

HBCC Summary **Free Holiday Parking Program**

10/20/25

The Chamber understands the City Council is evaluating a reduction in the duration of the free holiday parking program from four weeks to three weeks. We appreciate the opportunity to provide data insights, and would acknowledge that accurate, empirical evidence directly linking free parking to downtown business sales is difficult to obtain due to limitations in available data.

Sales tax reporting is not possible to isolate December retail performance since it is not reported monthly. To compare business activity before and after the inception of free parking, we would need monthly sales data from the time before the program was implemented, which is not publicly available. Asking downtown businesses for historical sales data is not realistic, especially in large enough numbers to be statistically relevant. We can however, piece together a story from the following:

Foot Traffic Trends & Sales Tax Trends:

Using Q4 data and a [Placer.ai](#) report that the Chamber provided to the City in Sept 2024:

- Q4 total sales tax: \$312K
 - \$208K (downtown) + \$104K (Pier Plaza)
- December foot traffic: 35% of Q4
- Extrapolated sales tax:
 - November: \$100K
 - December: \$109K
 - January: \$81K
- Sales tax changes:
 - +9% November/December
 - -26% January

While we can't isolate free parking as the sole driver, December sees a meaningful uptick that aligns with both shopping behavior and holiday events. The trend is consistent - downtown is most active in December, and this activity aligns with the free parking period.

Business Community Feedback:

We surveyed downtown businesses to rank their preferred 3-week free parking window. Results show from 42 responses that no single 3-week window works for everyone, emphasizing the need for the full 4-week program to accommodate diverse business models (retail, food/beverage, services).

Timeframe	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice
Nov. 28 - Dec. 19	45%	10%	45%
Dec. 1 - Dec. 21	30%	48%	22%
Dec. 3 - Dec. 24	56%	19%	24%

Recommendation:

The Chamber recommends the City Council maintain the current 4-week free holiday parking program. This provides the most inclusive support for all types of businesses, is in alignment with the City's economic and tourism goals, and shows a proven uptick in downtown activity during that period.

If the City is still considering a change, we respectfully request clear advance communication to our impacted businesses. We appreciate the partnership and shared goal of keeping Hermosa Beach thriving during the holiday season.

Best,
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The following are anecdotal comments from businesses who participated in our survey.

Q: Historically, have you noticed a change in sales and/or foot traffic during the holiday parking program? Please provide any information that could be helpful (i.e. sale % etc..).

- *It's a busy time during the holidays and see more people during this period.*
- *Yes. There is a noticeable increase in both foot traffic and sales during the complimentary parking period. While exact percentages vary year to year depending on weather and events, our store consistently sees more casual walk-ins and impulse purchases during the weeks when parking is free. The reduced parking stress clearly encourages visitors to spend more time downtown and explore multiple shops and restaurants instead of rushing in and out. It's an important seasonal boost for small businesses like mine and helps sustain momentum during what should be our busiest time of year.*
- *yes, a lot of people travel during the holidays. regular clients are not coming in as often but I also get new clients coming in that are visiting. If I have more foot traffic, I only have 5 parking spots and I rely on the metered parking for the rest of my clients when my spots are full*
- *Yes people love that the city gives back over the holidays by offering free parking. I even let clients in LA know come by parking free all of December! It's awesome!*
- *doesn't impact my business above trader joes*
- *Yes. We hear it over and over every year. People come to downtown Hermosa when they normally wouldn't because the parking is free.*
- *Yes there is a significant increase in foot traffic for shopping in the area*
- *our sales for December are better by 10% than the previous months leading up to the complimentary parking period.*
- *Yes guests will say I specifically shop more in Hermosa over the holidays because of the benefit of the free parking.*
- *I don't have specifics and there are other factors but I do believe it helps.*

