

## **Rick Williams Consulting**

Parking & Transportation Demand Management Consulting  
610 SW Alder, Suite 1221  
Portland, OR 97205  
Phone: (503) 546-4551 Fax: (503) 236-6164  
E-mail: [rwilliams@bpmdev.com](mailto:rwilliams@bpmdev.com)

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### **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Clark Worth  
**FROM:** Rick Williams  
**DATE:** June 15, 2006

**RE:** **Salem Parking: Draft *Guiding Principles***

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#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

This memorandum has been produced to facilitate discussion of parking strategies and programs necessary to develop a downtown parking management plan for the City of Salem.

As a precursor to discussions with the Salem Downtown Advisory Board and public forums and workshops, the consultant team has attempted to summarize the many themes that emerged from 30 one-on-one stakeholder interviews and the results of 140 business surveys into a draft set of ***Guiding Principles***.<sup>1</sup> The Guiding Principles are designed to guide and inform future decision-making on issues related to access and parking management. Strategically, the principles encourage the use of parking resources to support economic development goals and effectively serve the diversity of “customers” using the downtown.

The draft Guiding Principles outlined here will serve as a foundation for discussions with stakeholders and the community. Ideally, these draft Guiding Principles – as amended through community dialogue - will establish a basis for consensus, giving direction to near- and long-term decisions for parking management and access strategies in the downtown.

#### **II. BACKGROUND**

The development of Guiding Principles for parking in downtown Salem supports creation of a parking system that facilitates and contributes to a vital and growing downtown. Guiding Principles are based on the premise that development of the downtown will require an integrated and comprehensive package of strategies to stimulate economic development and redevelopment. The ensuing parking plan becomes but one critical element of a larger coordinated package for economic growth.

The consultant team believes the results of stakeholder input provided in interviews and the business survey can be summarized into ten draft Guiding Principles (listed below).

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<sup>1</sup> Copies of the summary reports from stakeholder interviews and the business survey are available from the City of Salem.

Each principle is followed by some of the important consensus challenges it addresses as synthesized from the interviews and surveys.

### III. RECOMMENDED GUIDING PRINCIPLES

#### Statement of Purpose

It is the primary objective of the City of Salem to implement a Parking Management Plan for the downtown that supports the development of a vibrant and attractive destination for shopping, working, living, recreation and entertainment. The parking plan will recognize that public parking is a community asset that needs to be managed to accommodate the diversity of users in the downtown, which include shoppers, visitors, employees and residents. The components of this plan need to be simple and intuitive for the user, providing an understandable system that is safe, secure, affordable and well integrated into other access modes (i.e., transit, bike and walk). The plan also needs to effectively manage parking supply both on- and off-street to ensure that access to the downtown is maximized.

#### GUIDING PRINCIPLE – ACCESS

**A. *Make the downtown accessible to all users through multiple modes.*** Economic development is best supported through multiple access options, allowing all users to conveniently visit, shop, work, live and recreate in the downtown. The City should strive to support as many access modes as possible (e.g., automobile, transit, bike, walk). This creates efficiencies within the entire transportation system, adding trip capacity to the downtown. From this perspective, parking is only one tool in the City's broader package of services for those who would use the downtown.

##### Challenges and desired outcomes:

- ✓ Recognition of diverse users of the downtown
- ✓ Perception that downtown Salem lacks access and capacity.
- ✓ Parking management is well-coordinated with other access modes (i.e., transit, bike and walk).
- ✓ Need to attract a more diverse mix of businesses downtown.

#### GUIDING PRINCIPLES – PRIORITY PARKING

**B. *Recognize that on-street parking is a finite resource and needs to be managed to assure maximum access for patrons.*** All users of the downtown favor on-street parking. The parking management plan recognizes this premium on-street parking resource needs to be managed to provide a rate of customer/patron turnover that supports downtown vitality. With this principle comes the recognition that growth in downtown parking demand will, over the longer term, need to be accommodated in off-street locations.

##### Challenges and desired outcomes:

- ✓ Maximize utilization of existing supplies of public parking resources.
- ✓ The availability of accessible and proximate parking for customers and patrons.

- C. Provide sufficient and convenient parking.** Parking should be provided to support desired and priority economic activities in downtown. Parking supply is but one element of a larger system of access that includes (and is balanced with) other modes. Parking under public control and/or ownership should be preserved and actively managed to accommodate patron access to the area.

Challenges and desired outcomes:

- ✓ Manage parking strategically.
- ✓ Need to attract a more diverse mix of businesses downtown.
- ✓ Maximizing utilization of existing supplies of public parking resources, particularly public Parkades
- ✓ Improving transit service/programs (and other modes) as a means to reduce demand burden on the downtown parking supply.

- D. Make the downtown core conveniently accessible for the priority user of the public parking system – the customer of downtown.** The downtown core should provide access that supports its role as the central point from which customers and visitors are connected to all areas of the downtown. The priority user of the downtown core is the short-term patron. Employee parking needs to be managed so as not to conflict with customer parking.

Challenges and desired outcomes:

- ✓ Better parking turnover.
- ✓ Parking supply is not managed to its maximum potential.
- ✓ Parking downtown is hard to understand (i.e., rates, signage, directional systems).
- ✓ The availability of accessible and proximate parking for customers and patrons.
- ✓ Downtown has to compete with other shopping areas.
- ✓ Parking system abuse (i.e., conflicts with patron priority).

