

Metropolitan Transportation Commission Smart Parking Workshop-Meeting Notes

Notes by Ken McCroskey-June 13, 2012, Walnut Creek

Agenda

1. Introduction – Valerie Knepper, MTC, Regional Parking Initiative
2. Welcome – Ken Nordhoff, City Manager, City of Walnut Creek
3. Interactive Sessions – Jeff Tumlin, Principal, Nelson/Nygaard
 - a. Introduction to Parking
 - b. Minimum Parking Requirements
 - c. Parking Structures
 - d. Parking Management from a System Perspective
4. Parking Policy Impact on Development: Parking Utilization Survey of Transit-Oriented Development Residential Properties in Santa Clara County – Robert Swierk, Sr. Transportation Planner, VTA, and Jason Meek, San Jose State U.
5. Parking Policies from a City Planner’s Perspective: A Real Life Story about Berkeley’s Smart Parking Practices – Matt Taecker, AICP, Principal, Dyett & Bhatia (recently with the City of Berkeley, Downtown Area Plan)

More information and eventually, it’s hoped, webcasts of the presentations above may be found at http://www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/smart_growth/parking/.

Notes

1. Introduction – Valerie Knepper, MTC, Regional Parking Initiative
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MTC is aware that regional economic success or failure is dependant on local decisions. MTC provides tools and information so local jurisdictions can make informed choices around parking.

2. Welcome – Ken Nordhoff, City Manager, City of Walnut Creek

Walnut Creek sought to preserve its human-scale central shopping district while providing increased parking availability. Solutions included designating a City Staff “parking czar,” taking an inventory of available parking, and creating a parking benefit district. New developments in the downtown area which opted not to include parking paid an in lieu fee to the benefit district. These funds were later combined to build parking. Walnut Creek now has parking available on the street and garages that tell you how many spaces are available inside before you enter.

Interactive Sessions – Jeff Tumlin, Principal, Nelson/Nygaard

a. Introduction to Parking

Parking is the cheapest change you can make to support economic development goals. It's also the most politically challenging. Parking is perceived as free, but someone is always paying to maintain it. These costs are passed through our governments and businesses to their customers and tenants.

Research shows that younger Americans are becoming less interested in driving and parking as part of their shopping and housing choices. They may feel cut-off from their social networks in cars, and many choose to use transit or human-powered transportation methods.

Parking policies require the bundling of parking with housing. Why not let the diversity of demand drive the amount of parking built with housing?

Parking for housing, shopping, or work is perceived as a need. Why not turn it into a good and let the market set the price?

b. Minimum Parking Requirements

Parking requirements are often based on the ubiquitous Parking Generation Manual, which is based on notoriously erroneous or inaccurate data generated mostly in Florida in the 1970s. Much of it is outdated or not applicable to projects under consideration. Multiple studies have found that parking is not based on the type of business but on the location of the business. All developments should be considered in context.

Auto use can be mapped by census data for residential areas.

Developers are much more capable of determining the demand for parking than regulations.

c. Parking Structures

... are a very expensive solution, especially for those spaces that remain empty. One downtown parking lot space costs about \$300/month to provide. Who will pay \$3,600 a year for each garage parking space?

Think like an economist: it's cheapest to use current resources before building new ones. What other solutions can lead parkers to spaces? Sensors under spaces, led signs pointing the way, better signage etc.

Is parking the best use of land and money? Parking should be viewed as part of the larger system of policies and goals.

d. Parking Management from a System Perspective, Case Studies

Redwood City

City Council charged staff to price parking so that spaces are always available. Drivers are encouraged to park once and shop many.

Santa Monica

Park once, shop six times has been realized

It's important to de-criminalize leaving your car in one space and visiting multiple stores or spending more time (and money) at a restaurant. Collect money for parking at the end of the time, or use smart meters that will call the patron and offer to add time to avoid a ticket. [Ken: Why must El Cerrito Plaza businesses each have their own carts? Why can't I park once and make a circuit of the stores using one cart?]

Instead of competing with parking availability, compete by having a more interesting/sociable/enjoyable shopping experience.

Parking meters should be easy to use and should charge during peak demand (including nights and weekends). Market pricing then builds on this infrastructure.

But what about the social equity of market pricing parking when there are lower income community members with kids who need to drive? The current model puts the cost burden on all community members, including those who can't afford it and those who don't drive. What you do with the money collected can mitigate equity imbalance. Means testing is sometimes used for transit, why not for parking?

3. Parking Policy Impact on Development: Parking Utilization Survey of Transit-Oriented Development Residential Properties in Santa Clara County – Robert Swierk, Sr. Transportation Planner, VTA, and Jason Meek, San Jose State U.

Overnight surveys of large, multi-unit, transport-oriented housing found that at most 85% of parking was utilized overnight on weekdays. These developments could have included 20% or more units instead of wasting space with unused parking spaces. Per-unit costs could have been reduced, and millions of dollars could have been used more productively.

