



## PARKING DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

(as part of the Transportation Committee's Recommendations)

### Introduction

No one ever came downtown just to park, but parking is a critical component of the overall downtown experience. Addressing parking in a proactive and strategic manner is of utmost importance. In an urban environment, where uses are denser and where there are more people and cars, parking becomes a more complex issue. For downtown to be successful, parking strategies and solutions must be part of the downtown redevelopment equation.

In cities where parking is managed more effectively than in others, several key principles are evident. These core principles are at the foundation of the recommendations below. They include:

- parking is part of a larger, comprehensive transportation system;
- parking is customer focused; and
- parking typically is coordinated through some structured central parking organization — either official or voluntary — that oversees parking practices and marketing of the downtown parking system.

There are several characteristics of current conditions regarding downtown parking, including:

- Inventory of parking in the Central Business District:
  - 14,177 parking spaces
  - 19 parking garages with 8,514 parking spaces
  - 90 parking lots with 4,845 parking spaces
  - 818 spaces at on-street meters
  - 2,934 of these spaces are controlled by public entities
- Parking shortages exist in pockets of downtown.
- Recent job losses have resulted in some parking availability.
- Parking experiences vary dramatically from location to location.
- Parking is perceived as an obstacle to downtown's sustainability and growth.
- When compared to other Ohio downtowns, downtown Dayton's parking rates are modest and are trending downward.

### Overall goal

Working with core stakeholders, create a comprehensive parking system that provides the right balance of availability, convenience and affordable pricing, while offering a parking experience that is clean, safe and customer-focused.

## Core objectives

- Ensure parking solutions are included in all future economic development initiatives.
- Work cooperatively with all stakeholders to ensure a customer-focused parking experience that addresses the needs of downtown's key constituents, including employees/employers, visitors and residents.
- Develop a comprehensive system in which all parking options — including garages, surface lots and on-street parking — work in tandem.
- Improve the parking experience by ensuring a consistent standard of maintenance, security, cleanliness and customer service.
- Clearly and aggressively market parking options, locations and availability to the public.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The establishment of the Downtown Dayton Parking Commission is central to implementing a comprehensive parking system downtown. The Commission will be a voluntary public/private parking alliance, comprised of representatives from the City of Dayton, Montgomery County, Greater Dayton RTA, the Downtown Dayton Partnership, private operators, downtown property and business owners, and other stakeholders. It will provide stakeholders with a forum to work together to strategically manage parking assets in a coordinated fashion, present the best combination of parking options and encourage optimum usage. It also will serve as a vehicle through which parking issues and concerns can be identified and addressed, as well as the oversight committee for development and implementation of the core recommendations outlined in the Greater Downtown Dayton Plan.

### **1. Since parking is a key element to economic viability, ensure parking solutions are included in all future economic development initiatives.**

- On an ongoing basis, evaluate and review the parking inventory to ensure it is adequate to meet the current and future needs of all downtown constituents.
- As any new development comes online, ensure a parking strategy is developed to adequately address the needs of the new development without straining existing parking needs.
- As new housing development occurs, ensure the special parking needs of residents are addressed.
- Strategically analyze the placement of any new parking lots/garages.
- Develop aesthetic design guidelines for garages and lots so they integrate into the downtown fabric and contribute to a sense of place.

### **2. Work cooperatively with all stakeholders to ensure a customer-focused parking experience that addresses the needs of downtown's key constituents, including employees/employers, visitors and residents.**

- Develop strategies for early and short-term parking, such as \$1 lots and early bird specials.
- Examine the feasibility of a downtown residential parking permit.
- Improve and enhance standard special events parking.
- Promote and support a customer service-focused culture.
- Examine the feasibility of offering such services as valet parking, "Park and Dine" or "Park and Shop" programs, and such services as battery jumps and flat-tire change assistance.
- Encourage parking operators to go beyond basic guidelines to improve the customer parking experience and make it fun, such as adding bright lights, music and other enhancements.
- Work with the City of Dayton and Greater Dayton RTA to implement a shuttle service circulating throughout Greater Downtown. It would serve as a parking shuttle during peak hours, but also move people between major attractions and throughout Greater Downtown.

**3. Develop a comprehensive system in which all parking options — including garages, surface lots and on-street parking — work in tandem.**

- Take a systems approach to parking with meters, lots, garages, parking specials and other tools all available to design a customer-focused downtown parking system.
- Working with parking stakeholders, ensure that on-street and off-street parking options are well coordinated so meters are used for short-term, quick turnover for retail/restaurant uses while off-street parking options are used for employee parking and other long-term needs.
- Evaluate and analyze enforcement policies regarding meter usage.
- Develop a timeline and funding sources to upgrade parking meter technology and equipment, such as installing meters able to accept credit and debit cards, multi-space meters and other improvements to enhance the customer experience. This technology also allows for better monitoring of peak hour usage so rates can be adjusted to reflect demand and enforcement issues can be eased.
- Make the best use of all available spaces, using shared parking and limited use strategies.
- Examine the feasibility of installing angled vs. parallel parking to increase on-street parking on targeted downtown streets.

**4. Improve the parking experience by ensuring a consistent standard of maintenance, security, cleanliness and customer service.**

- Establish standardized guidelines for the conditions of parking lots and garages. These uniform guidelines should address such issues as maintenance, security, cleanliness, landscaping and lighting.
- Develop quality assurance mechanisms to annually assess and grade garages and surface lots to ensure a consistent standard of operations. Post scorecards on [EasyParkDowntown.org](http://EasyParkDowntown.org) so consumers are aware of maintenance and customer-service standards.
- Examine the feasibility of developing a mechanism to license garages and lots.
- Conduct security audits with the assistance of the Dayton Police Department to assess methods of improving security.

**5. Clearly and aggressively market parking options, locations and availability to downtown's constituents.**

- Continuously educate the public on availability and location of parking to meet the need for more information about parking options.
- Through [EasyParkDowntown](http://EasyParkDowntown.org) and other opportunities, develop and implement a marketing program to promote parking options to all downtown users.
- Promote bargain specials developed by operators to shift parkers to targeted lots.
- Develop a standardized parking signage system throughout downtown.
- Design and implement a vehicular wayfinding system to efficiently direct motorists to the parking supply available on a real-time basis.
- Seek funding for implementation and maintenance of a wayfinding system.
- Conduct a biannual survey to gauge attitudes about downtown parking and set benchmarks for improvement.

**6. Continue the analysis in transitioning the voluntary parking alliance into an established parking authority.**

**7. Continue to work to improve the perception of safety downtown and the pedestrian-friendly initiatives that will greatly enhance parking users' willingness to walk a couple of blocks from parking to destination.**

Implementation

Lead Organization: Downtown Dayton Partnership

Supporting Partners:

- City of Dayton departments, including police, economic development and planning
- Montgomery County
- Greater Dayton RTA
- private parking operators
- downtown property and business owners

Potential Funding Sources

- federal CMAC funds
- FTA funds
- federal ISTEA funds