

DOWNTOWN POUGHKEEPSIE PARKING IMPROVEMENT PLAN



PLAN OVERVIEW

The Dutchess County Transportation Council (DCTC) initiated a parking analysis of the City of Poughkeepsie's extended downtown area (see study area map). The Parking Improvement Plan sought to ensure that the City's parking system is being operated and managed efficiently and consistent with the City's redevelopment goals for the downtown. Specifically, the study quantified and assessed downtown parking supply and demand and has demonstrated that the Downtown parking supply is adequate, but requires new management techniques that optimize resources and improve public perception.

PROJECT APPROACH

The study team, working closely with an Advisory Committee of City and DCTC staff, took a comprehensive approach to the parking analysis and identified recommendations to support the downtown's long-term success. The analysis included the following elements:

- Current and expected future parking utilization patterns
- Concerns of current downtown business owners, stakeholders, and the public
- Current and future development and land use
- Need and potential for improved parking management systems

Ultimately, parking is about economic development, and Poughkeepsie businesses, property owners, residents, employees and visitors stand to gain by managing parking demand and supply in a manner that makes Downtown an attractive destination.

Study Area and Parking Facilities





PARKING GOALS & OBJECTIVES



Capacity: A quantitative assessment of the supply and demand for downtown public parking.



Maintenance, Management & Operations: Strategies to improve the maintenance, management and operations of City-owned parking facilities.



Safety & Convenience: Ways to provide safe, convenient parking for office and commercial uses as well as cultural/entertainment venues.



Pricing: A determination of the need and feasibility for demand-based pricing or changes to current parking rates for garages, surface lots, and on-street parking.



Design: Recommended design improvements to increase the efficiency of City-owned parking facilities, to include improvements to parking-related signs and other wayfinding, circulation, and parking layouts.



Zoning: An evaluation of current parking standards and requirements in the City zoning code, including an assessment of parking impacts resulting from current efforts to rezone the City's downtown.

PARKING CHALLENGES

Employer/employee, customer, visitor, resident, and stakeholder input at meetings and through surveys identified several major challenges:

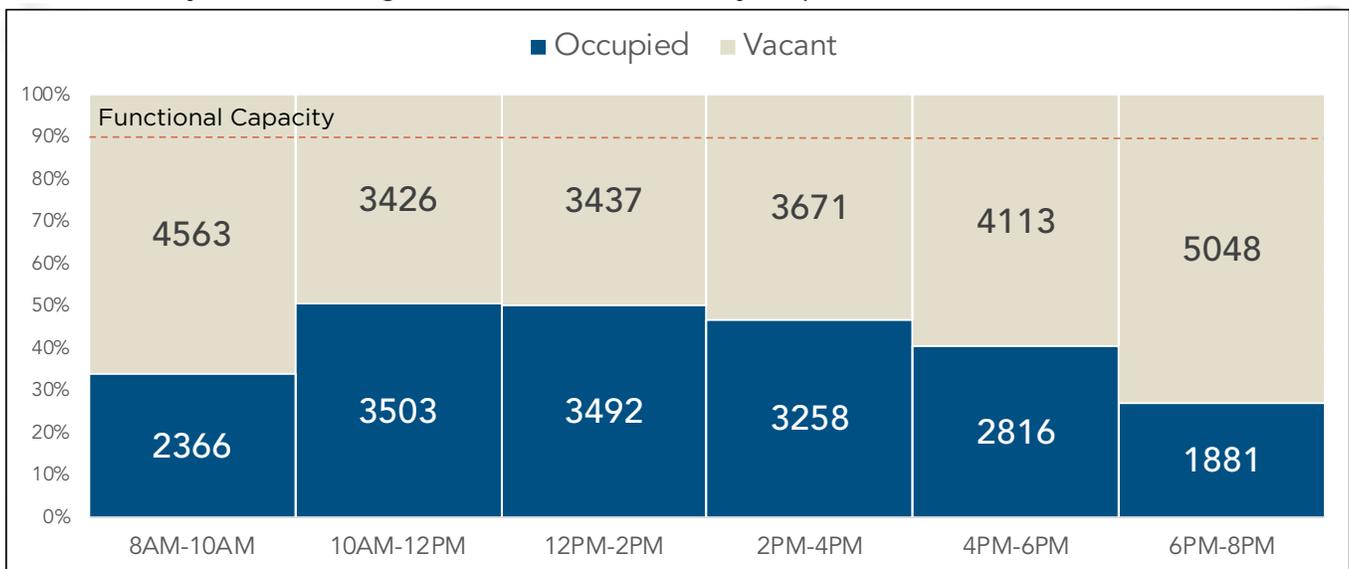
- A lack of clear information related to parking in general
- Difficulty finding parking in core area
- Perceived lack of safety in parking facilities and surrounding areas
- Enforcement policies that discourage visitors to Downtown
- A lack of coordination between public parking management and private lot owners



