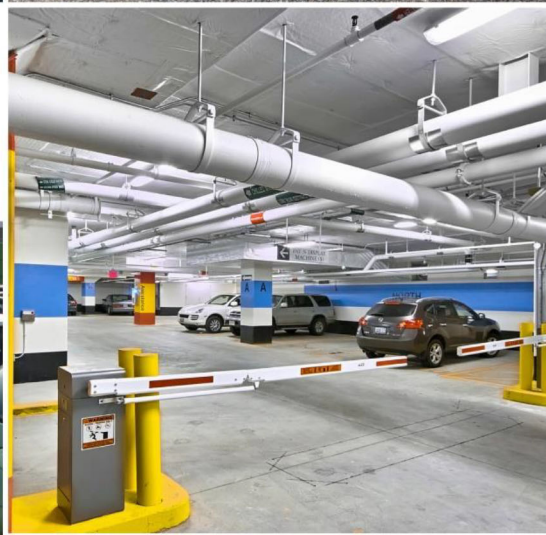




Prepared By:
WSP Canada Inc.



City of Airdrie Downtown Parking Study

What We Heard Report
May 27, 2025



CITY OF AIRDRIE DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

CITY OF AIRDRIE

PROJECT NO.: CA0042938.2818
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A STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To gain an understanding of stakeholder and community perspectives on parking in Downtown Airdrie, a series of engagement activities were conducted in early 2025. These initiatives aimed to gather insights from residents, business owners and other key stakeholders to inform the development of future parking strategies and recommendations for the Downtown area.

Engagement activities included the following:

- Online Survey (650 responses)
- Online Interactive Mapping Tool (329 comments from 196 contributors)
- Virtual Stakeholder Interviews (19 interviews)

This What We Heard (WWH) Report summarizes the feedback received through these various engagement activities.

ONLINE SURVEY

The online survey was designed to gather insights on parking conditions in Downtown Airdrie and consisted of 13 questions. Of these, nine were multiple choice and four were open-ended allowing respondents to provide detailed feedback.

The online survey found that nearly 75% of respondents visit Downtown Airdrie weekly, with parking experiences varying. Over 50% of visitors require parking for shopping and 40% stated parking availability impacts their decision to visit the downtown.

A majority of respondents use a combination of on-street and off-street parking during their visit with most willing to walk a block or less from their parking spot to their destination. Over 90% of respondents expressed opposition to paid parking voicing concerns that it will negatively impact local businesses and drive away visitors to the downtown.

Many respondents have expressed concerns over the lack of accessible parking and a need for more accessible spaces. Issues regarding the size of parking spots were also raised, particularly for larger vehicles. Some also stated that parking lots can be difficult to navigate and during winter conditions, parking becomes challenging due to inadequate snow clearing and snow piles taking up prime spots.

Beyond parking, respondents have suggested improvements for Downtown Airdrie, such as revitalizing the area and making it more vibrant and appealing for to the public and businesses. Additional suggestions focused on upgrading active transportation infrastructure and improving transit. Overall, a majority of respondents valued parking availability and the continuation of free parking in Downtown Airdrie.

ONLINE INTERACTIVE MAPPING TOOL

The online interactive mapping tool allowed participants to mark issues and opportunities with vehicular and bicycle parking locations throughout Downtown Airdrie. Along with placing

markers, participants were asked to provide comments, sharing their concerns, observations and feedback on the current parking situation at specific locations.

The main themes of comments provided in relation to vehicular and bicycle parking included:

- There is not enough parking/parking is difficult to find
- A parking structure or surface lot is needed in Downtown Airdrie
- Paid parking is not desired and will negatively impact businesses in Downtown Airdrie
- Improved parking turnover is needed
- Parking enforcement is needed
- Excess parking in certain locations can be better utilized
- Better parking management is needed during special events
- There is not enough bicycle parking
- There are instances of poor parking signage
- Non-parking related concerns

The mapping tool responses identified multiple parking hotspots in Downtown Airdrie where parking is problematic, notably around Main Street between 1 Avenue and Centre Avenue as well as a few additional areas. Participants suggested future parking structures at key locations, particularly the vacant lot at the corner of Main Street and Centre Avenue. Additional concerns include on-street parking congestion, navigation difficulties through lots, and parking stall dimensions. Respondents also recommended increasing bicycle parking at Midtown Park, Nose Creek Park, and Airdrie Farmers Market, along with improvements to sidewalks, cycling infrastructure, and crosswalk safety on Main Street.

VIRTUAL STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

To better understand parking challenges in Downtown Airdrie, a series of interviews were conducted with local businesses and organizations. The goal was to identify the main parking concerns impacting establishments and the broader Downtown area. Participants included representatives and property owners of various businesses and establishments throughout Downtown.

Several key themes emerged from the stakeholder interviews:

- **Insufficient parking:** There is a lack of parking for both staff and customers especially during peak hours which impact business operations.
- **Parking enforcement:** Insufficient parking enforcement results in overflow parking and extended parking beyond posted time restrictions.
- **Paid parking concerns:** Consensus that paid parking would negatively impact businesses and drive customers and clients away.
- **Need for parking structure:** A parking structure is needed to aid in alleviating parking demand and support growth of the Downtown.
- **Bike parking:** Lack of designated bicycle parking has resulted in informal solutions and there is a desire to improve bicycle parking.

- **Angled parking:** Suggested style of parking to increase capacity but is associated with traffic flow concerns.
 - **Winter parking:** Winter conditions reduce parking capacity.
 - **Special events:** Higher demand for parking during events resulting in a need for improved signage and alternatives to relying on personal vehicles.
-

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings from the online survey, interactive mapping tool and virtual stakeholder interviews highlight various parking issues in Downtown Airdrie. Participants in engagement activities feel there is a shortage of parking for both staff and customers, particularly during peak hours, which negatively impacts business operations. Furthermore, the perceived lack of enforcement of parking regulations results in overflow parking and violations of time restrictions.

Overall, there is a strong opposition to paid parking, with concerns that it would be detrimental to local businesses and discourage people from visiting Downtown Airdrie. Stakeholders and those who have contributed to the survey and mapping tool have emphasized the need for a dedicated parking structure in the downtown. These insights highlight the importance of addressing parking challenges to enhance convenience for those who visit Downtown Airdrie.

1 INTRODUCTION

From January to March of 2025, a series of engagement activities were conducted to gather community and stakeholder feedback regarding parking in Downtown Airdrie. This Downtown-focused engagement is part of a citywide parking study that also includes a review of the City's Land Use Bylaw. This "What We Heard" Report summarizes the key findings from the engagement and will support the project team in developing strategies to address parking challenges and prepare the City for future growth.

2 ENGAGEMENT FORMAT

To gain a stronger understanding of community and stakeholder perspectives on parking conditions in Downtown Airdrie, a range of engagement activities were conducted in the beginning of 2025. These activities provided insights into public and stakeholder opinions, concerns and suggestions. A summary of the engagement activities is outlined in **Table 2-1**.

Table 2-1: Summary of Engagement Opportunities and Participation

Engagement Type	Date	Participation	Purpose
Online Survey	January 27, 2025 – February 19, 2025	650 responses	Respondents were asked to fill out a 13-question survey including a mix of multiple choice and open-ended questions regarding parking in Downtown Airdrie.
Online Interactive Mapping Tool	January 27, 2025 – February 19, 2025	329 comments from 196 contributors	Respondents were asked to place markers at Downtown Airdrie locations, and to provide comments highlighting their concerns or feedback related to vehicle and bicycle parking conditions at those locations.
Virtual Stakeholder Interview	February 12, 2025 – March 12, 2025	19 interviews	Several key stakeholders within Downtown Airdrie were interviewed virtually to discuss parking challenges related to their establishments as well as within the broader downtown area.

