

Chapter 2. Public Outreach Week #I

The first of a pair of public outreach weeks was completed during the last week of March and consisted of four components, as described below.

- A series of four meetings with focus groups, consisting of:
 - Alternative Mode advocates;
 - City residents;
 - Downtown commuters; and
 - Representatives from the Downtown business community.
- One meeting with representatives of four key policy boards, consisting of:
 - The Ann Arbor City Council;
 - The Downtown Development Authority;
 - The Ann Arbor Transportation Authority; and
 - The Ann Arbor City Planning Commission.
- A series of four interviews with representatives from key Downtown institutions;
 - University of Michigan;
 - Washtenaw County;
 - The Ann Arbor District Library; and
 - The Main Street Area Association.
- A public open house held at City Hall.

Notes from each of these events are summarized below.

Notes from Focus Group Meetings

Continuing the Phase II focus on obtaining public input to direct the development of parking policy, the Project Team conducted a series of focus group meetings during the week of March 26th. These meetings were intended to solicit feedback from stakeholders with specific interests in, and perspectives on, parking. A total of four focus groups convened during the week.

- The Alternative Transportation advocacy community
- Ann Arbor Residents
- Downtown commuters
- The Downtown businesses community – Local business owners, the Chamber of Commerce, and other business interests including the real estate community.

For each meeting, Nelson\Nygaard facilitated a discussion of Phase I findings and potential strategies and direction for a Downtown parking policy. Following are summaries of the feedback received from the groups attending each meeting.

Focus Group 1 – Alternative Transportation Community

26th March 2007
DDA Conference Room

Figure 2-1 Focus Group 1 Attendees

Name	Representing
Frank Schwende	Washtenaw Bicycling and Walking Coalition
Matt Weingarden	Bus Commuters
Ana Iacob	Washtenaw Bicycling and Walking Coalition
Dave Askins	Self
Erica Briggs	getDowntown
Pete Hines	Washtenaw Bicycling and Walking Coalition
Kris Talley	Washtenaw Bicycling and Walking Coalition
Phil Farber	Washtenaw Bicycling and Walking Coalition
Mary Stasiak	AATA
Lily Guzman	Washtenaw Bicycling and Walking Coalition
Chris White	AATA
Tamara Real	Arts Alliance
Don VanCleave	DDA
Elizabeth Tidd	Bicycle Commuter
Sharron Tubb	Self
Joan French	Self
Ray Fullerton	Self
Jhamal Frederiksen	Self
Donna Goen	Health Media, Inc.

Many at the table commute to areas other than Downtown including:

- Stadium/ Packard area;
- South Industrial Highway area; and
- North Campus

Most rely on alternatives to personal auto travel for commuting. Stated mode reliance, in order of significance, consisted of:

- Bike,
- Transit, and
- Auto.

Most reside in or around Downtown. No one's commute, via any mode, is longer than 20 minutes.

Most regular bicycle commuters have access to inside storage at work, including one with access to bike lockers (AATA). An AATA employee noted that providing lockers at work is now required for new development.

Two attendees noted that they had access to showers at their commute destination – work (AATA), classes (UM).

Issues

- Wayfinding should be better – identify routing, storage options.
- City of Toronto cited as exemplary in wayfinding and storage (stores can request lollipop bike racks from the City)
- Education – For cyclists, drivers, and pedestrians. How to ride, where to find lanes and routes, using and maintaining bikes; driver responsibilities to respect pedestrians and cyclists (should be part of driver education) as well as bike lanes; cyclists off of sidewalks (no more signed sidewalk routes) and where pedestrians need to be aware of cars and bikes.
- Speeds on North Main (and other unnamed streets) scare cyclists out of bike lanes, and onto sidewalk.
- Not enough bike lanes – 30 miles currently.
- Suggestion for Weeklong Bike festival – Education, safety

Barriers to Biking

- Weather, required effort (acquiring/ maintaining necessary equipment, physical effort to ride), being sweaty (lack of showers at destination), safety.
- Land Uses – shift away from shopping and serving local market to dining and serving regional market. Diners are less inclined to bike as are those coming from farther away.
- Yearlong bike commuting is big, despite weather.
- Pedal-pooling can overcome many barriers – psychological support for required effort, safety in numbers.
- Lend-a-Bike could help with necessary equipment barriers – tried in the 70's and bikes were stolen wholesale.

Barriers to Walking

All agreed that Downtown is very walkable. Attendee from Lincoln Park DDA stated that he comes to Downtown to walk. Barriers to more walking include:

- Sidewalks – general conditions and weather-related maintenance, laws requiring sidewalks to be cleared by property-owners are not enforced;

- Safety – Cars;
- Security – Walking at night in areas with out housing or evening uses (Transit Center/ Library block); and
- Weather – Rain is worse than cold/ snow.

Barriers to Using Alternative Modes

- Many UM students arrive from areas where not driving is not thought of as an option. Where students come from directly affects how they perceive walking, biking, and bus options.
- Safety – Drivers entering one-way streets do not look for pedestrians, cyclists coming from other direction.

Incentives

- go!pass – stated as the reason attendee stays at current employer.
- getDowntown working on offering discounts at Downtown shops for Downtown employees (similar to common arrangements within shopping malls) – could generate more walking errands in district.

Buses

- Buses don't run late enough or often enough. They should run at least until 11 PM on weekdays and later Thursday – Saturday – as late as 3AM.
- Waiting for buses in the Winter is brutal.
- A coffee bar/ wireless access at Blake Transit Center would make waiting a lot nicer/ more productive.
- Bus drivers need to be ambassadors—be friendly and embracing around events/ Christmas shopping season.
- Transit needs to be branded.
- Express/ Commuter buses would need to run at least 3 buses in the AM and PM peaks.

