

**From:** [Daya Ceglia](#)  
**To:** -- City Council  
**Subject:** Bike/Pedestrian-friendly Petaluma  
**Date:** Saturday, January 25, 2025 9:27:09 AM

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Dear Councilmembers,

I wanted to thank you all for everything you are doing to make Petaluma more bicycle and pedestrian-friendly! I see many benefits, a few of which are—more interactions with friends and neighbors, less fossil fuel use, less need for parking space, better fitness and health, and it's fun!

Daya Ceglia

[REDACTED]  
Petaluma, CA [REDACTED]

Telephone: [REDACTED]

**From:** [Gary Danskin](#)  
**To:** [-- City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Parking  
**Date:** Saturday, January 25, 2025 9:12:57 AM

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Good morning hope this note finds you well. It's no secret we need more parking. take the \$100k and use some of that to buy the old bank and tare it down build parking structure w/shops. Please don't spend the money on a study commonsense says we do Please. I know it's easier to spend others money ,but let's use what we have wisely maybe we can get our streets paved instead of painting them? What say you. Thanks Gary Danskin

**From:** [Heather K](#)  
**To:** -- City Clerk; -- City Council  
**Subject:** Public Comment: Downtown Parking / Misinformation from Know Before You Grow  
**Date:** Monday, January 27, 2025 9:11:28 AM

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Petaluma City Council and Community:

Our historic downtown needs MORE and better parking options, not less as mayor Kevin McDonnell's "Know Before You Grow" and the outsourced for-profit M-Group continue to push. Below is a photo the mayor's Know Before You Grow used to advertise their recent meeting on the future of parking, showing the popular and well-utilized River Plaza shopping center on E Washington near Petaluma Blvd in a rare state of vacancy from ten years ago. This ongoing misinformation is insulting to the community, but the fact it comes from the mayor's own organization is just plain egregious.



The M-Group and Know Before You Grow both continue to spread misinformation, claiming we have TOO MUCH parking, and therefore we should remove some, force people out of their cars, and build, build, build! The M-Group denied use permits to the Fourth and Sea and Walnut Grill downtown restaurant properties for years due to "insufficient parking" yet continue to insist that there is plenty of existing parking for a new, hoity-toity hotel that would destroy our historic downtown. The M-Group and its marketing arm, Know Before You Grow, will continue to lie to the community when the facts don't support their agenda.

I understand that no decisions will be made in tonight's meeting regarding the reduction of any parking. However, that is the clear long-term goal of these two anti-community organizations, however many small steps it takes them to accomplish their misguided goal.

I hope the City Council majority will consider the will of the people, the importance of parking on the success of our downtown merchants and tourism, the need to support small businesses and not just rich developers, and reject the misinformation being spread by the M-Group and Know Before You Grow.

Thanks,

Heather Kratt

**From:** [Howard Belove](#)  
**To:** -- City Council  
**Subject:** Downtown Parking  
**Date:** Sunday, January 26, 2025 8:51:45 AM

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Parking. The key to a strong downtown is sufficient, convenient, low cost PARKING. We may regret that we remain car centric, but 75 years of car centric development will not be soon or easily reversed. The proposed development plans will only make things worse.

Howard Belove

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

January 27, 2025

## **Comments to the Council on the Downtown Area Parking Management Plan**

I am a resident of Petaluma who lives in southeast part of our town, and I would like to provide my comments on the Downtown Area Parking Management Plan that is under development. Besides a resident, I am also a former urban planner, city manager, and professor of public health as such I would like to share my professional perspectives as well as my thoughts as a resident.

As we all know, downtown Petaluma with its vibrancy and beauty brings many people to downtown to enjoy its countless businesses, eateries, and civic activities. Regretfully, we also know what brings those many people to downtown, the automobile. With the automobile comes the need for parking. The following are four points I wish to make as the Council and staff continue to develop the Downtown Area Parking Management Plan. The points are interrelated and collectively seek to mitigate the negative externalities associated with automobiles in downtown Petaluma. Automobiles are not what made downtown Petaluma vibrant and economically prosperous; people and proper planning did.

