

Downtown Bend Parking Study

Downtown Business Stakeholder Engagement Summary

August 2016

Downtown Business Engagement on DSAC Draft Guiding Principles

The DSAC sought initial feedback from businesses located in Downtown Bend on the DSAC's Draft Guiding Principles during a series of four coffee klatches hosted at downtown businesses in August. This engagement was targeted to the business community to help the DSAC get a better sense of whether the group was on track in its understanding of many downtown needs and priorities around parking. Further public engagement efforts will take place in the near future and will target additional stakeholder and community input.

Targeted Initial Outreach: Downtown Business Community

- **Guiding Principles**: Engagement focused on sharing the DSAC Draft Guiding Principles with businesses to solicit feedback.
- **120 Businesses and Offices Visited**: Approximate number of businesses and offices visited in Downtown Bend to share information and dates for the downtown business coffee klatches and the Downtown Bend Parking Study.
- **4 Coffee Klatches and 1 Downtown Bend Business Association (DBBA) Meeting**: Four coffee klatches took place in August (two at the Looney Bean Coffee House and two at J-Dub Bar & Grill) for businesses downtown. Coffee klatches were held on Tuesday, August 16 at 8:30am, Wednesday, August 17 at 6:30pm, and Wednesday, August 24 at 8:30am and 5:30pm. The Downtown Bend Business Association also invited a project representative to present the draft Guiding Principles and solicit feedback at their August 30 meeting. The Project Team partnered with the DBBA to get the word out about the coffee klatches.
- **16 Participants and 200 Stakeholders Engaged**: In addition to the many business owners, managers, employees, and office workers whom project team members spoke with when they walked around the downtown to encourage participation in the Downtown Parking Study and the coffee klatches, 16 individuals attended at least one of the coffee klatches or the DBBA meeting on the Draft Guiding Principles. Information about the Parking Study and how to stay updated and engaged was shared with over 200 downtown stakeholders via a handout provided during business visits and email messages to Downtown Parking Study and DBBA electronic mailing lists, which included links to the project website.
- **Feedback Solicited via Discussion and Feedback Form**: Stakeholder comments were captured in discussions as well as in written feedback forms at the klatches and DBBA meeting.

Coffee Klatch and DBBA Meeting Participant General Feedback: DSAC Draft Guiding Principles

- Participants indicated they generally supported the DSAC Draft Guiding Principles and individuals said they found them detailed and **considerate of many needs and interests**.
- Participants were **supportive of the priority users identified** in the Draft Guiding Principles.
- Some participants indicated they felt it was important to highlight that any Parking Management Plan would need to be a **public-private partnership** to be successful. (There was some concern shared about how the roles of the public and private sectors were separated out in the first section of the Draft Guiding Principles document.)
- Participants said they felt **good communication and education** in the community, businesses, and with visitors would be critical to success.
- Communications and outreach efforts around any adopted plan will need to **focus on the positives** of the plan, rather than enforcement.
- Future **communication systems** need to **consider all users**, including those who do not own or do not use technology such as smart phones, for example.
- **Broad stakeholder input** needs to be incorporated into the DSAC process, both from within the Economic Improvement District and the immediately adjacent areas downtown.
- Consider **engaging with law enforcement early** in the process to identify any feasibility concerns around enforcement.
- Participants were generally **supportive** of a data driven decision-making system and the **85% Occupancy Standard**.
- The DSAC needs to be **creative in identifying a parking plan for employees**. Concerns focused on the following:
 - The need to attract and keep high quality employees,
 - Costs to employees and businesses for employee parking,
 - The many types of employees downtown, including those who may park a small or limited number of hours each week,
 - Safety concerns of employees, especially those working early or late hours, and
 - The use of effective incentives or enforcement around employee parking.
- Participants were highly supportive of the notion of **supporting bicycle or electronic vehicle parking** and needed infrastructure to support these modes. Some participants said parking for these modes should be incorporated into any increase in the parking supply downtown.
- Participants indicated they would prefer **more incentives** to increase appropriate or preferred uses of the parking system, **rather than a more punitive focused system** of enforcement.
- **Concerns were noted around the meaning of a financially viable system**. Participants did not want to rule out the possibility of some subsidization of parking if a financially self-sustaining system would price out customers or high quality employees.

