

DOWNTOWN BELLINGHAM PARKING MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Prepared for:

City of Bellingham Public Works

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Executive Summary

Purpose of the Report

As a result of reorganization and realignment of city services, the management of public parking now falls under the direction of Public Works. A review of existing parking management practices and policies indicates that more effective and efficient strategies for public parking in Downtown Bellingham are needed. This report summarizes recommended strategies for implementation to improve and enhance overall parking management in Downtown Bellingham.

This report is intended to be used as a guide in initiating modifications to current parking management practices in order to help achieve the goals for Downtown Bellingham described in “Visions for Bellingham” (adopted by the City Council in December of 1992) and the City Center Master Plan (adopted by City Council in August of 2002).

Implementation of the recommendations in this document will be done in phases. Some recommendations can be adopted in the near future. Others will require further development by the Parking Commission and approval by City Council.

Goals

Recommendations in this report support the following goals for downtown:

- Provide parking to support downtown businesses
- Reduce the number of drive alone commute vehicle trips in downtown
- Improve financial operations related to parking

Recommendations

The following recommended strategies and policies address four key parking elements: short-term metered/on street parking; long-term permitted/structured parking; enforcement/ticket administration, and; programmatic modifications.

Short-Term Metered/On-Street Parking:

- Raise Parking Rates to \$0.50 per hour with scheduled periodic increases
- Begin meter enforcement two hours earlier at 8:00 AM
- Increase the fine for overtime meter violations from \$5, with a \$2 discount for early pay, to \$10 with a \$5 discount for early pay

- Increase the fine for meter feeding from \$10 to \$20 with no early pay discount
- “Ramp” the fine amounts so the more tickets a motorist receives in a year, the more each ticket will cost
- Immobilize scofflaw (chronic offenders) vehicles with wheel boots
- Accept only US currency
- Replace metered parking in some areas with pay stations that accept debit/credit cards for payment of parking fees, tickets and fines

Long-Term Permitted/Structured Parking:

- Adjust permit rates to eliminate arbitrary fluctuations (currently from \$0.95 to \$3.57 per day)
- Raise daily and monthly rates yet set a pricing structure so as to be more attractive than metered street parking
- Add pay station for hourly parkers in the Parkade
- Install access control in the Parkade
- Install comprehensive permit issue and revenue control system to reduce required staffing, provide increased customer convenience, and improve audit accountability
- Accept payment via internet using debit/credit cards

Enforcement/Ticket Administration:

- Develop a program to consolidate within one department parking management responsibilities that are currently split between Parking Services, Bellingham Police, and Municipal Court.
- Raise parking fines as outlined above
- Enforce meter feeding
- Increase collection efforts on unpaid fines

- “Boot”¹ chronic violators and assess a \$100 administrative fee for installation/removal of wheel boots
- Accept payment of fines at Pay Stations and via internet with debit/credit cards

Programmatic Modifications:

- Ensure that the revenue generated by parking-related fees and fines is dedicated to the efficient operation and expansion of the parking system
- Evaluate the boundaries of the current parking management zone and adjust as needed to ensure the impacts of downtown development are mediated by management of parking assets
- Develop strategy to evaluate parking demand and plan for future expansion

Table 1 provides the initial investments required to procure payment systems and Parkade access controls.

Table 2 summarizes recommended policy changes to the parking system that will support the goals defined earlier. Most of the policy changes require consideration of the Parking Commission and action by City Council. The policies should not be considered in isolation, but as a comprehensive approach to better management of the downtown parking supply as the overall benefits outweigh any potential negative impacts to certain stakeholders.

¹ Vehicle “booting” is the practice of installing a device on a vehicle which essentially locks it in place so that the driver cannot move it without contacting the appropriate authority.

Table 1. Initial Investments

Item	Application	Benefits	Approximate Cost
Parkade Pay Station and Access Control	<p>Hourly parkers in Parkade use pay station</p> <p>Ingress/Egress Control for Hourly and Monthly</p> <p>Monthly parkers must be current for entrance, hourly parkers must have paid for elapsed time for exit</p>	<p>Eliminate manned cash window</p> <p>Aid enforcement</p> <p>More payment options for customers</p> <p>Requires payment for garage utilization: can't "slip through"</p> <p>Can collect payment after office hours and eventually expand hours of use</p>	<p>\$100,000 (simultaneously reduces cashier and auditing staffing requirements)</p>
Pay and Display Stations for Depot Market area and other test areas downtown	<p>Hourly parking</p>	<p>More payment options for customers</p>	<p>\$15,000-\$30,000</p>
Parking Management Accounting Package	<p>All permits, pay stations, and ticket/fine tracking and collections</p>	<p>Eliminate labor intensive, inaccurate and inefficient paper system</p> <p>Reduce opportunities for cash mishandling</p> <p>Meet City Auditing Requirements</p> <p>Expandable to include enforcement tracking and ticket administration</p>	<p>\$18,000 - \$25,000 Internal or web-based services</p>

