The Fundamentals of Downtown Parking Management

Gresham, Oregon

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Prepared for:

CITY OF
GRESHAM
OREGON

Prepared by:

RWC

Owen Ronchelli (Project Manager)
Pete Collins (Senior Associate)
Rick Williams (Project Advisor)

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Following recent findings on the use of parking downtown[1], the City of Gresham is interested in gaining a better understanding of best practices in downtown parking management and developing an initial downtown parking management strategy for implementation. As a precursor to the development of the parking management plan, this report is intended to provide those who will review and ultimately implement a new plan with a review of the fundamentals of parking management.

The parking industry views parking management as a toolbox of strategies to address issues in residential, commercial, industrial, mixed-use, and institutional areas to ensure that desired land use and access goals are achieved. This report intends to 'set the table' for City staff and downtown stakeholders to think more critically about parking and all its management tools. As Gresham's downtown continues to grow, parking will play a strategically supportive role in its development and long-term growth.

Subsequent to this report, the consultant will present a draft parking management plan for the downtown for the City to consider. That report will be based on elements discussed herein and, most notably, findings from recently completed data work.

Ideally, "implementers" will come to understand the fundamentals of downtown parking management well and be able to strategically deploy strategies downtown based on what is practical and feasible for the City of Gresham in the near-, mid-, and long-term moving forward.

1.2 WHY MANAGE PARKING?

The very phrase parking management can elicit an emotional response from stakeholders. Easy access to a parking space near a favorite store or restaurant for customers or close to work or home for employees and residents can define one's perception of an area or experience. When on-street parking is unmanaged, all parking is inefficient (on and off-street), literally without rules for use, causing conflicts between users, for example, employees parking on-street in commercial retail areas or employees and visitors from business areas spilling over into residential streets. This can raise anxieties that set a negative tone for the area.

Understanding the key elements of parking will allow Gresham to:

A. Utilize a Limited Resource Efficiently

On-street parking is limited (finite), often described as the supply that is very unlikely to grow. Off-street parking is expensive, especially when cities transition from surface to structured parking. When on- and off-street supplies are treated as separate operating units, users are less likely to seek appropriate and effective options to the customary desire to just park on the street. As such, when the on-street supply becomes constrained, users begin to perceive the area as full (inaccessible), circle blocks looking for a
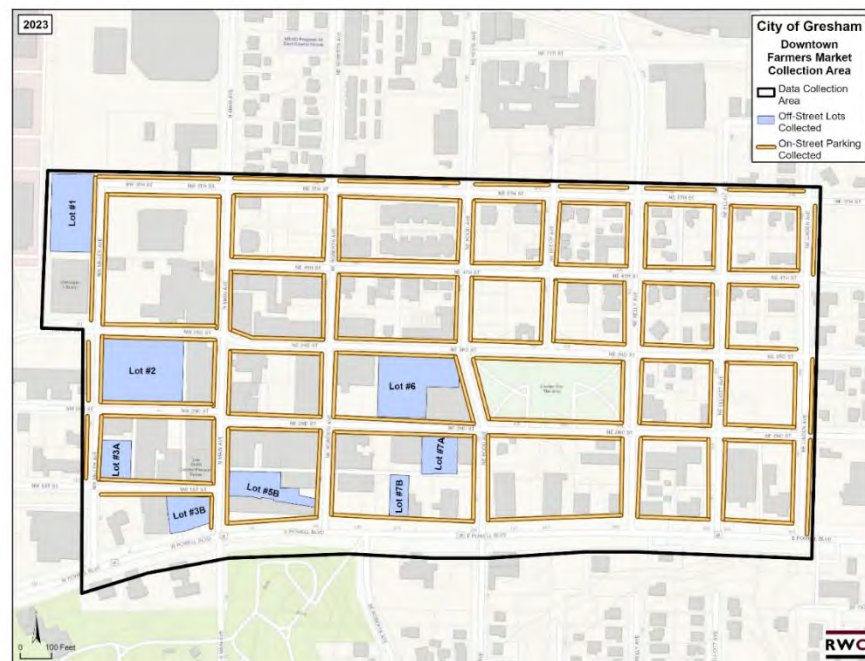
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[1] See, Rick Williams Consulting, *Downtown, Civic District, Rockwood Area Parking Use Assessment (June 2023).*

parking stall, and/or choose to leave the area entirely. Either way, the *"downtown experience"* becomes difficult and reflects poorly on future decisions related to a visit to downtown. However, when the <u>off-street system</u> is managed as a natural extension of the <u>on-street supply</u>, parking options increase and the ease of finding parking also improves.

