



# CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

## COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

**AGENDA DATE:** April 23, 2019

**TO:** Mayor and Councilmembers

**FROM:** Transportation Planning & Downtown Parking Division, Public Works Department

**SUBJECT:** Funk Zone Access And Parking Assessment Study

**RECOMMENDATION:** That Council:

- A. Receive the Funk Zone Access and Parking Assessment Study; and
- B. Direct staff to begin implementation of the proposed Action Plan.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The Funk Zone Access and Parking Assessment Study (Study) documents the results of a community-driven process to evaluate parking and access needs in the Funk Zone and recommends strategic actions to improve access and optimize the use of parking resources. The Study found that while the existing parking supply is sufficient, utilization is unbalanced. The most convenient parking is free, and often congested, while parking that is farther away requires payment. In addition to prioritizing parking needs, local stakeholders want to create a safe and inviting neighborhood that retains its funky character and encourages use of alternative transportation. The Study recommends action items designed to support the continued vitality of the Funk Zone by improving neighborhood access and optimizing use of parking resources.

### **DISCUSSION:**

The popularity of the Funk Zone has increased the demand for parking in this neighborhood. In addition to numerous comments at public meetings, City staff received two letters (one from Suzanne Elledge and one from the Funk Zone Owners' Association) expressing concern about Funk Zone parking and asking the City to explore strategies to maximize use of the available public parking supply.

In response to these requests, Public Works initiated a community-driven process to evaluate parking needs in the Funk Zone. This process culminated in the publication of the Funk Zone Access and Parking Assessment Study, which documented and analyzed the data and information gathered through the stakeholder outreach, parking occupancy survey, and intercept survey, and discussed conclusions and management objectives.

The draft Study was presented to the Downtown Parking Committee (DPC) on September 19, 2018. After incorporating revisions and comments, the DPC was presented with a revised draft on October 11, 2018 (see Attachment).

The parking and access needs and stakeholder priorities identified in the Study were used to develop a proposed action plan designed to achieve the stated management objectives.

## **Process and Results**

### ***Stakeholder Outreach***

On April 11, 2018, the City hosted a listening workshop with Funk Zone stakeholders, including business owners, employees, residents, and visitors. The purpose of this workshop was to assess the transportation-related needs, interests, and priorities of different stakeholder groups by gathering their responses to a series of questions. These questions were also posted in an online survey for those who were unable to attend the workshop. Responses were gathered over a period of approximately six weeks, and during this time, over 100 people gave over 450 individual interest-oriented comments.

Workshop participants and survey respondents identified the following priorities for Funk Zone parking and access:

- ***Parking resources for both customers and employees:*** Stakeholders believe the City should encourage the use of public lots and explore ways to optimize the use of street parking.
- ***A safe and inviting Funk Zone:*** Stakeholders requested additional lighting, wayfinding signage, pedestrian improvements, and roadway and sidewalk repairs.
- ***Expanded access to alternative transportation options:*** Pedestrian improvements, bicycle infrastructure, and shuttle service.
- ***“Funky” neighborhood character:*** Stakeholders encouraged the City to foster the organic, artsy character of the neighborhood and focus on locals and artists, not tourists.

### ***Parking Occupancy Survey***

Public Works conducted a parking occupancy survey of the area with the goal of understanding how the existing Funk Zone parking supply is used and how demand in the area does or does not meet the needs of visitors, employees, and businesses. Because an initial survey indicated that some areas of the Funk Zone had high parking occupancy rates and long vehicle stays, staff conducted a second, more in-depth vehicle occupancy survey, collecting license plate data and vehicle counts every hour between 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM on Thursday, May 10 through Saturday May 12, 2018.

Results of the survey indicate that there are enough public parking spaces in the Funk Zone to accommodate current demand – no more than 73 percent of spaces were

occupied at any point during the survey. However, parking utilization is unbalanced. Free on-street parking is over utilized and has longer parking durations with less turnover, while paid public parking lots are underutilized. The most convenient parking is free and often congested, while parking that is farther away requires payment.

### ***Intercept Survey***

In response to a request from the DPC, staff also conducted an intercept survey to better understand how people are using parking in the Funk Zone. Staff walked the Funk Zone on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, (July 19-21, 2018) between 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM, and stopped passersby to ask short questions about why they were visiting the Funk Zone, how they arrived, and where they parked.

