



City of Atascadero Parking Utilization And Management Study – Action Plan

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Prepared for:

The City of Atascadero
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Downtown Parking Study Action Plan 2006

Short-Term (Within the Next Twelve Months):

- Develop and approve a set of Guiding Principles for downtown parking. The Guiding Principles will guide the future development of the downtown parking system, as well as provide reasonable constraints within which future parking issues can be addressed. A draft version of the Guiding Principles is included at the end of this action plan (pages 8 and 9).
- Steps should be taken to begin investigating options to generate sufficient revenue to fund future parking projects, such as parking in-lieu fees or on-street parking meters. Once recommendations are made, steps should be taken to include the provision in the city zoning code as soon as possible.
- Designate a single city department as responsible for downtown parking management. While the actual operation, maintenance and planning of the system may be handled by several city departments, the system will appear to have a single responsible department.
- Improve downtown parking signage. Incorporate parking signage in any new downtown signage plans. Trailblazing signs should be located on incoming streets to direct visitors to available parking supplies. Parking lots should have identifying signage that includes user group restrictions. On-street parking signs should remind users they are intended for short-term visitors.



- Using the suggestions provided in the full Parking Utilization and Management Study, ensure adequate pedestrian paths exist to and from parking areas.
- Any parking deficits created by small in-fill developments could be covered through the usage of in-lieu fees to fund the construction of public parking. However, if the development is substantial and will require a large number of parking spaces (50 or more spaces), at least a portion of the required parking spaces should be provided on-site by the developer. This will help ensure sufficient parking is provided overall, but also help ensure close, accessible parking is provided. The remaining portion could be covered through the use of in-lieu fees and public parking. For larger projects, a minimum of 25% of the required parking should be provided by the developer on-site.
- Work with private off-street parking facilities near the Carlton Hotel to provide some long-term employee parking. Possible locations are the off-street parking lot in Block 21, the existing Old City Hall surface lot and the St. Williams Church. Encourage valet parking in the Carlton Hotel parking lot on the northwest corner of Traffic Way and El Camino Real.
- Designate more long-term parking downtown. Long-term parking should be provided in off-street parking lots and underutilized on-street parking spaces. Ideally, these spaces would be located more on the perimeter of downtown, with the parking located closer to downtown destinations reserved for short-term visitor parking. This should include eliminating the use of the Old City Hall surface lot as a parking and ride facility.



- Continue improving lighting levels in downtown parking areas and major pedestrian paths. Work with community stakeholders to improve both real and perceived safety levels in parking areas and on pedestrian pathways. Parking areas should provide a minimum of 2.0 footcandles per square foot.
- Work with downtown businesses to determine loading and delivery needs. For example, loading and delivery zones are needed around the businesses located on Entrada or for the Carlton. Where possible designate specific loading zones, and determine adequate hours for delivery vehicle parking. Loading zones could be used for short-term visitor parking after designated loading zone hours.
- With respect to new developments, attempt to better utilize existing parking supplies prior to designing and constructing new parking areas. There is currently enough unused parking to more than accommodate projected parking needs. The city should work with private parking lot owners to better utilize existing supplies, to the benefit of the city, developers and the private lot owners.
- Develop a parking marketing program to include information for downtown visitors and businesses. Create downtown parking maps, detailing on-street and off-street parking supplies. Include downtown parking information on the City of Atascadero website, and encourage other downtown organizations to include parking information. Create lines of communication between the city and downtown businesses concerning parking issues.



Mid-Term (Year Two):

- Conduct an in-house downtown land use survey, and update annually as necessary.
- Conduct an update of the parking inventory and occupancy surveys contained in the full Parking Utilization and Management Study. These counts should be updated as necessary (when new developments occur), and updates should be conducted annually at a minimum.
- Provide improved support for alternative modes of transportation. Provide bicycle racks, comfortable pedestrian paths, bike paths, etc. in downtown to encourage a pedestrian first mentality. A marketing campaign could be created to encourage people to walk, bike, carpool, vanpool, or use public transit to travel downtown.
- Should average short-term parking duration begin to exceed posted time limits, additional steps will be necessary to deter excessive parking. These steps could include parking enforcement or a combination of parking enforcement and paid parking.
- While comprehensive parking enforcement may not be necessary at this time, develop a system to monitor on-street parking turnover through periodic duration/turnover surveys and community “policing”. Develop a notice that can be placed on vehicles to remind them of the two-hour time limits.



