

## **MEMORANDUM**

Date: September 13, 2023

To: Economic Development Committee

From: Downtown Parking Team (Ricciello, Hilton, Green)

RE: Downtown Parking

### **SUMMARY**

The Downtown Parking Team was tasked with evaluating the current supply of parking in the downtown area and to present recommendations for addressing the perception that there is an insufficient supply of parking spaces. General comments about parking in downtown include:

- Street parking in front of shops is being used by employees.
- Insufficient parking for major events and performances.
- City lots for overflow parking are too remote.
- No enforcement of parking rules to facilitate turnover.
- Poor or no signage directing visitors to available parking.
- Heavy truck traffic on Lincoln Boulevard makes street parking difficult.

The team researched current state-of-the-art strategies and approaches for addressing the issue with priority given to lower cost options including improved signage, on-line parking maps, increased enforcement, and dedicated employee parking areas. Long term solutions include adopting smart parking technologies and increasing supply by acquiring strategically located properties, and implementing improvements that enhance the pedestrian experience (Exhibit A: Historic Murphy Avenue)

### **REVIEW OF EMERGING APPROACHES:**

There are numerous examples of downtown revitalization efforts that emphasized increasing the supply of parking by demolishing older structures to make way for surface lots (American Planning Association: [Downtown Revitalization in Small and Midsized Cities](#)). Strategies to combat the decline of older downtown districts confronted with stiff competition from suburban shopping centers would often prioritize increasing the parking supply as the core solution. The hard lesson learned was that “plentiful parking is not the

reason people choose to visit...they visit due to the mix of businesses and the exciting atmosphere.” (Exhibit B: Issues and Solutions for Parking on Main Street). There are many examples of small towns (e.g., Bend, Oregon; Galena, Illinois.) that achieved effective results by focusing efforts on attracting unique shops and exciting events, building walkable streetscapes, and encouraging mixed-use infill development that includes housing. Housing has been shown to enliven downtowns by creating a resident population that supports local shops and special events.

Infill mixed-use housing is a major objective of the Sacramento Council of Governments (SACOG) “Green Means Go” program which is funding a new specific plan for downtown Lincoln. The SACOG program assists cities in the Sacramento region with adopting land use regulations that encourage infill housing and supports alternative means of transportation. Nationally recognized urban planning organizations such as the American Planning Association, the Urban Land Institute and Strong Towns have found that revitalization strategies that focused on enhancing existing assets, providing incentives for desired uses, paying attention to community aesthetics, and seeking development partners focused on infill development have the most effective and long-lasting results. (Exhibit C: The Secrets of Successful Small Communities)

### CURRENT CONDITIONS

Current Parking Supply – An inventory of the current supply of parking was conducted using online resources coupled with field verification. The target area selected focused on the historic core of downtown Lincoln, the six-block area bounded by 7<sup>th</sup> Street, McBean Parkway, E Street, and the Union Pacific Railroad line. The total number of parking spaces available to the public and business patrons is as follows:

- Curbside Street Parking: 318
- Public Parking Lots: 207
- Commercial Businesses: 201
- Grand Total: **726**

Code Required Parking – The Lincoln’s Zoning Code establishes reduced parking requirements for the [Central Business District](#). For the construction of new commercial

buildings, the Code requires a minimum of one space per 400 SF of floor area. The Code does not limit the amount of parking that can be provided. In situations involving the reconstruction of existing buildings, the Code imposes a lower requirement of one space for 800 SF of floor area.

Parking Shortfall – To estimate the adequacy of the current parking supply, the Team calculated the number of parking spaces that would be required based on the total floor area of the building stock in the six-block study area. The Placer County Assessor property assessment records provided the data on building square footage per assessed parcel. For buildings owned by public entities for which the Assessor does not provide building floor area information, floor area estimates were calculated based on lot coverage multiplied by the number of floors in the building, multiplied by the industry standard building efficiency ratio of 80%. The Team believes the parking that would have been provided had all downtown buildings met the current standard is a reasonable measure of supply versus demand.

- Total Building Floor Area: 310,606 SF
- Parking Need based on Code: 776
- Off-Street Parking Supply: 408
- Shortfall subtotal: (368)
- Street Parking Supply 318
- **Net Shortfall (50)**

It should be noted that code-required parking is calculated based on each individual building's floor area and that the city does not allow developers to count public parking or street parking to meet a project's code parking requirements.

For comparison purposes, the Team researched the commercial parking requirements for the City of Davis which recently adopted a new specific plan and form-based zoning code. For commercial uses, the city's new code sets a maximum of 2.5 spacer per 1,000 SF, or the equivalent of one (1) parking space per 400 SF of floor, which is the same as Lincoln's code requirement for the Central Business District. The major difference between the two

is that Lincoln sets a minimum requirement whereas Davis sets a maximum requirement to discourage the overproduction of parking for new developments.

## RECOMMENDATION

### Near-Term Solutions

- Work with the Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Lincoln Association (DLA) on the design and placement of signs directing visitors to public parking lots.
- Develop a graphic map of downtown illustrating parking areas with a QR code linked to the city, Chamber of Commerce and DLA websites.
- Designate the city parking lot at the southwest corner of 6<sup>th</sup> and F Street for downtown employees; ensure that shop owners inform employees about the dedicated parking and the importance of not parking in prime customer spots.
- Increase parking enforcement patrols focused on information dissemination as opposed to issuing citations.
- Repurpose the city lot on the west side of F Street between 5<sup>th</sup> and McBean for employee parking.
- Work with business owners to make on-site parking available after hours for special event parking.
- Implement pedestrian improvements along F Street from 6<sup>th</sup> Street to 5<sup>th</sup> Street to increase the public's use of the city lots located adjacent to City Hall.

### Long-Term Solutions

- Adopt smart parking technologies to manage parking resources. (Exhibit D Revitalizing Small Towns: Harnessing Smart Parking Technology)
- Acquire a site within easy walking distance of 5<sup>th</sup> Street to increase parking (50-100 parking spaces); consider underutilized sites with mixed-use development potential.
- Retain consulting services to evaluate curb side parking resources and determine if additional spaces can be provided including increasing angled parking where appropriate.

## Downtown Lincoln Parking

- Conduct a study of the pedestrian environment and implement improvements to enhance the pedestrian experience (landscaping, lighting, signage, and street furniture).
- Move forward with the development of an artist-inspired gateway structure for downtown that would include directional signage for parking and a visitor information kiosk.
- Make 5th Street between Lincoln Blvd and F Street a pedestrian only area with wider sidewalks to accommodate outdoor eating and seating; enhance the pedestrian experience by adding attractive landscaping, lighting, and public art. with parking for cars, bikes and NEVs located nearby (see Exhibit A, [Historic Murphy Avenue](#)).

## Resources:

Exhibit A: Historic Murphy Avenue

Exhibit B: Issues and Solutions for Parking on Main Street

Exhibit C: The Secrets of Successful Small Communities

Exhibit D: Revitalizing Small Towns: Harnessing Smart Parking Technology