



In-Town Parking: *What Works?*

Innovative Practices in
Parking Provision

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Foreword

There has been a huge, emotive debate around the importance of car parking in town centres. While there are many strong views on this topic, many in the industry acknowledge the complexity of parking management because of how it overlaps with a myriad of other issues. Over decades, many publications from different perspectives have sought to highlight that this is not as straightforward as it always looks. Without seeking to go too deep into these complexities, this research has taken a practical look at “What Works” at home and abroad.

It is quite clear that there is great effort being shown to meet the needs of customers but it is not always obvious which initiatives reap the best rewards. Finding ways in which the parking offered can be adequately aligned to the needs of all stakeholders will be a good place to start. That means we need to collect regular data on parking and embed this within a wider understanding of town centre performance. ATCM’s successful town centre’s personality test and indicator set coupled with our health check software can help achieve this.

It is important that the best use of the capacity available is made. This can be done by utilising our networks so those responsible for managing spaces can network with each other providing opportunities for car park operators to liaise, share information and understand the opportunities.

It is just as important to be forward thinking. The ATCM and Experian paper, ‘Town Centre Futures’ indicates that society is evolving and town centres must keep pace. We know that the five things that are impacting on the behaviour of visitors are:

- Value for money
- Experience
- Choice
- Technology
- An aging population

Car parking can impact, or be impacted by, any of these areas positively or negatively. It is essential that parking operators and town centre managers are prepared for evolution. It is clear that town centres are changing. On one level we need to be responsive to these changes as they emerge. On another level, we have to plan ahead, be innovative and manage the change we want to see, ensuring that parking is not a barrier to attracting visitors.



Martin Blackwell,
Chief Executive ATCM

Martin Blackwell

Executive Summary

Parking in town centres represents a complex issue hampered by a number of significant problems. The growth of car ownership has exceeded what many of our traditional urban centres can easily accommodate. Parking comes at a cost which needs to be covered by someone, somewhere, somehow, but this has proved very emotive. Furthermore, the creation of clear parking policies, embedded in a holistic transport strategy, remains problematic because of the numerous stakeholders involved all working to different objectives.

Yet, town centres today are exposed to intense competition and so must do what they can to ensure it is accessible. Therefore, this report brings together a number of case studies that indicate how some of the problems described above can be mitigated.

These case studies have been drawn from a wide range of locations, with differing parking demands and a range of factors influencing key decisions with regards to the approach to parking taken by individual towns and cities. Case studies come from the following areas:

- Oxford
- Nottingham
- Aberdeen
- Dundee
- Middlesbrough
- Tunbridge Wells
- Maidenhead
- Colchester
- Rugby
- Fairbanks (Alaska, US)
- Cedar Rapids (Iowa, US)

Through an examination of these 11 parking case studies in the UK and US, 12 key factors have been identified as being critical to success in each (but not necessarily every) case. These factors are as follows:

- Integrated Transport and Accessibility Strategy
- Connected Value
- Know Your Customers
- Minimising Traffic in the Core
- Intelligent and Flexible Tariffs
- Modern Payment Methods
- Intelligent Transportation Systems
- Space Utilisation
- Wayfinding
- Communication and Transparency
- Safety and Security

Every location is unique. Therefore, it is important to recognise that success in replicating one of these factors will not automatically mean the creation of a successful parking policy. While some of these factors (such as knowing your customers) could be universally applicable, others might only be adequate in specific locations where the geography and dynamics of the location suit. Furthermore, there will be overlap between some of the success factors with one possibly being a precursor to another.



Introduction

Parking in town centres is a high profile, complex and emotive issue. Increasing fees, restrictive enforcement regimes and a lack of provision have caused anger in some areas across the UK which parking managers, local authorities, planners, town centre managers and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are working to mitigate. However, long-term solutions that satisfy everyone can be difficult to find for a number of reasons.

Growth in Car Ownership

As identified by the RAC Foundation in 'Spaced Out', and reiterated in 'Re-Think! Parking on the High Street', car ownership has seen astonishing growth during the post-war period. The number of vehicles on Britain's roads has increased from 2.5 million in 1952 to 34.5 million in 2012. This bloom has been partly fuelled by the cost of the family car decreasing from an equivalent of four years' average salary to 20 months' salary during those 60 years.

This has not suited traditional urban centres, many of which pre-date the era of common car ownership. With a high density of development and activity in town and city centres, retrospective alterations to

accommodate more cars can be costly and difficult to achieve. Therefore, the quantity of parking spaces has become a significant issue with concerns that too little availability may restrict footfall.

In many cases, increasing parking provision may not even be desirable regardless of the practical impediments of urban density. An opportunity cost often comes with the loss of other uses that parking provision may replace, potentially taking footfall and spend with it. More cars could also contribute to undesirable changes to the public realm that come with roads and traffic, something that is especially problematic for historic centres that thrive on tourism. Recognising the potential incompatibility of the car with historic architecture, many of Europe's best preserved and attractive towns and cities limit access to private motorised vehicles as a matter of necessity. With this in mind, traditional centres cannot easily accommodate the car and striking the right balance is an extremely difficult task.

Cost of Parking

Access for car users is not the only problem. There is also the issue of the cost of parking. Both local authorities and private companies have to cover their costs in relation to parking. Maintenance, management and long-term investment in the quality of the car park are all serious considerations that must be taken into account. While a disproportionate amount of media attention is devoted to pricing and enforcement, the quality of the car park is also important. Furthermore, it must be recognised that car parks attract business rates that must be paid. Consequently, neither on-street nor off-street parking is free. The cost needs to be covered by someone, somewhere, somehow.

Clear Policy Goals

The final significant issue is the difficulty in developing comprehensive parking plans that are aligned with the wider economic and social objectives of an area. The core reason for this is the fragmentation of ownership over important aspects of the transport network. Often parking policy can be set without consideration for planning or transport policy.

Whilst aligning parking policy to wider planning and transport aims remains a lofty ambition, in truth, many areas may fail to even achieve any coherent parking policy with a myriad of car park owners with differing objectives including county councils, district councils, private parking firms and retail developments all managing different car parks in, or near, the same centre. Few of the major towns and cities in the UK have the empowered local leadership that is permitted to unite the transport network and embed it within a forward-thinking planning regime.

Competing for Visitors, Spend and Investment

With all of these challenges to contend with, competition for visitors, competition for consumer spend and competition for investment against alternative locations and online substitutes, parking is an especially sensitive issue which needs the attention of those involved in enhancing the town and city centre experience.

According to the Genecon report less than half of all retail spend now happens in-town with out-of-town taking an increasing share. A report by the Association of Convenience Stores shows that since the publication of the National Planning Policy

Framework in 2012, 76% of all new gross retail floorspace permitted in England following planning permission is located out-of-town, compounding the pressure on in-town retail.

Meanwhile, online shopping continues to grow. Verdict Retail estimates that online retail expenditure in the UK has increased from £0.4 billion in 1998 to an estimated £29.6 billion in 2012, an increase of 14 percentage points in just over a decade.

Why We Need to Know What Works

Many town and city centres share these challenges. With population growth projected in the UK the pressure on our transport network will only increase. Therefore, there is a need to understand what customers want and what is working well, informing the efforts of parking managers, town centre managers and BIDs. 'In-Town Parking: What Works?' brings together customer desires, a range of good practice case studies from across the UK and US and an outline of some of the key factors of success.

This report has been created to expand on previous research on the subject and to highlight examples of

innovative practice and emerging technology being used to ensure car parking provision realises its full potential. Two recently published reports which are considered to be particularly relevant in setting the context of this area of research are the 'Future of the High Street' report produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government, and 'Re-think! Parking on the High Street', jointly produced by the Association of Town & City Management (ATCM), the British Parking Association (BPA), Parking Data and Research International, and Springboard. The former provides a summary of changes in the stance of government to parking following the Portas Review. The latter discusses the relationship between the cost of parking, footfall and town centre prosperity.