B. Use Parking As A Tool to Support and Enhance Economic Activity

Parking stalls do not generate trips in and of themselves. Their purpose is to serve and support a city's desired economic development vision and its efforts to grow interest and activity in an area by attracting new businesses and promoting interest and knowledge about downtown. Success in this area will result in increasing demands for parking in the downtown districts, which will lead to conflicts for access between customers and

Downtown Gresham: The public supply of parking

employees. If the City is to successfully attract more diverse business uses (including retail, office, and residential), a strategic and innovative parking management strategy is essential.

As this project unfolds, parking management will need to be structured (through policy and strategy) to support and enhance this type of economic activity.

While there are many "strengths" that can be associated with successful downtowns, the seven outlined below are common in most all great downtown environments:

Social **retail at the street level**

Cultural, continuing education, and recreational **("livability")** facilities

Offices for **businesses that serve Gresham residents** and economic strengths

Highly **livable urban homes**

Multi-modalism – **leveraging all systems of "access capacity,"** parking, transit, biking, walking, low-car, and carfree living.

A strong, **highly visible civic presence**

A circulation system for cars, bikes, and pedestrians that makes **Downtown a great place to be and to visit**

C. Create Order and Reduce Anxiety

Customers, visitors, employees, and residents appreciate a structure that simplifies decision-making and makes their visits effortless and efficient. When the parking system lacks order, anxiety and frustration increase, creating a negative perception of the area and affecting a customer's decision as to whether a return trip is worth the trouble.

D. Leverage Parking as a Tool to Encourage Transportation Options

Most experts agree that there is a direct relationship between how parking is managed and whether people will access the area using transit, biking, walking, or ridesharing.[2] The use of alternative mode options promote greater efficiency in the parking supply, particularly if long-term parkers (i.e., those who stay more than 4 hours) switch from driving to another mode. Reduced demand for long-term parking improves turnover rates, increasing a parking stall's economic value. In addition to freeing up parking for priority users, commuters who use transportation options derive wellness benefits that lead to healthier and happier employees and reduced health care and retention costs for employers.

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[2] Richard J. Kuzmyak, "Chapter 18 – Parking Management and Supply," in TCRP Report 95: (Washington, D.C.: Transportation Research Board, 2004), 18-22. Available online at < http://www.trb.org/Publications/Blurbs/153345.aspx>

A 2005 study by David Nieman found that employees who bike, walk, or ride transit to work can increase productivity by 50% and cut sick time in half.[3] In short, parking management is not just about efficient parking but an integrated system of access options to, from, and within downtown.

E. Maximize and/or Manage Parking Turnover

A car parked at an on-street stall all day turns over once. Cars parked in timed stalls (e.g., 2 Hours) are designed to turnover 5 – 8 times (when enforced). As such, the actual vehicle capacity of a stall is directly related to how it is prioritized to be managed. This is not to say that high turnover is always the "priority" for parking, but it does indicate that if turnover is desired, then management of a stall is essential. It is extremely important to understand and find consensus on where it is a priority to manage parking for turnover (e.g., on-street) and where long-term parking opportunities are intended (e.g., off-street). Similarly, off-street facilities can provide a balanced mix of both short-term (high turnover) and long-term (low turnover). Understanding the right mix of parking in these facilities will also be necessary, both for how facilities are managed and for how they are priced.

Why Manage Parking?

- Utilize A Limited Resource Efficiently

- Use Parking As A Tool to Enhance Economic Activity

- Create Order and Reduce Anxiety

- Leverage Parking As A Tool To Encourage Transportation Options

- Maximize/Manage Parking Turnover

- Get the Right People In the Right Parking Space

F. Get The Right People In The Right Parking Space

In a 2008 poll in Everett, Washington, downtown business owners were asked, "Where do you and your employees park on a typical business day?" Respondents believed that 80% of their employees had parked in off-street facilities or had arrived by alternative modes (i.e., transit, bike, walk, rideshare). When asked, "Where do your business peers and their employees park on a typical business day?" the same 80% believed they used on-street parking.[4] The irony of the Everett study was that while everyone agreed that employees parking on-street was a problem, few businesses would associate themselves with contributing to the problem. This also reinforces a best practices message: *If employees are not walking, customers are. If employees are parking on-street, then off-street supply is likely underutilized.*

Reaching a consensus on a clear understanding of who has priority to a particular parking spot in downtown Gresham's public supply (on- or off-street) is essential. With consensus, parking management strategies make sense, assuring that any changes implemented are intended to support consensus priorities that get the right user to the right space.

