

Chapter 3. Preliminary Recommendations

The following sections present preliminary recommendations for:

- A summary and balancing of the feedback received during the first week of public outreach;
- A Downtown Parking Policy;
- A Toolbox of parking management strategies in support of the Policy; and
- A recommended sequence of implementation actions based on the Toolbox.

Public Feedback

The following provides a summary and balancing of the feedback received during the week of March 26-30, 2007, when the Project Team presented a spectrum of potential parking policies and strategies

Detailed feedback received during these events is documented in previous project memoranda. The intent of the following summary is to describe the context within which these tools were analyzed for final selection.

Figure 3-1 summarizes the feedback received at each outreach event using the following rating system:

- Assigning it two points if attendees offered general support;
- Assigning it one point if attendees gave it mixed, but generally positive support;
- Assigning it no points if the topic was not discussed or if opinions were mixed;
- Assigning it one negative point if attendees gave it mixed, but generally negative responses; and
- Assigning it two negative points if attendees offered negative responses.

The following sections expand upon the feedback received for each proposed tool.

Figure 3-1 Toolbox Feedback Summary

Strategy	Alt. Modes	Residents	Commuters	Bus. Community	Policy Boards	Open House	Total
Express Transit Service - Rail or Bus	2	0	2	1	2	2	9
Monthly Permits as Debit Accounts	2	0	2	2	1	2	9
Support Multimodal Options	2	2	2	1	2	0	9
Pricing to Eliminate Time Limits	2	1	1	1	1	2	8
Bike and Ped Funding	2	2	2	0	1	1	8
Extending Meter Regulation into Evenings	2	1	0	1	2	2	8
Joint-Development: DDA Parking in Private Development	-1	2	1	2	2	1	7
Fix Permit Distribution System	2	0	1	2	0	2	7
Graduated Meter Rates to Generate Turnover	2	1	0	1	1	2	7
Using most cost effective means of providing access	1	2	1	2	2	-1	7
Retrofitting Structures with Street-level Uses	2	1	0	0	2	1	6
Evening Link Service	2	0	1	2	1	0	6
Park and Ride	2	0	1	0	1	2	6
Parking Cash Out	2	0	1	0	2	0	5
Valet Using DDA Structures	1	1	0	2	2	-1	5
Make Existing TDM programs More Effective	2	1	1	0	1	0	5
Expanding Existing Structures	-2	-1	1	2	2	2	4
TDM Coordinator	2	0	0	0	1	1	4
Unbundling	2	1	0	0	1	0	4
In-Lieu Fees	2	0	0	0	0	1	3
Base Monthly Rates on Hourly	2	0	-1	0	0	0	1
TDM Mandates	2	0	0	-2	-2	1	-1
Parking Caps	2	0	0	-2	-1	0	-1

Key -
 2 = Strong Support
 1 = Support
 0 = Neutral or Not Addressed
 -1 = Opposition
 -2 = Strong Opposition

Express Transit Service - Rail or Bus

Express transit was proposed as a tool for reducing commuter parking demand within the Downtown district. Current transit services may be missing markets in key outlying communities. Current Park and Ride operations do not extend to some communities from which many auto commuters travel, and offers only local service from existing locations. Express service from key communities outside of Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County could tap potential transit markets among commuters willing to pay for comfortable, speedy service into Downtown. Ridership on such service could decrease long-term parking downtown and monthly permit demand within the parking system, freeing up space for shoppers and other users.

This strategy received positive feedback from most outreach participants, and especially strong support from the Alternative Modes and Commuters focus groups, as well as mostly positive responses from Policy Board members. Commuters from Brighton averred that they would ride such a service.

Within the Commuters group, attendees least interested in express transit service were those currently holding DDA monthly parking permits. Others expressed various levels of interest in using transit if it provided trip times and costs comparable to driving. Particular interest arose in exploring express bus service that could take advantage of HOV lanes during roadway construction. All those in attendance felt that this was a valuable strategy to pursue.

