



**CITY OF FORT BRAGG**

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**COUNCIL COMMITTEE ITEM SUMMARY REPORT**

**MEETING DATE:** February 8, 2017  
**TO:** Public Works & Facilities Committee  
**FROM:** Tom Varga, Director of Public Works  
**AGENDA ITEM TITLE:** **RECEIVE REPORT AND MAKE RECOMMENDATION TO CITY COUNCIL REGARDING TIMED PARKING IN SKUNK TRAIN DEPOT PARKING LOT**

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**ISSUE:**

In 1996, the City and the owners of the Skunk Train partnered to construct the current Skunk Train Depot parking lot at the base of Laurel Street using funding from the Fort Bragg Redevelopment Agency. In 2008, the City entered into a 10-year lease with Mendocino Railway (aka the Skunk Train) for a portion of the parking lot in order to ensure that it remained available as public parking to serve the downtown area. From time to time discussions have taken place regarding the desirability of establishing permit or limited-time parking on all or some portion of the Skunk Train parking lot.

**SUMMARY:**

The Parking Lease Agreement (Attachment 1) between the Skunk Train and the City is attached for reference. Section 4, on page 2, describes how the parking lot is to be used. In accordance with the lease:

- The City may limit public parking to two hours within the lease area.
- The City has the right to install parking meters.
- Skunk Train employees and customers are exempt from any parking restrictions if they display a date stamped placard.
- Fifty spaces in the parking lot, (outside of the City's lease area), are reserved for Skunk Train employees and customers.
- The City has the right to reserve up to 10 spaces for parking permits. See Attachment 2 for a sketch of the City's lease area.

In 2011, the City removed parking meters, eliminated its permit parking program in the downtown area, and opened the City Hall parking lot to public parking at any time, in order to provide more flexibility and to encourage the employees of downtown businesses to park off-

street. This has been successful and most City lots are fully parked during the daytime even during the off-season.

In 2012, the Finance & Administration Committee reviewed the Skunk Train Depot parking lot lease at the request of the Skunk Train's manager, Mr. Robert Pinoli. None of the potential modifications to the lease agreement were made and no further action was taken.

As a point of information, the 22 parking spaces adjacent to the north side of the Depot Mall are not part of the Skunk Train parking lot or associated City lease area. However, given the proximity of the Skunk Train parking lot to the Depot Mall parking lot, they have been invited to participate in this discussion.

At its meeting on November 9, 2016, the Public Works & Facilities Committee considered the question of implementing timed parking within the portion of the Skunk Train Depot leased by the City. Staff is looking for a public discussion and guidance regarding the possibility of implementing timed parking throughout the leased portion of the Depot parking lot (excluding North Coast Brewing Company sub-lease). The purpose of the limitations would be to ensure that parking spaces in this very centrally-located lot turned over during the day enhancing parking availability for visitors to downtown Fort Bragg. This issue has not had a public dialogue for five years and it is timely to revisit the topic to gauge perceptions about parking demands and availability and to consider whether timed parking in the Skunk Train parking lot might help to address any issues.

At the November Public Works & Facilities Committee meeting, an initial discussion began with a consideration of implementing a 4-hour limit as Mendocino Railway sees this as an appropriate time that works well with the length of current Skunk Train excursions. The Committee concurred that this would be a reasonable time limit. Historically, the Council had discussed implementation of a 3-hour limit to provide adequate time for most visitors to the Skunk Train and downtown while still allowing for sufficient parking turnover. The intention is to discourage people from parking their vehicles all day and monopolizing the premium retail parking spaces. Part of the idea of implementing timed parking is to provide for sufficient, convenient parking for visitors to the downtown – especially during busier times of the year. While not essential, a consistent timed parking limit for Skunk Train passengers and downtown shoppers/visitors is desirable as it would make enforcement much simpler.

Other matters brought up during the November Committee meeting are summarized as follows:

- During public comment, the Committee was told that parking meters should not be installed in downtown to keep the area shopper friendly.
- The matter of people living/camping in their vehicles should be kept in mind as a possible enforcement issue.

Given that most of the parking lot is under the control of the City, enforcement of timed parking limits would be a City obligation. This task would be performed by the seasonal parking enforcement officer during the summer months and by community service officers during the remainder of the year.

The Skunk Train Depot parking lot is covered by the current Master Traffic Resolution and Section 10.20.035 of the Fort Bragg Municipal Code regarding parking regulations on private property. These code provisions authorize the City's Police Department to enforce the regulations.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Committee review and discuss the idea of timed parking within the City's leased parking area of the Skunk Train Depot parking lot and provide direction, as needed.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Parking Lease Agreement with the Mendocino Railway
2. Sketch of the Skunk Train Depot Parking Lot

**NOTIFICATIONS:**

Mr. Robert Pinolli, Mendocino Railway

Mr. Mark Ruedrich, North Coast Brewing Company

Mr. Jeffry Tavelli, Chernoff's Jewelers/Depot Mall Manager

Central Business District contact list