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[3] David Nieman, et al, "Immune Response to a 30-Minute Walk," in Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise (Indianapolis: ACSM, 2005), 57-62. See also, Lilah Besser et al, "Walking to Public Transit: Steps to Help Meet Physical Activity Recommendations," in American Journal of Preventive Medicine, (Philadelphia: Elsevier, 2005), 273-280.

[4] Barney & Worth and Rick Williams Consulting, "City of Everett, Washington CBD Parking Management Study," December, 2007.

1.3 KEY ELEMENTS OF PARKING MANAGEMENT – BEST PRACTICES

Breaking down the key elements of parking management for a municipality is an excellent first step in thinking about how and why to manage the parking system. The following sections provide an overview of step-by-step elements to explore when digging into a parking management plan, focusing on the following elements:

- **Established Goals.** Reviewing past planning efforts to understand established goals for downtown Gresham – Transportation, Access, multi-modal, parking, and vision. Ensure newly established goals or principles are in line and do not conflict with current efforts while establishing new consensus guiding principles.
- **The Role of Zoning.** Zoning can play a profoundly powerful role in helping to define how the parking system is built over time, how it can be used, and the degree to which it can be effectively managed to serve different users.
- **Different Downtown User Groups.** There are many competing demands on a downtown parking supply from a variety of user groups. Identifying who they are and their patterns of typical parking behavior is a necessary step in managing how they access the system.
- **Prioritization of Users.** Determine a hierarchy of users by understanding their differing needs – residents, employees, and visitors. Understanding the opportunities as well as the trade-offs when managing a parking program.
- **Right Sized Parking.** It is a practice being employed by numerous municipalities to refresh outdated parking codes to reflect local parking demands more accurately.
- **Measuring Performance and Demand.** Good decision-making depends on good data. Routinely measuring how the parking system works is a critical component of parking management. Local data is the best data.
- **Continued Public Involvement.** Continued community input through an advisory committee is essential to create community "buy-in," inform decision-making, and help shepherd the overall implementation process.
- **The City's Role in Parking.** Defining the City's role, both in terms of scale and scope, in parking management (and the provision of parking) is important so that boundaries are clear and transparent.
- **Enforcement.** Reasonable and efficient enforcement of a parking system is the key foundational element of parking management.

Managing parking within the framework of these best practices elements supports efficiencies within the parking system, ensures parking is available for priority users, and informs strategic decision-making.

A. Established Goals

With a baseline understanding of best practices in parking, there are several first steps that, if managed properly, can create a cohesive and successful parking system. However, the task of understanding the parking system can be daunting when it is unclear where or how to begin or when there is not a clear understanding and sense of how the access system is intended to support change in a district or corridor. In short, parking systems are unique to each community, complex with different moving parts, and constantly changing as demand for access grows as the community grows.

One of the seven key strengths for downtowns identified above is a '*circulation system for cars, bikes and pedestrians that makes Downtown a great place to be and to visit*.' The formal establishment of consensus goals for each type of use provides a baseline from which parking management strategies are "calibrated" and tailored to the community's unique characteristics and desired outcomes. These access goals (including parking) inform the selection and implementation of parking management tools. They also provide a narrative foundation against which the community can assess the reasoning and timing of decisions to implement or alter strategies for managing parking.

More specifically, the role of parking in downtown Gresham will be best guided by a series of Guiding Principles. Ideally, these "statements of priorities" will be developed through consensus in a community/stakeholder process, engaging a diverse group of individuals from the downtown (e.g., a Parking Advisory Committee) representing the different user needs (e.g., employees, employers, residents, City staff, and others affected by parking in the Downtown). Clear, consensus priorities can establish a foundation of local values from which parking decision-making will then be made.

