

From: [Mitch B](#)
To: [CITYCOUNCIL-List](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Written comment for item 7B of 5/3/26 City Council Meeting
Date: Tuesday, May 5, 2026 12:00:27 PM

Hello,

I will be making a public comment on item 7B for the 5/3/26 City Council Meeting and wanted to share a written copy with linked citations.

I visited the Spring Market on Central right next to the parking garage this weekend and it was a lot of fun. The music was great, the food was tasty, and all the little business kids were adorable. It did take up a small parking lot and some street parking to run this event, but because it was located immediately next to a parking garage, there was still plenty of available parking. For this reason, the city should strongly consider expanding the permanently pedestrian only section of Alameda Ave and make long term plans for conversion of the parking lot between Alameda Ave and Central Ave into a park. This would support local businesses with more foot traffic, provide more public space for the community to gather, and give highschoolers a safer walking route to Park St. It is after all, named Park St, not Parking St.

Now, despite there being plenty of ample parking at the parking garage, there were still plenty of illegally parked cars getting parking citations at this event. There's an important lesson to learn here. Despite the city spending \$9 million to build this parking garage and now over \$1 million to renovate it (<https://www.ipd-global.com/portfolio/alameda-civic-center-parking-garage/?ref=themorningbun.com>, <https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7523153&GUID=5D8CAA41-E5F6-4A1A-B6CF-4892F52F77CA&Options=ID%7CText%7C&Search=civic+center>), many people still refuse to use it because the problem was never that there wasn't enough parking; the problem was that there isn't enough parking immediately next to the destinations people want to reach. I've spoken about this before, but I believe this is worth reiterating: this was proven by a study the city conducted in 2014 that showed that the parking garage is often mostly empty despite all adjacent street parking being at nearly full capacity (<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6394354&GUID=04FBC5AE-DF22-431E-9F3C-9D43CCB3F8A8&Options=ID%7CText>). The solution here, as identified by this study and within later resolutions to accept grant funding, is demand-based parking (<https://alameda.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6394354&GUID=04FBC5AE-DF22-431E-9F3C-9D43CCB3F8A8&Options=ID%7CText>) which means increasing the street parking rates until there are parking spots available. Given that we've accepted grant funding for this purpose and it appears through this ordinance that the parking garage renovations are making progress, I'm really excited and supportive of the city implementing demand-based parking and finally solving a problem identified over 10 years ago. Once we do this, we will finally have available parking on Park and Webster St, better utilization of the expensive parking garage, and far less cars endangering cyclists lives by double parking on bike lanes. All this being said, it is possible that this may cause spillover in some nearby residential streets, so I encourage the city to begin tackling a new parking project, residential parking permits.

The laws of supply and demand tell us something very important about artificial price fixing.

If a good or service is artificially priced lower than its actual market value, the good or service will eventually experience shortages. This happened with groceries in Venezuela during the great recession and is happening with parking in Alameda today. Free parking equals unavailable parking and each step the city takes that acknowledges this fact is step in solving the single biggest complaint the city faces when it tries to do anything from building affordable housing to protecting pedestrians and cyclists to just letting kids play baseball: “but what if there’s not enough parking?”

Thank you,
-Mitch Ball