

Section III: Guiding Principles for Access

The work of the PWG described in Section II resulted in establishment of a consensus set of Guiding Principles designed to guide and inform parking management decisions. Strategically, the Guiding Principles encourage that parking resources be used to support and facilitate priority economic development goals and serve priority users.

The Guiding Principles will serve as a foundation for near- and long-term decision-making and implementation of parking management and access strategies in the downtown. These strategies are intended to support the on-going economic development and vitality of downtown.

1. BACKGROUND

The development of Guiding Principles for Parking Management in downtown Kirkland is based on the desire to create a system of access that supports, facilitates and contributes to creation of an ideal downtown. These Guiding Principles for Access are based on the premise that development of the downtown will require an integrated and comprehensive package of strategies that will stimulate economic development and redevelopment. The access component of that overall plan is but one critical element of a larger coordinated package.

The overall discussion that took place in the PWG work sessions can be summarized into nine draft Guiding Principles. A listing of some of the important consensus challenges from Section 2 that each Guiding Principle addresses follows each Principle as well as the opportunity themes it supports.

2. RECOMMENDED GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PARKING MANAGEMENT

Objective Statement: To implement a Parking Management and Access Plan for downtown Kirkland that supports the development of a vibrant, accessible, 24-hour city serving commercial, retail, recreational and residential uses and the customers, visitors, employees and residents of those uses. The access components of that plan need to be simple and intuitive for the user, providing an understandable system for use that is safe, secure and well integrated into the traffic system (land and water based) and other access modes.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE FOR ACCESS

1. ***Make the downtown accessible to all users. Kirkland will seek to develop the most cost-effective mix of transportation modes for access to downtown, including both parking and transportation demand management strategies.*** Access should be provided to all users of the downtown, which includes automobile, transit, boat and bike/walk users. The City should strive to create and implement as many access options as possible. Parking management strategies and programs should support and compliment other access modes as a way to maximize total access capacity in the downtown.

Challenges addressed:

- Parking supply is not managed to its maximum potential
- Perception that Kirkland lacks access and capacity

- Need for better connectivity
- Lack of transportation options and off-peak transit service
- Competition with other shopping areas
- Traffic and circulation and need for better directional and information systems

Opportunity themes supported:

- Commitment to downtown by the city, business community and citizenry
- Willingness to test innovative programs
- Great business environment downtown
- Downtown is a unique destination and shopping experience
- Safe community/streets
- Transit center in downtown

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PRIORITY PARKING

2. ***Make the downtown core conveniently accessible to priority users.*** The core zone of downtown should provide an access system that supports its priority role as the central point from which customers and visitors are connected to all the districts of the downtown. The priority user of the downtown is the short-term patron.

Challenges addressed:

- Parking supply is not managed to its maximum potential
- Perception that Kirkland lacks access and capacity
- Need for better connectivity
- Need to expand waterfront opportunities
- Public expectation of free and proximate parking
- Linking physical assets to commercial opportunity
- Competition with other shopping areas
- Lack of a marketing strategy
- Pedestrian safety
- Disconnect between downtown and Park Place
- Perception of access/capacity
- Traffic and circulation and need for better directional and information systems

Opportunity themes supported:

- Commitment to downtown by the city, business community and citizenry.
- Willingness to test innovative programs.
- Waterfront/physical beauty/boat moorage

3. ***Provide sufficient and convenient parking.*** Sufficient parking should be provided to support desired and priority economic activities in each downtown district. Publicly owned parking should be preserved for, and actively managed to, assure patron access to the area. The City should anticipate future patron needs in the context of its Downtown Strategic Plan and seek to acquire or develop parking as is appropriate.

Challenges addressed:

- Need a consensus plan to prepare for future economic viability and growth
- Public expectation of free and proximate parking
- Perception that Kirkland has no capacity to grow
- Perception of access/capacity
- Proximity of parking to land uses
- Attracting a more diverse mix of businesses
- Cost of building parking

Opportunity themes supported:

- Free public parking
- Demonstrable commitment to downtown by City, business community and citizenry
- Great business environment downtown
- Downtown is a unique destination and shopping experience
- Attractive streetscape
- Transit center in downtown

4. ***Provide adequate employee parking.*** Adequate parking should be provided to meet employee demand, in conjunction with a transportation system that provides multiple travel mode options. All parking strategies should be coordinated with transportation demand management goals and objectives to ensure that employees and customers have reasonable options available for access. Access management strategies should move larger numbers of employees into alternative modes over time.

