



City of Folsom  
Historic District Parking Solutions  
Ad Hoc Committee Recommendations

Report to Council

June 1, 2020

## Committee Members

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## Introduction

In response to existing parking problems in the City of Folsom Historic District, the City Council passed Resolution 10253 in March 2019, forming an Ad Hoc Committee (Committee) to find parking solutions to alleviate traffic and parking concerns in the residential and commercial portions of the Folsom Historic District. Ultimately, the Committee was tasked with finding solutions to resolve a current parking spaces deficit and developing a set of parking strategy recommendations for City Council by April 2020. The recommendations found herein are the result of deliberation by an eleven-member committee representing the interests of both Historic District residents and the business community. City staff assisted in providing engineering, planning and legal expertise to support Committee research and decision-making.

Folsom's Historic District is a treasured community resource deserving of adequate protection and preservation to be enjoyed by current residents, visitors and for generations to come.

The Committee's scope centered broadly on parking problems and solutions in both the residential and commercial areas of the City's Historic District. Parking related issues considered included existing conditions, traffic flow, wayfinding and special events. Recommendations were developed in alignment with the City of Folsom Historic District municipal code and to ensure preservation and enhancement of the district's historic, small-town atmosphere and to respect the quality of life for residents.

This report's recommendations outline both short term and long term solutions. This approach recognizes the variety of resources and implementation complexities necessary to address existing and future parking needs. An overview of recommendations begins on page 7 of this report.