The case studies in this report have been drawn from a wide range of locations, with differing parking demands and a range of factors influencing key decisions with regards to the approach to parking taken by individual towns and cities. Some of these have been sourced by transport consultants WYG, some have been kindly provided by members and associates of ATCM and BPA and the remainder by members of the International Downtown Association.



Case studies come from the following areas:

- Oxford
- Nottingham
- Aberdeen
- Dundee
- Middlesbrough
- Tunbridge Wells
- Maidenhead
- Colchester
- Rugby
- Fairbanks (Alaska)
- Cedar Rapids (Iowa)

A thorough assessment of the case studies in this report reveals a number of factors that are key to the success in one or more of the scenarios. These factors are:

- Integrated Transport and Accessibility Strategy
- Connected Value
- Know Your Customers
- Minimising Traffic in the Core
- Intelligent and Flexible Tariffs
- Modern Payment Methods
- Intelligent Transportation Systems
- Space Utilisation
- Wayfinding
- Communication and Transparency
- Safety and Security

The final section of this report explains why these factors are important, the conditions needed to implement them elsewhere and some of the barriers to implementation that need to be considered in advance.



What Customers Want

Identifying customer perceptions is an important starting point for 'What Works'. It provides a basis for understanding how key success factors can be shaped to deliver a parking experience that will not deter visitors from driving into a town centre.

In truth, drivers choose where they park based on multiple considerations. However, with limited resources, being able to target investment and improvement into elements that will make the most difference is essential for the owners of car parks.

Research by Sweeney Communications and commissioned by BPA identifies and ranks the top 10 factors that dictate a driver's choice of car park. This information was collected through a series of short face-to-face interviews with car park users conducted using a representative sample of car parks holding Safer Parking Scheme's Park Mark® award. In total 642 car park users participated in the research.

Car parks were segmented by market sector and area as follows:

Market Sector	Region/Nation
Airport	North East
Education	North West & North Wales
Hospital	Midlands
Leisure	South East
Park & Ride	South West & South Wales
Public	Scotland & Northern Ireland
Retail	South London, Surrey & Hampshire
Station	East Anglia & East Midlands
Town Centre	North London, Hertfordshire & Buckinghamshire
Others	

Results from the survey confirm that drivers use a wide range of criteria to choose where to park. Unsurprisingly, their overriding concern is 'location', in other words, proximity of the car park to the amenity or location which represents the very purpose of their trip. Their preference is a car park close to their destination where they can drive in and easily find a space that comfortably accommodates their vehicle.

The next most important is safety and security, both in personal terms and with regards to the vehicle itself.

Tariffs were only fourth on the list making it an important issue, but not the most prominent concern for motorists. Ease of access, queuing, availability, lighting, method of payment and cleanliness were all considerations raised by those surveyed.

The top 10 factors for customers when selecting a car park to use are ranked as follows:

Ranking	Car Park Users
1	Location
2	Personal safety
3	Safe environment
4	Tariffs
5	Ease of access
6	No/little queuing
7	Number of spaces
8	Effective surveillance
9	Size of parking space
10	Appropriate lighting

Bearing in mind that this survey is based on a range of locations not all specific to the high street the next step is to identify case studies that tackle some of these issues in the context of the town centre.



UK Case Studies





OXFORD

Related Success Factors

- Integrated Transport and Accessibility Strategy
- Minimising Traffic in the Core
- Intelligent and Flexible Tariffs

Context

The City of Oxford is located in Central Southern England and is well known for its university and historic core as well as for its role in science and research. As a result, the city benefits from a significant daytime population drawn from a combination of students, tourists and city centre workers, which helps to maintain its vitality.

The challenge for Oxford is based on a need to maintain the historic centre and nature of the city and to cater for the very high number of pedestrians and cyclists moving within the central area, whilst maintaining good levels of access for shoppers, commuters and tourists. This means restricting traffic at the same time as paying consideration to the number one concern for motorists wanting to park – proximity to amenities.

Restricting Traffic Centrally

Oxford's parking strategy stems from the 1970s Barron Transport Strategy, being one of the first to incorporate the development of park and ride sites

outside the city central area in combination with a policy of parking restraint in the urban centre. The city now has 5 peripheral park and ride sites, of which three are owned by Oxford City Council and two by Oxfordshire County Council.

As a result of the difference in ownership, the costs of parking vary with the County Council operated park and ride prices escalating steeply after the first 11 hours to discourage long-stay parking (as a number of the park and ride sites have the potential to be misused by travellers using London airports), whilst the City Council pricing encourages repeat use for commuters working in the central area by offering options for 7 and 28 day pre-payments by cash or mobile phone payments.

The average cost of using park and ride including bus travel is approximately £4.23. This compares to average city centre daily parking rates of £10.20, resulting in a financial incentive for those planning longer stays in the city to leave vehicles on the outskirts. This approach appears to have been

successful with annual congestion monitoring for the city showing little fluctuation in the levels of car traffic entering the central area for the last 4 years, despite wider growth in the area.

In order for a policy of parking restraint to be successful and not damage the city centre, alternative options have to be of sufficiently high quality to be viable for commuters, visitors and shoppers. The County Council has worked to grow the park and ride offer, including the most recent increase of 500 spaces at the Thornhill Park and Ride site. The public are also now able to view the available levels of parking at each of the main park and ride sites online so they can plan journeys via sites with available capacity.

It appears that parking restraint in the centre of Oxford has not had an overall detrimental effect on city centre success. The Oxford Economic Narrative report prepared by Shared Intelligence suggests that the city centre and the surrounding district centres continue to perform strongly with further growth of the main city centre retail area 'West End' planned in coordination with a further reduction in associated parking levels. For those locations already struggling with capacity but challenged by further population growth, Oxford's handling of parking may provide useful insight.



NOTTINGHAM

Related Success Factors

- Connected Value
- Minimising Traffic in the Core
- Intelligent Transportation Systems
- Wayfinding

Context

Nottingham is located in the East Midlands of England and is classed as a major city in terms of its retail draw and its university. It faces local competition from Derby and Leicester, and is also in close proximity of a number of smaller centres and market towns. The city is governed by a Unitary Authority with responsibility for both planning and highways and has a history of investment in transport, having the largest public bus network in the UK.

Moderating Demand Through Pricing

To help mitigate the problem of congestion in Nottingham, prices are staggered with the highest parking costs assigned to the central area, whilst more peripheral areas have cheaper (or free) car parking provision. Two years ago the city introduced charges for Sunday parking with footfall levels being similar to those recorded on Saturdays. Whilst initially challenging, this allowed parking spaces to be better managed and ensured that retail parking was used to support retail rather than being used for Sunday commuters.

Moderating Demand Through a Work Place Parking Levy

Nottingham operates a Work Place Parking Levy, in which major employers pay an annual fee for private non-residential parking. The levy was also introduced to combat the increasing congestion of which 70% was estimated to be caused by commuters at a cost of £160 million to the city.

The Work Place Parking Levy is a licensing scheme in which major businesses pay for their staff and visitors to park. The decision on whether to pass these costs on or subsidise motorists then rests with the business. In parallel, improvements to the public transport network were undertaken in order to provide commuters with a viable alternative to the car.

City-wide ITS

Nottingham also operates a city-wide Intelligent Transportation System (ITS), providing real-time updates on parking availability at each of the city centre's main car park sites. The system was consulted upon with major private car parking providers before implementation ensuring that the signage provides coverage for major public and private car parks equally effectively.

