



---

# Information Item

---

Date: January 24, 2013

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Gigi Decavalles-Hughes, Director of Finance

Subject: Final Report on the Implementation of the Walker Parking Study  
& Interim Parking Plan

## Introduction

Since 2009, the City has embarked on two significant efforts to address parking in the downtown. In 2006, Council approved the [Downtown Parking Program](#) that outlined a plan to address parking needs through the seismic retrofitting of Structures 2 & 4; rebuilding Structures 1, 3, and 6; and adding up to two new structures with a total of 1,000 additional spaces. In 2009, Walker Parking Consultants conducted a study ([Walker Study](#)) that evaluated parking operations, reevaluated recommendations relative to the 2006 study and developed recommendations to manage parking in the downtown area. On [February 23, 2010](#), Council supported the priorities of an Implementation Plan that looked to phase in specific actions that will further the goals and recommendations set forth in the Walker Study. On [March 8, 2011](#), Council approved an Interim Parking Plan that builds on the recommendations of the Walker Study, and adds initiatives to address parking needs in the downtown during a period of heavy construction activity (including the reconstruction of Parking Structure 6) between 2012 and 2014. On [July 10, 2012](#), Council approved a comprehensive parking rate change and on [July 24, 2012](#) approved modifications to the Municipal Code related to parking. With the success of these efforts, staff is now focusing on developing a new Parking Management Plan to prospectively address the City's parking needs.

## Discussion

### Interim Parking Plan Update

On [March 8, 2011](#), Council approved an Interim Parking Plan that builds on the recommendations of the Walker Study and adds additional initiatives to address parking needs during a period of heavy construction activity in the downtown between 2012 and 2014, which includes the demolition and reconstruction of Parking Structure 6. The following is the status of the specific steps in the implementation of this plan.

- Wayfinding Improvements – The Beach Parking Wayfinding system, which includes dynamic changeable message signs at the 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Street freeway exit and other key downtown gateway locations, has completed the design phase, with installation beginning in early 2013 and scheduled completion by the end of 2013. A \$760,000 Capital Improvement Project was approved in FY 2011-12 for new changeable message and parking availability signage at all downtown structures that would have directed customers to available parking. This project was unfunded in the FY 2012-13 Capital Improvement Project budget as part of the re-prioritization of capital projects.
- Parking Meter Pilot Project – Staff has completed installation of new, credit-card enabled single-space parking meters citywide. The meters, with sensors, now provide real-time parking information to the public via a mobile and online application: <http://map.parkme.com/?s=santa+monica%2C+ca>.
- Downtown Shuttle – The specially-branded Downtown Ride operated in a loop between the Civic Center and Downtown, providing access between the Civic Center parking and downtown locations every 8-10 minutes from 7:00 am to 10:00 am and 3:30 pm to 7:40 pm. From August 2011 through the end of March 2012, a total of 2,631 trips were taken with this service, and only 1,568 trips (60%) of those were monthly parking pass holders with the rest being non-parking customers who took advantage of the free ride. The BBB terminated the Downtown Ride service on June 15, 2012 due to low ridership. Monthly parking pass holders who purchased passes during the promotion period can still use their pass to take any BBB service, including the numerous routes that serve 4th St. between the Civic Center and Downtown every 7 minutes during peak periods. BBB has provided 1,200 trips during the first half of FY 12/13 at a cost of \$1 per trip. As part of the Parking Enterprise Fund study currently underway, staff is exploring ways to reimburse BBB for these trips.”
- Bike Transit Center – The City of Santa Monica Bike Center in Parking Structures 7 and 8 opened in November 2011. The Center offers services and facilities for people who walk, bike or use transit to get downtown. The Bike Center provides 260 secure bike parking spaces, bike repair facilities, showers, lockers, and bike rentals. It also offers programs including bike share for local employees, bicycle education, maintenance workshops, and supporting retail. The bike center has

been very successful since opening in 2011, and currently offers programs to expand bicycle commuting with workers at downtown businesses.

### Walker Parking Implementation Update

Staff also successfully completed several of the priority areas of the Walker Parking Study:

1. Complete a study of overall pricing and hours of operation changes for both the parking structures and on-street parking meters.
  - a. Adjust meter and structure prices throughout the downtown and adjacent areas as identified through the study and by City staff.
  - b. Adjust meter and structure hours of operation, as identified through the study and by City staff.