KEY FINDINGS

- Of the 7,151 parking spaces in the study area, approximately 50% are publicly owned, although not all publicly owned spaces are open to the public. Almost 12% of publicly-owned parking spaces, 420 spaces, are either leased to tenants, restricted by permit regulations, or reserved for loading and municipal use.
- Privately-owned, but publicly-accessible parking is not a large portion of the overall supply (7%).
- Approximately 82% of all spaces in the study area are off-street, occupying roughly 23% of the land in the study area.
- Almost two-thirds of the off-street supply is privately-owned (62%).
- There are 14 publicly accessible lots and garages, most heavily concentrated between Mill Street, Hamilton Street, Church Street, and Columbus Drive.
- There is sufficient parking supply to accommodate demand both under existing conditions and future demand scenarios.

Overall Study Area Parking Utilization - Wednesday, September 20, 2017



PRINCIPLES FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

A successful parking system in Downtown Poughkeepsie will:

- Ensure **proactive** facility management.
- Expand **effectiveness** of and availability of parking information.
- Create performance-based pricing strategies to **ensure availability** and optimize existing inventory.
- Focus enforcement on ensuring availability for **customers** rather than punitive strategies.
- Use all parking assets **efficiently**.
- Integrate parking policy into overall Poughkeepsie development, **transportation management**, and planning activities.
- Take a **comprehensive approach** to parking management to address parking challenges and concerns.

PLAN

RECOMMENDATIONS

MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Adopt Availability as the Primary Performance Measure

- Institute dynamic parking policies that respond to changes in parking supply and demand.
- Define performance targets of 85% occupancy for on-street spaces, 90% off-street, and 95% in monthly permitted spaces.

Create Tiered Pricing

- Apply differing parking rates to distinct zones, based on demonstrated demand and availability enabling parking options to be quickly found with minimal search.
- Use progressive rates for on-street spaces to increase the hourly cost for extended parking stays and incentivize shorter stays and turnover of on-street spaces by making longer stays particularly expensive.

Provide Parking Manager with Rate-Setting Authority

- Allow parking managers to adjust rates in response to facility availability.

Relax Time Limits

- Ease time limits on metered spaces as pricing policies create more consistent availability. Time limits do not enhance customer experience but instead limit visitors, shoppers, and diners to shorter periods of stay.

Simplify Regulations

- Simplify alternate side street parking restrictions. For streets where restrictions such as residential permits are permanent, the portion of the year in which the restrictions are in effect can be reduced.

Adjust Pricing Schedules

- Operate paid on-street parking between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Off-street pricing time periods should match or include fewer hours than on-street metering.



Monitor Performance

- Survey key, on-street blocks and off-street facilities each month
- Identify times and locations of constrained availability (less than 15% of spaces available)
- Adjust rates, or rate zones, in response to patterns in which availability is consistently above or below performance targets.

Provide a Grace Period

- Provide a grace period for on-street paid parking to help avoid customer frustration with payment systems. Short grace periods of 15 minutes at on-street metered parking spaces can make Poughkeepsie more visitor friendly, without undermining the effectiveness of performance-based parking rates.

Coordinate Rates with Private Facilities

- Coordinate between public and private parking operators to align pricing strategies and spread demand efficiently across the available parking supply. The more that private, publically accessible parking operators can be brought in line with municipal strategies for rate tier zones and progressive pricing, the more efficiently the parking system will operate.



Establish Customer Friendly Enforcement

- Re-orient enforcement policies and practices, in conjunction with updating regulations and parking management practices.
- Use enforcement operations to ensure parking availability and broader parking management goals.
- Avoid punitive policies that deter customers and visitors away from Downtown Poughkeepsie.

ORGANIZATION CHANGES

Establish and Manage a Parking Fund

- Net revenue from the parking meter fees, permits, and parking citations should be dedicated to a Parking Fund that would be used to invest in parking-related improvements in the downtown. These funds can be used for street improvements, parking facility upgrades, new signage, and a host of other possibilities. The City should advertise to parkers that net parking revenues are being used to invest in the downtown.

Create a Program Director Position

- Formalize the critical Program Director position through the development of a position description and associated budgeting.

Improve Parking System Reporting and Tracking

- The City should work within its parking system to enable, improve and create systems for reporting, tracking, implementation, maintenance and investment.

