



Florida Department of Transportation Research

Impact of Parking Supply and Demand Management on Central Business District Traffic Congestion, Transit Performance Measures and Sustainable Land Use – FDOT Project BD77 977-07

Parking is one of the thorniest problems facing local officials who wish to maintain the vitality of central business districts (CBD). Viewed in isolation, the solution often is seen as more parking, at least, and more free parking, if possible. But parking is not an isolated issue, it is integral to the overall traffic dynamic and must be balanced against other aspects, such as congestion, delays, and travel time reliability. More free parking might be viewed as an obvious benefit, but if it leads to greater congestion and customer frustration, it could discourage, rather than encourage, visits to business districts.

In this project, University of Florida explored the connection between strategies to manage parking supply/demand, transportation system outcomes, and congestion management. Specifically, they examined the CBDs of Fort Lauderdale and Miami from the perspectives of Transportation System Management (TSM), Transportation Demand Management (TDM), revenue streams, transit use and performance, and sustainable land use.

Researchers took a comprehensive approach, combining literature reviews of best practices, field studies of the current parking inventory, case studies of peer and model cities, and interviews with decision makers. From this work they developed recommendations which were presented to advisory committees and other stakeholder groups.

The study revealed that far from the simplistic addition of parking, parking solutions must be based on understanding the complex network of stakeholders involved in addressing both current and future needs related to many aspects of mobility in the studied areas. Developers, lenders, local and regional advisory boards, transit providers, and certainly CBD business owners are vitally concerned groups. The latter often feel disadvantaged compared to suburban shopping, which often has much free parking. However, the study also demonstrates how free parking



Free on-street parking could increase access to downtown Ft. Lauderdale businesses, but at the cost of additional congestion and travel delays.

becomes a hidden cost which is ultimately borne by CBD business owners either directly through building rents or indirectly through taxes.

Researchers did not approach the problem naively. They accepted that many solutions lie outside the realm of political possibility, and acknowledged the helpful candor of many interviewees. Nonetheless, they also found a growing acceptance of the complexity of planning for the urban context, which increasingly must balance broader community goals, including socio-economic vitality, green-house gas reduction, community's "livability," funding for multimodal transportation investments and economic development incentives.

Recommendations were made in nine strategy areas: (1) pricing to manage demand; (2) funding; (3) land use planning; (4) coordination of transportation and land use; (5) coordinated parking policies for alternative modes of accessibility; (6) regulation of parking providers; (7) design and technology; (8) improving public education through social marketing; and (9) institutional coordination of parking, transportation and land use.

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For more information, visit <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/research-center>