Table 2. Policy Modifications

ITEM	RECOMMENDATION	BENEFIT
<p>Modify Rate Structure</p>	<p>Increase street meter parking fees, modify Parkade hourly and permit rates to match. Recommended rates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meters and Garage hourly: \$0.50 per hour w/ scheduled periodic increases. ▪ Begin enforcement at 8:00 a.m. ▪ Garage daily max: \$4.00 ▪ Accept only U.S. currency ▪ Monthly rate to \$60.00 covered, \$50.00 uncovered 	<p>Discourages employees parking in short term, metered spaces,</p> <p>Increases parking availability for business patrons.</p> <p>Generates estimated \$352,000 in additional revenue.</p> <p>Encourages use of alternate commute modes</p>
<p>Modify Fine Structure</p>	<p>Increase ticket amounts, fines and late payment fees. Recommended fine structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expired Meter: \$10, 50% discount paid within 48 hours. ▪ Meter feeding: \$20 first offense, \$25 second, \$30 third, etc. ▪ *Charge \$100 booting fee when vehicle is booted for unpaid fees or outstanding tickets 	<p>Provides deterrent to chronic violators</p> <p>Generates estimated \$259,000 of cover costs of revenue to additional enforcement collection efforts</p> <p>Increased collections could add \$110,200 per year in addition to the \$1.4 million currently outstanding</p>
<p>Strengthen Enforcement Efforts</p>	<p>Increase collection efforts on past due fines.</p> <p>Boot vehicles for non-compliance as needed.</p>	<p>Better management of spaces assets deters abuse</p> <p>Adds bite to enforcement of non-compliance</p> <p>Produces additional income as more ticket holders are motivated to pay</p>
<p>Increase Enforcement Efforts on Meter Feeding</p>	<p>Add enforcement staff and/or spot enforce.</p> <p>Give enforcement officers access to current scofflaw information via handheld units.</p> <p>Enforce existing codes on "Rowdy Buckaroo"</p>	<p>Increases parking availability for customers of downtown businesses.</p> <p>Encourages employees to purchase permits or consider alternative commute modes</p> <p>Reduces the amount of Canadian coins in meter and associated revenue loss - \$12,788 in 2003</p>

Table 2 Policy Modifications (continued)

ITEM	RECOMMENDATION	BENEFIT
Pursue collection on unpaid fines	Boot chronic violators and utilize collection services as necessary	Increases fine collection to help pay for parking maintenance and management Increases compliance
Accept only U.S. currency	Phase out meters that accept Canadian coin. Begin in areas where the highest amount of Canadian coin is collected.	Recover \$12,788 in revenue currently lost to exchange rate and bank fees for sorting Reduces labor involved in handling and accounting reporting
Develop a plan to consolidate parking management responsibility currently split between Parking Services, Bellingham Police and Municipal Court into one department	Acquire parking management software with capacity to coordinate ticket issue with collection All funds generated by parking meters and pay stations, tickets, and fines generated within district dedicated to parking management, operations, and expansion of parking supply	Integrates responsibility and focus under one division Eliminates duplicated efforts Allows comprehensive parking management Flexibility responds to zone-specific problems and chronic scofflaws Collected fines pay for costs of parking program operation and towards future parking expansion Creates and reserves resources to increase parking supply as downtown develops
Monitor land use and parking utilizations and modify parking requirements for development in downtown as needed	Where parking needs cannot be met by developers, consider fee-in-lieu contribution to develop centralized parking	Addresses needs of existing and future businesses Creates centralized parking, minimizing the need for surface lots

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Introduction

In December of 1992, Bellingham's City Council adopted Resolution No. 67-92 which adopted "Vision for Bellingham" as a framework for the update to the Bellingham Comprehensive Plan. The "Visions" document was the result of several sessions conducted in the spring and summer of 1992 in which local citizens met to identify their collective desires for the future of Bellingham for a 20 year period. The "Visions" document included the following desires related to the parking recommendations contained in this report include:

- A vital downtown area
- Emphasis of infill and compact downtown development
- Retain downtown's role as the community's center
- Integrate parking and alternative transportation systems to respond to the complex mix of downtown businesses
- Support diverse specialty retail in downtown
- Improve air quality, decrease parking demand and reduce reliance on the use of the automobile

Public parking is one of a downtown's most important assets. The level of supply and pricing structure can impact the success of downtown businesses, influence potential developers' and new businesses' decisions to locate in downtown, impact the level of commuter vehicle traffic and provide a revenue source to support development of future parking supply.

