

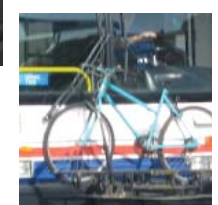
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UPTOWN PARTNERSHIP

Reporter

Parking | Traffic | Pedestrians



PARKING:

GETTING WHAT YOU PAY FOR

CALIFORNIA CITIES EXPERIMENT WITH VARIABLE PARKING RATES AND TIMES

When the Little Old Lady from Pasadena visits downtown these days, she has plenty of parking options – high tech parking meters that take credit cards, widely accessible valet service, and attractive, off-street parking structures housing retail shops and amenities.

Along with other California cities, like Pacific Grove and Redwood City, the City of Pasadena employs a range of innovative, market-based solutions to alleviate the parking crunch. The story behind parking management in these cities offers valuable insights for the City of San Diego as it copes with parking shortages.

THE CHALLENGE

According to transportation planners, several factors conspire to create parking shortages. Most important among them is a supply of free or inexpensive on-street parking that satisfies

demand most of the time, but fails to provide adequate parking during times of peak demand.

For example, imagine a busy weekend night in Downtown San Diego. If, at a given time during the evening, the number of drivers looking for parking exceeds the number of spaces, a driver searches until he or she finds a space. Multiply the number of drivers, and the result is traffic.

The average time cruising for parking in urban areas ranges from 3.3 minutes to 13.9 minutes per driver, according to academic surveys. In business districts cruising makes up 30% of traffic congestion, writes Donald Shoup, Professor of Urban Planning at UCLA.

When parking shortages reach critical levels, drivers lose their tempers and businesses lose their customers. Add the costs of fuel and vehicle emissions, and the economic costs of parking can

Prime areas were always chronically congested ... We were so confident in the ability of prices to effectively distribute people that we eliminated time limits. Dan Zack, Redwood City

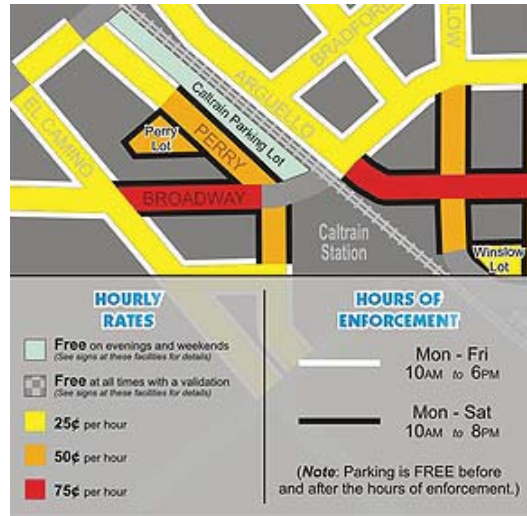
PARKING: GETTING WHAT YOU PAY FOR (CONT.)

be high, although not always obvious.

MANAGING A PUBLIC RESOURCE

To control on-street parking, Pasadena and Redwood City have adopted a public resource management model. On-street parking spaces are, after all, public property. The underlying logic of the model is to manage parking as other types of common property are managed, such as parks and open space.

The economic idea behind the model is to set parking rates according to supply and demand. When parking resources are scarce, managers increase the price in order to encourage individuals to park only as long as they need, which increases parking availability for more



Distribution of parking costs in Redwood City, CA. To learn more about Redwood City's parking policies please visit www.redwoodcity.org/cds/redevelopment/downtown/parking.html.

users. When parking resources are plentiful, managers lower the price.

Public resource management is based on a powerful idea in economics called "the commons problem." The classic example is a village pasture open to use by all. If all the villagers use the pasture to graze livestock without any cost, the pasture quickly is overrun to the point of resource exhaustion.

Now imagine that instead of grazing livestock in a pasture, you're parking a car in the local business district. Parking priced "below market" encourages drivers to park for unlimited amounts of time in a limited number of spaces. As a result, other drivers are left cruising for spaces, contributing to traffic congestion and ultimately, to a loss of business as customers simply give up.

"DISMAL SCIENCE," APPLIED

Economics is known to some as the "dismal science." But Pasadena employs variable rate and time parking management based on economic principles, and the system has shown anything but dismal results.

Parking rates change depending on location. For example, in the core of the popular shopping destination Old Pasadena, parking rates are set at \$1.25 per hour and time limits vary from 15 minutes to 2 hours. Outside the core, where parking demand is not as high, the rates are \$0.75 per hour.

Variable time limits and prices in Pasadena maximize the use of parking spaces. Drivers don't want to pay too much for parking or earn a parking ticket. So, as soon as they finish their business or shopping, they leave

and the next driver is able to park.

The City of Redwood City has eliminated time limits all together, relying on variable prices as the primary management tool.