Innovative Wayfinding

A major incentive promoted by the Council is the 'ParkSmart' concept, with parking and directional signing split into one of five main zones and a simple set of symbols used to identify each zone and to relate car parking provision to the area it serves. Drivers can then follow signs featuring the symbol for the area of the city they want to visit, replicated on car parking directional signage (also tied into the ITS system for the city). The 'ParkSmart' approach has been reviewed and approved by the Department for Transport and provides a consistent and cost effective way of simplifying car park wayfinding.



ABERDEEN

Related Success Factors

- Modern Payment Methods

Context

The City of Aberdeen is located on the East Coast of Scotland. Being the third largest city in Scotland and with its connections with North Sea oil, it plays a major role in the Scottish economy, facing limited competition within a reasonable drive time of the city.

Emerging Competition for Aberdeen

The Council operates 12 city car parks within the city, each are open between 8am and 10pm between Monday and Saturday. On Sunday, the car parks close at the earlier time of 5pm.

With the majority of parking belonging to the Council, they are able to maintain control of pricing policy. However, the issue of competition for car parking has recently become a more important local issue with the development of the Union Square, a new city centre shopping area. This development now sets parking charges between the hours of 6.00pm

and 4.00am at £1.00, a major incentive for users the evening and night-time economy. In comparison, the Council's car parking charges remain at a constant level until the car parks close at 10pm. Their charges follow the hourly lengths of time ranging from 1 hour of £1.00 to a maximum stay of 14 hours being £14.00.

The city centre is also experiencing competition from out-of-town shopping centres, with the costs of additional travel to such centres (with free car parking) not being as apparent to shoppers as parking charges in the city centre (but with lower travel costs).

Responding to Competition Through Modern Payment Techniques

Many parking areas within Aberdeen now offer the potential to pay-by-phone. As a result, people are able to pay either by calling, texting or using the mobile phone app. Motorists can register their details and pay electronically, making it easier and quicker to pay

for parking allowing them to get on with their day, whether it is shopping, visiting friends or going on business. Once the period they have paid for is nearly over, they are sent a text message informing them to either return to their vehicle or top up, which they can do on their phone. This helps remove one of the current barriers to longer dwell times in the city centre - the pressure to return to a parked vehicle.

Introduced in December 2011 it has had more than 19,000 transactions. Originally only being available in off-street locations it has now been opened up to on-street locations allowing consistency of services in all pay-and-display parking areas.



DUNDEE

Related Success Factors

- Minimising Traffic in the Core
- Intelligent and Flexible Tariffs
- Intelligent Transportation Systems
- Safety and Security
- Communication and Transparency

Context

The City of Dundee, the fourth largest city in Scotland, is located on the north bank of the Firth of Tay. Demands for city centre parking are driven by a combination of commuter, shopper and tourist traffic. 18 out of the 23 car parks within the city centre are operated and owned by the local council, with the remainder being operated by private companies such as NCP. Dundee Council is the local parking enforcement authority and, as such, is able to control the level of parking charges and fines.

Reducing Congestion

Similar to Oxford, as a result of the development of a parking policy in the 1970s, Dundee set out to create a city centre which would be largely free of vehicular traffic. The majority of off-street multi-storey car parks have been developed around the outskirts of the centre, limiting central area parking to largely on-street provision.

To support the policy of limiting traffic within the ring road, parking charges have been set for on-street provision in the city centre at a higher level than the equivalent off-street (outside the ring road), currently £2.00 for one hour on-street compared to £1.70 for up to 2 hours off-street.

Flexible Payment Options

A wide range of payment options are available including pay-by-machine with cash or card, or pay-by-phone. More recently the Council has invested in a pay-on-foot system which allows more freedom for the shopper, removing the pressure to return to the car park associated with a fixed period pre-pay ticket.

In the last 18 months the Council has invested in a new back office computer system for the parking service, (in this case the Metric Aura Elite system). This allows tariff changes to be pre-loaded and set for timed activations (including provision for a range of stored tariffs). The system also allows for tariffs to

be varied by time and date, providing a system which is flexible and allows for central and relatively quick updating of tariffs.

Designing Out Crime

Dundee has also achieved success by taking a proactive approach to safer parking, a key concern of customers. While there are a number of ways to tackle crime, consideration for safer parking at the design stage prior to the construction of a car park can provide the strongest possible foundation to build on. This was the case when a multi-storey parking facility was opened at Olympia in 2013 where security was a consideration from the initial design, through to construction and the on-going maintenance. Consequently, on completion, Olympia was awarded the Safer Parking Scheme's Park Mark®.

Dundee saw Park Mark® status was worthwhile because it reassures customers that the car park they are using is a well-managed, pleasant environment. This means a visual inspection every three years by a local crime liaison officer and the BPA area manager to inspect crime records, customer complaints and bouquets, staff training, evacuation procedures, lighting, barriers, payment machines, surveillance, lifts and stairwells, maintenance, traffic circulation, parking bays, pedestrian access and exit routes, direction signs, boundaries, landscaping and staff presence. In the intervening years assessment is completed via the electronic reporting of changes and crime statistics.

The approach to safety for Olympia means that recommendations have been limited to cutting hedges back to improve the line of sight for surveillance and improving the security of storage cupboards through the use of padlocks.

Dundee City Council has made the most of the Park Mark® status by seizing on opportunities to promote the award through local newspapers and radio stations as well as using Park Mark® signage in the facility itself.



MIDDLESBROUGH

Related Success Factors

- Intelligent and Flexible Tariffs
- Space Utilisation

Context

The town of Middlesbrough is located in the North East of England. Like many English towns and cities of the industrial north it suffered heavy bombing during the Second World War and, as a result, the centre was redeveloped. Consequently, Middlesbrough has been designed with common car ownership in mind.

Control of car parking within Middlesbrough is split between public and private ownership. Long-stay car parks are managed by the Council, whilst short-stay parking is managed by private firms.

Competitive Council Tariffs

The 2012 Annual Council Parking Survey found that there had been a 14% reduction in council controlled car park usage in 2011/2012 compared with 2010/2011 as result of the economic downturn with less people working in the town centre, rising fuel costs and private parking sites taking business from

council run parking. In order to reverse this trend and encourage people to use unpopular car parks, the Council have implemented a range of pricing measures.

This includes making the first 2 hours of parking in council owned car parks free. This has been in place since October 2013 and it is understood that local businesses have seen increased visitor numbers as a result of this scheme. Along with this, at the beginning of December 2013, a one day parking charge of £1.00 was put in place to encourage more people to use the town centre for Christmas shopping rather than drive to out-of-town retail centres.

The Council reviewed parking charges and their impact on local businesses. As a result, a council run car park which was rarely used had its parking charges reduced from £3.30 to £1.00 for all day parking. Following this change it was noted that,

not only were more people using the car parking facility, but local businesses were also experiencing increased spend.

Whilst these price reductions are having a number of positive economic benefits, the Council has also identified the potential wider effect upon the privately owned car parks in the town. With less and less people opting to park in the more expensive private car parks this raises the risk that some could go out of business, which could damage overall levels of parking supply in the long-term.



TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Related Success Factors

- Modern Payment Methods

Context

The town of Tunbridge Wells is located approximately 40 miles South East of London and is close to the border of the County of East Sussex. Parking demands are driven largely by a combination of retail and tourist visits, with the town having a strong regional draw due to its historic centre and spa baths (tourism making up to 30% of the towns income).

Award Winning NFC

Tunbridge Wells Council were recognised in the 2013 British Parking Awards Digital category for implementing technology-based solutions to car parking payment methods. This was because of their willingness to adopt new technology to advance the way the phone is used in the payment process.