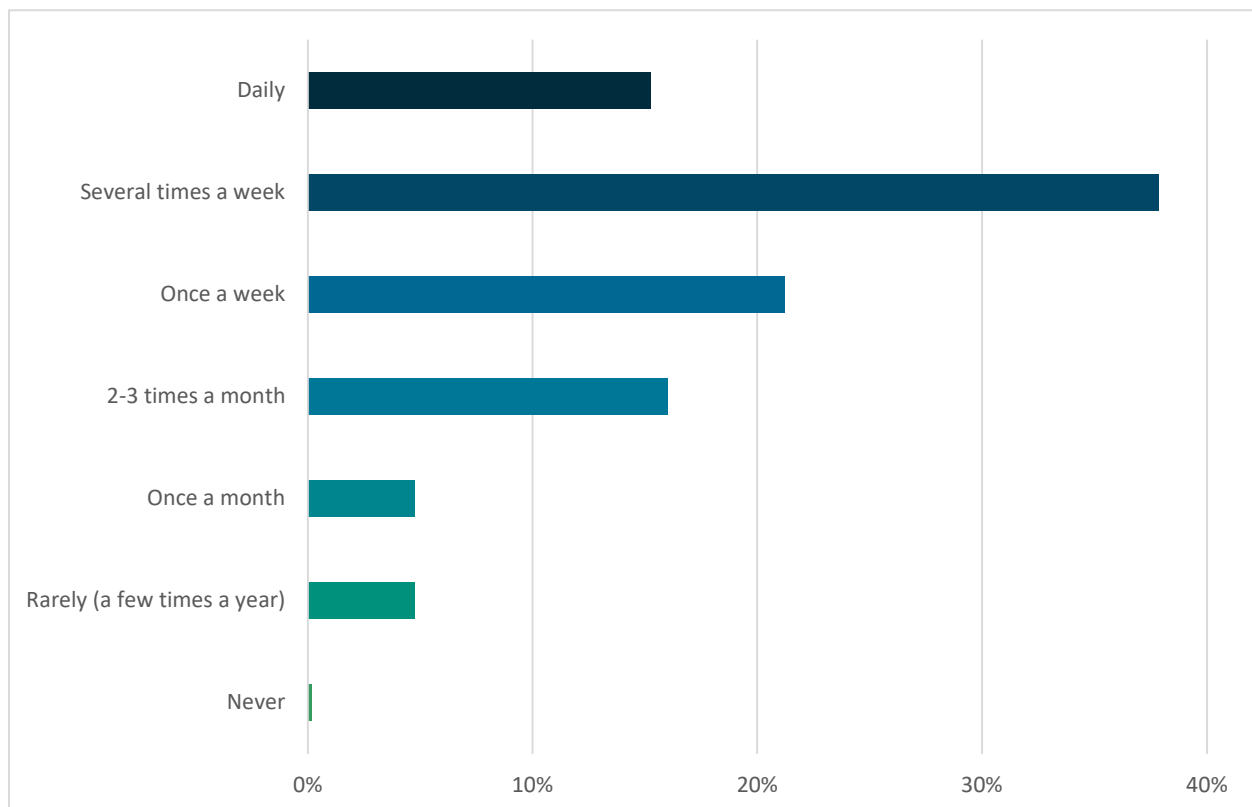
3 ONLINE SURVEY SUMMARY

The online survey consisted of 13 questions that aimed to gather insights on parking condition in Downtown Airdrie. Of these, nine were multiple choice questions and four of them were open-ended questions that allowed respondents to provide more details and feedback. A summary of the feedback received for each question is provided below.

QUESTION 1: HOW OFTEN DO YOU VISIT DOWNTOWN AIRDRIE?

As demonstrated in **Figure 3-1**, nearly 75% of respondents visit Downtown Airdrie on a weekly basis, either stopping by the downtown at least once a week, several times a week, or daily. In contrast, 20% visit Downtown Airdrie less frequently, with trips occurring once or a few times a month, while less than 5% of participants report rarely or never visiting the Downtown.

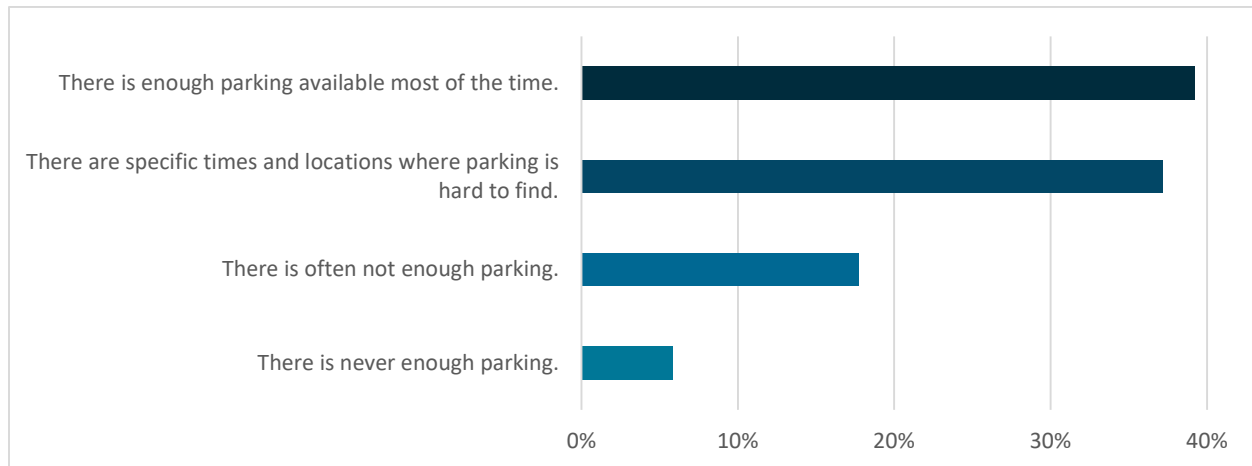
Figure 3-1: Results for Question 1 - "How often do you visit Downtown Airdrie?"



QUESTION 2: PLEASE RATE YOUR EXPERIENCE PARKING IN DOWNTOWN AIRDRIE

Figure 3-2 shows that about 24% of participants have difficulties finding parking in the Downtown stating that there is often or never enough parking. On the other hand, almost 40% of participants reported that parking is generally sufficient, while another 40% indicated that parking challenges are limited to specific times or locations.

Figure 3-2: Results for Question 2 - "Please rate your experience parking in Downtown Airdrie."



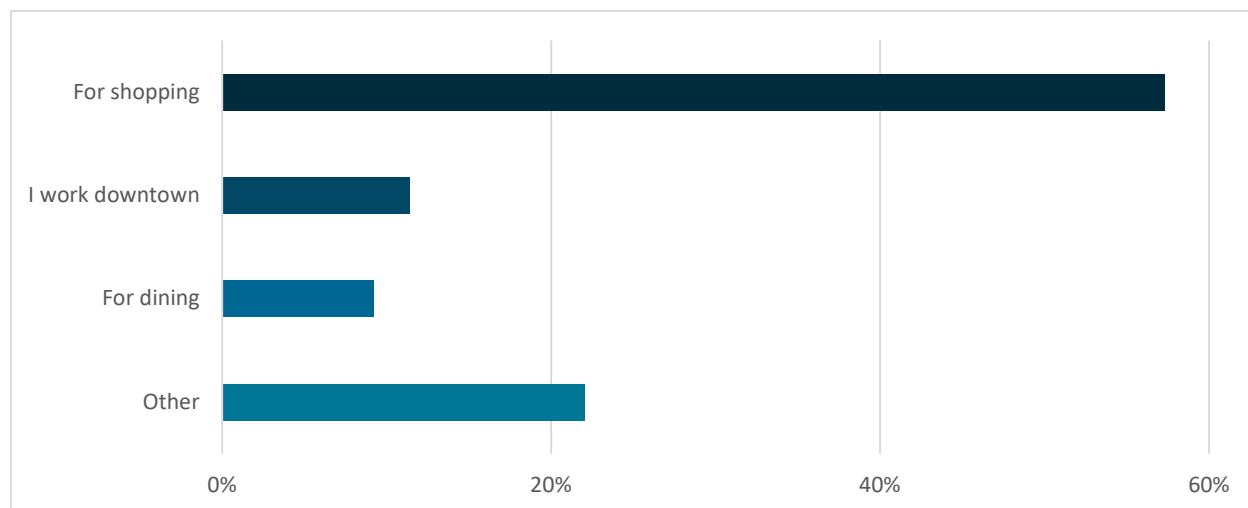
QUESTION 3: WHAT ARE YOUR PARKING NEEDS WHEN VISITING DOWNTOWN AIRDRIE?

