

POULSBO DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING 3

NOVEMBER 6, 2023

Meeting Invitees:

Becky Erickson, Mayor	Paul Anunson, Sons of Norway (Non-Profit)
Ray Stevens, Planning Commission	Mike Brown, Landowner
Mark Kipps, Planning Commission	Diane Lenius, City of Poulsbo
Jerry Block, Planning Commission	Heather Wright, City of Poulsbo
Gary McVey, Planning Commission	Michael Bateman, City of Poulsbo
Britt Livdahl, City Council	Josh Ranes, City of Poulsbo
Ed Stern, City Council	Nikole Coleman, City of Poulsbo
Sandi Kolbeins, The Loft (Restaurant)	April Zieman, City of Poulsbo
Kristin Jagodzinski, Flicka (Retail Shop)	Mallory Baker, Consultant Team
Tasha Zetty, RE/MAX	

Meeting Minutes

Meeting began at 3:05 pm PDT. Diane Lenius opened the meeting by introducing the purpose of the meeting. Mallory Baker gave a presentation summarizing project objectives, community vision and guiding principles, recommendations and priorities organized by time period of implementation (immediate, near-term, mid-term, and long-term). A group discussion on recommendations followed the presentation. Following the discussion, Mallory Baker described the final step for the project (presentation to City Council) and there was a brief discussion about what topics to cover in this presentation.

Questions and Comments About Presentation Slides (included as attachment):

Question: Regarding the parking permit program, is it a monthly fee of \$25-\$35?

Response (Mallory Baker): Yes, that's correct. It's a starting number based on other comparable communities needed to cover administrative costs.

Comment: After 7 hours, it would be cost more than the max daily rate, so that should be left off the slide. The hourly cost after 7 hours would be more than the max daily rate of \$12.00 (\$2 x 7 hours = \$14). I think that needs to be adjusted.

Comment: After the first 3 hours it would be \$1 each so that's \$3.00; the next 2 hours would be \$1.50 each so that's \$3.00 and the 6th and 7th hour would be \$2 each so that's \$4.00.

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Response (Mallory Baker): The max daily rate is really just charging the total cost if you parked for 8 hours. We can work on this. We'll check the math and fix that. Thank you.

Question: I was interested in your comment about parking revenues being considered as a special revenue fund. It's attractive because the parking revenue could be spent on downtown improvements. How have you seen it structured in other jurisdictions so that the revenue that is generated in downtown stays in downtown?

Response (Mallory Baker): It's pretty common for downtown parking revenue as an enterprise or a special revenue fund. If you are concerned about cost recovery not meeting 100% of O&M costs (which is the case for enterprise funds), special revenue funds can be used to try to achieve cost recovery. Any amount that does not meet the O&M is earmarked for capital expenses for downtown parking facilities within the district. For enterprise funds, the goal is to fund other pre-prescribed purposes of the funds. For example, it can be used for other investments, such as construction of a new parking facility, transit services, or transit passes.

Question: Two questions: 1) At our last meeting, the areas where paid parking will first be implemented would be the Anderson parking lot, the City Hall ramp, and I believe Front St. Can you clarify that? 2) Secondly, we know we're going to get pushback from the community on paid parking. I'm sure you had experiences with this in other communities. Do you have some key messaging to educate community members about paid parking?

Response (Mallory Baker): Your second question is excellent. I'll start with the first question. In the parking demand map in the final report, the areas with the highest demand (over 85% occupancy) are shown. I'll pull it up on the screen. Based on industry best practices, you typically start pricing in the facilities with the highest demand. The data collection Walker conducted was consistent with previous parking studies (last study in 2013). But because it was one point in time, we would recommend more data collection at each of these facilities with high parking demand to be sure and to gather data for off-peak times to get a baseline of demand during more regular periods to accurately forecast revenue from paid parking.

Your community is a little more attuned in understanding paid parking and it almost came through as a recommendation from the survey responses. I would be less concerned about pushback regarding parking here in Poulsbo. The primary concerns that we heard from the survey were demand distribution issues with finding parking during peak hours and lack of ADA parking for people with disabilities. There wasn't a lot of discomfort with paying for parking.

When communicating with community members, it's best to be transparent about parking goals and connecting them with broader community goals that everyone can resonate with, such as making parking more available to business owners and supporting more mobility options for residents, employees, and visitors.

