

MISSOULA PARKING COMMISSION
Minutes
September 18, 2019

A Special Board Meeting of the Missoula Parking Commission was held on **Wednesday, September 18, 2019** at the **Jack Reidy Conference Room, 140 W. Pine**, Missoula, MT 59802 at **12:00 p.m.** Those in attendance were Board members John Roemer, Joe Easton, Pat Corrick, and JR Casillas. Representatives from Dover, Kohl, and Partners (DK&P) were Jason King and Robert Piatkowski. Also in attendance were Tasha Jones, Ruth Reineking, Nancy Moe, and Ellen Buchanan from Missoula Redevelopment Agency, Linda McCarthy from Downtown Missoula Partnership, and Mark Bellon from Territorial Landworks. From the Missoula Parking Commission (MPC) were Tiffany Brander, Interim Director and Zoe Walters, Administrative Assistant II.

1. Welcome and Introductions:

Linda McCarthy began by explaining that it is adoption week for the Downtown Master Plan after the yearlong community visioning process. The plan has been funded 50% by private sectors and 50% by public sectors. On September 17, 2019 the Missoula Downtown Association, Downtown Business Improvement District, and Missoula Downtown Foundation unanimously adopted the plan. The Downtown Missoula Partnership (DMP) has presented the plan to the Planning Board, City Council, and County Commissions.

2. Call to order – John Roemer

Tiffany Brander explained to the Board that the agenda posted did not include an action item for voting. The Board is unable to vote on adopting the plan today because 48 hours' notice was not given. The voting action item will be on the October 10, 2019 agenda.

3. Presentation: Jason King, Dover, Kohl & Partners

Jason King presented an update on the revisions to the Downtown Master Plan. Jason explained that DK&P is part of a multi-disciplinary planning effort involving local firms. The Steering Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, and donors are local Missoulians who have invested ideas for the plan. DK&P has been completing deep dives for each chapter since the draft was presented in May 2019. He specified that action items, goals, policies, and strategies have been revised to better coordinate with what each different agency was looking to achieve in the plan. The five big ideas of the plan remain the same: 1. Downtown Needs to be More Than One "Postcard" Street; 2. Improve Mobility, Health & Safety; 3. Stay Original. Stay Authentic. Be Green. And Create Opportunity; 4. Better Utilize the River & Enhance Parks; 5. Downtown for Everyone. Of the 800 comments received and after multiple discussions, there are six top revisions to the plan. The revisions include plan usability, economic development, parking and transportation, and more. The plan is more sustainable and thinks more long-term. The plan has not been adopted yet, but the City of Missoula is already using the plan.

The initial parking utilization study showed that only 64% of parking was utilized. When the study was revised, parking utilization increased to 84%.

4. Q&A

Ellen Buchanan asked Jason to elaborate on inclusiveness for everyone downtown. Jason answered that Missoula's Downtown Master Plan contains a Downtown for Everyone chapter. The chapter is

about inclusivity for everyone, retaining valued businesses and residences, creating affordable housing and childcare facilities. Jason believes the plan follows through with goals to accomplish greater equity, diversity, and inclusivity in Missoula. Linda noted the plan is not solely focused on bikers and pedestrians. The plan includes a focus on parking for people driving into Downtown. Jason responded that the plan recognizes that in the Downtown area people are able to easily bike and walk, but outside of the area driving is more utilized.

Ruth Reineking asked Jason for more detail about the parking section of the plan. Jason answered that there are short-term, mid-term, long-term approaches to increase the amount of parking and parking utilization. Some of the parking strategies include improving employee parking, oversell of lease parking, and potential parking garage locations.

Joe Easton thanked Jason for being responsive to the MPC's concerns and priorities. Joe hoped that the plan, as presented, would further justify the expansion of MPC's jurisdiction south of the river and funding strategies for parking garages. Joe asked Jason if he feels that the stakeholders south of the river are well informed and receive the information from DK&P about MPC's intention to expand the district south of the river well. The chapter states it is recommended that MPC increase their jurisdictional boundaries. Joe is concerned that the parking study does not justify the recommendation. He hoped it would demonstrate a certain number of parking spots indicating public, private, and employee usage. Joe noted this is something that can be studied by MPC in the future, however he hoped this was something the plan could address in order to more clearly show MPC's intentions. Jason answered that the larger version of the plan talks in detail about parking south of the river and gives parking utilization numbers, residential concerns, and surveys of employees parking south and walking north. Jason feels the appendix has plenty of evidence and strength to justify this recommendation. Joe agrees and wants to make sure that justification is provided by DK&P. Jason feels that the compelling argument to expand jurisdiction south of the river is stated in the plan. Joe asked Jason if, in his experience in Missoula and other cities, the engagement in the Hip Strip neighborhood is representative of the stakeholders that need to be engaged with MPC's intentions. Jason feels that the Hip Strip community received a significant amount of focus. Dennis Burns, DK&P's Parking Consultant, talked with residents of the area. Jason stated he would be surprised if business owners and residents did not know expanding jurisdiction south of the river was MPC's intention.

