



DOWNTOWN/PARKING BENEFIT DISTRICT (PBZ)
Parking Management Recommendations

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BACKGROUND

In January and early February of 2021, the City of Bozeman Economic Development Department hosted a series of community engagement meetings to build trust between the city and residents, and to solicit input from stakeholders on the remaining strategies of the 2016 Downtown Strategic Parking Management Plan and recently approved Parking Benefit Zone (PBZ), which is adjacent to downtown. Also, staff hoped to surface any additional parking management challenges the stakeholders are experiencing. The engagement sessions were undertaken at the direction of both the Bozeman City Commission and the Parking Commission.

Purpose and Approach

Parking management is a complex, and sometimes emotional, area of focus that must address numerous interests and perspectives. The purpose of the engagement process was to inform all stakeholders as to intent and desired outcomes of parking management, while ensuring that the strategies used to reach those outcomes are informed by best practices and community input.

To accomplish this, two meetings for the Downtown/PBZ were held. The first meeting established a common understanding of Values and Guiding Principles that define the desired outcome of parking management. This objective information established the framework for discussion in 30-minute small breakout sessions to compile community feedback, which was reported back to the entire group. This information shaped the key findings, and corresponding recommended solutions, that were presented at the second meeting for each focus area. Meetings specific to the Downtown and PBZ discussions were conducted on the following dates. Because similar themes and challenges were raised in the first two meetings it was decided that one Recommended Solutions meeting pertaining to both programs would be most efficient and informative.

- January 28, 2021 -Values and Guiding Principles (PBZ)
- February 3, 2021 -Values and Guiding Principles (Downtown)
- March 8, 2021 – Recommended Solutions (Combined Downtown and PBZ)

This document summarizes information presented at these meetings with stakeholders as well as the key challenges and concerns expressed by participants regarding the existing Downtown and PBZ program format. Additionally, it documents the recommended solutions from the consultant team to address expressed concerns and serves as an action plan for staff and the community to move forward.

Parking Handbook

At the outset of the engagement process, the [Bozeman Parking Handbook](#) was created to serve as a guide to document and communicate the community foundation, intention and desired outcomes of parking policies. The Handbook will help facilitate decisions for future parking management policies that will help achieve the desired values for the community.

VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Parking management entails far more than simply providing access to a parking stall. It is a comprehensive system that integrates alternative modes of transportation (e.g. transit, biking, walking, ride-share) to maximize opportunities for people to efficiently access different locations across the city. How this system is implemented, and where investments are made, depends on a city's set of Values for managing growth and Guiding Principles that clearly state desired outcomes for managing parking and transportation access; in residential neighborhoods and in commercial areas.

The intent for both Values and Guiding Principles is to establish a basis for consensus and provide the city an evaluative filter for decision-making; ensuring that recommended actions and implementation of city plans are shaped by adopted policy and best practices. City Values and Guiding Principles for parking management were presented and discussed with stakeholders at the first public engagement sessions on January 28 and February 3, 2021. These are listed below.

Values

The following values prioritize outcomes for future city development in alignment with the city Commission Strategic Plan adopted in 2018. A more detailed explanation of these values and specific alignment with the Strategic Plan is provided in the Parking Handbook.

ENVIRONMENT

- **Address City Climate Goals** – Provide diverse transportation options (e.g. walk, bike, bus, remote work, rideshare) to reduce climate impacts.
- **Prevent Sprawl** - Use land more efficiently to reduce over-building roads, infrastructure, and parking surfaces.
- **Build a Healthy Environment** – Encourage walkable development patterns.

COMMUNITY

- **Accessible Neighborhoods** – Residents should be able to park on their street and have guests easily visit.
- **Strong Local Businesses** - Businesses should have parking accessible to customers in order to thrive.

CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

- **Public Fiscal Responsibility** – Cover the costs of programs and services with appropriate fees.
- **Community Engagement** – The city will employ transparent, upfront, clear communication to gather input from the public to help shape policy.
- **Equity** – Public policy should strive to eliminate negative impacts on those least able to bear costs.

Guiding Principles

Parking management is intended to maximize public investments in infrastructure that align with the established values. The following Guiding Principles for managing the public supply of parking are reflective of priorities established in the Downtown Strategic Parking Management Plan that was adopted in 2016. A more detailed explanation of these Guiding Principles is also provided in the Parking Handbook.

- 1) **Neighborhoods** – The city will ensure adequate parking for residents and guests in neighborhoods
- 2) **Downtown** – The city will ensure adequate parking for customers and visitors downtown
- 3) **Role of Private Sector** – The private sector (developers and employers) is primarily responsible for providing employee parking.
- 4) **Decision-Making** – Objective and publicly available data and performance measures will determine when new types of management or construction of additional supply is needed.
- 5) **Efficiency** - Unlock existing parking supply and promote use of alternative modes of transportation. Create capacity through strategic management of existing supply (public and private), reasonable enforcement, and integrating parking with alternative modes. The amount of available supply is determined by two factors 1) measuring performance of the existing parking supply through objective data collection, and 2) evaluating demand against an occupancy standard determined by neighborhoods and the Parking Commission that reflects the character of the neighborhood. This allows some areas to maximize the use of parking areas, while others will retain more vacancies. On-street parking is a finite supply. By maximizing the use of the supply, it reduces the need to build more stalls within the overall system.

