



MAIN
STREET
Now

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TULSA
OKLAHOMA

COMATTING PARKING MYTH

A statistical approach to
parking evaluations & solutions

Speakers:
Ben Levenger, MSARP, PLA, AICP
Nathan Davis, AICP



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@DTRedevelopment
Salt Lake City, UT | Ravenna, OH



ABOUT THE PRESENTERS



Ben Levenger

MSARP, AICP, PLA, CEcD
Ben@DTRedevelopment.com



Nathan Davis

AICP
Nathan@DTRedevelopment.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS



What is the matter with downtown parking?



Bringing numbers to the fight



How to prepare, capture, and document your numbers



Reviewing and analysing the numbers



Preparing Strategies



How to Use Data



Case Study





**WHAT IS THE
MATTER WITH
DOWNTOWN
PARKING?**

WHAT IS THE PARKING MYTH?



Adding more parking is often seen as the “**silver bullet**” for downtown revitalization.



A lack of parking is often named as the reason that downtowns are witnessing business losses to more sprawled areas.



“If patrons can't park in front of our store, they won't shop!”

These are all myths and not based in fact but more on emotion or lack of knowledge.



COMMON ISSUES

Parking is the bane of any Main Street manager, but here are some of the typical 'issues' people have with parking.

- People view walking more than a block to their destination as a “lack of parking” and a detriment.
- They feel the most sales received are by people who drive up, shop, and then drive away.
- People do not like to wait or circle in their car.
- Car drivers do not like interactions with bicyclists.
- Commonly, people prioritize their personal transportation.



PERCEPTION OF THE PROBLEM






While these items may feel like a real problem, let's look at the facts:

PERCEPTION	STATUS	REALITY
<i>"Additional parking will bring more business."</i>	Myth	Abandoned strip malls have ample parking. People visit for the shops and amenities, not parking availability.
<i>"We need more parking."</i>	Myth	Making walking more enjoyable can better connect parking to destinations.
<i>"Municipal parking ordinances make it challenging."</i>	Partial Truth	Lack of change over decades may make this a reality.
<i>"Our patrons will only shop if they park in front."</i>	Myth	They often shop at big box stores and walk much further through dangerous parking lots...
<i>"My business failed due to a lack of parking."</i>	Myth	Blaming parking as the cause is a failure to reflect on business practices.
<i>"People always complain about a lack of parking."</i>	Myth	While loud, this is only a small group of people.
<i>"We don't have adequate parking."</i>	Potential Myth	Sometimes, this refers to the type of parking not being accessible (ADA, Senior, Veteran, Expecting, Other, Etc.



WHAT DOES THIS ALL **MEAN**

This is simple to answer; all of these items are simply excuses. They are excuses for:

-  **Poorly managed businesses**
-  **Lack of situational knowledge**
-  **Only listening to a smaller group of users**
-  **A stuck city council or oversight agency**
-  **Outdated parking ordinances**



BRINGING
NUMBERS TO THE
FIGHT

WHY ARE NUMBERS SIGNIFICANT?

The “Parking Problem” is often a perception problem in the community, so it is critical to combat it with cold, hard facts. This will help with:



Having proactive and honest conversations.



Removing the emotional side of conversations, building a deepened level of understanding.



Documenting the current conditions and understanding what room there is for growth.



Setting a baseline of goals and strategies that can be implemented over time as development happens.

Overall, these numbers will help facilitate a civil, honest, and purposeful conversation instead of one based solely on emotion.

In this proverbial “fight,” there are many partners, each having a specific purpose in the discussions. Outlined below are the individuals you can expect and their perspectives:

PERSON	TYPICAL ARGUMENTS
Building owner	The city requires parking
Business owner	No parking = No Business
City Official	Well, its in the code..... so
City Staff	We do what we are told
Younger resident	Why do we prioritize cars?
Middle-aged resident	I need convenience
Older resident	We cant walk far
Visitor	I'd love to feel safe walking.

WHO IS PART OF THE FIGHT?

When you begin the parking evaluation and solutions process, you must understand who your community’s players are and how their “connections” will impact your efforts. Some things to consider:



Tenure of the resident



Last name/family of the individuals



How many properties do they own



Who they represent

Understanding these items for critical individuals will outline how, where, and when you or your team interact with these individuals.

HOW DO YOU PREPARE TO COLLECT THE NUMBERS?

