City Council Budget meeting 9/6/16

My name is Debora Dobias and I live at 100 Atlantic Avenue. I am a member of TAPS, which is a group of residents who have been working on the parking issues in our area. TAPS and our supporters in this room will take under 10 minutes of your time tonight. We respectfully request that you make sure there is budget funding for professional help to move quickly toward parking solutions.

Please read our petition to see why this funding is needed.  We emailed the links to you for the petition that has over 940 signatures and also the 35 letters. They are signed by people from all over the city:  residents, property owners, business owners, candidates, community leaders, and even a developer and architect.   There are hundreds of comments there.

TAPS is hearing from people about the worsening parking issues all over the city.   This is not just about Downtown and the solutions wouldn't be limited to Downtown.

We did our research before contacting you to make sure there were solutions. We hired Mike Kodama to do a preliminary evaluation of the parking issues. He’s a highly experienced parking planner and Transit Oriented Development expert. In his evaluation, he noted key things that need to change in order to start fixing our City’s parking issues. He showed us solutions that have worked in other cities and discussed potential grants to help create and implement a Parking Plan.

The Planning Commission understood the severity of the parking issue and wanted to begin to study solutions.    They requested a study session on parking twice this past year but were told that they didn't have the funding to acquire the background information.    They understood the urgency created by the many large buildings that are already in the planning phase.   The success of our entire area could depend on it.   If the new buildings won’t have enough parking for their own use, then nothing that any of us can do will stop the parking issue from getting worse as our city grows. The Public Works director has also discussed the need for the data that a parking study could provide.

The first step is the budget. I request that you move to include funding in the budget for a professional comprehensive Parking Study and Plan.

My name is Sharon Brown and I live at­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I respectfully request that you make sure there is budget funding for professional help to move quickly toward parking solutions.

The City’s actions have created cruising for parking. It’s no small matter that this cruising typically lasts 20 minutes to an hour for each person coming home, 365 days a year. With 60% of Long Beach working outside of our city, this daily cruising causes increased traffic, air pollution, safety issues, and lost revenue for our businesses.

The parking issues in the Downtown and Alamitos Beach areas have spread for a long distance into neighboring areas because none of us had parking to spare. We hear from residents and businesses are experiencing and seeing the damage to our area increase rapidly. We also hear from people who are pro-development but think the city is actually ruining its own chances to develop this area. This is from a letter we received recently from an Architect:

“Parking in Long Beach has created tension in our neighborhood and with other tenants in our building, creating an anti-growth attitude. This is detrimental to the future success of a vibrant downtown, which is a distant dream now and looks to be even more remote as the parking issues increase.”

The Downtown Plan was passed on the premise of “park once”, then walk, bike, and use public transportation. However, the Downtown Plan has some components missing like a plan for the “park once” part when it comes to residents or their guests. The City’s data shows that residents use transit, biking, and walking at a high rate already but still have a car. The reality is they cannot bike or take transit everywhere they need to go. The Downtown Plan was also missing data to support the new parking requirements.

I request that you move to include funding in the budget for a professional comprehensive Parking Study and Plan.

My name is Jeffrey Thompson and I live at xxx. I am the president of the Alamitos Beach Neighborhood Association’s Parking Task Force. I am also a member of TAPS. I respectfully request that you make sure there is budget funding for professional help to quickly move toward parking solutions.

TAPS is in favor of increasing housing in Long Beach and promoting multiple forms of transportation. However, by not planning for parking, Long Beach won’t be able to compete with nearby cities for business or residents because those cities are carefully planning for parking in their development plans.

Over the years, City leaders and staff told people that the parking issue is too big and expensive to fix. The City has worked on a few parts of the problem but ignored the rest. Our City has not even had a dedicated Parking Manager for years, which is rare for a city this size. Now this is a City that people want to leave because of the parking issues.

The good news for our city is that there are new solutions that have been used successfully in other cities our size. This is why a Comprehensive Parking Plan is essential for our city. Making a few smaller changes is good but cannot solve this problem. A city this size needs a trained parking manager to take over all parking duties. We need a comprehensive Parking Plan that’s based on data and professional evaluation.

A plan for our future should be based on data and facts. People in our area have always chosen to keep their cars despite the inconvenience. Most of the buildings in our area do not come with a dedicated parking spot, yet people move here. Many homes have 2 cars because 2 incomes are needed to pay the housing costs. Data shows that people in our area are already taking transit at a high rate but many also choose to have a car because transit cannot meet their needs. We can give you many reasons why assuming that people will give up their cars doesn’t reflect the reality of our area. The bottom line is adequate parking needs to be included in any plans.

We formally request that you move to include funding in the budget for a professional comprehensive Parking Study and Plan.