

2014-2015 Port Townsend Main Street Program Parking Summary

In 2014-2015, the Port Townsend Main Street Program, due to many comments from its members, conducted a 21 question on-line parking survey. We collected data for 2 months in the winter of 2014. We then re-launched the survey in the summer of 2015 encouraging the same people and new people to fill out the survey with their summer lens on. We received 342 surveys in the winter and another 141 in the summer (this included 42 people who filled the survey out twice). From this, we learned that most people who filled the survey out in the winter explained their winter *and* summer downtown parking experiences, so they would not need to fill out the survey again. We left a comment place for each question which was very helpful in explaining people's answers. This parking survey is by no means supposed to be a pin-point accurate data sample with controls. We were simply trying to get a clear idea of what the current perception of parking downtown was because it had been 10 years since the prior City Parking Study. We also wanted to see if there were any improvements or suggestions that could be made.

The full set of surveys are available for you to read through, they are attached. With this summary, we are trying to look at overall messages and themes. The Port Townsend Main Street Board has attempted to come up with a few creative solutions to move forward.

We averaged the two surveys in our comments as follows and bolded the most common answer.

1. I am a:

64.1% City resident.

27.5% Live in unincorporated Jefferson County.

8% Visitor

2. What best describes the largest amount of time you are spending downtown

6% of the people lived downtown

24.5% of the people work downtown

65.2% of the people shop, dine, or go to events downtown

3. I access downtown primarily by:

77.5% of the people access downtown by car.

12.5% by walking

5.4% biking

Less than 1% transit

4. Are the current regulations with 2 hour, 4 hour, and 24 hour parking working for you?

20.3% Strongly yes

49% for the most part

19.7% not really

9.4% totally not

Here is where some of the comments start to help us understand.

109 Comments most of which focused on 2 hours not being enough. However, other themes were on downtown residents wanting parking passes, workers not liking that the 24-hour parking is up hills or stairs, some suggestions of a parking garage.

5. I have gotten ___parking tickets in the last 6 months

86.7% none

6.7% 1 ticket,

4% 2 tickets

Comments: Majority say 2 hour parking is not enough. Other themes include: I move my car every 2 or 4 hours, they shouldn't give tickets in the winter, and multiple comments from workers downtown saying they don't have time if their shop is busy to be moving their car every two hours which we see as a lack of understanding about the finite amount of parking downtown.

6. I would prefer paid parking in lieu of getting a ticket for over time

31% Yes

64.6% No

Comments: Of the comments just over 50% said no way in all sorts of dramatic language. About 10% said yes for all sorts of different reasons, and about 30% said maybe and gave suggestions such as: monthly paid permit for residents, monthly paid permit for workers, having paid parking in a few areas, having the first 2 hours free then paying for more time.

7. When I drive downtown, I estimate I need _____hours for parking

5 minutes-2 hours 32.7%

2-4 hours 39.4%

4-10 hours 20.5%

More than 10 hours 5%

Comments were pretty straight forward. If running an errand, 15 minutes, if eating and going to a movie 3-4 hours, if working 4-10 hours, if living downtown, more than 10.

8. On average, how far away from where you want to go downtown do you have to park

Adjacent to where I am going 9.6%

2 blocks 39.6%

3 blocks 24.5%

4 blocks 15.3%

5 or more blocks 7.5%

Comments were again straight forward. This was the average unless there was a festival, then it was further. In summer you have to park a little further away. Mid- day was harder to find a spot.

9. How long do you have to look for a parking place on average in the winter

I usually find something in the first few minutes 73.4%

It takes between 5-10 minutes 21.6%

It takes more than 10 minutes 2.1%

10. How long do you have to look for a parking place on average in the summer

I usually find something in the first few minutes 21.2%

It takes between 5-10 minutes 46.1%

It takes more than 10 minutes 28.3%

Questions 9 and 10 clearly show the seasonal experience with parking downtown. In the winter, there is not much problem. In the summer it is difficult. Based on the comments, it appears to be quite difficult to find a spot in the summer though the data shows it to be fairly difficult.

11. If you work downtown, how often do your customers complain about the parking situation?

All of the time 18.7%

Regularly 38.9%

Not that often 42.5%

Please note that these percentages are based on the people who work downtown. The bulk (73.4%) of the people surveyed responded N/A or no response.

12. If you work downtown, what time do you typically come to work?

Before 11 **77.6%**
Between 11-4 21.2%
After 4 less than 1%

13. If you work downtown, what time do you typically get off?

Before 1 0%
Between 1-6 **62.8%**
After 6 38.2%

Again please note that 67.7% gave no response or N/A as their response. We were trying to see if there was any anomaly in what we thought were the typical business hours downtown and when the bulk of the workers might also be looking for a place to park. There was none. Most people work close to a traditional work day.