The Downtown Parking Commission, which consists of five members appointed by the Mayor, is directed by ordinance to establish and maintain on- and off-street parking facilities for public use on a self-supporting basis. The Commission makes recommendations to City Council on downtown parking related matters.

Based on these issues, the following goals were identified as important in developing the parking recommendations in this study:

- Provide parking to support downtown businesses
- Reduce the number of drive alone commute vehicle trips in downtown
- Improve financial operations related to parking

Numerous parking studies on Bellingham's downtown parking have been conducted in the past. Most have focused on determining the need for additional parking supply. Some make recommendations for modifications to the management of the existing parking spaces. As with any town, opinions vary related to the pricing and regulation of parking spaces. However, the City faces a potential shortfall of about \$3 million in 2005. In order to realize the goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, changes must be made to parking management. The information contained

in this report is intended to guide Parking Services, the Parking Commission and the City Council in determining what changes should be made.

This report relies on much of the inventory and utilization findings of those prior studies. The efforts of this report focus on the management of the parking supply and provide recommendations to help achieve the goals listed above.

Current Conditions

Current Downtown Parking Supply and Utilization

Parking in the downtown core is provided by a mixture of on- and off-street public parking, and private off-street parking lots. The two most recent parking studies conducted for the City (Rich and Associates, 1997, and Walker Parking Consultants, 2000) focused on a study area in the core downtown and is illustrated in **Figure 1**. The parking study focused on five square blocks in the CBD. Though there were slight differences in the studies related to the inventories, **Table 1**, taken from the Rich study, provided detail on the types of parking that was available within that core study area.

Table 3. Parking Supply¹

PARKING	SPACES
ON-STREET	
TIME LIMITED, FREE (15 MINUTES TO 2 HOURS)	122
TIME LIMITED, METERED (30 MINUTES TO 6 HOURS)	815
SPECIAL (DISABLED, TAXI, MOTORCYCLE, POLICE, RESERVED)	41
LOADING ZONE	73
UNLIMITED, FREE	26
<i>SUBTOTAL ON-STREET</i>	1,077
OFF-STREET PUBLICLY OWNED	
OFF-STREET SHORT-TERM	99
PERMIT PARKING	696
DISABLED	14
<i>SUBTOTAL OFF-STREET PUBLICLY OWNED</i>	809
OFF-STREET PRIVATELY OWNED	
OPEN TO PUBLIC	951
PERMIT/RESERVED	917
DISABLED	19
<i>SUBTOTAL OFF-STREET PRIVATELY OWNED</i>	1,887
TOTAL PARKING SUPPLY	3,773

1. 1. Rich and Associates, 1997

The majority of the on-street parking is time restricted, with very few unlimited spaces. Of those with time limitations, the majority are metered, with time limitations ranging from one-half to six hours, with more than 75 percent with two hours or less for parking. These 1,000+ time-limited spaces are intended to serve the patrons of the commercial businesses in town. Currently, many meters accept both U.S. and Canadian currency. Within the same study area, there are almost 2,700 off-street parking spaces, including another approximately 100 short-term parking spaces within City-owned parking structures. Another approximately 1,000 parking spaces are open to the public, either in small lots that directly serve customers of businesses on the same premises, or in small privately operated parking lots that charge a small hourly or daily fee.

Of the approximately 3,800 total spaces, 1,600 off-street parking spaces are available by permit only and primarily serve employees and business owners in the downtown core. These include parking located in two City garages, two surface lots and some permitted parking areas in downtown right-of-ways, known as “Island Parking.”

Parking Utilization

The Rich study found that on-street parking was highly utilized on weekdays (more than 90 percent at peak) while the off-street parking was utilized at just more than 60 percent at peak. The Walker study observed similar results.