Staff collected 334 intercept survey responses. Results of the survey indicated that Funk Zone customers find parking more challenging than employees and are more reliant on street parking. More than half of people who rely on street parking find it challenging or difficult. The survey also found that people don't like to pay for parking, but when they use paid public lots they are satisfied with their experience.

### **Conclusions and Management Objectives**

Results of the Parking Study confirm that the existing parking supply in the Funk Zone is sufficient, and that parking is readily available for users who are willing to park farther away from businesses and pay for parking. However, parking utilization is unbalanced, with parkers strongly favoring free, centrally located parking over paid parking located further away from the commercial center. It shows that customers, in particular, are more likely to rely on conveniently located street parking, and that people who rely on street parking often find it challenging. Finally, the Study found that stakeholders believe better use of the available public parking resources located on the outskirts of the Funk Zone should be encouraged, that infrastructure improvements are an important priority, and that maintaining the artsy, funky character of the neighborhood is critical to its continued success.

The Study's conclusions suggest that parking in the Funk Zone should be managed to achieve the following objectives:

- Balance utilization of parking resources.
- Increase the availability of on-street spaces in the center of the Funk Zone and increase turnover to provide customer parking.
- Increase use of alternative transportation.
- Ensure public parking lots are easily accessible.
- Improve infrastructure to increase pedestrian safety, encourage cycling, and help visitors navigate the Funk Zone and find parking.

## **Action Plan**

Based on the conclusions and management objectives identified through the Study, staff developed a slate of proposed action items designed to better address the Funk Zone's Stakeholders' interests by providing efficient and convenient neighborhood access, and enhancing the character and vitality of the Funk Zone.

On November 27, 2018, Public Works held a public Action Workshop to present this proposal to the community for their review and feedback. Participants were generally supportive of the objectives and action items, though some expressed concern about the specifics of the proposals. Taking these concerns into consideration, staff updated the Action Plan and presented a draft version to DPC on January 10, 2019, and returned with a revised draft for further discussion on March 14, 2019. The DPC expressed their support for the proposal and voted unanimously to forward the Action Plan to Council for approval.

The proposed action items are detailed in Appendix E of the attached Funk Zone Access and Parking Assessment Study, and summarized as follows:

- 1. Price parking on street.** Introduce priced parking on Helena Avenue, the 00 and 100 blocks of East Yanonali Street, and Anacapa Street north of the railroad tracks (approximately 94 parking spaces). These blocks offer some of the most convenient parking in the Funk Zone, and consequently have some of the highest parking occupancy rates and are often full for most of the day. The goal of pricing parking on these streets, is to increase the availability of these business-adjacent spaces and shift some parking demand to more under-utilized parking sources, such as the more outlying streets and lots. Additionally, converting some 90-minute spaces to paid parking will allow Funk Zone customers to extend their visits, while still encouraging turnover.

On-street spaces would be priced at \$2 per hour, with rates in effect from 11:00 AM to 10:00 PM daily (similar to the Garden Street and Helena Lots, with no free period). Customers would have the option of paying at a self-service pay station or by using a mobile app. The system would be "pay-by-plate", in which customers would enter their license plate into the pay station or mobile app, then select and pay for the time they plan to stay, with no need to return to their vehicle to display a receipt. Customers using the mobile app would have the option to extend their paid session remotely, without returning to the pay station. Downtown Parking staff will patrol the area to ensure compliance and payment of fees.

- 2. Remove illegal signage reserving public parking for private use.** In the Funk Zone, several businesses have posted signs that indicate that sections of the public right of way are not for public parking or are authorized parking only, tow-away zones. This signage essentially reserves the public right of way for private parking. Staff would initiate a process of enforcing SBMC 10.12.170, which prohibits such signs. Property owners would be offered the opportunity to have the pavement in

front of gated driveway entrances striped for no parking to prevent vehicles from blocking access.

