



TOWN OF LOS GATOS
Staff Report

MEETING DATE:

ITEM NO: 11

DATE: November 2, 2021
TO: Mayor and Town Council
FROM: Laurel Prevetti, Town Manager
SUBJECT: Provide Direction on the Proposed Pilot Employee Parking Program

RECOMMENDATION:

Provide direction on the proposed Pilot Employee Parking Program.

BACKGROUND:

On April 20, 2021, the Town Council directed staff to move forward with a pilot Employee Parking Program. Staff began this work by implementing a survey to determine the demand and locations for the employee parking spaces. Business owner and employee surveys were distributed via email and in person during door-to-door outreach. Distribution efforts occurred with collaboration and support of the Town's Complete Streets and Transportation Commission, and the Los Gatos Chamber of Commerce. The surveys helped to determine how many employee spaces are needed, preferences of where employees want to park, and parking concerns of employees and business owners.

There were 330 businesses surveyed from downtown, in which both business owner and employee surveys were distributed. Staff received responses from 103 businesses and 272 employees. With approximately one-third of the businesses responding and a vast disparity in the size and type of downtown businesses, the surveys provided a limited representation of the business community's parking needs. Restaurants, professional and personal services have the highest percentage of employees and were significantly under-represented in the survey responses.

With such limited business owner and employee response, including an under representation of the larger employers, further data were necessary to establish an accurate demand for employee parking. Staff collected the additional data as described in the report below.

PREPARED BY: Greg Borromeo, Interim Captain and
Jim Renelle, Parking Program Manager

Reviewed by: Town Manager, Town Attorney, Public Works Director, and Acting Police Chief

DISCUSSION:

The primary purpose of the pilot Employee Parking Program is to manage parking during peak business and provide plenty of convenient parking for patrons. Peak demand for parking has been identified in the Dixon Study as occurring on Thursdays and Fridays from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. To accommodate this goal, spaces would need to be reserved for employees Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Outside of those hours, the spaces would revert to all-day public parking, providing unlimited timed parking for evening visitors.

The employee survey indicated that the vast majority of the respondents are not willing to pay for employee parking. The remaining employees indicated that they are only willing to pay up to \$20 per month. To highly encourage full participation, staff is proposing that employee parking permits would be free of charge during the pilot period. The employee parking rate would be determined at the end of the pilot period taking into consideration the multiple factors that increase overall parking compliance.

To provide a more complete picture of the employee parking needs and fill in some of the missing data, staff created a comprehensive downtown business list. The list tracks the type of business, hours of operation, peak number of patrons, and number of employees parking in public lots at peak business hours. This also provides staff with a methodology to estimate for the businesses that did not respond to the survey. The list provides a relatively accurate picture of peak employee parking demand and may be used to determine how many employee spaces are needed in various locations of downtown.

While the initial demand analysis revealed a larger than expected number of employees working at peak times, several factors reduce the overall downtown employee public parking demand. Private parking lots and employees using alternative transportation reduce the overall demand by 18%. The chart below provides information on employee parking needs.

Total Employees at Peak (Thu. & Fri. 11 AM – 2 PM)	Employees Needing Parking	Employees Using Private Spaces	Employees Using Municipal Spaces
1028	956	121	843

It is likely that the number of employee spaces needed will increase over time; however, staff recommends that the program pilots with a more conservative number of employee designated parking spaces to avoid creating under-utilized spaces. This starting number would be determined based on the number of employees that initially register for the program, then spaces can be added as the demand increases. Employee permits would be oversold as not all employees would be utilizing a space at the same time and so that the Town may continue to prioritize and balance the parking needs of customers.

DISCUSSION: (continued)

In addition to public parking lots, a fixed number of employees would be permitted to park in designated on-street parking areas that would include a small number of spaces in the residential parking permit zones. The chart below illustrates the current parking space inventory.

Downtown Parking Inventory		Spaces
Downtown Municipal Off-Street Parking		1095
Downtown On-Street Parking		540 *This number is approximate pending final parklet build out and restriping
Commercial Private Parking		289
Residential Permit Parking		631
Total Downtown Parking		2,555

Pilot Employee Parking Permit Program Implementation

There will be several steps to implement the pilot Employee Parking Program including employee registration, parking space designation, signage design, and long-term parking solutions (three or more hours) for customers. Beginning as soon as February 2022, staff expects to assign designated employee parking spaces and begin installing appropriate signage. When all required signage is installed, the pilot Employee Parking Program will go live. This implementation timeline is reflected in the chart below.

Task	4 th Quarter 2021	1 st Quarter 2022	2 nd Quarter 2022
Employee Wait List	X		
Parking Wayfinding		X	
Parking Lot Signage		X	
Begin Employee Parking		X	
Other Wayfinding Tasks			X

Employee Registration and Permits

Staff has created a process called the Waitlist to begin registering interested employees using the existing parking management software, Turbo Data. This process, with a planned launch in November 2021, will provide a mechanism for downtown employees to register for the pilot program, and assist with data collection determining the number and locations of employee parking spaces being requested. When an employee joins the Waitlist, they will be in line to receive a parking permit and will be asked to provide specific data that will aide staff in verifying the demand for employee parking. The Waitlist will also help staff by dispersing the

DISCUSSION: (continued)

administrative workload of the initial permit registration. The need for additional employee designated spaces will be assessed and adjusted on an on-going basis.

Designating Employee Parking Spaces

Employee parking spaces must be well marked with signage or surface markings so that the parameters of the spaces are understood by all. The wayfinding portion of this project will begin in November 2021 with the first phase including the design of employee parking related signage as the signage must be installed before the pilot Employee Parking Program can begin. It is anticipated that parking signage will be installed during first quarter of 2022.

To incentivize employees to participate in the pilot Employee Parking Program, the option for employees to park in the unlimited public parking spaces must be significantly reduced or eliminated in the core municipal parking lots. As employee spaces are added, unlimited all-day spaces will need to be progressively eliminated. Doing this will have a negative effect on some downtown visitors as many need the ability to park for more than three hours without having to relocate their vehicle.

As more employee spaces are added, and unlimited public parking spaces are reduced, visitors will need another option. The “pay-to-stay” model was recommended by the Dixon Parking Study. Town staff has received feedback from customers that a pay option is preferred over shuffling their car or receiving a parking ticket. Thus, it is understood by staff that the extra convenience provided by the “pay-to-stay” option could outweigh the small fee incurred. Pay stations and a mobile payment application are needed to provide access to this option. Payment methods including the procurement of a mobile payment application will be benchmarked over the next few months and staff will return to the Town Council with further information.

CONCLUSION:

Los Gatos-Monte Sereno Police Department Parking Unit continues to work on moving forward the Parking Roadmap. The Department is focused on improving the Downtown visitor experience by managing employee parking. Staff looks forward to the Council’s feedback and direction of the elements of the pilot as outlined in this report.

COORDINATION:

This report was coordinated with the Parks and Public Works Department and Economic Vitality.

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SUBJECT: Pilot Employee Parking Program

DATE: November 2, 2021

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

This is not a project as defined under CEQA, and no further action is required.