

From: noreply@cityofsalem.net on behalf of obadahjbaird@gmail.com
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Subject: Submission
Date: Sunday, June 22, 2025 9:31:27 PM
Attachments: [ATT00001.bin](#)

Your Name	Obadiah J Baird
Your Email	obadahjbaird@gmail.com
Your Phone	9712358468
Street	2070 Church St. NE
City	Salem
State	OR
Zip	97301
Message	<p>Testimony and comment on item 3.2a My name is Obadiah Baird and I, along with my family, own The Book Bin in downtown Salem. My family owns the building that our store occupies as well. As business and building owners we have been a central part of Salem's downtown going back to 1995, and strive everyday to contribute to literacy and culture in our community. I understand that the city council will be discussing changes to the planned implementation of paid parking in Downtown Salem at the next council meeting. I wish that I could be there to stand up in front of you and speak, but unfortunately I am in Sacramento on business this week. Instead I am writing to express my concerns with the planned current implementation of paid parking, to encourage you to delay that implementation, and to reconsider aspects of the plan. I look around downtown Salem right now and see a shopping district on the edge, store fronts remain empty far longer than they should, and while some businesses have opened many have closed. I hear from my customers that they have concerns about shopping downtown and adding the barrier of paid parking will, I am convinced, be the final straw for many of them. When I have spoken to councilors in the past they have expressed certainty that paid parking will not affect business, but I don't hear any downtown business owners feeling that way, and many of us are deeply worried about the impact it will have. On a personal level my business has seen costs skyrocket and new competition from a chain store located out at the mall, with plenty of free parking. A drop in sales of 5-10% may kill my business, and from talking to fellow business owners, there will be others. I ask you to consider whether you truly believe that you can guarantee that won't happen? I believe that there is hope for a strong future in downtown. More and more residential units are going up downtown, and as we build a customer base within walking distance my concerns about paid parking will diminish. Unfortunately, I think you are getting the cart ahead of the horse, and a downtown without the appeal of local businesses also loses its appeal for renters. There is a symbiotic relationship and killing downtown business will have a huge negative impact across the board. I am already seeing signage going up for the paid parking, and I am already hearing confusion from customers based on the fact that the signage doesn't reflect current parking requirements, and won't until parking kiosks are installed. This strikes me</p>

as a very backward order in which to proceed. I am already hearing from customers and friends that they will be unwilling to pay to park downtown. I am also concerned that I have heard no concrete plans for how the money raised will be used to benefit downtown businesses, only vague promises. I was also told by a councilor previously that the parking tax wouldn't continue after meters went in, so you will pardon me if I am uncomfortable with vague promises. It is very reasonable for business owners to expect a better rollout than we are seeing and to want better answers. Along with these concerns I am worried about the lack of parking options for downtown workers aside from overpriced garage permits. The cost of these permits fail to meet the economic realities of downtown workers and are why they have continued to park on the street, the real cause of parking issues downtown. Parking meters take away all possible parking (even if the option they have been using wasn't legal) and offers no realistic replacement. I think it is highly unethical to try to punish workers and profit off them while they work to survive. I would like to see the implementation of paid parking set aside until these reasonable requests can be met. 1. A clear plan for how the new parking money will be used in ways that benefit the downtown businesses that bring customers downtown. These should be clearly communicated to downtown business, property owners and the downtown community, in a way that invites and incorporates feedback. 2. A phased rollout with one hour of free parking on the meters initially while our customers get used to the new downtown parking. 3. Businesses in downtown are working to get the word out that parking garages will still offer free parking in the downtown core. The city should be assisting or even taking the lead on this effort. 4. If the parking tax is still going to be collected alongside metered parking, those funds should be used to provide parking permits for downtown workers, so they have a workable parking option. Thank you for your consideration. I hope that you will do what is best for Downtown Salem. Sincerely, Obadiah Baird The Book Bin