



JOEL ANDERSON

SUPERVISOR, SECOND DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: May 5, 2026

12

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

ENHANCING REVENUES BY OPTIMIZING THE USE OF COUNTY PARKING FACILITIES AND SPACES IN DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

San Diego County is home to more than 3.2 million people and hosts approximately 32.5 million visitors annually. Our region features world-famous attractions, landmarks, and venues that provide both tourists and County residents with an abundance of opportunities for entertainment and relaxation. One major location that is heavily visited in our region is the City of San Diego's downtown. This popular destination includes a vibrant waterfront and popular attractions such as the Maritime Museum of San Diego, the historic Star of India, the USS Midway Museum, and the neighborhood of Little Italy. Downtown San Diego is also home to Petco Park – host to San Diego Padres baseball games and major concerts – and the Gaslamp Quarter, which includes many dining and entertainment venues.

As downtown San Diego continues to evolve and grow, vehicle parking has become more challenging for San Diego's downtown visitors and residents. Recent changes to parking rates in this area add new costs to those attending ball games and concerts, visiting museums, or dining out with family or friends, making it less desirable for people to spend time in America's Finest City.

The County Administrative Center (CAC) is located along the waterfront in downtown San Diego surrounded by Waterfront Park. In addition to these facilities, the County owns the parking structures located at the CAC and at the intersection of Cedar and Kettner Streets. Although these County parking facilities are available to the public to use during certain times, more can be done to ensure that the public is fully aware of these affordable parking options and to investigate ways the County could provide an enhanced level of convenience and value for potential customers. As a result of a revised lease agreement with the Padres, the County also has a minimum of 100 additional parking spaces available for public parking in the James R. Mills Building Parking Structure, located one block away from Petco Park. By working with a coalition of downtown San Diego stakeholders, the County can explore new ideas and

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partnerships to help optimize the use of its downtown parking structures and spaces for the benefit of residents and tourists visiting this vibrant and welcoming location.

To achieve this objective, I recommend that the County coordinate with downtown San Diego organizations to identify partnerships and actions to optimize the use of the parking structures and spaces located at the Ash Street Parking Garage, the Cedar-Kettner Parking Structure and the James R. Mills Building Parking Structure. This coalition could include, but is not limited to, representatives of the following: ACE Parking, Metropolitan Transit System, San Diego Padres/Ballpark Events, Petco Park concessions/vendors, Maritime Museum of San Diego, USS Midway Museum, San Diego Downtown Partnership, Gaslamp Quarter Association, Little Italy Association of San Diego, Petco Park concert/event entertainment companies, San Diego Convention Center Corporation, San Diego Tourism Authority, International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 122, and event producers that regularly use Waterfront Park. The County can continue to work with this group to implement feasible changes that would improve parking choices for downtown San Diego visitors and residents.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)
SUPERVISOR JOEL ANDERSON**

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to take the following actions to enhance public awareness and optimize the utilization of the Ash Street Parking Garage, Cedar-Kettner Parking Structure and James R. Mills Building Parking Structure:
 - a. partner with downtown San Diego organizations on outreach opportunities to enhance awareness of parking availability and rates at County parking facilities.
 - b. review current parking rates and the hours available for public parking to determine if any adjustments should be made to optimize the use of the Ash Street Parking Garage, Cedar-Kettner Parking Structure and James R. Mills Building Parking Structure.
 - c. explore incentive opportunities with downtown San Diego organizations to further optimize public use of the Ash Street Parking Garage, Cedar-Kettner Parking Structure and James R. Mills Building Parking Structure, such as free or discounted transit passes, shuttle services, discounted monthly or annual parking packages, and vendor-provided incentives that can be offered to individuals using these parking facilities, and return to the Board for authority to implement identified incentives, to the extent required by law.
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Office to report back to the Board with an annual update on the actions taken to enhance public awareness and optimize the utilization of these County parking facilities and changes in the facility use and revenue received from the preceding year.

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EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The downtown San Diego region has long served as a popular location for both County residents and tourists. As downtown San Diego continues to evolve, vehicle parking has become more challenging for downtown San Diego visitors and residents. Recent changes to parking rates in this area add new costs to those attending a ball game or concert, visiting a museum, or dining out with family or friends, making it less desirable for our constituents and tourists to spend time in America's Finest City.

New downtown parking fee rate structures provide challenges and barriers to individuals looking to enjoy downtown events and venues, including San Diego Padres baseball games, concerts, museums and restaurants. Higher parking fees have a greater impact on those with more marginal income levels. By working with downtown stakeholders, the County can reexamine the operations of our downtown parking structures and spaces to help alleviate the shortage and cost barriers of downtown parking while supporting the businesses and organizations that create a thriving downtown. The recommended actions will help to ensure the availability of more equitable parking options for individuals and families who are more sensitive to higher parking costs.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

By creating new partnerships with downtown stakeholders, the County can ensure that its limited downtown resources are used in a manner that maximizes their impact and efficiency for the public. This collaborative effort reflects a strategic and inclusive approach that prioritizes both short and long-term solutions in the County's efforts to resolve increasingly scarce and unaffordable parking for residents, employees and visitors seeking parking options in downtown San Diego.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for the actions requested are included in the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Operational Plan in the Finance and General Government Group. If approved, this request would result in estimated costs and savings of up to \$50,000 for existing staff time in the Department of General Services funded by existing General Purpose Revenue. Staff will return to the Board if Board authority is required to execute leases, service contracts, and/or amendments. There will be no change in net General Fund costs and no additional staff years. There may be fiscal impacts associated with future related recommendations which staff would return to the Board for consideration and approval.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

By working with San Diego's downtown stakeholders, the County can identify ways to optimize the use of its downtown parking structures and spaces while simultaneously providing alternative, less expensive and more attractive parking choices for our residents and visitors to the San Diego region. This proactive and innovative approach may benefit the numerous businesses and organizations located in downtown San Diego and attract additional customers by maintaining this area as a destination of choice.