Those attending the Alternative Modes group felt that express transit could improve transit's commuter share by appealing to riders from outside the traditional AATA service market. However, these participants did not volunteer to use the service, primarily because they currently travel by an alternative mode.

The Business Community group was more skeptical, voicing two doubts: uncertainty that any bus service would really be "express," and doubts that bus service in general could attract significant ridership from current drivers.

Most participants felt that either bus or rail would be equally effective in attracting ridership if service levels were comparable between the two and service were reliable, though rail investment might provide more potential economic benefit from development investment.

Monthly Permits as Debit Accounts

Replacing the current pre-paid monthly parking permit with a debit account payment system, similar to that used on many toll roads across the nation, was proposed as a tool for reducing parking demand in general and monthly permit demand in particular. Such a system could reduce permit demand by linking monthly access directly to users, who would be charged per daily use using accounts managed by the DDA, rather than paying a

flat monthly fee. This makes the daily cost of driving transparent to the user and prevents employers, landlords, and developers from controlling the distribution of permits. Without necessarily changing the pricing structure, this strategy could also reduce daily parking demand by removing a key incentive for permit holders to drive each day - maximizing the use on their pre-paid monthly permit investments.

This strategy was widely supported by attendees during our outreach events. Many participants placed a high priority on any strategy that would make the permit distribution process more transparent. For others, providing an incentive for monthly parkers to not drive every day was the most important benefit of a debit account system.

Some DDA board and City Council members, however, expressed reservations about changing the current system since it provides the public sector with a level of control over where permits are distributed – a level that has historically and currently been used to effectively attract businesses and new development to locate in Downtown and support ongoing economic development.

Support Multi-Modal Options

The City has a long history of being a leader in providing multi-modal transportation. Continuing support for investments in alternative mode options needs to be backed up with city policy to help frame future discussions and analyses of parking and access. Financial policy statements supporting a recognized mobility asset for the district can shape decision making by illustrating multi-modal investment options in comparison with the other investment options. This should be reinforced with the ongoing Transportation Plan update process.

Continued and enhanced provision of multiple transportation options that provide access to Downtown with comparable travel times and facilities was seen by most as an important district asset that can and should be used to reduce demand for parking in Downtown. Most agreed that new structured parking is typically the most expensive means for cities to provide visitors and commuters with Downtown access, and that, in general, the potential to shift travelers from driving while keeping them coming to Downtown should be the first priority of parking policy. Those indicating less enthusiasm for this policy felt that the market for mode shifting was limited, and access strategies need to focus on expanding parking supply.

On-Street Parking Pricing Strategies

Pricing was presented as a tool for managing turnover and availability of on-street parking spaces, so that these spaces can maximize the number of vehicles they accommodate. This tool can be effective where and when curb spaces are currently over or underutilized. Demand-responsive pricing is increasingly seen as the most promising means of maintaining availability. Effective pricing can potentially produce availability at all times in all places – maintaining high rates of utilization while discouraging complete saturation of the inventory. This also provides the benefit of capturing the real value of high-demand

spaces, and turning that value into revenue to fund public improvements – including parking and transportation options. At the same time, it allows low-demand spaces to remain as a lower-cost option.

Pricing received support at most outreach events, though support among some groups was somewhat qualified. Most liked the idea of charging more for the most attractive spaces, while others were wary of driving visitors away from Downtown by charging too much for parking. This strategy received strong support from the Alternative Modes focus group and at the Open House.

Bike and Pedestrian Funding

Two options for directing parking and transportation investments toward bicycle and pedestrian improvements were proposed to reduce demand for parking. These modes are widely recognized as viable transportation options in Ann Arbor, especially within Downtown. Supporting non-motorized travel is also perceived as less expensive than investments in new parking supply. Conversation, therefore, was not about whether to continue Ann Arbor’s investment in these modes, but how investment levels should be set – either strategically to reduce parking demand, or at a fixed level based on principled support for these modes regardless of impact on parking.