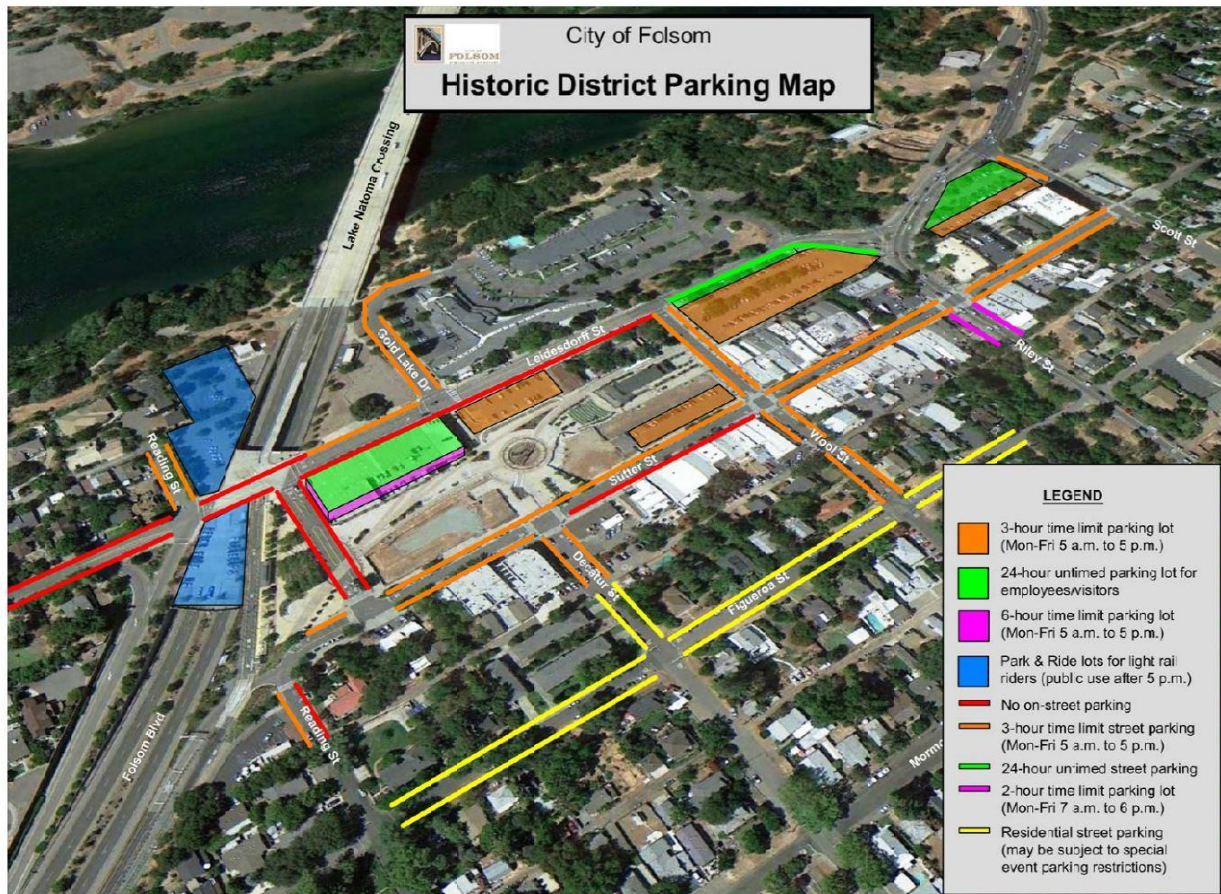
## Problem Statement

**Employees, patrons and visitors to Historic District destinations are occupying on-street parking spaces in the adjacent residential areas throughout the day and into the early morning hours, resulting in constrained parking options for residents along with many associated nuisance factors which adversely impact residential quality of life. Specific areas of the residential district experience different and sometimes greater impacts, depending on their proximity to Sutter Street.**

The future of Folsom's residential and commercial Historic District depends upon solving the problem of the limited parking supply to ensure visitors have a reasonable chance of finding convenient parking, while still meeting the needs of residents, patrons, employees, light rail riders, etc. With recent and projected Historic District commercial and residential growth and the anticipated addition of Accessory Dwelling Units resulting from newly enacted State laws, parking-related issues are becoming more acute. Parking solutions are necessary to address current and future issues including the overall limited parking supply as well as specifically addressing parking for residents, patrons, employees, light rail riders and visitors.



## Existing Conditions Historic District Context



Parking needs and issues in Folsom’s Historic District comprise a unique suite of challenges for various stakeholder groups.

### *Employee Parking Demand*

Historic District businesses require parking for employees and patrons throughout the day and night. The limited availability of parking spaces near business locations (specifically in the 600-700 blocks) is putting greater demand on existing spaces and pushing business patron and employee parking out into residential areas.

Based on the results of recent parking surveys (Kimley Horn, October 2018), it has been found that employee parking demand peaks during the second half of the week and into the weekend. Parking demand occurs throughout regular business hours as well as late into the night (approximately 9 am to 2 am). While the survey data confirmed the trends that many residents, business owners, employees and patrons already observe, the survey was not comprehensive and the results should be considered alongside firsthand experience, particularly impacts to quality of life during weekends, evenings, and nights. Additionally, the Committee felt that the survey did not paint a comprehensive picture in part because it did not account for the impact of other destinations in the area, such as churches.

### *Limited Parking Supply*

As the Historic District approaches build out, there will be a deficit of 522 parking spaces, a shortage that appears particularly acute during peak periods and special events (Kimley Horn, October 2018).

Recent parking studies show a total supply of 801 parking spaces, with 622 of those provided off-street and 179 existing on-street parking spaces (Kimley Horn, October 2018). However, the number of on-street parking spaces has since been reduced due to the Roundhouse construction project and the bicycle trail construction on Leidesdorff Street.

Historic District residents need timely action to address the swiftly growing traffic and parking issues in this unique neighborhood. Solutions should be implemented as quickly as possible.

In 2018, there were 50 special events permitted by the City of Folsom in the Historic District. In 2018, attendance at events ranged from 75 to 6500 people per event. Events have a significant impact on residential parking availability and quality of life. Special event organizers are responsible for addressing their own transportation impacts and demand. While some have done this effectively, many others could do more to help mitigate the impacts from events on the residential area of the Historic District.

