



County of Santa Cruz

GENERAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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ROY HOLMBERG, DIRECTOR

November 13, 1998

Agenda: 11/24/98

Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, California 95060

REPORT ON PARKING MANAGEMENT AT THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER

Dear Members of the Board:

On November 10, 1998, your Board accepted a report on parking management at the County Government Center and directed General Services to return on November 24, 1998 with recommendations for dispensing parking passes through the installation of a parking pass dispensing machine and a review of parking options in general.

PARKING PASS DISPENSING MACHINE

We have contacted the City of Santa Cruz and Cabrillo College regarding parking pass dispensers which are utilized by these agencies for parking lot management. Both agencies indicated that the units are relatively trouble free and are a good solution for lots where a fee is levied but where an attendant is not justified. The estimated cost of a single unit is approximately \$14,000 including a small kiosk for weather protection.

The County currently sells an average of 20 parking passes per day at \$1 .00 per pass from the County Information Booth on the first floor of the County Government Center. The annual revenue of approximately \$5200 is budgeted in the General Services Department and provides financing for parking related activities. Although it is not anticipated that there would be a significant increase in the revenue generated from a dispensing machine at the County Government Center to offset the one time cost for the machine, there would be some added convenience for members of the public when they need long term parking.

A site has been identified at the County Government Center where the unit could be installed in an existing loading zone area. This location for the kiosk is relatively centrally located within the areas of visitor parking and offers an opportunity for vehicles to stop without interfering with the flow of traffic. The loading zone area could then be relocated to an existing no parking area. A schematic map is attached (Attachment A) which shows a possible location of the dispenser and relocated loading zone.

As previously stated, we believe that a parking dispensing machine would provide some added convenience to the public when they need long term parking at this facility. However, due to the cost for a dispensing machine and the lack of available funds in the current year budget, we believe it would be prudent to defer a purchase until we complete our current review of various parking options. This would allow us to evaluate the cost effectiveness of a pass dispensing machine relative to other long term parking strategies.

ADDITIONAL PARKING OPTIONS

A review of parking options previously presented to your Board is included in the attached report: Parking at the County Government Center . This report outlines our current parking programs, summarizes various parking enhancement programs implemented in the last ten years and provides information on future strategies which are under review, including preliminary information on the cost of a parking structure and the status of other options which are being pursued.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the course of the next several months we will be engaging in further analysis of options for further enhancement of parking, including strategies for financing the construction costs of various improvements which will allow us to provide your Board with specific recommendations for improvements.

It is therefore RECOMMENDED that your Board:

1. Accept and file this report on parking pass dispensing and parking management at the County Government Center; and
2. Direct the Department of General Services to report back with additional recommendations for parking management at the County Government Center parking lot on or before March 2, 1999.

Very truly yours,


ROY HOLMBERG, Director

RH:bd/park1027

RECOMMENDED:


SUSAN A. MAURIELLO
County Administrative Officer

PARKING AT THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER

I. EXISTING PARKING FACILITIES AT THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER AND WATER STREET JAIL LOT

At the present time there are a total of 758 parking spaces at the Government Center and Water Street Detention Facility. The breakdown of these spaces is as follows:

County Vehicle Only parking	95
Assigned Space Employee parking	228
Employee Only parking (non-reserved)	171
Visitor parking	232
Disabled parking	9
Press	7
Emergency Vehicles Only	10
Maintenance Vehicles Only	6

Visitor parking is restricted to one and two hour zones, and all parking is free. Visitors may also purchase an all day pass for \$1 .00. We sell approximately 20 visitor passes per day.

Employee Only parking at the jail lot is free but requires a sticker on the vehicle. This allows us to identify County employees and issue citations to non-employee vehicles parking in the lot. Spaces are not assigned at the jail lot.

Assigned Space parking is charged at the rate of \$21 .00 per month and our current waiting period to obtain a space is approximately seven years. We currently have 149 employees on the waiting list.

County Vehicles Only parking is inadequate for the number of vehicles in the Fleet pool and those assigned to employees working out of this facility. Typically County vehicles are required to use the jail lot which reduces availability of employee parking.

II. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

1. Overall Parkina Shortage:

County services have continued to grow in Santa Cruz and as these services expand the need for parking at the County Government Center also increases. Demands for parking have resulted from the following: Additional Sheriff patrol vehicles, increased number of General Services fleet vehicles, expansion of the employee work force, expanded need for visitor parking, additional need for in-house and contract maintenance service vehicles and added courts with expanded need for juror parking.