- If area private parking lot owners are unwilling to work with the city, or the number of spaces required cannot be achieved using this approach, then the city should look to improving existing parking capacities or adding new surface lots. The costs associated with surface lot improvement or construction are far less than parking garage construction. The city should ensure all surface options are explored prior to moving forward with garage designs. Also, the city should view the creation of surface parking as land banking, and not as a permanent downtown parking solution. As the downtown continues to develop, and new developments are constructed on available parcels (typically surface parking lots), parking structures may be needed to provide for future parking demands.

Long-Term (Years Three and Later):

- Develop additional surface parking supplies. The lots should be placed and sized appropriately, using the parking supply and demand analysis methodology detailed in the full parking study report.
- The creation of downtown structured parking, should be viewed as an option for the future. Today, a downtown parking garage will likely not be financially viable, relative to the revenues and expenses generated. However, a garage may be the only available option should the city decide to provide convenient parking for developments without the assistance of private parking lot owners. The value of a parking garage could extend beyond the revenues it generates by providing an incentive for downtown development.



- Ideally, the development of a downtown parking garage would coincide with the development(s) it is serving. Building a parking garage with the hope of attracting downtown development should only occur if sufficient downtown development warrants. Should developments not occur, a garage built on speculation could result in a severely underutilized facility. If a developer is interested in developing a portion of downtown, and sufficient parking supplies cannot be provided using other methods, then the city could propose providing the necessary parking along with the construction of the development.
- If significant public parking development occurs, the city will need to change how it views downtown parking management. To fund new public parking facilities and encourage use, there would need to be a charge in place for on-street parking. Theoretically, the charge for parking should be such that it encourages short-term parking on the street and encourages long-term parking in off-street lots. It may be difficult to achieve community buy-off for the creation of paid on-street parking. Even if there is a fee for on-street parking, there will still be an ample amount of free off-street parking in private parking lots. Once fees are put into place for parking, other management issues will arise such as parking validation programs, reserved parking, greater parking enforcement responsibilities, etc. This may necessitate the creation of a city department charged with the management of the parking system.
- As the downtown parking system may not generate sufficient funds to fully pay for downtown public parking facilities, other revenue streams should be explored. First, the city could seek the use of tax increment financing in the future. This would be a terrific way to fund parking system expansion, and is used by many communities today. Second, the city could team with downtown developers in funding public



parking facilities. Assuming the demand patterns are favorable, a multi-use facility could help reduce city expenses. Finally, the city could create a parking fee charged to downtown developers to help fund the additional parking facilities.



EXHIBIT A

City of Atascadero – Downtown Parking Guiding Principles (DRAFT)

1. In order to encourage the continued economic development of downtown Atascadero, the City of Atascadero will endeavor to provide and/or designate necessary short-term and long-term parking for downtown businesses and visitors.
2. In order to construct/operate public parking facilities, the City of Atascadero will secure necessary funds through a combination of taxes, parking fees, special assessments and/or park in-lieu fees charged to downtown developers.
3. The city will designate a single department to be responsible for the maintenance and management of the public parking system, and no other city department will be authorized to construct, designate, operate or manage parking spaces/facilities. The department will also be responsible for assisting with the allocation of available parking spaces among the downtown user groups.
4. Parking fees charged to downtown parkers (e.g. employees, visitors, etc.) in public parking areas will be designated by the city, with input from the city department responsible for the parking system. Any parking fees charged will be reviewed annually to ensure all financial goals/objectives are met. Parking fees will be used to help support the parking system.
5. The city department responsible for the parking system will be included in future downtown development projects to ensure parking related concerns are addressed. The department will be responsible for managing parking losses/gains due to downtown development.



6. Parking rules and regulations will be set by the department responsible for the parking system, with approval as necessary from the City Council, and these rules/regulations will be clearly communicated to downtown user groups via printed materials and the Internet.
7. Parking enforcement will be provided by the City of Atascadero Police Department when needed. Parking fines will be established by the City of Atascadero, and set to discourage illegal parking.
8. Special event parking needs will be coordinated by the department responsible for the parking system when needed. The department will be reimbursed for direct and indirect costs related to special event parking when appropriate.
9. Parking related budgets will be developed and reviewed on an annual basis.