*At the [May 11, 2010](#) Council meeting, staff presented recommended rate changes for Downtown Parking Structures 1 through 9, the Main Library, Civic Center Parking Structure, and the Civic Auditorium Lot as a first phase of broader parking rate changes proposed in the Walker Study. Council unanimously approved the recommended rate changes, which also included changes to hours of parking structure operation in terms of evening flat rates for the Main Library and Civic Center area parking facilities.*

*In February 2012, staff contracted with Walker Parking Consultants to conduct a Citywide parking rate study and to develop a model by which future rate adjustments could be made. The parking rate study examined various factors, including:*

- *Current occupancy and usage of City-owned facilities.*
- *Current rates.*
- *Rates at private Santa Monica facilities.*
- *Rates at various comparable and competitive areas.*
- *The relationship between on-street and off-street parking locations.*
- *Monthly rates.*
- *Event rates.*

*Walker Parking Consultants was asked to provide a report that showed the exact rate that the model produced for various areas. The report was completed in June 2012, and is attached. Staff reviewed the model recommendations and developed proposed rates, which were presented to various stakeholders, including Downtown Santa Monica, Inc., Main Street Merchants, the Pier*

*Corporation, the Pier Tenants Association, and other interested stakeholders. In developing the proposed rates, staff sought to balance change from current rates with previous Council actions that lowered rates in less-used facilities, and charged more in congested facilities.*

*Most recently, Council approved citywide parking rate changes on [July 10, 2012](#) that addressed the goals of lowering the cost of parking in less utilized locations and raising the cost of parking in heavily used locations. The rates went into effect on October 1, 2012 citywide, except the beach lots where new rates went into effect November 1, 2012.*

2. Develop agreements and new signage for public use of private parking facilities.

*Since July 1, 2010, private parking facilities in the Downtown have had access to approved signs that can be placed in the public right of way to promote public parking. Currently, eight locations have approved signs.*

3. Identify and secure employee parking options.

- a. Re-negotiate 100 Wilshire parking agreement in Structure 2

*The Fourth Amendment of the Lease providing for removal of nested parking in Parking Structure 2 was executed on May 18, 2011, and has allowed for the public use of an additional 100 spaces in Parking Structure 2.*

- b. Renegotiate 1299 Ocean LLC parking agreement in Structure 4

*On [April 24, 2012](#), Council approved a Parking Agreement with 1299 Ocean LLC, for Parking Structure No. 4, regarding the removal of reserved parking spaces, the extension of the lease term, and payment by the City for use of relinquished parking spaces. The parking agreement amendment makes up to 204 reserved and underutilized parking spaces in Parking Structure 4 available to the public. In return for relinquishing reserved spaces and using only the amount of spaces that are needed by tenants, the City would pay 1299 Ocean LLC (Lessee) \$20 per month for each space not used. In addition, the City agreed to extend the term of the lease by ten years, through August 31, 2031. During the extended ten-year period, the Lessee would be allowed to purchase up to 204 spaces at the then-current monthly rate, at locations to be determined by the City, with the City making a good-faith effort to locate the spaces in close proximity to the office building and with no obligation to pay the Lessee for any unclaimed parking spaces.*

- c. Identify locations (including private lots and peripheral locations) and short-headway transportation options to/from the identified location(s).

*As part of the July 2012 parking rate change, Council approved a new, lower monthly rate and a low-cost pre-paid parking rate to meet the needs of*

*Downtown employees. This has resulted in the relocation of a total of 804 former Downtown parkers to the Civic Center. Additionally, the new parking application noted above includes privately-owned facilities where rates are known and parking is made available to the public.*

4. Expand transportation demand management programs.

*The City's Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Ordinance regulates a total of 669 employers, accounting for 37,784 employees in the City. The current Average Vehicle Ridership (AVR) for the City in FY 2010-11 is 1.67, down slightly from 1.71 last year. This is in part due to the new requirement that employers purchasing emission reduction credits must now also survey their employees and report their survey information. These employers choose to purchase credits instead of reducing employee trips and, as a result, their employee commute patterns lower City AVR statistics. In an effort to increase City-wide AVR and alternative commute participation by area employees, the Transportation Management Office has initiated a comprehensive outreach program which includes:*

- Planning and Community Development staff in the Transportation Management Office (TMO) is currently working with vanpool providers to increase the number of vanpools currently operating in Santa Monica from 10 to 50.*
- TMO staff work closely with employers, consulting with them on methods to increase AVR, create more effective plans, and solve parking problems.*
- Staff is currently auditing employers of 50-169 employees. These audits include a complete review of the employers' plans, and suggestions for strengthening those plans in order to achieve higher AVRs. Fifteen audits have been completed in FY 2011-12 and more are scheduled to take place on a regular basis.*
- Staff is working on various components of the City's No Net New Trips program, helping to set the framework to meet the trip reduction goals of the LUCE through Transportation Management Association (TMA) formation, creating connected mobility hubs (transit, Expo, car share, bike share and EV infrastructure) and trip reduction website applications.*
- Forty new employers in the 10-49 employees category have been trained at a City-sponsored TDM workshop and submitted their initial Worksite Transportation Plans (WTP) plans in April. Staff is working with the Business License Office in order to streamline the new employer notification process*
- Staff from the City's Transportation Demand Management group have been actively working with downtown employers to decrease single occupant vehicle use and promote rideshare, carpool, transit, and non-*