Transpo collected parking utilization and duration measurements for ten block segments of downtown on-street parking from 8:00 am to 5:00 PM on Wednesday, June 2, 2004. The data is provided in Appendix A. There were just under 500 parking spaces included within this study area. Of those, Cornwall Street was the most heavily utilized, with maximum utilization of the NE block at approximately 98% which occurred between 4:00 and 5:00 PM. For the study area, between 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM, the total vehicles counted, with one count each of those six hours, was 1,820. Another total of approximately 440 vehicles were counted with one count at 8:00 AM and 9:00 AM, or an additional 20% in the two hours before metered parking takes effect over the following six hour total while metering is in effect.

Many factors contribute to the disproportionate use of parking assets: the hours of meter operation, a high incidence of meter-feeding (staying parked at a meter in excess of the allotted time), imbalance in parking fee structures (on-street parking is currently the least expensive option), a small parking enforcement force, low fines for parking violations, and a fine collection process that is exclusively administrative.

Current Parking Rates and Processing

Parkade

There are many different fee classifications. In addition to the hourly and standard monthly fees, customer and employee validations, part-time employee and other rates are offered. Table 1 summarizes the current fees.

- Current fees for the hourly parking are set by the City Council, on the recommendation of the Parking Commission.
- The current hourly rates have not changed since 1992 and have not kept up with inflation or operating costs. The current price structure of \$0.30 for less than thirty minutes, \$0.60 per hour and \$3.60 daily, if adjusted for national inflation rates over the last ten years would be \$0.38, \$0.77 and \$4.61 respectively.
- Transit service rates cannot compete with metered parking rates, which is contrary to the City's objective of encouraging alternative transportation. The current fare for transport on Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) is \$0.50 per ride. Round trip to/from downtown costs \$1.00. At the current rates, it is difficult for transit to compete with the cost and convenience of driving downtown, especially for visits of short duration. (Note metered parking is only \$0.25 per hour) The City's vision for public transportation includes a commitment to utilize public transportation to improve air quality, decrease parking demand and reduce reliance on the use of the automobile. The current parking rates do not support that goal.
- Credit card payment options are not available for either hourly parking or monthly permit holders.
- While most of the street meters are able to accept Canadian currency (for which no exchange rate is applied) the Parkade will accept this currency for which the exchange

rate must be calculated manually. Approximately \$12,800 in revenue per year is lost to exchange rate and bank fees for sorting Canadian coin deposited in parking meters.

- There is no charge for parking after 5:00 or on weekends.
- Rates are set at amounts that are not easily paid with cash. With a fare box collection system, increments of 0.25 and \$1.00 are easiest. For example, increasing the half hour to \$0.50, hourly to \$1.00 and daily to \$5.00 would be much easier for patrons to pay, easier to collect and sort and help reflect impacts of inflation to old rate.
- Individuals purchasing monthly permits for the Parkade as well as for other City facilities must make the transaction at the Parking Office where the cashier window is open during limited hours. More convenient options, such as credit card payments, autopay and electronic banking, with an internet option, would better serve those who find it difficult to get to the cashier window in the Parkade during operating hours.
- With approximately 50% of the monthly permits sold to three employers, revenues are at risk if any of these employers relocate out of area.
- The manual hangtag system requires time consuming auditing and is inefficient in tracking “lost” or expired permits.

Table 4. Current Parking Rates

LOCATION	TYPE/ DURATION	PRICE	PURPOSE/ISSUED TO	COST/HR.	ISSUES
PARKADE - 1 ST FLOOR	HOURLY	\$0.60/HOUR	DT SHOPPERS, CUSTOMERS, CLIENTS AND PT EMPLOYEES	\$0.60	RATE INEQUITY, MORE EXPENSIVE, LESS CONVENIENT THAN ON STREET.
PARKADE - 1 ST FLOOR	DAILY, 6 HR MAX	\$3.60	DT SHOPPERS, CUSTOMERS, CLIENTS AND PT EMPLOYEES	\$0.45	RATE INEQUITY, DIFFICULT TO COLLECT FEES AFTER HOURS, MANY DO NOT HAVE CORRECT CHANGE FOR NIGHT DROP
PARKADE - 2 ND - 4 TH	MONTHLY - COVERED	\$50.85/MO	DT EMPLOYEES, BUSINESS OWNERS	\$0.29	HANG TAG SYSTEM EXTREMELY INEFFICIENT, TAGS REPORTED "LOST", OFTEN CONTINUE TO BE USED AND ANNUAL EXCHANGE IS TIME CONSUMING FOR STAFF AND INCONVENIENT FOR CUSTOMERS ¹
PARKADE - 5 TH	MONTHLY - UNCOVERED	\$40.03/MO	DT EMPLOYEES, BUSINESS OWNERS	\$0.23	SAME AS ABOVE
PARKADE - MEZZANINE	MONTHLY - COVERED	\$81.15/MO	DT EMPLOYEES, BUSINESS OWNERS	\$0.46	IN SPITE OF COST, THERE'S A WAITING LIST FOR THESE SPACES, MOST CONVENIENT TO AREA OFFICES.
PARKADE - 4 TH	PART-TIME, 16 DAYS MONTHLY	\$27.05/MO	PT EMPLOYEES	\$0.21	INADEQUATE FOR PT WORKERS' NEEDS - USE ON ANY DAY FOR EVEN 2 HOURS COUNTS AS FULL DAY. MANY END UP PAYING FOR ADDITIONAL DAYS. MONITORING IS TIME-CONSUMING, SOME PARK ON DIFFERENT FLOORS TO AVOID BEING COUNTED.

