

Section II: Guiding Principles for Access

The work of the PSC described in **Section I** resulted in establishment of a consensus set of Guiding Principles designed to guide and inform access and parking management decisions. Strategically, the Guiding Principles encourage the use of parking resources to support and facilitate priority economic development goals and serve priority users.

The Guiding Principles will serve as a foundation for near- and long-term decision-making and implementation of parking management and access strategies in the downtown. These strategies are intended to support the on-going economic development and vitality of downtown.

A. BACKGROUND

The development of Guiding Principles for Access in Downtown Spokane supports creation of a parking system that truly facilitates and contributes to a vital and growing downtown. Guiding Principles for Access 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 work of the PSC can be summarized into nine Guiding Principles. The Guiding Principles are listed below. Each guiding principle is followed by some of the important consensus challenges it addresses (from **Section I**) as well as the desired outcomes and opportunity themes it supports.

1. Recommended Guiding Principles

Objective Statement

To implement a Parking Management Plan for Downtown Spokane that supports the development of a vibrant, *regional center for shopping, working, living, recreation and entertainment*¹ and the customers, visitors, employees and residents of those uses. 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 the traffic system and other access modes. The plan recognizes the role of the public sector in providing parking for patrons of the downtown, as well as seeking out opportunities for creating partnerships with the private sector to improve access and support of alternative modes of access.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE FOR ACCESS

A. Make the downtown accessible to all users through multiple modes. Economic development is best supported through multiple access options, which allows all users to conveniently visit, shop, live and recreate in the downtown. This also creates efficiencies within the transportation system. As such, all access modes should be supported (i.e., automobile, transit and bike/walk). The City should strive to create and implement as many access options as possible. Parking management strategies and programs should support

¹ Taken from Chapter III, Vision and Concept, of the *Plan for a New Downtown* (page 31).

and compliment other access modes as a way to maximize total access capacity in the downtown. Parking is only one tool in the City's broader package of services for those who would use the downtown.

Challenges and desired outcomes addressed:

- ✓ Develop clearer policy direction.
- ✓ Perception that Downtown Spokane 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.
- ✓ A tool box to influence future parking policy for office/retail/residential development.

Opportunity themes supported:

- ✓ Great business environment downtown.
- ✓ Downtown is a unique destination and shopping experience.
- ✓ Lots of opportunity for continued growth and expansion.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PRIORITY PARKING

B. *Provide sufficient and convenient parking.* *Sufficient* parking should be provided to support desired and priority economic activities in downtown. However, parking should not be overbuilt to assure efficiencies of land use, balance with other access modes and preservation of downtown's architectural integrity. Parking under public control and/or ownership should be preserved for, and actively managed to accommodate, patron access to the area.

Challenges and desired outcomes addressed:

- ✓ Understanding strategic/deliberate elements of managing parking
- ✓ Integrated decisions that balance need with effect on larger parking system.
- ✓ A transition of surface parking lots to structures (and strategic location of such).
- ✓ Preserve historic character of buildings in downtown.
- ✓ Need to attract a more diverse mix of businesses downtown.
- ✓ Cost of building structured parking.
- ✓ Maintaining transit service (and other modes) as a means to reduce demand burden on the downtown parking supply.

Opportunity themes supported:

- ✓ A viable downtown. A sense that people want to come downtown.
- ✓ A visionary picture of the future - *The Plan for a New Downtown*

C. *Make the downtown core conveniently accessible for the priority user of the public parking system - the patron of downtown.* The core zone of downtown should provide an access system that supports its priority role as the central point from which customers and

visitors are connected to all areas of the downtown. The priority user of the downtown is the short-term patron.

Challenges and desired outcomes addressed:

- ✓ Develop clearer policy direction.
- ✓ Parking supply is not managed to its maximum potential.
- ✓ Parking downtown is hard to understand (i.e., rates, signage, directional systems).
- ✓ A more "customer friendly" parking system in the downtown.
- ✓ The availability of accessible and proximate parking for customers and patrons.
- ✓ Downtown has to compete with other shopping areas.
- ✓ Parking abuse (i.e., conflicts with patron priority).

Opportunity themes supported:

- ✓ Demonstrable commitment to downtown by the City, business community and citizenry.
- ✓ Downtown is a unique destination and shopping experience.
- ✓ Success of, and potential for, existing rewards and incentives programs.

- D. 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 multiple travel mode options. All parking strategies should be coordinated with transportation demand management goals and objectives to ensure that commuters and customers have reasonable options available for access. Access management strategies should move larger percentages of employees into alternative modes over time to reduce overall demand for commuter parking.

Challenges and desired outcomes addressed:

- ✓ Develop clearer policy direction.
- ✓ Parking supply is not managed to its maximum potential.
- ✓ A tool box to influence future parking policy for office/retail/residential development.
- ✓ Cost of building structured parking.

Opportunity themes supported:

- ✓ Demonstrable commitment to downtown by City, business community and citizenry.
- ✓ Success of, and potential for, existing rewards and incentive programs.
- ✓ Maintaining transit service (and other modes) as a means to reduce constraints on the downtown parking supply.

