

September 24, 2014

To | **Ashland Downtown Parking Advisory Committee**
CC | **Michael Faught and Bill Molnar, City of Ashland**
From | **Robert Parker, Nick Meltzer, and Taylor Eidt**
SUBJECT | **AUGUST 2014 DOWNTOWN PARKING MONITORING RESULTS**

INTRODUCTION

Community Planning Workshop is working with the City of Ashland to conduct a downtown parking and multimodal circulation study. The study is intended to evaluate the effectiveness of existing downtown parking management, truck loading zones, and travel demand management strategies to improve the overall accessibility of downtown for visitor, employees, business owners and residents. To document parking utilization in Downtown Ashland, CPW conducted three parking count and turnover monitoring sessions.

This memorandum presents results from the third session conducted in August 2014. This monitoring session focused on parking occupancy during late afternoon and evening hours. Maps displaying downtown parking utilization can be found in the attached mapbook.

FINDINGS

Ashland has more of a distribution problem than parking supply problem

Similar to the April monitoring session, the peripheral areas of Ashland's downtown experience occupancy rates of less than 85% between 4pm and 8pm. Areas farther from downtown, including 4th and 5th Streets, generally had occupancy rates below 50% and decreasing towards 8pm. In core downtown areas such as Siskiyou Blvd and Lithia Way, CPW observed occupancy rates that increase to 85-100% capacity from 4pm to 8pm. Parking availability in the core area decreases at a faster rate than areas outside of the core area. This leads to high occupancy rates consistently above 85% in areas adjacent to downtown, while streets not adjacent to downtown showed occupancy rates under 85% at 4pm, 6pm, and 8pm.

The August evening monitoring session showed capacity issues similar to both the Labor Day 2013 and April 2014 monitoring sessions. This finding suggests that Ashland should consider parking management strategies that will distribute parking demand throughout the existing supply. Ashland should consider increased wayfinding in the downtown core, in order to direct users to more available parking in the periphery of the core.

The August 2014 monitoring confirms concerns that employees are parking in the Railroad District during the day

August monitoring found that Railroad District occupancy was highest at 4pm, where rates on 1st St, Pioneer St, A St, and B St were observed between 85% and 100%. Other areas of the Railroad District saw occupancy between 50% and 84% during this time. At 6pm, occupancy

was lower, with Pioneer St, B St, and A St seeing occupancies of less than 50%. Only 1st St between A and B streets had occupancies above 85%. This trend continued to 8pm, where total use occupancy in the Railroad District was generally less than 50%, except for on streets adjacent to the downtown core. Many of the streets surrounding the Railroad District are residential, suggesting that occupancy on these streets should be limited during the day. Since they show high occupancy rates during the day then decrease post work hours, CPW infers that this area is used for employee parking.

This finding suggests that Ashland should consider policy options related to employee parking management. Such options may include employee parking incentive programs, an employee parking permit program, and encouraging and facilitating alternative modes of transportation, among other options.

The downtown core (E. Main and Lithia Way) remain fully occupied throughout the afternoon and evening

Parking in Ashland shows a consistent pattern of higher occupancy rates on streets adjacent to the downtown core compared to streets in the periphery of the downtown. The areas of Siskiyou Blvd and Lithia Way see occupancy rates higher than any other areas between 4pm and 8pm. While all areas of downtown see an increase in occupancy at this time, the core downtown area maintains a higher rate. The downtown core maintained occupancy rates above 50% from 4pm to 8pm, and peaked at 8pm, where Siskiyou Blvd reached occupancy of 85-100% on every block within the core. Only two blocks saw occupancy rates lower than 50%, including the library at the edge of the downtown core and loading zones.

This finding suggests that the downtown core does not have low occupancy rates during the evenings as previously thought. Areas in the periphery of the downtown have occupancy rates slightly lower than those in the downtown.

