

MISSOULA PARKING COMMISSION

Minutes

July 23, 2019

A Board of Directors' meeting was held in the Hal Fraser Conference Room, 140 W Pine Street at noon. Those in attendance were Board members John Roemer, JR Casillas, and Joe Easton. From the Parking Commission office were Tiffany Brander, Interim Parking Services Director, and Jodi Pilgrim, Interim Administrative Services Manager. Also in attendance were Robert Giblin, Downtown Missoula Partnership; John Corwin, Downtown Missoula Partnership; Ellen Buchanan, Missoula Redevelopment Agency; Dale Bickell, Chief Administrative Officer for City of Missoula; Aaron Wilson, Transportation Planning Manager, Development Services; Scott Wittenberg, University Of Montana; Bryan von Lossberg, Ward 1 Council Member; Dave Strohmier, Missoula County Commissioner; Neil Miner, Parks and Recreation; and Laval Means, Long-Range Planning Manager, Development Services. On the phone were Dennis Burns, Kimley Horn, and Robert Piatkowski, Dover, Kohl & Partners.

1. **Call to order** – John Roemer
2. **Introductions**
3. **Public Comments & Announcements** - None
4. **Adjustment(s) to the Agenda** - None
5. **Approval of Minutes**
6. **Communications and Presentations**
 - a. Downtown Master Plan Parking Discussion on Parking & recommendations:
Dover, Kohl & Partners – Robert Piatkowski; Kimley Horn – Dennis Burns

Robert Piatkowski started off by addressing the Downtown Master Plan Parking Chapter revision. The biggest changes were re-looking at parking utilization rate based on an updated count of MPC's parking facilities, reorganizing how the strategies were prioritized to more of a time frame prioritization - short-term, mid-term, long-term, removal of reintroduction of parking requirements, added detailed sections on employee parking strategies, and ways to rethink how the Commission is organized. There is also a table of action items which was adjusted based on changes to the report. Robert asked Dennis to jump in with details of these bigger changes.

Dennis Burns mentioned that one challenge in the redraft was to address the concerns about timing of data collection. Initial counts took place on March 6th. The week was very cold week, and ended up giving lower than expected utilization numbers. To make an adjustment, they asked Tiffany to go out and count spaces in MPC parking facilities. This second count was completed July 10th. The counts in July were only 6.5% higher than in March. In July school was out, which effected numbers in ROAM. The March counts for ROAM gave a more accurate picture. In addition, the counts in Park Place are low. This is due to the large number of spaces leased to Marriott. Those spaces are technically used, which brings utilization in Park Place to 90%. The new counts and

adjustments made brought overall occupancy to 85%. This is a better reflection of utilization.

John Roemer asked for any questions for Dennis.

Dennis explained they left the rest of the data as it was because there was not the budget to recount everything. The data is a pretty good representation of what is going on with MPC managed parking.

Ellen Buchanan asked how the adjustment in numbers influence the parking chapter recommendations.

Dennis stated the numbers didn't really change recommendations dramatically.

Ellen pointed out that in the first draft there was a threshold of 85% utilization and we were at 66%. Now we are at that 85% threshold. Doesn't that influence something?

Dennis stated the assets MPC has now are reaching effective capacity now. MPC can probably get by for now.

Joe Easton wants to know about methodology to get the number used for occupied spaces on the Leased Parking Table and the Executive Summary. We show lease parking controlled by MPC to have 57 available spots. On the Executive Summary table, it shows 33% available, which is 33% of 972. It seems that the leased parking table is a more accurate representation of use of MPC resources, separate from on-street parking, not the table that has a count of used on two snapshot days. If an employer came in today and wanted 100 spots for their 100 employees, we would not have that available, but if we rely on the table it implies that there are 300 spots open. We're trying to figure out how often or how frequent people with lease parking spots are using their leases. The question is what is the goal of the Master Plan, and what are we trying to represent? It seems like there is no parking available to be leased. That table shows we have parking available. So which is the conclusion and what does our community believe that we would like to see in this report?