1. **I strongly encourage the city to adopt much needed priced parking.** When parking spaces in the area are free this misrepresents the true cost of driving, including the time wasted due to congestion, harmful vehicle emissions, and the wear and tear of our already frayed roadway infrastructure. Pricing parking to manage demand mitigates these costs by allowing land to be transitioned to revenue generating uses and potentially long-term savings due to decreasing the need for improvements to parking and roadway infrastructure. Pricing on-street parking to manage demand has many benefits. Pricing on-street parking encourages parking turnover in high-demand locations. Setting the right price discourages drivers from leaving their cars parked in the same space for hours or even days at a time and helps to alleviate traffic caused when drivers cruise or double-park while waiting for an available parking space. Turnover increases the potential for additional economic activity, supporting local businesses by making more parking available for customers. Importantly, I would strongly advocate that those revenues generated by priced parking should all be directed back to the downtown area in the form of increased public improvements (e.g., safer and more navigable sidewalks, trees, lighting, planters, art, street and sidewalk cleaning, etc.).
2. **I strongly encourage the city to not develop any new on-street parking in the downtown area.** Indeed, I would argue that the city needs to strategically remove parking in certain areas and return those areas to a more pedestrian friendly use. For example, the long history of Center Park's struggle between its use as a parking location - first with horse drawn carriages, then the automobile, and now the congested nightmare it is everyday - and as a civic location (it is one of Petaluma original parks with associated festivities over its many years) is instructive for current planning decisions regarding parking. Reclaiming the paved parking adjacent to western side of Center Park and transforming it into a pedestrian friendly gathering area would allow the area to regain its historic role as a central community hub. Also changing the current diagonal parking spots to very short-term parallel parking adjacent to the shops and restaurants would allow for deliveries to these establishments and services such as taxis, ride-hailing (e.g.,

Uber), and food ordering and delivery (e.g., DoorDash) to continue but would free up additional land for Center Park. Certainly, this would result in a much safer pedestrian experience in this area than its current auto-dominated one.

3. **I strongly encourage the city to enact ordinances and/or agreements with developers that requires that any new residential or lodging development in the downtown area must provide appropriate onsite parking.** This will greatly reduce impact on parking on nearby city streets, especially overnight parking. The city has long voiced a commitment to affordable housing. Perhaps, counterintuitively, these new ordinances and/or agreements could be utilized to help achieve that affordable housing goal. Negotiating with the developer to allow less parking than stipulated in our housing regulations already triggers the state-mandated Density Bonus. By further decreasing the amount of onsite parking will allow the developer, with city encouragement, to build more affordable units aimed at one-or no-car residences, while simultaneously managing nearby parking congestion.
4. **Lastly, to successfully manage parking, alternate forms of transportation to and from our downtown are needed and the city should encourage their expansion.** As a resident of the far southeast corner of incorporated Petaluma, I was a bit dismayed that our little corner of town isn't currently being served by *LumaGo*. Increasing *LumaGo*'s range coupled with the construction of well-planned bike paths and pedestrian walkways throughout Petaluma has benefits beyond parking congestion relief.

With our current automobile-dominated planning scheme comes many well documented negative effects on our local public health. With its Downtown Area Parking Management Plan, Petaluma can incorporate an innovative and necessary set of proper planning strategies that will help offset these negative consequences for the people of Petaluma and our visitors. The best downtowns are those that understand that people not automobiles are the primary unit of analysis for planners to focus upon in creating vibrant, healthy, and enriching streetscapes.

Sincerely,

Keith Schildt, PhD



Dear Petaluma City Council,

As a Petaluma city resident, I was pleased to hear about the data collection efforts for the downtown area Parking Management Plan. Parking Management, while perhaps not the most glamorous topic, is an important process and I welcome this opportunity to provide perspective and feedback. In the midst of an epidemic of loneliness and isolation, climate crisis, and debt-ridden communities across the US with crumbling infrastructure, I think it is important that any Parking Management Plan takes into account the cost of car-centric development. Car-centric places, with copious parking, are essentially non-places - too sprawling to traverse outside a vehicle, too hazardous and unpleasant to congregate in, not to mention environmentally damaging and economically unsound. Therefore the goal of the plan should be to decrease parking by making evident the true cost of parking, through policies such as market priced parking, as well as by making alternative forms of transportation (e.g., walking, cycling, transit) more visible and more enticing. Once implemented, we will have a stronger, safer, more community oriented city.

To begin with, I would like to make the case that parking is a generally inefficient land use. First of all, parking is expensive to build and maintain, with surface parking spaces costing about \$5,000 to 10,000 to construct (including the value of the land they occupy) and structured parking costing between \$25,000 and \$50,000 per space.<sup>1</sup> This is not an insignificant expense, and the requirement to provide parking makes small businesses less competitive, as larger chains can more easily absorb the cost.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the cost of any item purchased at a store is going to reflect a portion of the cost of that store's parking - regardless of whether the person making that purchase arrived by car. Any land that goes towards parking is land that could have gone to other purposes, such as housing, transit, parks, and public space.<sup>3</sup> With less real estate available, the cost for these other projects increases. For instance, it has been estimated that for residential projects, the addition of one parking space per unit increases the cost of affordable housing development by 125%.<sup>4</sup> With the current cost-of-housing crisis, a move away from providing free and plentiful parking could be an essential step in the right direction.