The second funding option proved to be more popular among outreach participants. The many benefits of supporting non-motorized transportation that go beyond its impact on parking demand were cited as a reason for setting an ambitious level of funding for these modes each year. Benefits noted specifically include:

- Reduced transportation costs;
- Improved physical fitness levels;
- Decreased air pollution; and
- Reduced traffic congestion.

Others, especially among the business community participants, were doubtful of the impact such investments were likely to have on parking.

Extending On-Street Meter Regulation into Evenings

Extending meter regulation into evening hours was proposed as a means for managing the overall parking inventory and shifting on-street demand to off-street facilities at times when demand has been shown to be much higher than on-street supply. On-street demand rises sharply directly following the current end of meter regulation each evening, swinging up from a midday average of about 68 percent to an average of roughly 100 percent shortly after 6:00 PM. Extending meter hours could stabilize on-street demand at these times, freeing up some spaces and relieving traffic on popular blocks. With surplus capacity available in off-street facilities, parkers would still be able to find spaces, so no parker would be turned away due to lack of space.

Those supporting this strategy felt that eliminating free, unlimited parking at these spaces would open up parking opportunities for visitors and reduce traffic congestion on Main Street area blocks. Others saw this as an equity issue, feeling that people should have to pay for parking that is in demand, whether it is at night or during the day. Others noted that daytime parkers currently “subsidize” evening parking by providing the majority of overall parking revenues.

Stakeholders from the Business Community presented mixed opinions on this strategy. Some felt that it would indeed free up priority spaces for nighttime customers, while other felt that any time a charge is introduced for a previously free good, business suffers. In general, the majority of those attending the focus group felt that it was a strategy worth trying in areas of highest evening demand.

Joint-Development: DDA Parking in Private Development

Joint-development of public parking within private, mixed-use projects was proposed as a strategy for expanding DDA parking supplies while reducing cost and land-use impact. This addresses the public’s nearly universal opposition to construction of any new stand-alone parking structures, which current DDA policy opposes as well. This also presents a unique opportunity to add reduced-cost housing options within Downtown.

The theory of this strategy was almost universally supported by outreach participants. Alternative modes advocates and some residents, who oppose any expansion of the parking supply, were the only ones opposed to this strategy in theory. Past performance has instilled serious doubts in some, however, about the ability of the City and local developers to successfully accomplish joint development. The Liberty Square project, whose non-parking elements predominantly have been vacant since construction, was cited by those most skeptical of this tool’s potential.

That being noted, current DDA policy indicates that this is the only form in which new public parking facilities are likely to be developed.

Amend the Permit Distribution System

This policy was proposed to address a number of issues with the current permit distribution system, including:

- The long wait list for permits;
- The ability of businesses and property holders to acquire and control permits; and
- The City’s use of free parking permits to lure investment in Downtown.

We did not propose a specific means for fixing the current process, intending to first gauge general interest in reforming the current system.

Amending the current system was supported fairly strongly among most outreach participants. Policy Board members, however, emphasized the success and advantages of the current system and hesitated to change it without sufficient explanation of the options.

Members of the Business Community focus group offered some of the strongest support for this policy, noting a growing sense of resentment among individuals and businesses that have waited for parking permits for years following the deal to give Google 400 permits for free.

Graduated Meter Rates to Generate Turnover

This strategy is part of the larger concept of using pricing to manage on-street spaces. Graduated rates specifically address the issue of promoting turnover to free up spaces for short-term parking. Where short-term parking is a priority, parking can start with a limited period with no charge, and then rates can increase for each subsequent hour or half-hour to discourage longer stays.

This strategy was generally favored along with support for the on-street pricing strategies noted above.