Dennis believes the biggest concern is the lack of parking as it relates to the need for meeting future employee parking needs going forward. That's why they did a special look at lease parking. The recommendation was to really look at how the lease parking is currently being used and oversell potential. He believes it could be more aggressively oversold. You still have to be careful because you don't want to oversell to the point that no one can find a space, but it is the recommendation to look at oversell potential. It is also recommended to look at shared parking resources that might be privately owned facilities that the Parking Commission could lease or could partner with a private developer.

Joe clarified that it is a policy direction for the Parking Commission to oversell existing spots. He asked if that recommendation is clear in the plan.

Tiffany noted that in Park Place and ROAM, we are not able to lease to anymore businesses. Those are the only waiting lists that we have at this point, so in those garages we can not over lease. We can over lease all our other facilities, but not those two garages. The Park Place bonds aren't callable until 2024. When we no longer have those restrictions, we can oversell starting at at least 15%, but it is a bigger conversation than just the Master Plan meeting.

JR does not believe it is a clear policy recommendation in the document.

Joe was trying to tie the three pieces together and doesn't see that there is a clear recommendation.

Tiffany asked for this recommendation to be added as an action item in the short-term.

Robert Piatkowski will add the short-term action item specifically to look at a policy for overselling the lease spaces.

Dale Bickell had trouble reading the lease parking table. What are the assumptions to be made for the available column? The math doesn't always work straight across to give the number shown.

Tiffany explained that the table is from our in office spreadsheet. In areas where we have already oversold, the percentages don't match on the table. Available spaces is actual number of physical spaces in the lot. And then there is the number that we've leased out or oversold.

Dale asked if the Parking Commission has created a formal oversell policy.

Tiffany said no. We do have certain lots that are oversold and shown on the table. The table is just our in-office lease table, so maybe it is not the best format for this document. It is just what we provided Kimley Horn to let them know what our current leases look like.

Dennis summed up MPC does not have a specific oversell policy. MPC probably could oversell a lot more than what is currently oversold. Having a policy that assumes a certain level of oversell is needed. There would have to be a range based on an understanding of how each lot is used. It would increase the number of leased parking available in the short-term and still leave a need for more leased parking going forward. This will help to get the most out of the existing assets MPC has.

Brian von Lossberg asked the value of having this table this way when it's already out of date. There may be policy direction that the data helps inform. From a public document standpoint, in a Master Plan that is setting a vision of where we want to be, why is this in here?

John Roemer answered the table is illustrative of usage that's going on. It is a dynamic piece – it changes every day or monthly depending on how we modify these things. However, on page 1.15 we could insert some language that states this table illustrates the leased parking inventory on such-and-such a date. It might help clarify what the illustration is.

Brian agrees that adding a clarifying statement is necessary. Brian asked when we talk about overselling, we talk about increasing the number of lease spaces. Does this oversell also include increasing the number of public spaces?

Tiffany clarified the terminology. All parking is public parking. The difference is between lease parking and hourly pay parking. She then explained that, no, this is only related to lease spaces and does not include turning any lease spaces into hourly spaces.

John Roemer mentioned that that is another step we could be looking at.

Brian noted that he often hears complaints from business owners in the area of Park Place. At lunch time you go in and all the hourly spaces are full. There are many empty spaces, but they are leased and not available.

Tiffany explained that Park Place has 44 hourly spaces at the entrances. It was always part of the plan to look at usage and possibly transition some of the lease spaces to hourly spaces if it became necessary. Until the Mercantile was completed, there were no waitlists at Park Place. It has since become clear that we need more hourly spaces there. With requirements for bonding, we have to consider whose leases we cancel to create those spaces. With the current leases being underutilized, we won't need to cancel any. Instead we would look at changing lease spaces to hourly pay spaces prior to looking at over leasing.

Brian would like to see that as an action item.

John Roemer stated that it doesn't seem to be anywhere in the plan.

Tiffany acknowledged that it is not in the plan. It is, however, something we've been discussing and seems like a good short-term item.

Dennis has some concerns about how MPC is allocating spaces in Park Place based on the fact that it was partially funded by exempt bonds. With the IRS use rules, he believes it says MPC can only have 10% of the spaces that are leased out on a long-term basis. Did MPC ever get a bond council to review that?

Ellen Buchanan stated that the bond council created the formula.