B. The Role of Zoning

As noted above, many different users are accessing both the on and off-street parking downtown. To make sense of how to minimize conflicts and simplify a parking management plan, zoning is the most commonly held basis for determining priority use of parking. For instance, if base zoning in an area is residential, then the "priority" for access to any on-street parking in the zoned area would be residents and their guests. If the area is zoned commercial or mixed-use, with requirements for active ground floor use, then the "priority" would be short-term visitor access to ground floor uses. If an area were zoned industrial, the priority could be for long-term employee parking associated with industrial businesses. Of course, there are variations to this, but the point remains that zoning is a straightforward platform from which to begin the process of prioritizing parking. To this end, management strategies are directly tied to the street-level land use priority (e.g., residential/business permit programs for neighborhoods/industrial areas and timed/priced parking in retail/commercial areas where turnover best serves the adjacent land uses).

C. Different Downtown User Groups

Downtowns are mixed-use commercial districts comprised of ground-level retail/active-use storefronts with upper-story office and residential tenants. Other institutional uses support this, including government offices and entertainment venues (e.g., theaters, museums). To this end, the on-street system within a downtown parking management zone should be time limited to a calibrated base standard (whether free or paid parking). The intent is to ensure that any downtown block face that abuts a commercial storefront is structured to preserve and prioritize access for customers and visitors. Locating unregulated and unrestricted parking within downtown commercial districts encourages employees and/or downtown residents to park all day on-street and can conflict with other parking strategies to move those with long-term stay needs into off-street facilities or toward the use of alternative modes of transportation that do not require a parking space, such as transit, biking, or walking.

Customers

On-street

In the parking industry, a customer is defined as anyone using businesses downtown via a transient trip – this includes shopping, eating, attending entertainment events, recreating, and visiting downtown amenities. As such, a customer can be a shopper, tourist, or resident. Customers are the lifeblood of most commercial/retail downtowns. A study of the economic value of on-street parking spaces in downtown Vancouver, WA, determined that a single 2-hour on-street parking space generated approximately $54,000 annually in customer sales (see graphic at right).[5] If any one group should have prioritized access to the most convenient and easily accessible public on-street stalls, it should be the customer. Most customer stays are considered short-term, typically 3 hours or less. This is true in most cities across the United States.

AVERAGE DAILY TURNOVER PER OCCUPIED STALL	5.6 PER DAY
AVERAGE RETAIL SALE PER CUSTOMER TRANSACTION	$31.55
DAILY POTENTIAL RETAIL SALES PER OCCUPIED STALL	$176.68
NUMBER OF SHOPPING DAYS PER YEAR	303 SHOPPING DAYS
ANNUAL POTENTIAL RETAIL SALES PER OCCUPIED STALL	$53,534

Source: Vancouver WA Downtown Association.

While customers are prioritized, it is equally important to keep them circulating through the downtown so more of them can be accommodated. This is accomplished through a combination of time restrictions and enforcement (more mature systems, in the case of Vancouver, also include priced parking). As discussed above, optimal and efficient time stays for customers are established through data collection that monitors the duration of stay. Occupancy data allows for demand-based management of rates. The overall goal of circulation and turnover is supported with parking enforcement structured to ensure reasonable levels of compliance. If the system is not optimized, both access and economic benefit for the downtown are not fully realized.

Off-street

While not as standardized as the municipal on-street system, *publicly owned* off-street parking should also prioritize customer access. If an on-street supply becomes constrained (even after the use of time restrictions, pricing, and enforcement), the municipal off-street system serves customers as spillover for the on-street system and provides a potential longer-term stay option for customers needing more time than what is allowed in the higher turnover on-street supply. In general, best practices encourage cities to balance their off-street systems to serve a combination of short- and long-term users. However, as constraints in the downtown supply grow over time, the focus is to *manage the municipal off-street system to transition long-term users (particularly employees) to private parking supplies and alternative transportation modes*.

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[5] Vancouver Downtown Association Survey of Retail Businesses (2014).

Employees

On-street

Employees are the first to arrive downtown. If parking is unregulated, they will typically take the most convenient parking spaces near their place of work. As stated above, the highest priority for on-street parking stalls is the customer, suggesting that all on-street parking within a commercial parking management zone be formatted to a base standard. To maintain customer access, the on-street downtown system should not be available to employees or for long-term parking.

As a note, some cities, including Milwaukie and Salem, Oregon, and Vancouver, Washington, allow limited use of the downtown on-street system by employees and/or residents using permits. However, these cities are the exception rather than the rule. The key to these unique programs is that on-street permits are (a) provided on an <u>interim</u> basis, (b) allow parking in commercial areas of their downtowns with a demonstrated level of occupancy that is well below a targeted occupancy standard like the 85% Rule (and never as spillover into adjacent residential streets), and (c), designated on-street block faces allow permitted vehicles are signed (for example) "2 Hour Parking <u>*or by Permit*</u>."

