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Gresham, OR
Downtown Parking Work Group
Meeting #2
September 12, 2024 (8:00 AM – 9:30 AM)

Presentation: Building Guiding Principles

Attendees:

- Claire Lider
- Thea Enos
- Kerry Ann O’Halloran
- Amee Curtis
- Christina Struyk-Bonn
- Bryce Baillie
- Teresa Fery
- Kayla Brown
- Sara Wolfe
- Ben – House of Tattoo

RWC Staff:

- Owen Ronchelli
- Pete Collins

City of Gresham:

- Jay Higgins, Senior Transportation Planner

Introduction

The meeting began with a review of the Project Scope, followed by a review of the study boundaries.

Then the consultant dove into Building Guiding Principles, noting the Facilitator’s statement to encourage PWG (Parking Work Group) members to respond with short, simple words or phrases. The goal is to understand Gresham’s unique values and desired outcomes for how parking should work for Gresham.

Building Guiding Principles

This exercise presents a series of questions about Downtown Gresham to understand the local values and qualities that keep people living, working and visiting Downtown Gresham.

What attracts people to Gresham?

The PWG members chimed in with a series of thoughtful responses including:

- Small Business Oriented: food, quaintness, independent businesses, and family-owned businesses. Gresham is walkable and small business oriented. Many of the businesses and restaurants have been here for 10+ years. Rarely a vacancy on Main Street. It feels affordable. The restaurants are affordable.
- Events: Events are well thought out. Elevated. Events all summer. The arts plaza. The Farmers Market. Lots of services and arts (art murals)
- People: Authentic and aesthetics of downtown are great. People think outside the box. Lots of kids.
- Noteworthy Quotes:
 - *"We are not Portland, and we are not the Pearl".*
 - *"This is a commuter City. Transit is not convenient."*

What is special/unique about Downtown Gresham that draws businesses to it?

- Businesses/Buildings: The historic buildings down here. The leases are affordable. Many of the businesses/commercial owners are local.
- People: The look and the price are what brings people to Gresham. There is a 'save a penny, spend a penny' mentality. Gresham supports the opportunity to grow. People like to support the local and want things to grow.
- Accessibility: The accessibility is encouraging. The accessible to MAX line – especially for kids.
- Quotes: *"There is something here. I like having a business in the heart of Gresham."*

What makes downtown Gresham an attractive place to live?

- Community: Clean, not a high crime rate, the interaction with the homeless population. There is a difference between the disabled and the drug addicts. I think Gresham have done a great job with their homeless services. The care and community. I feel safe walking around here.

- Walkability: “I love the historic homes.” The walkability of Downtown. Not having to use a car on a daily basis. The downtown is very walkable, but the rest of Gresham is very drivable. Everything is 30 minutes.

What types of things keep you here?

- Environment: Trees, nature, garden, parks, nature and community development. The statues, benches, the small touches.

Parking: What is Working Well?

Things that make parking easy?

Available Parking: We have a lot of free unlimited parking. We have more than a lot of downtowns. We have chunks of areas that are dependable. There is always parking availability.

What ‘benefits’ customers?

Customers love how much parking there is available.

Parking: What is NOT Working Well?

- a. Specific areas where problems are more common?

ADA Stalls: There is a lack of handicap spaces in the Downtown.

Short-term on-street stalls: There need to be more short-term (5-min stalls) stalls to accommodate users like Door Dash/Uber/Lyft.

Loading Zone Misuse: The Loading Zone (in the slide) is constantly being used as parking and displacing the loading trucks.

No Striping: I think street parking is challenging in Downtown because there is no striping.

- b. Times of day, days of week, seasons?

On-Street Use Conflicts: People would 4th and 5th between Hood and Roberts – they would like permitted parking (people parking overnight) as there is a conflict with the local bars. Could be expanded to 1st.

Employees Parking on-street: There is a disconnect between some of the other local downtown business owners who care and those who do not care. I park on Main Street because I’m leaving the lot for the customers.

No Event Parking Management: Events are not working well. There are needs to be event management.

No Striping: I can't say about the striping and signage. There are no parking stripes, so some people park poorly.

No Enforcement: I think if we can monitor parking, that would help. There is no enforcement. We care about community, but I don't know who to call.

Lack of Parking: I experienced a lack of parking. I was losing business – towards Powell.

Special Use Coordination: It took 2-years to get a Loading Zone. Customers are looking for handicaps. We have people parking between handicap stalls. Food pick up stalls would be helpful.

Establishing Priorities

- c. Should employees be allowed to park on-street in the commercial downtown?

Initially, there was the thought that yes, employees should be allowed to park on-street due to primarily a safety concern. However, many PWG members chimed in that they do not think employees should park on-street and that they need to have a safe alternatives.

Quotes: *"I do think it is customer first"*.

- d. Should business/property owners be allowed to park on-street in the commercial downtown?

The PWG began with the thought that business/property owners should be allowed to park in particular areas, but not everywhere, again primarily due to safety concerns. The conversation changed to the idea of time limitations and larger parking management ideas.

- e. Should downtown residents be allowed to park on-street in the commercial downtown?

Only after certain hours and overnight. In some cases, the residents do not have off-street parking. The parking near On-Civic (on Civic Street) is a 3-hour parking, but the residents are parking on-street in these stalls all day.

- f. Should employees be allowed to park on-street in residential neighborhoods?

PWG members questioned if this is applicable to the study area, but in general thought they employees should not be allowed to park in residential areas.

On-street parking on 5th and east of Kelly are only the residential area.

- g. Should downtown customers be allowed to park on-street in residential neighborhoods?

Yes, I think. I think it is a time issue, as long as they move their car in 2-hours. Our priorities are the customers and employees. We want to upgrade the safety of Gresham. We have a diversity in businesses that have different time stay needs. Services may be longer and somethings are shorter stays.

Establishing Priorities

- h. Who should be the priority user of the on-street system in downtown?

PWG members agreed that customers should be the priority user of the on-street system in downtown Gresham.

- i. Who should be the priority user of the off-street system in downtown?

PWG members agreed that employees/staff/business owners should be the priority user of the off-street system in downtown Gresham.

- j. Who should be the priority user of the on-street system in the neighborhoods around downtown?

PWG members agreed that residents should be the priority user of the on-street system in the neighborhoods around downtown Gresham.

Establishing Priorities

- k. Who is responsible for providing parking to:
 - i. Customers
 - ii. Employees
 - iii. Residents

This conversation was robust with members stating that parking is established by the City and City code. There was discussion around the City parking requirements and the new state rule (CFEC) which allows buildings to be built in downtown Gresham without any off-street parking. There was the idea and understanding that parking management has many different tools for different parking problems. Further there was a discussion about the true costs of building parking and how to balance housing needs and parking.

Establishing Priorities

- l. A successful parking program for Downtown Gresham will.....
 - Be flexible and be able to look at different needs
 - Alleviate complications
 - Keep it simple
 - Prioritizes customer parking
 - Help businesses thrive
 - In order to get, you have to give.
 - Not overburden commercial renters.
 - Place customers first.
 - Create a good time limit on Main and the off-street parking.
 - Look at different areas of downtown.