

## **Fall 2016 Roundtable Notes: Parking and Community Engagement (Butler and Rice Lake)**

Butler Welcome: Community of 1,800 residents and 500 businesses, including 3 24-hour manufacturing facilities. Hampton Avenue is the major thoroughfare, and has only two vacant storefronts currently. The corridor is primarily a 50's era single story development, and includes City Hall and the Library as major destinations.

### **Parking Discussion**

Summary of current status:

Butler: Parking meters from 8 am-5pm, \$0.25 per 30 minutes, 2-hour limit. Reserved spaces in lots for employees are \$35 per quarter. Currently they earn \$37,000 per year from these sources, and although the meters are unpopular (originally they were installed to pay for the creation of lots), removing them also introduces enforcement and budget hurdles.

Reedsburg: Currently has no time limits or enforcement of either on street or municipal lots. Used to have signage for 2-8 hours, but removed those. Tickets are \$10, but primarily are complaint driven. The BID (before it dissolved) had paid for parking enforcement and maintenance of lots.

West Allis: Every block downtown has City-owned rear parking lots, 4-hours each. On-street spaces are 2-hours. Tickets are \$10, and reserved parking is \$80 per year. Enforcement happens on most sunny days.

Hartland: Have 2-hour parking, \$10 tickets, but not heavily enforced.

Two Rivers: 2-hour parking, \$25 tickets, lightly enforced.

Little Chute: No time limits, only overnight parkers get tickets, \$10.

Beaver Dam: No meters, 2-hour limits, also several strategically placed municipal lots.

Menomonee Falls: 90 minutes on street and in some lots, complaint-driven enforcement with \$20 tickets.

Brillion: No meters, 3 current and 1 proposed lot.

Marshfield: 90 minutes on street, 3 hours in lot, \$15 tickets enforced summer during the day. Permits are \$120/year in the lots.

Tomahawk: diagonal parking on main street, no time limit but no overnight, \$10 ticket

Wisconsin Rapids: No time limit in most areas, \$150 for a permit in lots, limited enforcement

Barron: 2 lots that are free with no time limits. 2 hour on street, no overnight, sporadically enforced.

Edgerton: few limits, no overnight, limited enforcement

Rice Lake: 4 hour on street, 4,8 and 24 hour spaces in lots. Complaint driven ticketing, \$25 tickets

Cumberland: no cost, not enforced.

### **Challenges:**

- Butler did a consumer survey and determined that meters are a deterrent to visitors of certain types downtown.
- Reedsburg City lots are not well signed – only locals know about them. For most businesses, anyone coming through the front door is typically a visitor. Issues losing spaces due to snow removal, upstairs tenant parking.
  - o Many communities identified confusion over which lots were public and which were private. Need for signage.
  - o Also challenge with private lot owners that are rude or overly quick to ticket/tow. Some harass customers for other businesses, creates a problem.
- Some businesses do actually require substantial, short or long term parking, and it can be difficult to accommodate this. Some communities are exploring on-business signage for longer term lots, and/or adding short term spaces on blocks with convenience retail to help with this.
- Almost all communities have some issues with either business owners/employees and/or upper floor residents parking in front of other businesses long-term. It is easier to move cars every few hours than to walk a block for many, especially if there are ample spots available to move them to.
- Constantly changing landscape. Hartland has had several restaurants open up, which has caused cars to circle and/or park in residential areas. But has been one conversation or another since 1972 when the first parking study was done. Two Rivers also had two restaurants open in the same block which has now created congestion during lunch and 4-6 pm.
- Communities with large elderly community have different issues – are legitimate concerns with convenient and accessible parking. Discussion of potential to introduce ‘preferred senior parking’ – not strictly enforceable, but sends a positive message and helps provide spaces in key places for this audience.
- Planning for strategies if/when larger vacancies get filled.
- Wide variety of signage is confusing – Menomonee Falls is removing the various times and introducing standardized locations/time limits and sign styles.
- Paying for/staffing enforcement – Butler had a ½ time parking ½ time code enforcement officer. Now going to contract with fire department when they are on duty and free. Difficult to rely on police enforcement, not an efficient use of dollars.
- The cost of maintaining lots is an issue – many communities would like to upgrade/green lots and add additional lighting to improve perception of safety (help encourage residents or late night workers to use them). Permeable lots also of interest to some (reduce need to plow, can extend life of lot). This is an issue in many places – creating lots can be accomplished together with new development or TIF, but there is limited funds for maintenance.
- Some discussion about limiting on street parking in downtown-adjacent residential areas in high traffic corridors, but concern over impact on residents of the area.
- Dislike by customers for parallel parking – everyone wants diagonal, which has safety drawbacks as well.
- In general, communities want to create the least hardship possible, but every solution poses a challenge for someone (visitors, businesses, residents, etc).
  - o Many communities do not strictly enforce, but have signs to allow enforcement for problem instances.