1. Many different discounts were negotiated with different terms, some with unlimited options to renew, some based on annual pay in advance, others with no savings to PDS in terms of staff time or administration. No deposit is required on parking permit

On-Street Parking

- On-street meters allow for from 30 minutes to 6 hours of parking. The majority of meters have a 2 hour limit
- Meter costs are \$0.25 per hour
- Meters do not go into effect until 10:00 AM

- Meter charges are not in effect after 5:00 PM on weekdays or on weekends
- Total meter revenues for 2003 were \$413,030
- Canadian currency is accepted in most meters

Revenues/Costs

The following revenues related to hourly and monthly permits, primarily in the downtown area, were reported for 2003 (rounded to nearest \$100)

- \$210,300 for Parkade monthly permits
- \$17,200 for Railroad Garage monthly permits
- \$29,400 for hourly parking in the Parkade garage
- \$413,000 for on-street parking

Costs for management of Parking Services exceeded revenue generated by more than \$60,000.

Enforcement

Tickets issued

- In the twelve month period from October 2001 through September 2002 a total of 46,662 Tickets were issued. Of those, approximately 80% (37, 903) were issued downtown.
- The almost 38,000 tickets issued downtown were issued to 990 different vehicles. That averages about 38 tickets per vehicle that was ticketed at least once.
- Of those 990 different vehicles receiving tickets, 67% received six or less, 23% received from between 6 and 24 tickets, and 10% received 25 or more tickets. One vehicle alone was issued 146 tickets.
- Historically, about 74% of the tickets issued are issued for expired meters, and only 3% for meter feeding. The remainder was for miscellaneous violations like parking in no-parking zones, expired plates, parking in handicapped spot without proper identification to do so, etc.
- The Rich study found that 67 parkers in the study area were feeding meters for four hours or longer. These presumably are employees in the downtown area. Another 153 were parked for 2-4 hours, feeding meters limited to two hours or less. Transpo's study of a more limited area, and less specific to individual meters, indicated that 46 parkers were at meters for more than six hours, though no meters allowed more than six hours of parking. In the sections of Champion Street, Commercial Street and

Cornwall Street SW, where no meters allow more than 2 hours of parking, 10 vehicles were parked for five or more hours.² While not specifically quantifiable, it does appear that a notable number of parkers are feeding meters in the downtown area.

Staffing

- There are currently two parking enforcement officers, down from three.
- The two officers must enforce all parking regulations within City boundaries, making it difficult to provide the consistent coverage needed to enforce meter feeding violations.
- It is estimated that 10,000 to 12,000 tickets are issued per officer per year

Fine Structure

- The cost for an expired meter or overtime in time limited space is \$3 if paid within 72 hours. This fine increases to \$5 after 72 hours.
- The fine for meter feeding is \$10
- Another \$10 is added to all tickets if not paid after 15 days. After 30 days the cost is increased by another \$25.

Uncollected Fines

- There are currently over \$1.4 million in uncollected parking related fines
- The City does not currently boot or tow vehicles who have outstanding fines

Development Requirements

The City's Municipal Code currently exempts all businesses in the Central Commercial Core and Fringe area from providing off-street parking, with the exception of hotels and motels, which must provide parking at the rate of 1 per two bedrooms and 1¼ per bedroom respectively. Note that while the Code does not require provision of parking for other uses, through the State's Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), any developer of new facilities would have to demonstrate that their site-generated needs can be met with the available parking supply, if not included on-site with the development. In order to facilitate new development in the downtown core the City executed agreements to lease available parking in existing structures for tenants of some of the first new projects. Given the growing demand for parking spaces this incentive is unlikely to be offered in the future.