Parking

- “It's easy to park in Ann Arbor”
- “Perceived parking problem is sign of success”
- One attendee stated that his entire department (at UM) walked or biked because otherwise they would have to pay for parking.
- Two people will not pay for parking and will go out of their way to avoid paying (will walk a mile).
- “DDA should charge for on-street at night.”
Equity issue of charging day time and not night time—Daytime businesses' customers have to pay, why not evening businesses?

- One attendee’s friend will always bike or walk except at night when parking is free. Then he drives

Signage

- A number of attendees noted not being able to distinguish between UM and DDA parking garages. Some have gotten tickets for parking at UM garages, thinking they were public/ DDA garages.
- “Monthly Parking Only” signs are placed so that driver is already entering garage before they are seen. Must back up, often with a line of cars waiting behind.

Future of Bike/Walk use in Downtown

- Attendees were almost universally optimistic about growth of these modes for travel into and around Downtown, though all agreed that there is less today than in the past. The 1970’s were noted as the height of bicycle use in Downtown.

Focus Group 2 – Residents

27th March 2007

DDA Conference Room

Figure 2-2 Focus Group 2 Attendees

Name	Representing
Richard Shackson	Downtown CAC
Nancy Stokes	Downtown Residents
Ray Detter	Downtown CAC
Constance Crump	Downtown Residents

While efforts were made to reach out beyond the Downtown and near-Downtown neighborhoods, all those attending were residents of Downtown.

Discussion

Do people have the information they need about alternatives to parking?

- People who need information on alternatives will find it out

Is parking sold separate from the unit?

- One person’s unit comes with parking
- Some of us have been talking about a carsharing pool. What it means to a developer is that he doesn’t need to provide so many parking spaces.
- Metro 202 provided parking nearby in a garage: 21 parking spaces for 44 units—across the street.
- Some people are renting their off-street spaces and using on-street parking to gain income.

- In some mixed-use buildings, only residential units have deeded parking.

What do you do when you're driving in Downtown?

- Walk 98% of the time
- Drive to Kerry town to studio that has parking.
- My side of town is a small town. I know most of the merchants. I grocery shop at the farmer's market, Sparrows, and the Food coop. I bum a ride every few weeks or so for toilet paper. I can find all the good quality food I need downtown.
- If I'm stopping downtown and going somewhere else, I'll often take my car. I'd have a hard time getting rid of my car.
- Before 9 AM, I can find a meter anywhere.

Do people take advantage of free on street parking to lock them up for the whole night.

- One person's husband parks on street for the night at 6:30 (lives downtown)
- There's a lot behind Kerrytown where there's a box you pay at that one person does not pay. But others have found enforcement "quite efficient". However if it was easy to pay by credit card, "that would be fabulous".
- There was little interest in expanding RPP program as many feel they have adequate off-street parking and don't bother with street spaces.
- People going to the Y in Old West End are cruising to try and get free parking.

RPP program with meters?

- Oppose any spread of parking meters in residential neighborhoods. Wouldn't like the look of meters on residential street.

Bicycling and Walking Downtown

- I used to bike quite a bit. I didn't have a car for 6 or 9 months and it worked fine.
- On sidewalk riding was a problem. Recent enforcement has worked – less people riding on the sidewalk, especially downtown.
- Mid block alleys are really dangerous for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- AATA bike racks are being used very well.

Transit

- The AATA pulsing in and out twice an hour works very well. Even when buses are late, the coordinated transfer works. Announcements made at approaching intersections. "A very customer-oriented organization" Part of the reason is that it's an independent organization.
- One attendee used to commute by bus, before retiring.

- One never rides a bus, but in the summer will bike quite a bit. His mother used the bus all the time, even as entertainment.
- One attendee tried using the bus, but the stop was hard to get to and service times were really inconvenient.

Comments

- Many on-streets space are empty because of the meter limits.
- Some one-hour meters were put in place out of a desire for short term parking in front of lofts to unload groceries. One participant was concerned that some availability be maintained for that purpose.
- One participant does not own a car but controls two parking spaces that he doesn't use. He walks, rides the bus, and occasionally gets a ride to surrounding areas for shopping.
- All others own cars and most have on-site parking
- One lives at Main and Liberty with no onsite parking. She rents in a garage and her husband does his best to park on street. Her car hardly ever gets used, sitting in the 4th & William garage for months.
- Older apartments tend not to have on-site parking, especially loft conversions along Main Street.
- In our neighborhood, there is permit parking on just one side. Cars park on-street before after passengers ride a vanpool to work in Detroit. Their cars are on the street all day.
- A lot of people are parking and using the Link instead of running around using parking.
- Opening the city lots for free is fabulous!
- One attendee stated that she keeps her car only because she is looking for a new job for which she may need it. Otherwise she'd sell it.
- There was a time when a student couldn't have a car in town. It was a school regulation.
- The university should offer storage options for students.
- Every development downtown should bring it's own parking solution. Liberty lofts still has units for sale. Ashley terrace is still struggling.
- We want no more free standing parking structures. Also, no more surface lots. Want more residential downtown, not retail or parking. Want some kind of plan so that on-site parking is there for at least the tenants of the building.