Investing in Cost-Effective Access Options

This strategy is proposed as a formalized version of the process that DDA currently undertakes when considering parking expansion. The current assumption is that new structured parking is always the most expensive, and most often the least cost-effective, option for providing Downtown access. Formalizing a cost/benefit analysis for weighing parking construction against investments in alternate modes could provide clearer direction for the DDA and the City, and identify modes that offer greatest potential to affect parking demand.

Most support the theory of looking at parking in the broader sense of providing access. Few subscribe to the “build it (parking inventory) and they will come” theory of focusing solely on providing parking. Those that opposed the current DDA policy, as well as our idea for formalizing its approach, included the extremes of both sides of the table: those that wanted no new parking at all, and those that felt that the current need for additional parking supply superseded any interest in demand management options.

Retrofitting Existing Garages with Street-Level Uses

This strategy was proposed as a means for improving the pedestrian environment at the site of existing parking structures. Placing street-oriented uses such as shops and restaurants at the base of existing structures would reduce the physical impact of parking on the compact, mixed use land use patterns that are central to much of the appeal of Downtown. This would, however, result in the loss of some parking spaces at the facility.

This was a particularly popular option among residents, many of whom expressed opposition to future, as well as existing, parking structures (during this phase, as well as at the Study’s Phase 1 Open House). This was also popular among those at the Alternative Modes group who felt that such retrofitting could be used to enhance the pedestrian environment. No one expressed opposition to this strategy. One DDA board member

noted that this is currently being considered for the Ann & Ashley structure but that retrofitting would not be possible at some existing structures.

Evening Transit Service (Link)

By offering transit service, such as the increasingly well-used Link service, during evening hours, more employees and visitors might choose not to bring their cars with them to areas with overcrowded curbside spaces. This strategy was proposed as a means of reducing parking demand in the evening.

Evening transit was very popular within the Business Community focus group, with some participants citing increased use of the Link among daytime customers. Later service could extend this success into evenings. Most other groups responded positively to this strategy as well, mostly notably the Alternative Modes focus group. Reservations were expressed, however, by some board members as to the funding of this operation.

Park and Ride

This strategy was proposed to reduce weekday off-street parking demand by attracting commuters to a cost-saving option of parking closer to home and riding a bus the rest of the way downtown.

Many participants expressed frustration with the current state of Park and Ride service, citing poor stop location (including Park and Rides so close to Downtown that the short distance between the lot and their destination made getting out of the car pointless), long trip times, and frequent stops. Many of these participants, however, felt that there was significant potential to improve the current service and attract increased ridership on buses.

Parking Cash Out

This strategy was proposed as a means of reducing midday off-street parking demand, by providing cash incentives to employees to not drive to Downtown. This is an increasingly popular strategy in cases where parking is currently offered free of charge to all employees, and is most effective where parking spaces are leased separately by employers from the property owner. Under a Parking Cash Out program, employees are offered a choice between free parking and a monthly cash benefit. Participants in the program allow the employer to lease fewer spaces, producing savings from which the cash benefit can be funded. This also addresses the common inequity of providing benefits to those that drive (free parking) while not offering an equivalent benefit to those that do not.

This was well-received by most groups when presented as a voluntary program for employers interested in offering commuter benefits. This was an especially popular strategy for those already commuting via alternative modes. Others expressed skepticism about the applicability of this tool to all but a few employers and the level of interest among those few. As a required policy, this option did not receive much support beyond the Alternative Modes focus group.

Valet Using DDA Structures

This strategy could accommodate additional parking demand in off-street facilities without forcing drivers to park in the off-street facilities. By providing the service on the street in popular parking areas, demand at overcrowded curb spaces can be accommodated in under-used off-street facilities without attempting to change visitor parking patterns. Using DDA facilities can also avoid area resident concerns about attendants using their streets or nearby private lots for storing cars or creating unwanted evening noise and traffic. Using DDA facilities and DDA-managed attendants would keep the service and its customers from being tied to one specific destination, allowing patrons to use the same parking service for the whole evening, while free to move from one establishment to another. An additional resource for valet parking could be underused, private accessory lots.

