

Advisory Board Summary of Comments

Economic Sustainability Commission

The ESC discussed concerns of the parking study being conducted at a time when the COVID Pandemic was impacting customers visiting local businesses as well as how much downtown employees were considered during the study. There were also discussions about the lack of enforcement around satellite parking agreements that new businesses enter when they open in Downtown. Additionally, they recommended an implementation period which the Commission centered on a 5-year period.

Motion by Mr. Porto, seconded by Chair Jessee to **recommend the ESC serve as the Parking Committee (as recommended by the Study) to provide specific technical recommendations to the Council for the next 5 years in conjunction with other advisory boards.** This is the recommendation of the ESC because of their coordination with the Carrboro Business Alliance and Tourism Development Authority on parking issues. All members in-favor of the motion.

Transportation Advisory Board

Overall, TAB members are generally supportive of the Parking Study recommendations and are eager to see this topic advance beyond studying and into implementation. Below is a list of specific comments and recommendations:

1. Parking considerations should include the broader relationship of various transportation system elements to provide a better context – for example, transit seemed to be conspicuously absent as did possible Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs, and opportunities for park-n-ride lots.
2. Since most (81%) of the parking inventory is on private property, additional detail is needed on the extent employers are allowing/encouraging employees to park in their lots, and the study should look more closely at the possibility for public/private partnerships.
3. More details about a paid parking fee structure are needed, including a description of the possible pros and cons of various scenarios.

Climate Action Taskforce

Motion by Paulsen, seconded by Zhou to accept the CAT's comments below and forward them to the Town Council.

- We support all of the recommendations in the study
- Paid parking should be implemented, not just considered
- We support several of CBA's inputs
 - Would like to highlight their recommendation of consolidating parking and having a vision
 - Disagree that the fact that the counts were performed during the COVID-19 pandemic means that the Town does not have enough parking
- We have the pavement, let's use it
 - Helping people find it should be a top priority
 - Charging for parking should also be a priority
- Purely from a climate point of view, the Town should be doing things that enhance a need for public transportation, not making it easier for people to drive cars

- Enforcement – would prefer to have an employee on a bike or electric vehicle to reduce emissions
- Incentivize van pools with specific parking spaces
 - Employees who work in Carrboro and those who want to park and ride to places of employment throughout the Triangle
- Try out all of the recommendations
 - Pilot the ideas in several areas in order to determine what will be successful
- Would not recommend prioritizing the shared parking agreements as it might take a longer time to figure out
 - Would not want this to hold up any of the other recommendations
- All of the money from parking should not go back into parking
 - Some should be set aside for supporting alternative forms of transportation, such as biking and greenways
 - Would not want this to hold up implementation of parking agreements, however, the Town should be supporting public transportation and walking and biking over driving in cars
- We recognize that charging for parking might lead to people parking in private lots, such as the Carr Mill Mall parking lot
 - Consider a hybrid program, such as a sticker for residents (including the Northern Transition Area) that allows for 2 hours of free parking, in order to incorporate equity for those who have the need to drive into Town
 - Look into using technology for implementation, such as a parking app and QR codes to identify those who are residents and those who are visiting
 - However, consider that not everyone has equal access to technology
- We recommend moving forward with the recommendations even if some of the wayfinding signs that are currently in progress may need to be updated in the future

Racial Equity Commission

The commission members offered the following feedback –

- Discourage paid parking for residents.
- Provide parking decals for residents. Paying property taxes should count for something.
- More bicycle infrastructure.
- Is there federal funding available to provide alternatives to vehicle parking?
- The community (residents) should not suffer to accommodate visitors in downtown. More scrutiny should be placed on visitors.
- Restrictions on temporary residents. (students)
- Offer parking for older community members.
- Research public/private partnerships. Long/short term agreements.
- Has the town completed a check list of what matters?
- Create a paid parking system. (consider above recommendations) The revenue from parking should be used to address racial disparities.

Carrboro Business Alliance

This is input for your consideration from Carrboro Business Alliance (CBA), which is an association of more than 100 local enterprises collaborating to help Carrboro thrive.

The CBA has reviewed the parking study and has the following feedback, which they would like for you to consider and hope you will include it in your feedback to council.

- 1) **This study gives a false picture of health for parking in Carrboro.** All the figures used in this study were collected during a count performed in September 2021 – a Covid hardship period for local businesses when customer counts were still down. For example, Weaver Street Market pulled year-over-year customer counts for that month and found September 2021 was **down 40%** from that same time period pre-Covid. This means that the findings and recommendations in the study are likely **underestimating** the severity of needs and full breadth of solutions necessary. Many of the green zones would be yellow and yellow zones would be flashing red.

- 2) **This study lacks vision.** The list of recommendations are useful, but are piecemeal tactics that work around the edges and do not add up to a comprehensive long-term parking plan that fosters a more vibrant downtown. With the very likely loss of ability for the town to lease 300 E Main parking deck and the area behind Cat's Cradle, there will be insufficient centrally-located parking to meet the current and growing needs of the downtown zones. The study does not put forward a vision and recommendations for that reality (i.e., consolidated parking instead of all the onsie-twosie surface lots which are not the highest and best use for precious space in our downtown).

- 3) **As far as the recommended tactics, the CBA encourages your support of the following (with the caveat that these tactics should be part of a long-term comprehensive parking that includes additional centrally-located structured parking decks in zones to meet the current and growing demand).**
 - a. **Annual counts:** It is important to perform the count annually to give a more accurate and regular picture of the parking demands.
 - b. **Wayfinding:** This is a tactic that should have implemented years ago. Please recommend to council and staff that they prioritize this, including consistent visible signage with moon/sun images like Chapel Hill to signal night/day parking availability, and robust digital options for visitor-ease.
 - c. **Payment and Enforcement:** The study found an alarming percentage of parkers who were UNC students, staff, and/or faculty who took spots all-day without payment. Like water, those seeking free parking will flow to the nearest and most convenient space. As Chapel Hill charges for parking, the next best (free) spaces are in Carrboro. Thus, the problem. (And remember, UNC provides several park and ride options and our community offers free bus service, so there are alternatives). Until Carrboro begins charging and enforcing, we will continue to have a free-loader challenge.
 - d. **Incentivizing private parking engagement:** The Town of Carrboro does not have a healthy portfolio of publicly owned parking. The public/private split of parking should be closer to 50/50. There is a "high cost to free parking" as the average cost of a parking spot is roughly \$25,000/year. This cost is increased for those who put their private spots into the public domain (think additional costs for lot management, security, signage,

enforcement, insurance, etc). As such, to incentive private parking owners to put their spaces/lots into the public domain, a downtown-wide pay for parking system is a baseline must. The gentle market force that follows will help foster a natural evolution in the public-private split and amount of available parking in downtown.

- e. **Payment in Lieu:** It's easy to think that future development will help solve the parking problem, but the reality is the land and development size and costs in Carrboro are so high that the deals don't pencil with sufficient parking and developers often cannot secure the financing without sufficient parking. Similar to Chapel Hill, getting the Town of Carrboro to offer developers a payment in lieu option that funds the expanded supply of parking and more centrally-located parking is a win-win-win (for the town, the developer, and for the visitor, who's purchases fuel our local economy).