Focus Group 3 – Downtown Commuters

28th March 2007

DDA Conference Room

Figure 2-3 Focus Group 3 Attendees

Name	Representing
Sharon Stanley	Permit Holders
Gale Redding	Commuters
Barbara Mangan	Permit Holders
Jhana Frederiksen	Commuters
Alexis Cecil	Commuters
Olga Billakis	Property Owners

- 3 Participants do not have permit
- 2 Participants have permits (1 paid by employer/ 1 not)
- 1 Participant is a landlord who lives downtown and maintains permits to offer to tenants.

Discussion and Comments

Length of Commute

- Most commute about 20 minutes in the morning and up to 40 minutes or more in the evening.
- Many complained about the traffic, especially during construction.

How far will people walk from parking to work?

- Generally, about 10 minutes - one person will walk over one mile.
- In general, older people would not consider alternatives, younger people would. One noted that being environmentally sensitive, and having time to do stuff on a bus, would be of considerable value in taking an express bus.
- Two non-permit holders vary their parking patterns to match weather conditions and time constraints. For each, however, finding a free spot in surrounding neighborhoods is the primary form of parking. Will pay when weather is poor, or time is limited.

Do you use your car during the day?

- Most leave their car all day, but one uses it once in a while.
- One parks underground at Ann Ashley because she knows the spot will be there when she gets back and there's easy egress out of the garage. Another person didn't know that there was parking underground.
- Generally finding parking at midday is difficult, which discourages midday trips.
- One company employs couriers. They have a very hard time finding parking during the day. It was not clear if they would be willing to pay more to have a guaranteed parking space for couriers (through on-street pricing). But finding space was essential.

Would non-cash payment options make paid parking more attractive?

- All agreed it would

Would you pay for a permit if there weren't a waiting list?

- All non-permit holders agreed that they would not.

Light Rail

- This would need to be direct from their community, or very near by – “When you're almost at work, why would you park and switch?”
- Must start and end in a convenient location.
- It will be very difficult to overcome the independence that the car offers.

Express Bus Service

- One would ride such a bus if it was cheaper than paying for gas
- One person would use the bus except that she sometimes needs to use her car after work. She did take it once, but it made a lot of stops and took too long.
- If it ran during rush hour times every 15 - 30 minutes, two would ride.
- If it was a comfortable ride and you could do other things, same two would ride.
- “When I get out of work, I want to go home. I don't want to wait a half hour.”
- “If I can get stuff done on the bus, that's valuable time I wouldn't have had.”
- “It would be really nice if it was every ½ hour rather than every hour “

HOV

- If there was a carpool lane more people would be apt to carpool.
- This would also help appeal of express bus service.
- It would be great to have an Emergency ride home for mid day and late night when one has to stay late or leave early.

Access to Permits/ Cashing out parking

- When a new person comes in there's not necessarily a permit. One person has been on the list for a couple of years.
- “I highly suspect if I didn't get my permit, I wouldn't get the permit and I wouldn't get the \$100.”
- Usually I'm running errands for the office before I get in, so I would not take the cash out.
- One person walks to work even though she could get a free permit.
- At one law firm with two senior partners, one does not have a permit because he's willing to walk. It's his way of getting exercise.

- “To know that you can definitely get a space is definitely worth a lot. I would still pay a \$100 to park.”

Rebates for Non-Driving Days

- “If I have the permit, I’m going to drive.”

Effect of Courthouse

- Monday is a busy day at the courthouse as hundreds of prospective jurors come downtown. Clients cannot park on-street. Closing of 4th and Williams spaces, and shift of permits to 4th & Washington made things much worse. Attendee’s law-firm is looking for new space in the suburbs because of this parking issue. Majority of people would prefer to stay in Ann Arbor.

Focus Group 4 - Downtown Business Community

28th March 2007
DDA Conference Room

Figure 2-4 Focus Group 4 Attendees

Name	Representing
Bill Milken	Milken Realty
Andrew O’Neal	O’Neal Construction
Ed Shaffran	Shaffran
Jesse Bernstein	Chamber of Commerce
Bob Gates	First Martin
Karen Farmer	Kerrytown Shops
Jason Boggs	Kerrytown District Association
Newcombe Clark	MSAA
Mary Stasiak	AATA
Tom Heywood	State Street
Ron Dankert	Swisher

Discussion

What are the sizes of your companies?

Focus group participants noted they had the following number of employees; 3.5, 4, 5, 14, and 14. Participants estimated that the number of employees within downtown businesses would range from 2 to 200.

What are your individual parking needs; your customers; your employees?

One participant noted that their parking needs for their own office were minimal. The participant had limited on-site parking, enough for staff and visitors, and expressed knowledge of where to park when coming downtown for personal reasons. One participant noted that they are located at Main Street and William Street (Chamber of Commerce), and they have high traffic volume coming through the door that they need the parking system to accommodate. The participant added that the Chamber had received

phone calls from Detroit Edison (DTE) complaining that they'd been in Ann Arbor for years, and were on the permit waitlist for 250 parking permits, and questioned why Google is getting a free ride. A participant noted that the discussion should also be about mobility and providing more resources, like shuttles. Another participant agreed, adding that a number of spots are taken up by evening employees, and felt that part of the problem was due to a lack of late night buses to the AATA's Park & Ride lots.

Would the DDA overnight parking permit fit with restaurant/evening employees schedules?

Participants were skeptical of this solution. The participant felt that it would be difficult to get employees out of the nearby spots (if they are even actually the ones parking in them) and noted that a restaurant owner would never buy parking permits for all of their employees. One participant suggested the Nelson/Nygaard team speak with Dennis Serras to get his opinions, as he owns multiple restaurants in Ann Arbor. One participant suggested extending the hours of meter enforcement and another felt that extending meter hours would penalize the customers. A participant noted that people will do anything for free parking. Another participant noted that the parking structures in the Main Street Area are very convenient and are easy to get in and out of quickly. One participant noted that after business hours, parkers are more concerned with convenience than cost.