Question: Great job on everything. We appreciate being heard. What did you suggest for Front St? Second, any topic about Poulsbo residents being given a discounted parking rate (about 10,000 residents of Poulsbo).

Response (Mallory Baker): We recommend implementing paid parking on Front St, but as mentioned previously, we would advise additional data collection to validate assumptions before launching into

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paid parking. We also looked at ways to address ADA users of the parking system. Right now, most spaces are provided in off-street facilities. There were thoughts about including ADA spaces on Front Street, but ADA parking spaces need to comply with strict federal regulations, including slope, which make on-street parking impossible in most on-street locations. However, demand is intense, so paid parking is a solution there.

Response (Mallory Baker): Preferential parking rates for residents has some equity implications and economic implications that could be problematic. One solution is to establish a long-term parking permit for residents. Residents are the priority in Poulsbo, since it is not a tourism-oriented community. Does anyone have thoughts to share? We can definitely think more about this concept.

Comment: I think it would be difficult to administer a discounted parking rate for residents. For example, if a business owner has a business downtown and lives on Bainbridge Island or somewhere outside of Poulsbo, would they receive a discount? How would people prove that they are actually residents? I think it would bring up large equity concerns.

Response (Mallory Baker): I agree that the equity concern could be intense, especially because of the increasing cost of housing. I think you have a hot button political issue on your hands if you give a reduced parking price to residents even though employees who commute into Poulsbo feel that they deserve equal access and pricing.

Comment: I thought about that as well, but as long as we can show that we are going to provide value to the Citizens of Poulsbo to add new parking to the downtown, we will be okay. Right now, lack of parking space is a speedbump for development. We would also be able to fund new parking construction more quickly if we take out the parking discount for locals. As far as selling this to people, one of the hurdles we have is a lot of people who live outside the city limit but use municipal services, and these people are not paying for these services. I think it's more equitable to the City of Poulsbo that visitors pay for these services. I joked that we should build a gate at the end of Poulsbo so that anyone leaving without spending a certain amount of money would have to pay a \$5.00 fee; this would be along the same lines. Overall, I think the report you've prepared tracks really well with what we've discussed. I think you've done a great job putting this together and I hope that City Council sees that as well.

Response (Mallory Baker): Thank you, I think your point about equity of who pays for the parking system is a good point that I didn't mention. If we draw from the General Fund to pay for maintenance of existing parking facilities, then everyone is paying equally for the garage, which is not equitable. The model we are using is one in which the end user is paying for it, which is more equitable.

Question: Great job, well explained. I have a question for my colleagues on the committee who own a business and have employees, if they are willing to share.

Response from Committee: I'm not sure what you mean about employees specifically, but overall the paid parking model is being adopted everywhere. For example, to take the Bainbridge Island Ferry it costs \$12 to \$15 to park your car and if you go to an event in Seattle it costs \$50 for parking. These are bordering on ridiculous, but they are intended to keep people from parking all day. As for where employees are parking, I'm skeptical, because I don't know. In the summertime, my one loft business has 100 employees. When you start adding all the small businesses nearby, that's a lot of cars. There are a few small lots, but I'm not sure what the plans are for them, maybe they will be used to build new

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housing near downtown. I just hope that people start to adopt new technology like e-scooter programs so that people can park farther away and ride in on a scooter. I'm hearing quietly listening and I know that the paid parking model has to come. Hopefully we'll see from the other side of it that it didn't hurt anyone's business too much.

Response (Mallory Baker): What we've seen in other communities is the challenge, especially nowadays, demand distribution turnover the frustration of where people tend to park. What we were hearing from folks (those who live in Poulsbo and those who commute in) really want a solution. They really want an enforcement solution, but based on the data analysis, turnover is not the issue and will not be addressed by enforcement. The other thing we have to work with is low acceptance of O&M costs, which are labor intensive and necessitate a lot of investment. Communities that have implemented a lot of enforcement and experience a lot of customer service challenges. Customers hate enforcement-based models, especially those with a quota—they erode consumer choice and result in people paying more than if they choose to pay a fee. The model we have recommended can support economic vitality and does not negatively impact sales tax revenue over time. Based on the survey responses, it is likely to be well received by the community. Employees will be a little more challenged because commuting patterns are difficult to change. If people park in the same place every day, that's a habit. Messaging will be important, and formalizing different options in the near term. The parking permit program will be a solution in the mid-term, with a streamlined and easy application process. It will be challenging, but with paid parking, some of those behavioral changes will happen with both a stick in addition to a carrot.