Information derived from the January 28 and February 3, 2021 breakout sessions was consolidated into several key themes that were consistently expressed by stakeholder participants. The city believes that this community input reflects important issues for consideration in managing the Downtown and PBZ districts.

The following key findings and recommended solutions were presented at the March 8, 2021 Downtown/PBZ stakeholder meeting. Solutions were crafted to address specific concerns and challenges derived from the community feedback gathered during the initial meetings on January 28 and February 3, 2021.

There were several consistent themes heard from stakeholders as to currently perceived challenges inherent to the existing format. These challenges and desired outcomes shape the recommended solutions outlined later in the Section – Downtown/PBZ Recommended Solutions.

Invest in Values – The city should invest in alternative transportation modes, but there is skepticism that this value is not evident in practice. Stakeholders were supportive of the beneficial relationship

between parking management and alternative modes and are uncomfortable moving forward with some solutions (e.g., paid on-street parking) without more commitment to planning and budgeting for transit, biking, ridesharing, and other alternative modes.

Data – Concern that implementation of the 2016 Downtown Strategic Parking Management Plan by staff and Parking Commission is not based on clear, objective and up-to-date data. Stakeholders see the benefit to transparency that routine monitoring of best practice performance metrics can bring to discussing (with the community) and implementing key recommendations within the 2016 Plan.

Prioritize Residential Parking – There was support for, and skepticism of, the Parking Benefit Zone (PBZ) concept as a potential solution for managing parking in residential areas within the new PBZ boundary. For stakeholders, the city must demonstrate commitment to manage to the priority (residential parking) and mitigate potential spillover issues from downtown employees in the B-3 zone. The city must demonstrate that the PBZ program intent is not a tool to allow new development to avoid parking code requirements at the expense of neighborhood livability and congestion. Data and on-going collaboration between the Parking Commission and affected neighborhoods will be important elements for addressing these concerns.

Prioritize On-Street Customer Parking – Stakeholders support the Guiding Principle that prioritizes on-street parking in the downtown for customer access, underscoring the importance of customer traffic to business (and downtown) vitality. There is concern regarding how the city defines "adequate parking" as well as the process for implementing changes or for the possible transition to paid parking. Data, transparency, and outreach/education need to be a part of the solution for managing the on-street system.

Manage Employee Parking – Concern was expressed about use of the on-street system by employees, which conflicts with customer need. Concern was also expressed that employees need reasonable options, in the public supply, the private supply and for alternative modes (e.g., transit, bike, walk, shared parking agreements, monthly permit parking in the garage). Addressing and balancing this concern needs to be strategic; through an exploration of shared use options, education and data.

DOWNTOWN/PBZ POTENTIAL CONFLICTS WITH CURRENT CITY VALUES AND PARKING MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

The city wants to address the community concerns stated above and ensure that moving forward, the downtown and PBZ's are managed and aligned with current city policy. Key city policies that may challenge concerns expressed by stakeholders include paid parking, new supply, and spillover of downtown demand into neighborhoods

These potential conflicts were presented to participants in the February and March 2021 public engagement meetings. It is the intent of the solutions section proposed below that concerns can be addressed effectively, and City policy can remain consistent and forward moving. Specific City values and principles are clarified further below.

Manage On-Street Supply (Curb Space) More Efficiently

The city's goal is to maximize use of curb space in a manner that preserves on street parking for customers and visitors, provides other options for employees, and mitigates spillover into neighborhoods. **The primary desired outcome is to maximize the cost effectiveness of city investment in the parking supply.** Elements that would drive this goal include better data, outreach and education, and coordinated use of PBZ's to manage downtown spillover into neighborhoods and "unlock" underutilized existing supply as appropriate. Similarly, strategies that could transition more parking areas to paid parking are key elements in the city's parking toolbox; that need to be evaluated and implemented strategically, equitably, and transparently.

Manage Off-Street Public Supply More Efficiently

Building new supply is very expensive and the use of public dollars for parking needs to be leveraged within the context of long-term priorities for use of the public supply to serve visitors. Similarly, there will need to be greater reliance and investment in non-auto mode options for users. **Parking cannot be the only access solution for Bozeman.**

To this end, the City will manage its existing off-street supply (i.e., the Bridger Parking Garage and public lots) to their highest and best use and in a manner that is flexible to how demand for parking changes over time (hourly, daily, and seasonally). Ultimately, new public supply will be influenced by growing visitor parking demand.

DOWNTOWN/PBZ RECOMMENDED SOLUTIONS

The following solutions were presented at the March 8, 2021 RPPD neighborhood stakeholder meeting. Solutions were crafted to address specific concerns and challenges derived from the community feedback gathered during the meeting on January 28 and February 3, 2021.