Through its interim on-street permit program, Vancouver, WA, allows those with business or residential addresses in the downtown parking management district to purchase permits. Interestingly, Vancouver's on-street permit program is an "interim general access permit." In other words, Vancouver does not prioritize employees or residents in its program; instead, it is first-come, first-served, allocated to those with verifiable downtown addresses, and routinely adjusted based on an optimum occupancy standard. Again, these permits are limited in the number allowed and are interim, with no guarantee of renewal. In short, if visitor demand goes up, the number of on-street permits allowed will be reduced by higher rates charged and/or reducing the number of permits allocated.

Off-Street

The industry's best practice regarding employee parking in municipal supplies is first to encourage employees to park in private off-street surface lots or garages downtown[6], allowing the city to maintain a visitor parking priority within its own on- and off-street supplies. Ideally, any city-managed employee parking program using public supply should also be integrated into programs encouraging alternative transportation modes. This can be accomplished through market-based pricing or actively managing the allocation of long-term parking permits allowed in the public supply to always ensure customer access availability.

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[6] The City of Portland prohibits employee permit sales in its core area Smart Park garages. In Smart Park garages in the periphery areas of downtown, Portland maintains a balanced mix of customer and employee users, though its permit pricing is set at a rate above the local market average for monthly parking. As such, Portland's goal in managing its off-street supply is to always prioritize customer access and mitigate, through pricing and monitoring of use, conflicts between employees and customers needing a parking stall.

Residents

On-street

In any parking management district *zoned primarily for commercial or employment,* residents, like employees, should be a low-priority user within an *on-street* parking supply. Conversely, *in areas zoned residential*, the priority for on-street parking should be the resident and their guests (thereby controlling for potential employee spillover from adjacent commercial areas). As with commercial areas, permit programs targeted only for residents and their guests can be implemented to prevent overspill issues affecting residential/guest access, safety, and congestion on zoned residential streets. There are hundreds of such programs around the United States. Such programs do come with implementation requirements that can include data verification of occupancy constraints, limits on the number of permits per household, guest permit allocations, local petitions to establish a residential permit boundary, and (in most cases) an annual fee to residents for the administration of residential permit programs. Again, as with parking permits in commercial areas, such programs aim to ensure reasonable and convenient access for priority users, in this case, preserving such access for residents and their guests in residential areas.

Off-street

Cities encourage residential "mixed-use" development in commercial zones to revitalize urban areas and to attract ground-level active uses (e.g., retail, restaurants, entertainment). Most cities guide newly developing residential parking within commercial zones through minimum parking requirements. The intent in these cities is to ensure that a specific "minimum" level of parking is provided within new residential developments, precluding any assumed reliance by the development for on-street parking intended to serve customers and visitors of a commercial district.

For older and historic buildings without parking, we could find no examples of specific municipal programs (outside of the Vancouver example) that use public supply to serve residential parking demand. For the most part, cities support the provision of residential parking through code for new development or third-party offsite agreements between older and historic residential buildings and private owners of parking.

Hood River, OR, is considering eliminating parking requirements for older, historic buildings that convert upper stories from commercial to residential use. This is being evaluated as an option to support the City's goal for preserving older and historic buildings and encouraging residential growth downtown. Nonetheless, the elimination of the parking requirement comes with a condition of approval acknowledgment that the use of the municipal on-street system by residents for long-term parking during established hours of enforcement is not allowed. This provision is intended to encourage building owners to seek shared-use parking partnerships with other downtown private sector partners, stimulate increases in alternative mode options, and promote a low-car/no-car living environment downtown.

D. Prioritization Of Users

There should be high clarity and agreement in identifying priority users of the parking system, particularly for publicly controlled on-street resources. With a clear understanding of (1) who has priority to a particular parking spot and (2) whose role it is to provide parking (public and/or private sector), policies and strategies can be developed that "get the right user to the right space." One of the most significant challenges of managing a municipal parking system is trying to accommodate the needs of competing user groups. The parking system (particularly the on-street system) cannot serve all users' needs equally, particularly when competing demands for a space occur during similar peak times. Parking is a scarce and costly resource that needs to be prioritized for the highest and best use.