Specific Feedback by Guiding Principle

Guiding Principle

1.City Role and Coordination a) Primary Role (City of Bend) and b) Primary Role (Private Sector)

Stakeholder Feedback

- Some participants said they felt that separating out the roles of the City and private sector in the first section of the Guiding Principles takes away from the needed partnership of the public and private sectors in parking management downtown.

Guiding Principles (*Communication*)

1.City Role and Coordination, d) Effective Communications. High-quality, user-friendly communications to ensure easy access for customers and visitors to appropriate and available parking near their destination.

4.Information Systems, Customer Based, a) Product Quality. Provide and manage a safe, reliable, user-friendly and attractive on- and off-street parking and communications system. This will be provided in a manner that complements the quality of downtown and attracts visitors and customers to downtown.

4.Customer Based, c) Branding & Wayfinding. Augment and expand the existing wayfinding system for the downtown that links parking assets and provides directional guidance, preferably under a common brand/logo.

Stakeholder Feedback

- Participants were very supportive of improved and effective signage and communications.

Comment themes:

- Consider expanding the parking plan area to include wayfinding outside of the downtown area (include wayfinding to the downtown area as well).
- Consider all types of users, including those less comfortable or without access to technology.

1.City Role and Coordination, e) Stakeholder Support. Ensure that a representative body of affected private and public constituents routinely informs decision-making.

Stakeholder Feedback

Comment themes:

- Need representation from property owners or others immediately east of the core of Downtown Bend.
- Consider engaging law enforcement early in the development and feasibility of any plan.

Guiding Principle

2. Priority Users a) On-Street System (downtown). The most convenient on-street parking will be prioritized for the customer/visitor (short-term trip).

2. Priority Users b) On-Street System (immediately adjacent neighborhoods). The most convenient on-street parking will be prioritized for residents and their guests.

2. Priority Users c) Off-street System. Coordinate off-street parking resources (public and private) to meet employee and downtown resident demand that cannot be met by safe and reliable walking, biking, riding transit, and carpooling/ridesharing.

Stakeholder Feedback

- Participants were generally supportive of the identified priority users in the Draft Guiding Principles.

Comment themes:

- The DSAC needs to be creative in identifying a parking plan for employees. Concerns focused on the need to attract and keep high quality employees, costs to employees and businesses for employee parking, the many types of employees downtown including those who may park a small or limited number of hours, safety concerns of employees working early or late day hours, and the use of effective incentives or enforcement around employee parking.
- Downtown employees are some of the downtown businesses best customers as well.
- Consider defining the priority user of the on-street system as tourists first, followed by local downtown customers.
- Options are needed for people to park close to their intended downtown destinations, especially if they have physical needs that are not covered by ADA requirements.

Guiding Principle

3. Active Capacity Management, a) Optimize Utilization. Manage the public parking system using the 85% Occupancy Standard to inform and guide decision-making.

Stakeholder Feedback

- Participants were generally supportive of the use of the 85% Occupancy Standard to inform and guide decision-making.

Comment themes:

- The project needs to share with the community whether a problem actually exists with downtown parking based on the data and the 85% Occupancy Standard.
- Lead with statistics and metrics to help inform community discussion.

Guiding Principle

3. Active Capacity Management, c) Shared Off-street Parking. Encourage shared parking in areas where parking is underutilized. This will require an active partnership and effective communication with owners of private parking supplies.

Stakeholder Feedback

Comment theme:

- A Parking Management Plan will need real flexibility in developing any opportunities involving privately held off-street parking. Private lot owners may not be interested in this option.

Active Capacity Management, d) Capacity Expansions. Capacity will be created through strategic management of existing supplies (public and private), reasonable enforcement, leveraging parking with alternative modes, and new supply.

Stakeholder Feedback

Comment themes:

- Some participants indicated they would be amenable to adding parking downtown supply if some of that parking were bicycle parking.
- Some participants indicated they would like consideration of electric vehicle parking in the Guiding Principles or the Parking Plan.