Linda asked Jason what his impression was of the wants and needs around parking in the Hip Strip community. Jason answered the main concern was to increase the parking capacity. Linda agreed that there was a division of support for parking meters in the district. The community is interested in the idea of parking management, but not meters. Linda mentioned that it seems the Hip Strip community members that have been there for a longer time are not as interested in parking management, while the newer ones are.

Ellen believes parking management is the only way to solve the problem of Downtown employees parking south of the river and walking north. Ellen questioned now that locations for a new parking structure are being identified, why someone would pay to park in a garage when they can park on the street for free. Jason responded that every city goes through this discussion and initially does not want to put parking meters in, but will see the capacity created by turnover. Ellen noted that neighborhoods east and west of the Hip Strip are well organized and will not tolerate the push of commercial parking into their neighborhoods.

Ruth stated the Downtown Master Plan does make a justified and outlined recommendation for managed parking and its benefits south of the river. Jason confirmed this.

Joe asked for a review and specific recommendations about funding strategies for a new parking garage. In the previous meeting, there was conversation about engaging an external consultant or bond council about the existing capacity of MPC revenues and alternative strategies.

Joe asked Jason if he feels that the funding strategies DK&P recommends in the plan apply to Missoula. Joe asked if there are funding strategies that are not included in the plan or if there are strategies in the plan that may work better for MPC. Jason responded that the plan discusses funding issues and notes that further study is needed. Jason stated DK&P is not an expert on how a Commission or a parking garage is funded. Joe asked if MPC should ask the question again of Kimley Horn, recalling that a year ago a funding strategy and recommendation of a funding strategy were some of the deliverables that MPC wanted to see come out of the Downtown Master Plan or Kimley Horn's work. Ellen mentioned that previously there was discussion to include the City's financial advisors in meetings to provide an analysis. Joe responded that City Finance would attend the October board meeting. Tiffany clarified that is in relation to bonding. MPC is working with external advisors for bonding capacity. Ellen stated the plan discusses selling assets with retired bonds. This is relative to funding a parking structure south of the river, where there is not tax increment financing. Robert Piatkowski confirmed this strategy is still included. Robert explained the strategies consider increasing parking rates, extending hours, and a long-term strategy to consider expanding jurisdiction citywide. The short-term strategy considers the greater Downtown area.

Linda explained that this plan does include different funding strategies for consideration. Parking requirements were removed from the plan after receiving feedback from MPC and others. Linda stated ultimately, it is up to various Missoula agencies to decide how to fund the next parking garage based on needs and goals. Joe reiterated that his expectation a year ago was that the plan would provide a specific recommendation for what funding strategy applies best or would be most successful for MPC. Jason responded that DK&P focused on the consensus issues. DK&P attempted to provide specific funding, but it was too controversial and divisive. Joe clarified his questions and concerns are not about DK&P's contribution, but more about expectation versus reality.

John Roemer commented that parking in-lieu fees are still included in the document even though parking requirements have been eliminated. Robert clarified the parking requirements are specific to the Hip Strip. Linda added that there are no parking requirements in the Central Business District (CBD), but the Master Plan study area is larger than the CBD.

Jason asked Tiffany Brander for a plan assessment. Tiffany feels good about the plan. She acknowledged that significant improvements have been made to make the plan more practical and flexible. She feels the transportation piece has a greater impact on different mobility strategies and parking garages.

The larger revisions to the parking chapter were eliminating parking requirements, no changes the Missoula Senior Center parking, expanding bike parking, addressing employee parking needs, parking count utilization rates, better support to the Mountain Line strategic plan, updates to ADA standards, and organized strategies based on a time lime.

Ruth asked for more information about economic development revisions. Jason answered that Destination Missoula will be creating a separate plan. Ellen clarified that Destination Missoula did support the plan and their plan will be compatible with the Downtown Master Plan. Linda commented that the plan discusses the economic strategies of entrepreneurship, maker space, and technology growth.

Ellen asked Jason if senior housing and parking on Higgins is still included in this version of the plan. Jason responded that this was a rendering of the plan and there has been negative feedback. Linda answered there has been some support from seniors and the Missoula Senior Center (MSC). Mike Sweet, MSC Administrator, has been involved with the plan since the beginning. Mike informed Linda that housing around the MSC caused concern.

Joe thinks the parking count was the most drastic and justifiable change. 85% of parking being utilized is the threshold of which MPC can define parking as full.

Linda asked MPC Board for any concerns that would prevent them from adopting the plan next month. There were no responses.

5. Closing Comments

6. Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Zoe Walters
Administrative Assistant II