Knowing that millions of motorists already use phone technology to pay for parking and understanding that smartphone penetration in the UK is currently

around 58% and growing every year, PayByPhone utilised near field communication (NFC) to develop a new way to help make paying to park faster and easier.

PayByPhone installed unique cashless parking stickers that were embedded with securely encrypted NFC tags onto Tunbridge Wells Council pay and display machines. When paying to park, the motorist simply taps their phone against the NFC tag. This instantly launches the payment page on the PayByPhone app with the unique location number already populated. To complete payment the motorist simply enters the parking duration and their card security number.

In Tunbridge Wells, each NFC tag is programmed to contain a unique URL that is automatically detected by the NFC smartphone when the motorist touches their phone to it. The programming is done in such a way that the tag cannot be reprogrammed

and the data is encrypted in such a way that third parties cannot access it without permission from PayByPhone.

Over time an increased use of this system and other cashless payments, including card and phone options could reduce the issues associated with more traditional cash payments, including reducing or removing the need for cash collections by council employees.



MAIDENHEAD

Related Success Factors

- Minimising Traffic in the Core
- Modern Payment Methods
- Communication and Transparency

Context

The Nicholson Centre multi-storey car park is located on Broadway in Maidenhead town centre and is associated with the Nicholson shopping centre, although the car park is operated by the Council. The entrance to the car park is off Broadway which is a busy one way street within the town centre.

The car park, adjacent to the shopping centre, was originally fitted with a pay-on-foot system (utilising a barrier) that was well suited to the size and location of the car park. The pay-on-foot system was favoured by the shopping centre management as their customers using the car park did not need to “clock watch” as they would if a pay-and-display system was in operation.

Peak Time Congestion

The disadvantage of the barrier solution was, that

due to the design of the entrance lanes, it is only possible for two or three vehicles to be queuing at the barrier. At peak times on Saturdays, the queues would regularly back up on to Broadway, which in turn very quickly backed up to the main inner ring road causing significant congestion in the town centre.

After a number of years, the Council decided that this had to be resolved and so decided to remove the pay-on-foot system in favour of pay-and-display machines. This meant no more queuing to enter the car park and immediately resolved congestion issues at peak times. However, shopping centre management started to see a decline in visitor numbers and shorter stay durations, which was attributed to the new pay-and-display system.

After a campaign in the local papers and increasing pressure from town centre groups, the council

agreed to investigate alternative solutions to the “traditional” parking systems.

CCTV Solution

In 2012 the Council installed Parkeon’s automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) based parking solution, ParkREG. ParkREG uses ANPR cameras at the entry and exit lanes to capture vehicle movements as they enter and leave the site. Payments are made via ten terminals installed throughout the car park with colour touch screens using coin and card payments. The ParkREG system operates in the same way as pay-on-foot i.e. the user pays when they are ready to leave, meaning that customers do not have to decide how long they are going to stay when they arrive. As there are no barriers at the entry and exits, traffic can flow in and out of the site.

The use of modern ANPR technology has allowed the Council to deploy a parking system that addresses the congestion issue associated with the barrier operated system and balance the needs of the shopping centre and town centre businesses in a difficult economic climate. The adoption of the ParkREG system has enabled the Council to explore and provide additional payment channels to users, such as mobile phone payments, web and account based parking schemes.



COLCHESTER

Related Success Factors

- Know Your Customers
- Minimising Traffic in the Core
- Intelligent and Flexible Tariffs
- Communication and Transparency

Context

Colchester falls under the North Essex Parking Partnership which hosts the operation of seven authorities. Like countless other areas, drivers in Colchester were dissatisfied with the parking offer. Consequently, the North Essex Parking Partnership worked with businesses, leisure providers and the tourism sector through collectives such as the Chambers of Commerce and the Colchester Retail and Business Association to develop a plan for a more progressive parking offer.

Simplification of the Customer Offer

A thorough review of parking was undertaken looking at pricing, statistics, the market and nearby locations. Within this review, Colchester identified four key groups for whom the parking offer could be constructed around:

- Commuters;
- Shoppers;
- Lifestyle/leisure users; and
- Weekend visitors/tourists.

The Council had to break away from the traditional notion of 'the more you pay, the longer you get' which places time restrictions on motorists, cutting dwell time and enjoyment and instead offered specific packages which met the needs of the motorists and reduced congestion. This required a change in the payment machines, clear signage, good communication and engaging branding. The following four distinctive offers were constructed around the four groups identified:

- Work (special offer for all day parking for those arriving before 8am);
- Shop (special offer for 4 hours parking for those arriving after 10am);
- Play (special offer for 4 hours parking for those arriving after 3pm); and
- Relax (weekend ticket valid at multiple car parks).

This offered simplicity for drivers who could more easily identify a pricing tariff that was appropriate for them. It also incentivised commuters to avoid driving during the morning peak period, reducing congestion on the roads. Further discounts were offered to those

who did not fit one of these categories and therefore, was unable to benefit from a reasonable tariff, but did drive a low emissions car.

Businesses in Colchester were happy to support the parking offer with restaurants, theatres and cinemas boosting publicity by offering prizes as part of local marketing campaigns.

In order to further improve the customer experience, the Parking Partnership held discussions with 'Mobilise' (now known as Disabled Motoring UK), who represent disabled motorists to identify any weaknesses in the current offer. This identified that civil works were just as important as putting in place the right charging scheme. In particular, wheelchair users could not actually use the payment metres provided. This meant alterations to the public realm to ensure this was no longer the case.



RUGBY

Related Success Factors

- Connected Value
- Space Utilisation

Context

Rugby, in Warwickshire, and the surrounding suburban area, is home to over 100,000 people. Rugby is classified as a major regional centre by CACI's Retail Footprint model which places it in the second tier of the regional shopping hierarchy, similar to other West Midland shopping destinations like Wolverhampton, Coventry, Nuneaton, Kidderminster and West Bromwich.

Rugby faces a challenge of capacity with regards to its parking offer. A common complaint for motorists is a lack of parking availability in the town centre. This has possibly been fuelled by a steadily growing population within the Borough. This challenge is made more acute by increasing competition with CACI estimating that Rugby's residents are spending £80 million annually outside the Borough.

Empowering Rugby's Retailers Whilst Promoting Underused Parking Assets

Rugby Council and Rugby First BID are working together to test simple ways of empowering retailers to shape parking. Despite the capacity issues in Rugby's most visible and central car parks, in close proximity on the edge of the centre in less visible locations, two council car parks sit virtually empty with around 80% of spare capacity during peak times.

To counter this, the Council and the BID have agreed to develop a number of free parking passes for these underutilised car parks. These passes will be distributed to retailers who, in turn, have the freedom to give these to customers of their choosing, permitting four hours free parking for either of the two edge-of-centre car parks. This means retailers

can reward valued customers and encourage repeat business. Customers benefit from the free parking but also become aware of the convenience provided by alternative car parks previously unknown to them. The Council benefit from the good PR generated from a free parking offer but more importantly, by actively promoting underutilised parking assets, is able to moderate demand across multiple parking sites both within centre and on the edge of the centre.

US Case Studies





FAIRBANKS (ALASKA)

Related Success Factors

- Connected Value
- Communication and Transparency

Context

Fairbanks, in the US state of Alaska, has a population of 100,000. The City Government retained power of authority over the management of on-street parking, and some contracted management of private off-street parking, all coordinated through the Fairbanks Parking Authority (FPA). For many years the parking enforcement regime had been poorly run, with suspicions of corruption, a hostile relationship with the downtown businesses and a negative public image.