The on-street parking supply is finite and is most preferred by users. If the parking priority users are prevented from using the supply, the parking resource is inefficient, contributes to conflicts between users, and does not support off-street parking or alternative mode options. As such, it is essential to reiterate that the role of on-street parking should be to ensure access to defined priority users. If on-street parking is intended for visitor access, it is likely that it be time limited. If the priority is for employees or residents, then systems need to be developed to ensure that employees and residents are "identified" (e.g., permits) so that other long-term parkers (i.e., employees from out-of-district, park and ride users) are not monopolizing supply. This becomes more apparent and critical in areas with high parking access constraints.

Knowing there is a limited public parking supply, city parking managers must make decisions based on established user priorities. For lower-priority user groups, city parking managers must consider how and in what form their parking needs should or should not be accommodated in the public supply and/or the distinct role the City plays in providing parking versus that of the private sector.

E. Right-Sized Parking

Historically, parking policy and code development in most cities focused extensively on the uniform provision of parking to avoid conflicts between landowners or to remain consistent with "peer cities." In *The High Cost of Free Parking*, Donald Shoup notes that communities relied heavily on general guidance documents such as the Parking Generation Manual produced by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). This manual observes peak parking occupancies at different sites to generate a land use type's parking generation rate. Unfortunately, ITE parking generation rates are based on limited samples and, most often, from suburban locations where driving rates and peak hour parking are much higher than in mixed-use business districts (like emerging downtowns). Further exacerbating the problem, planners have often required parking capacity to be sized to accommodate the 30th busiest hour for a particular land use. This amounts to planning for the highest demand that might theoretically be experienced—akin to building to accommodate the Christmas rush.

This approach typically assumes that all trips will be made by motor vehicle and that demand is consistent throughout the year. This over-states parking demand in mixed-use developments and gives little consideration to the urban context or a site's accessibility by other modes or where users will park

once for trips to multiple destinations. Studies routinely find that where minimum parking requirements are in place, they often require more parking than actual demand warrants. This is costly, wastes land, and the impacts are long-term. For example, King County Metro's 2015 Right Size Parking Report[7] found that minimum parking requirements in over 20 cities in King County (Seattle area) resulted in overbuilt parking ranging from 20% - 35%.

Even more importantly, parking standards in many cities relate parking requirements specifically to individual land uses, as opposed to considering all of the land uses in a site or an area as a whole. However, examining the different land uses collectively allows managers to adjust parking rules to account for such factors as:

- Different peak hours of use by type of business within a mixed-use project or parking district.
- Fluctuations in the number of employees absent from work due to new hybrid work schedules, illness, vacations, and business travel.
- The role of on-street parking as a supply for visitor demand.
- Use of local data to identify peak hours versus national standards.
- The percentage of trips using transportation modes other than a motor vehicle.

When considered from an economic perspective, "right-sized" parking can substantially reduce development costs, saving hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars. Parking policies and codes that are "one-size-fits-all" may appear simple but can have adverse consequences. Over-building can cause several problems: it can lead to inefficient land uses, where parking can dominate the environment and inhibit alternative transportation. It can increase development costs, thereby discouraging new businesses from building or locating in these areas. And it can undercut efforts to revitalize Main Streets and create affordable, livable, and economically viable communities.

> *Keep in mind that a parking stall does not generate a single trip, it is the destination that attracts the trip. Some competition for parking is a signal of a healthy economy. If you don't have a parking problem, you have a problem with your downtown! The focus should be on cultivating great destinations and creating a parking plan that supports that vision.*

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[7] https://metro.kingcounty.gov/programs-projects/right-size-parking/pdf/rsp-final-report-8-2015.pdf

F. Measuring Performance and Demand

Performance monitoring is an integral part of successful parking management. Many cities implement parking programs without setting aside the resources to monitor the outcome of the changes. This makes any evaluation of the results of the program difficult. A good monitoring program should follow the following steps:

- Develop a monitoring program before implementing any changes in parking policies.
- Collect solid baseline data of "before" conditions before implementing changes.
  - ✓ If possible, design the parking program and monitoring plan in a way that will allow you to isolate the impacts of specific policy changes.
- Practice regular (annual, bi-annual) parking data collection and analysis, quantifying metrics for occupancy and utilization in both the on and off-street supplies.
- Analyze data within the context of changes in population, employment, and economic activity in a study area.
  - ✓ Use the monitoring plan and data to help revise and update your parking policies as needed.