## Strategies:

- Butler has both a perception and reality issue – they worked with UWM to do a parking meter study to determine what the revenue per space, and/or cost per storefront or square footage to remove them might be. They are also exploring a parking district.
- For meters, modernizing to adding credit card capabilities and/or apps are a trend.
- Improve pedestrian friendliness on side streets/crossing main street to expand the ability of people who can walk/bike to district and thereby reduce parking demand.
- Parking meters do offer the opportunity for businesses to provide customer service – money for meters, etc. Also can use them to create sense of nostalgia, especially if they are inexpensive.
  - o Some businesses will also pay tickets for customers who linger too long.
- Wauwatosa removed meters in some areas and businesses had additional sales.
- Did a study in 1985 and as a result created a TIF district to construct municipal lots with 200 stalls.
- When Beaver Dam redid their on-street spaces following street reconstruction, created extra-long pull in spaces to reduce the need to parallel park.
- Several other communities do not have lined spaces at all, which allows for maximum usage but accommodating more vehicles.
- Menomonee Falls just completed a parking study and plan to look at demand various times of day, location and enforcement. Currently typically 22% occupancy, but have several developments coming online.
  - o May want to periodically inventory spaces, loading zones, etc. Tomahawk had several loading zones that were for businesses no longer in place, could remove. Similarly, if some permit spaces are no longer leased, can remove those signs.
- Ultimately communication is key – personally asking individuals to move their cars and communicating the importance of keeping open spaces is most successful. If a certain business is an offender, talk to their employees, or offer a discount at the impacted businesses in exchange for them parking elsewhere. Incentivize good behavior and make sure people are personally acquainted.
  - o Best practice to reach out to new building/business owners of all types to let them know when there are events downtown throughout the year so they can plan accordingly for loading, specials, move-in, etc. An issue if they are new to the community and don't know about something and schedule over it.
- Brillion worked with a UW landscape student on a capstone project that looked at parking and landscaping. Also working on extending existing trails into downtown and creating amenities to encourage trail/downtown connections and activity. Looking to add bike wayfinding pointing to downtown from various points in the trail network.
  - o Marshfield used some of their banners as parking wayfinding signage with arrows.
- In general, good strategy to increase biking/walking trips and reduce cars.
  - o Some talk of adding amenities for dog walkers as well, encouraging pedestrian visitors from the neighborhood while they are already out walking.
  - o Extending regional trail connections through the downtown (Crosby, MN images at right)



- Tomahawk allows all forms of transportation (ATV, Snowmobile and bike), added share rows on some streets to create routes and keep bikes, etc off sidewalks.
- Hartland developed a flyer that they placed on delivery truck drivers or other chronic offender windows reminding them of parking rules and including a map of parking lots. Businesses still ask for these to use when there is an issue.
  - Rice Lake has notecard reminders for spaces under hanging baskets to allow watering during certain hours.
- Prominently marking lots on printed and online maps is helpful.
- Wayfinding signage is critical. Logical time limits, variety (all day visitors, convenience oriented spaces).
- Some building owners with upstairs residents have put in the lease that residential tenants cannot park on the main street, only on side streets or in lots.
- Creating step surveys to illustrate that walking downtown is closer or equal to big box parking lots – student project.
- Marshfield is considering a parking study – exploring potential to create tiered permit pricing, higher priced for lots in most demand, etc.
- Discussion of potential to create address/name for parking lots so they can be pinned on Google or other GPS apps, and also so that businesses can direct visitors to the nearest lot by name. Marshfield has their lots appear on apple maps, along with the time limit in each. This also works for parks which might host events and/or be destinations.
- Developing public-private partnerships to provide additional parking – Menomonee Falls has school that allows parking for farmers market, also exploring shared maintenance or leased costs for bank or other lots to accommodate evening parking. In West Allis, a nursing home pays rent to the bakery for spaces in lots. Businesses can also reserve spaces in lots, in some cases painted the spaces branded for that bakery.
  - Can require an insurance rider, or adding additional insured to address liability.