The light rail line adjacent to the Historic district has resulted in commuters occupying parking spaces in the parking garage otherwise available for employees and customers.

The Historic District's existing 330-space parking structure, at the corner of Leidesdorff and Reading, is often not utilized to capacity despite its proximity to the district's businesses and current wayfinding efforts. However, after the completion of the Roundhouse Building and three additional construction projects pending in the Railroad Block, there will be additional demand for this capacity alongside fewer on-street parking spaces resulting from this development.

The City has previously analyzed new parking garage locations behind the Folsom Hotel, at Gold Lake Center, the Moose Eagles Lodges, Riley and Scott and Trader Lane. Each of these options was estimated to cost in excess of \$10 million dollars to develop, with estimates as high as \$16 million for some sites. While it has been previously estimated that there is a need for a second parking structure due to the overall growth trajectory of Folsom, funding sources have not been identified for garage construction and as a result, no additional parking structure has been developed.

### *Lack of Dedicated Enforcement*

Existing parking time limits, particularly in the Railroad Block Garage, are not effectively enforced due to a lack of dedicated staff to ensure compliance.

### **Committee Purpose and Process**

The City of Folsom recognizes data alone is not sufficient to understand the effects of existing parking conditions-input is required from residents and business owners both within and outside of the Historic District. To facilitate the successful implementation of parking solutions, considerable effort was made to proactively involve key stakeholders as members in the

formation of the Ad Hoc committee. The Committee met eight times between August 2019 and March 2020.

Committee members provided feedback on potential solutions and associated criteria to form consensus recommendations which meet the Folsom Historic District's unique parking needs. The strongest consensus amongst committee members included widespread recognition that the existing parking garage is underutilized and requires improved wayfinding, current parking management has resulted in difficulties finding convenient parking during peak hours and special events, and properly addressing parking challenges will require a variety of solution approaches in combination rather than a single solution.

The Committee also reached a mutual understanding that an additional garage is necessary, as the Historic District continues to attract new businesses and residents. Committee members often raised important questions regarding the implementation of parking solutions that went beyond the scope of this process to answer. For that reason, the recommendations in this report contain notes regarding implementation considerations and questions for further study.

## Key Issues and Opportunities

### Residential access to neighborhood parking

Residents of the Historic District have been adversely impacted by lack of available on-street parking in front of and near their homes, noise, litter and other nuisances of regular public parking in their neighborhood. While existing parking in the public right of way is available to all residents and visitors in the Historic District, visitors and employees should be directed to available parking in the existing Railroad Block structure. Additional opportunities exist to provide alternatives to private vehicle parking in the residential areas of the Historic District, such as the use of transportation network companies, public transit, or incentives for parking garage use for visitors.

### Visitor access to short-term parking

Convenient, consistently available visitor parking is critical to the health of the Folsom Historic District. Key approaches to improving both real and perceived short-term parking availability include setting parking rates to reflect demand patterns across downtown, ensuring that all drivers know all their options, creating a public valet program, and creating mobile payment options for the parking structures.

### Employee access to parking

Employee parking is displacing high-demand parking availability for residents and visitors. Approaches to ameliorate this issue include creating education or incentive programs for desirable parking behavior. For example, greater education of employees about the designated off-street employee parking in the Railroad Block Garage could encourage more employees to park there. Additionally, greater enforcement of employee parking in time-limited areas could encourage better parking behavior.

### Underutilized parking garage capacity

The existing parking structure is underutilized due to location, wayfinding, and safety-related issues. These issues could be addressed through improving wayfinding signage, ensuring drivers

know their options, creating a shuttle program, and improving lighting along routes between the parking garage and Historic District destinations. Improving the lighting in the garage and installing security cameras or providing security guards or public safety ambassadors could help employees and patrons feel safer walking to and from the garage late at night.