- E. Promote strategic development of off-street facilities.** Off-street parking facilities should be developed to serve a diverse mix of uses and facilitate continued access activity throughout the day and into the evenings and weekends. Parking facilities should be strategically located to assure that a mix of uses is conveniently and economically served, *particularly patron access*. Facilities should be sited in a manner that supports connectivity within the downtown and cost recovery. Employee parking should not be the long-term, primary intent of parking facilities in the downtown.

Challenges and desired outcomes addressed:

- ✓ There is not a clear consensus on parking policy or the roles of the public and private sector in the provision/management of parking to meet future goals and objectives of the downtown.
- ✓ Lack of a capital strategy for funding/supporting public parking programs and infrastructure.
- ✓ Understanding strategic/deliberate elements of parking management.
- ✓ Need for better connectivity in the downtown between destinations.
- ✓ Cost of building structured parking.

Opportunity themes supported:

- ✓ Downtown is a unique destination and shopping experience.
- ✓ A viable downtown.
- ✓ Lots of opportunity for continued growth.

- F. *Preserve and expand on-street parking wherever possible.*** On-street parking should be preserved along strategic corridors to improve customer/visitor accessibility and to facilitate revitalization of street level activities. In some cases, on-street access should take priority over street capacity and vehicle speeds.

Challenges and desired outcomes addressed:

- ✓ Managing parking to have "pedestrian friendly" benefits.
- ✓ Understanding parking strategically.
- ✓ A more "customer friendly" parking system in downtown.
- ✓ Perception that Spokane lacks parking capacity and convenient access.

Opportunity themes supported:

- ✓ Downtown is a unique destination and shopping experience.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE FOR UNDERSTANDABILITY

- G. *Improve access linkages between districts and the downtown core.*** Access linkages within the core and between districts should be clearly identified through signage, wayfinding measures and other communication strategies to increase customer understanding of the downtown. Access linkages include parking, transit, and pedestrian/bicycle systems.

Challenges and desired outcomes addressed:

- ✓ The lack of a coordinated parking management system.
- ✓ The availability of accessible and proximate parking for customers and patrons.
- ✓ Building support for transit and the STA as a parking objective.
- ✓ Parking downtown is hard to understand (i.e., rates, signage and directional systems).

Opportunity themes supported:

- ✓ A visionary picture of the future - *The Plan for a New Downtown*.
- ✓ Lots of opportunity for continued growth.
- ✓ A strong, positive sense about downtown's future.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- H. *The City and PSC should participate in the development of access options for patrons (customers and visitors) of the downtown and partner with the business community to stimulate additional access and growth.*** The City and PSC should promote alternative modes for commuter access as well as creating incentives, partnerships and programs with the private sector to attract and accommodate desired development growth. Strategies should be developed and integrated into a uniform parking management plan that has the consensus support of the public and private sectors.

Challenges and desired outcomes addressed:

- ✓ Develop clearer policy direction.
- ✓ Aligning public/private sector partnerships as it relates to parking and access.
- ✓ Understanding strategic/deliberate elements of parking management.
- ✓ A tool box to influence future parking policy for office/retail/residential development.
- ✓ Resistance to public sector investment in public parking.
- ✓ Lack of a capital strategy for funding/supporting public parking program(s)/infrastructure.
- ✓ Need to attract a more diverse mix of businesses downtown.

Opportunity themes supported:

- ✓ Downtown is a unique destination and shopping experience.
- ✓ Demonstrable commitment to downtown by the City, business community and citizenry.
- ✓ Increased residential development – potential to grow the market.
- ✓ Great business environment downtown.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE – QUALITY

- I. *The "parking product" in the downtown should be of the highest quality to create a positive customer experience with parking and the downtown.*** Parking facilities (surface and structured) should be of uniform quality to create a sense of safety, convenience, understandability and coordination with the pedestrian environment. Communication and marketing materials should also be of high quality and integrated into a comprehensive package of services to inform and guide the parking public.

Challenges and desired outcomes addressed:

- ✓ Perception that Spokane lacks access and capacity.
- ✓ Managing parking to have "pedestrian friendly" impacts.
- ✓ A more "customer friendly" parking system in downtown.
- ✓ Easy to use finished product - a "usable" parking program.

- ✓ Safe, secure and well lit.²

Opportunity themes supported:

- ✓ Downtown is a unique destination and shopping experience.
- ✓ Great business environment downtown.
- ✓ A strong, positive sense about downtown's future.

B. SUMMARY

The *Plan for a New Downtown* is an exciting vision for Spokane. That vision recognizes the goal and objective of the City of Spokane, Downtown Spokane Partnership\BID, stakeholders and the community to move downtown toward becoming a vibrant, vital, 24-hour urban neighborhood destination - an ideal downtown. With this recognition has come the understanding that managing the 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 the DSP, City, and its stakeholders can serve as a solid foundation for coordinating parking and transportation decision-making and policy. The Guiding Principles are grounded in the long-term economic development vision of the City and its downtown stakeholders. Their intent and purpose is to generate parking and transportation management strategies and programs that will complement the DSP and City's efforts in attaining its long-term growth and development vision.

² Even though this element was not mentioned by the PSC as a challenge or desired outcome, it was strongly suggested in the discussion of elements of a successful parking system.