**Specific Situations/Issues & Approaches:**

- Overnight parking – many communities are looking to reduce enforcement of overnight parking violations to encourage additional residential development and discourage drunk driving.
  - West Allis now allows a call-in to the police to identify cars that will be overnight to eliminate tickets, soon will be able to enter license plate numbers online.
  - Some communities looking at overnight allowances on Friday and Saturday nights, which balances the need for cleaning/snow removal and overnight parking.
  - Menomonee Falls identified a few overnight spaces in each of its lots.
  - West Bend has a tiered parking system that places long term spaces including overnight in targeted spaces farther away.
  - Some communities promote downtown resident parking in nearby residential side streets where alternate side parking already exists, others have some dedicated 24 hour lots.

- Parklets/reserved parking – can businesses pay to reserve on-street spaces for themselves and/or replace spaces with a parklet? Communities where this happens average price is \$1,500 per year.
- Potential to create ‘suggestion spaces’ which accommodate those with legitimate need of spaces – small children, seniors, etc. Not enforceable necessarily, but sends a message.
- Addressing parking requirements to facilitate redevelopment of vacant or underutilized spaces. Mix of ‘look the other way’ or PUD for new development and communities that have formally adopted alternate requirements for downtown. Kenosha has a 50% reduction in requirements by use for new downtown infill, and also exempts remodeling of existing spaces or change of use from need for additional spaces. Twin Lakes and Sun Prairie have an overlay district for downtown which requires less parking and allows a radius to provide required spaces.
- Discussion of angle/parallel and reverse angle parking. Many have a combination of all of these – is some resistance to parallel parking among some communities, so is desirable to provide a variety of spaces. Few have had success with reverse angle spaces.
- Tomahawk is working to program underutilized parking spaces, in part to demonstrate that there is not a parking shortage (night market in parking lot).
  - o Edgerton hosted a trolley for one of their events due to concerns about parking. Only 5 people ended up using the shuttle lot, and 5,000 people attended – managed to find parking.
- Discussion of strategies for addressing maintenance and appearance.
  - o Tomahawk brought in a goat and took a picture of it eating weeds in the municipal lot to bring about change.
  - o Artist groups take over lots – Poetry parking lot, poetry as parking stripes, art in the spaces, adopt a lot. All of these provide ownership and pride, improve appearance.



## **Community Engagement**

### ***What is community engagement:***

- Participation, volunteerism, municipal government, partnerships, education, communication.
- Getting people to interact, attend, participate in community activities, either formal or informal.

### ***Challenges in cultivating engagement:***

- Every community is different – organizations operating in silos is a common challenge. Regionalism is even more difficult.
  - o Often have multiple civic organizations, need to bring them together to be truly effective.
- Too often people share an idea and walk away, not wanting to be part of process.
- Will never get anyone – with community engagement is really more of 90/10 rule versus 80/20 when it comes to people who will show up and be part of the process.
- How to stem the negativity on Facebook.
  - o However, may be better to be criticized than ignored, at least it means they care.
- Sometimes right idea but wrong time – some communities don't want to be trendsetters (tomahawk did outdoor piano years ago, people thought it was horrible to ruin a piano).
- Keeping people engaged is a challenge – consider it your right to ask people to help and their right to say no.
  - o Have a variety of tiny tasks to get new people involved or keep people engaged in a small way until they are needed/feel refreshed.
- Often people don't see an immediate chance of success if there isn't already a pot of money available, don't want to just talk.
  - o Need to start small and work toward goal.
- Need to screen volunteers with CCAP (so far all have checked out)
- In rural communities many business participants/ reps are no longer the owner, less vested in the outcome, doesn't produce same results.
- Areas with increasingly diverse cultural residents also pose a challenge – how to engage and welcome in way that is accepted and doesn't make issues.
- Finding people to run businesses/projects is difficult, even if a plan is already in place. Need leaders.
- Prioritizing can be a challenge- the thing that CAN get done may be more important than the thing with high potential impact if inertia has set in.
- Concern about change – need to treat it like a grieving process – acknowledge that they are sad for what is lost, not necessarily reacting to the actual proposal.
  - o Find ways to let people acknowledge the past – keep part of an old building, capture memories, honor businesses/people in positive way that shaped the building/place.
  - o Collect stories – tell the why and who of both past and future.