Figure 3-3 presents an overview of participant parking needs when visiting the downtown. Over 50% of visitors require parking for shopping trips. Nearly 12% need parking for work related visits, followed by approximately 9% who use parking when dining downtown.

In addition to the main categories listed, 22% of respondents noted that they go downtown for other purposes, including the following:

- Medical visits and appointments
- Gym and wellness
- Banking
- Library
- Special events
- Entertainment
- Childcare and activities for children

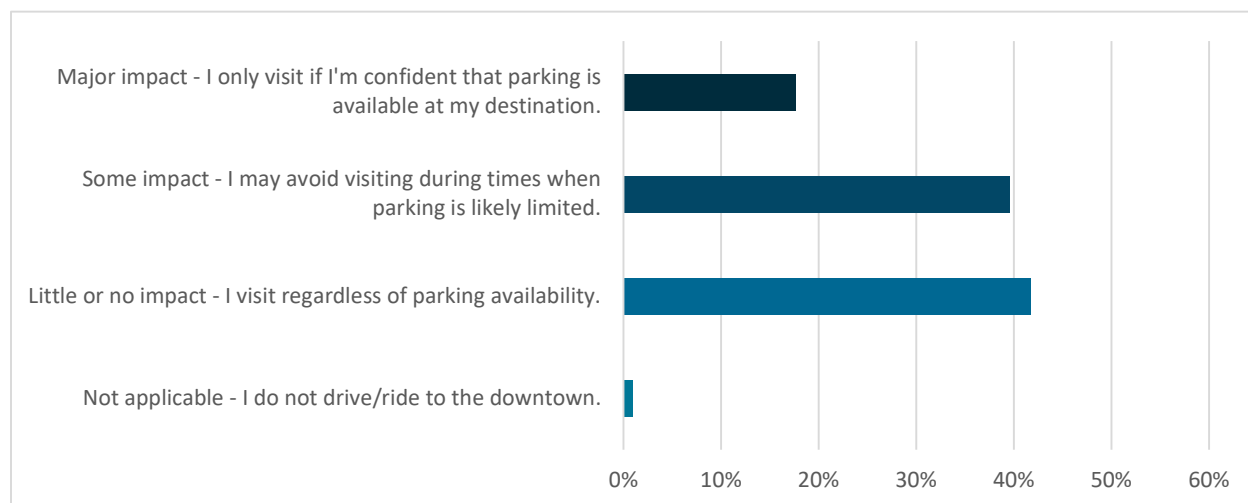
Figure 3-3: Results for Question 3 - "What are your parking needs when visiting Downtown Airdrie?"



QUESTION 4: HOW DOES PARKING AVAILABILITY AFFECT YOUR DECISION TO VISIT DOWNTOWN?

As shown in **Figure 3-4**, parking availability has little or no impact on approximately 40% of respondents that visit downtown. Another 40% of respondents have indicated that they may choose to avoid visiting downtown when parking is likely limited. About 20% of respondents have identified that parking availability has a major impact on their decision to visit downtown and that they will only visit if they are confident that parking will be available at their destination.

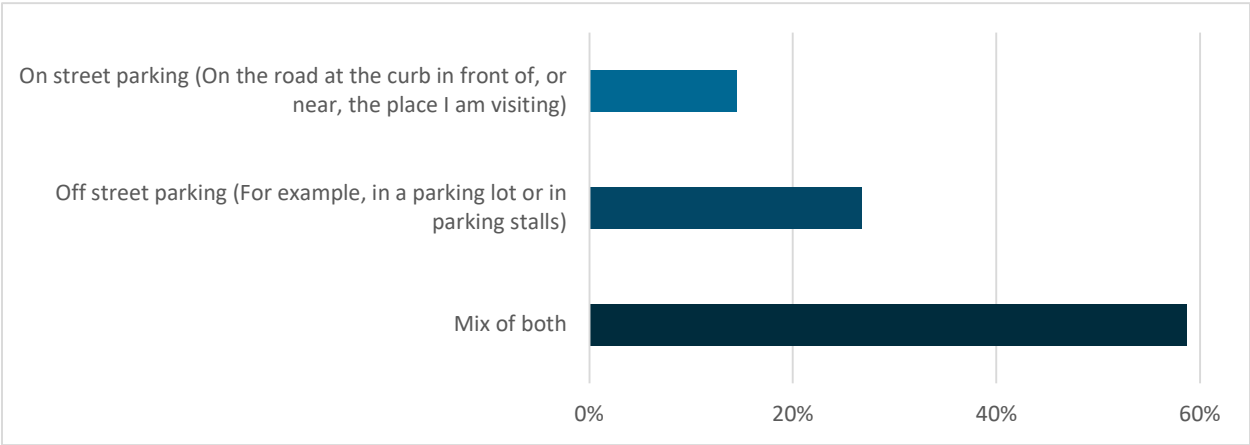
Figure 3-4: Results for Question 4 - "How does parking availability affect your decision to visit downtown?"



QUESTION 5: WHAT TYPE OF PARKING DO YOU TYPICALLY USE WHEN VISITING DOWNTOWN AIRDRIE?

Figure 3-5 demonstrates that over 50% of respondents will use a mix of both on-street and off-street parking during their visits to Downtown Airdrie. Almost 27% of respondents rely solely on off-street parking, such as parking lots and stalls, while around 15% exclusively use on-street parking, like the curb in front of the establishment they are visiting.

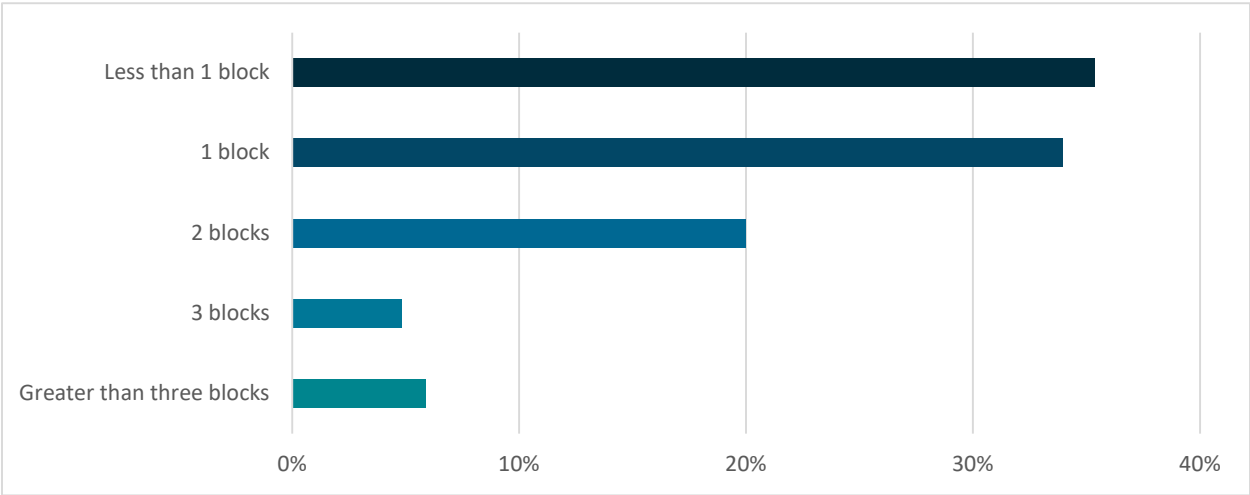
Figure 3-5: Results for Question 5 - "What type of parking do you typically use when visiting Downtown Airdrie?"