Tiffany explained that none of our leases are considered long-term leases.

Ellen stated that, except for the cash that went in, Park Place was paid for almost entirely by tax exempt bonding.

Tiffany explained that the spaces currently leased to Mercantile, since they have the most spaces, have been filtered into our cash financed spaces. This allows us to lease the Park Place business spaces to more than one business.

Dennis stated that if we are comfortable with the bond attorney's ruling, that's fine. It is just different than what he has seen done in other places.

Ellen would like to request a glossary of terms for all the acronyms in the chapter. It's not very user friendly for the public without a glossary.

Robert will put something in toward the beginning or end for the entire Master Plan document, not just the Parking chapter.

Ellen has a comment on 1.17. This came from last discussion where Riverfront Triangle was ignored in terms of parking and impact. Now it has been incorporated. The placement in this document seems like Riverfront Triangle and development of the hotel and conference center is a MPC project, which it is not. It's even listed in program accomplishments.

Dennis will address that placement.

Tiffany noted under summary of program accomplishments – the final bullet point before the Riverfront Triangle refers to updating PARCs and LPR, and above that it talks about Passport parking. Then the final bullet point under other program accomplishments talks about MPC providing Passport. It feels repetitive. Maybe we can strike one or the other.

Dennis agreed.

Ellen would like to discuss on page 1.86 where there is discussion about capacity of Parking Commission to do other projects – it is stated that MPC is tapped out in terms of bonding capacity after building the Park Place garage and the acquisition of one floor of parking in the new ROAM Student Housing project. The Parking Commission did not pay for the parking floor at ROAM. The Parking Commission is only financing 60% of Park Place. Ellen would like to see the analysis of what the bonding capacity is, because the document just states there is none.

Joe agrees. We did not pay for ROAM building. MPC paid for control arms. It is just not accurate to say MPC is tapped out.

Dennis said last time we said we would have MPC bonding capacity looked at.

Ellen asked if we have done that.

Tiffany responded that we have not yet done that.

Dennis will adjust that paragraph on 1.86.

Joe referenced, on the same page, scenario 2 - he does not agree with the thrust of those paragraphs and does not feel this scenario should be discussed at this level. It should be discussed at the City Council level at least. It may be a future parking garage financing strategy, but the argument presented is highly debatable.

Ellen explained that scenario 2 deals with required parking in the CBD (Central Business District). She recalled that at the last meeting it was agreed that parking requirements would be removed from the chapter.

Dennis clarified that this section is a listing of strategies. They did strike out the recommendation for that strategy. It can be removed from strategies as well, but as far as strategies to consider – this is a strategy to consider.

Joe believes adding a parking requirement or minimum by zoning would have a limiting effect on development in Downtown Missoula.

Ellen has a question about scenario 3. Scenario 3 states that MPC has parking garages that now have their debt retired. While Central Park has certainly been paid off, Bank Street may not be, Park Place and ROAM are still encumbered. The ROAM encumbrance is a TIF encumbrance. Can MPC still sell that asset if there are outstanding bonds that are being served not by parking revenue?

Dale stated yes, probably.

Dennis wanted to point out again these are just potential strategies – things to consider if you're looking at financing mechanisms. None of them are recommendations at this point. They're just trying to show the breadth of options that might be available - mapping out a full range of potential financing strategies. If they weren't picked up in the recommendations, they were just information to consider.

Ellen mentioned that these potential strategies were couched in words that made them specific to Missoula.

John noted that they are using the word should instead of the word could.

Scott Wittenberg stated that they could add in caveats to some of the strategies.

Robert Piatkowski mentioned that when it comes to the actual report – the Downtown Master Plan, it's much more specific to what the consultant recommended, what the City agrees with, and what the residents want to see. The parking report has more information. It's important to make the distinction between what's in the downtown report and what's in the parking report.

Tiffany commented on the same page. Under scenario 6, the final bullet point states, “pooled resources will go farther than other agency handouts. This option is legal in some western states. Verify legality in Montana.” Could we just verify legality before putting it in the plan?

Robert said yes.

Tiffany’s second comment was Scenario 4 and Scenario 8 seem like they could be combined. They seem like the same thing – just one of them is an interim solution and one is long-term.