### Commuter access to parking

Commuter parking demand has placed more pressure on the Historic District's already limited parking capacity, exacerbating existing negative ramifications of spillover parking to residential areas. The Railroad Block garage was not originally intended to provide commuter parking to Regional Transit and greater enforcement of parking time limits may be needed. Additionally, education and encouragement programs for transportation alternatives like walking and biking to the Light Rail Station may be useful in converting vehicle parking demand for commuters to other modes.

### Data collection and analysis

Investments can be made toward equipment and research to capture a robust data set that can be used to monitor parking system utilization and parking behavior. Making the most of these technologies and continually investing in upgrades will help Folsom capitalize on opportunities to improve parking system function and efficiency. Key opportunities to improve data collection and analysis include utilizing data collection capacity to support performance-based management as well as upgrading parking transaction and management software. Future monitoring of the parking situation is necessary to ensure parking issues are not being overlooked; however, data collection will not solve the parking problem alone.

### Immediate and future growth

At build out, the City of Folsom is expected to include approximately 10,210 housing units and 3.5 million square feet of commercial development. New businesses are expected to open this spring in the Historic District. Future growth pressures can be addressed through key strategies including updating the City's zoning code and investing parking revenues in a parking garage and parking solutions.



# Committee Recommendations

## A Portfolio Approach

### Short Term High Priority

- Establish designated loading zones for ridesharing and Smart RT
- Establish an In-Lieu fee for parking
- Improve and expand wayfinding signage to encourage use of parking garage
- Create a special district to fund parking improvements
- Design, implement and enforce residential parking permit program
- Enhance pedestrian safety to and from the Railroad Block parking garage
- Increase frequency and scope of parking enforcement

### Short Term Low Priority

- Provide shuttle options to parking garage and Light Rail
- Educate Historic District employees about parking options

### Long Term High Priority

- Offer incentives to reward beneficial parking behavior
- Build an additional public parking garage

### Long Term Low Priority

- Consider establishing valet parking services at key locations
- Improve overall circulation design for access to the Historic District
- Consider use of small undeveloped or underdeveloped lots for infill parking

### Ongoing and Existing Solutions

- Continue to improve bicycle and pedestrian access to Historic District
- Promote ways to get in and around the Historic District
- Work with Special Event organizers to manage parking demand
- Address parking standards for Historic District through Zoning Code update
- Adaptively manage Historic District parking

Parking solutions need to be packaged into a comprehensive program for parking demand management. For example, increasing enforcement in the parking structure without implementing a permit parking program in the residential area will simply continue to burden the residential area with overflow parking.

No single parking solution will be successful if implemented independently.

For this reason, the Committee recommends that the City take a portfolio approach, which seeks to move a comprehensive package of parking solutions forward together, with attention to timeliness. The Committee recognizes the need to monitor, report and improve upon parking solutions as they are managed over time, as the landscape of the parking challenges may shift as elements of the portfolio are implemented.

The Committee's recommendations are depicted below, organized by the Committee's recommended timeframe. Short term items are solutions which will be addressed within two years while long term items will be addressed within five years.

## **Short Term High Priority Parking Solutions**

### **Establish designated loading zones for ridesharing and Smart RT**

Work with City Staff and ridesharing companies to determine how existing loading zones could be identified as late night rideshare and Smart RT pick up zones. Businesses may want to consider offering discounts to patrons who utilize these services, as a way to incentivize alternative transportation to the Historic District.

- Implementation*
- What location(s) would be most beneficial?
- Considerations*
- Ensure implementation does not limit the way people use ridesharing apps or limit the ability of residents to call for ridesharing from their homes.

### **Design, implement, and enforce residential parking permit program**

Work with City Staff to determine program elements including initial boundaries, approval threshold, permits per address, visitor permits, and permit cost. Committee members expressed an interest in a program that would be residents only, allowing parking for each home to have 2 street parking spaces provided by the City at no cost while additional residential permits would cost a reasonably affordable sum. A Sunday church parking exception would need to be addressed in program implementation.