"Prime areas were always chronically congested, with the frustration, cruising, and complaints of 'this place has no parking' that parking congestion entails," wrote Dan Zack, Downtown Development Coordinator for Redwood City, in a recent website posting. "We were so confident in the ability of prices to effectively distribute people that we eliminated time limits."

SAN DIEGO

The Downtown Community Parking District began a pilot program in 2006 to test variable rates and times. An advisory group of residents, businesses, and property owners directs and monitors the program.

The Downtown program's goal is to maximize use of on-street parking. In some areas, this program has increased utilization by 300% and, so far, unintended consequences have not materialized.

Business owners have been largely unperturbed by the new meter rates. Parking meter revenue increased by 21% since the program began and citations for over-limit and expired meters declined by 22.1%, according to the advisory group's latest report.

The Downtown Community Parking District has submitted a comprehensive report of its findings to the Mayor and City Council. Contact the Centre City Development Corporation at (619) 235-2200 to request a copy of the report.

UPTOWN PARTNERSHIP

Board of Directors Meetings

The Board of Directors meets the first Thursday of each month at the Uptown Partnership office. Meetings are open to the public. Please contact Uptown Partnership to confirm meeting dates and times.

Board of Directors

- Cindy Lehman, President
- Anne Rast, Vice President
- Ronald Baranov, Treasurer
- Warren Simon, Secretary
- John Eisenhart
- Jim Frost
- Robert Grinchuck
- Robert Orphey
- Sean Schwerdtfeger

Staff

- Carol J. Schultz, Executive Director
- Janet Fairbanks, Project Planner
- George Franck, Planner
- Jessica Freeman, Program Specialist
- Janelle Luna, Project Manager
- Ty Tosdal, Project Planner

Uptown Partnership

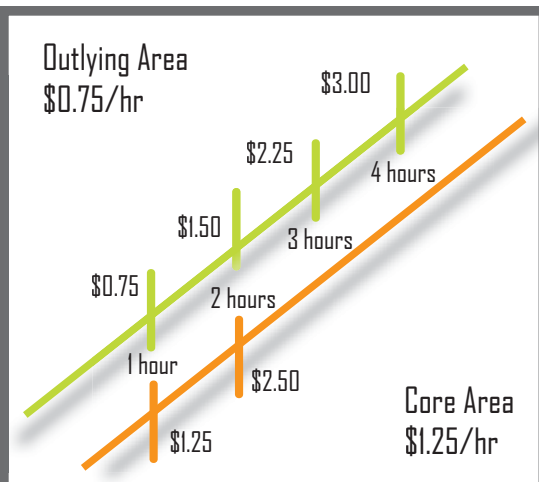
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Parking Card Hours

Monday - Thursday 11 - 4
Friday 9 - 12:30

Funding Provided by: The City of San Diego

Cover Photo: Susan Williams



Variable parking rates in Old Pasadena. For more information on Pasadena's parking techniques please visit www.ci.pasadena.ca.us and look under "Transportation."

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Re-striping for parking in **Five Points**, primarily on San Diego Avenue and India Street, added **more than 25 on-street, metered spaces** in a commercial and restaurant area with heavy parking demands.

Installation of an **electronic V-calm sign on San Diego Avenue** alerts drivers who are exceeding the speed limit to slow down. A neighborhood advisory group identified this project as a high priority.

Intersection upgrades in Hillcrest are improving pedestrian signals. See page 4 for details. Two intersections in **Five Points** were upgraded in FY 2007-08 on Washington Street at India Street and at San Diego Avenue.

Plans are moving forward to install **six new multi-space meters** in high-use locations in Uptown. The Partnership has ordered the meters for delivery in November 2008. These meters accept credit cards, parking meter cards, and coins, and they will not require drivers to place receipts on their dashboards.

The City of San Diego broke ground in March 2008 for **intersection improvements** at Washington and Goldfinch in **Mission Hills**. Uptown Partnership's contribution of \$168,000 in parking meter revenues provided significant help in obtaining federal funding.

Partnership staff is working with the Mission Hills BID and Council District Two to **mitigate neighborhood impacts during construction at the Washington-Goldfinch intersection**. They also are coordinating mitigation efforts with the Paseo Project currently underway on Ft. Stockton Drive. See page 4 for details.