How Parking Enforcement Threatened New Inward Investment

The city centre had been massively impacted by the edge-of-town development that followed the 1970's oil boom. The few remaining retailers, banks

and restaurants struggled on alongside government buildings and a small amount of residential property. In the late 1990's a Marriott Hotel, a new state courthouse, a new visitor's information centre for the growing tourism sector and a pedestrian footbridge over the river were proposed, all contingent on certain downtown commitments, amongst which was the overhaul of the notorious parking enforcement system. Not only had parking been a PR nightmare for Fairbanks but it now threatened new inward investment.

Businesses Leading on Enforcement

The decision was taken to break the link between the City of Fairbanks Government and parking management, instead empowering the business community to spearhead the operation. The FPA

was reformed as a separate entity from the City of Fairbanks, becoming a not-for-profit organisation. A small board of directors, made up of downtown business leaders with a delegated power of parking enforcement, led the FPA.

Clear communication of this change in management took place and the hands-on involvement of members of the board in the appeals process became the norm. A new enforcement regime that was applied consistently and fairly, encouraging education before enforcement, was introduced. The aim was to deliver a parking regime that prioritised shoppers and tourists over employees, making it clear to commuters where free or low cost parking was available on the outskirts of the core of the downtown, a short walking distance away.

The involvement of businesses not only ensured the FPA was more commercially focused, transforming parking facilities into an amenity, but this also had an impact on the way the FPA was perceived by key stakeholders. Within a year the conflict between the business community and the local government dissipated and the FPA broke even, a stark contrast to the loss-making operation that had existed before. As well as becoming an incentive to downtown investment and public patronage, the parking regime focused on making the downtown core area accessible. The planned investments materialised, and tourism started to pick up. Retail unit lettings increased and upper floor units attracted members of the creative arts community. Downtown started to buzz.



CEDAR RAPIDS (IOWA)

Related Success Factors

- Integrated Transport and Accessibility Strategy
- Connected Value
- Communication and Transparency

Context

In June 2008 Cedar Rapids faced, what was at the time, the fourth worst natural disaster in US history. Extensive flooding left over 10 square miles of its downtown underwater causing damage estimated to be up to \$9 billion, displacing 650 residents and 1,000 businesses.

With an extensive regeneration program to return the city-wide area to health it was clear that downtown parking could no longer be the local government's top priority.

Public-Private Leadership on Parking Policy

The Cedar Rapids Downtown District and the Self Supported Municipal Improvement District joined forces to create the platform for a public-private

partnership to manage parking in the downtown area. It was identified that a well coordinated, customer focused offer could be an important lever for bringing people back to the downtown, using the disaster as an opportunity to start again and create something compelling for users.

The partnership worked together to create 'Cedar Rapids Parking: Strategic Action Plan' which was aligned with the wider economic development strategy for the downtown. While the City of Cedar Rapids retained ownership of the parking facilities, it was the downtown partnership that took responsibility for developing public policy. Good leadership was a priority with the parking system vertically integrated allowing on-street parking, off-street parking, enforcement, parking planning, and

demand management to be managed by a single team.

With a strategic action plan in place, the purpose of the parking facilities became clear – the economic development of the downtown area Cedar Rapids. With this in mind, the geography of the available parking facilities were chosen in accordance with the planning context outlined in related strategic documents including the JLG ‘Vision Cedar Rapids’ Plan in 2006 and the River Corridor Recovery Plan in 2009.

Using Parking to Incentivise Investment

With development in the downtown area essential following the floods, parking was used as a catalyst for investment. Although parking requirements are the norm for new developments downtown, these requirements were waived for buildings categorised as a priority. This applied in particular to desirable public-private mixed-use developments using parking as an incentive to much needed investment.

The revenue from a successful parking regime, that was developed in accordance with the wider needs of the city with input from the community, was then used to fund initiatives to build the resilience and vibrancy of the downtown.

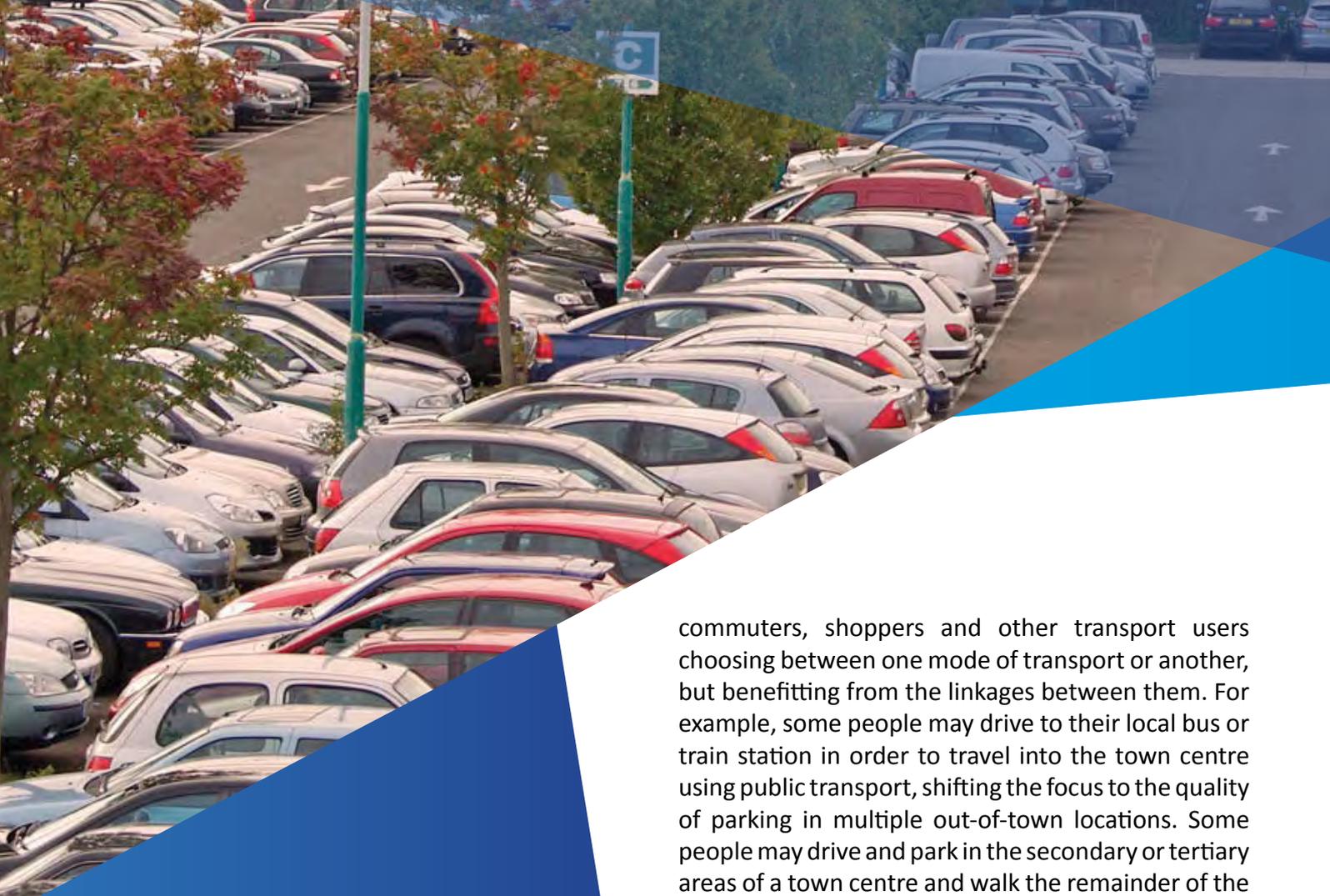


Identifying Success Factors

A thorough assessment of the case studies in this report reveals a number of factors that are key to the success in one or more of the scenarios. This section identifies what these success factors are, explains why they are important, and the conditions needed to implement them elsewhere. This includes a brief overview of the barriers to implementing these factors.

