

## **Race and Equity Pocket Questions**

**Title and purpose of this initiative:** Parking Enforcement Update and Discussion

**Department:** Economic Development

### **What are the racial and equity impacts?**

Public parking, while open to everyone, is truly only utilized by those who can afford a vehicle and (in cases where there is a charge for public parking) the cost of parking that vehicle. These most certainly would be middle- to upper-income households and may include some moderate-income households.

### **Who is or will experience community burden?**

Depending on the route Council chooses to take, low-income households would be most burdened by implementing a paid parking program and those who work or need to spend extensive time in Downtown would be burdened by implementing parking enforcement. Presumably, these would be low- to moderate-income households.

### **Who is or will experience community benefit?**

The benefit of moving to parking enforcement or paid parking would most benefit those households who own a car and/or could afford to pay for the parking. Presumably, these would be middle to upper-income households. The benefit they would receive would be the increased availability of parking due to higher turn-over or the lack of downtown visitation by those who cannot afford or choose not to pay for parking.

### **What are the root causes of inequity?**

In the past, a limited number of households could actually afford a vehicle. These households tended to be upper-income households. This left other lower income households to utilize public transportation to access their daily needs. Over the decades as cars became more affordable, middle- to moderate-income households were able to afford a reliable vehicle. The more households that were able to afford a car, the demand for access to parking became a necessity for commercial districts (especially those which had previously been walkable and bikeable) to survive. Much of this same thinking is with us today in downtown districts as we look at public parking, however, even with the affordability of vehicles where they are today, many low-income households still cannot afford the ownership and maintenance of a reliable vehicle. This lineage has led to inequity in the use of public parking.

### **What might be the unintended consequences of this action or strategy?**

Unintended consequences of parking enforcement may include shoppers spending less time in the downtown district and, therefore, spending less money in this district. Unintended consequences of paid parking may include fewer low- to moderate-income households visiting and utilizing services and businesses in the downtown district. Naturally, this could result in



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downtown becoming a “premium” commercial district where businesses would set their prices to appropriate levels for middle- to upper-income households. Additionally, this could result in higher commercial rent rates edging out start-ups and lower income entrepreneurs.

**How is your department planning to mitigate any burdens, inequities, and unintended consequences?**

Generally, ensuring adequate and easy access to downtown either by foot, bike, or public transit would be the most equitable approach to ensure our downtown is accessible to all residents and visitors. Additionally, paid parking equity could be ensured through a variety of mechanisms if this policy path is chosen, including only charging in high demand lots, offering discounted parking solutions, or providing an annual stipend to be used for public parking.