² It should be noted that the person counting vehicles was approached several times by people parking in the street to ask what was being studied. He observed some of these, and other people moving their cars within the same area. While these vehicles would not be identified in the study as meter feeders, they were parked within the downtown area longer than would appear simply by looking at expired meters.

Adequacy of the Future Parking Supply

The Rich study projected that approximately 1,000 additional parking spaces would be needed to meet parking demand in the sub-area they evaluated. The Walker study, using a different method to quantify the parking supply, concluded that the parking supply might be adequate, given modifications to management of the spaces and increased enforcement. However, considerable development has occurred since these studies were completed and much more is planned or already underway.

Recommendations

A variety of measures were considered in order to achieve the goals presented:

- Provide parking to support downtown businesses
- Reduce the number of drive alone commute vehicle trips in downtown
- Improve financial operations related to parking

The following recommendations are suggested for consideration as a means to achieve those goals.

Surface Lot Parking

Recommended Changes

Install centralized automated Pay and Display units. The first area for conversion should be the City's Railroad Avenue Surface Lot, as well as the adjacent street parking on Railroad Avenue between Chestnut and Maple Streets. The City is underway with a capital project to modify this lot to accommodate a weekend market. The modified lot can serve both permit parkers and hourly parkers. The hourly parkers can make payment at pay stations along Railroad Avenue within this block. More and more City's are converting street meters to centralized pay stations as a means to provide tighter auditing, based on reduced cash handling, and reduced labor and service requirements. These pay stations also offer the hourly parker more flexible payment options by providing change or accepting credit card payment. Centralized automated payment stations currently cost approximately \$15,000 each. Total cost for the two Pay and Display units is approximately \$30,000. Additional related costs will include signage and communication and setting up the accounting system to track revenues from these stations. Following this initial use of Pay and Display systems, other lots can be added and more meters can be in subsequent years.

On Street Parking

Recommended Changes

- **Start the enforcement day two hours earlier** at 8:00 AM. Recent utilization counts in a limited downtown area indicate that an additional 20% meter revenue could be realized if current utilization patterns continued. Roughly, an additional 20% of meter income would result in approximately another \$80,600 annually based on current meter revenues of about \$413,000. Additionally, at current meter rates, a full day from 8:00 AM to 5:00 pm at \$0.50 would cost \$4.50 which would give the Parkade an advantage for daily parkers at a max of \$3.60 per day, if at current rate (note: recommendations include modifications to Parkade rates to a maximum of \$4.00 per day, charges starting at 8:00 AM).

- **Change meter rates to \$0.50 per hour.** Doubling the hourly parking rate would make use of the metered parking less attractive for workers who now only have to pay \$1.75 per day (10 AM to 5 PM @ \$0.25 per hour) while still remaining affordable for those patronizing area. Doubling the metered parking rates could result in an additional \$413,000 per year if current utilization patterns continued. Realistically, the utilization of meters would be expected to decrease somewhat as longer term parkers, like employees, would be expected to look at alternative transport or parking in spaces for monthly permits which would reduce their costs. If done in conjunction with the longer metered day, as described in the bullet above, the incentive for employees to park off-street or consider alternative modes would be even greater.
- **Accept only U.S. currency** in the parking meters. Between the exchange rates and the bank fees charged to sort out Canadian coin, the City loses \$0.60 for every dollar of Canadian coin collected in the meters.

Ongoing Strategy

- Consider extending metering to Saturdays. This measure would discourage downtown residents from using the on-street parking for extended periods which takes away the availability of parking for business patrons on weekends. It would also provide a means for additional income. However, weekend enforcement would be needed as a result. Weekend utilization and duration should be tracked over time to determine if this measure would be beneficial.

Parkade

Recommended Changes

Hourly Parkers

- **Collect payment for hourly parkers at a centralized pay station.** This reduces the need for a manned cashier window at the Parkade, provides a tighter audit system and offers hourly parkers more flexible payment options by providing change or accepting credit card payments. A centralized pay station can be coupled with entrance and exit control which would also eliminate the need for enforcement officers to continuously monitor the parkers. Such a system costs approximately \$100,000.
- **Decrease Parkade Hourly Cost to \$0.50 per hour** to reflect same cost as recommended modification to street parking, daily **maximum of \$4.00**. The hourly rate would be decreased by approximately 16%. If this same decrease in revenue were reflected in annual revenues from hourly parking in the garage, at current rates of \$0.60 per hour, an annual decrease of just under \$5,000 in hourly Parkade revenue would be experienced. Matching hourly parking rates in the garage to hourly parking at street meters would eliminate the current disproportionate charge for Parkade parking compared to current meters: the hourly rate for the Parkade is almost two-and-a-half times that of street meter parking.