Preparing to collect the numbers is a critical first step in the process. Through this process, your organization can begin to think critically about the following:

- What numbers can you pull independently, and what do you need help with?
- Who are your opponents and your supporters?
- Can your organization supplement, manage, and interpret the data?
- Where and when will the numbers be publicized/used?
- How will you manage the database of data?





WHY DO WE TAKE ON THE FIGHT?

We all know reforming parking is a fight, yet it is “the good fight.” We undertake this to not only help our downtowns but also to serve as a true baseline for fact-based parking solutions.



**HOW TO PREPARE,
CAPTURE, & DOCUMENT**

**YOUR
NUMBERS**

DEFINING WHAT TYPES OF PARKING YOU HAVE

Downtown parking takes multiple shapes and often has various purposes. Consider the following types of parking:



On-street parking



Off-street parking

Public or private

Structure or lot

When developing a parking evaluation, consider how, when, and where you'll count the spaces. Some options include:



Frequency

Define how often you will count to set the parameters for which you survey the project area.



Days/Times

Determine the days/times of data capture as this will greatly impact which spaces show as frequently occupied



Project Area

Define your project area boundaries which will define the extent of your efforts. Strategies - Determine how you will measure parking utilizations, including windshield surveys, sitemap checks, drone photography, or another method.



Typologies

Define which types of parking spaces you will count, whether all spaces, public only, or some other set.



Testing the results

Ensuring that figures collected are precise and accurate is more vital than just collecting one set of data.



Parking evaluation team

Determine who will be assisting in the effort.






CREATING A STRATEGY TO COUNT THE PARKING

Your parking evaluation will be defined through the creation of this framework. This is a crucial step to get right the first time, so it is suggested that a team help decide these elements or that an external review by a different agency (such as the municipality) be conducted.



PLAN YOUR DURATION AND INTENSITY OF DATA CAPTURE

Thoroughly planning the length and intensity of the parking evaluation will help ensure success. This should include:

-  Different days of the week
-  A minimum of three different times of the day
-  Peak, off-peak, and shoulder season
-  Tourism and weekend-specific viewings
-  Event and non-event timeframes

These varied environments will help paint a holistic picture, removing outlier days such as special events.

GAINING APPROVAL OR PERMISSIONS

It is best to gain approval prior when studying private parking facilities, or even public. It is better to define the narrative by thoroughly communicating (e.g., letters, calls, and door knocking) rather than someone else falsely defining the narrative after the fact.

Bonus:

This can also serve as a time for critical questioning about problems, average tenure, and businesses' specific parking needs.

SETTING A BASELINE NUMBER

Setting your baseline numbers is about getting an understanding of your current parking supply, often including:

Counting parking spots, per facility and in total

Outlining the different areas of the study process

Making maps of the study area

Counting the quantity of each type of parking stall being counted

CAPTURING THE FIGURES

Capturing the data is often the most tedious and eye-opening experience of the entire process.

As a pro tip, prepare cards and flyers for distribution about the work when questioned.

Elements often include are:

- **Collecting data at regular intervals**
 - *Day-time collections (2-3 times in the day)*
 - *Morning collections (1 time in the morning)*
 - *Evening collections (1 time in the evening/night)*
 - *Event or tourism season collection (same as above, but on a specific date)*
 - *Weekend collections*
- **Filling in your worksheets or online survey**
- **Tallying and documenting highlighted data sets**
- **Imaging of the lots (blur or avoid capturing the license plates)**
- **Tallying ingress/egress figures**
- **Documenting visible site constraints or challenges**

THE “BORING” OFFICE WORK

After the site work has been completed, it's time to clean-up and tabulate the data into a organized database. This often includes:

- **Creating detailed spreadsheets by block or sizeable area**
- **Calculating the figures for each area's duration and intensity**
- **Documenting the statistics for each review as a separate sheet**
- **Analyzing the data for outliers or otherwise concerning data.**

Some things to search for are:

- **Overall utilization rate**
- **Hot spot parking areas**
- **Areas with limited turnover or higher-than-average tenure**
- **Areas with limited parking availability**
- **Areas where accessible parking is difficult to access**
- **Communal spaces that are often used**

**Pro
Tip**

Online surveying software can help document this information directly into a spreadsheet.