14. Do you currently use the free longer term parking at the edges of downtown?

Yes 32.9%
No 42.3%
Sometimes, Please let us know when 19.9%

Comments fell mostly into 4 categories. First group uses the longer term parking when they should because they're staying downtown longer than 2 hours. Second group, which was the largest group, uses the longer term parking because they must --because it is in the summer, on festivals when you can't find a place to park, or when they know parking enforcement will be out. Third group has no idea that there is longer term parking. Fourth group feels our longer term parking is too inconvenient for them --up a hill or too far away--from where they want to go.

15. Would you use the park and ride if there were more reliable transit?

Yes 29.8%
No 52.2%

Comments ran the gamut and there was no clear pattern except to say they would not. We saw everything from "maybe to yes I would consider", to "I didn't know there was a park and ride". Comments ranged from "it's shorter for me to drive downtown, to "I might tell tourists to but I wouldn't use it." A few valuable comments of note were: "the schedule ends too early for me to get back to my car" and "the current route is too long from the park and ride to downtown." Another interesting suggestion was to have a park and ride or parking lot at the edge of town not up a hill but within walking distance for the workers and residence.

16. How many times in an average trip downtown do you currently have to move your car?

I don't have to because 2 hours is enough	33.5%
1 time because 4 hours is enough	14.9%
2 or more times because 4 hours isn't enough	6.3%
I park where I don't have to move my car	34.8%
I just leave my car and pay the \$15 ticket	4.6%

Many of the comments were about what people did to avoid getting a ticket. Again repeated themes about how 2 hours is not enough to shop and dine or to see a movie. People commented that they move their car when enforcement is working that day and do not move their car when enforcement is not out.

17. Is the summer 4hour/ winter 24 hour parking in front of Memorial Field useful to you?

Yes	47.4%
No	22.6%
Sometimes, please let us know when	8.2%
I didn't know there was longer term parking anywhere downtown	18.6%

Comments are grouped into a few areas. First and most common, that area is always full and we wish there was more. Second, it is too far away from where I want to go. Third is comments and confusion surrounding whether it's 4 hour or 24 hour. Many people think it should be 24 hours always, some commented on the bad signage, some think it changes times arbitrarily.

18. Would you pay for parking if there was something closer and you didn't have to move your car?

Yes	25.4%
No	57.7%
Sometimes, please let us know when	12.8%

Comments: There were the extreme yes and no comments, but additionally there were a good amount of maybe and it depends comments. Most of the later category said they would consider paid parking in the summer and event weekends when it's difficult to find parking but it largely depended on how much.

19. How much would you be willing to pay?

Charge by the hour up to \$10 per day	18.2%
Charge by the day up to \$10 per day	1.7%
Parking should be free like it is now	46.3%
I'd pay more than \$10 per day not to have to move my car	<1%
I'd like to see a monthly pass	12.1%
I don't like your answers, here is my suggestion	11.7%

Comments: Obviously a lot of comments mostly surrounding how parking in our small town should be free and if you charge anyone it should be the tourists. Many comments about how people wouldn't go downtown if there were a cost. Many about special passes for workers and residents. Some encouraging a parking garage. Multiple suggestions about having the first 2 hours be free and the pay by the hour afterwards. A note, we did try selling a pass for an additional 2 hours of parking 10 years ago without much success.

20. Would you be interested in biking or walking downtown for some of your trips?

Yes-if yes, what would help you do this more	52.8%
No, not for me	43%

Comments: Lots of comments from people saying they already do bike and walk downtown as well as lots of comments from people saying why that couldn't work for them. We focused however on the third group who gave suggestions on what they would like to see improved to get them to walk or use their bike more. Better bike racks, sheltered and secure was at the top of the list of suggestions. More bike lanes including on Water Street. Have a fun program to get people connected, engaged, and recognized in riding and walking to work. For walkers it was a more regular shuttle to downtown. Move the Park and Ride closer to town so that you could easily walk. A shuttle up the hill so you only have to walk down.

21. Please give us your ideas on creative changes for parking in our downtown

There were many different ideas as well as a lot of random comments. We tried to capture most of them in our list:

Many many comments about building a parking structure most of which identified Memorial Field as the preferred location. Other parking structure locations suggested were the Bank of America lot, the space by the old Upstage, at the Park and Ride with a continuous shuttle, at the ferry dock, and in the Fins parking lot (Port Townsend Plaza).