Would valet parking work downtown?

One participant commented that if on-street parking is full, valet parking would be appealing, partly from a safety standpoint, in order to not have to walk up and down within the parking structures. Another participant felt there would be a cultural resistance to valet parking here, as it is a university town and a little more laid-back, it might seem snooty to having valet parking. One participant felt if valet parking was implemented, it would have to be given a significant period of implementation, like a year, to really determine how well it was working.

Is there an interest in Wayfinding information, such as real-time info on available parking spaces?

Participants generally felt this would be beneficial, as Ann Arbor is often confusing to visitors, particularly with the one way streets. One participant noted that the increasing number of cars with navigation systems helps to reduce confusion. A participant commented that there are businesses that would like to locate in the downtown, but there isn't parking available, so they go to the edges of town instead. Another member noted that this isn't just the case with small offices, it's the same with large offices too, and not only are they not being attracted downtown, but they are leaving downtown too. One participant remarked that companies just need to change their name to Google and then they'd not only get parking, but also for free.

Convenience and Parking Solutions

A participant shared that visitors to the DTE building tend to play roulette to get one of the free visitor spots right in front, then when there aren't available, they eventually go across

the street to the parking deck and end up frustrated and late. The participant was bothered that people still seem to hold on to the idea that they will always be able to park right in front of their destination.

One participant shared that they lived within walking distance to one of the AATA outlots, but riding the bus into the downtown takes 40 minutes. The participant noted they did not have that much time, but would take an express bus if it only took 15 minutes to get downtown. Participants agreed that bus frequency should increase, and noted that light rail would be great, but questioned how that would be funded. One participant noted that parking structures have to be one part of the solution, and added that light rail and buses won't solve the problem alone.

A participant was amazed after going to Birmingham, MI, as the first two hours of parking were free. Another member remarked that it would be possible to do that here. One participant commented that Ann Arbor is a very walkable town, but said they wouldn't walk all over in the middle of winter. A member suggested that as many levels as structurally possible should be added to every current parking structure. It was acknowledged that some people love certain surface lots and prefer not to park in structures. One participant noted that it would be a waste to put a structure on a flat lot, and said that the goal should be to keep downtown walkable. Another participant noted that a combination of elements is necessary to create a solution.

Express Bus

One participant questioned where the threshold is, that if you're willing to take the bus, how much longer are you willing for it to take to get downtown. Another participant said that a 30 minute ride would be the maximum, but added that reliability is also a factor. A participant noted that some people just need to have a car, especially if they make multiple trips during the day. One participant said the focus should be on reducing the parking demand of the big users like City and County employees, and giving them the incentive to come in on buses.

Other Issues Employment

- Most employees work a standard 9-5 shift, with the exception of DTE employees, which have different shifts throughout the day.
- State Street employees mostly park in the Liberty Square Structure. There was a feeling in the group that the right people are using the garages during the day.
- In Kerrytown, most people park in the adjacent neighborhood or park in two hour parking and move their car every two hours. The group stated there are no complaints from residents of surrounding neighborhoods of people parking and then walking to Kerrytown.

Parking Permits

- The group stated that the permitting process works either officially through the DDA or a developer will have his name on floating lists, and when a permit opens up he/she will call their client and ask them if they need another spot.
- There is a \$19 difference between having a monthly permit and just paying at the structure out of pocket. The group noted that the gap is getting smaller.
- The group liked the idea of permits going away completely and then people getting billed monthly for their parking usage. They believed this idea would give more flexibility to people who only park downtown part-time.
- It was stated that the problem with parking in structures is that there are always going to be people who want a guarantee of close parking.

Adding New Parking Supply

- Building more spaces immediately was a primary concern for many in this group. The group noted the City's goal to add 3000 new residents in or near downtown, and that they will need parking.
- Some feel the city needs to add to the parking inventory, and that they worry about businesses leaving, in part because employees are running out of choices for parking.
- Businesses are moving out to South State Street because of the parking. It's not an economic decision, but one of convenience.
- It was noted that the top levels of the Maynard Structure are usually empty, but motorists do not want to travel up 5 levels to find that out.
- The group said new technologies to inform people of where spaces are located would be a plus. (Like updates on cell phones)

Pricing and Payment

- The price of a parking ticket is \$10. This is far less than a comparable ticket in New York or Chicago. If ticket prices remain low, it will encourage people to continue to park illegally.
- With regards to free parking after 6pm, it was noted that most of those spaces are taken up by restaurant employees or patrons. This policy has not hurt businesses (but some in the group said that it may in the future).
- The group was supportive of the idea of no time limits for meters, with charges going up the longer a vehicle was parked in that space.
- They also noted that no one carries quarters anymore – a credit or debit card would be highly convenient for parking downtown.
- The group stated that a balance was needed between encouraging turnover for retail businesses but also not deterring businesses.
- The group also wanted to make sure money from parking fees were used to pay and maintain parking (and not taken for other things)

- Some felt that building a new structure and then charging higher fees to pay for it would work – that people would pay more money for parking than what they do now.
- Some merchants liked the free parking on Sundays because it made them busier.