Dennis said they could be merged together - they are similar in vision.

Ellen mentioned in Scenario 5 with regard to temporary parking lots – she does not believe we will be able to create parking lots that are unpaved. We have air quality issues here that will override that every single time. She understands it isn’t a recommendation, but it keeps cropping up and it’s a pretty sensitive topic with our health department.

Neil stated there are a limit of days that a lot can be unpaved - around 50.

John Roemer asked to clarify – if MPC obtained a 2 year temporary lot, would we have to repave that also?

Ellen affirmed.

Brian has been an advocate of looking at a lot near the train crossing on MRL land. Are we closing the door on looking at temporary lots? There should be a way to at least look at them and consider the air quality restrictions.

Dale explained that there are ways.

Dennis was recently at a conference in Anaheim and there is a product - a large piece of material that can be rolled out over a dirt lot. You can stripe over it. It has some air quality benefits and lasts for several years. He can put that concept into the temporary parking paragraph as an option to be considered.

Ellen believes that would work.

Neil mentioned that snow removal is a consideration in our climate.

Dennis asked Ellen if she would rather eliminate the temporary parking piece.

Ellen says that temporary parking lots make some sense. It’s just that the paving is usually a non-starter here.

Dennis noted that the other big change in the chapter is the elimination of parking minimums Downtown. We did leave in a recommendation to at least review parking requirements over all.

Laval Means added that Development Services works on zoning regulations for CBD and other zoning districts. She stated that action 15.6 is a good guidance. Development Services is talking about reviewing their zoning code in the parking chapter to modernize it. They might be working on it sooner than mid-term. Development Services would be leading it with engagement and partnership of MPC.

Robert stated we can move that up in the timeline and add Development Services.

Dennis mentioned another big change was the chapter on Parking Commission organizational structure, which was specifically requested by Mayor Engen. Normally when we're trying to fix parking programs, we try to get vertical integration of all the pieces – management of on-street, off-street, and enforcement at a minimum. In this respect, MPC already has a very organized, established, and successful organizational structure. Moving things city wide, for example having City maintenance manage Parking Commission maintenance, seems like going backwards. He provided a whole range of organizational frameworks, but really highlighted the vertical integration piece as important going forward. He thinks moving away from this model would be problematic.

Dale stated that he doesn't disagree with Dennis relative to day-to-day operations of MPC. Vertical integration in the organization is established. The issue we were looking at was integration of parking into the decision making in the City. Right now, Parking, while it's a partner, it is not part of the core decision making relative to planning and transportation overall. Parking needs to be a core partner relative to development. We need to talk about TDM strategies holistically, and Parking needs to be a part of that.

Joe asked if section 15.4 as written addresses those goals.

Dale thinks that's right. He does not believe there are a lot of efficiencies gained by spreading all the stuff around.

Joe recommends that in the lead column of action 15.4 be changed to mayor's office or CAO. He's ready to discuss those types of changes and focus of the Commission as well as the role of the director and various leadership teams. He doesn't think we as a commission have capacity or ability to review all those factors in the context of what the City does.

Ellen referenced, on Strategy 19 – implementing paid on-street parking in new areas, there's a statement that says before implementing paid parking within a parking management district, the area must already have time limit restrictions in place with enforcement. It may have even said there needed to be 2 years before going to a paid

situation. She asked Dennis to elaborate a little because it doesn't seem very practical from a financial standpoint.

Dennis explained that the goal is to put metrics in place for starting new managed districts. There needs to be a minimum size and a minimum parking demand and a minimum parking enforcement in place, in theory, before you start implementing a meter district. The strategy was trying to provide some guidance and thresholds to have in place.

Ellen thinks some of the real pressure that is going to come on to the Parking Commission is what do you do about the hip strip. The other one is once Riverfront Triangle develops or if there are more additions at the hospital. What do you do with that area West of Broadway and North of the river?

Dennis stated that this is not a recommendation to expand the jurisdiction into those areas. That would be a first step.

Ellen inquired, from a practical standpoint, how do you do time limited parking enforcement for 2 years without revenue streams outside of fines? Does that math work?