Users parking in the evening occupy spaces for longer periods of time

Parking occupancy rates in the Ashland core varied during the August monitoring session by parking time limit. All parking occupancy rates increased from 4pm to 8pm, although total occupancy rates of 4-hour zones were highest during this time, followed by 2-hour zones. Short-term parking areas did not show any discernable occupancy pattern. Four-hour parking maintained 50% to 84% capacity from 4pm to 6pm, and increased to 85% to 100% in all core downtown areas at 8pm. Two-hour parking also increased during this time, from an even split of 50% to 84% and 85% to 100% occupancy at 4pm to all 85% to 100% occupancy at 8pm. Maximum occupancy occurred primarily along Siskiyou Blvd and Main St. This pattern shows that many patrons require parking spaces that have time limitations longer than two hours during evening hours.

This finding suggests that the City should consider utilizing peak hour parking requirements, where parking is not time limited during non-enforced hours. The implications are that maximum spaces will be available in key downtown areas, during times that are not enforced currently.

Loading zones are not clearly marked

Throughout the downtown area, CPW observed that loading frequently occurs either in parking spaces not designated for loading or in travel lanes. Low occupancy rates of loading zones show that these areas are underutilized. The low occupancy of loading zones throughout the downtown area show that there may be an excess of loading zone spaces downtown. Other possibilities are that loading zones are not clearly marked, resulting in users parked illegally within loading zones, or businesses are not utilizing loading zones. Both of these occurrences were observed during the August monitoring session.

This finding suggests that Ashland should consider consolidating loading zones and increasing wayfinding to make them easier to locate. The implications are that increased ability to locate loading zones will decrease the frequency with which. Ashland should consult with local businesses to determine areas that have highest need for loading zones in order to be used most efficiently.

SUMMARY OF OCCUPANCY TRENDS

Following are key parking occupancy trends observed by the CPW team during the August 2014 monitoring period:

- Occupancy rates in downtown remained consistently high in the downtown core.
- Parking occupancy rates decreased throughout the evening in the peripheries of downtown.
- 2- and 4-hour parking areas increased in occupancy throughout the evening.
- Parking spaces closest to downtown's core filled faster and had consistently higher occupancy rates than spaces further from the core.

CPW observed similar trends during the Labor Day and April parking counts as well; primarily increases in occupancy rates throughout the day and underused capacity in certain locations. Rates of occupancy were generally comparable to the Labor Day 2013 monitoring session during this count, and higher than occupancy rates observed during the April 2014 monitoring session. The general trends were observed in all three monitoring sessions. This suggests that high occupancy rates are not solely a function of visitor traffic during the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Figures 1 through 4 show below show the occupancy rates for parking classifications over the course of the observation period.