Some may argue that although the cost of providing parking is steep, it is unfortunately unavoidably necessary. They might say we must increase parking to ensure customers can reach the stores they need to, so businesses can operate smoothly, and to ease traffic congestion. However, this is not the case. Increased parking simply increases urban sprawl, making active travel (e.g., walking, cycling, wheelchair use) less feasible, which in turn necessitates more driving, which in turn necessitates more parking.<sup>5</sup> This vicious cycle additionally increases traffic congestion, as there are more cars on the road and more drivers cruising for parking spots. Studies in 15 different cities found that between 8 and 74 percent of

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<sup>1</sup> Cortright, Joe. "The Price of Parking." City Observatory, 18 Oct. 2016, [cityobservatory.org/the-price-of-parking/](http://cityobservatory.org/the-price-of-parking/).

<sup>2</sup> Sisson, Patrick. "Cities' Parking Problem Won't Be Solved with More Parking." CityMonitor, 3 Aug. 2023, [www.citymonitor.ai/analysis/cities-have-a-parking-problem-more-parking-is-not-the-solution/](http://www.citymonitor.ai/analysis/cities-have-a-parking-problem-more-parking-is-not-the-solution/).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

traffic was cruising for parking, with the average time to find curbside space ranging from 3.5 to 14 minutes.<sup>6</sup> On average, cruising made up 34 percent of traffic, with the average time it took to find a space being 8 minutes.<sup>7</sup> While these results are somewhat biased given researchers' tendency to study cruising only where they expect to find it, they are nevertheless instructive.<sup>8</sup> Keeping our cities compact so more people can reach destinations without a car should be the goal, particularly as studies have found that people who biked and walked to their destinations tended to visit stores more and spend more than drivers.<sup>9</sup>

Given these facts, I propose that our city consider taking the following actions. First, we should introduce market based pricing for parking and use that revenue to strengthen our downtown. San Francisco's trial with dynamic pricing for parking spaces resulted in an increase in available parking, a decrease in the time spent searching for a spot, and speedier transit routes.<sup>10</sup> Second, we should eliminate parking minimums and perhaps even introduce some parking maximums. When Minneapolis slashed parking minimums for housing in 2015, they found that developers responded by dropping rent costs for new apartments by \$200 per unit.<sup>11</sup> Third, we should start removing some on-street parking. Studies have shown an increase in vehicle ownership of 18% when parking is plentiful and available, even when transit is accessible.<sup>12</sup> We should not be incentivizing additional car ownership in the midst of the climate crisis and those spaces are valuable land which could certainly be put to better use. For instance, when the CafeTO program in Toronto created 1,213 expanded patio spaces for restaurants, most of which came from repurposing on-street parking spaces, they found that the number of customers at local businesses increased and the average customer spending went from \$186 to \$245 per month. Most businesses interviewed after the program ended, roughly 75%, wanted to continue to see curbside lanes used for expanded patios in warmer months, with only 7% wanting full-time parking back. Lastly, we should unbundle parking for all new residential projects. When the price of a parking spot is automatically included in the price of housing (bundled), rather than paid separately (unbundled), it leads to higher vehicle ownership rates.<sup>13</sup> People who do not need a parking spot should not have to pay for something they aren't going to use, and we shouldn't be encouraging those who don't really need a car to get one.

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<sup>6</sup> Hampshire, Robert Cornelius, and Donald Shoup. "What Share of Traffic is Cruising for Parking?" *Journal of Transport Economics and Policy*, vol. 52, no. 3, July 2018, pp. 189–190, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325247222\\_What\\_Share\\_of\\_Traffic\\_is\\_Cruising\\_for\\_Parking](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325247222_What_Share_of_Traffic_is_Cruising_for_Parking).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Elliott, Matt. "Matt Elliott: Even Businesses Are OK with Losing on-Street Parking. so Why Would Toronto Undo Curbside Patios?" *Toronto Star*, 31 July 2024, [www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/even-businesses-are-ok-with-losing-on-street-parking-so-why-would-toronto-undo-curbside/article\\_872e5492-ae84-5f01-b18e-87bc20d1b519.html](http://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/even-businesses-are-ok-with-losing-on-street-parking-so-why-would-toronto-undo-curbside/article_872e5492-ae84-5f01-b18e-87bc20d1b519.html).