Committee members noted the opportunity for a residents-only pilot to initially be implemented along Figueroa Street to address the greatest impacts at this time. Members noted that while fees would be an additional cost for residents, they were estimated to be reasonable and it would be an investment in solving the more significant challenges to their quality of life from overflow parking. While Committee members acknowledged the complexity of designing and implementing a permit parking program, it was agreed that this solution has the potential to greatly improve residents' quality of life.

- Implementation*
- Implementation will require updates to City regulations and may not be broadly supported by residents who are not directly impacted.
- Considerations*
- Could push parking issues into adjacent areas if initial scope is limited.
  - Implementation will need to address parking for churchgoers.
  - Will require additional enforcement to be effective.

### **Establish an in-lieu fee for parking**

Work with City Staff to determine policy details for desired impact and path for policy implementation. Implementation would require updates to City regulations and nexus study to determine fees.

- Implementation* • Could contribute to a dedicated funding source for parking programs and facilities.
- Considerations*
- Timeframe for conducting nexus study and setting fees.
  - Impact to future development.

### Enhance pedestrian safety to and from the Railroad Block garage

Work with City Staff to enhance real and perceived safety of existing parking garage. Examples include additional lighting, more foot traffic, and additional security presence.

### Improve and expand wayfinding signage to encourage use of parking garage

Work with City Staff to place wayfinding signage in key locations to encourage preferred parking behavior.

- Implementation* • Where is signage needed?
- Considerations* • What type of signage?

### Increase frequency and scope of parking enforcement

Increase frequency of parking enforcement to ensure access to residences for first responders and for other public safety situations. Consider dedicated parking enforcement position to enhance the current parking enforcement program.

Work with City Staff to improve enforcement of municipal code and all parking violations, to ensure access to public rights of way for parking.

- Implementation* • How can volunteers from the CAPS program be leveraged to enhance parking enforcement?
- Considerations*

### Creation of a special district for parking

Work with City Staff to evaluate the creation of a special district for parking that would provide a dedicated funding stream for future parking facilities and or programs.

- Implementation* • Legal considerations and cost to implement.
- Considerations*

## Short Term Low Priority Parking Solutions

### Provide shuttle options to parking garage and Light Rail

Work with City Staff to identify opportunities for grant funding or partnership for shuttle services within the Historic District.

Committee members shared examples from other communities, such as the free ride system FRAN (Free Rides Around the Neighborhood), implemented in Anaheim, CA.

- Implementation Considerations*
- May not be financially feasible if partnership or private funding is not available.
  - What route would be most effective?

### Educate employees about parking options

Distribute educational materials regarding Historic District parking to local business owners through Historic District Association meetings. Ask employers for help in incorporating parking information into their orientation process for new employees.

### Long Term High Priority Parking Solutions

#### Offer behavioral incentives to reward beneficial parking behavior

Consider working with Historic District business to create incentives for commuters, employees and patrons. Incentives may differ for each group. For example, consider discounts for showing proof of parking garage use at events, or discount codes for ridesharing like Uber or Lyft.

- Implementation Considerations*
- What type of benefits to provide?
  - How would benefits be promoted?

#### Build an additional public parking garage

Work with City Staff and engineering consultant to determine prioritized locations to consider for parking garage. Previously considered location options include: on northwest corner of Leidesdorff Street and Gold Lake Drive; on southwest corner of Leidesdorff and Riley Streets; and on northwest corner of Canal Street and Scott Street.

Committee noted that previous evaluation criteria for parking garage locations may need updating.

- Implementation Considerations*
- Significant length of time needed to design, fund and construct another garage.
  - Significant concern from residents about continued development in the Historic District without an additional parking structure.

### Long Term Low Priority Parking Solutions

#### Consider establishing valet parking services at key locations

Historic District businesses may wish to engage a valet company representative to determine appropriate locations and estimated costs for this type of service.



- Implementation Considerations*
- Meets patron desire for curbside access while placing vehicles in a location which mitigates adverse impacts.
  - Cost burden and administration considerations for private enterprise.