3. **Extend nighttime parking hours.** Change existing “No Parking 12 AM – 6 AM” signs to “No Parking 2 AM – 6 AM” to provide additional parking for restaurant and hospitality businesses, whose customers and employees often stay later into the night. Approximately 68 of these signs are located throughout the Funk Zone.
4. **Add employee parking – permits.** Create new resources for Funk Zone employee parking by offering up to eight additional monthly parking permits for sale in the Helena Lot and up to 20 additional monthly parking permits for sale in the Depot Lot. These lots have the capacity to accommodate additional permit holders without displacing visitors and customers.
5. **Add employee parking – new spaces.** Create approximately 60 new parking spaces on Garden Street between East Yanonali Street and the railroad tracks by re-striping this portion of the roadway during regular pavement surface maintenance. These additional spaces would be created concurrently with the proposed changes to the Funk Zone’s on-street parking supply.
6. **Update zone of benefit calculations.** Re-assess the parking zones of benefit in the Funk Zone and update the Zoning Ordinance to enable businesses in the Funk Zone to use the zone of benefit calculation to reduce their on-site parking requirement.
7. **Add a Downtown Shuttle stop.** Improve access to the Funk Zone by adding a new Downtown Shuttle stop at the western corner of Anacapa and East Yanonali Streets.
8. **Shared mobility zones.** Should the City implement shared mobility services, such as bike share, designate drop-off and pick-up zones for these devices to provide enhanced alternative transportation options while limiting sidewalk clutter and impacts to the right of way.
9. **Designate ride share pick-up and drop-off zones.** Ride share services, such as Uber and Lyft, are very popular among Funk Zone patrons. However, the erratic behavior of ride share drivers looking for their customers can cause traffic hazards. Ride share drivers often have difficulty finding curbside spaces to pull over to pick up or drop off passengers, causing vehicles to stop in the traffic lane to load and unload. Staff would work with area businesses to designate drop-off and pick-up zones for ride share services to ensure ride share vehicles have safe places to load and unload passengers.
10. **Invest in the Funk Zone.** Funk Zone stakeholders identified a number of infrastructure needs in the neighborhood, including street lighting and path lighting, wayfinding signage, and pedestrian improvements such as crosswalks and sidewalk repairs. The proposed on-street paid parking would generate an estimated \$245,585

in net revenues annually. Fifty percent of these revenues (approximately \$122,793 annually) could be used to fund priority projects in the Funk Zone.

**BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:**

Staff estimates that, in total, the proposed activities would be revenue-positive. One-time and operating costs would be funded by the Downtown Parking budget and are estimated as follows:

| Action Item                    | Est. One-time Cost | Est. Annual Operating Cost | Est. Annual Revenue |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Price parking on street        | \$42,286           | \$77,058                   | \$322,608           |
| Extend nighttime parking hours | \$867              |                            |                     |
| Add employee parking permits   |                    |                            | \$46,560            |
| Add a Downtown Shuttle stop    | \$2,345            |                            |                     |
| Shared mobility Zones          | \$10,500           |                            |                     |
| Ride share zones               | \$1,110            |                            |                     |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                   | <b>\$57,108</b>    | <b>\$77,058</b>            | <b>\$369,168</b>    |

Staff will return to Council as needed for appropriations.

**Environmental Review and Permitting**

The Funk Zone is located within the Coastal Zone, and the Action Plan implementing projects would be subject to coastal review and design review approval.

Based on a preliminary Environmental Review conducted by Planning Division staff, a Council action to approve the Funk Zone Action Plan has been determined to be Categorically Exempt from further environmental review under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) provisions as follows:

- For Action Plan except Item 6: State CEQA Guidelines §15301, Categorical Exemption Class 1 – Existing Facilities. This exemption class includes the operation, repair, and minor alteration of existing public structures, equipment, or features involving negligible or no expansion of use, including streets, sidewalks, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities and other alterations such as the addition of bicycle facilities, including bicycle parking, bicycle-sharing facilities and bicycle lanes, transit improvements such as bus lanes, pedestrian crossings, street trees, and other similar alterations that do not create additional automobile lanes. The City list of activities determined to qualify as exempt in this category includes installation of traffic safety devices. None of the Exceptions to use of this Exemption per CEQA Guidelines §15300.2 apply.

- For Action Plan Item 6 – Update Zone of Benefit: CEQA Guidelines §15262, Statutory Exemption – Planning Study. The identified activity is to study parking zones of benefit in the Funk Zone toward reducing on-site parking requirements, but no specific change is identified at this time. A proposed change subsequently identified would require a Zoning Ordinance amendment approved by City Council and Coastal Commission, with CEQA environmental review conducted at that time.

**ATTACHMENT:** Funk Zone Access and Parking Assessment Study

**PREPARED BY:** Rob Dayton, Transportation Planning & Parking Manager/VG/sc/mj

**SUBMITTED BY:** Rebecca J. Bjork, Public Works Director

**APPROVED BY:** City Administrator's Office