QUESTION 6: HOW FAR ARE YOU WILLING TO WALK FROM WHERE YOU PARK TO YOUR DESTINATION?

Figure 3-6 presents evidence that respondents were generally not willing to walk very far to their destination. Nearly 70% of respondents are willing to walk one block or less from their parking spot to their destination. About 20% are willing to walk two blocks, while approximately 10% are open to walking three blocks or more.

Figure 3-6: Results for Question 6 - "How far are you willing to walk from where you park to your destination?"

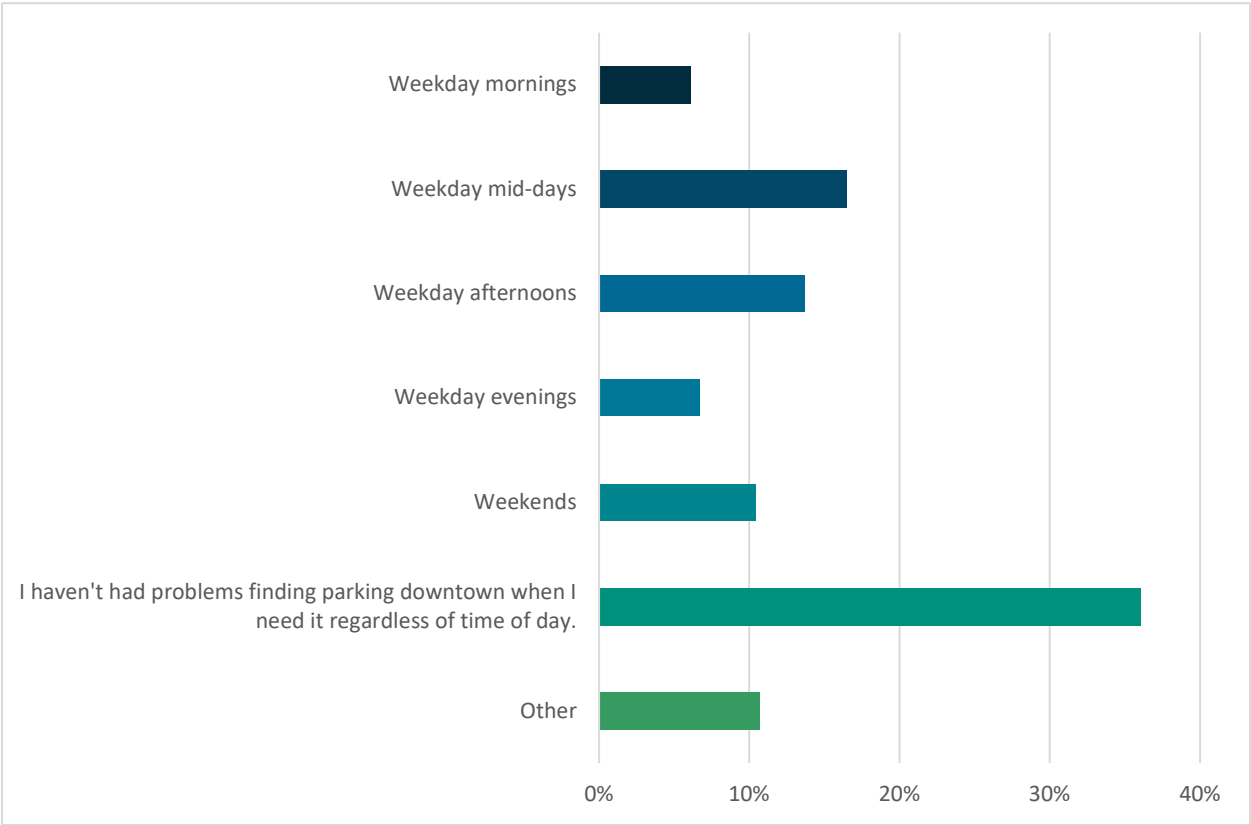


QUESTION 7: IS THERE A TIME PERIOD WHEN IT IS CHALLENGING TO FIND PARKING DOWNTOWN?

As demonstrated in **Figure 3-7**, around 36% of respondents have indicated that they never have problems finding parking in Downtown Airdrie regardless of the time or day. About 43% of respondents have indicated they have issues finding parking during certain periods on weekdays and around 10% have challenges with finding parking on weekends.

Additionally, some respondents have noted that parking is generally difficult to find during regular business hours (9:00 AM – 5:00 PM). Other respondents have mentioned that parking is challenging only for certain areas during all times of day such as on Main Street between 1 Avenue and Centre Avenue. Furthermore, respondents have raised that parking is also difficult to locate during special events such as parade days and Airdrie Fest.

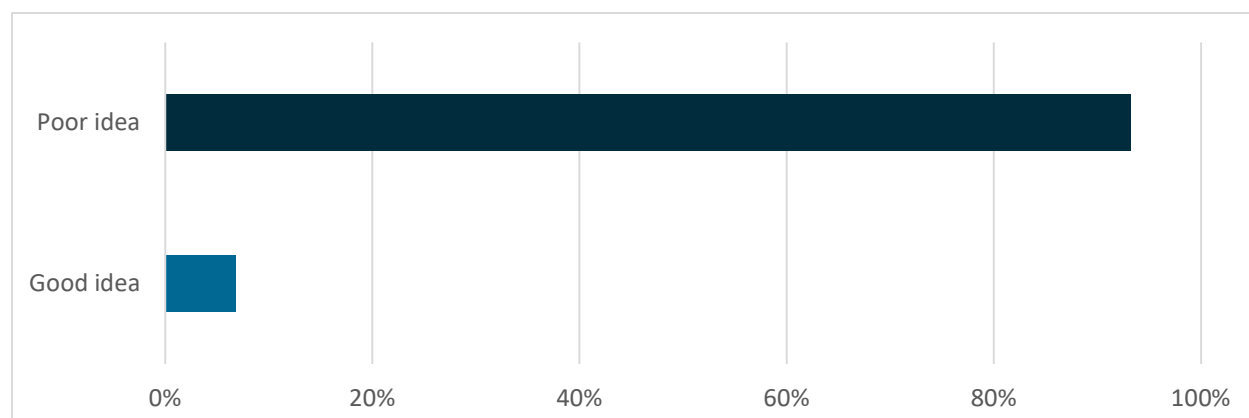
Figure 3-7: Results for Question 7 - "Is there a time period when it is challenging to find parking downtown?"



QUESTION 8: WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON INCORPORATING PAID PARKING IN THE DOWNTOWN?

Figure 3-8 shows that 93% of respondents think that the incorporation of paid parking would be a poor idea while around 7% think that it would be a good idea.

Figure 3-8: Results for Question 8 - "What are your thoughts on incorporating paid parking in the downtown?"