Monthly Permit Holders

- **Install access control to parking above the ground floor.** Access to parking above the ground floor would be limited to holders of **valid** monthly permits and drivers with approved state issued disabled permits.³ For permit holders, entry gate would work by card key or card proximity reader. Current problems associated with “lost” or unpaid monthly permits would be eliminated. Access control of this sort typically costs around \$30,000.
- **Increase monthly permit rate to \$60** for floors two through four, and to **\$50 for uncovered** parking on fifth floor. Note that previous contracts with large employers for monthly permits allow a reduced fee and may not be subject to this change in the near future, individual permits would be affected.

Ongoing Strategy

Enforcement

Recommended Changes

- Develop a program to consolidate within one department parking management responsibilities that are currently split between Parking Services, Bellingham Police, and Municipal Court.
- Add enforcement staff.
- Institute booting practice.
- Rotate enforcement focus, special spots on meter feeding.
- Improve ticket tracking system to provide field officers with information on violations history so that stepped violation rates and deterrents for unpaid fines can be instituted.

Fine Structure

Recommended Changes

- Increase fines to create better deterrent. Fines for expired meters and meter feedings should be significantly more than the out of pocket costs for meter parking.
- Increase fine per ticket with number of tickets issued.

³ Because disabled parking is located on the second floor, with elevator access, some accommodation for entry past gate must be made for those with state issued disabled permits. Options are currently being explored.

- Charge for collection costs for unpaid tickets

Recommended fine structure:

- Expired Meter: \$10, 50% discount paid within 48 hours
- Meter feeding: \$20 first offense, \$25 second, \$30 third, etc.
- Charge processing fees for those over 60 days requiring special collections
- Charge \$100 booting fee when vehicle is booted for unpaid fees, outstanding tickets or chronic abuse.

The impact of fine changes to fine related revenue generated is difficult to identify as fine revenue generation is difficult to obtain. While the cost per violation would go up, the increased costs and increased enforcement is likely to improve compliance with regulations and therefore reduce the number of tickets issued.

Management

Recommended Changes

- Invest in parking management software program
- Work more closely and openly with enforcement officers, or, more ideally, bring parking enforcement staff under Parking Services

Appendix A: Utilization Counts

Parking Utilization Counts, June 2, 2004

Street	Duration of Parking (General)							
	1 - Hour	2 - Hour	3 - Hour	4 - Hour	5 - Hour	6 - Hour	7 - Hour	8 - Hour
Railroad Ave. (SW)	174	10	8	1	1	4	1	8
Street Parking	84.1%	4.8%	3.9%	0.5%	0.5%	1.9%	0.5%	3.9%
Railroad Ave. (SW)	127	39	21	6	4	4	3	4
Median Parking	61.1%	18.8%	10.1%	2.9%	1.9%	1.9%	1.4%	1.9%
Railroad Ave. (NE)	67	9	2	1	6	2	1	0
Street Parking	76.1%	10.2%	2.3%	1.1%	6.8%	2.3%	1.1%	0.0%
Railroad Ave. (NE)	155	29	11	7	4	6	1	1
Median Parking	72.4%	13.6%	5.1%	3.3%	1.9%	2.8%	0.5%	0.5%
Champion Street (N)	17	3	3	1	0	0	0	0
	70.8%	12.5%	12.5%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Champion Street (S)	35	9	2	1	1	0	0	1
	71.4%	18.4%	4.1%	2.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%
Commercial Street (NE)	27	10	4	6	0	2	0	0
	55.1%	20.4%	8.2%	12.2%	0.0%	4.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Commercial Street (SW)	81	15	4	10	0	1	4	0
	70.4%	13.0%	3.5%	8.7%	0.0%	0.9%	3.5%	0.0%
Cornwall Street (NE)	159	28	7	5	1	1	0	0
	79.1%	13.9%	3.5%	2.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Cornwall Street (SW)	157	36	13	5	2	1	0	1
	73.0%	16.7%	6.0%	2.3%	0.9%	0.5%	0.0%	0.5%