This strategy was fairly well-received by all focus groups and the Policy Board members, and was especially popular with the Business Community focus group. The ideal location of the valet drop-off was a matter of some disagreement, with some feeling that it must be in a prominent location near destinations, and others feeling that attendants at existing off-street structures would be more practical.

Some skepticism was raised about the cultural embrace of a service that some might see as “snooty” or “fancy.” This feeling, however, was countered by the general sense that convenience trumps price for many evening visitors. It was also argued that valet would be especially embraced by those who feel unsafe in structures. In general, many felt that this strategy offered a good deal of promise for expanding parking access for Downtown’s growing restaurant and evening entertainment market.

Make Existing TDM Programs More Effective and Visible

This strategy was proposed as a means of reducing commuter demand for off-street parking by improving the many programs available to Downtown commuters and residents. The consensus among outreach participants was that existing TDM programs were sufficiently comprehensive, but that too many employees and employers were unaware of their availability. Improved marketing and, in particular, recruitment of employer participation were cited as ways to make more people aware of the programs and result in increasing their effectiveness. While some participants felt that current SOV rates were about as low as they were going to get, most felt that encouraging alternatives as effectively as possible remains important.

Expanding Existing Parking Structures

This strategy was proposed as a continuation of the current DDA strategy, as put into effect most recently at 4th & William. Expanding existing structures provides new parking supply at a reduced per-space construction cost, and without the land opportunity cost of building a new facility on a new site.

This strategy is especially popular among those believing in the need for more parking spaces. Most, citing the recent deal in which Google was promised up to 400 free monthly permits, felt supply expansion was a clear need and that this was the most obvious place to start.

This strategy, however, does provoke strong opposition from groups and individuals resistant to any new parking supply expansion in Downtown, as well as some opposed to higher parking structures specifically. Those among the Alternative Modes focus group and some residents living near downtown voiced the strongest opposition encountered during public outreach efforts.

TDM Coordinator

This strategy was proposed as a means of increasing the effectiveness of TDM programs and ultimately reducing commuter demand for off-street parking by formalizing some of the efforts of the getDowntown program. Many municipalities and counties have established TDM coordinator positions to assist local employers with setting up commuter benefits programs. These positions are often created in areas of elevated traffic congestion where participation in a TDM program is mandatory for local businesses or new developments. In these locations, TDM coordinators help companies establish and meet goals for reducing rates of single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) commuting. Another common strategy is requiring a meeting with the TDM coordinator as part of the development approvals process.

On a “wholesale” level, the TDM coordinator would work with Ann Arbor’s businesses, property managers, and hotel managers who, in turn, would work with their respective employees, tenants, and guests to advance travel options. On a “retail” level, the coordinator would provide public information and education to end-users via City-wide information campaigns, commuter websites, direct mail, and at bus stops and commuter retail stores.

While Ann Arbor does not appear to suffer the levels of congestion that typically instigate municipal-level TDM efforts, Downtown already benefits from a central warehouse of information (the getDowntown program) on available commuter benefits.

The proposed strategy would formalize this program and designate an official TDM coordinator within it. This was proposed as a means of raising the profile of the work already being done, and the potential benefits being offered.

Most outreach participants expressed some level of support for this strategy, while some doubted whether formalizing the current system would make much difference.

Unbundling Parking

Requiring that developers sell or rent accessory parking separate from the rent or purchase of housing units is an increasingly popular strategy for reducing housing costs and increasing the efficiency of on-site parking supplies. This strategy was proposed as a potential means of:

- Increasing efficiency of site-specific parking at future development projects;
- Reducing the housing costs for those owning one or fewer cars; and
- Providing an incentive for developers to market projects to households owning one or fewer cars.

Unbundling parking costs from housing costs can:

- Encourage developers to only build parking spaces that can be sold or rented;
- Lower housing costs for those that choose not to purchase or rent parking; and
- Create a development environment attractive to those seeking to reduce their own automobile use.