<sup>10</sup> Sisson, Patrick. "Cities' Parking Problem Won't Be Solved with More Parking." *CityMonitor*, 3 Aug. 2023, [www.citymonitor.ai/analysis/cities-have-a-parking-problem-more-parking-is-not-the-solution/](http://www.citymonitor.ai/analysis/cities-have-a-parking-problem-more-parking-is-not-the-solution/).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Polovin, Marta. "Paying Attention to Residential Parking: Why Cities Should Care." *Berkeley Public Policy Journal - A Graduate Student Publication from the Goldman School of Public Policy at the University of California, Berkeley*, 20 Dec. 2019, [bppj.studentorg.berkeley.edu/2019/12/20/paying-attention-to-residential-parking-why-cities-should-care/](http://bppj.studentorg.berkeley.edu/2019/12/20/paying-attention-to-residential-parking-why-cities-should-care/).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

Adjusting to these changes may be uncomfortable for some, so I additionally propose that the Parking Management Plan include provisions to help educate Petalumans on other transportation opportunities available to them and to make those opportunities more enticing. For instance, we could increase the frequency of events like Ciclovía, where certain streets are closed off to car traffic, from once a year to once a month to provide Petalumans a vision of what their city could look like if we embrace this more person-oriented city design. We could also introduce new signage to highlight for folks the walkability/cyclability/wheelchair roll-ability of Petaluma. During the Walk Raleigh campaign initiated in 2012, signs were put up to let folks know the travel times and walking routes from one point of interest to another (e.g., “It’s a 15 minute walk to...”).<sup>14</sup> Even though 41 percent of all trips made in the US are a mile or less, less than 10 percent of all trips are made by walking or biking,<sup>15</sup> so increasing the visibility of those alternative routes could go a long way to changing those numbers. And of course we could always do more to improve public transit, for instance by creating dedicated bus lanes so public transit is actually faster than taking a car. When in 2023, the city of Los Angeles converted 30 miles of existing lanes to only allow bus traffic during peak travel times, they found a decrease in transit times by as much as 30% on busy corridors.

I’m afraid I have probably already gone on too long, and I haven’t even addressed the negative environmental impacts of car- and parking-centric development, such as heat islands, increased flooding, and pollution<sup>16</sup>, or the negative impact to mental and physical health from this sedentary and isolating form of transportation.<sup>17</sup> However I hope I have given you some food for thought. The City of Petaluma needs to look towards the future when drafting its Parking Management Plan, and that future should be one with less parking, less cars, but more community. A plan that highlights the true cost of parking, while simultaneously increasing the visibility and desirability of alternative modes of transportation, should help us to reach that future. And that is a future that I look forward to living in.

Sincerely,  
Leslie Fruchey

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<sup>14</sup> Lydon, Mike, and Anthony Garcia. *Tactical Urbanism: Short-Term Action for Long-Term Change*. Island Press, 2015, pgs 109-118.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Mickel, Gabriella. “Reimagining Parking: Unlikely Spaces for Climate Resilience.” *Yale Environment Review*, 2 Jan. 2024, [environment-review.yale.edu/reimagining-parking-unlikely-spaces-climate-resilience](https://environment-review.yale.edu/reimagining-parking-unlikely-spaces-climate-resilience).

<sup>17</sup> Ding D, Gebel K, Phongsavan P, Bauman AE, Merom D. “Driving: a road to unhealthy lifestyles and poor health outcomes.” *PLoS One*. 2014 Jun 9;9(6):e94602. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0094602. PMID: 24911017; PMCID: PMC4049576

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4049576/#:~:text=Findings%20suggested%20that%20longer%20driving,worse%20physical%20and%20mental%20health>.

**From:** [Nathan Spindel](#)  
**To:** [-- City Council](#); [-- City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment on City Council Meeting Item 7 - Recommendation to Receive an Update on Data Collection Efforts for the Downtown Area Parking Management Plan (Under Development) and Provide Feedback on Potential Parking and Curb Management Strategies an...  
**Date:** Saturday, January 25, 2025 1:16:00 PM

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Dear Petaluma City Council,

I am writing to express my support for exploring paid parking solutions in downtown Petaluma, as discussed in the Downtown Parking Workshop on January 27, 2025. As a community member invested in our downtown's vitality and safety, I believe a paid parking program could create multiple benefits for our city, its residents, and tourists.