Solutions are provided in an Immediate/Short-term (6 – 12 months) and Mid-term format (12 – 24 months) implementation format. Those charged with leading these efforts is provided under the column "determination to proceed." Immediate/Short-term solutions address actions that require minimal to moderate funding, presenting quick and timely solutions to some commonly expressed community concerns. Mid-term solutions will require additional time and higher levels of funding and longer-term community discussion, planning and decision-making.

Immediate/Short-Term: 6-12 months

Topic	Description	Determination to Proceed
Demonstrate an Investment in Values: <i>Integrate parking management into broader transportation planning to improve access via all modes to downtown.</i>	Communicate existing investment in alternative modes (transit, bike/ped projects in CIP, major road projects)	City Management, Public Works, Finance and Economic Development Staff
	Demonstrate commitment to the City's values of alternative modes and sustainability by budgeting for alternative modes of transportation.	City Management, Public Works, Finance, Economic Development Staff – Parking Commission and City Commission
Collect Data	Commit to key performance metrics and a collection methodology. Commit to scheduled routine collection that is transparent with the public. Refresh and compare collected data with baseline to ground and inform decisions.	Parking Services and Strategic Services, specifically GIS
Manage Employee Parking	<i>Identify Employee Parking Opportunities</i> – Clearly identify employee access opportunities that include parking and alternative modes. Recognize that they need to drive due to affordable housing issues that won't let them live nearby and walk or bike (parking equity).	Parking Services and Downtown Bozeman Partnership
	<i>Communication/Education</i> – Through a partnership with the downtown association and business champions, educate business owners and employees regarding the importance of customer parking and provide alternative parking options through shared use of private lots and garage permits.	Parking Services and Downtown Bozeman Partnership

Medium-Term: 12 months - 3 years

Topic	Description	Determination to Proceed
<p>Prioritize On-Street Parking for Visitors and Customers</p>	<p>When all the following conditions exist, then paid on-street parking will be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer and employee education and outreach is not sufficient to open up on-street parking for visitors and customers • Occupancy data determines that parking demand is in excess of an established threshold (e.g., over 85% of the parking supply is occupied for extended periods) • Parking data determines that turnover is frequent enough to accommodate for the cost of implementing a paid on-street parking system 	<p>Parking Commission</p>
<p>Protect Residential Parking in Neighborhoods</p>	<p>If residents support it, and supply occupancy data warrants it, the Parking Commission may propose the creation of a PBZ. If created, determine a minimum block area to protect resident access to on-street parking</p>	<p>Neighborhood Residents and Parking Commission</p>
<p>Maximize Use of Public off-street supply (Bridger Garage and City Lots)</p>	<p>Continue to manage demand to the highest and best use of existing off-street public parking supply based on data.</p>	<p>Parking Services</p>
	<p>Communicate and educate the public to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an objective understanding on current garage/lot utilization • Maximize the utilization of the City's off-street supply 24/7 • Convey that the ultimate long-term intent for use of the City's off-street supply is to prioritize and ensure customer & visitor parking (i.e., "the full sign never goes up.") 	<p>Parking Services</p>
<p>Explore Funding Options for Future Visitor Supply</p>	<p><i>Determine Need</i> - <u>Based on data</u>, determine the need to build or invest in new visitor parking supply.</p>	<p>Parking Services</p>
	<p><i>Determine Funding</i> - If determined necessary, a new 330 stall garage would cost approximately \$15 - \$18M. Define a strategic package of funding options (e.g., TIF, land donation, facility operating revenues, paid on-street fees, Special Improvement District). Other options for expanding supply include adding an additional deck to the existing parking structure (\$4 - \$6M)</p>	<p>Parking Commission and City Commission</p>

SUMMARY

Community stakeholders provided valuable insights into the challenges they see for managing parking in the downtown and in potential residential permit programs within the new Parking Benefit Zone (PBZ) boundary. There was support for both the city's Values and its Guiding Principles for parking management. Vital neighborhoods and a thriving downtown are common visions shared by all participants.

The most significant underlying concern seems to be transparency in decision making and trust between the public, Parking Commission and staff. Solutions offered by the consultant are directly tied to addressing this concern, through commitment to providing access to downtown via multiple modes, collaboration with downtown stakeholders, and clear measures (both parking and other modes) which includes outreach, collaboration and education, and clear measures of system performance to inform the implementation of strategies. Equally important was the city's continued support of the values and goals contained in the 2016 Downtown Strategic Parking Management Plan related to its role in parking, priority users in the public supply, maximizing existing parking supply, and data collection.

The solutions offered here provide a means to both improve parking downtown and in adjacent neighborhoods. They also directly address concerns expressed by stakeholders; providing a sequence of actions that safeguard businesses, residents and users' access to information and options to get to, and use, downtown. As with any plan, on-going communications and collaboration between the city and stakeholders, and a commitment to data, will facilitate transparency and sound decision-making.

Parking is, and will likely continue to be, an emotional and controversial issue – in Bozeman and in other cities around the country. In parking, it has been found that the inevitable outcome of growth is change. Recognizing this reality and commitment to a plan that strategically anticipates change, with objective information (data) and realistic and equitable solutions, is the key to whether a city falls behind or leverages change to the advantage of business vitality and neighborhood livability.