

Parking Management

What is it?

Many of the parking solutions presented herein could perhaps best be implemented by establishing or designating an organization to manage parking matters in your community. This organization would be responsible for identifying areas of your community where parking is an issue, arranging for parking studies of these areas, implementing solutions to parking problems, and handling ongoing parking maintenance and enforcement issues. The designated organization could range from an appointed parking task force to a parking authority, existing development authority, or a parking department within city or county government.

How to do it

1. **Establish a stakeholder committee to evaluate management alternatives.** Include affected merchants, property owners, residents, and parking enforcement personnel. Begin by getting their input on parking issues that need to be addressed in the community.
2. **Evaluate current responsibilities of agencies involved in parking management.** Working with the stakeholder committee, identify all organizations currently handling aspects of parking (from planning for parking to enforcing parking regulations). What responsibilities does each organization handle, and how effective have they been? Are these organizations addressing all of the parking issues identified by the stakeholder committee (above)?
3. **Decide responsibilities and proposed management structure. Involve the stakeholder committee in determining:**
 - a. *Responsibilities* of the new parking management organization. These might include such things as:
 - conducting parking studies
 - implementing parking solutions
 - maintenance of parking facilities
 - leasing and management of parking facilities
 - maintaining a parking bank
 - enforcement of parking regulations
 - b. *Type of organization* that might best handle these new responsibilities. Is a new organization needed, or could an existing organization take on these responsibilities? In some cases, an informal organization such as a parking advisory committee will suffice while in other cases nothing less than a city/county parking department or parking authority will work. It all depends on the complexity of local parking issues and the resources available to address these issues. Typical parking management organizations include:
 - an appointed parking task force

- an area merchant's association
- a Main Street program manager
- a parking authority
- a downtown development authority
- an industrial development authority
- a parking department within city or county government

Where existing organizations are handling selected parking responsibilities, determine whether it is best to leave those responsibilities in place or transfer them to the designated parking management organization.

- c. *Funding.* There will be costs associated with operating the parking management organization. Estimate an annual budget for the organization (including cost of its implementation activities) and determine where these funds will come from. Options include:
- funding from the local government
 - parking fees and fines
 - membership fees collected from area businesses (merchant's association, etc.)
 - special tax assessment on area properties see special assessment districts (not currently available)
4. **Adopt the new requirements.** Present the stakeholder committee's recommendations for parking management to local elected officials for official adoption. Be sure to solicit public input before establish the new parking management structure.
5. **Implement the parking management plan approved by the local governing body.** Periodically re-evaluate the effectiveness of the parking management organization. What adjustments are needed to ensure that local parking issues are addressed most effectively?

Things to consider before using this tool

- Smooth the way for transferring parking responsibilities to a new organization by involving the affected organizations from the beginning (i.e., include them in the stakeholder group). If involved in all discussions and planning for the new parking management structure, these organizations are more likely to understand the need for unified parking management and will offer less resistance to the change of responsibilities.

Additional Information on Smart Parking Solutions

Background

- Does your community have expanses of parking lots that detract from its attractiveness?
- Do you hear frequent complaints from customers and business owners about parking availability?
- Is there a perception that parking is not convenient, safe, or customer friendly in particular parts of your community?
- Is there pressure to provide more parking in high density areas even though there are many vacant spaces during the peak hour?

If your community is typical of many others in Georgia, some sections of the community simply have too many unattractive asphalt parking lots, while other high activity areas, such as the downtown, seem to suffer from a lack of convenient, adequate, and safe parking.

The simple fact is that most people want to be able to park within a few feet of their destination. Businesses want to locate in places where parking is convenient for their customers or clients. The result is that parking can play a big role in influencing development patterns. Typical responses to the need for parking can be to:

- Tear down buildings, remove trees, and clear land to create more parking lots. This has serious environmental consequences and can substantially reduce the attractiveness of your community.
- Build parking decks. This may not be a good or even a viable idea. Garage parking is not well used in smaller communities and is quite expensive - \$10,000 per space or more.
- Relocate businesses to areas with more available parking. This is especially true for high customer use facilities with a perceived lack of parking, such as post offices or governmental offices. Moving such facilities away from central locations can work against local efforts to revitalize in-town areas.

There are a number of smart parking strategies that can be used to better match the supply of parking to actual demand throughout your community. Less land is wasted on asphalt while your citizens are better able to find parking facilities available within a convenient and reasonable walking distance of their destinations.