



DOWNTOWN TAMPA PARKING PLAN

JANUARY 2019



TAMPA
DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP

The Downtown Tampa Parking Plan is the first comprehensive analysis of parking in Tampa's central business and events district. In the last decade, major changes in downtown have greatly influenced its overall parking profile, adding new stress to the system. So is there enough parking?

DOWNTOWN PARKING AT A GLANCE

24,000

spaces covered in the study

8,000

of these spaces managed by the City of Tampa

6,000

spaces remain vacant at peak-use time

4,100

customers on wait-lists for City-managed parking in July 2018

WHO CONTROLS PARKING?

The City of Tampa owns and operates the largest share of downtown's parking, though the majority is managed by private operators.

The City's prices are lower than those of nearby private parking facilities, creating an ongoing preference for using City-owned spaces.

Private operators understand their market and set prices according to demand, though many remote facilities have unused space.

Neither the City of Tampa nor the private owners or operators are currently showing interest in building new parking.

WHY SO MUCH VACANT SPACE?

At the busiest times on weekdays, some parking is heavily used while nearby facilities have ample unused spaces. Why is this?

Monthly parking permits, mostly for employees, have been the dominant form of access to parking. This results in customers or tenants leasing more parking than is necessary, keeping this parking supply from being available to others.

General public concern over access to parking has led customers purchase more than they may need. Even if it isn't all being used, customers prefer to hold parking in reserve (or continue leasing the same amount) should they need it later.

The price differential between on-street and off-street in similar locations motivates people to choose on-street spaces, especially when they are not metered, creating a parking crunch right outside of off-street facilities with availability.

HOW PUBLIC PARKING IS MANAGED IN TAMPA

Parking in most cities is more closely aligned between publicly-owned spaces and privately-owned spaces. What's different in Tampa?

The market for downtown parking remains highly focused on monthly employee permits, limiting opportunities for transient use, residential parking, and a variety of modern parking products like early-bird rates, part-time employee permits and more.

Natural market economics have been manipulated by a 15-year freeze on City parking rates, which is a huge subsidy that private operators cannot afford to compete with, limiting their profits to invest in better customer services.

The City has long wait lists for its parking but no controls or costs for them, so savvy parkers can be on multiple lists and keep newcomers waiting for years.

WHAT CAN TAMPA DO?

There is opportunity for a more natural market among private landowners and developers, the City's parking department, and the private parking operators. A smart partnership can benefit all by eliminating inefficiencies, creating more customer-friendly parking opportunities, incentivizing good behavior, and learning from best practices in other cities, which create beneficial revenues for downtown improvements by running a modern parking system.

Phase 1: Tampa Downtown Partnership takes an early lead to gather information and help to build a business case for making these adjustments to parking management. It draws on its membership to build political support for the City making changes that allow more nimble, strategic policymaking that responds to parking needs.

Phase 2: The City of Tampa reconsiders its management practices to move toward correcting imbalances in the pricing market and helping to demonstrate that there is a market for a broader range of parking options.

Phase 3: Private parking operators adjust their sales to this new market, allowing potentially more locations in underutilized lots and garages to serve downtown parking demand.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

The plan study team will continue to work with City staff and other partners to define what actions should be taken. A well integrated, well managed parking system becomes a boon to downtowns like Tampa which are experiencing increased events, new housing, and a new investment in transit, walking and biking. **Mobility options and a targeted focus on convenience for the end user are key parking system improvements,** not only because they strengthen travel options other than driving, but because they expand the reach of the parking system. In addition, parking policy that recognizes a more dynamic downtown of mixed uses and major special events is critical to downtown's continued success.

Continue to visit www.tampasdowntown.com for updates on the Parking Plan, including draft documents for review.