Response from Committee: I actually foresee that in the future, there will be less parking space. As we grow as a community, I see us having less parking, not more. When 3rd street developments are done, we are going to have less parking, and as we start pushing employees to 4th St, and then into residential neighborhoods. Then the residents impacted by higher parking demand will say that they don't like people parking on their street. Then City Council will start getting phone calls, so I'm just thinking ahead more. I agree that this absolutely has to happen, and I think it's a good model, but I don't think it addresses the long term issues that are going to come to this community as we grow. So that's my only thing, but I'm still saying "Good job, everybody."

Response (Mallory Baker): Thanks, just to offer one more point. We did include some recommendations on adding inventory. But we would advise covering the financial bases first because we think that shoring up the assets that you do have and managing them well is a precursor to adding inventory to the system in the form of a parking structure. It could add hundreds of parking spaces to the downtown, while given the density of the downtown, not that many additional spaces are needed. In addition, you are limited by the limited transit service available to Poulsbo. The good think about the paid parking model, especially if it generates revenue above costs, is that the revenue can be attributed to micro-transit, e-bike or e-scooter share programs, or commuter benefits programs. The one thing I caution you about is to allocate it to something. Adding inventory is extremely expensive, so you'd have to prioritize investments. We also have inventory solutions in the short term through a shared parking program to free up some space near downtown that makes up nearly half of the total parking inventory, which is largely underutilized. Finally, we recommended remote parking solutions that are a short 5-to-10-minute walk to the downtown core. Those are some of the solutions that we envision for the future.

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Question: I was hoping you could talk about some of the options for adding inventory. As we know, 600 of the 1200 parking spaces are privately owned. Maybe we could speak with downtown property owners and discuss the possibility of a shared parking agreement? How feasible do you think that is? One for the first things we talked about was working with Historic Downtown Poulsbo Association (HDPa) to lease some space at Firth Lutheran Church. Is a similar strategy included in the report?

Response (Mallory Baker): The recommendations are more general than what you've described. But yes, there is a strategy for developing a shared parking program with private property owners in the short term, and we have some specific recommendations, like tenants for developing a shared parking agreement, potential public/private facilities to consider based on parking utilization, and an example of an existing shared parking program. The efficacy of shared parking programs is mixed, however, because of the mix of businesses in downtown, there is a greater likelihood of success in Poulsbo. For example, large restaurant chains like McDonald's and Target are challenging to work with due to limiting legal requirements. However, with smaller businesses and churches we've seen more success. The three important details to hammer out are 1) compensation, 2) insurance, and 3) liability. This is a strategy for the mid-term.

On the inventory addition side, even adding just 15 or 30 spaces can play a significant role. We looked at Anderson lot. It's not big enough to accommodate a structure but King Olaf lot is. Then there are the remote parking sites which would be a great option for employees in the mid-term.

Comment: My main concern is the safety of my employees. We have to make sure that parking options are safe in terms of lighting. Some parking spaces for employees are locations without enough lighting.

Response (Mallory Baker): Yes, that's a good thought. As you implement any parking solution, you have to have a higher standard of service. I think some of these strategies will incur more on-the-ground presence through eyes on the street, enforcement, cameras and surveillance, and improved lighting. These technology upgrades should be accompanied by lighting upgrades. Safety concerns in some ways are objective and it is difficult to address them entirely, but lighting can certainly alleviate safety concerns your employees have.

Comment: I have a thought about the inventory. It might end up being. Balancing the needs of the community and maybe not moving the direction of not offering discounted parking for residents is offset by having King Olaf parking that is free; it's like a mitigating factor. I have some friends who take their kids to a class each week and don't want to have to pay on a weekly basis. But if we can point to here, this is still free, this is good. But it also occurs to me that we are charging for the premium spots, the court has been charging and it's underutilized because it is one of the only places that charges for parking. Potentially the court parking facility will be more utilized once paid parking is implemented systemwide.

Response (Mallory Baker): That's right. One of the reasons why we are recommending additional data collection is because we want to consider other potential needs of the system including increasing parking rates, adding inventory in the near term, subsidizing parking permits for employees, etc. We hope that the recommendations are logical and help the City manage parking on its own after the project is completed.