It must be remembered that some of these factors overlap with others with success in one area only possible if other factors have already been implemented. For example, modern payment methods might be a precursor to intelligent and flexible tariffs structures and an integrated transport strategy may go hand-in-hand with solutions to minimising traffic in the core of town centres. It must also be remembered that these factors are not necessarily universally applicable. It is for those who shape the local parking offer to decide what approach should be adopted.





Integrated Transport and Accessibility Strategy

Related Case Studies

- Oxford
- Cedar Rapids

Achieving successful parking policies over the long-term requires holistic thinking, ensuring parking policy is a subset of a transport and accessibility strategy.

The rationale for this is clear. The links between different methods of travelling are intrinsic. Changes to one mode of transport can have a huge impact on other modes. In London, heavy investment in the public transport network has significantly slowed the growth of car use, for example. Poor investment in public transport can often have the opposite effect.

It must also be recognised that it is not necessarily

commuters, shoppers and other transport users choosing between one mode of transport or another, but benefitting from the linkages between them. For example, some people may drive to their local bus or train station in order to travel into the town centre using public transport, shifting the focus to the quality of parking in multiple out-of-town locations. Some people may drive and park in the secondary or tertiary areas of a town centre and walk the remainder of the journey shifting the focus to excellent accessibility by foot from the edge-of-centre.

Cohesive and well thought-out transport strategies consider more than just modes of transport. As suggested in the recommendations of 'Re-think! Parking on the High Street', other considerations such as spatial availability, evolving demographics and the relationship between a town centre's business mix and subsequent travel needs must all be taken into account. An integrated transport strategy itself must be embedded within a forward-thinking planning regime (see diagram 1).

Developing and delivering on holistic transport strategies, while clearly the right way forward, is something that is difficult to achieve. Coordinated transport policies, even at the most operational level can be hard to implement. Take parking in isolation, for example. New convenience stores are opening on the high street, in some cases bringing free parking with them. This means, in some town centres, it is possible for car parks in close proximity to each other to be owned by a mixture of district councils, county councils, private parking providers and supermarkets, each with their own objectives. Surrounding roads may then be the responsibility of the highways authority. This undermines the ability to develop



coherent parking plans. So consider the difficulties in adding land owners, employers, train operators, bus operators and statutory agencies in order to develop a comprehensive transport strategy.

The problem is not insurmountable. In fact, parking and transport is symptomatic of traditional problems affecting town centres – no natural coordination or management. ATCM, its members, and others have advocated for years that with strong local leadership we can deliver a coordinated approach that will benefit town centres and this extends to transport and accessibility. Town centre management through local government structures, BIDs or voluntary schemes such as Town Teams, offer the potential to ease parking problems by being the forum to develop good transport strategies that will require an alignment to planning and input from multiple stakeholders.



Diagram 1



Connected Value

Related Case Studies

- Nottingham
- Rugby
- Fairbanks
- Cedar Rapids

There are often comparisons drawn between in-town and out-of-town parking. In-town parking is often associated with high costs and uncertain availability whilst out-of-town with ample, free, surface level parking. One of the biggest concerns cited is a lack of transparency in the rating system because out-of-town car parks that are part of a large retail development are not rated separately in the same way as most in-town car parks, leading to disparities in cost. There is no clarity whether or not this leads to any tangible difference in the cost of managing a car park but, what is clear, is that this is symptomatic of a wider problem for town centre car parks – a lack of connected value.

Out-of-town shopping centres and retail parks manage their parking assets in accordance with the needs of the businesses that rely on them. The connected value between businesses and the car park allow the businesses themselves to subsidise the cost of parking on behalf of motorists with customers paying indirectly through the till. This removes charges at the point of use making the parking offer more attractive even though it is not actually free. The capacity for this level of business influence in-town seldom exists because of a lack of natural connected value between the parking facilities and the business community. As

parking assets are not often owned by the businesses that rely on them, the actual owners, whether local government or private providers have to recoup the costs directly from users rather than through the till. Charges at the point of use may have a detrimental impact on footfall.

Business empowerment and influence of this kind is not just about removing costs at the point of use for users. It may be about shaping the offer in other ways so that it is aligned with the needs of different users from commuters, to tourists, shoppers and after dark. Town centres are likely to have a much more diverse range of businesses grouped together, than out-of-town locations. Therefore, the need of businesses to input into parking policies may be even greater to meet the needs of its diverse users.

Furthermore, it may not be just businesses that have an interest in shaping their parking assets. In smaller centres, local community groups might want the chance to ensure parking meets their needs. Creating a connected value between either the community or the businesses with local parking facilities opens up the possibility for them to be used appropriately as assets rather than a perceived cash cow.

This empowerment is possible through measures that are not substantially different from the management structures suggested under the first success factor – integrated transport strategies. Partnership is critical to this process. The key stakeholders have to come together to develop a coordinated approach to parking that allows them to overcome local problems with innovative solutions. BIDs are already in an ideal position to take a leading role in local parking. Town Teams and other voluntary groups can also get involved, especially with empowering legislation such as *community right to buy* and *community right to challenge*.



Know Your Customers

Related Case Studies

- Colchester

Predictably, understanding the needs of your customers makes a big difference in the quality of parking provision offered. Whilst predictable, not all operators of car parks are sensitive to the specific habits of different users, especially as not all public sector operators will have a commercial background and may simply be aiming to cover the cost of parking without the knowledge of the ramifications of different tariff structures.

Different people use parking for different reasons and being able to find out the commonalities between users and build segments around these is a simple and effective marketing technique that can be the basis of a strong parking policy. This should act as a precursor to the next factor – *Intelligent and Flexible Tariffs*.

Questions which should be asked are:

- Why are people using a car park? Shopping, commuting, leisure, tourism, delivery of products to businesses etc...?
- How long is the parking required for?
- Where, in the town centre, is the ideal parking place for them?
- Are they visiting during particularly busy periods, and if so, are there any suitable incentives that may encourage them to visit during quieter periods?

- Does the journey have to be made by motor vehicle or are there any particular incentives that can be used to encourage a change in transport mode?
- What other factors impact on their needs when they get into the town centre. For example, is the car carrying a young family? Is the journey being made by a blue badge holder who may have specific mobility needs once reaching their destination? Are they picking up or dropping off bulky items?

This information can provide the building blocks for sensible marketing and pricing policies to be deployed to ensure that town centre is viewed as accessible by as many people as possible. Take, for example, the Colchester case study where a partnership decided to build its parking policy around four distinctive user groups typical of that town centre.

This information can be collected in a variety of ways. While traditional market research and customer surveys remains an option, modern payment techniques can actually collate much of this data automatically. Payment terminals can be used to store information on where and when people are parking allowing operators to build up a picture of car park use. For example, in Braintree the district council attempted to attract people into town after 3pm on Monday to Fridays by only charging drivers 10p to park. This policy was introduced in contrast to free after 3pm simply because the need to purchase a ticket meant the Council could continue to collect data and monitor the evolving use of the car park, thus giving them the ability to understand the travel patterns of customers.



Minimising Traffic in the Core

Related Case Studies

- Oxford
- Nottingham
- Dundee
- Maidenhead

As mentioned in the introduction to the report, responding to the growth in car ownership and parking capacity issues by increasing parking provision is not always a viable option. In fact contrary to common assumptions, some centres may benefit greatly from restricting access to traffic from private motor vehicles.

There may be a number of reasons for this. In large centres it may simply be that demand will always be greatly in excess of supply and so increasing provision or removing parking restrictions would lead to significant congestion problems. Furthermore, larger centres have the critical mass and scale to make public transport efficient and profitable.