*motorized transportation options. This work will continue through 2013, with a focus on smaller employers (10 to 49 employees).*

5. Identify and expand alternative payment mechanisms.
  - a. Replace current parking meters with ones that accept credit cards.
    - *Staff completed installation of parking meters that accept credit cards and pay-by-phone in January 2012. Based on the 0.6% usage of the pay-by-phone service and its impact on parking meter battery life, the City is discontinuing the pay-by-phone service as of March 2013.*
  - b. Expand or develop new smart card system.
    - *The Santa MoniCard was discontinued on June 28, 2012 due to the inability to maintain the antiquated equipment. Customers are able to use their existing cards in the new meters until the value is used up. Since the new parking systems accept a variety of payment options and an in-house card is costly to manage, staff does not anticipate a replacement program.*
6. Review parking operations staffing, policies and procedures.
  - a. Review parking operations staffing.
  - b. Review revenue control, cashiering and close out procedures.

*The Walker Study recommendations were further supplemented by the completion of an Internal Audit of Parking Operations in 2010. Both the study and audit included various recommendations to more efficiently manage parking operations. Proposed staffing recommendations were approved as FY 2010-11 midyear budget changes, and as part of the FY 2011-13 budget. Other recommendations, such as expanding automated pay machines, were fully implemented in June 2011.*

7. Review/formalize maintenance program.

*Staff is working with Public Works to review and formalize a comprehensive maintenance program for the Downtown parking structures. The FY 2012-14 biennial Capital Improvement Project (CIP) budget includes a project to replace elevators in parking structures 2, 4, and 5 at a cost of \$5,061,000 over three years beginning in FY 2012-13.*

8. Review Walker in-lieu fee recommendations.

*The Walker Parking Study recommended that the City evaluate its existing parking in-lieu fee program for the Downtown because although the existing program has been important to furthering the City's "park once" policy and*

generating funds to construct new parking, the fee of \$1.50 per square foot is insufficient to finance the current costs of new parking spaces. At its [June 14, 2011](#) meeting, Council authorized an agreement with the consulting team of Nelson\Nygaard and AECOM to study the existing Parking In-Lieu Fee Program in downtown Santa Monica and to provide recommendations for its possible extension and expansion. Santa Monica's existing parking in-lieu fee for the Downtown, called the Parking Developer Fee, was established in 1986 as an incentive to encourage property owners to rely upon public parking and support a longstanding "park once" approach within Downtown Santa Monica. The consultants presented a draft of their report on a proposed update to the Downtown Parking In-Lieu Fee Program at the [September 11, 2012](#) Council meeting. At this meeting, Council held a Study Session to discuss the Nelson\Nygaard and AECOM findings and recommendations and to direct staff to return to Council with an ordinance that would create an updated parking in-lieu fee program for the Downtown area. The results of this study are expected to be presented to Council in spring 2013.

9. Research and develop centralized valet program.

Staff examined centralized valet systems currently in operation in Old Pasadena, Manhattan Beach and Culver City to better understand best practices that are needed to ensure success, and presented findings, recommendations and a draft RFP to the Downtown Santa Monica, Inc.'s Parking and Circulation Committee on April 13 and May 11, 2010. Due to findings pointing to difficulties with the storage of vehicles, high retrieval times, and high cost, the City was unable to deliver a centralized valet program. Staff assisted Downtown Santa Monica, Inc. in its development of a centralized valet system currently operating at peak times at Wilshire and 3<sup>rd</sup>.

10. Establish mechanism for ongoing review of pricing; parking supply and demand; and operations.

In February 2012, staff contracted with Walker Parking Consultants to conduct a citywide parking rate study and to develop a model by which future rate adjustments could be made. The parking rate study examined various factors as described earlier in item one above. Additionally, as part of the comprehensive Municipal Code changes adopted on [July 24, 2012](#), staff has the ability to review and modify rates administratively within defined parameters quarterly.

11. Develop a proactive program to disseminate parking information.

On December 20, 2012, the City launched a new real-time parking application that shows available parking in parking lots, structures and parking meters. The app also includes rates and privately-owned parking information, when available.

With the success of the implementation of the Interim Parking Plan, staff will begin developing a new Parking Operations Strategic Plan to guide future changes as Parking Structure 6 is reopened and additional parking is built at the City-owned parcels on Arizona between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Streets. This plan will be developed in Fiscal Year 2013-14 and will include numerous opportunities for stakeholder input.

**Prepared By:** Donald Patterson, Assistant Director – Finance