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Comment: I personally think it was very comprehensive and captured everything that we said throughout this process. So I think that City Council will fire away with questions that maybe we haven't considered, but I think this is a pretty good start.

Comment: I really want to emphasize the concept of a restrictive fund. It will be more amenable to our downtown business owners if they understand that revenue generated above operating costs will be re-invested in the downtown area. They need to be aware of the motivation behind paid parking, and how it will support long term business growth and expansion of parking inventory in the future.

Comment: I would just make sure in the presentation to City Council, besides the paid parking model and some of the other recommendations, to emphasize the issue of parking inventory. I think there is going to be a pretty keen interest in expanding the current inventory. Either through shared parking or construction of a parking garage, I think that will be a key theme. I think regarding change, it will be challenging during the first year, and therefore we should explain how the changes can benefit the downtown.

Comment: I'm sure that there is not a business owner downtown who has not heard someone say, "I came to your shop and decided not to say because I couldn't find parking." This plan must address that. I've been involved in several committees over the years looking at parking issues in downtown. People are more committed to it than ever, and I think we've reached a point where something needs to be done. Thank you for all of your time.

Next Steps

Mallory Baker summarized the next step, a work session on December 6, 2023, and attendees shared additional comments about what should be covered in this final presentation to City Council.

Meeting concluded at 4:05 pm PDT.

Attachments:

Meeting PowerPoint Presentation



Downtown Poulsbo Parking Study

Final Plan Presentation



We’ve studied quite a bit—now is the time to make real and impactful change!

Build a parking system **fit for Downtown.**

- Align with vision for Downtown success.
- Address existing and foreseen challenges.
- Be proactive in making changes to parking management that improve economic and social vitality.
- Sustainably allocate and build resources.

Project Objectives



Update our **framework** for managing parking downtown given existing and projected conditions and our vision for success.



Create **metrics** that show us when to change our approach and help inform how we're doing.



Expand and refine our **menu of options** for different kinds of parkers—residents, employees/commuters, visitors and more.



Understand **resources needed** for near-term, mid-term and long-term objectives.



Share and build consensus with **decision-makers** so we can get things done!

Project Scope and Schedule

June—July Discovery + Visioning

Advisory Committee Kickoff*
Community Survey
Data Collection
Vision and Guiding Principles

July—September Strategies Identification and Vetting

Advisory Committee Meetings (2 and 3)
Strategy Identification and Vetting

September—November Create a Plan for Action

Advisory Committee Meetings (4)
Implementation and Action Plan
Final Plan Presentation

Opportunities, Challenges and Guiding Vision

A Successful Parking System in Poulsbo

- Supports a **vibrant, thriving economy and community** Downtown.
- Is **welcoming and easily understandable for anyone**—from a local to a first-time visitor.
- Offers **multiple options** that make sense for any user—very short-term (e.g., <30 minutes, short-term and long-term).
- Leverages existing assets and **creates opportunity for future growth**.
- Makes it **easier and more pleasant** to use other forms of travel (e.g., walking/biking).
- Approaches **cost neutrality**.
- Is transparent about what revenues pay for and **how they benefit the community**.
- Follows **data and industry standards** for effective parking management.

Key Challenges and Limitations

- **Small Downtown core** is both a blessing (great walkability and two minutes' walk to any parking facility!) and a curse (very limited space—we need to work with what we have!)
- Learnings from length of stay analysis indicate that enforcement of 2-hour time limits alone **will do little to address demand challenges**, like too much demand for facilities along Anderson Pkwy and Front Street.
- Reliance on the general fund—at least at the outset—will necessitate impactful but relatively low-cost initiatives, **especially on an ongoing basis**
- Employee parking is working now (along 3rd Avenue), but **needs to be tracked and managed in the long term**
- **Limited transit service** with few plans for expansion in terms of routes or headways

Vision and Guiding Principles

Vision Statement

We see parking as a way to help people live, work and have fun in Poulsbo. We envision a parking system that facilitates and supports Poulsbo's cultural, economic and social strength.

Guiding Principles

We seek strategies and actions that...

1. Address localized demand shortages that frustrate users and reduce parking system efficiency.
2. Equitably accommodate all users in need of a parking option, including long-term (8+ hours), mid-term (2-8 hours) and short-term (2 hours or fewer) parkers.
3. Prioritize parking management techniques and policies in keeping with Poulsbo's welcoming, friendly spirit.
4. Support a multimodal environment that maximizes mobility freedom, choice and safety for the Poulsbo community.
5. Maximize long-term financial sustainability for the parking and mobility system so that it can continue to serve the Poulsbo community.
6. Take a data-based, steady and contextual approach to change—from changing parking management practices to adding new parking facilities.