Guiding Principle

4. Customer Based, b) System Communications. Improve existing and create new information resources (outreach, education, maps, websites, apps, etc.) for use by the public and private sectors. Communications systems must be uniform and strategically coordinated.

Stakeholder Feedback

- Participants were very supportive of improved communications systems for downtown parking users.

Comment themes:

- There need to be multiple communication systems to accommodate many types of users, including those less comfortable or without access to technology, such as smart phones.
- Marketing and education of any new Parking Plan needs to promote the positive attributes of any new policies or plan and should not focus on the enforcement or punitive aspects of parking management.
- Focus education on frequent users of downtown, such as local residents and delivery drivers.
- Educational information needs to be simple, short, and easy to read and understand. Guiding Principles could emphasize the need for effective communications in this way.

Guiding Principle

4. Information Systems (Supply & Customer-based), Customer Based, a) Product Quality.

Provide and manage a safe, reliable, user-friendly and attractive on- and off-street parking and communications system. This will be provided in a manner that complements the quality of downtown and attracts visitors and customers to downtown.

Stakeholder Feedback

Comment themes:

- Participants noted a need for safe parking areas throughout downtown for employees and visitors.
- Parking enforcement should not be highly punitive, but serve as a gentle reminder of policy and rules. Incentives are preferred for better compliance.

Guiding Principle

5. Integration with Other Modes b) Bicycle Parking. Increase bike parking on- and off-street to enhance the broader bicycle network.

Stakeholder Feedback

- Participants were generally supportive of increased bicycle parking infrastructure.

Comment themes:

- More bicycle parking is needed. Many businesses have asked for bike corrals in front of their businesses.
- Any bicycle parking needs to be located in highly visible locations to reduce or prevent theft.
- Bicycle corrals contribute to ADA identified needs on downtown sidewalks by removing the bicycle parking from the sidewalk where pedestrians travel.

Guiding Principle

7. Financial Viability, a) Fiscal Stewardship. All parking operations must be financially sustainable.

Stakeholder Feedback

- Participants expressed some concerns about a financially self-sustainable system pricing out customers and employees.

Comment themes:

- Participants had concerns about **passing costs potentially onto customers**, effectively dissuading customers from visiting downtown.
- Participants had concerns about **passing costs potentially onto employees**, possibly making it cost prohibitive for employees to work and park downtown.
- Some participants did not want to leave out the **possibility of some public financial support** for parking, contending that the City benefits from an economically successful downtown and would not benefit from pricing out potential visitors or others from downtown.
- Some participants suggested the DSAC consider a **cost-benefit analysis on using a private parking enforcement company, rather than a publicly run system.**

Other Comments

- **Recreational Vehicle, Tour Bus, and Oversize Vehicles.**
 - Bend is a tourist destination and we may need to consider where drivers can park RVs or tour buses when visiting Downtown Bend
 - Guiding Principles do not address parking management for oversize vehicles such as long or tall passenger trucks or vans.
- **Small Vehicles**
 - Participants were interested in whether the plan will specifically accommodate smaller one- or two-person vehicles such as motorcycles, scooters, and very small vehicles, such as “Smart Cars”.
- **Commercial Delivery Loading Zones Needs**
 - Commercial loading zones and policies need to be addressed. There may be a need for additional loading zone or policies or agreements on loading zone use and timing among businesses.
- **Business Owner and Manager Outreach**
 - Parking information and options needs to be well understood by businesses. Many business owners and managers were not well informed about parking options downtown.
- **Long-term Parking Considerations**
 - There are visitors and others who park long-term (multiple days without moving) in the immediately adjacent neighborhoods to participate in bicycle tours or other events.
- **Manage Expectations**
 - The City has embarked on other **parking management studies in the past** and not implemented recommendations. How is this different?
 - There are **existing policies** (fees-in-lieu for example) that need to be referenced in any effort.
- **Intermittent Parking Constraints**
 - Some business owners commented that they sometimes felt constrained by current parking enforcement. Owners or employees visiting a business for a drop-off or check-in in the morning, for example, who then return to downtown for another visit to the business or a meal in the afternoon **are not permitted to park in the same area in the same day.**