The City's initial study reveals that Petaluma's downtown parking congestion primarily stems not from a lack of spaces, but from inefficient use of existing parking options. Paid parking is a proven tool for optimizing parking turnover, ensuring spaces are available **when and where** they are needed most. This increased availability would actually bring more customers to our downtown's businesses, as visitors will no longer circle blocks searching for parking (or leave frustrated).

One potential approach is to charge for on-street parking spaces while keeping the off-street parking spaces in the garages free (or discounted). The City's study points out that these garages are often underutilized — so a policy that encourages their use would result in more on-street parking availability for downtown visitors.

The projected \$9M in paid parking revenue represents a tremendous opportunity to reinvest in downtown's accessibility, vibrancy, and future. These funds could expand transit options via additional buses and expanded LumaGo service, making downtown more accessible to our seniors, youth, and those who can't/don't drive, walk, or roll. This revenue could fund new bathrooms, lighting, public art, parks, and other safety projects in downtown. These funds could even potentially support the Historic Trestle Restoration project, which is much desired by the community but lacks funding. And over time, if the City ever decided to build more parking downtown, this revenue stream could facilitate that (whereas the BID funding is insufficient for that type of investment).

Paid parking could be implemented equitably. Parking revenue could fund programs like free parking passes for downtown employees and low-income residents, ensuring the system works for everyone. This approach creates a sustainable funding source for transportation improvements while making our downtown more accessible and business-friendly.

I encourage the Council and Staff to move forward exploring paid parking in more detail, as a smart investment in a more vibrant, accessible, and sustainable downtown Petaluma.

Thank you for listening,  
Nathan Spindel

Good evening, City Council members and fellow residents,

My name is Nickola Frye, and I'm a proud resident of Petaluma and an engineer by profession. Tonight, I want to address the pressing issue of parking in our downtown area—a challenge that affects businesses, residents, and visitors alike.

Our downtown parking situation isn't just inconvenient—it's a symptom of a system in need of reform. As a systems analyst, I know that solving problems isn't about patchwork solutions but about creating systems that are efficient, equitable, and forward-thinking.

We need a comprehensive approach to parking reform that balances accessibility, sustainability, and economic vitality. This means rethinking our reliance on cars and prioritizing investments in alternatives. Improved public transit is essential, offering reliable options that reduce the demand for downtown parking. We must also expand safe bicycling infrastructure to make biking a viable and attractive option for more people.

At the same time, we cannot forget about accessibility. Our seniors, residents with disabilities, and those with mobility challenges rely on ADA-compliant parking to participate in downtown life. These spaces must remain a priority and be thoughtfully integrated into any reform plan.

Smart parking management, like variable pricing and better signage, could ensure that spaces are used efficiently. And let's explore partnerships to create shared parking solutions, especially with underutilized private lots.

These changes won't be easy, but they're necessary to make downtown Petaluma a vibrant, accessible, and sustainable place for everyone. By coupling parking reform with investments in transit, biking, and ADA access, we can create a downtown that works for today and the future.

Thank you.

Date: January 24, 2025

To: Mayor McDonnell, Vice Mayor Nau, and City Councilmembers

From: Pete Gang

Re: **Downtown Parking and Curb Management Strategies**

Dear Mayor, Vice-Mayor, and members of the Petaluma City Council,

Like most people in our fair city, when I want to go downtown, I reach for my car keys and head out the door. But the following thoughts often make me reconsider my choice to get in my car and drive downtown:

- Though we would all prefer to put it out of mind, are in fact in a climate crisis. Here in Petaluma, transportation represents two-thirds of our citywide planet-heating emissions. If I can avoid contributing to the crisis, I'm willing to give it a shot. As they say, "When you're in a hole, stop digging."
- As someone who has lived a few years past the age of 65, I know that daily exercise is a magic elixir for the body and the mind. A brisk walk or a bike ride keeps me away from the medical community and away from anti-depressants. A car ride doesn't have the same benefits.
- While walking or riding a bike into town there are waves and smiles. Little pleasantries are exchanged – sometimes actual conversations! I am reminded that I live in a community of great people. Again, a car ride doesn't have the same benefits.

All of which makes me think that – before we think about making it easier to park in our downtown -- maybe we should think first about ways to make it easier and safer for people of all ages and abilities to get downtown without having to get in a car. If we could pull that off, there would be fewer cars downtown. Which would make more parking available for the people who don't have the option of walking or rolling (and for those who just don't want to walk and roll).

Everybody wins.

Oh and big bonus: when we turn surface parking lots into buildings, we make our streetscapes livelier while also increasing the tax base on which our city's financial health depends.