Final Thoughts

One participant expressed concern regarding a “death spiral”, that if Ann Arbor loses its culture and panache, the City will lose things like Google to other places, and added that maintaining a viable downtown is more tenuous task than it used to be. A participant noted that the overall transportation solution for downtown will have multiple needs, and added that as a major city it is difficult to imagine that there is a one lane road coming into the downtown. Another participant noted that the City needs a policy, a plan, and a vision for the City. One member brought up the Pfizer campus, and noted that in terms of size, it is larger than the downtown. The participant shared that one vision for the redevelopment of the site included light rail that would go to U of M campuses and to the downtown. The participant added that however it is redevelopment will have a huge impact on the City, and felt that municipal, state, and University funding would need to come together to fund and support light rail.

Notes from the Policy Boards Meeting

On March 28th, 2007, the Ann Arbor Downtown Parking Study Project Team facilitated a meeting of Downtown’s key transportation policy makers including:

- Ann Arbor City Council;
- Ann Arbor City Planning Commission;
- Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority; and
- Ann Arbor Transportation Authority.

Individuals in attendance are listed in Figure 2-5. Attendees were randomly assigned to participate at three tables, with the only requirement being that every agency must be represented at each table.

Figure 2-5 Policy Board Meeting Attendees

Name	Representing	Name	Representing
Fred J. Beal	DDA	Ethel Potts	CPC
Bonnie Bona	CPC	Evan Pratt	CPC
Dawn Gabay	AATA	Wendy Rampson	CPC
Leah Gunn	DDA	Nancy Shore	AATA
Jennifer Hall	DDA	Sandi Smith	DDA
Roger Hewitt	DDA	John Splitt	DDA
Marcy Higgs	Council	Mary Stasiak	AATA
Joan Lowenstein	Council	Margie Teall	Council
D. Nacht	AATA	Kirk Westphal	CPC

The objective of this meeting was to frame how the community's overall goals can be aided through parking policy. A brief presentation of the quantitative and qualitative results from Phase I began the meeting, providing participants with a clear picture about how Downtown's parking inventory (including DDA-managed parking, private commercial on-site parking, backyard parking, and the influence of University of Michigan parking) is currently being utilized. The presentation concluded with a summary of key concerns reported by parkers and the general public during Phase I.

The presentation was followed by a consensus-building session on the community's needs which policy makers believe the transportation system should serve and prioritize. These "transportation needs" will be the basis for the establishment of policy goals and objectives, as well as how transportation resources can work together as a comprehensive strategy to support the City's overall goals.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of potential parking policies and strategies, as presented in the Parking Toolbox memo. The Project Team introduced a spectrum of potential strategic policies and various levels of implementation. General feedback from the meeting's participants was received through discussions at breakout tables, as led by Project Team facilitators. Finally, each table presented a series of key points and conclusions based on the elements of the Toolbox. Feedback received from each table is presented below, summarized by agency, followed by a summary of feedback on the Toolbox options as presented at the conclusion of the meeting.

Feedback Received

Table 1 - Parking Policy Positions

- DDA – Parking policy should support options to Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) travel and attempt to intercept vehicles before they reach Downtown. Transit options are needed for commuter service – rail or commuter bus.
- City Council – Prioritize cost effectiveness. Parking should go where it is needed – note the Google problem (where are they going to park with their 400 free permits?). Parking enforcement costs are a key issue. Discerning majority opinion from vocal minority opinion is a challenge where parking attracts passionate opinions from all sides of issues.
- AATA – We need to balance the needs of retail establishments with needs of office tenants.
- City Council – City Council has a policy of supporting public transportation.
- Planning Commission – The Commission's focus is on quality of life for residents. Parking is an unglamorous component of Downtown. It is not efficient to require each private building to provide its own parking. Design requirements are lacking, for example, where to place access points at off-street facilities.
- DDA – The DDA acts as Downtown's parking authority. We struggle with operating parking as a business, while at the same time using parking to support business vitality. If DDA were a private parking operator, it could raise rates much higher,

but as a public authority, it must consider the impact on businesses. The DDA board believes more parking is needed in Downtown, but some want to emphasize alternative transportation options first. Monthly pass rates are artificially low, but how much it can be increased is unclear. The parking permit wait list is representative of the cost discount and space convenience; it is not a measure of unmet parking demand as most people on the waitlist are already parking elsewhere. For those that receive free parking outside of Downtown, there is no incentive to come Downtown any other way but in SOVs. This is important in considering the impact of the Google deal.

- AATA – Whatever is done, do not hurt Downtown businesses. Downtown vitality is key to everything.

Table 1 – Toolbox Feedback

- Extending meters – There was general support for extending the time meters are in effect, while noting that enforcement costs are an issue. Enforcement officers complain about the difficulty of enforcing time limits.
- Valet and Pricing – Convenience outweighs price at night. This priority could work for Valet and pricing on-street spaces. Valet parking could improve utilization of structures that now sit empty.
- Wayfinding – Support for wayfinding was clear, noting a particular need for signage to let people know which lots are public (i.e., City Hall and Fingerle).
- Park and Ride and Express Bus Service – These should work because so many commuters go to the same outlying towns.
- Parking Cash Out – General support with some doubts about applicability.
- Unbundling Parking – There was general support for unbundling, though some feel that current zoning already encourages it.
- Joint-Development – The DDA will not do any more stand alone structures. Building more parking is not at the top of DDA’s priority list.

Table 2 – Parking Policy Positions

- DDA – The DDA is looking at the need for more parking as result of the Google deal and potential similar deals.
- AATA – The AATA is looking at peak hour needs, evaluating countywide service.
- Planning Commission – The Planning Commission looks at parking as a land use - the least productive land use in Downtown.
- City Council – The Council must take all comments into consideration. The economy is a key concern. The Council likes the idea of extending meter hours, but not everywhere.
- All – Each board must deal with balancing needs. The approach must be realistic and all agreed that some additional parking is needed. However, all also agreed that reduce the amount of parking needed through alternative transportation options is an equal priority.

