



CITY OF MARTINEZ

**CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
June 6, 2012**

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Dave Scola, Public Works Director
Tim Tucker, City Engineer
SUBJECT: Downtown Circulation
DATE: May 30, 2012

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt resolution restoring two-way traffic on portions of Castro Street, Escobar Street, Estudillo Street and Main Street.

BACKGROUND:

On May 16, 2012 the Council considered downtown circulation after approving the outdoor seating Flex-space program. After taking public comment the Council voted to continue the meeting to an adjourned regular meeting starting at 5:00 pm June 6, 2012.

In an effort to work with the community on this issue, staff met with and provided drawings and street and parking standards to interested members of the community subsequent to the May 16th meeting. A group of community members developed a draft outline for City staff to review.

Due to the voluminous nature of the draft outline, staff agreed to provide a copy to each Councilmember for review. There will be copies available for the public to review at the June 6, workshop.

After reviewing the information provided, Staff continues to recommend restoring the following blocks to two-way.

- Castro Street: Escobar Street to Green Street
- Escobar Street: Court Street to Pine Street
- Estudillo Street: Escobar Street to Main Street
- Main Street: Alhambra Avenue to Court Street

Staff recommends this for two primary reasons: (1) the two-way traffic model meets minimum design standards and works with the approved flex spaces; and, (2) the two way traffic option is equitable for all business owners who qualify for outdoor dining. The one-way one lane traffic option with diagonal parking on one side and no parking on the other does not provide for outdoor dining opportunities to properties on one side of the street.

DISCUSSION FROM MAY 16, 2012 REPORT:

Pine Street is in the vicinity of the County Administration Building and has been converted to one-way traffic. Staff recommends studying this area in more detail and meeting with County staff prior to proposing any changes.

Returning the recommended streets to two-way traffic will increase visibility to local merchants, will facilitate emergency vehicle access and create an easily understood traffic pattern through the downtown. It is anticipated there will be a net decrease of approximately twenty-one parking spaces should the recommended streets be restored to two-way. This parking loss can be absorbed on nearby streets.

Further, staff has entered into preliminary negotiations with Local 324 to explore the possibility of leasing or purchasing the vacant lot across the street from Lemongrass Bistro to offer long term parking and help offset the 21 spaces lost in converting the aforementioned streets to two way traffic. If this proposal is successful staff would more than likely use one time accumulated Parking Fund proceeds to purchase or lease the lot and use a similar design and green landscaping concept as the attractive parking lot behind the Copper Skillet.

Should Council approve the conversion of the listed streets to two-way the restriping will be done as part of the planned paving and surfacing rehabilitation project anticipated later this fall on the 500 block of Main Street.

In March of 1999, the City Council adopted a parking plan which among other things designated several blocks in the core downtown as one-way streets. In addition a shuttle system and parking plan was created north of the railroad tracks on Joe DiMaggio Drive. This action was taken to mitigate the loss of parking during the construction of the Family Law Center. At the same time the 500 block of Main Street was converted to one-way as part of a trial outdoor dining plan.

Best Management Practices

The unintended consequence to the changes in traffic circulation was the decreased exposure to some businesses, hindrance to emergency vehicle access through the downtown, and confusion to the traveling public. It is not uncommon to see vehicles traveling the wrong way on Castro Street. It has also been observed regularly that west bound vehicles on Main Street make unsafe u-turns at the intersection of Castro. In addition many vehicles pause for extended periods when entering this intersection due to confusing traffic restrictions.

The fourteen to sixteen foot width travel lane that is created with diagonal parking on one side of our downtown streets is substandard. This lane width is appropriate in parking lots where diagonal parking is more common. Our downtown streets, unlike parking lots, have to accommodate delivery trucks, emergency vehicles and higher traffic volumes. The standard minimum clear width is twenty feet.

Since the completion of the Family Law Center several things have occurred that has relieved the downtown parking shortfall.

- ◆ Contra Costa County has relocated over 150 employees to their Muir Road facility.
- ◆ The Amtrak Station has been completed creating 178 parking stalls.

- ◆ Street and off-street parking has been reestablished near the Courts.
- ◆ The City has purchased the Zocchi property in anticipation of the construction of an approximate 300 space ground level parking lot. The Council has awarded a design contact for the \$3.5M project and construction will take place next spring.

Research and Case Studies

Other communities have recognized the importance of efficient traffic circulation. As part of the “Downtown Matters” project several cities were reviewed. In 1988 the City of Campbell adopted a downtown development plan which has been updated over the years. The 2006 Plan identified several key revitalization projects including utility undergrounding, streetscape improvements and traffic enhancement that restored their main street from one-way to two-way to “enhance retail accessibility.” Likewise the City of Martinez’s Downtown Specific Plan states “two-way traffic is encouraged on Pedestrian-Priority Streets (Main, Ferry, Las Juntas, Estudillo and Castro) in order to maximize retail visibility.” The caveat is that adequate parking should be available.