QUESTION 9: TELL US MORE ABOUT YOUR RESPONSE ON INCORPORATING PAID PARKING

Additionally, respondents were invited to provide further feedback on their response regarding the implementation of paid parking through an open-ended question. As noted above a majority (93%) of respondents expressed opposition to the idea of paid parking. 83% of respondents further expanded on their reasons. The key themes in their responses include:

- Impacts to local businesses in Downtown Airdrie
- Paid parking not warranted as Downtown Airdrie is sufficiently supplied
- Deterrence on visits to Downtown Airdrie
- Time consuming to pay for parking
- Economic burden to those that live in Airdrie
- Confusion on how paid parking will influence parking supply

While the majority of respondents are opposed to the concept of paid parking, a small minority shared reasons why it could be a viable option. These respondents suggested that paid parking, if enforced and reasonably priced, could increase parking turnover, fund road maintenance, fund Downtown improvements, and support additional parking options.

QUESTION 10: HOW CAN PARKING INFORMATION BE MADE CLEARER OR MORE ACCESSIBLE?

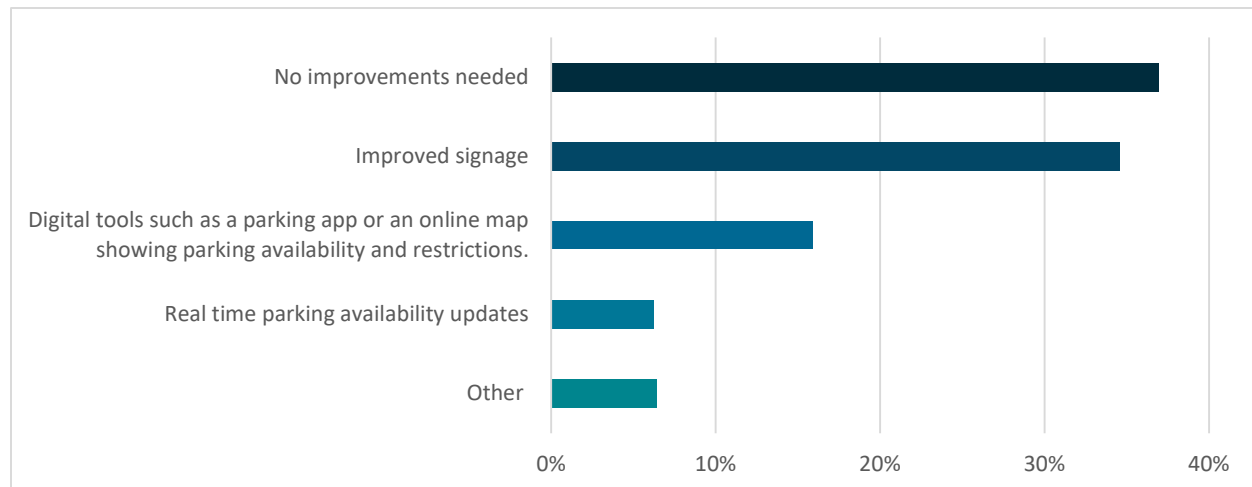
As demonstrated in **Figure 3-9**, around 37% of respondents do not think any improvements are needed to make parking information more clear or accessible. In contrast, more than half of the respondents indicated that parking information can be made clearer and more accessible through improved signage, digital tools such as apps or online maps that show parking availability and restrictions or real time parking availability updates.

Some respondents have additional suggestions to help make parking information more accessible including:

- Adding parking information to the City of Airdrie's webpage that includes information such as time limitations.

- For underground parking, green and red lights can be used to indicate whether parking spaces are available.
- Providing more accessible spaces and enforcing parking infractions to make more spaces available.

Figure 3-9: Results for Question 10 - "How can parking information (e.g. restrictions, times in effect, etc.) be made clearer or more accessible?"



QUESTION 11: DO YOU USE ANY APPS OR SYSTEMS TO FIND PARKING?

A majority of respondents have replied that they do not use any apps or systems to find parking in Airdrie. Those who do use parking apps/systems typically only use them in the City of Calgary and have listed the following apps:

- ParkPlus
- ParkedIn
- My Parking
- SpotHero
- AHS Parking
- Indigo Neo

Furthermore, respondents have indicated that parking apps are currently not needed in Airdrie as it could complicate parking and is impractical for the seniors that live in the city. Some respondents indicated that it could be investigated further in the future but is not necessary at this time.

QUESTION 12: IS THERE ANYTHING THAT WOULD MAKE PARKING EASIER AND MORE CONVENIENT FOR YOU?

To improve parking accessibility and convenience in Downtown Airdrie, many respondents have highlighted the importance of keeping parking free and increasing the number of parking spaces. Several specific areas in Downtown Airdrie have been identified as facing parking challenges and would benefit from additional parking availability. These key areas include:

- Near the Airdrie Public Library
- Near Main Street and Centre Avenue
- Near Alberta Precision Laboratories
- Near the Airdrie Community Health Centre

Many respondents have also suggested that implementing dedicated structures to increase parking supply in Downtown Airdrie would be beneficial. These structures could be in the form of lots, parkades or underground garages. Participants also suggested implementing on-street angled parking especially along Main Street.

Furthermore, respondents have stated that improving signage and implementing time restrictions on parking signs (1–2-hour limits) would help improve parking turnover at certain locations, especially during busy hours of the day. Enforcement of these time limits and preventing illegal parking have also been raised as necessary measures. Better management of parking during special events has been suggested, as some people struggle to find parking during these times. Conversely, some respondents also stated that they never have any problems finding parking in Downtown Airdrie and that the current situation is fine and should remain unchanged.

Additionally, many respondents highlighted an overall lack of accessible parking supply in Downtown Airdrie and the need for more accessible spaces. Concerns have also been raised around the size of parking spots and that they need to be made larger to accommodate bigger vehicles like pickup trucks and to allow people to get in and out of their vehicles easily. Some respondents have also stated that lots can be difficult to maneuver through and that during winter, inadequate snow clearing makes parking challenging as snow gets piled up on prime spots and sometimes covers stall lines.

Beyond parking, respondents suggested other improvements for Downtown Airdrie. They proposed focusing on rebuilding downtown and transforming it to be more vibrant and appealing to the public and businesses. Additionally, transit and active transportation improvements were suggested to provide more options to get to and around Downtown.

QUESTION 13: IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PARKING IN DOWNTOWN AIRDRIE?

Many respondents reiterated the importance of maintaining free parking in Downtown Airdrie. Additionally, they emphasized that parking availability can be limited, highlighting the need for more spaces, particularly accessible parking, and larger stalls. Concerns were also raised regarding on-street parking in certain areas, such as 1 Avenue, where it impedes traffic flow and contributes to congestion.

4 ONLINE INTERACTIVE MAPPING TOOL SUMMARY

The online interactive mapping tool invited participants to add place markers indicating issues and opportunities with vehicular and bicycle parking locations around Downtown Airdrie. Along with the markers, participants were asked to provide comments sharing their observations, concerns and feedback regarding current parking situations at those specific locations.

The main themes of the comments provided from respondents on the interactive mapping tool are as follows:

- There is not enough parking/parking is difficult to find
- A parking structure or surface lot is needed in Downtown Airdrie
- Paid parking is not desired and will negatively impact businesses in Downtown Airdrie
- Improved parking turnover is needed
- Parking enforcement is needed
- Excess parking in certain locations can be better utilized
- Better parking management is needed during special events
- There is not enough bicycle parking
- There are instances of poor parking signage
- Non-parking related concerns

The input gathered from the exercise was taken and visually summarized in the series of social feedback maps shown in **Figure 4-1 - Figure 4-3**.

