

Perception Versus Reality

The Availability of Parking in Downtown Laguna

We can learn a lot about whether there is a need for more parking in Laguna by taking a stroll around downtown Laguna. How much parking does downtown Laguna need? A stroll around downtown Laguna at midday on a holiday weekend (11:00 AM to 1:00 PM – Sunday May 28, 2023) offers perspective on the big gap between the perceived need and reality. While it was a grey day, there was plenty of car traffic and foot traffic. And this was midday in the middle of the busy three-day Memorial Day Weekend – the start of summer in Laguna. Walking around reveals that there are many available parking spaces on the street, in public lots, and in underutilized private lots.

The City’s recently adopted Downtown Specific Plan (Chapter 2, page 30 – Parking and Circulation) says: “Despite the large number of parking spaces in the downtown, *there is a perception that parking is deficient.*” And in Chapter 3, page 61 -Topic 4) it states very clearly: “The results of the study show that *the existing parking supply of public and private parking spaces exceeds the actual parking demand throughout the downtown.*”

Some people keep repeating: “We need more parking downtown! We need a parking structure!” They figure if they repeat it often enough, this perception will dominate the reality that on nearly all days of the year, there is available parking in downtown Laguna. They seem unwilling to believe the experts who wrote the DSP, which was adopted by the City Council and which reduced parking requirements on downtown businesses.

Why should the City divert scarce resources or increase residents’ taxes in order to add supply if there are plenty of downtown parking spaces available on most days, even on a busy holiday weekend? Data from the DSP and pictures are a reality that should prevail over perception.



Parking spaces available on City Streets



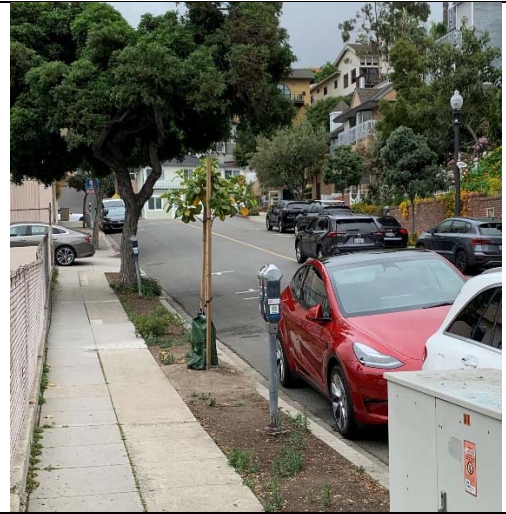
Third Street near Forest



Third Street looking east



Forest



Mermaid



Third Street across from Susi Q – in front of proposed Presbyterian Church parking structure site



Forest near Broadway looking toward City Hall



Broadway in front of Playhouse



Broadway across from Festival looking both ways

Parking Available in Public City Lots



Susi Q



Hagan Place Public Spaces



Near Digester



Near Digester



Near Digester



Christmas Tree Lot across from the Festival

Private Lots that are underutilized



Presbyterian Church Lot at Mermaid and Second



Private level of Hagan Place



Presbyterian Church Lot on Third Street across from Susi Q



Commercial Building on Third Street



Water District on Third Street Near Forest