2. Peak Parking Problems

In addition to a general shortage of parking to service normal on-going activities we are impacted by specific demands for parking which create peak fluctuations well above normal levels. These demands are created during public meetings with high public interest and during days of initial jury selection. The major fluctuations typically occur on Mondays and Tuesdays when prospective Jurors are given passes for all day parking at the facility during jury selection. After selection jurors are given passes to park in the City parking structure or along Dakota Street and the impact is minimized. Initial juror selection is primarily conducted on Mondays and Tuesdays and during these days as many as 150 people can be called at one time. This high peak demand significantly impacts our available public parking facilities.

III. ACTIONS TAKEN DURING THE PREVIOUS TEN YEARS TO IMPROVE PARKING AT THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER

1. In 1988, meters along Dakota Street, from Ocean Street to the San Lorenzo Park, were converted from 2-hour maximum time limit to a 12-hour maximum time limit. This change in time limits allows these meters to function for all day parking at the County Government Center for employees or jurors. Rates at these meters are currently set at 15 cents per hour. When Jurors park at these meters, the City counts the number of vehicles with Juror permits and bills the County at the rate of \$2 per day.
2. A free bus pass program for employees was implemented at the County Government Center in 1984 and continues to operate. Current ridership is approximately 550 trips per month which has been relatively consistent for the past five years but is not as high as in the earlier years of the program when we had in excess of 700 trips per month. The reduction in bus service over time may be a factor in the change in use of this program which has been very popular with employees who choose to use alternative means of transportation. Costs for passes have gone from \$1 per day when the program began to \$3 per day currently. Costs of the passes are financed with revenues generated from paid employee parking.
3. Employee permit parking was implemented at the County Jail lot in 1988 as a means of controlling unauthorized use of the lot. This program increased availability of parking at the lot and when originally implemented vacant spaces were typically available in the lot. Subsequent increases in employee demand due to increased employees at this facility and additional County vehicles, however, now often fill the lot to capacity.

4. A proposal to convert three landscaped areas into parking was discussed in 1988. One of the three sites was approved and an additional fourteen spaces were added. The other two locations would have added an additional sixty-six spaces; however, they were not implemented at that time. Areas previously proposed to be converted to parking are shown on attachment B.
5. The Board of Supervisors approved an agreement with the City of Santa Cruz which allows jurors to park in the City parking structure on River Street. After a juror has been selected to sit on a jury they are given a pass to park in the City lot for each day that they are required to serve. These passes cost \$2 each and are purchased by the Courts. Prior to being selected to sit on a jury, Jurors park at the Government Center in Visitor parking or on Dakota Street in the metered spaces. When Jurors park on Dakota Street they do not have to put coins in the meter but just place a portion of their Jury Summons in the windshield and the County is billed by the City at the rate of \$2 per day for each vehicle.

We have recently been advised by the City that our ability to issue permits for Juror parking in the River Street lot may be interrupted beginning in January 1999. The City has indicated that they expect significant need for parking in the downtown area during 1999 due to several major construction projects which will disrupt existing City parking lots and create increased demand for parking by construction workers involved in the projects. One of the projects which will be under construction during this period of time is a new 500 space City parking structure which when complete should provide some parking opportunities for the County at least on an interim basis until growth in the downtown area creates additional demand for parking. The City has always contended that parking in any of these structures by the County should be looked at as a temporary use and that parking for the Downtown businesses would be the priority at times when demand exceeded supply.

6. In 1995 the County received a grant from the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District to construct a covered and enclosed bicycle parking area and remodel the existing bicycle locker structure at the County Government Center. These improvements enhance facilities for those employees who bike to work and encourages use of this form of alternative transportation.
7. An agreement was established with the First Church of Christian Science to utilize 8 parking spaces during the weekdays for employees or County vehicles. The Church provided these spaces at a nominal cost of \$1 per year. This program has been ongoing since 1990.

8. An agreement was established with the Home Savings Bank to utilize 10 parking spaces at their facility located at the corner of Ocean and Water Streets. Home Savings does not charge the County for use of these spaces, however, recent changes in ownership of the bank and potential new programs at this facility may require the bank to terminate our use of these spaces at some time in the future. The spaces at Home Savings are assigned to two person carpools or employees at the top of the waiting list for employee parking if there is inadequate demand for carpool spaces. We do not charge for use of these spaces.
9. Over the past few years, the Planning Department and Sheriff's Office have decentralized some services to field offices. One of the positive benefits of these actions have been the reduction of trips to the County building by the public and in some instances by County staff. In March of 1996, the Planning Department opened the Felton Permit Center. Two Building Inspectors are permanently stationed at the Center and it is open to the public three afternoons per week. Since its opening, 2710 trips by members of the public have been made to the Center. The Department recently received a grant from the Air Pollution Board and is currently planning on opening a South County Permit Center in the Aptos area by the summer of 1999. The Department plans on stationing two Building Inspectors permanently in the South County Permit Center and plans to be open to the public five afternoons per week. The Department estimates that approximately 2000 annual trips by the public will be made to the Center, thereby reducing parkign congestion further at the Government Center. These numbers do not include the reduction in staff parking at the Government Center nor do they reflect trips to the Centers made by the staff of the largest fire agencies. Additionally, the Department is developing Internet based permit application programs and remote payment by credit cards which are estimated to save another 2400 annual public trips to the Government Center.