- *Yes, people shop more and go out more at that period. I would say 30%+*
- *do not take away the free holiday parking. please extend as long as possible. this is a hermosa tradition. lets not give Holiday shoppers a reason to shop elsewhere*
- *Yes way more foot traffic*
- *My salon is much busier during the holiday season and most clients that come in stay for a few hours so they are very happy with the free holiday parking.*
- *Yes , parking is already difficult and rates are increasing so it's time to continue to give back to the community -who helps us thrive and supports small businesses*
- *in the period between black friday and xmas day, with the free parking in place, business has been consistently good over the years. i fear what would happen if it was cut short even a week, as none of those dates above make sense to that particular shopping time and what neighboring beach towns are doing.*
- *The holiday season is our truly make or break it season in retail. Any sort of incentive to bring folks to our shops and area is a win. While a few say they don't rely on free parking to shop I would challenge that by asking how many people are choosing to go to large box stores and national chains because they have wide open parking? The holiday shopping season can not be limited to just 2 or 3 weeks. The holiday shopping season begins Thanksgiving and ends on Christmas Eve. Asking us to choose to only have three weeks is bad business and telling the community that the city does not value its local shop/dining places. For the past 2-3 years we've sat with extensive vacancy after vacancy giving the city bad PR that they are not business friendly and not helping people open up dreams in town. Being scrouges during the holiday season also shows the city is not business friendly. And yet a few in the city claim they are and even ran on their political platform they were business friendly. Such a shame to see us having to beg the city to have a bit of holiday cheer and help the business community out, My thoughts might be all over the place but that is due to the fact that it's frustrating we have to appeal for the city to act in good cheer and faith rather than the disdain it feels like the city has at the root of all towards the business community*
- *The holidays are make or break for our business, approximately 40% of our sales for the year come in November and December. Any dip in sales for these months would be extremely detrimental to our business. Retailers need the strongest holiday season possible to make their year. I can't overstate enough how important the free holiday parking program is to keep hermosa competitive and top of mind. We, the businesses and the city, need to be providing the very best experience for customers coming to*

Hermosa. Please remember how many other places there are to shop and dine, and also that our Hermosa businesses cannot make it on sales from Hermosa locals alone, we need to attract customers from our neighboring cities.

- *We see foot traffic all throughout the holiday month starting after Thanksgiving.*
- *Yes, 25% more traffic when parking is free*
- *Yes! It corresponds with our sales greatly, clients LOVE having parking and it eases their stress during the holidays to buy more*
- *Yes. It's much more "bustling" & gives incentives to folks to run errands locally at their leisure instead of ordering online.*
- *No, just more difficult to find parking*
- *no, but as a consumer and supporter of small businesses, it does make the shopping experience so much easier.*
- *We are busier with the program in effect.*
- *We definitely notice an increase in foot traffic. November and December is where we make 40% of all our income for the year! It will really effect our next year if November and December are not good.*
- *The free parking helps bring people in, and keeps people on their seats ordering more as they're not worried about finishing before their meter is up.*

Q: If you have heard feedback from customers regarding the complimentary parking program, please provide some anecdotal information.

- *Many of my customers have expressed how much they appreciate the ability to park for a short period of time for free during the holidays. My storefront is located at the corner of Hermosa and Pier, an area where parking is often extremely limited. Several customers have mentioned that in the past they've chosen not to stop by simply because they couldn't find parking nearby. The complimentary parking program has made it easier for them to visit, shop, and explore the area without the stress of finding or paying*

for parking—especially during such a busy season. It's a small gesture that makes a big difference in encouraging foot traffic and supporting local businesses

- *Our customers love the free parking initiative. They have stated over and over that it makes the hectic world of holiday shopping a lot easier. A lot of our clients like to pull in quickly, shop and move onto their next task. The red holiday bags get everyone excited and in the mood to holiday shop. This also shows our clients that we value them and that the city values them and that we are encouraging foot traffic to come and support Hermosa Beach businesses. Failure to do so when our neighboring cities are doing very like-minded things would really put a bad light on Hermosa Beach*
- *The holiday parking is a fun way to give a little back to our brick and mortar stores, it gives locals from neighboring cities incentive to pop over to shop the stores not available in their area. My shop is exclusive in Hermosa, so I depend on foot traffic from other local beach cities to shop here. The fact all the cities participate makes it easier for clients to remember to jump in their car and park outside to pop in and make a purchase. I don't think you should make this complicated by limiting it to 3 weeks.*
- *customers appreciate the complimentary parking during the holidays and it would be a shame for it to be reduced or taken away*
- *Yes - consistently every year. People state directly that they are inclined NOT to come shop downtown Hermosa because of the parking. When we can promote that the parking is FREE, they are then more willing to consider DTHB. The reality is downtown Hermosa is NOT a shopping destination. We are in a battle for fewer customers these days with all the surrounding cities and a revitalized MB Mall. We absolutely MUST give people every reason to think that shopping DTHB is easy and a great place to spend some time and \$\$\$.*
- *Customers are always pleasantly surprised when they come to the area for their first holiday and realize they don't have to worry about parking. I would expect to see local residents a little upset that the tradition has changed.*
- *Yes, Our customers begin asking when it will take effect as early as October and comment on the stress is relieved during the Christmas shopping period.*
- *It's the right thing to do. It's the least you can do.*
- *Guests love it and look forward to the gift of free parking*
- *Our customers expect it every year. Why are you reducing it to only 3 weeks. That seems chintzy.*

