



S T A F F R E P O R T

D A T E: **September 18, 2019**
RE: **City of Newport Parking Study and Recommendations**
TO: **Paula Miranda, General Manager**
ISSUED BY: **Aaron Bretz, Director of Operations**

BACKGROUND

The Port of Newport has participated over the past three years in the Bayfront Parking District, which was a temporary committee appointed by the City of Newport for the purposes of considering various parking solutions around the City.

Following a study by a reputable Portland traffic firm, the committee passed some recommendations to the City following considerable deliberation about the issue of whether or not to install meters on the Bayfront. The final recommendation was to institute a mix of meters and permit parking on the Bayfront with meters on the west end and permit parking toward the east, and not to meter Nye Beach or City Center at this time.

Last week, the City Planning Commission held a public hearing on the issue of whether or not to institute the recommendations of the Parking Committee. A motion to forward the Committee's recommendations to the City Council as drafted failed by a 4-3 vote. The Commission voted to recommend that the Council create a new advisory committee with instructions to revise the draft to eliminate or minimize recommendations related to metering.

DETAIL

As a member of the Bayfront Parking District and a very important partner on the Bayfront, the City has asked if the Port of Newport would like to weigh in on the public discussion about the decision of whether or not the City Council should hold a public hearing on the Parking Committee's recommendations (particularly the question of metering the Bayfront to create turnover in parking spaces), and further, whether or not to adopt those recommendations.

There has been considerable pushback on the question of metering in Nye Beach. The Bayfront metering question is in doubt, and is directly related to the Port's interest. Several shop owners have expressed anxiety about the installation of meters, but there has also been support for meters voiced in the parking committee by several other business owners.

I anticipate that if the City institutes a mix of meters and permits on the Bayfront, what may happen is that the Port's parking assets will be in higher demand. Whether or not that comes to fruition will depend on the policy that is implemented by the City where the permits are concerned. A central question for holders of Port parking permits will be whether or not they will have to purchase a City permit in addition to the Port permit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I have considered four separate alternatives that the Port Commission may take that each seem to be reasonable choices:

- The Port may choose to make no statement regarding the issue of whether or not to schedule a hearing about parking meters and permits on the Bayfront. This has been a lively enough topic that I believe even making no statement here constitutes a statement, and we should be aware of the implications of being too passive in this matter.
- The Port may choose to urge the City Council to simply schedule a public hearing so that the Council can hear all sides of the issue.
- The Port may choose to wholeheartedly support the Parking Committee's recommendations (to include metering the Bayfront).
- The Port may choose to wholeheartedly oppose the Parking Committee's recommendations (to include metering the Bayfront).

My recommendation is to urge the City Council to schedule a hearing on the matter of whether or not to implement the recommendations of the committee. There can be no harm in fully considering an issue before making a decision. Additionally, it provides a further opportunity to vet solutions, which are desperately needed to help the Bayfront operate more effectively. There is clearly consensus in the community that *something* needs to be done to improve the situation on the Bayfront.

City of Newport City Councilmembers:

The Port of Newport is the largest property owner on the Bayfront in acreage, and by virtue of Commercial Fishing users, one of the heaviest users of parking across the Bayfront. The Port has participated regularly in the parking district as a contributor to district funding, and as an active member of the Parking Advisory Committee. There is a lot at stake for the Port as the City of Newport carefully considers solutions to the difficult traffic and parking problems on our working waterfront. The Port Commission appreciates your strenuous efforts to generate solutions. Thank you for working so hard to keep the Bayfront vibrant and healthy.

We understand that there are various viewpoints about solutions to the limited parking supply on the Bayfront; there is angst about what choices the City will make in the future to remedy the congestion on the Bayfront that limits economic development. There is also support for the City's efforts to explore solutions, and a wide variety of constructive ideas within the community that the City Council can draw upon to maintain the momentum toward solutions on the Bayfront. We urge you to hold a public hearing on the recommendations recently submitted by the Parking Advisory Committee so that you can hear directly from the community the ideas and concerns about the way ahead.

As fellow servants of the public trust, we can certainly appreciate the difficult task of solving complex issues in the community. We offer you our full support and best wishes as you undertake the hard work of determining the future of the Bayfront Parking District.

Sincerely,