



Staff Report

TO: City Council
FROM: Christina Taylor, Deputy City Manager
DATE: September 5, 2023
SUBJECT: Public Hearing and Consideration of a Proposed Ordinance Temporarily Suspending Off-Street Parking Requirements for Existing Non-residential Structures in the Downtown District

Description A request by the Planning and Economic Development Departments to establish an ordinance temporarily suspending off-street parking requirements for existing, non-residential structures in the Downtown District as defined by the Downtown District's map boundaries. The proposed ordinance would be in effect for a period not to exceed eighteen (18) months.

Background and Analysis:

Over the past several years, staff has been making incremental progress on assessing the needs of downtown businesses. In 2018, the City adopted an Economic Development Strategic Plan. In 2020, the City received a grant for a Parking Management Master Plan. In 2021, the General Plan Update was adopted. In 2022, at the direction of City Council, the City's Economic Development Department began the process of developing the Downtown Beaumont Revitalization Plan (DBRP) and in 2023, City Council engaged in developing a Strategic Plan. Each of these have contributed to the evaluation of and adjustments to how City staff approaches various processes and programs.

One of the main programs staff is currently running through the Economic Development Department are the Downtown Incentives. These provide an array of financial and staff assistance to current and future businesses. As staff conducts site visits and reviews proposals, various issues have been identified as barriers to opening a business.

Programs are currently in place to assist with many of these issues such as pre-inspections and pre-application fee waivers, grease interceptor cost sharing and façade improvements. In addition to these, a program for helping with fire sprinkler installation and/or retrofit is being proposed this evening as part of tonight's agenda.

With programs in place to address the bulk of the structural issues, on-site parking requirements remain a barrier to many businesses. A majority of the lots and buildings in the Downtown District (Attachment B) were created and constructed decades ago. Current parking standards were adopted in 2007 and are applied City wide. These standards do not take into consideration the site constraints of downtown properties and are not conducive to facilitating revitalization in downtown.

The City Council has adopted a number of documents which contain goals or action items to implement throughout the City. The following are a few goals or actions related to Downtown:

Economic Development Strategic Plan (2018)

ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT

D. Incorporate real estate development / revitalization programs into entrepreneurial development programs, as appropriate to the extent that entrepreneurs' space-using options are currently constrained.

REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT AND REVITALIZATION/REDEVELOPMENT

A. Continually monitor coordination efforts between the General Plan and other research work and economic development objectives and actions. For example:

- Explicitly relate planned commercial/industrial areas to industry targets and the City's overall economic development approach.
- Show how areas designated for revitalization relate to economic development targets and programs.
- Show how the repurposing of certain structures/areas can support startup companies.

The intent of this ongoing monitoring effort would be to ensure that the City's various development-related policies remain in sync and, when appropriate, to make future policy adjustments to maximize the alignment of these closely related programs.

C. Create and market incentives for redevelopment / revitalization of older properties (potentially including non-financial incentives such as expedited entitlements and permit processing)

E. As appropriate, contact the owners of commercial properties that might benefit from revitalization efforts to assess interest and potential partnerships or other forms of public support to achieve revitalization / redevelopment goals.

PLACEMAKING

B. Identify and promote actions to encourage the placemaking potential of the Downtown area within the framework of the Downtown Specific Plan.

General Plan (2021)

Goal 5.1: A dynamic local economy that attracts diverse business and investment.

5.1.5 Maintain a regulatory environment that is business friendly, easy to navigate, flexible and encourages growth consistent with the General Plan.

5.1.7 Support a variety of revitalization and improvement programs focused on placemaking and beautification, such as façade improvements, public gathering places, public art, and community events. (Also see Land Use and Community Design Element).

Goal 5.4: A community that supports the growth and prosperity of local businesses.

5.4.3 Encourage investment and focus revitalization efforts in Downtown and along Beaumont Avenue and Second Street corridors to have the most positive impact on existing businesses and to capitalize on the potential of a walkable mixed-use commercial center in the community.

Goal 5.5: A community with vibrant shopping areas.

5.5.7 Create development regulations that facilitate adaptive reuse of older buildings.

Parking Management Master Plan (2021)

Short-Term Recommendations (1-2 years)

- 3) Lower parking requirements for the downtown area

The Parking Management Master Plan identified a parking surplus of 828 spaces on-street and off-street, in the Downtown Core Subarea which aligns with the Downtown District shown in Attachment B.

City Council Strategic Plan (2023)

Priority Level 3 Goals:

- Develop a pedestrian style downtown with shopping, restaurants, and parking (Target #3, Goal #2)
- Recruit and attract businesses, including an anchor tenant, downtown hotel, and medical providers (Target #3, Goal #4)
- Revisit the City's Municipal Codes and Zoning (Target #3, Goal #6)

Through the revitalization efforts and incentive program applications, staff has encountered instances where a property has no parking or very minimal parking on-site. This means in many cases a business cannot occupy a property or cannot expand their existing business to add space, due to the parking requirements. This is a particular issue in the heart of downtown.

As the DBRP nears completion, the Planning Department is beginning the process of updating the City's zoning code. As part of both of these processes, utilizing previous

and current data, downtown parking standards (among other things) will be assessed, and revisions recommended.

In the interim, to assist with continuing progress on meeting Council's goals and to facilitate continued interest in the downtown, staff is proposing temporary relief (not exceeding 18 months), from parking standards, specific to existing, non-residential structures in the Downtown District while the DBRP and Zoning Code Update are completed.

Planning Commission

At a public hearing held on August 23, 2023, this item was presented to the City's Planning Commission. There were no public comments on this item. Planning Commission concurred with staff and have forwarded a recommendation of approval to City Council.

Environmental Determination

In accordance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Section 15304(e), adoption of this ordinance is categorically exempt from CEQA, because it results in a minor, temporary alteration in the use of land which will have no permanent effect on the environment.

Fiscal Impact:

The cost to prepare this staff report and ordinance is approximately \$1,000.

Recommended Action:

Waive the first full reading and approve by title only "An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Beaumont Temporarily Suspending Parking Requirements for Existing, Non-residential Structures in the Downtown District for a Period not to Exceed Eighteen (18) Months."

Attachments:

- A. Ordinance
- B. Downtown Districts Map
- C. Proof of Publication