### ***Strategies to increase/encourage engagement:***

- Need to have leadership to keep drive on mission/goal – connect activities to the goal throughout the transition.
- There are groups within each community that are supportive of growth/change. Need to identify and get them to work together. Again, may be formal or informal groups.
- How to promote civic activity

- Empower community. Hartland is new ice age trail community – created a committee and put them in charge of maintenance and marketing of the trail.
- Form task-based goals, find people passionate about the topic, not just the community (Edgerton pottery fest found artist to chair group, outside normal circle). Will need to find and ask personally.
- Pewaukee friendraiser events has a social to recruit new volunteers and introduce the organization to new individuals.
- Each one reach one events – everyone bring someone else they know to the meeting/event.
- Outreach to audiences looking to get involved – welcome baskets, personal invites to new families to town. Ask people what they would like to be involved with (general) so you can best match them to passion projects/opportunities.
- Ask people what they want to see and then do it (informal surveys at events, online, FB, ‘I wish this was’ signs on buildings/booths.
- Take every opportunity to speak in front of civic groups to present activities and engagement opportunities.
- Second homeowners and community service hour requirements are often untapped markets.
- Establishing support from board/council is critical
- Identify things that are easy and visual, ideally that include variety of demographic/age groups to generate broad base of support, even better if people can be involved individually (i.e. not having to show up to a meeting, just complete a task).
- May require having non-meeting sessions – i.e. happy hour, coffee break, recess to talk through things with less structure.
- Think outside the box for event volunteers. Instead of looking to downtown district supporters, think about the type of event (i.e. for a car show, ask car clubs from the region, for a music festival look to music schools/groups). Drives attendance, passion of volunteers, spirit level of event and is a much easier sell. Keep your core volunteers for those events that can’t be filled elsewhere or planning committees.
- Incentives to get people to show up.
  - Reach out to new audiences (church indicated that only one group had ever approached them to help out. Always looking to get involved.
  - Having jobs that allow families to volunteer together is successful.
    - Identify jobs for older/younger volunteers to get/keep engaged. Don’t just look to working -aged adults.
    - If you have a large older population, identify grandparent/grandkid volunteer activities or youth volunteer week – market in advance so they can come stay with grandparents during that time.
  - If you want them involved in implementing, get them involved in decision-making. Lake Mills has high school students on their board who then recruit volunteers.
    - Wisconsin Rapids Encourage Foundation used community engagement to determine direction and style of tribune building they had purchased. Community involved in every process, over 2,000 people total.
      - Did create problems since they want City to do same process, but City has different goals for sites it owns.

- City was able to use some aspects of process – for instance had a booth at the baseball game to solicit input, hosted block party on redevelopment site, etc., other nontraditional ways.
  - Tomahawk had ‘Ask the mayor’ booth at farmers market, ways to get informal feedback and engage.
  - Be sure that you actually want their feedback if you recruit new people. If you aren’t open to changing longstanding traditions, may make more sense to bring them in as separate but ancillary group that creates additional activities rather than creating animosity between two groups (i.e. Rapids Homebrewers, LAX FUN committee – new groups involved in own way with larger initiative).
    - Additional groups might not be directly related to solving problems, but retaining and recruiting these populations is, worth the investment.
  - May need to change what you are doing, create new elements to long-standing events or change meeting times if you really want new people to get involved. Create opportunities for that to happen.
  - Having a specific ask and timeframe is critical for new volunteers of any group. Small but sustained regular tasks can build to greater involvement over time.
  - Use online tools – signup genius, volunteer spot, Facebook groups.
  - Consider paying people for critical positions to make sure they take it seriously.
  - Engage people with points of Civic Pride – cleanups, park builds, etc.
  - Make sure to recognize volunteers
    - Mount Horeb recognizes one of them each week on Facebook.
    - April is volunteer month, host an event or recognition.
    - Feed them. Or adult beverages.
- Cultivating entrepreneurs is one way to grow leaders and local investment.
  - BizStart Barron County has 1-2 new people come through door every week, even though don’t market anymore.
  - Marshfield popup program provides opportunity to test market.
  - Business plan contests for space/\$/services can be effective
  - Student-run businesses can be viable to meet a need/engage youth in community.
  - Tomahawk group of business owners provides specific business mgmt. advice to new prospects.
    - Need to get the word out that you are looking, or nobody will step up.
    - Equally important to have a support system (business or team) to make sure they can be successful.
- Communication is still key – many have gone back to newsletters, including some hard copy or printable even if it’s only quarterly – need to reach people where they are. In-kind printing or sponsorship to allow that to happen. Reader boards, utility bills also non-online ways to reach people and remain top of mind.
  - One way to think of it is as if your organization is ‘dating’ your other civic partners – what do you like to/can you do together, what things should you keep to yourself, etc.
- Discussion of community foundations as conduit for philanthropy and cultivating spirit of giving, curating worthy causes.
- Sometimes may have to help community learn to help themselves, especially in former industry or company towns.

- Placemaking is one type of activity that may be new enough to bring groups together – does not have an entrenched group which ‘owns’ this activity unlike other events or tasks. May be a way to foster collaboration.