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ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

Recent changes to downtown San Diego parking rates have resulted in increases in the costs that residents and visitors pay when parking – if they are able to find increasingly scarce spaces. Some of these rate changes, which include “dynamic” and “surge” pricing, also require payment for parking during days that were previously free. This impacts those parking downtown to attend events such as ball games and concerts and the time they choose to spend there before and after those events.

The County owns two major parking facilities in downtown San Diego and co-owns the James R. Mills Building Parking Structure. These parking structures are located at the County Administration Center (CAC), at the intersection of Cedar and Kettner Streets and one block away from Petco Park. Collectively, these structures provide a minimum of 847 available parking spaces to the public and are managed through County contracts with ACE Parking. Although the location and availability of these facilities may be known to some people visiting nearby venues, the opportunity exists for the County to coordinate with downtown stakeholders to ensure that they and their customers are fully aware of these parking options and to work together to develop and implement actions that will optimize their use.

The primary function of the Ash St. parking garage is to provide parking access to the public, elected officials, CAC employees, and guests/visitors in support of official County business during routine business hours (8:00 am to 5:00 pm). Visitors are allotted 3 hours to park while conducting business with County staff. The primary function of the Cedar-Kettner Parking garage (CKP) is to provide parking for CAC-assigned staff, non-CAC staff conducting County business, and for visitors conducting official County business during routine business hours. Although the garages are not intended to support public parking during routine business hours, they serve as "pay-to-park" public facilities after routine business hours (Monday - Friday) and all day on weekends and holidays.

ACE Parking has managed these three garages since 2015. The current contract became effective in June 2025, and parking rates were purposefully established at or below market rate. CKP allocations are as follows: a) 7% CAC staff assigned parking b) 38% monthly rentals for public (these are at full capacity) and c) 58% visitors which includes 4% ADA and 1% EV charging. CKP on average is at 15% daily capacity with 85% availability as an after-hours “pay-to-park” public facility. Parking spaces at Ash Street are allocated as follows: a) 40% CAC assigned staff, and b) 60% visitors, which includes 8% ADA and 4% EV charging. The Ash Street garage does not have a monthly rental option. The contract includes a revenue sharing component where ACE Parking sends 95% of monthly net parking revenue to the County and retains 5%. The County averages approximately \$60,000/month revenue from this contract.

The James R. Mills Building and parking structure, located at 1255 Imperial Avenue, San Diego is currently owned by the San Diego Regional Building Authority (SDRBA), a joint powers agency composed of the County and the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS). The Health and

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Human Services Agency (HHS) and MTS jointly occupy the 180,000 square foot building and adjacent parking structure. The SDRBA, County and MTS have a lease with the Padres for the use of 50% of County managed parking stalls during games and special events. The revenue generated by this lease is used to offset building operating expenses.

During the March 18, 2026, Board of Supervisors Ad Hoc Fiscal Transparency and Accountability (FTA) Subcommittee meeting, County staff provided information about the current contracts for the County's downtown parking facilities, along with information regarding the operations, availability and revenue received by the County. Based on this data, I believe it would be beneficial for the County to review current parking rates and the hours available for public parking at these locations and to investigate outreach opportunities to enhance awareness of these parking opportunities. This action could help identify changes to optimize the use of these facilities and enhance County revenue.

By working together with a coalition of downtown San Diego organizations comprised of, but not limited to, representatives of the following: ACE Parking, Metropolitan Transit System, San Diego Padres/Ballpark Events, Petco Park concessions/vendors, Maritime Museum of San Diego, USS Midway Museum, San Diego Downtown Partnership, Gaslamp Quarter Association, Little Italy Association of San Diego, Petco Park concert/event entertainment companies, San Diego Convention Center Corporation, San Diego Tourism Authority, International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 122, and event producers that regularly use Waterfront Park, the County can explore new ideas and partnerships to help provide an enhanced level of convenience and value for residents and tourists visiting this vibrant and welcoming location. Actions could range from increasing awareness of the County's parking structure and space availability and locations to improving transportation options from our parking structures to destinations such as the USS Midway Museum, the Gaslamp Quarter and Petco Park.

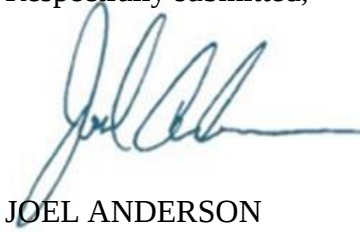
To achieve these objectives, I recommend that the County coordinate the formation of a coalition comprised of downtown San Diego stakeholders to identify partnerships and actions to optimize the use of the parking structures and spaces located at the Ash Street Parking Garage, the Cedar-Kettner Parking Structure and the James R. Mills Building Parking Structure. The County can continue to work with this stakeholder group to implement feasible changes that would improve parking choices for downtown San Diego visitors and residents. This initiative can help keep parking costs affordable for San Diego residents and those choosing to frequent downtown venues when visiting America's Finest City.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

This item supports the Equity (Economic Opportunity) and Community (Engagement) initiatives within the County of San Diego's 2026-2031 Strategic Plan by advancing opportunities for economic growth and development to all individuals and the community, and inspiring civic engagement by providing information, programs, public forums and other avenues that increase access for individuals or communities to use their voice, their vote, and their experience to impact change.

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Joel Anderson', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

JOEL ANDERSON
Supervisor, Second District

ATTACHMENT(S)
N/A