

**AGENDA ITEM 9**  
**MEETING: November 10, 2016**

**MEMORANDUM**

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**TO: Board Members**

**FROM: Nina Rannells, Executive Director**  
**Kevin Connolly, Manager, Planning and Development**  
**Michael Gougherty, Senior Planner, Planning and Development**

**SUBJECT: Approve Systemwide Parking Fee Program Policy Goals**

**Recommendation**

Adopt the proposed systemwide parking fee program policy goals.

**Background**

This memo proposes goals for a systemwide parking fee program policy for WETA-controlled facilities. If adopted, the goals will help shape parking fee programs at individual terminals and provide guidance as staff works with City partners to develop parking and access initiatives at various system terminals. It is expected that a parking fee program will be introduced at the Harbor Bay terminal in early 2017 as a part of a multi-pronged approach developed by the City of Alameda in conjunction with Harbor Bay residents, the Alameda Transportation Commission and WETA to address terminal access issues and concerns.

The proposed goals are based upon a consultant (Nelson\Nygaard) review of WETA's existing policy and planning documents such as WETA's Access Policy, the *2016 Strategic Plan* and actions taken by the WETA Board at recent meetings. The goals were developed with the understanding that while a parking fee program may be introduced at the Harbor Bay terminal in the near term, the program goals are meant to apply to all existing and future terminals.

**Proposed systemwide parking fee program policy goals**

- 1) **Develop a program that helps to increase the share of passengers who access the system on foot, bike, transit or other alternatives to single-occupancy vehicles.**

WETA's Access Policy calls for increasing the share of passengers who access the system on foot, bike, or transit, and the parking policy should be consistent with this larger system goal. Encouraging access by modes other than private automobiles can produce positive outcomes for the environment, an emphasis in the *2016 Strategic Plan*. A comprehensive approach to terminal access is also a critical prerequisite to expanding service and growing the system's ridership, as stated in WETA's System Expansion Policy.

Parking is a constrained resource for WETA, given the high costs of expanding supplies through land acquisition or the construction of structured parking. In addition, cities often have land use policies that encourage and foster high density residential or commercial development in close proximity to regional transit facilities such as ferry terminals. As such, limited land resources will act as a cap on parking expansion, limiting ridership growth over time if automobiles continue to be the primary access mode. Bicycle and pedestrian capacity is abundant, constrained only by the number of

potential ferry riders who live within a reasonable walk or bike ride of a terminal. Similarly, public transit bus routes accessing the terminals currently have spare capacity available to serve additional commuters transit capacity and frequency can be scaled as demand grows. Accommodating access to the ferries via any of these alternative modes is generally more sustainable, from both the environmental and financial perspective, than accommodating more single-occupancy vehicles.

**2) Develop a parking management system that helps to balance passenger loads and ensure parking availability.**

Parking policies should be designed to help balance passenger loads on peak-period ferry trips, in order to make the best use of the limited vessel capacity. Ridership data indicate that due to growing ridership, the parking lots (as well as nearby on-street parking) at certain terminals, including Harbor Bay, are filling to capacity early in the morning peak period. Given the lack of available parking later in the morning, some riders have adjusted their schedules to depart earlier. This has led to greater ridership on some early ferry departures and fewer riders on later trips, where loads were previously evenly balanced. At terminals with limited parking but all day service, there may not be available midday or early evening parking. Managing parking resources – through fees and/or time-of-day constraints -- has the potential to ensure parking availability throughout the day.

More generally, maintaining adequate parking availability at all terminals at all times can help the system maintain balanced loads between different departure times, helping WETA make the best use of its limited capacity. Therefore, WETA's parking policies should support the administration of a system in which loads are as balanced as possible across the peak, to rationalize utilization and make the most of the operating resources.

**3) Develop fees that strike a balance between managing parking resources, covering system costs and maintaining transit affordability.**

Fee structures should be developed thoughtfully, to ensure that larger policy goals for WETA are realized. A potential negative consequence of parking fee programs is that it drives up the cost of the overall transportation trip which could serve to cap system demand. On the other hand, if fees are not adequate to cover the cost of administering the program or to influence access demand, the parking program risks being ineffective and resulting in a new cost to WETA. Therefore, fees need to achieve a balance, ensuring that sufficient revenues are generated to cover expenses, that parking utilization can be managed carefully and that the expense of taking the ferry is not cost prohibitive.

**4) Invest any surplus revenue generated from parking fees into the WETA system.**

Surplus revenue, consisting of any fees collected above and beyond the revenues required to offset the cost of administering the parking fee program, should be invested exclusively and directly into the WETA system. Use of parking revenues should be kept flexible, in order to allow revenues to be directed toward WETA's highest priority goals, rather than restricted solely to improving landside access.

**5) Ensure that all elements of the parking program are scalable to terminals across the system.**

Payment, wayfinding, and enforcement systems put in place at initial implementation sites (e.g., Harbor Bay) should be implementable at a reasonable cost at all other terminals where WETA owns or manages parking. Contracts with vendors should include provisions allowing for expansion to other terminals. Payment options, online information, wayfinding, and other aspects of the program should be as consistent as possible across terminals to minimize confusion for customers and reduce administrative costs.

**6) Aim for ease of operations, maintenance and enforcement, in order to minimize capital costs and staffing requirements.**

The parking program should be designed to achieve its overall goals while minimizing the capital costs and staff time required to establish, operate and maintain the parking program. Achieving this goal may involve, for example, selecting parking fee schedules and/or regulations, payment options and equipment, parking access and revenue control systems, and/or enforcement methods with an eye to minimizing operations, maintenance and enforcement costs.

**7) Implement parking programs in partnership with local communities.**

Strengthening partnerships is a key focus area identified in the *2016 Strategic Plan*. As such, WETA aims to continue working with cities to both support their overall land use and transportation goals, and to solve any specific areas of concern related to terminal access. While the ferry service provided by WETA helps many cities meet their goals of reducing motor vehicle traffic, congestion and pollution, growing ferry ridership can lead to growing pains. In particular, when terminal lots fill to capacity, parking spillover into residential streets in areas near terminals can be a source of tension with nearby residents. Working with residents and local jurisdictions to address this problem, by supporting local jurisdiction's efforts to implement on-street parking management, such as curb parking pricing and/or residential parking permit districts, can help achieve the goal of maintaining good relationships with WETA's partner jurisdictions.

**Fiscal Impact**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this policy item.

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