

Email to Heritage Real Estate Company regarding Nob Hill Shopping Center

September 4, 2026

Dear Jim and Debra,

As you know, we placed the matter of parking at the Nob Hill Shopping Center on the agenda for our board meeting September 1, 2026 at the request of a number of members. Over 60 residents, business owners, employees, and community stakeholders attended. The community expressed consternation and deep concern. At the conclusion of the agenda item our board voted unanimously to send you this statement with our recommendations. After the statement is a summary of what we heard.

To begin, we are grateful for your appreciation of historic places, your reputation for preserving historic character, and support for local arts and culture. In keeping with that you are undertaking stucco renovation and replacing awnings. Thank you.

We recognize that parking management presents challenges and that a property owner has the right to manage as they see best.

At our meeting many noted that the La Montanita Co-op location has housed a community grocery store since the Center was completed in 1947. It is a priceless community resource. Many noted that business is way down for the Co-op since the parking policy change. The community dreads the idea of losing it, which would create a food desert.

All the stores at the Center are valued. No one knows of any retail center where customers have to pay to shop. That makes the current policy very unpalatable: "Could you imagine if Sprouts or ABQ Uptown charged for parking?!"

People stated over and over that the Center holds a special place in the heart of the Nob Hill community. For 79 years it has served as a casual gathering place where people could buy their everyday needs. People would like for you to consider this as you identify new tenants.

We have some recommendations that could benefit everyone.

- Go back to free parking which has succeeded for 79 years
- If not, that then at least implement 1½ hour free parking to accommodate shoppers but prevent long term parking.
- Provide free or reduced-rate parking for employees.
- Meet with the Association and Main Street in the near term about parking and a successful environment for businesses and community.

The message we heard over and over: “Read the room. Heritage can be seen as a community partner but at present it is not.”

People are eager for constructive dialog to preserve the unique character of the district, support existing and new businesses, support employees, foster long-term success of the Center, and ensure that it remains a vital gathering place.

#VivaNobHill

Gary Eyster, President

Nob Hill Neighborhood Association

What we heard at the September 1 Association Board Meeting

1. The parking policy is causing immediate harm to existing businesses

Multiple businesses report:

- Sharp declines in customer traffic
- Employees paying substantial parking fees simply to work
- Customers avoiding the Center due to \$4.95/hour parking
- A nearly empty parking lot during peak shopping hours

The Co-op, Gecko’s, and other long-standing tenants are already experiencing reduced patronage. Several businesses have announced relocation or closure. There is a perception that the parking policy is accelerating displacement of existing tenants.

2. Risk of Losing Essential Community Services

The Center is one of the most important assets of our vibrant, historic, and deeply valued neighborhood. The current parking policy is causing measurable, emergency-level harm to businesses, workers, and residents.

The Co-op is a critical food resource for a large area. If the Co-op leaves, Nob Hill becomes a food desert. Their negotiation for 12 paid parking spaces underscores the severity of the issue.

People are concerned about the loss of attractive businesses offering everyday services, both in the Center and in the district at large.

3. Negative Impact on Workers

When employees of Nob Hill businesses — hourly workers — have to pay parking fees, that significantly reduces their take-home pay. This is widely viewed as inequitable and it affects employee retention.

4. Risk to the Fragile Business Environment of the District

Residents and former business owners note that the district suffered mightily from ART and COVID. They describe the business environment in the district as “fragile,” with many storefronts already vacant.

The parking fees discourage shoppers and undermine the Center’s historic role as a community hub.

5. Alignment with Neighborhood Vision

Heritage’s stated vision for a curated set of shops may not be responsive to needs or desires of the community. Nob Hill is much more than a tourism center. It is a neighborhood-serving commercial district with long-standing local businesses that residents rely on. And the businesses rely on the neighbors.

The community wants to preserve and strengthen existing businesses — not replace them with concepts that do not serve the neighborhood.

6. Perception of Insensitive Behavior

Some expressed concern that the parking fees appear designed to push out current tenants.

One person stated: “The people want a partner who cares as much about the community as they do profit.”

The \$4.95/hour rate is especially onerous since the meters are only \$1/hour.

7. Initiatives outside the Center

Because Councilor Rogers attended, the community brainstormed initiatives that could improve parking district-wide like removing parking meters or creating parking structures.

8. Commitment to Community Partnership

People would like Heritage to:

- Engage with the Association and Nob Hill Main Street soon.
- Share plans as they develop to demonstrate partnership and build trust.

- Consider the unique needs of a neighborhood-serving district.