Respectfully,

Pete Gang

DRAFT

Dear Mayor, City Council and City Staff,

I appreciate the work to study the parking context in our downtown core. The findings show we have several opportunities to increase access for all ages and abilities downtown, strengthening local small business revenue. The parking study shows increased traffic congestion and pollution from drivers circling the block looking for parking. It also indicates that the dominant use of the curb space is for parking. These two facts alone make it clear that we have too much traffic and that adding more parking is not the solution.

Research shows that **as cities increase access for people of all ages and abilities, revenues go up—for local small businesses** and for the city.

- Research from Davis, CA, comparing consumers who traveled downtown by bicycle vs car found that consumers on bicycles spent more money and made more frequent trips downtown.  
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.3141/2468-06>
- Research from Lancaster, CA shows that their significant investment in active transportation downtown resulted in double the pedestrian activity and double the revenue from the downtown area.  
<https://emoryeconomicsreview.org/articles/2023/1/17/how-making-cities-more-pedestrian-friendly-can-revitalize-local-economies>

**Not everyone is so privileged to be able to drive.** A large percentage of youth & seniors do not drive. Many neighbors with disabilities rely on alternative forms of transportation. We need to serve all ages and abilities.

**Nobody likes traffic.** The constant search for parking spaces in our downtown core contributes to traffic congestion, idling vehicles, and increased air pollution, negatively impacting the environment and public health. It also results in fewer customers for our local businesses and more aggravation for people attempting to visit shops, restaurants and other local businesses.

I urge the city council to consider the following reforms:

1. **Prioritize safety for all ages and abilities:** Walking, rolling, and driving safety should be improved. Implement bike parking, wider sidewalks, and improved pedestrian crossings to enhance safety and encourage alternative transportation.
2. **Optimize on-street parking:** Paid on-street parking can reduce excessive car circling while reserving some of this prime on-street parking for free for people with disabilities and drop-off/pick-up activities. The funds from paid parking can also be reinvested in making our downtown accessible to all ages and abilities, increasing customers and driving up revenues.
3. **Invest in alternative transportation options:** Expand and improve public transportation services. Consider adding regular shuttle service to downtown from various east and west side locations. Make space for drop-offs and pick-ups to encourage the use of ride-sharing and other car-sharing services.
4. **Enhance alternative parking solutions:** Incentivize off-street parking options, including signage showing parking availability and safety improvements in off-street parking facilities—notably the Keller Street garage. Improve the accessibility of garages for people of all ages and abilities.

By implementing these reforms, we can create a more accessible, sustainable, and vibrant downtown that welcomes all community members.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Eric Leland

**From:** Bruce H [REDACTED]  
**To:** -- City Clerk  
**Subject:** Comments for January 27 Downtown Parking Workshop  
**Date:** Monday, January 27, 2025 11:37:02 AM

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---Warning: Use caution before clicking any attachments. THIS EMAIL IS FROM OUTSIDE OUR EMAIL SYSTEM.---

Dear City Council:

I have four points and a teaser:

1.

**“Free parking” is free only in Monopoly.** In Petaluma, it just pushes the cost onto everyone. Paid parking means being accountable for your own actions.

2.

**We need smart paid parking.** Not the parking meters Paul Newman decapitated in Cool Hand Luke. Metering that responds to supply and demand, gives drivers and merchants a better experience, and makes for a better downtown.

3.

**We need better alternatives to driving in single occupant cars.** Let’s finish the Active Transportation Plan *this spring*, and get on with building a city-wide network of safe, healthy, and affordable options for drivers, walkers, and rollers of all ages and abilities.

4.

**Executive Orders won’t wipe away our climate crisis.** Gasoline cars and trucks remain Petaluma’s biggest sources of climate pollution. They can’t have a free ride. Ask Los Angeles or Asheville what it’s like to live in a climate-crazy world.

Teaser: Stay tuned to hear more about **“Tree Parking”**.

Respectfully,  
Bruce

Bruce Hagen

[REDACTED]  
Petaluma [REDACTED]



“When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, “Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.” - Fred Rogers.

**From:** [David Garti](#)  
**To:** [-- City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Parking Workshop  
**Date:** Monday, January 27, 2025 11:57:34 AM

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Some people who received this message don't often get email from [REDACTED]. [Learn why this is important](#)

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To Whom it May Concern:

Thank you for studying options for parking in downtown Petaluma. I personally hope we start charging for parking to encourage different modes of transportation like transit and walking.

Much appreciated!

