

GUIDING PARKING PRINCIPLES FOR CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS

(Approved by the Portsmouth City Council on March 19, 2012)

Overall Principles: A balanced mix of retail/restaurant, office, and residential uses is key to downtown vitality.

A downtown parking supply that is convenient, viable and central to downtown destinations is key to the short-term and long-term health of the City's retail, restaurant and office economy.

1. Insuring an adequate supply of parking for retail/restaurant and office users in the downtown is primarily a City responsibility.
2. Parking for new downtown residential development is primarily a private responsibility with residents wanting convenient parking right where they live.
3. We need to plan for future reuse, redevelopment and full occupancy of buildings in the Central Business Districts. If it is too difficult, expensive or unpleasant to find parking, retail/restaurant/cultural destination customers may prefer to visit elsewhere and offices may prefer to locate elsewhere.
4. The City should strive to play a lead role in developing and managing parking facilities:
 - Parking management and supply decisions are interconnected and a comprehensive, unified approach to decision-making is needed.
 - The value of private parking facilities should be recognized as a resource. These resources are not part of the public parking supply under the City's long-term control and opportunities to manage private lots are limited.
5. Address peak parking demand needs in order to avoid perfect Friday/Saturday night storm when residents/customers can't find parking:
 - Manage parking at the garage (for example, flat rate pricing for special events).
 - Increase the supply of convenient parking.
6. Parking should support economic development including businesses (office, retail, restaurant) and visitors/customers.
7. The parking garage should be priced and managed so that it has high occupancy more frequently (improve utilization of what we've got).
8. The primary reason for parking revenues is to be able to provide an adequate supply of safe, convenient parking. Pricing structures should be simple and easy for customers to understand.
9. Parking management strategies should recognize that there is a difference between the needs of long-term parkers who may be more likely to use the garage or use parking immediately adjacent to downtown, and short-term parkers running a quick errand.
10. Price and manage more desirable on street parking spaces to favor users who are highly motivated to use them. Give customers and residents the option to stay and pay.

11. Information on parking options should be easily accessible to parking users, including through technology options.
12. Parking planning should take a comprehensive, sustainable and big picture approach by taking a broad range of costs and benefits into account when making decisions.
13. All parking resources should place value on aesthetics, security, accessibility and user information.
14. Consider ways to incentivize use of “remote parking”.
15. Surface parking lots should be located at the periphery of the downtown and should not be allowed to create a “dead zone” barrier to comfortable pedestrian movement.
16. Parking management programs should take into consideration hospitality industry workers.
17. Incentives for residents should be provided at the parking garage, but shouldn’t compromise best practices.
18. Parking resources should be provided to support downtown activity (streets are for people as well as cars) and should therefore be designed and located in such a manner that recognizes the following:
 - Parking resources should enhance – not detract from – downtown vitality, walkability and the pedestrian experience;
 - Parking resources should accommodate pedestrians (bump-outs, plazas), bicycles (bike parking) and transit (space to pull over);
 - Parking structures should be incorporated into the commercial streetscape; and
 - The needs of an aging population should be taken into account when it comes to parking.
19. Parking strategies should be revenue neutral.
20. Parking management plans should recognize the short-term parking needs of retail and hospitality industry for loading zones.
21. Encourage public transit and other transportation modes, but recognize strong customer/resident preference for personal vehicle use as well as very limited regional public transit infrastructure.