- E. Provide adequate employee parking and encourage other modes.** Adequate parking to meet employee demand should be provided in conjunction with a transportation system that offers travel options. All parking strategies should be coordinated with transportation demand management goals and objectives to ensure that commuters and customers have reasonable access options. Over time, access management strategies should move larger percentages of employees into off-street parking locations and/or alternative modes to reduce overall demand for commuter parking and conflicts over the finite patron parking resource.

Challenges and desired outcomes:

- ✓ Affordable parking solutions for all types of users.
- ✓ Parking supply is not managed to its maximum potential.
- ✓ Maximizing utilization of existing supplies of public parking resources, particularly public Parkades.
- ✓ Supporting transit service/programs (and other modes) as a means to reduce constraints on the downtown parking supply.
- ✓ Building support for transit (and other alternate travel modes) as a parking objective.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLE – UNDERSTANDABILITY**

### **F. *Make downtown parking user-friendly – easy to access, easy to understand.***

Parking resources should be clearly identified and explained through branding, signage, wayfinding and user information, increasing customer understanding of how to access the downtown's on- and off-street parking resources. Connect the downtown core and other districts with transit service and bicycle / pedestrian facilities, to improve access within the CBD.

#### Challenges and desired outcomes:

- ✓ Salem lacks a consistent and well-coordinated parking management system.
- ✓ The availability of accessible and proximate parking for customers and patrons.
- ✓ A more "customer friendly" parking system in the downtown.
- ✓ Parking downtown is hard to understand (i.e., rates, signage and directional systems).
- ✓ New parking features that appeal to customers: merchant validation, directional signage.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLE – QUALITY**

### **G. *Provide a "parking product" in the downtown that is of the highest quality to create a positive customer experience with parking and the downtown.***

On-street parking should be uniformly managed and enforced to assure an intuitive, reasonable sense of the allowed time stay. Off-street facilities (surface and structured) should be of uniform quality and identity to create a sense of safety, convenience, understandability and coordination with the pedestrian environment. High quality communication and marketing materials should be integrated into a comprehensive package of services to inform and guide the parking public into the on- and off-street parking system.

#### Challenges and desired outcomes:

- ✓ Managing parking to have "pedestrian friendly" impacts.
- ✓ A more "customer friendly" parking system in downtown.
- ✓ Upgrade the Parkades.
- ✓ Developing downtown as a unique destination and shopping experience.
- ✓ Safe, secure, well lit and attractive.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLE – COORDINATION**

### **H. *Manage the public parking supply using the 85% Rule to inform and guide decision-making.***

The *85% Rule* is an operating principle and industry based management tool for coordinating a parking supply. When occupancies routinely reach 85% in the peak hour, more *intensive* parking management strategies are called for to assist patrons in finding available parking. The 85% Rule standard can facilitate the City and the community in making reasonable and effective decisions regarding time stays, pricing and other decisions related to capacity management.

Challenges and desired outcomes:

- ✓ Clear policy direction.
- ✓ The lack of a coordinated system of parking management.
- ✓ A parking program that supports downtown growth.
- ✓ A parking program that recognizes the diversity of users in downtown.

- I. **Centralize management of the public parking supply.** Publicly owned parking in the on- and off-street supply needs to be managed in a coordinated manner. The finite nature of on-street parking necessitates strategic integration of parking decisions to facilitate a seamless, recognizable and convenient transition of future growth into off-street facilities. Also, the overall parking management system needs to be coordinated with a strategic and supportive relationship with transit and other access modes.

Challenges and desired outcomes:

- ✓ Clearer policy direction.
- ✓ The lack of a coordinated system of parking management.
- ✓ A system that is responsive to changes in downtown use and demand over time.

- J. **Dedicate downtown parking revenues for downtown operations and ensure downtown parking solutions are financially sustainable.** All net revenues derived from parking within the public supply should be dedicated to a parking enterprise fund that is used to: (a) support the fiscal health of the parking system; (b) maintain and enhance parking assets; (c) provide on-going marketing and communication of the parking system to the public; and (d) facilitate future development of new public parking supply.

Challenges and desired outcomes:

- ✓ Ensure parking revenue derived from new paid parking is reinvested in downtown.

#### IV. SUMMARY

Every downtown stakeholder maintains an exciting vision for Salem. That vision recognizes the goal and objective of developing the downtown as a vibrant and vital urban neighborhood destination – an ideal central business district. With this recognition must come the understanding that managing the parking infrastructure that supports multiple economic uses is challenging. It requires fully using the parking and transportation system to provide understandable, convenient, safe, reliable transportation options for employees, customers, visitors, and residents. This network of access is essential to the vitality of each desired economic use.

The Guiding Principles derived from dialogues with stakeholders and businesses can serve as a solid foundation for coordinating parking and transportation decision-making and policy. The Guiding Principles should be grounded in the long-term economic development vision of the City of Salem and its downtown stakeholders. Their intent and purpose is to generate parking and transportation management strategies and programs that will complement the City and community's efforts in attaining its long-term growth and development objectives.