

City of Olympia Parking Strategy: Strategy 7 [Current Draft]

Strategy 7: Improve Disabled Parking Management

7.1: Work with other departments on achieving Downtown Strategy goals around safety, lighting, and cleanliness in Downtown Olympia to ensure that the parking system is clean and safe.

Stakeholder input to this study suggested that connections between the downtown core and parking assets (inside and outside the core) are lacking. Infrequent users are especially inconvenienced by the lack of signage directing them to, through and between the downtown and adjacent areas. Inadequate street lighting and the poor condition of some facilities create negative safety perceptions, and alternative mode options that could allow users to park once and access all the downtown easily are not strategically coordinated or managed.

It is recommended that the City undertake a comprehensive inventory and evaluation of impediments to connectivity in the downtown and develop solutions for each. This might necessitate engaging a third party to assist in cataloguing issues, drafting solutions, and forecasting costs. Input from and participation by other relevant City divisions, as well as Intercity Transit, will be important. An action plan would be developed for presentation to City Council and other affected entities for their review, consideration, and approval.

Potential elements of the action plan could include:

- Improving pedestrian links (e.g., unsafe pedestrian crossings, sidewalk conditions, lighting improvements)
- Improving bikeway links (e.g., safe routes/lanes, directional signage, bike parking).
- Installing wayfinding signage at key access portals to direct users to available parking and help them find efficient routes between parking and their destinations (in coordination with Strategies 3.a and 3.b., above.
- Evaluating improved transit connections between parking locations and destinations in and outside the core. This could entail rerouting of existing services and/or new shuttle/circulator programs.

Timeline: Short to mid-term

Estimated Costs: The costs associated with developing such an action plan are unknown at this time. It would involve City staff time, working with stakeholders, coordination with other City departments, and most likely the assistance of a third-party planning firm. The costs for engaging a planning firm could range from \$20,000 to \$25,000.

7.2: Confirm that all City-owned off-street facilities are compliant with ADA parking requirements. Consider increasing the number of disabled parking stalls in City-owned surface lots and make these spots available for public parking.

It is recommended that the City conduct a survey of all its off-street parking facilities to validate that these facilities meet the minimum ADA parking requirements for handicap and disabled stalls. The



survey should include not only a count of required stalls but an assessment of stall sizes, signage, location and ingress/egress paths within the parking facility. This will ensure that the City assumes a leadership role in serving ADA customers, residents and employees in its downtown facilities. Based on occupancies, the City should also consider increasing the number of disabled stalls at its off-street facilities as necessary to meet demand that may exceed minimum standards.

Timeline: Short-term

Estimated Costs: Assessment of City lots/facilities could be completed by existing facilities staff or through third-party engagement. Any recommended changes or upgrades to existing ADA stalls would incur costs associated with painting, signage, and maintenance of new disabled stalls.

7.3: Restrict disabled parking to the 4-hour limit allowed by law for on-street parking.

Several cities in WA have begun restricting the use of on-street ADA parking to a maximum time limit of 4-hours. These include Vancouver, Washington and Portland, Oregon. This restriction is allowed by federal law and is intended to preserve on-street ADA parking to visitor uses, while encouraging and supporting longer-term and employee ADA parking to locate in off-street facilities. Moving to this type of on-street limit would need to be coordinated with Strategy 7.2., above. Again, implementing this strategy would ensure that disabled parking stalls have turnover and are available throughout the day.

Timeline: Short-term

Estimated Costs: Staff time associated with developing necessary ordinances and code changes.

7.4: Review the number and locations of on-street disabled stalls and ensure high demand areas, such as the core, have sufficient disabled parking stalls. Routinely collect data on the occupancy, duration, and turnover of disabled parking stalls. Direct disabled users to appropriate stalls to minimize conflicts between those needing short-term versus long-term parking.

As a corollary to Strategy 7.3., above, the City should assess the demand for short-term on-street ADA parking to ensure that ADA stalls are adequately provided to meet demand and are strategically located near destinations with high ADA demand. This can be accomplished through routine data collection related to occupancy, duration of stay and turnover at existing stalls, and outreach and communications with Downtown destinations and the ADA community. With Olympia's new License Plate Reader (LPR) technology, routine assessments of on-street ADA stalls could become a standard operating procedure throughout the year; leveraging the new technology and minimizing data collection costs. This type of assessment will ensure that ADA stalls are sufficient in number and appropriately located.

Timeline: Short-term

Estimated Costs: Staff time associated with inventory, data collection efforts, and education.



7.5: Work with State representative to implement reforms that would result in reduced handicap placard misuse.

The State of Washington has the primary responsibility for regulating disabled parking and the issuance of handicap placards. Cities have limited options for regulating and managing disabled parking. Cities are responsible for enforcing disabled parking rules and the potential for misuse of handicap placards that occurs when violators attempt to avoid time limits and parking payment. Reforms to improve the ability of a City to enforce handicap placard violations should start with state law. Reforms may include connecting temporary handicap placards to specific vehicles and improved systems for enforcing the expiration of temporary placards. The City should work with state representatives and other cities to support reforms that minimize handicap placard misuse while improving disabled parking access and management for those complying with the regulations.

Timeline: Short to mid-term

Estimated Costs: Staff time associated with research on best practices and coordinating with State staff and representatives.