David Garti

**From:** [Eris Weaver](#)  
**To:** -- City Clerk  
**Subject:** Public Comment: City Council Agenda Item #7  
**Date:** Monday, January 27, 2025 12:32:12 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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---Warning: Use caution before clicking any attachments. THIS EMAIL IS FROM OUTSIDE OUR EMAIL SYSTEM.---

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers:

We've read the staff report for tonight's workshop on Downtown Parking and have some comments.

First, you may be wondering what parking has to do with bicycling...LOTS! Our streets have many different competing uses, and for the past fifty years private automobiles have received the lion's share of funding and attention. Free parking – or publicly subsidized storage of private property, as I like to call it – has been seen as a Holy Grail of urban planning. As we move toward a more climate-friendly paradigm, the City has been prioritizing other modes of transportation such as cycling, walking, and transit. Whenever a new bicycle facility is proposed, the potential effect on parking is one of the first arguments against it.

The Downtown Parking report lists five categories of improvement, four of which we support and one which we urge you to reject:

- *Improve Transportation Options:* YES to more safe bikeways, more bus routes with shorter headways! Make it easier, safer, and more fun for people to get around in another way. If “congestion” is defined as “I can't drive as fast as I want or park where I want because there are too many other cars,” the solution is FEWER CARS.
- *Create More Frequent Turnover and Promote Long-Term Parking Options:* These two are a pair; if employees must drive, having to move their car every two hours is a challenge – separate long-term and short-term parking benefits both employees and shoppers.
- *Improve Loading Access and Safety:* Creating clearly marked loading zones should hopefully cut down on use of bike lanes for loading.
- *Expand Parking Supply:* NO. This is a no-brainer. Creating parking is expensive; the costs are born by the entire city while used by just a segment.

Additionally, we are in favor of paid parking. The City of Santa Rosa has had success with their graduated parking fees – higher rates closest to the center, with lower rates the farther away. Often when people claim there “isn't enough parking,” it's that there isn't any exactly where they want to be; walking a couple blocks and paying a lower rate becomes a more attractive option.

Thank you for your consideration.

*Eris Weaver*



Eris Weaver, Executive Director  
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**From:** [krebillot@](mailto:krebillot@)  
**To:** -- City Clerk  
**Subject:** Public comment for tonight's council workshop on parking management  
**Date:** Monday, January 27, 2025 11:34:46 AM

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Dear Council members and City Staff,

Thank you for scheduling this workshop on Downtown Parking Management. I read the staff report and am looking forward to a robust discussion on the topic. I will be watching from home.

My overall reaction to the report is based on the imperative (now more critical than ever) to address climate change and on an ongoing desire to live in a community where our downtown area is more friendly to people than it is to cars. Dealing with issues raised in the report will entail an ongoing effort for many years. In that context I urge you to couch this "problem" in terms of cars, not parking.

How might we begin addressing this issue? Some possibilities:

Create no new parking downtown. Upgrade and manage our current inventory better. Repair and upgrade the Keller Street garage - use priced parking to pay for it as well as other upgrades to revive our downtown area. Explore "out of the box" solutions to accommodate those who work downtown. Are there empty lots that can be used for employee "overflow"? Better use curb space to enable access for all abilities. Create designated accessible parking spaces, strengthen access to transit. Put pedestrians, cyclists, and other "rollers" (wheelchairs, scooters, strollers) at the center of the management plan.

Explore using transit as an alternative to getting folks downtown. I live on the East side of Petaluma and would urge a pilot of designated weekend shuttles from various pick-up locations (Leghorn, the Community Center, Casa Grande, etc.). If it's convenient and reliable people would use it. Consider establishing similar locations at the various gateways to town to serve visitors. Providing clear wayfinding/educational efforts would be a key part of the effort. Longer term: Consider eliminating the current parking spaces across from Center Park (Mystic Theater and McNear's) and turn it into an active public space. What a gift that would be to the larger community!

In addition to addressing climate change I think these changes would also help re-invigorate and revitalize downtown, making it a more welcoming and exciting space for all, which would be good for business.

I acknowledge that change is difficult. Downtown employees may be inconvenienced. Business owners would need to hang tight during transitions (I honestly think good management and the use of transit would make it easier for people to come downtown, which would be a boon for business.) Making these changes would be disruptive and challenge long-held habits, especially for long-time residents who live near the downtown area. But I urge you to consider future generations. Given how much we've screwed things up in regard to our climate (Are any of us faultless in this regard? I don't think so.), adjusting to change seems like the least we could do for those coming after us. Let's do it for our grandkids and the other youngsters who are our future.

Thanks for your consideration.