Challenges addressed:

- Parking supply is not managed to its maximum potential
- Required parking ratios
- Perception of access/capacity
- Lack of transportation options and off-peak transit service
- Cost of building parking
- Lack of available commercial and physical space necessary to accommodate growth

Opportunity themes supported:

- Demonstrable commitment to downtown by City, business community and citizenry
- City's willingness to test innovative programs
- Transit center in downtown

5. ***Promote strategic development of off-street facilities.*** Off-street parking facilities should be developed to serve a diverse mix of uses and facilitate continued access activity throughout the day and into the evenings and weekends. Publicly owned parking facilities should be strategically located to assure that such a mix of uses, particularly customer/visitor access is conveniently and economically served. Facilities should be sited in a manner that supports connectivity within the downtown. Employee parking should not be the long-term, primary intent of publicly located parking facilities in the downtown. Park and ride parking should be prohibited in the downtown.

Challenges addressed:

- Need a consensus plan to prepare for future economic viability and growth
- Lack of transportation options and off-peak transit service
- Parking supply is not managed to its maximum potential
- Need to expand waterfront opportunities
- Need for better connectivity in the downtown between destinations
- Disconnect between downtown and Park Place
- Proximity of parking to land uses
- Traffic and congestion
- Perception of access/capacity
- Cost of building parking

Opportunity themes supported:

- Downtown is a unique destination and shopping experience
- Great business environment downtown
- Attractive streetscape
- Traffic volume through downtown

6. ***Preserve and expand on-street parking wherever possible.*** On-street parking should be preserved along strategic corridors to improve customer/visitor accessibility and to facilitate revitalization of street level activities. On-street access should, in some cases, take priority over street capacity and vehicle speeds.

Challenges addressed:

- Attracting a more diverse mix of businesses
- Parking availability
- Need a consensus plan to prepare for future economic viability and growth
- Traffic and circulation
- Pedestrian safety

Opportunity themes supported:

- Downtown is a unique destination and shopping experience
- Great business environment downtown
- Attractive streetscape

GUIDING PRINCIPLE FOR UNDERSTANDABILITY

7. ***Improve access linkages between districts and the downtown core.*** Access linkages within the core and between districts should be clearly identified through signage, way finding measures and other communication strategies to increase customer understanding of the downtown. Access linkages include parking, transit, and pedestrian/bicycle systems.

Challenges addressed:

- Need a plan to prepare for future economic viability and growth
- Lack of a marketing strategy
- Public expectation of free and proximate parking

- Need to expand waterfront opportunities
- Need for better connectivity in the downtown between destinations
- Disconnect between downtown and Park Place
- Proximity of parking to land uses
- Traffic and congestion
- Perception of access/capacity
- Pedestrian safety

Opportunity themes supported:

- Downtown is a unique destination and shopping experience
- Great business environment downtown
- Attractive streetscape
- Waterfront/physical beauty/boat moorage
- Safe community/streets

GUIDING PRINCIPLE FOR COORDINATION

8. ***Coordinate access strategies with desired development.*** All access strategies should be coordinated with and highly and mutually supportive of residential, retail, and commercial office developments in the downtown.

Challenges addressed:

- Need a plan to prepare for future economic viability and growth
- Need to attract a more diverse mix of businesses downtown
- Lack of a commercial anchor(s)
- Need for better connectivity in the downtown between destinations
- Lack of transportation options and off-peak transit service
- Perception of access/capacity
- Proximity of parking to land use(s)

Opportunity themes supported:

- Downtown is a unique destination and shopping experience
- Increased residential development – potential to grow the market.
- City’s willingness to test innovative programs.
- Great business environment downtown

GUIDING PRINCIPLE – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

9. ***The City should lead in the development of access options for customers and visitors (patrons) of the downtown and actively partner with the business community to incent additional access and growth.*** The City’s primary role in the use of public resources for parking should be prioritized to meet patron access demand. The City should use its resources to promote alternative modes for commuter access as well as creating incentives, partnerships and programs to attract private investment in parking and desired development.

Challenges addressed:

- Need a plan to prepare for future economic viability and growth
- Lack of available commercial and physical space necessary to accommodate growth
- Need to attract a more diverse mix of businesses downtown
- Lack of a commercial anchor(s)
- Affordable lease space for existing and new businesses
- Required parking ratios
- Lack of a marketing strategy
- Perception that business is flat
- Perception that Kirkland has no capacity to grow
- Lack of transportation options and off-peak transit service

Opportunity themes supported:

- Downtown is a unique destination and shopping experience
- Demonstrable commitment to downtown by the City, business community and citizenry
- Increased residential development – potential to grow the market.
- City’s willingness to test innovative programs.
- Great business environment downtown

3. SUMMARY

As stated earlier, the Guiding Principles will serve as a foundation for near- and long-term decision-making and implementation of parking management and access strategies in the downtown. These strategies are intended to support the on-going economic development and vitality of downtown. The consensus nature of these Principles provides a solid foundation from which to begin implementation of an effective program of strategies for downtown.

It will be important for the City to codify the Guiding Principles for Parking Management as part of the City Code to assure their on-going role in facilitating decision-making for the parking system over time.