Good data leads to good decision-making. This is especially true when data is tied back to established access goals and accommodating priority users.

85% Occupancy Standard

In the parking industry, the 85% Occupancy Standard is the most common approach to assessing a parking supply's performance. The 85% Occupancy Standard is a flexible measure for evaluating parking supply, whether as a facility-by-facility measure, at a district level, sub-area, or block-face by block face.[8]

> 85% Constrained Supply

70% - 85% Efficient Supply

55% - 69% Moderate Demand

< 55% Low Demand (Parking Readily Available)

When 85% or more of an available parking supply is occupied for sustained periods (red on the graphic at right), it is considered constrained. In a constrained system, finding an open spot is difficult, especially for infrequent users such as customers and visitors. This can cause frustration and negatively affect perceptions of an area or district. Continued constraints can make it difficult to absorb and attract new growth or to manage fluctuations in demand—for example, seasonal or event-based spikes.

Most parking managers strive to maintain a supply in the 70% to 85% occupancy range (orange), deemed an "efficient" parking supply. An efficient parking supply shows active use but minimizes constraints that would create difficulty for users. Efficient use supports vital ground-level businesses and

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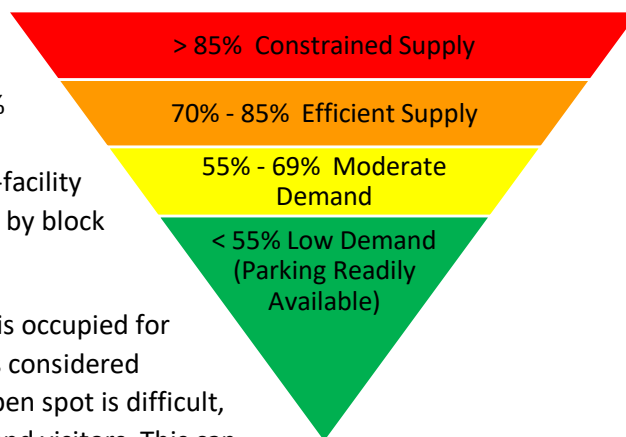
[8] Readers may be aware of parking analyses presented by Donald Shoup in his book *The High Cost of Free Parking.* Dr. Shoup is strongly in favor of implementing pricing systems at the block face level.

business growth, is attractive to new users, and can respond to routine fluctuations - resulting in a supply that is robust and accessible.

Occupancy rates of 69% or less (yellow and green) indicate moderate to low demand for parking, leaving more significant percentages of supply empty with the potential to absorb parking demand. In other words, this indicates a potential opportunity to maximize and/or share with other uses.

For Gresham, baseline data is currently being collected and analyzed. This will provide an objective counterpoint to discuss strategy development within the context of established guiding principles. Guiding principles inform priorities, and data will provide clear measures of system performance and appropriate strategies will be developed for implementation to ensure priorities are consistently managed.

G. Public Involvement in Parking Management

Integral to the continued management of parking for the City of Gresham is the ongoing role of downtown stakeholders in assisting in implementing the parking management plan recommendations and strategies. Active participation by those affected by forthcoming strategies is best accomplished through an established advisory committee that reviews the performance of the public parking system, serves as a sounding board for issues, periodically reviews the recommendations presented in the plan, and acts as a liaison to the broader stakeholder community as changes are implemented. Once a new downtown parking management plan is completed, the City should continue with a stakeholder process to assist in its implementation and provide ongoing feedback.

An example of a possible advisory committee's continued role could be to assist City staff in establishing key parking and access management performance measures that would be routinely quantified and tracked, and published in a dashboard format in an Annual Downtown Parking Management Report. Tracking and communicating system performance, illustrating change between measured operating years, and adjusting strategies in areas where performance is not met can be a catalyzing element of any city's parking management program.

H. The City's Role in Parking

The complexity and strategic format of any parking management plan is shaped by the role—large or small—that the City itself plays in its implementation. To achieve desired City's goals for the downtown, the status quo may need to be changed to address the evolving needs of a growing Gresham. To successfully address these challenges, the City may have to play a more significant role and take on greater responsibilities than it has historically in the active management of parking. This can include policy guidance, adjustments to regulatory standards, active supply management, the development of new parking supplies or alternative mode options, and funding. Clear guidance from the City on its role and responsibility in these areas will be necessary to enable appropriate strategy choices going forward. Also, a clear statement of the City's role sets expectations for the private sector that establish a "level playing field" for assembling a development project.