REPORTING THE STATISTICS

Reporting the statistics is a critical step. A large amount of data will be provided, yet the meaningful data must be highlighted in your report. Some hints to determine that data:

- Think back about the problems you are trying to solve
- Keep an eye on forward projection or movement
- Start with a baseline and move into area-specific details
- Preparing a succinct and impactful report





**REVIEWING &
ANALYSING**

THE NUMBERS

REVIEWING FOR **CRITICAL FIGURES**

Preparing downtown parking assessments is about identifying the numbers that are both impactful and meaningful. To achieve this, you must think through:

Impactful
numbers type
sample



- Amount of spaces
- Amount of spaces utilized
- Average tenure

Meaningful
numbers type
samples



- Percentage of available parking spaces
- Location and distance to available parking
- Priority and accessible parking locations

IDENTIFYING LOCALIZED ISSUES

Now that the numbers have been collected and reviewed, conducting some background research about the information learned is important.

This often includes deep diving into:

- Municipal parking requirements
- Ownership/operation structures for parking
- Talking with owners or stakeholders to identify need vs. amount required



COMPARING DATA WITH DIFFERENT **DAYS/DATES**

With all of the information and background readied, the following steps must be completed by a third party to verify the results.

This requires people to review the prepared statistics' dates, times, and overall information.





CHECKING DATA FOR **ACCURACY**

A final review or figure gathering can be completed to verify the results. This serves as a final check before releasing the information, ensuring that the data are not outliers.



PREPARING
STRATEGIES

WHAT STRATEGIES TO **PREPARE**

When identifying problems, it is always good to return with solutions. This requires outlining and preparing a series of solutions that can be implemented to solve the parking problems in the short term and the long term.



THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER

Branding your efforts under
“Needs-Based Parking”

This is a process where you allow people to create or allocate the necessary amount of parking for their businesses, and nothing more. This will provide additional space for built form and other amenities.

SHORT TERM SOLUTIONS

Short-term solutions should focus on collective use and enforcement, specifically:



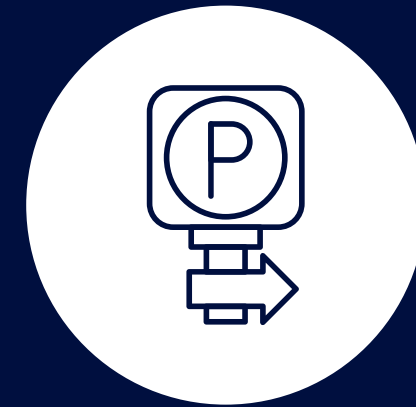
Time limits on-street parking (and enforcing it, even if through public reporting)



Collective use of private surface parking



Revisions to local codes or ordinances to allow for shared facilities in parking calculations



Increases in wayfinding or use of signage

LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS

Long-term solutions are often years in the making, specifically including:



Creation of new municipal surface or structured lots



Removal of parking requirements or stricter guidance on uses



Incorporation of effective alternative transportation



HOW TO USE
THE DATA?

PREPARE A CLEAR SYNOPSIS & SHARE THE RESULTS

Preparing the statistics should keep in mind the reader or user, so there should be two sets of reporting prepared:



TECHNICAL GUIDE

A lengthier report with all the technical information and figures, defending your responses and analysis.



COMMUNITY GUIDE

An graphic report that utilizes maps, graphs, and visual aids to demonstrate the figures.



OUTLINE THE SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS WITH **PROPERTY OWNERS**

Property owners will be concerned about this process, especially the outcomes. So, plan on returning the results and solutions to them for review and support.






UPDATE LOCAL CHANGES REGULARLY

After the announcements, it is time to begin working on the code and ordinance revisions. This is a long process, so it is suggested that you start soon and check in often.

**Lets take this out of
hypathetical and review
a case study**



CASE STUDY



WHERE WAS THE STUDY COMPLETED?

Moab, UT

**The only City we have
encountered with a true public
parking shortage**

WHAT WAS COMPLETED?



Physical Spot Parking

We reviewed various areas to conduct an analysis of how many spots were available in each.



Utilization and Ingress/egress

Reviewed the ingress/egress and overall circulation of the site to ensure it was easy and/or convenient.