Dennis calls this a softer approach so we could be invited in. We can start to develop a partnership and working relationship before just dropping meters in.

Ellen understands that part, but how financially does it work to enforce without revenue.

Dennis said there would be an enforcement revenue stream.

Ellen asked if that is commonly how parking expands into new metered parking areas.

Dennis stated that the process mapped out is what they see as a good way to move forward for adding new meter areas. Usually it is neighborhood specific.

Ellen requested that Dennis go through and look at how the strategies have been organized sequentially. It may be out of order.

Dennis will look at that.

Dale had an aside regarding the Hip Strip. In meetings he's had with that group, the business owners seem eager for management.

Dennis wanted to address the other big new section on employee parking programs. It came from a combination of research he has done on employee parking and then TDM (Transportation Demand Management) Strategies. Although it talks specifically about employee parking options here, there is also a section of specific recommendations based on other programs around the country for management of employee parking through TDM strategies. The employee parking piece is a critical piece going for. We could

shrink down this chapter significantly and put it as another appendices, but it was important for everyone to see all the information at least once.

Tiffany mentioned in reading employee parking strategies it seems geared toward individual employers instead of toward MPC. Are there specific recommended strategies that MPC should take to relieve current employee parking issues.

Dennis stated that the goal was to present a collection of strategies for MPC to review and decide if they make sense, or are applicable for Missoula. There are a whole range of options others are trying. He was hoping we would review them all as a menu of options.

Tiffany would like to go through those options with Dennis. Dennis will do that. Tiffany also pointed out that on that strategy, we have it listed as Strategy 13 and not Strategy 3.

Robert noted this discrepancy.

Tiffany's final comment for the moment is instead of having priority rating, could we make them strategy ratings to lessen confusion?

Dennis asked how about time-frame?

Tiffany agreed.

John asked if we should move pieces to appendix.

Ellen suggested a disclaimer for suggested strategies. A lot of the strategies questioned – Dennis mentioned they are just things to look at and not recommendations, but the whole thing is under the category “recommended strategies”, which is confusing.

John suggested we change it from recommended strategies to suggested strategies.

Tiffany noted that on page 1.9, short-term, mid-term and long-term priorities could be short-term, mid-term and long-term strategies.

Dennis agreed with that

Aaron Wilson noted we already have resources for a lot of the employee parking/TDM strategies and have been trying to engage with employers. With the resources we have, how do we transition from waiting for employers to be interested to getting employers to adopt the strategies? We're already doing most of the employee strategies, we just don't have the buy in from employers. How do we get the door open to make the strategies happen?

Dennis has strategies from other communities he's worked in, and will add a piece on that.

Dennis wanted to address staffing level. It is currently so lean that if anything goes wrong, Tiffany has to stop directing and start managing front desk. He would like to research some peer cities and give us information or recommendations about where staffing levels could be.

Ellen noted that if we review staffing, we'll also have to review rates and revenue streams. She believes what would be found is that MPC is understaffed because we're not charging enough for parking.

Aaron believes it's something that isn't addressed enough – with the rates we're charging, we're heavily subsidizing parking Downtown. It has cascading impacts on the entire transportation system. How much are people willing to pay to park before they look for other options?

John mentioned that this is a retail community and their willingness to take that risk is limited.

Joe doesn't think it needs to be a Master Plan item. If the Director came to the Board to request more staff, the Board would review the suggestion favorably.

Tiffany explained that Dennis sees the issue because we are currently in an interim period. When the interim period is done, we will have our second Admin II position filled, and we have requested an additional Admin I position to be added to our FY20 budget. Some peer city information that would be helpful is information about enforcement officers to spaces/areas. We could probably just do that outside of this plan.

JR views this as a sort of on-going internal challenges.

Dennis stated that we may need more enforcement staff, especially if we are going to expand the hours.

John asked if anyone else has anything to add. Nothing in the room.

Robert Piatkowski added that they are still taking comments. If you have more time to review, please send comments to Linda McCarthy or John Corwin to forward on to Dover Kohl.

7. Adjournment – John Roemer

Next Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 7, 2019 (Jack Reidy Conference Room).

Respectfully submitted,

Jodi Pilgrim
Interim Administrative Services Manager