Paid On-Street Parking Could Backfire on Downtown Businesses.

The performance records show that the existing downtown parking management has outperformed the parking industry's goals. Why should the downtown businesses risk shifting from time limits to paid on-street parking? A small minority is waging this shift campaign primarily based heavily on rhetoric, city support and a few complaints from individuals who always expect an open space at the front of their destination.

There are three principles of an effective parking district. The first principal is making sure the "right people are in the right spaces." Customers and visitors should have priority on the premium on-street parking. Residents and employees should have sufficient and affordable parking in close proximity. The second principle is to make a good plan and follow it. The third principle is to monitor the results and make improvements as needed.

There are three measures for monitoring a parking district performance- An ideal turnover rate of less than 2 hours because it encourages a steady flow of new customers. The ideal utilization rate is between 70 to 85%. A busy downtown is a good problem to have. An ideal "violations rate" (tickets) of no more than 10% is a measure of how successful the district communicates its rules to its users.

What do the actual performance measurements say about the effectiveness of the downtown parking management since 2016? The existing parking management scores very high in all three industry performance measures. The average turnover rate has dropped 28% from about 1 hour, 40 minutes to 1 hour, 16 minutes. The 2016 measured peak weekday utilization over the entire large study area was about 76%. However, the much smaller core streets and lots approached 100%. The underutilized core garage brought the core average down to about 80% . Today, Wall and Bond message boards display the real-time-data monitoring of the core peaks at about 76%. The violations (tickets) rate has dropped from 9.2% to 3.7%. The last parking manager was recognized as the top manager in the nation by his peers.

How does the new DBBA plan compare to the existing plan? The existing management plan already contains the same objectives that the new DBBA plan hypes. The primary difference between the two plans is the existing plan relies on time limits, and DBBA plan relies on paid on-street parking. Time limits have delivered the intended outcome while the DBBA plan illogically assumes the paid on-street expense of a few dollars will be enough incentive to increase an already high turnover rate. Which method has a better compliance record? Nearly 57% of the violations in 2024 were in paid spaces while only about 28% occurred in time limited spaces. Paid on-street parking will likely reverse the parking management performance gains.

How the two plans were created is the second major difference. The existing plan was created by a citizen committee guided by a well-respected parking consultant over an 18-month period. The DBBA has stated that they spent the last 1-1/2 years "working with" the

Downtown Parking Advisory Committee (DPAC) “researching, gathering data and developing this draft plan”. That statement is false. Instead, the DBBA Director made one rough draft presentation in February 2026 with little time allowed for any discussion. Then the DPAC meetings in March and April were cancelled. On May 21st, the city “paused” the DPAC.

I could find no evidence that the creators of the DBBA’s plan acquainted themselves with the existing adopted plan and its actual performance. The DBBA has declined to provide DPAC members the research, data or a list of sources used by whoever created the DBBA draft plan.

A 2024/2025 DBBA survey found about 2/3 of their customers would reduce or eliminate shopping downtown if the time limits were changed to paid parking. Now the DBBA is re-surveying stakeholders and the community after claiming five benefits that DBBA has never substantiated.