

# Executive Summary

## Everett Downtown Parking Management Study

In 2007, the City of Everett commissioned the *Everett Downtown Parking Management Study* to examine the parking situation in the downtown. The study analyzed demand for customer and employee spaces throughout the downtown. At that time, this was most comprehensive exploration of downtown parking conditions conducted to date.

Key questions answered by the *Everett Downtown Parking Management Study*:

- How many parking spaces remain vacant – on street and off-street – during the peak hour?
- Are downtown customers' needs being met?
- How is event parking being accommodated?
- Where do downtown employees park – and where should they park?
- What parking lessons can be learned from other cities?
- What are the options for improving parking in the downtown?

A day-long survey of downtown parking activity was conducted in November, 2007. On-street parking spaces and off-street garages and lots were surveyed hourly from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on a typical weekday to determine precisely how Everett's parking resources were being utilized. Results of the analysis contributed to recommendations for solutions to improve parking in the downtown.

For the 2007 study, the City of Everett retained a consultant team led by Barney & Worth, Inc., and Rick Williams Consulting. This same team was selected in 2015 to update the downtown parking study. The consultant team's assignment is to work with the City and its business community partners once again to compile comprehensive data on parking utilization in the downtown, then update Everett's existing parking management plan. The 2015 update of Everett Downtown Parking Management Study will involve stakeholders and the public in re-shaping the parking system to meet future needs, assure the downtown's continued vitality and enhance community livability, consistent with Everett's Downtown Plan.

## Stakeholder Interviews

As an early step in the 2015 parking study, the consultant team interviewed a cross-section of interested stakeholders: downtown business owners and other employers, property owners, developers, neighborhood leaders, City of Everett staff, parking enforcement personnel and other close observers. Interviews were conducted in-person and by telephone with 33 persons who are involved or have an interest in decisions surrounding the future of parking in downtown Everett. Many of these participants took part in the 2007 downtown parking survey and previous Everett parking studies.

Interviewees were asked to share their perceptions related to the current parking situation in the downtown, along with their vision and suggestions for the future.

This report reflects the advice, feelings and attitudes of the individuals interviewed. It is not intended to provide a scientifically valid profile of community opinion as a whole.

## Highlights

The following highlights summarize the main points offered by key downtown stakeholders and other observers who were interviewed for the 2015 update of the Everett Downtown Parking Management Study.

Key findings from the interviews:

1. **Parking congestion is increasing in downtown Everett, with the core area fully parked at the peak.** The median score given for parking congestion on a scale of 1 (not congested) to 10 (highly congested) is 7 – the same score given in 2007 interviews. The most congested areas include Colby, Hewitt, areas near the Snohomish County Courthouse, and the streets surrounding visitor attractions and events venues. Some factors contributing to the parking crunch include: improved economic conditions and an uptick in business; new developments, visitor attractions and businesses creating parking demand without providing sufficient parking; and hundreds of new housing units in the downtown.
2. **Employees parking on-street is still thought to be the leading problem.** Nearly every participant has a story about a business owner or employee who chronically parks on-street near their business. The standardized 90-minute time limit seems to have made some difference, making it more difficult for employees to move their vehicles to avoid enforcement. But stakeholders suspect significant numbers of spaces across the downtown are still filled with employees.
3. **A contributing factor to parking congestion is inconsistent enforcement.** Some observers say parking enforcement has improved since 2007. Occasional intensive enforcement sweeps have grabbed the attention of some long-stay parkers. The increased fine – now \$20 – may also have driven some employees off-street. But most observers think enforcement is understaffed and ineffective, all but invisible. Business owners say they seldom see enforcement personnel in their area, on average, only about one day per week. Several downtown employees say they park on-street in the enforcement area all day, every day, year-round, and have never been ticketed.
4. **The downtown is busier now and stakeholders raise the question: is the downtown parking supply still adequate?** Factors pinching the parking supply while demand continues to increase include the emergence of popular attractions (Children’s Museum, Performing Arts Center, Schack Art Center), a loss of surface lots to new development, and the housing boom that is underway.
5. **Parking for events has become a growing problem.** There’s no enforcement on evenings and weekends. Event goers take customer spaces and this loss of on-street spaces adversely affects restaurant businesses. For daytime events, the garages are already full with monthly parkers, leaving little room to accommodate event patrons.
6. **Saturday parking is a “new” problem that requires attention.** Without enforcement on Saturdays, on-street spaces in the core area are filled with employees before retail customers arrive, cutting into Saturday trade.

7. **Another problem: stakeholders report there are many public vehicles parked on-street in prime customer spaces.** City and County vehicles are often parked on-street in the spaces closest to City Hall, Courthouse, and downtown fire station. A strong consensus among stakeholders is that public vehicles should be parked off-street in lots or garages.
8. **There's more interest now in switching to paid on-street parking.** Many stakeholders advocate converting the downtown to paid parking using modern pay stations that accept credit cards. Some say they have changed their minds since 2007. Converting to paid parking is the number one strategy suggested for improving the current situation, and two-thirds of the stakeholders interviewed say they could support it. But some questions remain about the best timing for a changeover.
9. **Some downtown stakeholders call for new public garages to be constructed.** Building new garages, above and below ground, is the strategy recommended most often after transitioning to paid parking. The locations nominated most often for new parking facilities are the County Courthouse/City Hall/Xfinity Arena vicinity, sites near downtown Everett's new/active attractions, to serve new housing projects and the Farmers Market. Participants suggest an alternative to City or County-owned garages may be public parking that is incorporated into private development projects, through incentives.
10. **A first step to improve the parking situation is to relook at prior recommendations and implement them, stakeholders advise.** The City and business community have invested time and money in previous studies that should still benefit downtown Everett.

A list of the persons interviewed follows on the next page and discussion questions are attached in an appendix.

## Everett Downtown Parking Update

### Stakeholder Interviews Rev. 7/28/15

Glenda Anderson	Schack Art Center
Sgt. Mike Braley	City of Everett – Police
Holly Burkett-Pohland	Burkett's
Rick Comeau	Xfinity Arena
Timothy Corpus	Studio Donna Spa
Brent Diamond	Trinity Lutheran College
Crystal Donner	Perteet Engineers
C. J. Ebert	Downtown business / property owner, parking operator
Al Garcia	Snohomish County – Administrative Operations
Allan Giffen	City of Everett – Planning
Steven Graham	Downtown Everett Association
Jim Hanson	City of Everett – Planning
Tom Hoban	Coast Properties
Nancy Johnson	Imagine Children's Museum
Capt. Greg Lineberry	City of Everett – Police
Judy Matheson	J. Matheson Gifts / Gourmet Kitchen
Troy McClellan	Economic Alliance of Snohomish County
Lanie McMullin	City of Everett – Economic Development
Glen Peterson	Republic Parking
Renee / Bill Quistorf	Renee's Clothing
Fred Safstrom	Housing Hope
Ben Schurig	Trinity Lutheran College
Dean Shinagawa	Kama'Aina Grindz Restaurant
Reid Shockey	Shockey Planning Group
Pat Sisneros	Everett Community College
Art/Craig Skotdal	Skotdal Realty, property owner and developer
Valerie Steele	Bayside Neighborhood
Sean Straub	Experience Everett
Morrie Trautman	Board of Directors, Mountain Pacific Bank
Andrea Tucker	Port Gardner Neighborhood Association
Shelley Weyer	Northwest Neighborhood Association