The Sheriff's Department has also embarked on an ambitious program of decentralized services by opening Community Service Centers in Aptos, Corralitos, Freedom, Live Oak, and Felton. Six Sergeants and eight Deputies are stationed at the Centers where they report directly for their work assignments. It is estimated that over 11,000 public trips to the Sheriff's Service Centers are made on an annual basis. This number is likely to increase as word of the availability of the services spreads. While not all of these visitors may have traveled to the Government Center, it is clear that one of the benefits to the County of these decentralized Service Centers is a reduction in parkign at 701 Ocean. In addition, in 1997, 731 individuals were fingerprinted at the Centers and over 200 individuals attended community meetings at the Centers, further reducing the number of trips to the Government Center.

V. OPTIONS FOR FURTHER ENHANCEMENT OF PARKING

1. Leasing space at the Holiday Inn for County parking:

Preliminary discussions have been held with the Holiday Inn management to lease space for County parking. They seem receptive to such a proposal, particularly during times when parking demand is low and adequate space is available. They have concerns, however, during peak periods of use and particularly when they may have major events scheduled. This seems like a potential location for overflow parking but would require additional discussions with the Holiday Inn to resolve operational issues.

2. Alternative management of parking for jurors:

Parking demand at County Government Center is relatively stable except for major meetings with high Public involvement and juror parking during initial jury selection. Options to alleviate the high fluctuations for juror parking are being explored with the Court Administrator.

3. Phase out of assigned parking as employees give up existing spaces:

Previous proposals to manage existing parking included a recommendation to convert existing assigned spaces to a reserved parking area with parking any where in the area on a first come first served basis by those with permits. This would allow for over booking the area based on the typical number of empty spots on an average day and would provide for maximum utilization of the space.

An alternative method to accomplish such a goal would be to convert these spaces on an attrition basis. As employees give up spaces, the replacements would be assigned parking in a special permit area but without a specific spot. The size of this area would be expanded over time until the assigned spaces were converted to permit parking without assigned spaces. This change would require meeting and conferring with the Union prior to adoption by your Board.

4. Construction of a parking structure

Based on cost estimates developed by the City of Santa Cruz and the University, a parking structure will cost approximately \$17,000 per space. The County has relatively little undeveloped land in the vicinity of the County building to construct a parking structure. Therefore we would be required to either build the structure on existing parking areas or purchase additional property for a structure. If we were to build a structure in an existing parking area we would have to include the loss and replacement cost of the existing spaces for the footprint of the structure in the cost analysis.

Cost studies were conducted in an attempt to develop a system to use parking revenues to offset construction costs for a parking structure. Using the existing \$21 monthly rate, annual revenues per space would be \$252. The actual cost per space in a structure, assuming a typical financing strategy and a cost of \$17,000 per space, would be approximately \$912 per year. Based on these figures a significant revenue shortfall would exist unless parking fees were raised, and they would have to be approximately \$76 per month to cover the debt service. These figures do not take into account any lost spaces to accommodate the structure and this rate is considerably higher than going rates within the area. In order to construct a structure and keep rates at levels similar to other paid parking in the downtown Santa Cruz area the structure would require subsidized funding.

5. Acquisition Of Land For Off-site Surface Parking

The Real Property Division of Public Works was requested to provide preliminary cost analysis of non-residential property in the vicinity of the County Government Center which could possibly be purchased and used for surface parking. They provided information on five sites. Based on their preliminary analysis, land costs for off site parking would range from \$12,000 to \$30,000 per space and it is estimated that an additional cost of demolition of existing structures and construction of parking facilities would cost about \$4,000 per space. The identified sites are not currently on the market.

6. Conversion of existina visitor parkina to barkina meters or a aated lot:

Other methods which could be used to generate revenue to offset costs of parking infrastructure improvements would be to install parking meters or convert to a gated lot and charge for visitor parking. A gated lot would involve logistic problems when paying and leaving the lot and could involve significant impacts on adjacent City streets unless multiple exits are provided. Multiple exits would require additional staffing or circulation changes to exiting. Additional studies would be necessary to evaluate the pros and cons of a gated lot or the installation of parking meters and the costs associated with either option.