### Improve overall circulation design for access to the Historic District

City Staff should continue to look for ways to improve traffic within the Historic District. Committee suggestions for future consideration included: no turns onto Riley, no left turn onto Sutter and instead direct traffic to Leidesdorff, and directing traffic north on Riley.

- Implementation Considerations*
- Substantial investments needed to change circulation with limited likelihood of improving parking situation.
  - Could exacerbate parking issues and negatively impact Historic District access during construction.

### Consider use of small undeveloped or underdeveloped lots for infill parking

City staff should continue to monitor opportunities for infill parking on small undeveloped or underdeveloped lots in the Historic District.

- Implementation Considerations*
- Are landowners willing to consider this use?
  - Is the amount of parking provided by small infill lots worth the investment of time and effort on the part of the City?

## Ongoing or Existing Parking Solutions

### Zoning Code update that addresses Parking Standards and Variances

City staff should consider revising the existing parking space ratio (Kimley-Horn, February 2008), as well as additional enforcement criteria and/or finding for approval of variances for parking in the Historic District. Any additional criteria or finding would need to be in compliance with relevant State law.

### Continue to improve pedestrian and bicycle access

City Staff and consultants will continue work to craft a multi-modal transportation plan which will decrease automobile dependency long-term in the Historic District.

### Promote how to get in and around the Historic District

The City and businesses should continue to promote and encourage alternate modes of transportation (ridesharing, non-motorized transportation) to the Historic District beyond personal vehicle travel.

The City and businesses should continue to promote location and availability of parking in Railroad Block garage. Businesses may want to consider signage asking patrons to park in the garage rather than the residential district.

### Continue to work with special event organizers to manage parking demand during events

Work with City Staff to continue to improve special event management to reduce adverse impacts to residents and businesses.

### Implement adaptive management strategies

Work with City Staff to craft a parking management plan which institutionalizes periodic reviews and incorporates lessons learned to ensure continual updates and improvement of the Historic District parking situation.

### Solutions Considered but Not Advanced at this Time

Through the course of the Committee's deliberation, many solutions were offered. The following were considered for a number of months, but ultimately did not advance to recommendations due to concerns about the return on investment that they might offer.

#### Create more designated employee parking zone(s).

The Committee initially considered the use of the vacant parcel on the west side of Riley St. between Sutter Alley and Figueroa St. for additional employee parking. Staff shared with the group that the costs to prepare the property for parking would be significant, and given the low number of potential parking spaces it might provide, the group withdrew support for this concept. The group discussed but had not come to consensus on whether designated employee zones would be appropriate in alternate locations.

#### Consider angled parking and a change to a one-way from Leidesdorff to Sutter on Wool and from Wool to Decatur on Sutter.

The Committee initially considered creative ways to develop more parking on Sutter Street by modifying the circulation and parking design. Staff shared with the group that the cost to do this may be significant and the estimated number of parking spaces that might result would be low. The group withdrew their support for this concept due to concerns over the return on investment.

### Funding

No solution mentioned above will take shape without funding. Committee members expressed a desire for dedicated funding to solve parking problems in the Historic District. Among the ideas they contributed were suggestions for a Parking Benefit District (or Special District), use of parking fees from permit programs, seeking grant funding for parking improvements, using fines from parking enforcement, additional fees on downtown purchases, hotel stays and development and fees from parking meters or paid parking programs. The use of paid parking (meters or garage) and additional fees in the Historic District was a point of disagreement between Committee members, with concern being expressed by some that it would discourage patronage of local business and suggestions from others that a pilot program could be investigated. Despite that concern, there was broad agreement that solving the parking issues the Historic District is experiencing will take additional investment by business owners,

residents, visitors, developers. In other words, investment by the Community as a whole. The Committee recommends that any funding mechanisms be monitored and adjusted as necessary.

To advance opportunities for funding, it is recommended that a funding strategy for Historic District parking solutions be developed by City Staff within six months of the Council's receipt of this report.