Table 2 – Toolbox Feedback

- Joint-Development – Joint-development options for parking structures are generally supported.
- Transportation Coordinator – A dedicated staff person is valuable, though the attendees were not sure whether it required a full time position. This could be handled by the Chamber of Commerce and the getDowntown program.
- Commuter Benefits – Implementing a requirement for a mandatory pre-development meeting with Planning staff/Transportation Coordinator is supported. Such a meeting should provide non-binding information on TDM options available to Downtown employees. Some felt this was too ambitious for Midwesterners and that it would be hard to identify what might work.
- Mandatory go!pass – Only if it is free.
- Commuter Buses – Bus-only lanes to improve speeds would be a key to success. Signal priority would also be needed (ATA currently doing a pilot project).
- Bike/Ped Funding – Special assessments are a bad way to fund these programs. Instead the City should commit to an annual funding level.
- Un-bundling of Parking Costs – Generally supported with the objective of reducing car ownership.
- In Lieu Fee – Developers that pay will want control over spaces. Hard to do in current context as there are wait lists for permits and most permits are not for reserved spaces.
- Parking Maximums – It was generally felt that this option goes against the grain in Ann Arbor. If a developer wants to build accessory, this takes pressure off of City.
- Demand-Based Pricing – This was thought to be worth looking into. Support to extend meter hours based on demand was also supported.

Table 3 – Parking Policy Positions

- AATA – The agency’s focus is currently on analysis and improvement of a transit system integrated with City, County, and other service areas.
- Planning Commission – The Commission’s recent focus is on emphasizing and prioritizing non-motorized transportation, while reducing the emphasis on vehicle level of service.
- DDA – The DDA parking goal is Park Once.
- General Comments:
 - A good comparable for Downtown would be Boulder, Colorado.
 - Attendees were happy to see the evidence of solid park-once behavior.
 - Ann Arbor needs to do better with what we are already doing.
 - The future of mobility is in mass transit.

Table 3 – Toolbox Feedback

- Express Buses – Express buses could build momentum for rail.

- Mandatory go!pass – The pass is too cheap. If it doesn’t cost, it isn’t valued.
- Valet parking – This has never been successful, but may have promise if done right.
- Wayfinding – Generally supported.
- Demand-Based Pricing – Generally supported. Remove time limits, and target enforcement.
- Joint Development – Ann Arbor’s lack of experience is holding back implementation of mixed-use strategies. Liberty Square is a good example of an unsuccessful past attempt that has dampened enthusiasm for this strategy.
- Park and Ride – Supported, but trip times into, out of town need to be improved.

Summary of Toolbox Feedback from All Tables

Figure 2-6 provides a summary of the feedback received for each specific strategy outlined in the Parking Toolbox and discussed at each breakout table. The overall feedback for each strategy is derived by:

- Assigning it two points for each table that gave it general support;
- Assigning it one point for each table that gave it mixed support; and
- Assigning it two negative points for each table that generally opposed it.

Zeros were assigned where options were not discussed, or feedback was uncertain.

Figure 2-6 Toolbox Feedback Summary

Strategy	Table 1	Table 2	Table 3	Score
Joint-Development: DDA Parking in Private Development	2	2	2	6
Express Transit Service - Rail or Bus	2	2	2	6
Extending Meter Regulation into Evenings	2	2	2	6
Valet Using DDA Structures	2	1	2	5
Support Mass Transit	2	0	3	4
Parking Cash Out	2	0	2	4
Retrofitting Garages with Street-Level Uses	2	0	2	4
Expanding Existing Garages	2	0	2	4
Pricing to Eliminate Time Limits	1	0	2	3
Bike and Ped Funding	0	2	3	3
Unbundling	1	2	0	3
Park and Ride	1	0	1	2
Make Existing TDM programs More Effective	0	0	2	2
TDM Coordinator	0	2	0	2
Graduated Meter Rates to Generate Turnover	0	2	0	2
Regular Data Collection	0	2	0	2
Monthly Permits as Debit Cards	2	0	0	2
Base Monthly Rates on Hourly	0	1	0	1
In-Lieu Fees	0	1	0	1
Fix Permit Distribution System	2	-2	0	0
Parking Caps	0	-2	0	-2
TDM Mandates	-2	-2	-2	-6

Notes from Key Institution Interviews

One-on-one interviews were conducted with representatives from the following organizations to obtain key input regarding plans for parking and transportation improvements, and options to expand existing programs:

- University of Michigan;
- Washtenaw County;
- The Ann Arbor District Library; and
- The Main Street Area Association.

These interviews were conducted via phone calls and in-person meetings. Summaries of these discussions follow.

University of Michigan

Phone interview with Sue Gott, University of Michigan, Planner, April 19, 2007

The following summarizes input gathered from the conversation with Ms. Gott.

The University's approach to parking is regional. There are five campuses in and around Ann Arbor. The University caters its parking approach at each campus to local transportation conditions.

The University's approach emphasizes demand management. Supply strategies are most often considered in reaction to new waves of demand increase, coming from changes in University-related activity – the on-going Medical Campus expansion for example. The emphasis on managing demand rather than building to suit it stems from a number of planning policies, such as:

- The high financial cost of parking construction – especially in Downtown;
- The opportunity cost of using land for parking; and
- The objective of supporting transit use (UM and AATA) among students, staff, and faculty.