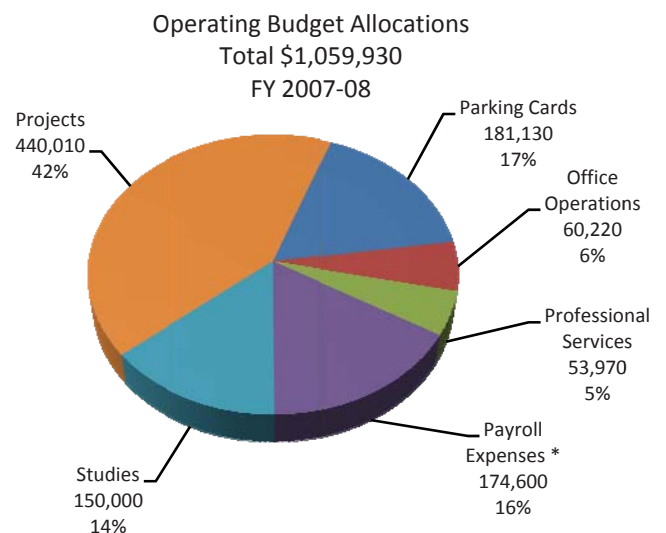
Obtaining **grants from the Redevelopment Agency and County of San Diego** totaling \$228,700. Grant funding will construct capital improvements in Five Points and conduct studies in **Five Points and Bankers Hill-Park West**. The improvements and studies were identified by the affected neighborhoods.

Uptown Partnership will post the complete report for fiscal year 2007-08 on its website in early August 2008.

OPERATIONS

Uptown Partnership, Inc. began as a community association in 1997. When the San Diego City Council created the Uptown Community Parking District (CPD) on March 4, 1998 under Council Policy 100-18, the Partnership took on the responsibility of administering the Uptown CPD for the City. The Partnership incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit community benefit corporation on February 26, 1999.

Our mission is to invest in projects that balance parking availability, traffic circulation, transit effectiveness, and pedestrian mobility in the Uptown Community. Uptown Partnership envisions a vibrant community in which creative collaborations enhance the vitality of businesses, sustain the health of neighborhoods, and promote a cohesive community.



* 2/3 supports Projects & Studies
1/3 supports Office Operations

UPTOWN PARTNERSHIP INTRODUCES

PEOPLE

JIM FROST

The Partnership's newest Board member is Jim Frost, a resident of Bankers Hill-Park West. Jim is committed to neighborhood development



that benefits all sectors. He has world-wide airport design experience including Europe, Asia, and the United States. His range of expertise also encompasses architecture, analysis of building failure, and urban planning and development.

JANET FAIRBANKS

Janet Fairbanks heads the Partnership's Five Points project. She is an Oregon native who moved to San Diego 31 years ago. After earning a Master's Degree in Urban Planning from San Diego



State University, she pursued a planning career with the County and City of San Diego as well as the San Diego Association of Governments. Since retiring, she is consulting; her clients include SANDAG, the State of California Resources Agency, and the Cleveland National Forest.

JESSICA FREEMAN

Jessica Freeman is a Southern California native who moved to San Diego over 10 years ago. As the Program Specialist, Jessica manages



the Parking Card program and Utility Art Box program, as well as supporting community relations efforts and organizational business. Jessica earned a B.A. in English from San Diego State University and plans to return to school to pursue a career in non-profit management.

COUNTDOWN FOR SAFETY



City Transportation crew at Fourth and University installing new pedestrian signals.

PROJECTS

City Transportation Engineering crews recently installed traffic signal improvements for pedestrians in Uptown.

- Park Boulevard at University Avenue
- Fourth Avenue at University Avenue
- Sixth Avenue at University Avenue
- Fourth Avenue at Washington Street
- Fifth Avenue at Washington Street
- Washington Street at India Street
- Washington Street at San Diego Avenue

The pedestrian signals feature flashing numbers that count down the amount of time for crossing. They also give pedestrians three seconds of lead time before vehicles get a green light.

Total project cost is estimated at \$20,350, which Uptown Partnership funded from parking meter revenues.

City and Partnership staff identified these intersection locations because of high pedestrian and traffic volume counts and numerous vehicle-pedestrian conflicts.

INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS AT WASHINGTON & GOLDFINCH

The Partnership is working with the Mission Hills Business Improvement District, Paseo Project, and Council District Two, to mitigate neighborhood impacts during construction of intersection improvements at Washington and Goldfinch Streets. These organizations co-sponsor regular neighborhood meetings on the second and fourth Thursday of each month, at 2:30 PM at The Gathering.

For information about the Paseo Project, residents and businesses may call Robert Osuna (Turner Construction) at (858) 320-4040, or Nicole Anderson (CLB Partners) at (858) 847-9100.

More information is available on the Partnership's website www.uptownpartnership.org under the heading 'Projects - Work in Progress.'

Construction on the corner sidewalks will continue into July 2008. After completing the four corners, crews will begin working on the flanking medians.

During construction, residents and businesses may call City Engineer Sally Amezcua at (858) 495-4732, or Mission Hills BID Executive Director Richard Stegner at (619) 296-8100, with questions about the project.



Washington and Goldfinch south-east curb under construction.

BANKERS HILL WATER MAIN PROJECT

Upgrading water mains is part of a larger city-wide plan to replace the City's aging water and sewer system. In older neighborhoods like Bankers Hill, the mains were installed as early as 1920. Bankers Hill construction will be completed by the end of July. Residents can call the City at (858) 573-5081 with questions about the project.



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