

1/28/19

Brett Lee, Mayor  
City of Davis  
23 Russell Blvd., Suite 1  
Davis, CA 95616

Dear Mayor Lee,

Since its inception, the Davis Chamber of Commerce has had a commitment to the local community. Our Chamber is a vibrant business organization which reflects the vitality, education, community involvement, and quality of life characteristics of our locale. With over 500-member business, it is an invaluable resource to individuals, organizations and businesses, offering opportunities for growth, education, professional seminars and networking.

At the core of our City is a friendly, lively downtown business district. Residents and visitors alike enjoy the variety and quality of our shopping, dining and cultural pursuits. The University of Davis and the downtown are seamlessly joined, and activities, events and people flow effortlessly between them. The Davis Chamber see access to the downtown as critically important as it is the epicenter of what makes Davis the great community it is. This is why the Davis Chamber of Commerce has carefully considered the current Paid Parking Proposal that the Council will be voting on and has decided to provide strong objection to the current proposal as presented and respectfully request that you vote *NO* on the current proposal.

The Davis Chamber does not believe the proposal will enhance the unique character of the City or enhance downtown business vitality. We are equally skeptical that it will meet the objectives laid out by City planners to “increase parking availability.” Additionally, the proposal as presented to the community, does not do anything to address the real issue that must be addressed of increasing the supply of new parking spots.

**The proposal does not enhance the unique character of the City.** At the core of what makes Davis, Davis is our downtown. We have a robust set of restaurants, nightlife, museums, the Farmers Market and business that make up our vibrant downtown. The downtown is an essential place for the citizens of our City to meet and enjoy what it means to be part of Davis. It serves as an essential part of the retail and business community and the current proposal will provide a systemic deterrent from people enjoying this essential part of Davis.

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We encourage the City to revisit the proposal and come up with a different solution that does not detract accessibility from the unique character of the City.

**The proposal does not enhance downtown business vitality.** It is the Davis Chambers' strong belief; the proposal will adversely impact the downtown business community. In the City owns words it believes that the proposal will "change people's behavior." We agree. Unfortunately, many small businesses, especially retail business in downtown, do not have the financial margins to survive the unproven impacts of the City proposal. It is our belief, a parking fee as proposed will both deter people from coming downtown, will encourage them to shop in other areas of the community or drive to neighboring communities with big box stores with free parking. All will have a negative impact to the downtown business community. With this proposal in place, it will now pencil out for people to drive to neighboring Cities. As the DAVIS Chamber, we would rather City planners encourage people to come to our City rather than go to other communities to shop and work with that business community.

**The proposal does not meet the objective laid out by City leadership to "increase parking availability."** We believe the proposal will have the opposite impact of encouraging people who do come downtown to move regularly. We believe it is likely visitors will find a parking spot and stay in that location for extended periods of time and not move as assumed by planners. This is most likely to be found with employees of companies and the University who will be forced to pay for a parking spot but will have the capacity to remain in that spot for an unlimited period of time. Based upon the way its structured, as compared to University paid parking, it is easy to see how people could find an economic advantage parking in Downtown versus on the Campus. Additionally, those who don't want to pay but are willing to walk a distance, will park in areas that are not downtown but are residential areas.

**The proposal does not meet the needed objective of increasing the supply of new parking spots.** The City of Davis has not added new parking spots, in any real significant way, for a substantial amount of time despite the fact both the City and the University populations have grown dramatically. This fact must be addressed directly by the City if it ever hopes to deal with the parking issue downtown. We would encourage the City to look for a solution of new parking spaces before asking the Community to pay an additional downtown parking tax. We believe a *direct nexus* must exist to more new spaces before the community should be asked to support any parking proposal.

For the above reasons, the Davis Chamber of Commerce respectfully ask the City Council to **VOTE NO** on the current Paid Parking Proposal.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Stiver  
Board Chair  
Davis Chamber of Commerce