Historic centres may face a different challenge. Protecting highly valued public realm could be a priority which leads to the need to minimise traffic centrally. Also, there is the issue that busy roads can dissect the flow of pedestrians, sometimes suffocating footfall to the detriment of businesses.

While restricting the amount of traffic in a town centre can sometimes support the trading environment, careful consideration must be given to viable alternatives. This might include excellent public transport, adequate and cost effective parking provision on the edge of town (which includes good accessibility, by foot or other means, to amenities) or even a shared space scheme which accommodates both pedestrians and cars simultaneously. Restricting traffic without a viable alternative in place that is well promoted will only limit people's access to town centres.

Furthermore, consideration must be given to blue badge holders to ensure they are able to access key services regardless of traffic restrictions.



Intelligent and Flexible Tariffs

Related Case Studies

- Oxford
- Dundee
- Middlesbrough
- Colchester

Free parking is not always an option for a number of reasons and is not necessarily the only criteria motorists use to judge which location is the most attractive to visit. However, poorly thought out tariffs can turn motorists away from town centres, or simply not attract the right people to help a centre thrive. Intelligent and flexible pricing tariffs can do a lot to make parking work well for all key stakeholders with a little effort from operators.

At a simplistic level this can be about the ability to drop prices where there is a need or desire to increase demand and raise them where there is a need to moderate demand. Changes in the tariffs could also be a response to specific events or circumstances. In Cedar Rapids, for example, part of the solution to revitalising the downtown following the floods was to offer temporary concessions on parking. Such temporary discounts may also be a consideration during specific seasons where customer demand may be low or competition for footfall may be fierce. Take, for example, Middlesbrough Council's decision to compete on price during Christmas.

At a more sophisticated level it can be about targeting

different users using different tariffs to encourage shoppers to more central areas and encourage commuters to secondary locations (such as the Oxford case study). This can extend to positively changing behaviour for the benefit of any number of objectives. It may be about offering special rates to attract users of the evening and night-time economy or using pricing as a method of tackling congestion or even cutting local pollution by rewarding those with fuel efficient cars.

Like 'Know Your Customers', a great deal of consideration needs to go into a number of issues. Evidence needs to be gathered and informed judgements made about which drivers should be targeted, plus where, when and how they should be attracted. This requires an understanding about the habits of different road users including the times of day they are likely to travel into the town centre and the likely duration of their stay.

Good marketing and promotion is essential. Motorists need to understand the rationale of a tariff system that moves past a universal flat rate structure if they are to perceive it as fair. However sophisticated the tariff, the simpler the message is, the better.

Decision-making which is responsive to events supported by coordinated back office systems may also be an important factor. As circumstances emerge that require the alteration of pricing, the need for this to be implemented quickly can determine success or failure.



Modern Payment Methods

Related Case Studies

- Aberdeen
- Tunbridge Wells
- Maidenhead

Digital technology is changing the way we live. We are beginning to understand how such technology can increase convenience and provide the basis for a hassle-free experience.

Mobile parking payments in particular are making life more convenient for users by increasing the potential for dwell time as the duration of stay can be extended without a need for the motorist to return to the vehicle. Mobile payments as an option can also assist both motorists and operators by simplifying a sometimes arduous process. For motorists it reduces the need to carry cash and for operators reduces the need to collect and transport cash. Furthermore, it can be a central part of offering connected value by allowing motorists to utilise parking validation, collecting parking discounts at the till using their phone.

Before parking managers embark on a mission to introduce mobile payments, a number of issues must be carefully considered first. There will be initial set up costs that must be taken into account. Is the expected return on investment going to be enough to justify the initial investment? Secondly, mobile payments become less attractive if an operator does

not have complete coverage across a town centre, undermining the ability to guarantee motorists a hassle-free experience wherever they park. Finally, consideration must be given to the take up of mobile technology amongst customers. Although most people in the UK own a mobile phone, this does not extend to everyone and there is a difference to be drawn between a smart phone and other phones. There needs to be a decision made on whether a mobile parking payment system will only cater for smart phones or will be compatible with other phones and furthermore, whether alternative payment methods will exist alongside this.

It is not just mobile payments that can transform how we pay for parking. The use of CCTV technology is growing ever more sophisticated and can be utilised effectively, avoiding the weaknesses of pay-and-display which cuts dwell time and a barrier operated pay-on-exit system which can cause congestion at key times (see the Maidenhead case study).

This is only a snapshot of the technology available to assist parking managers and operators. Many other solutions will be available from a variety of parking providers.



Intelligent Transportation Systems

Related Case Studies

- Nottingham
- Dundee

Modern payment methods and intelligent parking tariffs have both touched upon how technology can be exploited primarily in the consumer-facing context. However, this must also extend to back office functions that may not directly influence actual users but will lead to a very well-managed, efficient and intelligent operation.

ITS can help in a number of different ways including the development of intelligent, targeted tariffs through data collection, managing responsive changes to tariffs, and coordinating this across a number of different car parks all in the same vicinity whether on-street or off, publicly owned or private. However, comprehensive route coverage is a precursor to successfully implementing such a system. This requires partnership if there is split ownership between different car parks in a town centre with consideration given to incompatible management and monitoring systems.

Additional benefits can be sought by allowing an ITS to work across the public transport network as well as the private network providing a more holistic solution.

As with other technology-led solutions, initial set-up costs and therefore, return on investment, must be explored. These are likely to be more prohibitive for smaller locations such as market towns.



Space Utilisation

Related Case Studies

- Middlesbrough
- Rugby

As the cost of purchasing a car continues to fall in conjunction with projected population growth, car ownership is expected to rise in future years. 'Action for Roads', by the Department for Transport and the Highways Agency, warns that by 2040 there will be somewhere between 24% to 72% additional traffic on our roads. This has extreme implications for the availability of parking space. The RAC Foundation found that a car spends just 3% to 4% of its time in transit, remaining parked somewhere for the remaining duration. If there are more cars on our roads then thought must be given to where they will go once they reach their destination. Therefore, it is critical that those involved in shaping parking, from town centre managers to local planning authorities, think about intelligent space utilisation to minimise some of the anticipated problems.

One answer could be to consider all parking space as multi-purpose. For example, towns and city centres will have ample parking serving offices which are not always used outside of normal working hours. Ensuring these spaces are available to users of the evening and night time economy and those shopping outside of the working hours is a good start. Single purpose parking which leads to an available parking space not being used when there is a supply/demand imbalance may have to be consigned to the past.

Another solution, which also relies on making the most of existing space, is to promote those car parks which are underused. Through the innovative use of communications, and special offers both amongst drivers and businesses, parking operators can increase the long-term use of less visible car parks similar to that illustrated in the Rugby case study.

A more radical, but equally plausible, long-term option is to look towards new methods of parking cars that require less space. Automated parking systems are one example of this. This system stacks cars like a multi-storey car park. However, this is done autonomously using a mechanical system removing the need for walk ways and staircases, reducing the overall space needed. This carries the additional benefit of security because there is no public access to parked cars. While automated parking systems are being used in increasing numbers abroad they have not yet taken off in the UK, yet they may help minimise issues, with capacity.



Wayfinding

Related Case Studies

- Nottingham

Wayfinding has always been critical for visitors to town centres regardless of the mode of transport they are using. However, problems can clearly be more acute when travelling by car with very little time for drivers to consider the direction they should be travelling in, inconvenient one-way systems and other road users to consider. Furthermore, the actual destination of people travelling by car will not be the car park itself but instead another amenity, hopefully close by, increasing the importance of finding the right car park, not just any car park. Clear, succinct signage that allows drivers to reach their destination could do much to improve the in-town parking experience.