Figure 4-1: Social Map Feedback Section 1

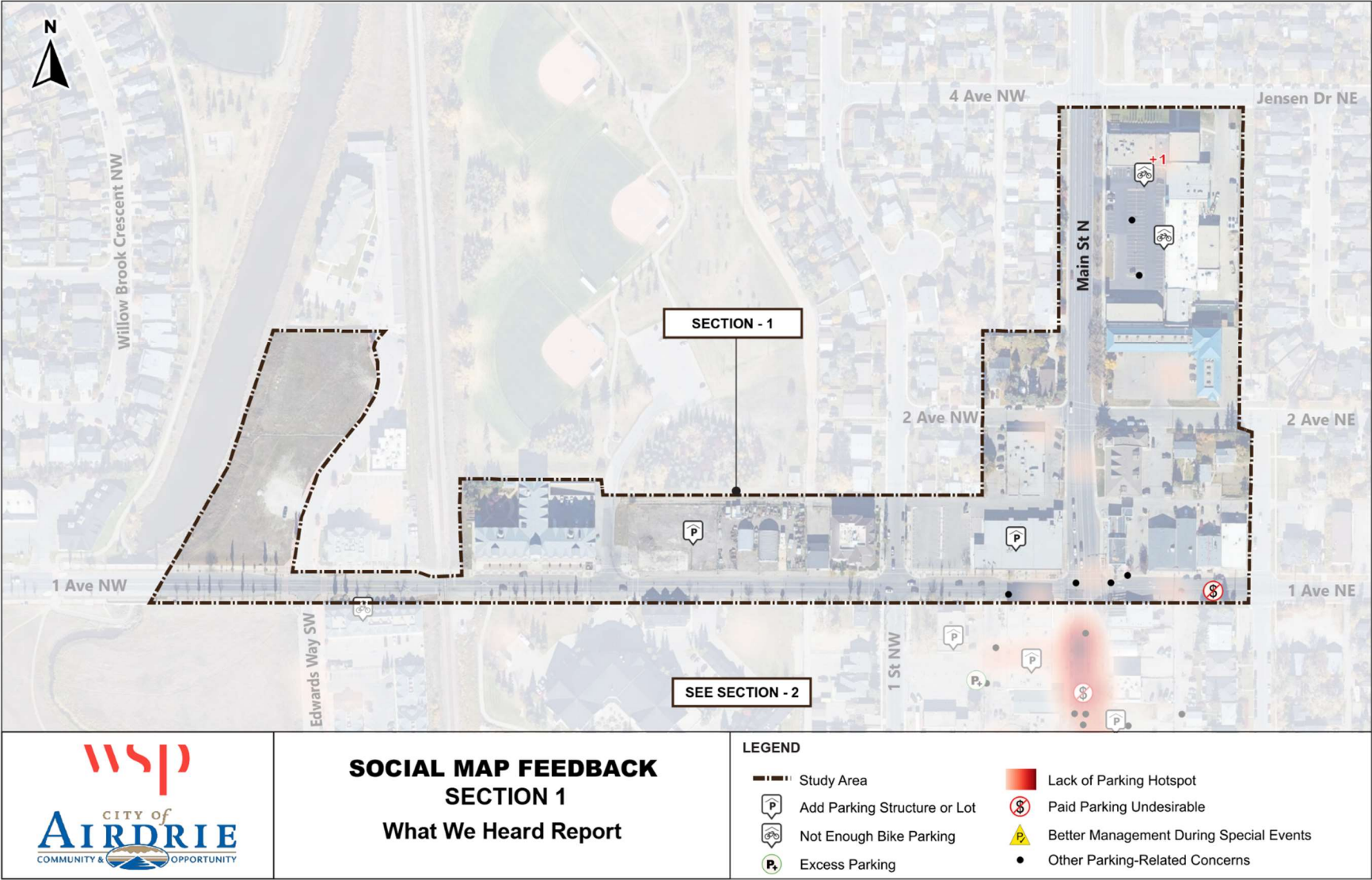


Figure 4-2: Social Map Feedback Section 2

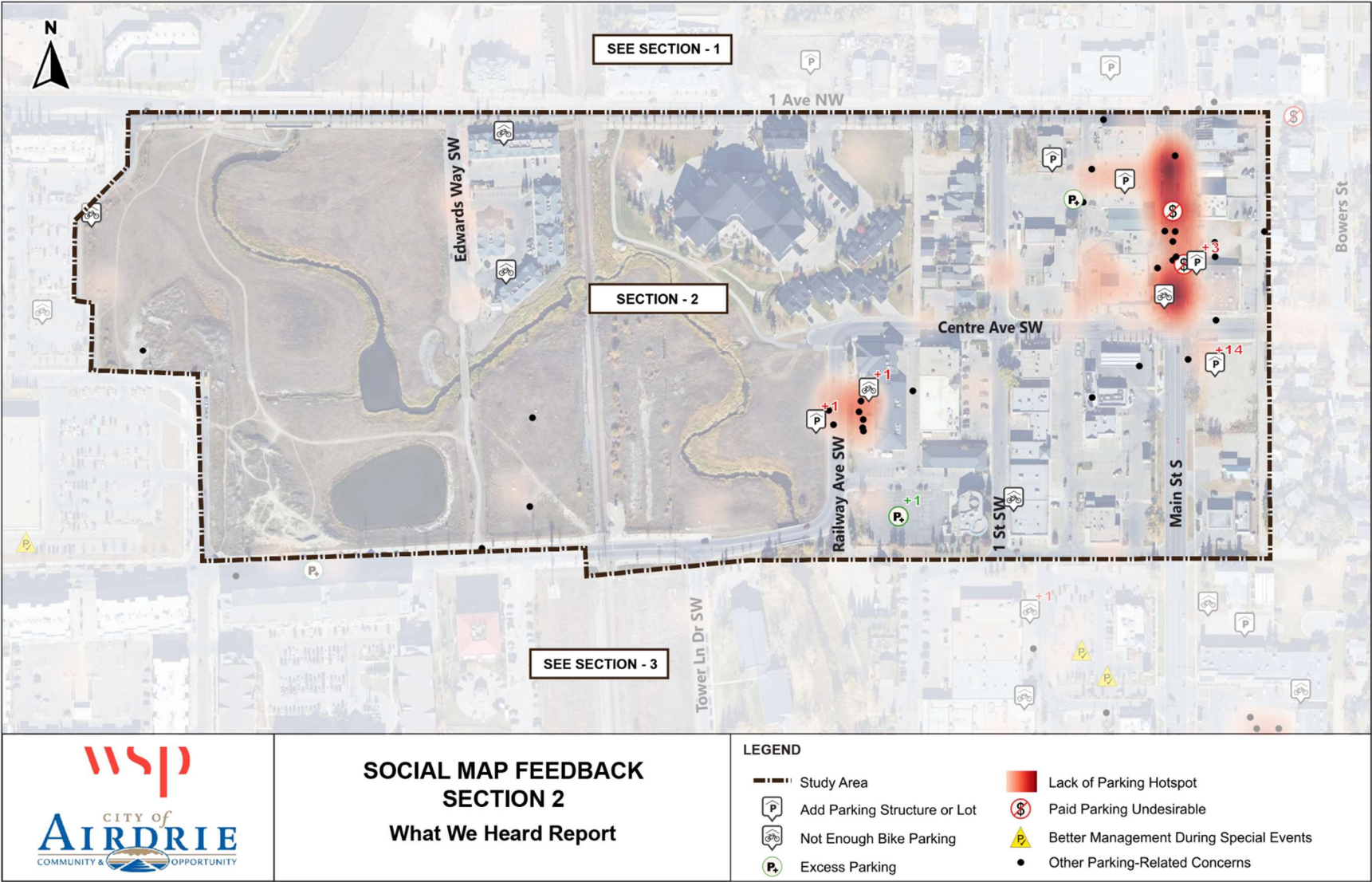
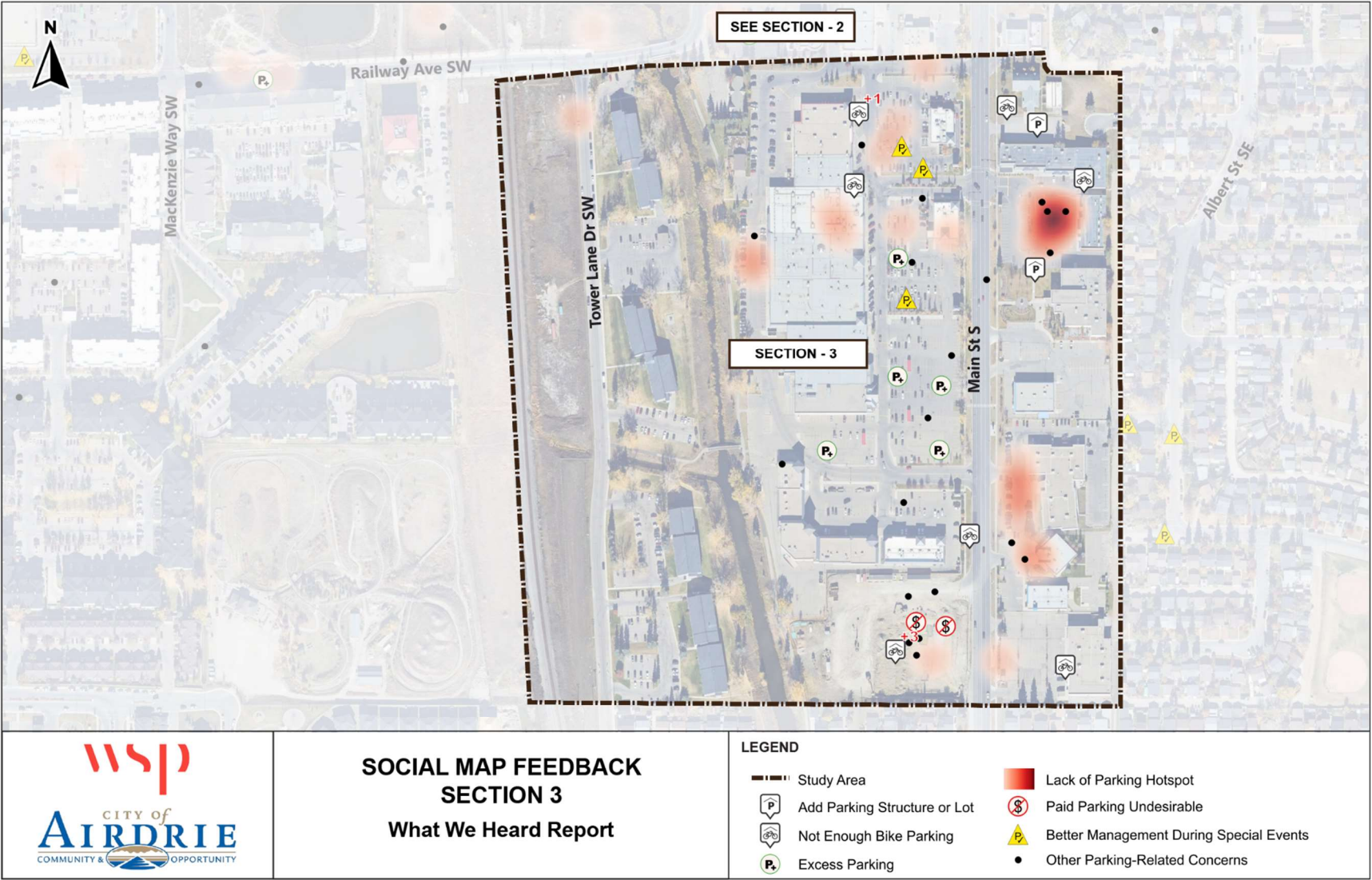


Figure 4-3: Social Map Feedback Section 3



As shown in the series of maps presented above, there are hotspots where participants identified parking is lacking in the following locations:

- On-street along Main Street between 1 Avenue and Centre Avenue
- On the Alberta Precision Laboratories lot
- On-street on Railway Avenue SW directly adjacent to the Alberta Precision Laboratories lot
- On the Airdrie Public Library lot
- On the Airdrie Community Health Centre lot

Numerous locations have also been marked by participants indicating that there is a lack of bicycle parking, including within the Towerlane Centre, the London Drugs lot, and the Central Health Chiropractic and Wellness Clinic lot. Additionally, many participants stated that they would like to see bicycle parking incorporated at the new library site.

The maps also present a variety of locations where participants thought a parking structure or lot should be implemented. Most participants have highlighted the vacant lot at the corner of Main Street and Centre Ave as a good location to add a parking structure/lot. Other suggestions include turning the lot with the vacant building at 128 1 Street NW into a parking lot/structure or adding a parking structure/lot on the existing Airdrie Public Library lot.

Parking issues also occur when there are special events that take place in downtown Airdrie. Participants have highlighted areas on the map that require better parking management during these events. Within the study area boundary, only the Towerlane Centre was identified as requiring improved management. However, participants also indicated that better parking management is required outside of the study area boundary within the adjacent residential neighbourhoods, specifically along Albert Street.

Many participants indicated that the Towerlane Centre lot has an excess of parking spaces as well as the Apple Pharmacy lot to the east of Railway Avenue and the lot located to the west of Community Links.

Other issues raised in the interactive mapping tool in relation to parking include the following:

- On-street parking leading to congestion along certain areas of Main Street
- The Alberta Precision Laboratories lot being difficult to navigate
