



Other Community Parking Experiences

Ann Arbor, Michigan

(Population: 121,093)

Businesses in Ann Arbor, Michigan, used to hear daily complaints from residents that there wasn't enough parking downtown. The Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority (DDA) tackled this problem by making it easier for drivers to find garage parking and by making street parking more expensive and limiting it to short-term stays. Susan Pollay, the DDA's executive director, says that from the outset the board decided that both on-street and off-street parking should pay for itself, and that a good public parking "product" should cover its costs as well as help pay for other ways of getting downtown.

To encourage drivers to use garages, the DDA put up signs directing them to the nearest garage. It also installed electronic signs at the entrances to six garages that show how many empty spaces are available inside. Because street parking now costs more than garage parking, street spaces are likely to be available most of the time. As a result, customers spend less time "cruising" and looking for a space.

Pollay reports that "Ann Arbor's perceptions that there was not enough parking is now almost completely gone." This is true even though the city's downtown zoning does not generally require developers and tenants to provide parking. The DDA's parking profits have helped pay for commuter bus passes, supplemental transit service, bike parking and bike shelters, car-share spaces, electric car-charging stations, and a late-night shared cab program. Most of these reduce the need for parking, so the DDA's parking program also operates as a successful parking demand management program.