4. Parking Policies from a City Planner's Perspective: A Real Life Story about Berkeley's Smart Parking Practices – Matt Taecker, AICP, Principal, Dyett & Bhatia (recently with the City of Berkeley, Downtown Area Plan)

Plan sought to increase the vibrancy of Downtown Berkeley

- Currently 80-90% on-street parking utilization
- 25% of spaces occupied by “meter feeders” all day
- Retailers who cry for more on-street spaces often the ones feeding the meters
- Space in parking garages going unused
- Many different perspectives on parking
- Large proportion of daytime traffic made up of drivers cruising for parking

How to make more parking available downtown?

- Static and dynamic signs
- Smart phone apps
- Share UC lots after five pm (already happening)
- Market-rate pricing of parking

Hard sell to merchants, so need to provide benefits

- Link revenues to tangible benefits
- Beautification
- Steam cleaning
- Ambassadors

Promote alternatives

- Program to divert commuters to transit: state law requires firms to pay employees who don't use parking for the value of a parking space
- Transit pass program
- Guaranteed ride home via taxi 2 times a year for transit commuters
- City Car Share alternatives for daytime trips from the office

Future Downtown district designation will:

- Lead to development that matches parking ratio to market demand
- Reduce demand for parking
- Allow efficient use of existing parking spots
- Collect in lieu fees from developers which are low enough to act as an incentive to limit parking

Please remember:

- When designing regulations, give staff flexibility to carry out policy Example: “Set parking price so that spaces are always available.”

Aleida's notes on Parking Workshop at the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) on June 12, 2012.

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2. Welcome-Tom Bates, City of Berkeley Mayor and MTC Commissioner
3. Interactive Session
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 - b. Minimum Parking Requirements
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4. Parking Policies from a City Planner's Perspective: A Real Life Story about Smart Parking Practices—Matt Taecker, AICP, Principal at Dyett and Bhatia
5. Parking Policies from a Developer's Perspective: How lower parking minimums will make housing more affordable—Mott Smith, Principal at Civic Enterprise Associates and member of the California Infill Builders Federation
6. Next Steps

Notes:

2. City of Berkeley has implemented strategies to manage parking and created incentives for City employees to use transit or other modes of transportation.

3. Minimum Parking Requirements

We have to have a clear understanding that parking demand depends on location, therefore, parking management has to be implemented according to the land use of the area and that on-street parking is more desirable than off-street parking. In the Bay Area, 80% of trips (aside of commute trips) are made by car.

In the Bay Area, 0.9 parking spaces per unit work well in most of the urban areas. Experience tells us that cities that have dropped their parking requirements in their mixed use areas have experienced increased economic development. Parking drives development decisions and these decisions determine the makeup of a community. For instance, communities that want to attract a mixed of activities where people more interested in social interaction live (generally young, educated people), find that dropping the parking requirements encourages development that facilitates social interactions as opposed to spread out developments where people more interested in car ownership and less social interaction live (more typical of previous generations). For instance, the City of Santa Monica has adopted parking policies in the downtown that brought down requirement for parking as low as 1.6-1.7 per 1000 sq. ft. development has shown that when communities deregulate parking, economic development increases.

Unbundle Parking: for residential units in condominium situations, giving a discount if parking is not used in a condominium or reducing the price of a property if parking is not required, helps in identifying the real cost of parking. In summary, when developers abide by the rule of providing certain number of parking spaces per unit, they are providing parking at below market rate and creating a demand for parking. This translates into developments that are less inductive of walking and transit usage and more dependent on auto ownership. The space used to provide this “below market” parking could be used to increase the number of housing units and create more dense areas increasing walkability and as a result, economic development.

Parking Cash out: Thinking about parking as we think about any other good in society, the idea of cashing out for not using parking works best in employee-based transportation demand management situations.

Parking structures: This is one of the most expensive forms of parking at \$25,000 per parking space. Therefore, empty parking spaces are a waste of resources. Before thinking on building a parking structure, it is better to achieve a more efficient and better use of what you already have than building more of the same good. Therefore, what you need to do in your community is to collect data on parking utilization. A survey of parking demand/supply or parking utilization survey and how this impacts retail sales.

What should we invest in?

- Decrease parking and improve street amenities
- Improve accessibility to Transit Stations
- Try to get rid of parking minimums

Parking Management. Berkeley case:

1900 parking on-street parking spaces, 900 in the core downtown area.

Berkeley policy:

Fully use what is available

Inventory and information -the University has a parking share arrangement.

-Underutilized garages

-Static/Dynamic signs to direct people where parking is available.

-Proper pricing (look at parking occupancy-75% occupancy rate is a good sign).

Match demand and supply

Look for alternatives

- Parking cash out- Mandated by State Law under AB904-Sustainable Parking Standards of 2012:
 - Reduce Parking in transit-rich areas
 - Provide flexibility to developers
 - Give cities Transit Oriented Development zoning
 - Give cities the authority to set these standards
- Low Minimum parking requirement
 - 1 parking space per 3 dwelling units
 - 1 parking space per 1000 sq. ft. of commercial development
- Reduce demand further
 - Unbundle parking
 - Require transit passes
 - Require car-sharing PODs when building projects with over 25 dwelling units
 - Provide bicycle parking
- Monitoring and Enforcement
 - This is usually required of property managers. They have to submit annual reports showing compliance with the established Transportation Demand Management measures.
- Establish shared use arrangements: different land uses, consume parking at different rates.