

ALBANY CALIFORNIA



CITY OF ALBANY
1000 SAN PABLO AVENUE
ALBANY, CA 94706
www.AlbanyCA.org

18 April 2022

MEMORANDUM

To: Albany City Council Members

From: Mayor Jordan

Re: Waiving bike parking installation fee

RECOMMENDATIONS

Direct staff to prepare an amendment to the Master Fee Schedule waiving the fee for installation of bicycle parking in the public right of way when required as a condition of approval. Pay the cost of such installation from the Measure DD greenhouse pollution and climate change adaptation reserve. Encourage the City to explore co-funding more iconic, and consequently expensive, bike parking racks with Albany Strollers & Rollers.

BACKGROUND

§ 20.28.030.C.3 of Albany's Municipal Code requires one bicycle parking rack per 1,500 square feet of new, repurposed, or remodeled commercial space. If the rack is to be in the public right of way, which is the only option for most commercial parcels in Albany, only Albany may install the rack. By the Master Fee Schedule, the City charges \$585.94 to provide an installed basic inverted U rack.

DISCUSSION

The Code requirement for provision of bicycle parking in the public right of way in association with commercial development partially fulfills Active Transportation Plan Measure TL 1.2, which is to "install bike racks in commercial areas and civic areas of the City where racks do not exist." The success metric for this measure specified in the Active Transportation Plan is the provision of one bike parking space for every car parking space.

Imposing a part of the financial burden of meeting this goal on the on commercial redevelopment is asymmetric. The Master Fee Schedule does not contain a charge for the City to create a car parking space in the public right of way. Rather the City provides this parking for free to the party pursuing commercial redevelopment. The City should treat its provision of bike parking in the

public right of way at cost parity to its provision of car parking, which is no cost to adjacent private entities.

Albany installs a nominal number of such racks at the request of private entities each year to meet the condition. The Measure DD greenhouse pollution and climate adaptation reserve fund will receive approximately \$150,000 this fiscal year, accounting for the late start to collection of the tax on water services. The reserve was initially funded with approximately \$30,000 from last year resulting from collection of the tax on electricity and natural gas service late in the fiscal year. To date approximately \$105,000 of these funds have been allocated, as follows: \$30,000 to pay for a portion of this year's street tree planting contract, \$25,000 for a pilot program subsidizing the installation of electric vehicle chargers in multi-residence buildings, and \$40,000 for a program subsidizing the replacement of gas-fired space heating with electrically powered heat pump heat, ventilation, and air conditioning. The latter program is not anticipated to commence until the next fiscal year. As such, the reserve fund has adequate resources to pay the fee for the City to install bike parking in the public right of way when required as a condition of commercial redevelopment given how few such installations occur each year.

For years, the City has partnered with Albany Strollers & Rollers (AS&R) and organizations that opt in to install bike-shaped bike racks. AS&R and the business have generally split the cost of purchasing the rack and the City has installed it at no cost. The City itself as an organization has partnered with AS&R in purchasing one such rack as an icon of Albany. This rack is installed below the Welcome to Albany sign on the western approach on Solano Avenue. As funding to purchase an install a basic inverted U rack is required of commercial redevelopment by condition, this creates the option to leverage that funding with AS&R to install a more iconic, and consequently, expensive bike rack, such as a bike-shaped bike rack. Partnering with AS&R to fund this could potentially result in lower cost to the City than its installing a basic U-shaped rack on its own. A short discussion with AS&R would determine if this is the case or partnering on funding such racks is otherwise desirable.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

As mentioned, the provision of bike parking is a policy in the Active Transportation Plan in order to facilitate biking. Research has found the availability of bike parking at destinations or lack thereof is a significant control on people's choice whether to bike or not.

Goal 1 of the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan is to "decrease vehicle miles traveled through use of alternative modes". The first approach is to "encourage active transportation through infrastructure and parking management". Providing bike parking infrastructure partially fulfills this approach.

SOCIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSIVITY CONSIDERATIONS

Because the fee for installation of bike parking is fixed, the smaller the business seeking to locate in Albany the more burdensome this cost. The recommended action would eliminate this inequity.

CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES

Goal 1, Objective 3 is to “promote active transportation and safety.” The recommended action is neutral in this regard because it does not change the future number of bike parking spaces to be installed but rather how those spaces are funded.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

As discussed above, the nominal annual cost of installing the bike parking required by commercial redevelopment can readily be met with Measure DD greenhouse pollution and climate adaptation reserve funds.