- *They like it. It's like a Christmas gift from the city and the businesses. Parking is very expensive.*

- *Yes everyone I have spoke to are in favor of keeping it. They all say they would be extremely disappointed if it did not happen*

- *My customers are always so happy to have the free parking during the holidays. They say it makes it so much easier to come to my business and relieves the stress of parking in that busy area. The clients at my salon would be upset if the free holiday parking was taken away. It's always been such a nice thing that the city gives back to our community and definitely boosts business in the off season.*

- *For our annual special event, The Santa Stroll, our participants have always appreciated the opportunity to use the free holiday parking to make it easy to visit the downtown area of Hermosa Beach and participate in our annual fundraiser!*

- *We are largely unaffected by holiday shopping. I'm sure free is nice if they are coming anyway.*

- *Customers definitely comment how great it is and easy it makes running in to grab last minute gifts if they don't have to stress about the meters. I have also over heard folks in passing say how it's such a cute program the City offers to the community at large.*

- *Our customers love when the red bags go on the meters, they come in and mention it right away, they feel it's a really generous gift! When we post on social media it's always one of the most liked posts of the year. Our customers have many other options for shopping, but the red bags truly give a festive feel to downtown, and contribute greatly to a happy shopping and dining atmosphere.*

- *Habits are EVERYTHING!! We have residents and visitors alike who come to Hermosa during the holidays after Thanksgiving and enjoy our downtown dining, shopping, and services. Changing this pattern and not aligning with neighboring cities like Manhattan who are offering four weeks of Complimentary Holiday Parking is not a good idea. For those that want to take advantage of Black Friday, free parking is a major incentive to come to Hermosa. Holiday parties during the month of December draw customers to entertain at our restaurants before Xmas. And let's not forget those that like looking their best...our service businesses attract visitors as well. I believe we can and should advocate for the full 4 weeks. If our businesses want this program they need to weigh in by either calling, emailing or showing up in person. It will truly take a village!*

- *Everyone cherishes the time of year when parking is free and it's one less expense they have to worry about during an already very expensive season*
- *This is HUGE for them, it boosts our customer base*
- *yes.. They come and stay in our community longer for both shopping and dining.*
- *While it is a nice gesture, our patients have a more difficult time finding parking & making it on time for their appointments*
- *It is stated by EVERY client that 4 weeks is preferable for shopping, eating, and personal care services. SHOULD BE BLACK FRI THRU XMAS EVE.*
- *They are very appreciative. Times are tough, groceries are high, the tariffs have really raised prices everywhere. In the past, our customers have commented how nice it is to be able to shop with peace of mind and not have to worry about getting a ticket if we are busy.*
- *The free parking program is always nice to have and doesn't adversely affect our business in any way*

Please share any other feedback and opinions regarding the complimentary parking program and its impact on your business.

- *It's a great program and asset to the community. Would hate to see it reduced.*
- *The complimentary parking program is one of the few tangible ways the City can directly support local businesses during the critical holiday season. It sends a positive message that Hermosa Beach values its small business community and wants to make downtown accessible and welcoming for shoppers. Even a short period of free parking can make the difference between someone deciding to stop in or driving elsewhere. In a time when online shopping continues to grow, removing barriers like difficult parking helps us compete and keeps spending local. I strongly encourage the City to continue — and ideally expand — this program as a proven, low-cost investment in our community's economic vitality.*
- *It's a shame that we have to fight for this every year when this was a city initiative. This is something that we are going to want every single year moving forward. I feel that if we have to choose, focusing on free parking up to Christmas Eve is the best option.*