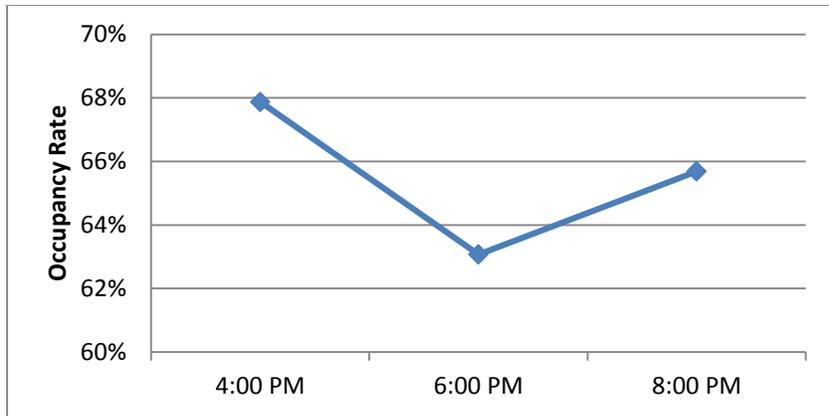


Figure 1. Overall Parking Occupancy (all spaces), August 28, 2014

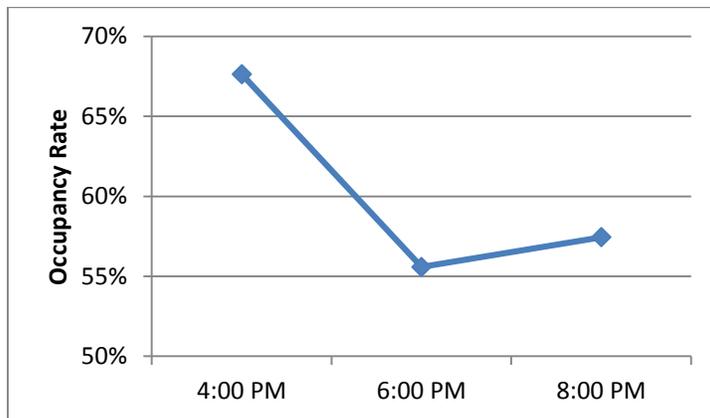


Figure 2. Occupancy Rate for No Limit Spaces, August 28, 2014

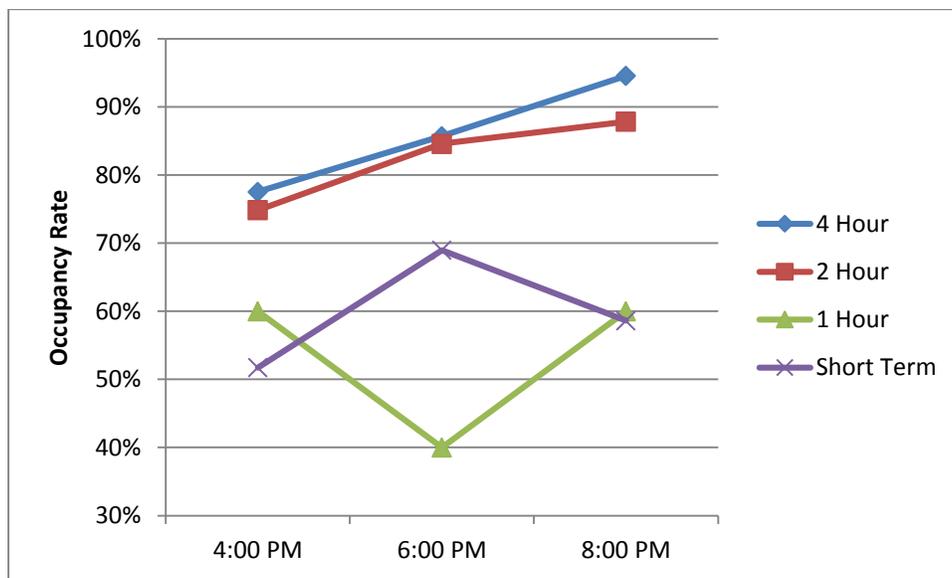


Figure 3. Occupancy Rate, by Time Limitation, August 28, 2014

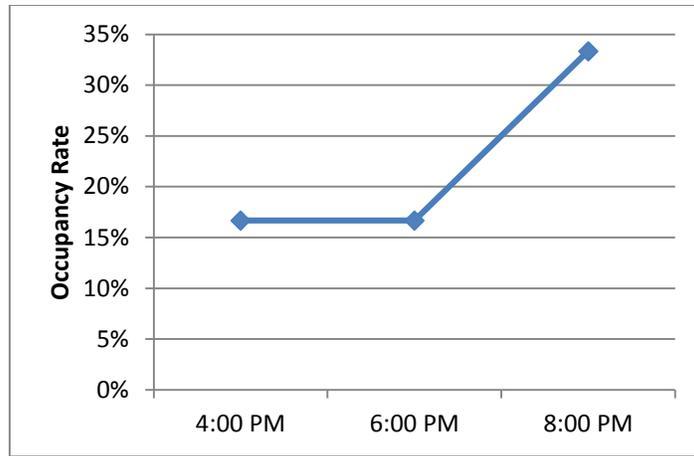


Figure 4— Occupancy Rate for Loading Zones, August 28, 2014