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

Upgrade Technology and Payment Systems

Consider parking technology options that:

- Make payment easy and convenient
- Allow multiple payment methods
- Reduce distance between paystations
- Can offer a grace period option
- Offer “virtual” permits, using license plates
- Facilitate enforcement
- Integrate with enforcement equipment

These options include:

- Smart Pay Stations
- Pay by Plate Systems
- Pay by Phone Technology

Improve and Coordinate Information Systems

- Clearly convey parking rates, regulations, and restrictions via signage, while also directing drivers to less obvious parking options. Wayfinding, signage, and information should be designed and deployed to inform drivers of their options before arrival, upon arrival, and after arrival.

Facilitate Shared Parking Agreements

Shared parking is the co-location of off-street parking in a single location that serves the parking demand for multiple land uses in a mixed-use context.

- Work with private lot owners to make better use of underutilized parking facilities by making those facilities available to the public during certain hours. The City should develop an in-house capacity to advance shared parking agreements, provide educational and negotiating support to potential sharing partners.

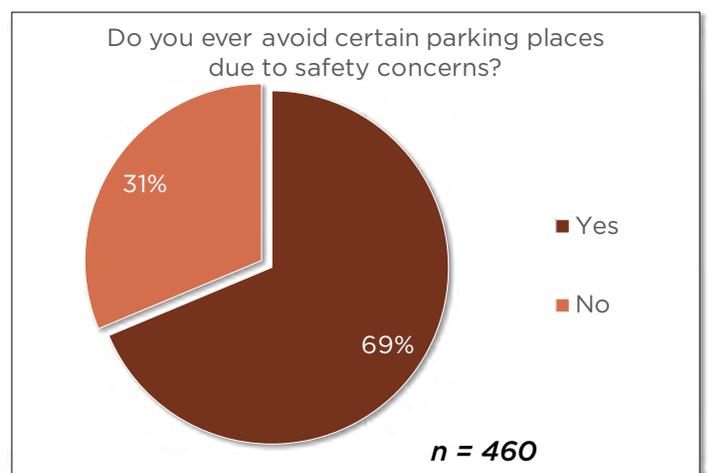
Improve Facility Condition



- Enhance the appearance and improve the state of repair of public parking facilities. Parking management should define maintenance standards and develop an implementation program.

Emphasize Safety and Security

- Emphasize personal safety and security in public parking facilities through the creation of a security plan for each facility. Security plans should include the design elements or reassessments to improve visibility and ensure the safety of customers.



Accentuate Branding and Marketing

- Market parking facilities as a positive asset for Downtown. Parking facilities may incorporate public art, creative lighting, and theming to enhance the parking experience for visitors to Downtown Poughkeepsie.

Provide a Quality Pedestrian Environment

- Include parking management in local transportation planning efforts. The parking office should work with city staff to review and evaluate policies related to good urban design principles and parking provision within a high-quality pedestrian environment.



A clear and consistent parking brand, such as ParkAlbany used by the Albany Parking Authority, would improve the perception of the parking system as a positive element of the downtown experience.

Coordinate Programs

- Take a lead role in parking program coordination and act as a centralized resource that coordinates and distributes information related to parking supply, availability, planning, special programs, event activities, and other resources.

Incentivize Public Transit

- Provide free or discounted transit passes to local employees to further reduce demand for parking.

Improve and Expand Bicycle Facilities

- Provide adequate bicycle parking, including indoor facilities for commuters, to provide cyclists with reassurance that they can always find appropriate and convenient parking when traveling to, or within, Downtown Poughkeepsie.

Prioritize Pedestrian Safety and Access

- Improve the pedestrian environment, particularly street crossings, to increase safety and walkability. Another important benefit of an improved walking network is that a driver's final destination is easier and more pleasant to reach.

PARKING IN THE ZONING CODE

A unique set of parking requirements emphasizing access for all modes over the provision of a set amount of accessory parking would help create an active center city district. Access requirements can be met in a number of ways, including multimodal amenities and programs.

- Provide publicly-accessible on-site parking.
- Provide on-site mobility amenities such as bike parking or car-share vehicles.
- Provide amenities (Eg. free/discounted bus passes, vanpool program) designed to manage transportation demand.
- Appropriately price parking in order to encourage other modes of travel.
- Pay an impact fee per parking space, which funds Downtown investments, including public parking, mobility, and Transportation Demand Management benefits.

The Parking Improvement Plan provides Poughkeepsie with a prioritized blueprint to maximize existing parking assets while supporting Downtown's long-term success.