Street	Duration of Parking	
	Less than 3 hours	3 or more hours
Railroad Ave. (SW) Street Parking	184	23
	88.9%	11.1%
Railroad Ave. (SW) Median Parking	166	42
	79.8%	20.2%
Railroad Ave. (NE) Street Parking	76	12
	86.4%	13.6%
Railroad Ave. (NE) Median Parking	184	30
	86.0%	14.0%
Champion Street (N)	20	4
	83.3%	16.7%
Champion Street (S)	44	5
	89.8%	10.2%
Commercial Street (NE)	37	12
	75.5%	24.5%
Commercial Street (SW)	96	19
	83.5%	16.5%
Cornwall Street (NE)	187	14
	93.0%	7.0%
Cornwall Street (SW)	193	22
	89.8%	10.2%

Street	Duration of Parking (Island Pass Holders)							
	1 - Hour	2 - Hour	3 - Hour	4 - Hour	5 - Hour	6 - Hour	7 - Hour	8 - Hour
Railroad Ave. (SW)	3	0	0	0	1	1	1	2
Median Parking								
Railroad Ave. (NE)	3	3	2	0	2	1	5	2
Median/Street Parking								

Street	Highest Hour	Occupancy	% of veh. parked 3 hours or more
Champion Street (N)	9am - 10am	64%	29%
Champion Street (S)	11am - 12pm	70%	21%
Commercial Street (NE)	3pm - 4pm	80%	31%
Commercial Street (SW)	1pm - 2pm	73%	33%
Cornwall Street (SW)	11am - 12pm	94%	30%

Street	Inventory of Parking Spaces and Allowed Duration by Street						
	30 min	1 hour	2 hour	3 hour	6 hour	Total	Actual
Railroad Ave. (SW)	3	60	0	5	11	79	83
Street Parking	4%	76%	0%	6%	14%	100%	
Railroad Ave. (SW)	0	0	25	41	11	77	78
Median Parking	0%	0%	32%	53%	14%	100%	
Railroad Ave. (NE)	0	21	0	18	24	63	67
Street Parking	0%	33%	0%	29%	38%	100%	
Railroad Ave. (NE)	0	25	26	18	9	78	77
Median Parking	0%	32%	33%	23%	12%	100%	
Champion Street (N)	0	0	14	0	0	14	11
	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	
Champion Street (S)	0	0	10	0	0	10	20
	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	
Commercial Street (NE)	0	0	11	0	0	11	20
	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	
Commercial Street (SW)	5	0	36	0	0	41	45
	12%	0%	88%	0%	0%	100%	
Cornwall Street (NE)	0	0	21	0	6	27	46
	0%	0%	78%	0%	22%	100%	
Cornwall Street (SW)	4	26	11	0	0	41	50
	10%	63%	27%	0%	0%	100%	

Street	# of Spaces	Time of Day Utilization														
		8:00	%	9:00	%	10:00	%	11:00	1:00	%	2:00	%	3:00	%	4:00	%
Railroad Ave. (SW) Street Parking	83	24	28.9%	33	39.8%	40	48.2%	51	35	42.2%	30	36.1%	28	33.7%	33	39.8%
Railroad Ave. (SW) Median Parking	78	51	65.4%	54	69.2%	55	70.5%	67	53	67.9%	40	51.3%	43	55.1%	58	74.4%
Railroad Ave. (NE) Street Parking	67	4	6.0%	11	6.0%	13	19.4%	24	27	40.3%	26	38.8%	24	35.8%	21	31.3%
Railroad Ave. (NE) Median Parking	77	36	46.8%	48	62.3%	59	76.6%	59	61	79.2%	58	75.3%	55	71.4%	55	71.4%
Champion Street (N)	11	2	18.2%	7	63.6%	3	27.3%	5	5	45.5%	4	36.4%	5	45.5%	5	45.5%
Champion Street (S)	20	7	35.0%	6	30.0%	9	45.0%	14	10	50.0%	8	40.0%	7	35.0%	14	70.0%
Commercial Street (NE)	20	7	35.0%	9	45.0%	8	40.0%	15	15	75.0%	15	75.0%	16	80.0%	10	50.0%
Commercial Street (SW)	45	13	28.9%	17	37.8%	22	48.9%	31	33	73.3%	28	62.2%	26	57.8%	27	60.0%
Cornwall Street (NE)	46	18	39.1%	30	65.2%	31	67.4%	41	38	82.6%	33	71.7%	31	67.4%	45	97.8%
Cornwall Street (SW)	50	24	48.0%	38	76.0%	41	82.0%	47	45	90.0%	39	78.0%	38	76.0%	41	82.0%