Techniques in signage are evolving, using images and simple visual cues to provide drivers with the location of the amenity they might want to visit, the nearest parking facility and real-time information about the spaces available at the facility. 'Smart signage' is being introduced in more and more locations, providing drivers with updated information to reduce the stress of finding an adequate parking space. An area of growth potential is the inclusion of

real-time information into GPS systems such as smart phones and Tom Toms, allowing drivers to continually access information on the move. This means parking providers and network providers working together to offer a seamless service to customer



Communication and Transparency

Related Case Studies

- Maidenhead
- Colchester
- Fairbanks
- Cedar Rapids

Communication and transparency appears to play a role in nearly all of the success factors referenced here.

This is not limited to motorists but includes a much broader range of stakeholders including retail businesses, office based businesses, other transport operators, town centre and BID managers, the local media etc... This is not just about effectively communicating the right tariffs to the right people or real time information about parking availability but is also about making relevant stakeholders aware of the rationale for the decisions taken to shape a parking offer. It is often the case that people who depend on parking are not always aware of the complexity of transport and accessibility issues and can therefore be resistant to change. Those in the parking profession who do not make clear the reasons why certain decisions are taken can fall foul of negative publicity. This includes being open and transparent on how funds are spent to help dispel

myths that public sector parking operators are generating excessive surpluses.

Furthermore, this is not just about communicating to the relevant stakeholders that certain decisions have been taken and explaining why they have been taken. Good communication means bringing stakeholders into the decision-making process so their concerns are understood and their needs can be met. Good communication means a fair consultation process to decrease the likeness of public disputes.

Safety and Security

Related Case Studies

- Dundee

Personal safety and the security of the vehicle are key concerns for drivers, often more so than tariffs. Exposure to potential crime is a huge deterrent to the use of particular car parks whilst perceived safety will attract users. For those who manage car parks there are a number of considerations that come into play.

Preventing crime is probably the most important of these, either through the designing out of crime for new or renovated car parks or adequate security measures introduced into existing car parks. Alongside this must be an effort to influence the perception of safety to attract car park users and deter potential criminals. Finally, there is ensuring that an adequate response can be put in place should a crime occur. Not only would this give victims peace of mind but would also recognise that many crimes are caused by repeat offenders. Therefore, successful apprehension could have a disproportionately positive impact on future crime and disorder.

Measures to tackle prevention, perception and response can include a number of options such as good quality lighting, a clean environment, visible CCTV, on-site staff, coordination with police, street wardens or a local crime prevention partnership. Those managing car parks who believe they have an offer which is extremely safe should consider Park Mark® accreditation. The following section outlines the benefits of achieving Park Mark® status.

About Park Mark® Award

High streets and town centres are the hub of a community so every effort should be made to ensure visitors, staff and residents are as safe as possible – and this applies to cars and car parking facilities too. The Safer Parking Scheme is a nationwide initiative

designed to reduce the opportunity for crime to occur in car parks and thus reduce fear of crime for members of the public. Safer Parking status, Park Mark®, is awarded to parking facilities that have met the requirements of a risk assessment conducted by the Police, giving confidence to car park users. These requirements mean the parking operator has put in place measures that help to deter criminal activity and anti-social behaviour, thereby doing everything they can to prevent crime in their parking facility.

Park Mark® Benefits

This carries many benefits for customers and operators alike:

- Customers are assured that there is a commitment to providing a high quality, clean, well-managed, safe parking facility by the operator;
- A commitment to reducing crime and the fear of crime helps car park operators save money by reducing the carbon footprint of the car park;
- Advice and consultation from BPA Area Managers to ensure car parks are at the required standard to achieve the Park Mark®, Safer Parking Award;
- Support from accredited Police Assessors who will assess the car park to ensure it meets the Park Mark® Safer Parking standards; and
- Free listing of car parks on www.parkmark.co.uk - fully searchable by the public.

The scheme is open to anyone with an interest in the reduction of crime and the fear of crime in society, from parking facility operators/owners to individuals or organisations that simply want to be affiliated to the scheme.

The scheme is managed by the BPA, on behalf of the Association of Chief Police Officers and supported by the Home Office, Scottish Government and the Police Services of Northern Ireland and Scotland.





Summary

The challenges for town and city centres in relation to parking are significant. It is hoped that this report provides some guidance in how parking practice can be enhanced to help alleviate problems without conforming to the notion that free parking is the universal answer.

It is important for the parking profession and those who help manage town and city centres to recognise that what is contained here is not the extent of what can be done to improve accessibility. There may be many areas where the right answer lies in thinking beyond the car, with better public transport and public realm.

For many of Europe's most desirable towns and cities the work of Danish architect Jan Gehl, encouraging traditional centres to be people focused rather than car focused, remains relevant today. This view pervades and is supported by the more contemporary work of Just Economics and Living Streets on the power of the pedestrian pound, highlighting that town centres capable of maximising accessibility via alternative methods to the car can attract, rather than lose, spend. However, this does depend on the dynamics and character of each particular centre with large regional towns/cities and historic centres likely to need to limit cars but mid-sized and small convenience centres relying on spend from motorists.

To reiterate the message in 'Re-Think! Parking on the High Street' parking policy must be set in accordance with an evidence based strategy for the town centre with parking itself as a subset of a transport and accessibility plan. Through this we can identify what purpose parking serves, what problems exist, and how best to overcome those problems.

Related Publications

Action for Roads: A Network for the 21st Century (2013)

Department for Transport, Highways Agency

The Future of High Streets (2013)

Department for Communities and Local Government

Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space (1987)

Jan Gehl

The Pedestrian Pound: The Business Case for Better Streets and Places (2013)

Just Economics, Living Streets

Portas Review: An Independent Review into the Future of our High Streets (2011)

Mary Portas

Re-Think! Parking on the High Street (2013)

Association of Town & City Management, British Parking Association, Parking Data and Research International, Springboard

Spaced Out (2012)

John Bates, David Leibling (commissioned by the RAC Foundation)

Town Centre Futures - A Case for the Effective Management of Town & City Centres' (2014)

Association of Town & City Management and Experian

Town Centre Futures White Paper 2020 (2012)

Experian

Contributors



Association of Town & City Management (ATCM)

ATCM, is a not-for-profit membership organisation dedicated to promoting the vitality and viability of town and city centres. It has more than 540 members including key stakeholders in town and city centres across the UK and Ireland. More than 400 of its members are town and city centre management initiatives. Nearly all of these work as partnerships, some with several hundred contributing members. They develop and implement shared visions, strategies and action plans for a total of more than 700 district, town and city centres throughout the UK.

This report would not have been possible without the ATCM Cities Group who provided support through crowdfunding.



British Parking Association (BPA)

The BPA is a not-for-profit membership association representing over 700 organisations from across the entire parking and traffic management sector, including local authorities, manufacturers, car park operators, health authorities, universities, airports, railways, shopping centres, bailiffs, construction companies, learning providers and consultants.

The BPA also manages the Approved Operator Scheme, for those managing parking on private land and the Safer Parking Scheme and Park Mark® Award. For more information about the BPA visit www.britishparking.co.uk



WYG

WYG are a UK based multi-disciplinary consultancy who specialise in assisting public and private sector clients across the world, resolving planning and engineering challenges and exploring new and efficient ways of development and delivering transport, environmental and structural projects. As a multidisciplinary consultant WYG are very aware of the ongoing challenges that delivering effective parking solutions to towns and cities can bring, balancing a commitment to sustainable travel with a pragmatic approach to protecting and enhancing the vitality of town and city centres.

The logo for the Association of Town & City Management (ATCM) features the letters 'ATCM' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The letter 'C' is stylized, with a circular element that resembles a keyhole or a gear, positioned between the 'A' and the 'M'.

association of town & city management

Helping people make
great places

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