

Introduction

Parking is an essential component of the transportation system. Vehicles need to park at each destination. A typical automobile is parked 23 hours each day and uses several parking spaces each week. Parking facilities are a major type of land use; their location and design affect the kind of development that occurs as well as how we view a building or use a street. Parking is generally the first and last interaction that visitors have with a destination, and so has a major impact on their experience.

In the past, parking planning activities were primarily concerned with providing a generous amount of free parking at each destination. If the supply was ever inadequate, governments and businesses were expected to add more. However, there is a growing realization that this approach can be harmful. In many situations, there are better ways to satisfy our parking demands.

Parking management includes a variety of specific strategies that, when appropriately applied, can significantly reduce the number of parking spaces required in a particular situation and provide a variety of additional benefits by:

- Improving user quality of service.
- Creating more accessible land-use patterns.
- Reducing motor vehicle traffic.
- Reducing congestion, accidents, and pollution.
- Creating more attractive communities.
- Improving mobility for nondrivers.

For these reasons, improved management is often the best solution to parking problems. For more information on these benefits, see the sidebar entitled “Summary of Parking Management Benefits and Costs.”

Below is a list of the types of parking management strategies described in this book:

I. Strategies That Increase Parking Facility Efficiency

- Share parking.
- Regulate parking.
- Establish more accurate and flexible standards.
- Establish parking maximums.
- Provide remote parking and shuttle services.
- Implement smart growth policies.
- Improve walking and cycling conditions.
- Increase capacity of existing parking facilities.

II. Strategies That Reduce Parking Demand

- Implement mobility management.
- Price parking.
- Improve pricing methods.
- Provide financial incentives.
- Unbundle parking.
- Reform parking taxes.
- Provide bicycle facilities.

III. Support Strategies

- Improve user information and marketing.
- Improve enforcement and control.
- Establish transportation management associations and parking brokerage.
- Establish overflow parking plans.
- Address spillover problems.
- Improve parking facility design and operation.

This book provides guidance for evaluating and implementing these strategies and developing an integrated parking plan, plus examples, and resources for more information. Most of these strategies have been described previously, but no existing publication describes all of them or how to plan and implement a comprehensive parking management program.

Parking management is an art as well as a science. It is not usually possible to predict exactly how effective a particular parking management strategy will be or what combination of strategies is most appropriate in a particular situation. It requires creativity, judgment, and a little bit of courage. Over time, parking management becomes easier as planners, operators, and users gain experience. (The sidebar entitled “Parking Management Principles” describes general principles that can help guide you in developing an effective and acceptable parking management program.)

Parking management is particularly appropriate in locations with the following attributes:

- Perception of a parking problem.
- Rapid population, business activity, or traffic growth.
- Compact land-use patterns, such as a commercial district.

Parking Management Principles

These 10 general principles can help guide planning decisions to support parking management:

1. **Consumer choice:** People should have a variety of parking and travel options from which to choose.
2. **User information:** Motorists should have information on their parking and travel options.
3. **Sharing:** Parking facilities should serve multiple users and destinations.
4. **Efficient utilization:** Parking facilities should be sized and managed so spaces are frequently occupied.
5. **Flexibility:** Parking plans should accommodate uncertainty and change.
6. **Prioritization:** The most desirable spaces should be managed to favor higher-priority uses.
7. **Pricing:** As much as possible, users should pay directly for the parking facilities they use.
8. **Peak management:** Special efforts should be made to deal with peak demand.
9. **Quality versus quantity:** Parking facility quality should be considered as important as quantity, including convenience, comfort, aesthetics, and security.
10. **Comprehensive analysis:** All significant costs and benefits should be considered in parking planning.

- Efforts to redevelop and infill urban areas.
- High levels of walking and public transit use or a desire to encourage these modes.
- Perception that parking problems are a constraint to economic development.
- High land values.
- Concerns about equity, including fairness to nondrivers.
- Environmental concerns.
- A desire to preserve unique landscapes, historic districts, or building design features.

PARADIGM SHIFT

Parking management represents a paradigm shift (a fundamental change in how a problem is perceived and how solutions are evaluated). The current paradigm assumes that, when it comes to parking, more is usually better. This reflects “predict and provide” planning where past trends are extrapolated to predict future demand, which planners then try to satisfy. This often creates a self-fulfilling prophesy, since abundant parking supply increases vehicle use