

CAMDEN PARKING STUDY – PARKING GUIDING PRINCIPLES
ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMPOSITE SCORING/PRIORITY RANKING

Twenty-two (22) sample parking guiding principles were reviewed, ranked in priority order, and submitted for scoring by the Advisory Committee with comments. Composite scores for each principle are provided below in priority order (highest point total to lowest). The scoring sheets and submitted comments will be considered/discussed at the Advisory Committee meeting.

Priority Order

#1. On-street public parking is a finite, precious commodity that should be preserved and expanded when feasible to facilitate street-level activities in the core commercial areas. An on-street metered parking space adjacent to a store is generally far more valuable in terms of retail sales than a parking space on the third floor of a public parking facility. On-street parking and proper turnover of on-street spaces are considered the “life-blood” of downtown businesses. No stone should be left unturned to safely expand curbed parking. On-street access should, in some cases, take priority over street capacity and vehicle speeds.

TOTAL POINTS: 41

#2. Commercial core areas should be reserved for short-term customer and visitor parking to the extent possible. Employees, residents and longer-term parkers should use parking within a short walk to these core areas – especially during commercial hours of operation. User groups vary on what origin to destination distances are “reasonable”. For example, retail customers will generally consider only a short walk (sometimes as short as 200 feet) reasonable while downtown employees as a group will generally consider a much longer walk reasonable (1/4 mile/5-min. walk or more). In general, storing employee and resident cars within the prime commercial core area should be a secondary consideration to providing short-term customer and visitor parking.

TOTAL POINTS: 37

#3. You cannot park at what you cannot find. Wayfinding signage leading from all gateways into downtown, parking facility entry signage, and good parking regulatory signage is essential to a properly functioning parking system. Online parking websites and apps are also useful in this regard.

TOTAL POINTS: 33

#4. Existing and future parking within the core commercial areas should be fairly priced, commensurate with land value and location, and paid for by users. Not all land in commercial districts is of equal economic value or in equal demand as often implied by “one-size-fits-all” downtown parking rates. Pricing should reflect the relative convenience and value of public parking. Parking on “Main Street” should not necessarily be set at the same price as parking a 3 to 5-minute walk from Main Street. To the extent possible, the parking program should be self-supporting and not rely on General Fund revenues.

TOTAL POINTS: 27

#5. For paid parking areas, customers should have multiple options for paying whether by cash, credit card, mobile payment app, permit or other means.

TOTAL POINTS: 27

#6. Parking should be considered as a secondary use that supports the primary economic use of land. Land in the study area is of limited supply and is suitable for high-value, economic, institutional, and/or recreational uses. Using this relatively scarce commodity for surface parking, especially very close to the prime retail/waterfront area, may represent a missed economic, recreational or open space use opportunity.

TOTAL POINTS: 22

#7. Mean what you say. Parking regulations should not be posted if they are not going to be enforced. Parking users quickly figure out whether regulations are being sufficiently and consistently enforced. When enforcement is lacking, compliance with municipal parking rules and regulations is poor and payments/revenue generation is substandard.

TOTAL POINTS: 21

#8. Parking regulations should be very consistent and easy to understand – This may mean consistent paid parking hours of operation for on-street vs. off-street, consistent hourly parking rates on-street vs. lots, consistent time limits that do not necessarily vary much from location to location, consistent payment methods/technology, etc.

TOTAL POINTS: 15

#9. The core commercial areas should be accessible to all users. Ideally there is a cost-effective mix of transportation modes and well-designed parking facilities for downtown access for people of all socio-economic backgrounds and those with disabilities.

TOTAL POINTS: 15

#10. Private parking facilities should be viewed as potential public parking assets. Private parking facilities are often underutilized when public parking facilities are full or near full. Municipalities should engage these private parking facility owners to determine under what mutually agreeable circumstances these facilities could be used for supplemental public parking during peak-times.

TOTAL POINTS: 14

#11. All public parking facilities must be safe, appealing and well maintained. Sufficient operating revenues must be dedicated to ensure that public facilities are clean, well lit, and properly maintained – reflecting the high level of regard the community has for its visitors and regular customers.

TOTAL POINTS: 12

#12. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and non-auto transportation strategies are important ways to increase mobility and visitation to downtown while reducing parking need. Most parking agencies realize that it is not sustainable to singularly expand parking to meet development needs.

Enhancing modal options such as transit, rideshare, biking and walking - and making connections between modes not only increases mobility but it reduces parking demand, and in some cases, can significantly delay the need and associated cost for constructing additional parking facilities.

TOTAL POINTS: 12

#13. Parking discounts whether on a monthly or hourly basis should be provided to resident users whether they live downtown, own a business downtown or work downtown. Senior residents may warrant an additional discount. Many communities decide to discount resident homeowners, business owners, and renters – although discount levels vary across the board.

TOTAL POINTS: 11

#14. Parking is dynamic so the Plan must be also. There must be regular, on-going monitoring of parking use and conditions and regular plan updates to ensure that the parking system is being responsive to downtown changes and the community's changing needs. In parking planning, what is not measured is often not fully understood.

TOTAL POINTS: 10

#15. The parking agency should provide world-class customer service in the delivery of safe, convenient, and customer-friendly parking services to foster a positive downtown experience for visitors. Often, the first and last experience a visitor has downtown is with parking. It can also be the first and last impression visitors have of your downtown.

TOTAL POINTS: 6

#16. Enforcement should not be heavy-handed or overly punitive. Most people have at one time or another parked and inadvertently overstayed at a meter or in a time-zone. These actions are not criminal and should not be treated as such. Enforcement and citation policy should consider that these parkers are often times our customers, visitors and the people that make the downtown go.

TOTAL POINTS: 5

#17. Increasing parking access to waterfront areas is not typically worth the traffic that it generates. The benefit of increasing the parking supply or increasing parking turnover in direct waterfront areas may be outweighed by costs associated with drawing more vehicular traffic into the heart of the downtown.

TOTAL POINTS: 5

#18. The development of structured parking should be considered only after use of the existing parking supply is optimized and the need for structured parking is still present. Structured parking is extremely expensive to construct and operate when compared to surface parking. It should be considered, only after all other existing parking facilities are optimized for use, in conjunction with higher revenue from parking users, and when minimal impact to the Town's historic, aesthetic and walkable character can be assured.

TOTAL POINTS: 4

#19. “Free” or affordable parking for low wage employees is desirable if available within a reasonable walking distance of the core commercial areas. Free parking areas in safe, well-lit, peripheral locations can be an important factor for attracting and retaining lower-wage employees. It may also attract long-term parkers out and away from the busy retail core area – thus expanding the effective parking supply.

TOTAL POINTS: 4

#20. Downtown employee and visitor parking on residentially zoned, densely developed, downtown neighborhood streets should be discouraged. Parking spillover from downtown core commercial districts into nearby neighborhoods can create negative quality-of-life impacts that include a shortage of available on-street parking for residential needs – particularly in densely developed, residential-only zones where off-street residential parking is limited.

TOTAL POINTS: 4

#21. On-street parking should be secondary to other needs that may include loading zones, curb extensions for pedestrian crossings, wider sidewalks, bike lanes, parklets, outside dining, etc.

TOTAL POINTS: 4

#22. Development projects in core commercial areas should share in the cost of their own parking and/or mobility needs. Full public subsidy of the parking needs associated with private development is not a sustainable strategy. Private development cost-sharing strategies for new public parking facilities or programs that reduce parking need are desirable.

TOTAL POINTS: 1