- *It would be great to see the program go from Thanksgiving until New Years. It is also confusing if one beach city is doing 3 weeks and the others are doing more. It makes a difference.*
- *I really don't think we need to be upsetting the city both business owners and local residents, making Hermosa the grinch town who took away free parking for the holidays for the sake of one week of meter money... especially when the city can't get it together to approve planning for Beckers to have a tenant. If you want to figure out how to make money, fill vacancy's. It's been dead space next to my shop for 2.5 years not a great look... and you're concerned about a week of meter parking at the slowest time of year. Beckers is the center of Pier Av, and it's empty. It's basically an entire front block of darkness. Just think our survey time would be better spent looking for a tenant and making sure every shop on the street had a lovely window for passers by to enjoy and want to come back to shop :) just a thought.*
- *It's a necessity. No question. We're already more challenged than our neighboring shopping districts. We have to compete with them and making the parking more appealing is a simple and decent first step.*
- *It has little impact on us but I believe the impact on local shops is much larger and makes holiday shopping for consumers a lot more enjoyable so that parking is not one more thing they have to be concerned with.*
- *the complimentary parking this is a tradition that our customers cherish as a convenience and motivation to shop locally. Our local businesses in Hermosa Beach have come to rely on the free parking period as a necessity to boost sales and survive in an increasingly business difficult environment in our city.*
- *The complimentary holiday parking is something that all of our guests look forward to. It also encourages a holiday spirit throughout the city. To do away with the program after all of these years would really be a shame.*
- *Think it should be from December 1st to December 26th. t's the least the city can do for the town that pays their salaries.*
- *I am late to work constantly due to lack of parking availability even though I pay for a pass. This leads to finding street parking that I have to pay every single day and if I'm unable to pay the meter in time I am often written up....*

- *As a business owner and homeowner, I encourage complimentary parking in Hermosa Beach!*

- *The free holiday parking makes me and my clients feel appreciated and it definitely brightens the holiday spirit in our community. When I see the red bags on the meters it feels like a special time of year and my clients and I truly appreciate the special holiday gift that this city gives back to its businesses and visitors. I feel like it makes Hermosa Beach a great welcoming city for tourists and residents.*

- *The free holiday parking program makes it easier for customers to shop small and shop local by being able to quickly stop by a store or pop in without worrying about the meters. The free holiday parking also incentivizes customers to stay in the area after their initial stop to continue supporting the local businesses.*

- *I saw the council work on this Tuesday. My impression, without them saying it, was that it must not be very important if no one could be in chambers to advocate for it. Dave did great on zoom! But in person is key for this one. There must be some data somewhere from one year. The data will not change year to year so one study should do it.*

- *Clients appreciate the parking and come downtown to shop small instead of Amazon ! Is Manhattan beach also shortening their parking tradition timelines ?*

- *we absolutely need the 4 weeks from 11/27-12/25. i can't imagine any of those other 3 week time frame scenarios making sense to businesses or customers alike. it would be a great detriment to my business if we didn't have it in place. everyone is watching their \$, and if they have to pay the highest parking rate in hermosa, AND we have less shopping establishments than mb or rb, why would they come here??*

- *The holiday parking program is a wonderful holiday tradition, a generous gift from the city to it's residents, businesses and all other customers who choose to come shop and dine in Hermosa. As such the city should be proud of and help promote how wonderful they are for giving this generous gift! We always make sure to promote it and thank the city of Hermosa Beach. Please keep 4 weeks of holiday parking on the calendar beginning Thanksgiving weekend through Christmas Day. And please consider approving this tradition for 2 or 3 years this time, so that your retailers do not have to have this fight every year. In 17 years our position on the issue hasn't changed, free holiday parking is essential to a successful shopping season downtown Hermosa.*

- *It's essential that we show a united front. I support 4 weeks of Complimentary Holiday Parking. If you think three weeks are going to save the city money, think again. The City*

will find other ways to spend it and not necessarily use the funds to stimulate our commercial areas. At the last Council meeting, they approved 570k in bonuses and incentives for six staff members over the next three years. This is just the beginning. Considering the City keeps saying we have upcoming fiscal issues and we need to make cuts. Yes, they will may cuts. The businesses and residents will feel it first. If we want to remain competitive in this environment, we need to hold the line and weigh in on that night. It will make a difference!

- *The parking program is HUGE for us. It helps us maintain clients and grow our customer base. It's a huge way to get clients to come to OUR location.*
- *Difficult for patients to find parking.*
- *The program brings new people to the city for shopping, services and food.... we see an increase in new clients during this time.*
- *Please give us the whole 4 weeks free parking! We need to drive business to Hermosa Beach. With Manhattan Beach offering free parking and free parking at the malls - we wont have a chance.*
- *I see no reason to change what hermosa did in previous years, other than a shameless cash grab by giving more parking tickets*
- *It helps customers take more time to shop*