Multiple suggestions for parking meters or kiosks

Many comments that the parking is fine

Special parking or passes for the workers downtown came up over and over

Paid parking with a free pass for locals

Monthly paid parking for residents and workers

More 15 minute spots

Things that didn't make a lot of sense like ban reserved spaces

Make tourist use Park and Ride Web cameras to find available parking or Valet

Don't give tourists tickets no matter how long they stay. Just give the locals tickets

More regular transit service like every 8-10 minutes

Make spaces diagonal so that there would be more

Have hotels pay for parking for their guests

Many comments about increasing parking to 3 hours or 4

Eliminate parking downtown all together, make people bike and walk more

Implement bike sharing, improve bicycle parking and bicycle safety, bike lanes

Many many people who recognized problem but also recognized they didn't have a solution

Summary of what we learned:

- Themes that reoccurred over and over were that there is not enough parking downtown for everyone that wants to use it in the summer and on festival weekends.
- That two hour parking is not enough for many of people's driving trips downtown. -That education about what we offer now as far as the 2, 4, and 24 hours spots and why is lacking. (Note: the downtown 2 hour parking signs are inconsistently worded in reference to the 2 hour time period).
- That an understanding of the value of a parking place to the businesses is lacking by both the public and the businesses
- That the survey was taken mostly by locals which allowed us to understand what they think but not what our visitors think or need.
- It was not necessary to do a seasonal change study as people understood the seasonal changes and demands and were able to articulate that in their answers and comments.
- That the survey did not focus much on what the residents need.
- That the local people are not ready to pay for parking.
- That we could get more people to walk and bike downtown with some improvements like a bike shelter and an organized place to park and walk.
- That enforcement is a key factor in people parking where they should.

Our suggestions and ideas from what we learned:

- If you would like the visitors' input, re-launch this or a different study targeted specifically at visitors.
 - We would encourage a plan or a group focus on a better situation for bicycle parking downtown. A covered, secure facility as we heard over and over would encourage people to bike during the summer, particularly which is when parking spaces are in such high demand. If this facility gets built, a campaign to bike and walk to work or to the movies could be in order.
 - A map of where workers should park and an educational campaign targeted at workers and business owners on why they should park at the edge of town or walk and bike to work as well as the value of the parking eg. jobs creation, higher sales should be launched.
 - We suggest at this time not to implement paid parking throughout downtown until a wider spread percentage of people think it would be ok.
 - We suggest that seasonal enforcement be implemented asap. No matter the suggestions for change and improvements no plan can work without enforcement. The enforcement needs to be regular and at least seasonal. The current parking stresses downtown and increase in comments are due mostly to the end of parking enforcement in downtown the last calendar year.
- The following are 3 different approaches to address the many comments about how 2 hours is not enough time to do what they would like to downtown. Recognizing that there is no one perfect solution, here are a few brainstorm ideas from the Main Street Executive Committee:

1. Re-launch the \$5 paid parking pass which all of the shops could sell. This pass extends the 2 hour parking to 4 hours without having to move your car. This concept came out of the parking task force 10 years ago but was not very successful as people at that time preferred to move their car over paying \$5, so it was subsequently cancelled. As parking has gotten even more difficult in the summer, it might be successful this time around. It is a low cost program that could potentially bring in a small amount of money that could be used for an improved bicycle shed or some enforcement. To be a success it would need clear signage, a campaign to educate all of the shops on selling these passes and to whom and why, and enforcement, which no idea will succeed without. It would also need several meetings to work out the specific details.

2. Change the over-arching 2 and 4 hour parking in downtown to a design that would include 2 and 3 hour parking. Our idea is something like all of Water Street is 2 hour parking all of Washington Street and the cross streets are 3 hour parking. Continue the seasonal change on Washington Street from 3 to 24 hour parking in the slower months and perhaps extend the seasonal change for all of or more of Washington Street thus recognizing that it doesn't seem fair to the workers in the cold dark months to have to walk 4+ blocks to their cars past all of the empty spots. The elimination of 4 hour parking is based on comments and experiences that the 4 hour parking which was supposed to be used as longer term to shop and dine or attend an event is actually being used almost exclusively for worker parking where they move their car at lunch. For this plan to succeed we would again need enforcement, as well as clear signage since the likelihood to misunderstand increases when there are different parking zone time limits and people become even more upset when they get a ticket by mistake. We also would need the education piece as with all of the 3 ideas. We recognize this idea does incur cost and does not have a funding stream except for parking tickets.

3. --Have seasonal paid parking on Water Street half of the year and in the shoulder season, have Water Street as 3 hour free parking to encourage the locals to shop and dine and go to the events downtown
--Have all of the cross streets be 2 hour free parking year round.
--Have Washington Street be 3 hour free parking, with all or some of it going to 24 hour parking in the shoulder season for the same reasons as above. This allows for free parking in the winter and some paid parking for those who do not want to move their car in the summer. Again you would need to launch an educational campaign, have enforcement, and have clear signage. This idea came as a balance for those who did think paid parking in the summer was a reasonable idea. It adds an income stream that could pay for the signage, the enforcement, the tools to enforce, and/or improvements such as a bike barn which was suggested many times as a way to encourage less vehicles downtown.