The University's planning and parking offices were described as being continually engaged in cooperation and negotiation with the DDA on a number of Central Campus/ Downtown parking issues, such as:

- Visitor parking at the University: The University relies upon the DDA to accommodate certain, regular patterns of visitor parking demand;
- The need for on-street ADA parking near campus buildings;
- Improving co-sponsored TDM and transit programs; and
- Developing/ sponsoring additional TDM and transit programs.

Car-Sharing – The car-sharing program, in which a number of cars provided through ZipCar were placed at UM structures on three campuses last fall, is growing steadily. Current utilization is around 25 percent. The Central Campus cars are used quite a bit more than those on North and Medical, but usage of the Medical Center cars is picking up. Students are using them much more than staff, as was expected.

ZipCar will advise the University when more cars should be added. Generally the company looks for utilization of about 50 percent, so that is not expected to happen before next fall. The University guarantees a minimum revenue stream of \$1,500 per car per month, so they want to be prudent about adding new cars. The University has been encouraging the City to join in and establish a few cars of their own.

Valet – The University has a long-standing arrangement with the Bell Tower Hotel, under which the hotel can use up to 15 vehicles Monday through Friday and 30 vehicles on weekends for a flat monthly fee of around \$2,100. The impetus for this agreement was the fact that many of the hotel's guests are UM visitors. It has worked well, but given the tightness of parking on campus, they do not want to encourage or expand such relationships.

Washtenaw County

Phone interview with Gordon Burger, Washtenaw County, March 28th, 2007

Current Plans

- The County does have a number of construction projects planned, but none in the Downtown area.
- The County is committed to begin the process next year of relocating Juvenile Court. This court currently resides outside of Downtown, on Platt Road, within the Family Court facility. This court is likely to be re-located in Downtown within the existing courthouse building. Remodeling and possible limited expansion of this building are likely strategies for accommodating the new court. The court is slated to leave its existing building by 2010.
- This is expected to create demand for 120 new spaces, in addition to the 300 monthly parking permits currently allotted to County employees at the Ann & Ashley parking structure. It is not anticipated that any of this demand will be accommodated on-site. The existing 300 permits represent free parking for nearly 90 percent of the County's 340 Downtown employees. The County does not have any plans to change its existing policy of providing this level of free parking to its current Downtown employees or the 40 new Downtown employees expected to come with the move.
- The County intends rather to approach the DDA about the possibility of accommodating the additional parking demand at the Ann & Ashley structure.

Ann Arbor District Library

Meeting with Josie Parker – Director, Ann Arbor District Library, March 28th, 2007

On March 28th, 2007, a member of the Project Team met with Josie Parker, Director of the Ann Arbor District Library. The purpose of the meeting was to solicit information on any recent, current, or planned changes related to the library's parking needs, policies, and actions. Following is a summary of information related to these issues.

- **The Library:** Ann Arbor District Library's central library is located within Downtown, at the northeast corner of 5th Avenue and William Street. While serving as a local branch for Downtown residents, the Downtown library is also the central location for the District's many programs and services. Regular visitors commonly come from 8-10 miles away. Visitation for the current year is expected to exceed 600,000 following an eight percent increase in visitation last year.
- **The Library Lot and Parking Patterns:** Sunday is the Library's busiest day. It is open for only four hours, but these are the four busiest hours of the week. Ms. Parker believes that the biggest reason for this is that parking at the adjacent South 5th Avenue lot is free on Sundays. Their clients have a clear preference for surface parking over parking in structures. The library is open until 9:00 PM Monday to Saturday and evening patrons are especially reluctant to use structures.
- **Recent Parking Plans:** In 2006, there was a plan to redevelop the DDA-managed Library Lot. The development plan included both a new City courthouse and Police station, as well as underground public parking. The amount of proposed parking would have increased the public parking capacity at the site. The proposed land uses however were subject to strong public objection, including those who felt that these land uses conflicted with the adjacent library and nearby businesses who felt their customers would not continue to park at the site once the facility was moved beneath such uses. The proposal was not adopted by the City Council.
- **Current Parking Plans:** The Library has contracted for a feasibility study to identify potential expansion opportunities. The current building is composed of three sections which vary in age and structural design. It is currently unclear whether the existing building therefore can be expanded vertically, or if so by how much. Due to site constraints, any proposed horizontal expansion plan would likely include redevelopment of the Library Lot. Such a plan would fit with the current DDA preference to seek joint-development opportunities for supply expansion.

Main Street Area Association

Phone interview with Ms. Ellie Serras, Director, Main Street Area Association, April 12, 2007

The Main Street Area Association, an organization that is similar to a Chamber of Commerce, or business improvement district, is focused on the Main Street area of Downtown. In addition, her husband is the owner of four restaurants on Main Street,

including the Real Seafood restaurant which has been operating on Main Street since 1975.

Ms. Serras represents an area where the business community is increasingly dominated by restaurants and bars. These establishments employ thousands of staff members. As such, she is keenly interested in the issues concerning high on-street occupancies in the evening periods.

Her primary concern is the strategy of extending meter hours into the evenings in order to reduce demand at these times, and free up some availability for restaurant customers. This strategy is a response, in part, to the common perception that many of the on-street spaces are filled by Main Street area employees who park on-street and remain in the same spot all night. Ms. Serras is sure that the on-street demand in the evenings is, in part, generated by employees, but feels that no one can really identify how significant their impact is.

