:

- **Helps ensure adequate and convenient parking for the visitors of the downtown**
- **Provides adequate and affordable parking for the employees of the downtown**
- **Generates enough revenue to cover expenses and maintenance of the parking district**

How About a Parking Structure?

A seemingly simple solution—one that we often hear—is that we should develop a parking structure. It would make perfect sense, right? We already have parking lots; why not go vertical? Unfortunately, the cost of constructing a parking garage is more than Ukiah can afford to bear. For example:

Lot A (near the old Post Office): 106 spaces

- Each space takes an average of 300 square feet
- In 2013 figures, the average parking structure cost \$24,000 per space to construct
- A two-story parking structure (on Lot A):
 - $\$24,000 \times 106 \times 2 = \$5,088,000$
- A three-story parking structure:
 - $\$24,000 \times 106 \times 3 = \$7,632,000$

These figures don't include ramps, elevators, lighting, and other structural requirements; they also don't include a mechanism for this structure to pay for itself. In conclusion, the structure is not a viable option. The good news, however, is that we already have enough parking spaces. We just need to use them properly.

The Proposal:

1. Install parking meters in the downtown core, roughly from Pine to Main Street (but not including those streets), Smith to Clay Street.
 - The meters would be fully programmable, with the first 20 minutes being free or 1¢, depending on the type of meter utilized. This would allow someone to pick up a to-go order, drop off a heavy load near his or her business, grab a cup of coffee, etc. without having to pay the meter.
 - Meters would take coins, credit cards, or operate through an app that is linked to an account (like Fast Trak). When linked to a smart phone, a meter can notify a user that their meter will expire in XX number of minutes and the user can instantly add more time to the meter.
 - The cost to park at a meter would get progressively more expensive. The first 15-20 minutes would be free or 1¢. The next 1-2 hours may be 50 cents per hour. After that, the cost could go up to \$1/hr. Parking meters would likely have a maximum time limit of four hours.
2. Retain a limited number of reserved, permitted spaces in Lots A (near the old post office) and B (on Stephenson, across from the Conference Center parking lot) for people who want and are willing to pay for a dedicated space.
3. Free parking: Create plenty of free parking in Lots C (near library), D (N. School near Henry Street), and on-street outside the meter core. This is designed specifically for the long-term parkers—the employees of the downtown—as well as customers who don't want to pay for parking and are willing to walk a block or two. The goal is to have free parking available within 2-3 blocks of every downtown business.
4. Make major improvements to the parking district:
 - Repave the parking lots
 - Repair sidewalks
 - Improve parking and directional signage
 - Other beautification projects
 - Add electric vehicle charging stations

Note: All the revenue generated by the Parking District stays in the Parking District. Some communities have used these funds for public art, free wifi, marketing of the downtown, and more.

This proposal addresses all of the major problems of the current model and is largely consistent with the recommendations that were made ten years ago but not implemented. It helps ensure that the “prime” customer parking will be available for customers and that those customers can have flexibility in how long they stay in the downtown. It provides plenty of free parking for the employees of the downtown and for customers who are willing to walk a block or two. It can easily be adjusted for future impacts and demand. It will generate enough revenue to keep the parking district sustainable.

Implementation: It is the committee's recommendation to implement a new parking system in conjunction with the Downtown Streetscape Project. Both projects will have a significant impact on the downtown; it would be best to do all the work at once, rather than stretching out the impacts over a longer period of time. The hope is that both projects be transform the downtown in a positive and impactful way. Currently, the construction period is scheduled to begin in Spring 2019.

Next Steps:

- Ad hoc committee will process community and Council input
- Develop more detailed recommendations, including timeline, for the City Council
- Present to City Council (public forum); receive direction from Council (Note: This item will be publicly noticed, including emails to all workshop attendees.)
- Implement recommendations

For additional information or to discuss further, please feel free to contact Deputy City Manager Shannon Riley at (707) 467-5793 or sriley@cityofukiah.com