Our electronic parking meters were utilized to evaluate available on street parking. We have the ability to download reports on parking meter usage. Reports were developed to determine the occupancy of on-street parking in the downtown area. The average parking space occupancy is as follows:

<u>Street</u>	<u>Occupancy</u>
Marina Vista	37%
Escobar	56%
Main Street	76%
Ward Street	32%
Green Street	49%
Castro Street	26%
Ferry Street	64%

This data indicates our downtown street parking is not saturated. The loss of approximately 21 spaces can be absorbed within the area being restored to two-way. The parking impacts are as follows:

Street	Block	# of Existing Spaces with 1-Way traffic	# of Proposed Spaces with 2-Way traffic	Loss
Castro	East side, Green to Ward	9	7	2
Castro	East side, Ward to Main	13	9	4
Castro	East side, Main to Escobar	8	6	2
Escobar	North side, Court to Pine	5	0	5
Escobar	South side, Court to Pine	6	6	0
Estudillo	West side, Main to Escobar	11	7	4
Main	North side, Alhambra to Castro ¹	10	9/6 ²	1/4 ²
Main	South side, Alhambra to Castro ¹	6	9/6 ²	(3)/0 ²
			TOTAL	21

¹ Parking meters will be installed as part of the new striping

² without flex spaces/assuming three flex spaces

The main objective for our downtown revitalization is to have parking demand approach saturation. This would be an indicator that our revitalization is becoming a success. Prior to that point the City will need to develop additional parking. There currently is vacant or underutilized private property that could be developed as small parking lots. The long term plan would be to construct a parking structure. Unfortunately in 1999 the City calculated that such a structure would need to be subsidized by over \$200,000 per year to make the debt payments. It may make more sense that a private/public partnership with a retail/residential and parking be incorporated into a single project.

FISCAL IMPACT:

It is anticipated that there will be no long term loss of parking revenues. Parking rate occupancy should increase on surrounding streets to compensate for the lost spaces. The one-time cost of relocating parking meters and signage is anticipated to cost \$9,000 and will be funded through the existing Downtown Parking District maintenance funds. Costs to restripe and resign the streets will be included in the pavement resurfacing projects.

ACTION:

Adopt Resolution to restore two-way traffic on portions of Castro Street, Escobar Street, Estudillo Street and Main Street.

Attachments:

Resolution and Location Map

Community Draft Outline on file in the Clerk's Office

APPROVED BY:


City Manager

RESOLUTION NO. -12

ADOPT RESOLUTION TO RESTORE TWO-WAY TRAFFIC ON PORTIONS OF CASTRO STREET, ESCOBAR STREET, ESTUDILLO STREET AND MAIN STREET

WHEREAS, in 1999 Contra Costa County constructed the Family Law Center; and

WHEREAS, this created a temporary loss of over 200 on and off street parking stalls; and

WHEREAS, Contra Costa County requested the City help mitigate the lost parking by constructing temporary parking lots, introducing bus shuttles and increasing street parking stalls; and

WHEREAS, in 1999 the City Council of the City of Martinez approved certain parking improvements including the conversion of certain downtown streets to one-way creating additional diagonal parking; and

WHEREAS, the construction of the Family Law Center has been completed and on and off street parking has been restored; and

WHEREAS, the conversion to one-way streets has created unintended negative consequences including the decreased exposure to some businesses, hindrance to emergency vehicle access through the downtown, and confusion to the traveling public; and

WHEREAS, it is recommended to restore the following streets to two-way:

Castro Street: Escobar Street to Green Street
Escobar Street: Court Street to Pine Street
Estudillo Street: Escobar Street to Main Street
Main Street: Alhambra Avenue to Court Street

WHEREAS, the Custodian of Records is the City Clerk of the City of Martinez.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council, based on its independent judgment, does hereby find and resolve as follows:

Project exempt from CEQA

A. The City Council has reviewed and considered the information contained in the record, including but not limited to, all staff reports, all oral and written testimony presented at, or prior to, the hearing on the Project and all other matters deemed relevant prior to adopting this resolution.

B. The City Council does, based thereon hereby find that the Project is exempt from the requirements of CEQA, including but not limited to Categorical Exception Class 1(c) - Existing Facilities - streets; and Section 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines pertaining to the general rule exemption, as it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant effect on the environment, in that:

1. The street and lane widths comply with general engineering practice and meet City street standards for two-way traffic.
2. The Level of Service at all affected intersections will remain above level D with the restoration of two-way traffic.
3. The street circulation pattern will most likely result in less use of fuel, fewer miles of travel, and less automobile emissions with the restoration of two-way traffic
4. Restoration of two-way traffic creates direct emergency vehicle access to and from the downtown, resulting in enhanced safety for the public.
5. The new configurations will improve pedestrian safety.
6. The City's parking meter data establishes that the average space occupancy for downtown streets is approximately 49%, indicating that downtown street parking is not saturated. Thus the removal of 21 spaces for the re-establishment of two-way traffic can be absorbed.
7. The City has recently developed substantial additional parking in downtown with improvements to the multi-modal station (Zocchi site).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Martinez, to restore two-way traffic on portions of Castro Street, Escobar Street, Estudillo Street and Main Street as listed above.

* * * * *

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution duly adopted by the City Council of the City of Martinez at a Regular Meeting of said Council held on the 6th day of June, 2012, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

RICHARD G. HERNANDEZ, CITY CLERK
CITY OF MARTINEZ