I. Enforcement

An enforcement program is vital to any parking management plan, ensuring that the system is being used as intended. Without basic compliance with time stays or following the rules of permit use, the system breaks down, and conflicts with priority users increase.

Note: the level of enforcement is less critical than just conducting and assuring parking compliance.

Some cities may find it financially challenging to employ full-time parking enforcement staff. Sixteen to twenty hours of enforcement a week is better than none. Cities transitioning from a system with no monitoring can assign an existing staff position the responsibilities of part-time enforcement. Where third-party enforcement can be engaged, cities contract for a specific base level of enforcement hours per week rather than assuming that there must be a constant presence to enforce. To be most effective, the enforcement hours should be randomized so as not to be predictable.

Also, enforcement officers can be viewed as community liaisons and less punitive, serving the downtown area for compliance, safety, and public information. For example, officers can be supplied with "Main Street" information (maps, restaurant guides, key destinations) to greet visitors with friendly information, promoting a positive visitor experience. The transition of traditional enforcement officers to community liaisons and/or "ambassadors" is taking place in numerous cities across the United States.

Source: Long Beach, California

Finally, enforcement should be viewed as something other than a revenue stream, rather a revenue-neutral and self-supporting program, balancing fees/citations to create reasonable compliance and cover labor and operating costs. When enforcement is viewed as a revenue center, it can create an aggressive enforcement environment that deters visitors. Preferably, enforcement revenues are not deposited into a city's general fund but into a downtown enterprise fund that supports the parking program and other investments in the area where fees are collected – for example, downtown beautification projects. Such reinvestments make parking fees more palatable overall.

1.4 ADDITIONAL PARKING MANAGEMENT ELEMENTS

A. Parking Technology

For cities considering installing or upgrading pay-to-park systems, the industry is fast developing new technologies, including smart meters, pay-by-cell programs, wireless stall sensors, and parking apps. However, these can be expensive, and their successful use is contingent upon a willingness and ability to support technology and educate the parking public (as necessary) regarding their availability and use. Consider the upfront and long-term costs before jumping on the "latest and greatest" technology bandwagon.

New parking payment technologies may be explored through a demonstration process that allows for an objective cost-benefit analysis, comparing vendors and equipment types, and evaluating customer

acceptance and impact on city operations. Call the parking managers at peer communities to find out what they're using and their experience. Many Northwest cities use smart technologies, so their use in this region's unique climate and geography can be evaluated and discussed using real-world input. Above all, ensure that you cover the basics of parking management first and that the technology you use helps you achieve your goals.

B. Transportation Demand Management

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is a critically important and often overlooked parking management strategy. When coupled with other access solutions, it can have an immediate and lasting impact on the on-street parking system, encourage employees to use transportation options to get to work, and free up parking for customers and visitors. When employees use on-street stalls, the stalls become nothing more than vehicle storage and experience no turnover during the workday. Allowing employees to park on-street is a policy decision, but cities should understand that it will affect the economic health of the downtown.

TDM aims to maximize the efficiency of the urban transportation system by discouraging unnecessary private vehicle use and promoting more efficient, healthy, and sustainable access solutions. TDM strategies are often more cost-effective than capital investments in new roads or parking lots.

Examples of TDM strategies within a Parking Management Plan include:

- Priced parking
- Transit pass programs
- Free emergency rides home
- Commute option planning
- Preferential rideshare parking
- Employee vanpools (sometimes with employer subsidies)
- Bicycle parking (short- and long-term)
- Financial incentives for transit, biking, walking, or carpooling
- Carsharing and bike-sharing programs

Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) can also be an effective way to deliver TDM programs. TMAs are non-profit, member-based organizations that work in a specific neighborhood or business district to address common transportation concerns, including parking, traffic congestion, and active transportation. Through negotiated public-private partnerships, TMAs can leverage public parking meter revenue along with other funding sources to provide a range of transportation services more cost-effectively than individual businesses could. TDM programs may also be delivered through the municipality or in-house by large employers to decrease drive-alone commuting by employees.

1.5 SUMMARY

Parking Management is complex. Various elements play equally important roles in constructing a holistic plan that is thoughtful and reflective of a community's values. Downtown Gresham is no exception. With a bustling and historic downtown and increasing new development, now is a critical time to begin thinking about how to best manage the parking in Gresham now and into the future.