This strategy received support from Alternative Modes focus group members, residents, and policy board attendees, while others were mostly neutral. This is presently a fairly uncommon policy in the Midwest and, as such, may require additional promotion and public discussion before community support can be properly gauged (see Appendix for sample ordinance language).

In-Lieu Fees

This strategy was proposed as a means for shifting future parking supply away from on-site provision and into the public parking inventory. In simple terms, a fee is paid by a developer into a parking development fund in lieu of the development of on-site spaces. This was suggested as a means of generating funds for future expansion of the parking system (as well as funding alternative options), while getting away from the idea that parking permits should be given away to encourage development. Payment of such fees can either be mandated in lieu of on-site parking (for no cost benefit to the developer), or they can be offered as a cheaper alternative to meeting minimum parking requirements.

This tool did not elicit much feedback during the outreach activities. In part, the long wait list for monthly permits within the parking system created doubt that developers would be willing to pay into a parking development fund that their tenants would be unable to use. Others felt that developers should provide more on-site parking construction. Some of those felt that it was only right that developers “pay their own way” in response to the sense that the current system gives away spaces in the parking system, in essence subsidizing parking for private developments.

While most groups were indifferent to this proposed tool, it did receive some support from the Alternative Modes group, and neutral responses at the Open House.

Base Monthly Rates on Hourly

This strategy was proposed as a means of reducing demand for monthly parking permits by basing monthly rates on hourly use for a typical commuter (i.e., 8 hours per day for 21 days per month). This strategy did not garner much response during outreach activities. The limited feedback that was received was mixed, with Alternative Modes advocates it and commuters opposing.

TDM Mandates

This strategy was proposed as a means of increasing the participation of existing and future businesses and employees in TDM programs such as go!pass. For the most part, mandatory

participation in TDM programs is more common in areas suffering from congestion issues. This appears to be a lesser concern in Ann Arbor, even in Downtown.

This strategy received consistently negative feedback from most groups, with the noted exception of the Alternative Modes focus group and some residents. Non-mandatory TDM promotion however received strong support, as noted above.

Parking Maximums/Caps

This strategy was proposed as a means for shifting future parking supply away from on-site provision and into the public parking inventory. Placing a limit on the number of spaces that can be included in projects, or setting an overall cap on on-site parking in the Downtown area, represent two ambitious approaches encouraging such a shift.

During the outreach efforts, these approaches received consistently negative responses from most groups, with people stating that such strategies were too controlling. In fact, many participants, especially at the Open House, expressed a desire to eliminate the current exemption from parking requirements for Downtown developments.

Parking Management Toolbox

This section presents a set of recommended parking management strategies to comprise a Toolbox of management options in support of the Downtown Parking Policy. Figure 4-1 presents a summary of proposed Toolbox contents, while the remainder of the section provides some background on the rationale for each selection.

Figure 3-2 The Toolbox

Tools	Purpose
Transit Services	Reduce Parking Demand, Local and Regional Accessibility
Valet Parking	Displace Evening Demand from On- to Off-Street, Local and Regional Accessibility
Pricing	Demand Management, Revenue Generation
Technology/ Payment Options	Reform Permit Distribution, Encourage Reduced Use
Park and Ride	Displace Parking Demand from Downtown, Regional Accessibility
Commuter Benefits and TDM	Demand Management, Local and Regional Accessibility
Non-Motorized Transportation Investments	Local Accessibility, Park Once Support, Smart Growth Policy
Information and Wayfinding	Increase Efficiency of Existing Inventory, Local and Regional Accessibility
Zoning	Manage Private Parking Supply
Expand Existing Facilities	Manage Parking System Supply

Transit Services

Expanding transit services was widely supported among participants in project outreach activities. While many feel that the local transit market has been exhausted and gains in ridership will be hard to win, others have cited recent increases in ridership on the Link service. Express bus operations, focused on the traditional commuter market, garnered exceptional support. Additionally, Phase I survey responses indicate a few key barriers to regional transit markets that can be addressed.

