



Ad Hoc Committee Meeting #2  
April 2, 2019 – Hood River City Hall

- Welcome 5:30 PM
- Introductions 5:35 PM
  - **Kate McBride**, City Councilor / Energy Council
  - **Mark Zanmiller**, City Councilor
  - **Laura Garcia-Rangel**, City of Hood River
  - **Annika Cardwell**, City of Hood River
  - **Megan Ramey**, Planning Commission Liaison
  - **Brooke Pauly**, Downtown Building/Retail Owner
  - **Sean Hallissey**, Business Owner, Developer
  - **Hannah Ladwig**, Hood River Farmers Market
  - **Gary Bushman**, Downtown Building Owner (by phone)
  - **Dustin Nilsen**, City of Hood River
  - **Rachael Fuller**, City of Hood River
  - *Consultant Team*: Rick Williams, Owen Ronchelli, William Reynolds
- Approve Meeting 1 Notes 5:45 PM
- Review Meeting and Outreach Schedule 5:50 PM
  - **Council Member Zanmiller**: Make sure to lean on Committee when developing contact lists.
  - **Council President McBride**: Make sure to target Parking Operators
- Building Guiding Principles 6:00 PM

General

- *What attracts people to Hood River?*
  - Food and beverage
  - Cute town/destination
  - Proximity to Portland/easy to access to PDX
- *What is working for businesses that makes Hood River special?*
  - Very dense food/beer/wine/coffee scene
  - Lots of mom and pop shops/boutique; no chains
  - Very compact and accessible, easy to walk around
  - Externally accessible, easy to get here
  - Can spend whole day here, observe recreation, many great attractions
- *What makes Hood River an attractive place to live?*
  - Close to nature, but can live without a car (“oxymoronic utopia”)
  - Amenity-rich community; tons of options and great attractions for residents
  - Big city amenities an hour drive away (PDX, etc.)
  - Small town feel, everybody watches out for each other

- Great schools, great for families, high quality of life
- *What types of things keep you here?*
  - Food and drink options
  - Beautiful, access to nature
  - Quality of life
  - Community
  - Geographic richness; weather (variety, seasonality)
  - Lack of congestion/easy to get around

### Parking

- *What is currently working well in the parking system?*
  - Cars move and circulate fairly well, generally good turnover
  - Fairly convenient (relative to other cities)
  - Parking has not disrupted urban design, no overwhelming large lots
  - Generally there have been many options for obtaining parking downtown
  - Fairly affordable parking system (even for customers)
  - Customer/visitors can typically park close to destinations
  - After 6pm, parking is free and readily available
  - Sundays are free (but busy)
  - Enforcement is effective, present, active, visible, pleasant
  - Signage is not overwhelming
  - BUT: tension is growing among user groups
- *What is currently not working well in the parking system?*
  - Signage and wayfinding largely ineffective, doesn't direct visitors to parking
  - Oak Street is unsafe for bicyclists; friction with traffic (but most other streets are generally OK)
  - Some feel enforcement can be too aggressive
  - Perceived problem that it's difficult to find parking (among locals, particularly those who lived here for many years; some locals indicate they avoid peak tourist times like Saturday mornings in the summer)
    - When Farmer's market moved to Downtown, there was a need to convince people that they would be able to find parking
    - Downtown parking should be viewed as a shared resource.
  - Payment technology is outdated and inconvenient (coin meters)
  - The current fee-in-lieu system is not workable for new development downtown.
  - Blind corners (turning onto Oak Street) can be very challenging (pedestrian/vehicle conflicts)
  - Crossing Oak on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> as a pedestrian is a challenge, crosswalks inadequate
  - Some parking is not well set up for the number of large recreational vehicles (Sprinter vans)
  - There is very little downtown activity after 8pm

- Lighting is fairly poor, but still feels safe (not a major issue)
  - Largely by choice, the City tries to maintain dark skies as much as feasible
- Locals avoid downtown because traffic moves so slowly during peak times (pedestrians generally have priority when there are large numbers of visitors).

#### Establishing Priorities

- *Should employees be allowed to park on-street in the commercial downtown?*
  - Perhaps if they pay?
  - No (from Business owner perspective) or at least strongly discouraged; most employers feel this parking should be available for customers
    - But many employers let them because other parking options limited
  - No
- *Should business/property owners be allowed to park on-street in the commercial downtown?*
  - No; should be consistency between employees and owners
  - However, there needs to be considerations for loading/moving equipment; should be some degree of flexibility (for infrequent needs)
- *Should downtown residents be allowed to park on-street in the commercial downtown? (\*Meaning special privileges for residents, such as with a permit; residents driving downtown to shop/eat are considered visitors in this context)*
  - No; not during business hours
- *Should employees be allowed to park on-street in residential neighborhoods?*
  - No; not as a priority
  - There should be parity between options for employees and residents
  - But, residents do not “own” the public on-street parking in residential areas
- *Should downtown customers be allowed to park on-street in residential neighborhoods?*
  - Yes, but this is not ideal for customers
  - Need to be mindful of residents, particularly in areas where they have no other option when the street is full
  - Should not be prohibited; needs to be customer-friendly

#### Responsibilities and Roles

- *In Downtown, who is responsible for providing (supplying) parking to customers?*
  - City is primarily responsible; City (80%) / Private (20%)
- *In Downtown, who is responsible for providing (supplying) parking to employees?*
  - Balance of private and public; strategic balance
- *In Downtown, who is responsible for providing (supplying) parking to residents?*
  - (To be determined...)

### Defining Success

- *A successful parking program for Downtown Hood River would be...*
  - Accessible
  - Invisible, in back of mind, an afterthought
  - Effectively changes behavior
  
- Initial Parking Demand Assessment 6:45 PM
  - **Gary:** Explain the 1.54 vs. 1.87 numbers, why the increase?
  - **Gary:** Can we use these numbers to forecast out a few years?
    - Rick: we will be working on developing forecasts in the coming weeks
  - **Council President McBride:** It's important to note that demand for parking in many areas is much higher for commercial use compared to if it were converted to residential (number of people per square foot in residential vs. commercial space).
  - **Gary:** These sample cities aren't representative of size of Hood River.
    - Rick: While it's tempting to use other cities as a benchmark, there is truly no other city that has the same characteristics (employment numbers, visitors, etc.), so the numbers are a tool to document the unique conditions in Hood River.
    - **Council President McBride:** It's also important to note that code is an important driver of these results.
  - **Dustin:** Keep in mind some of the change in demand is coming from redevelopment and more intense land uses (such as restaurants) in existing buildings.
  - **Gary:** Consider the impacts of 40 residential units in converted building
  - **Council President McBride:** Will financing be an issue if no parking is provided in historic conversions?
    - **Gary:** Fee-in-lieu is killing redevelopment potential in Downtown
  
- Next Steps 7:25 PM
- Adjourn 7:30 PM