- Concerns regarding parking stall dimensions

Respondents also had comments that fell outside of the study area. Notably, a few respondents would like to see additional bicycle parking at Midtown Park and Nose Creek Park as well as additional bicycle parking at the Airdrie Farmers Market.

Other respondents also had comments on topics that fall outside of the topic of study and are not included on the map. For example, some respondents asked for existing sidewalks to be widened, more protected cycling infrastructure along Main Street and Centre Avenue and improving the safety of crosswalks on Main Street.

5 VIRTUAL STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

To gain a deeper understanding of parking challenges in Airdrie, WSP conducted virtual stakeholder interviews with local businesses and institutions identified based on discussions with City staff. The objective was to identify key parking concerns related to their establishments and the broader Downtown area. It should be noted that each of the questionnaires used for the interviews included a set of questions specific to the property followed by a set of general questions related to parking in Downtown Airdrie. The latter set included questions from the survey conducted on the Involve Airdrie website. Stakeholders were asked at the beginning of the interview as to whether they had already completed the survey on the Involve Airdrie website. If they answered in the affirmative, the general questions related to parking in Downtown Airdrie were skipped. The questionnaire used for the interview is included in **Appendix A**.

Stakeholders interviewed included representatives from the following businesses and institutions:

- Off the Beaten Path
- Rare Cannabis
- Central Health
- Revival Therapeutics
- GP Law
- Marr & Company
- Cream Lingerie
- Airdrie Public Library
- Airdrie Dental Studio
- Airdrie Chiropractic
- The Little Gym
- BYŌŌDĒ Bar
- Anna's Spa
- Airdrie Eyecare Centre
- Towerlane Centre

Several key themes were identified during the stakeholder consultations. These are summarized below.

5.1. INSUFFICIENT PARKING

Many of the stakeholders interviewed noted a general lack of parking for both staff and customers at their businesses. Because most businesses share parking spaces with other tenants in multi-use plazas, parking demand often exceeds capacity, particularly during peak hours. Several business owners shared that clients frequently report difficulties with finding parking.

