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Gresham, OR
Downtown Parking Work Group (DPWG)
Meeting #3

October 9, 2024 (8:00 AM – 9:30 AM)

Presentation: Data Review

Attendees:

- Claire Lider
- Kerry Ann O’Halloran
- Thea Enos
- Amee Curtis
- Theresa Fery
- Bryce Baillie
- Sarah Wolfe
- Jay Higgins (City of Gresham)
- Owen Ronchelli (RWC)
- Pete Collins (RWC)

Meeting:

Review of Guiding Principles: RWC staff began the meeting with a review of the draft Guiding Principles exercise from the previous DPWG meeting. Members of the DPWG added some comments to the Guiding Principles’ responses. The Guiding Principles will be solidified at the next meeting scheduled for November 20th.

Data Collection Effort: Next an overview of the Gresham data collection effort and methodology was provided. The 2023 occupancy data for the Downtown study area was used for this data review. The data was collected on Wednesday, June 14th, 2023 from 9AM-7PM. During this time, data was also collected in the Civic and Rookwood neighborhoods.

Review of process: RWC staff provided an overview of the project scope, reviewing past efforts including previous meetings, as well as charting out the future meetings’ topics, community survey information, open house meetings, and how this becomes a draft/final Parking Management Manual.

Review of Parking Inventory: In total, there are 854 on-street parking stalls. The majority of them are No Limit stalls (93.6%). There were 375 off-street parking stalls inventoried on 8 public surface parking lots.

85% Rule: RWC staff went over the 85% Rule, a common decision-making demand measurement which provides an understanding of different levels of parking activity. Demand at or above 85% indicates that the parking system is challenging for customers. 84%-70% is the 'sweet spot', where parking activity is robust, stalls are accessible, and the system is running efficiently. 69%-55% demand is considered moderate parking activity, and the supply can absorb additional demand. Under 55% parking activity is low, and not supportive of active business.

On-Street Findings: The peak occupancy is 40% at 6PM. The trend line shows midday and late afternoon peak periods, so people are coming back to Downtown in the evening. Overall, the average occupancy, over the 10-hour study period, is 35%. There are 513 empty parking stalls on-street at the peak hour (6PM). The on-street occupancy is considered to be 'green', meaning low occupancy for all 10 hours of the study.

DPWG Question – How do you measure an unstriped stall?

- *RWC either uses a measuring wheel or paced off distances to quantify the length of a parking stall – approximately 23' a single, parallel parking stall. It allows space for all non-trailer vehicles to park with at least a one-foot buffer on either side.*

DPWG Question – Does the study area include Powell?

- *The north block face along Powell was included in the parking study.*

Heat Maps: The occupancy levels do not tell the whole story. There are pockets of demand including 3rd and Main. 13 block faces are above 85%, however 94 block faces were below 85%. Despite constraints in the system, there is available parking nearby. People may just need to walk a block or two.

RWC staff explained how parking management is pushing and pulling on a finite supply; essentially looking to spread parking demand more evenly so there are not areas of constraint.

RWC staff also noted that any parking construction during the survey day was not brought into the "useable" parking supply, therefore did not impact the parking demand numbers.

Off-street Findings: The peak occupancy was 74% with the peak hour being 1PM. The average occupancy, across the 10-hour survey, was 67%, with a trend line of a midday peak with sustained afternoon period. There were 96 empty parking stalls at 1PM. Overall this looks different than the on-street demand with more congested. Taking a closer look, the individual lots – Lot #2, #3A, #3B, #5B are in the red occupancy band – close to or at 100%.

Data Summary Key Findings: On-street demand is low (35%) with 513 empty stalls at the peak. Off-street demand is moderate at 67% over the course of the day, peaking at 74% from 11AM-12PM. 4 of the 8 public lots reach over 85% occupancy.

Hourly Heat Maps: RWC staff walked the group through hourly heat maps from 9AM-7PM. Showing how things change over the course of the day. Lot #2 is constrained throughout the day.

The DPWG members stated that this lot also sees a lot of turnover, while Lot#6 is full of employees and always busy.

In general there is higher use (demand) west of Roberts Avenue.

DPWG Question – How do we get buy-in from the community and business owners? In other words, how do we change behavior to encourage people to park in the right stall?

- *Great question. This is a process, and change may happen in part with the open house (outreach/education) and with the final product (strategic recommendations). This will be a continual process. The DPWG will be instrumental in figuring out the solution. Also, important will be working with the Association. There was further discussion about the need to encourage more employers to be part of the Association to spread the word and implement change.*

DPWG Comment – One member believes that this process is moving towards on-street time limitations on Main along with enforcement to create a ‘culture of compliance’.

DPWG Comment – One member thought that it might be wise to tie some of these ideas to encourage better parking behavior to lease agreements in the Downtown.

RWC staff offered that change is likely a combination of both a regulatory approach as well as continually having conversations with business owners and employees to encourage good parking behavior.

Safety - Safety continued to be a large area of discussion as DPWG members stressed the importance of creating a safe environment so that people feel comfortable parking their cars and walking to and from their place or work, especially if we are asking employees and business owners to park further away from their destination.

One DPWG member stated that they do not feel comfortable asking their young employees to walk too far. The employees cannot park south (unruly bar patrons/unsafe), nor can they park north (constrained parking). Further going east is the only possibility, which is primarily residential, but there is a homeless camp.

Many of the DPWG focused on the downtown bars, especially late at night, as a main safety concern. Patrons of the bar tend to hang out in the parking lots. The loitering outside makes it feel unsafe. They offered the idea of controlling the loitering somehow as well as adding more lighting and having more of a police presence. Better branding and signage would help too. Private security would be great but is expensive. The group emphasized the importance of reporting problems (e.g., potential crimes, disturbances, unruly behavior, etc.); areas with more documented reports will get more deployments. The majority of the small business owners in Downtown Gresham are women.

DPWG Question - Do the recommendations of time limits extend to the off-street? I need more time than 2-hour time limits on-street.

RWC staff stated that the intent is to have off-street options to accommodate longer-term stays. Also, the off-street can have employee permits (a portion of the supply), and some for customers.

On-street in underutilized areas can also have interim on-street employee parking. There are many options and tools to use for different challenges.

DPWG Comment - People do not know that lots #7A & 7B are public lots. They would benefit from better branding/signage.

RWC Question - Does the data ring true?

DPWG stated that yes, it does.

Next Steps: Building off of the Guiding Principles and the data findings, RWC staff will come back to the DPWG with a number of draft strategies/recommendations to consider.

Next Meeting is November 20th (8-9:30AM).