Action Steps and Impacts

Essential Steps: Within 6 Months

- **Design and install static signage wayfinding improvements** for the parking system in keeping with Poulsbo's aesthetic and feel.
- **Update user group allocations** to formalize employee parking options and support additional parking for mobility-impaired community members.
- **Improve parking communications** through a City-provided parking webpage and web-based parking options map.
- **Establish a rate schedule** and in-ordinance support for ongoing rate changes.

Essential Steps: Within 6 Months

Hours 1-3	\$1.00 per hour
Hours 4-6	\$1.50 per hour
Hours 7-8	\$2.00 per hour
Max Daily Rate	\$11.50

Recommended Initial Rate Schedule (Years 1-2)

	High-Demand (>90% Typical Peak Demand)	Base (<90% Typical Peak Demand)
Hours 1-3	\$2.00 per hour	\$1.00 per hour
Hours 4-6	\$3.00 per hour	\$1.50 per hour
Hours 7-8	\$4.00 per hour	\$2.00 per hour
Max Daily Rate	\$23.00	\$11.50

Recommended Mid-Term Rate Schedule (Years 2+)



Recommended Initial Paid Parking Map (Facilities in Purple)

Essential Steps: Within 6 Months

- **Establish and implement data collection protocols** to aid in decision-making and rate changes.
- **Procure Parking Access and Revenue Control System to facilitate paid parking and passive enforcement** through an RFQ process to obtain a scalable parking and access revenue control system and payment platform. Consideration should be given to gated options coupled with potentially more advanced options (e.g., sensors) to facilitate passive enforcement and reduce labor costs.

Essential Steps: Within 6 Months

- **Establish and implement data collection protocols** to aid in decision-making and rate changes.
- **Procure Parking Access and Revenue Control System to facilitate paid parking and passive enforcement** through an RFQ process to obtain a scalable parking and access revenue control system and payment platform. Consideration should be given to gated options coupled with potentially more advanced options (e.g., sensors) to facilitate passive enforcement and reduce labor costs.

Essential Steps: Within 18 Months

- **Begin charging for parking in high-demand facilities** per the initial rate schedule.
- **Refine parking violation schedule to support parking program holistically** by employing first-time warnings for low-level violations, with graduated fines for repeat violators and premiums of high-level offenders, like those who park in a crosswalk and impede others' path of travel.
- **Establish a shared parking program with private parking facilities.**
- **Establish a simple permit system for employees and other long-term parkers**, with an initial price range of \$25-\$35 per permit per to cover administrative costs.
- **Begin tracking parking-specific operating costs and revenues** so that cost recovery can be calculated and evaluated.

Important Priorities: Mid-Term

- **Consider establishing Downtown parking as a special revenue or enterprise fund** with a set cost recovery target and an investment plan for revenues above cost, like funding new parking inventory or supporting other travel choices.
- **Create a formal framework and strategy for remote parking** for events, particularly as events continue to scale.

Important Priorities: Long-Term

- **Consider more dynamic signage and wayfinding**, such as dynamic directional signage at Downtown entry points showing real-time availability information in parking facilities.
- **Establish a more complex long-term parking permit program** with options beyond month-to-month parking, like tiered permit options for people who only drive to work a few days a week, to improve program efficiency and serve more users.
- **Add inventory with a new public parking garage** if data collection efforts indicate typical peak occupancy levels above 90-95%. This study has determined that the King Olaf lot would be a feasible location for a new parking structure in terms of size.

Budget Implications

INCREASED REVENUE GENERATION

Detailed financial analysis not conducted, but revenues generated during a fully operational year are likely to achieve 100% cost recovery of O&M at minimum.

ONGOING COSTS

\$50,000 – 75,000

Part-time enforcement and data collection, supported by technology

CAPITAL COSTS

\$100,000 – 400,000

Static signage and sensors and/or handheld enforcement tech

Parking access controls

All highly variable depending on tech selected

Discussion Questions

Guiding Questions

- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the Consultant Recommendation?
- To what extent are you prepared to move forward the essential immediate-term steps recommended by the Consultant?

Thank You.