Technology

Technology is the key to many of the ideas that were well-received during project outreach activities. Specifically, payment options for both on- and off-street parking were well-received ideas that would require new technology investments. Technology will also be the key to implementing some of the pricing strategies that also received favor from the community and focus groups, such as graduated rates for longer parking stays. Technology will also be key to implementing some of the information dissemination ideas that were well-received, such as:

- Parking information delivered to cell phones and in-vehicle navigation systems; and
- Real-time signage at structures and at highway exits.

Pricing

Pricing as a demand management tool was especially well-received for on-street spaces. Pricing strategies for off-street parking, and specifically monthly permits, received more mixed feedback. Pricing, however, is gaining attention among parking management interests for the promise it offers in simplifying demand management and generating revenue that can fund downtown revitalization and transportation improvements. Potential

pricing strategies should therefore be considered for all public parking, with a priority on the on-street inventory.

Non-Motorized Transportation

Dedicated investment in non-motorized transportation received strong support among many stakeholders. This is a key strategy for supporting Park Once environments. The Ann Arbor community, as demonstrated in the Phase I *Employment Profile*, indicate a high interest in non-motorized commuting. Ann Arborites appear well-inclined to walk and bike to work across greater distances (and in harsher seasonal conditions if the “Worst Day of the Year Ride” is any indication) than most. Outside of its potential parking management benefits moreover, outreach participants have indicated support for setting consistent levels of non-motorized investment, based on community principles in support of these modes.

Park and Ride

Park and Ride service is well-supported by those providing feedback during outreach activities. AATA Board members have indicated that improving existing service is an area of current focus for the authority. Future improvements could prove very useful to parking demand management in Downtown.

Commuter Benefits and TDM

This is another well-supported concept, though some disagreement was noted among focus group members as to whether existing services are marketed effectively. Specifically, it was felt that penetrating into the workplace was a key challenge in Downtown. Raising the profile of the informational clearinghouse services being provided by the getDowntown program will be an important tool for managing commuter parking demand.

Valet Parking

This strategy is widely supported as well, and benefits from very strong support among some groups – notably the business community and policy makers. Perhaps most importantly, this strategy offers significant promise to address one of the most challenging problems identified in Phase I – how to shift evening parking demand away from the curb and into garages without forcing drivers to change their habits.

Zoning

The current zoning exemption for parking requirements in Downtown garnered strong negative feedback at the Phase II Open House. In addition, a number of outreach participants have expressed the desire to see developers provide their own parking. In addition, a current study of zoning overlay district strategies appears to be favoring removal of parking requirement exemptions for some areas of Downtown.

This represents a policy shift away from supporting a Park Once/ Shared Parking environment. A Park Once approach to parking policy has been an important tool used to revitalize numerous downtown districts (see Appendix).

If zoning exemptions are ever removed, it will be important to implement other tools to maintain an emphasis on accommodating parking demand within a publicly managed, shared inventory.

Information and Wayfinding

Everybody loves this idea. An effective wayfinding program can, not only increase the efficiency of existing parking supplies, but make things easier for users of all modes to find their way around Downtown. Many in the business community feel that their customers do not know where to find off-street parking when on-street spaces are unavailable. Pedestrian and bike advocates support the idea of making it easier to find bike parking or estimate the walking time between destination points.

Supply Expansion

The above options represent tools for reducing the amount of parking supply needed to support Downtown. Once these tools have been exhausted, the City and the DDA must decide whether Downtown offers sufficient parking opportunities to support desired levels and forms of accessibility. None of the above tools will bring down the cost of adding new parking. In fact, by making Downtown a more vibrant, accessible destination, successful implementation of many of these tools may increase land and opportunity costs for parking construction. Supply expansion, therefore, is likely to remain the most challenging tool in the box to implement.

