



City of Santa Barbara
Downtown Parking Committee

Staff Report

DATE: October 13, 2022
TO: Downtown Parking Committee
FROM: Meghan Salas, Parking Resources Specialist
SUBJECT: Commuter Parking Resources and Strategy

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee receive an update on parking options for downtown commuters and plans to accommodate commuter parking following the closure of the Cota and Carrillo Commuter parking lots.

DISCUSSION:

Downtown Parking recognizes the need for affordable parking for employees of the downtown core. This need is currently met through low-cost parking permits at the Cota and Carrillo Commuter parking lots, and through heavily discounted permits at our hourly parking lots. The commuter lots are slated to be repurposed as sites for upcoming city projects, requiring Downtown Parking to find alternate parking for permit holders. Downtown Parking has developed a plan to relocate the legacy commuter permit holders and is also evaluating options to continue to serve future commuters.

BACKGROUND:

The Cota Commuter and Carrillo Commuter parking lots were built in 1985 to meet the parking needs of employees of the downtown core. Permits are offered at an affordable rate to employees who commute into the downtown core for work. The Carrillo Lot has 140 parking spaces and permits cost \$40 per month. The Cota Lot has 221 parking spaces and permits cost \$70 per month. Both lots can be oversold due to varied permit holder work schedules and can therefore accommodate subscribership at approximately 150% capacity.

In March of 2020, the Carrillo Commuter Lot had 101 permit holders and the Cota Commuter Lot had 358. Permit subscriptions declined heavily through the pandemic and as of September of 2022, the Carrillo Commuter Lot has 25 permit holders, and the Cota Commuter lot has 297.

Repurposing the Commuter Lots

In 2019, Santa Barbara City Council reviewed 18 potential sites on which to build the new Santa Barbara Police Station. The Cota Commuter Lot was chosen as the new location. The project is currently in the permitting phase with construction tentatively scheduled to begin in June of 2024.

In 2021, Santa Barbara City Council approved a proposal by The Housing Authority of Santa Barbara to develop permanent affordable housing at the site of the Carrillo Commuter Lot. This project will soon enter the permitting phase and has an estimated construction start date of June of 2024.

Legacy Permit Holders

Permit holders who have an active permit as of December of 2023 will automatically be entered into the Legacy Permit Holder program. Legacy Permit Holders will be able to continue to park in the commuter lots until construction begins on the housing development and police station. Legacy permit holders will then be assigned to either City Lot 2 or City Lot 10 (Ortega Garage). Lot assignment will be determined by the permit holder's work location and the available occupancy at Lot 2 and Lot 10 at the time of the transition. Legacy permits will be billed at the commuter lot rates for a period of 24 months from the date of transition. Permit rates under the Legacy Permit Holder program will be valid only to the named permit holder and are non-transferrable. Permits issued after December of 2023 will be billed the standard rates as determined by the fee resolution.

Commuter Parking Alternatives

Although the Legacy Permit Holder program will allow current permit holders to continue to have affordable commuter parking, Downtown Parking recognizes an ongoing need to offer a variety of affordable options for commuters. City Staff offers the following options for the consideration of the Downtown Parking Committee:

- Reduced permit rates for low-income employees of the downtown core.
- Discounted pre-paid parking cards for verified downtown employees.
- Permits issued for specified hours (example, 8:00 a.m. -1:00 p.m., Monday through Friday) or a set number of days per month to accommodate part-time workers.
- Reduced permit rate at City Lot 10 (Ortega Garage), and the elimination of discounted Paseo Nuevo and SBCC Cosmetology permit rates.

Staff appreciates any input and feedback from the Downtown Parking Committee on low-cost commuter parking alternatives.