Furthermore, Ms. Serras does not see much of a problem with the lack of on-street vacancies, citing that full blocks indicate that one is “where the action is” so to speak.. She sees the potential extension of meter hours as a punitive effort, and would like to see a more “creative” approach to a problem that she does not have much of a problem with. She also felt that employees would continue to “plug” the meters till whenever they became free and continue to park on-street even if meters were extending until 10 at night.

Her suggestion as the best approach to the problem is to shift demand over to off-street facilities through wayfinding and information campaigns. She stated that much of the restaurant clientele are coming from outside the area and “have no idea” where to find the structures. If this information were made clear, along with marketing the idea that trying the garages first will save time, many patrons would give up looking on-street and drive directly to close-by garages.

Ms. Serras also echoed some of the comments from the business community focus group, that extending transit – in particular the Link service – would be a boon for evening businesses and relieve some of the on-street demand. She would like to see the Link run until 3:00 AM.

She also echoed the business community focus group sentiment that evening customers place more importance on convenience than price. She also “loves” the idea of expanding valet services, an idea she says she has been pushing for years. She would like to see the DDA manage this and have the valet stations be placed in prominent locations.

She was uncertain of the potential of using overnight monthly permits to shift employee demand off-street, feeling that, with so many Main Street businesses employing hundreds of staff, the cost of subsidizing or paying for such permits would be too costly.

She mentioned the need for improvements in the entry and exit queuing at structures. She looks forward to the implementation of credit card payment options in the hopes that this may help. She was doubtful of the prospect of debit-based parking cards attracting interest among evening customers.

In closing, Ms. Serras suggested that the DDA could do more to keep the four Downtown neighborhood associations abreast of new developments and policies. She suggested that monthly updates would help these associations keep up with “what is going on and what is available.”

Notes from the Open House

On the evening of March 29th, the Project Team held a two-hour Open House to conclude the week of public outreach meetings. All those interested in attending were invited through a series of announcements, a press release, and invitations made during the Focus Group and Policy Maker meetings. Figure 2-7 presents the names of the 26 attendees received.

Figure 2-7 Open House Attendees

Name	Representing
Debbie Francis	DTEES
Ronnie Jones	DTE Energy
Alan Connor	Self
Steven Gavas	Parthenon Restaurant, Wireless Toyz
Jesse Bernstein	AAA Chamber of Commerce
Tom Higginson	Borders
Mary Stasiak	AATA
Sam Breck	Self
Carl Rinne	Self
Jane Kamfer	Self
Herbert Kamfer	Self
Chris Adams	Self
Terri Blackmore	Self
Russ Collins	Michigan Theater
Kay Werthan	Self
Chris Crockett	A2D2
Larry Horvath	Self
Vhiie Carm	Self
Paul M Ganz	DTE Energy
Joan French	Self
Ray Fullerton	CAC
Jim Hart	Self
Ray Detter	Self
Jill Damon	16 Hands Gallery
Robert Klinger	Self
Bob Kuehne	Self

Participants were guided through a series of four distinct stations, arranged sequentially to present existing conditions and policies before introducing potential strategic and policy options. The stations, in order, were:

- Existing Conditions – A summary of findings from Phase I, including inventory, occupancy, and public perceptions;
- Existing Policy – Current policies and actions related to parking;
- Policy Options I – Options offering a moderate approach to new and innovative ideas; and
- Policy Options II – Options offering a more ambitious approach to innovative strategies.

Each station was attended by a member of the Project Team to present material, provide detailed information, answer questions, and receive feedback from participants.

Comments Received

- The 1st and William lot is permit-only parking until 6:00 PM, but occupancy drops significantly beginning at 4:00 PM. Allowing earlier, free public parking could address employee demand that is currently filling on-street spaces.
- Many visitors to Station 1 (Existing Conditions) noted that they did not know that Fingerle was a public lot. Again, this lot could provide capacity for restaurant employees in evenings.
- Parking information should be provided by local businesses to their customers.
- An Information Station is needed in Downtown
- We would like to see much more mixed-use, especially attached to parking.
- Parking revenue should go back to the City.
- Look at Non-Motorized Transportation plan – is there an intention to get rid of parking along Liberty at State? This would be terrible.
- Require new residential to provide at least 1 space per unit.
- Permit distribution is unpredictable.
- Permit parkers should park outside of Downtown core.
- Explore flexible parking options for permits.
- Borders book store requires loading/unloading space, especially for performances.

Voting

Following the last station was a large printout summarizing options discussed at the final three stations. Participants were given dot-shaped stickers – four red and four green – and asked to place green dots next to the options they most favored, and red dots on the options they least favored. Figure 2-8 presents a summary of received votes.

Figure 2-8 Policy Options Voting

Tool	Positive	Negative
Cost effective alternatives to new parking	3	6
Parking pays for itself	1	
Current zoning exemptions		10
Joint Development	4	
Re-Develop Existing Structures	9	1
Transportation Coordinator Position	3	
Mandatory go!pass	1	
Commuter Buses	5	
Strategic Bike/Ped Investments	4	1
Fixed Same	1	1
More Park and Ride	8	
DDA Valet	1	3
Current Valet Trials	6	5
Oversupply of on-site parking		3
In Lieu Fees	1	
Parking Maximums	1	1
Dedicated Parking Revenues - Current	2	5
Extend Meter Hours	6	1
Price to manage on-street Demand	3	1
Price to manage turnover	8	
Price Monthly Permits for demand		5
Price to Wait List	1	6
Current Monthly price, distribution		1
Distribution process		6
Debit Cards	4	
On-Street Pricing to discourage commuter parking	3	
Surveys to identify target areas for enforcement		2