Kris Rebillot

[REDACTED]  
Petaluma, CA [REDACTED]

**From:** [Maureen Go](#)  
**To:** [-- City Council](#); [-- City Clerk](#); [D Street Project](#)  
**Subject:** City Council Meeting 1/27/2025 - Agenda Item #7 Workshop Downtown Area Parking Management Plan Comment  
**Date:** Monday, January 27, 2025 1:47:22 PM

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January 27, 2025

Petaluma City Council,

I would like to begin by commending the City for organizing a "workshop" aimed at gathering feedback without proceeding to a council vote on the same day. In previous instances, it has been quite frustrating to have the City invite the public to participate in discussions or workshops, only to discover that the Council had already made decisions on how they would vote that evening. This approach marks a positive step towards genuine community engagement.

In this context, we support efforts to continue promoting our historic downtown businesses. While we believe that some measures for instance adding parking for seniors and establishing multi-use drop-off zones for business deliveries, ride-sharing services, and public transportation is appropriate, as identified in the City's staff report we must address the loss of curbside parking that will occur.

Regarding the city's recommendation to explore alternative parking solutions, it is noteworthy that 70% of visitors find parking to be moderately to very difficult in locating. Therefore, overlooking the potential benefits of reinstating all parking on D Street as one of the downtown off-site parking solutions appears to be a significant oversight.

Reinstating handicap parking at the church and recognizing D Street's historical role as overflow parking for downtown (as evidenced by portions of the street being within the direct parking zone) are crucial considerations. Reinstating parking on D Street will also provide elderly residents and visitors with direct access to their homes and destinations. Prioritizing senior parking is essential not only for the business district, but also for the downtown residential needs. This action would eliminate the disproportionate and inequitable encroachment fees imposed due to the loss of parking on only one side of the street, affecting some residents' ability to access their homes for maintenance and repairs without paying unfair additional costs to the City. It would restore safe access for residents, visitors, and contractors, while ensuring other streets can support safe passage for cyclists.

Furthermore, we have concerns regarding the new Adobe Road Tasting Room, which will host business events and weddings with a potential overall capacity exceeding 300 guests. The garage directly across the street from it will not be able to accommodate the current parking and this large business parking requirement. This development will directly impact D Street and should be factored into the overall consideration.

Along those same lines, it appears the analysis was only for the current parking situation and did not include moderate growth, new businesses that have permit approval or opening up shortly (Adobe Road Tasting Room).

Before the City considers whether to install costly meters and other parking measures such as additional busing, we would encourage the Council to request a cost benefit analysis from the City on each potential solution as well as a business impact report for current businesses and future businesses in existing locations. Additional analysis of the customer demographic for downtown. How many are locals, day visitors or overnight guests and the type of transportation they used to get here or even have the ability to from their departure location? This is important to have a holistic approach and see what type of parking measures are most needed and that they actually solve a problem.

We formally request that the City include the reinstatement of parking on D Street as one of the solutions for overflow parking. The bonus of this reinstatement is that it would not incur additional costs for the City (repainting is already in the budget) but will open back up a valuable parking resource that contributes to the economic viability of our downtown and returns safe access to residents' homes on a designated truck route.

Sincerely,

Maureen and Mike Gottschall

**From:** [Tom Bornheimer](#)  
**To:** [-- City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Downtown Parking Comments  
**Date:** Monday, January 27, 2025 3:00:50 PM

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Hi Petaluma City Council and Staff,

I am very surprised that Petaluma is spending \$100k on a parking management plan. Yes, it is a grant but still, I think the assessment and plan could be done for much less. I performed a space use study of all Lockheed Martin (LM) buildings in Sunnyvale and Palo Alto for significantly less than \$100k and eventually saved LM \$10M by consolidating space.

Based on the assessment information so far, Petaluma should focus on increasing the use of the parking garages to offload some volume from Kentucky Street and the Boulevard. One suggestion is to provide an incentive to park in the structures such as a free coffee or pastry at one or more of the shops (Stellina, Della, Avid, etc.).

Petaluma should not charge for street parking as this may only push some customers away or they may just park in the nearby neighborhood streets. Also, employees working downtown should be given free parking in the garages which would free up street parking and avoid the need to move cars multiple times during their work time.

Petaluma should work to sign agreements with private parking areas for high use times such as weekends. Bank parking lots are a good example that could be used more if Petaluma negotiates with the businesses.

Another sore point should be addressed. Get the owner of the building across Keller Street from Volpi's to allow parking in the evening. Too many cars are being towed and this just kills business and upsets customers who are spending at downtown restaurants and businesses.

Also, parking enforcement is imperative to improve space turnover for street parking.

Thank you,

Tom Bornheimer