

News from the City!

Atascadero's Downtown Parking

By City Manager Rachelle Rickard

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As part of the recent approval process for the new and exciting Bridgewalk Hotel project to be located in Colony Square, a downtown parking study was performed that determined there are over 1,200 public parking spaces available in the downtown core. We also learned that, even on a busy Tuesday evening when a large event was taking place at the Middle School; a Planning Commission meeting was being held at City Hall; and the Tuesday Evening discount movie night was going on at Galaxy Theatre; there were still plenty of open parking spaces available throughout the downtown area. Even so, we regularly receive questions about parking in the downtown area and we realized that many people just may not be aware that there are numerous downtown parking spots already easily accessible to them.

As a result, the City is currently working on better publicizing all of the parking locations available by creating and distributing updated and improved wayfinding signage, parking maps and brochures to make this information more widely known. Galaxy Theatre has also volunteered to assist in this public outreach effort by running parking location information during their on-screen advertising segments. It should be noted that Atascadero's downtown parking spots are all free, with not a single parking meter in sight; and are located within a short distance of each other, making access to restaurants, shops, wine and brew tasting and the theater very convenient.

Having a parking problem can be seen as a good thing! It's a healthy sign of success and a strong indicator that Atascadero's downtown is growing and thriving. That said, we recognize that having plenty of convenient parking in and around the downtown area is vital to continue building on our current energy and growth. We are currently reviewing the El Camino Real corridor to evaluate measures that would help to address traffic and parking.

While many of us search for and hope to find that perfectly positioned parking spot with quick and handy access, we encourage Atascadero's shoppers and visitors to get out and about in the downtown; to take a few moments to enjoy the sights and surroundings during the brief walk that might be required to get them from their car to their ultimate destination. The newly designed and centrally located public parking lot located on East Mall across from City Hall, next to the newly opened Centennial Plaza and Bridge which crosses Atascadero Creek between Sunken Gardens and Colony Square, is a beautiful example of an easily accessible, well-lit parking location with a short and scenic stroll to reach entertainment, shops and dining. The meandering walkway allows visitors to enjoy a close-up view of the creek habitat, while providing pedestrian connectivity not only to and from Colony Square but also between El Camino Real and Lewis Avenue.

If you would like more information about this or another City government related topic, please contact me at rickard@atascadero.org, or 470-3400.