Drone Imagery

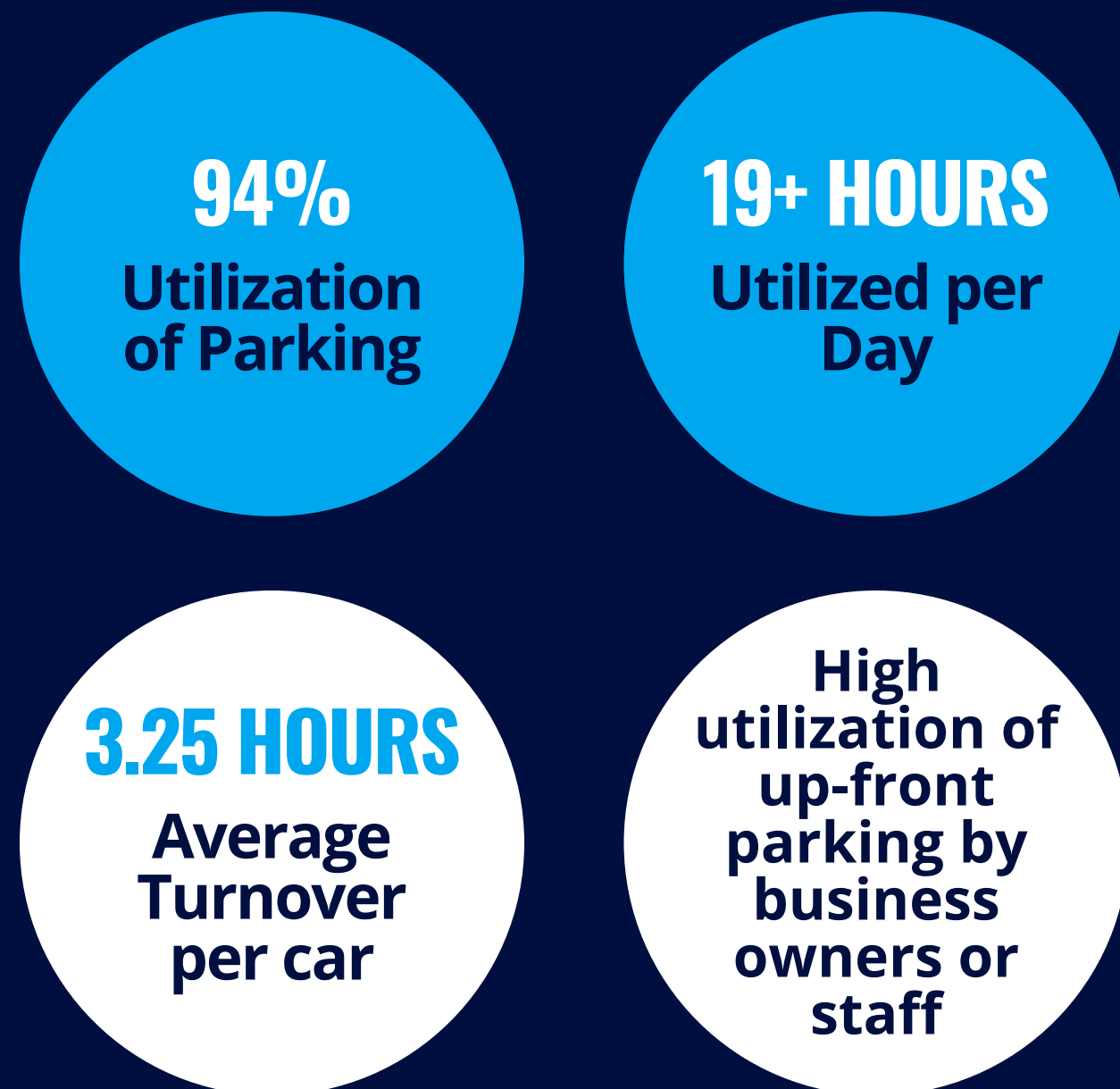
Using drones, we flew the corridor three times a day for a week at three different times of the year to take photographs.

This included three different seasons:

- High-season
- Low-season
- Festival/event day

WHAT WERE THE RESULTS?

The results showed the following:



The results were:

Short-term parking alterations

- Shared parking facilities
- Enforcement of the parking regulations
- Regular review and updating of parking requirements
- Removal of parking minimums for downtown businessse

Long-term parking alterations

- UDOT-funded parking structure
- TIF financed local match

DEMYSTIFYING THE **PARKING** MYTH

Thank You!



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Ben Levensger

DTRedevelopment

Nathan Davis

DTRedevelopment

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