Health-related businesses noted that many of their clients are elderly or have limited mobility. For these groups, having to park farther from the businesses can create physical challenges. Additionally, some business owners noted parking challenges not only cause clients to arrive late for their appointments but also lead to postponed visits which affects business operations. Several business owners mentioned that, in order to ensure sufficient parking spaces for

customers, staff often have to find on-street parking farther from the businesses. In particular, parking on Main Street (between Centre Avenue SW and 1 Avenue NW) was mentioned as being challenging for staff.

During the stakeholder engagements, it was observed that parking peak hours were generally varied depending on the business. Most business owners, however, noted that weekday middays and afternoons were generally busiest, with parking demand sometimes exceeding available capacity. On the other hand, businesses such as bars and gyms generally reported reaching capacity on weekday evenings and during the weekends.

5.2. LACK OF PARKING ENFORCEMENT

Parking enforcement was a key theme during the stakeholder consultations. Business owners remarked that many of the issues with insufficient parking stemmed from a lack of strict parking enforcement. For example, several business owners brought up concerns about overflow parking from other businesses into their parking plazas. In particular, due to a high demand for parking at the City Hall and Airdrie Public Library, several business owners noted that visitors and staff at these locations often have to find parking at other business plazas. To counteract issues with overflow parking, some business owners have had to contract private enforcement companies to regulate visitor parking and issue tickets as necessary. On the other hand, some business owners have developed signs, fences, or gates around their buildings to restrict overflow parking from other businesses.

Beyond overflow parking, a concern raised by several stakeholders was the lack of effective enforcement on parking time restrictions. Some businesses noted the presence of 30-minute, 1-hour, or 2-hour restrictions on both on-street and on-site parking spaces. Due to a lack of enforcement, however, vehicles may park at these spaces for extended periods of time, limiting parking availability for other customers at shared plazas/streets. Consequently, stakeholders agreed that stricter public enforcement is required to address both overflow parking and a lack of adherence to parking time restrictions.

5.3. PAID PARKING CONCERNS

During the stakeholder consultations, there was a general consensus regarding the undesirability of paid parking at business locations and in Downtown Airdrie. Many business and property owners voiced concerns that introducing paid parking would cause clients to move to businesses with free parking, particularly those in greenfield developments. Some business owners further added that having to pay for parking could potentially result into clients being late for their appointments, increasing their frustration with parking. Business owners noted that depending on the nature of their appointments, some clients have to park for more than 4 hours; this could create financial strain, especially for those who visit the businesses frequently. Stakeholders further noted that introducing paid parking with no enforcement would only result in illegal parking in business plazas.

A few business owners suggested that paid parking could potentially work if targeted at specific locations. For example, one stakeholder acknowledged that because the courthouse is prone to having a comparably high parking demand on Tuesdays and Thursdays, perhaps paid parking could be implemented for courthouse visitors on those specific days. Moreover, another

stakeholder noted that paid on-street parking has been successful in cities like Calgary and could potentially work well for Airdrie. Nonetheless, many business and property owners agreed that this approach could deter business and potentially stunt the growth of Downtown Airdrie. Instead of paid parking, stakeholders preferred stricter enforcement of time restrictions to manage parking demand and improve turnover.

5.4. NEED FOR A DOWNTOWN PARKING STRUCTURE

A key theme that emerged during the stakeholder engagements was the need for a parking structure in downtown Airdrie. Participants noted that as Downtown Airdrie grows, the demand for parking will continue to increase, straining the parking supply. Participants noted that building a structure to serve as a parkade would help alleviate increasing demand and ensure that parking is not a barrier to people visiting Downtown Airdrie.

Stakeholders acknowledged that building such a structure would require both land space and financial resources. Many of the business owners therefore suggested that rather than buying new land, existing vacant lots and buildings in the Downtown area could be retrofitted to serve as parkades or public parking lots. Several stakeholders further gave suggestions for potential parkade sites. Among the locations suggested was an empty lot across from the RBC Royal Bank. Specifically, this lot is located at 105 Main Street SE (at the corner of Main Street South and Centre Avenue East). Additionally, stakeholders remarked that the old Airdrie post office building (at the corner of 1 Avenue NW and 1 Street NW) has been vacant and underutilized for many years. They suggested that this building could be retrofitted and turned into a parking structure in order to increase parking supply in the Downtown area. One participant added that Downtown visitors would be more likely to pay for parking if it was guaranteed for them through a structure/parkade.

5.5. INSUFFICIENT BIKE PARKING

During the stakeholder engagements, WSP asked business and property owners about the availability of bike parking at their facilities. Several stakeholders shared there is a general lack of adequate designated bike parking at their businesses and in the broader Downtown area. Most stakeholders acknowledged that they do not have formal bike racks in front of their businesses. Consequently, customers and staff who chose to bike often park their bicycles at informal locations including locking them at pillars, poles, or trees. In some cases, customers and staff would take their bicycles into the facilities/businesses they are visiting in order to keep them secure.

One business owner remarked that while requests for formal bike racks have been made to the City, they have not yet been resolved. Another business owner noted that in order to reduce parking demand, the City of Airdrie needs to encourage active transportation through improving both bike-friendliness and walkability in Downtown. The stakeholder noted that while this was not a popular opinion, the City could consider closing down a lane on Main Street to accommodate bicycles. Another stakeholder further acknowledged that since Airdrie does not have a very established transit system, some people in Downtown have to bike and walk, underscoring the need for effective active transportation infrastructure.

5.6. ANGLED PARKING

Stakeholders discussed the potential benefits of implementing angled parking in Downtown Airdrie to help increase parking capacity, particularly for business staff. Business owners noted

that staff often have to leave parking lot stalls to customers and rely on on-street parking. However, on-street parking is often limited due to competition with other businesses and at times, conflicts with residential parking. As a result, several stakeholders noted that angled on-street parking could potentially alleviate parking challenges faced by staff. Some stakeholders also provided suggestions for streets that could benefit from angled parking. One stakeholder identified the western side of Railway Avenue as a potential location and another stakeholder, along the western side of Centre Avenue. Stakeholders, however, acknowledged that accommodating angled parking would likely require removing at least one traffic lane from these streets.

5.7. WINTER PARKING

During the interviews, some stakeholders highlighted challenges related to parking during the winter months, especially during snowy conditions. These stakeholders noted that due to reduced visibility during winter, customers are often unable to see parking boundaries and consequently end up taking more than one designated parking stall. Other stakeholders noted that some of their parking stalls are often lost to snow storage in the winter months which can impact parking capacity at their businesses. One stakeholder remarked that their business chooses not to clear the snow as this would require piling it onto the parking area, consequently affecting one or more needed parking stalls.

5.8. BETTER PARKING MANAGEMENT DURING SPECIAL EVENTS

Stakeholders emphasized the need for better parking management during city-wide events. Business and property owners stated that the Airdrie Fest in September and the Airdrie Christmas Parade in December often result in congestion and high parking demands in the Downtown area. Stakeholders remarked that often during these events, the City shuts down Main Street to accommodate event attendees which in turn, limits the amount of available on-street parking. Property owners further noted that during these events, residents often park their vehicles at business plazas for extended periods of time, which impacts clients needing to park at those businesses. To better manage parking during these events, stakeholders emphasized the need for proper parking signage and clear communication with residents. Stakeholders also recommended that during special events, the City should consider introducing alternatives to personal vehicles in order to manage parking demand. For example, the City could provide e-scooters and shuttle services to connect people from their residences to event locations and reduce the number of vehicles requiring parking.

APPENDIX

A STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Airdrie Downtown Parking Study – Stakeholder Engagement

Interview Info:

Interview No:

Interview Date:

Stakeholder name:

Role:

Business name:

Address:

Study Lot:

Completed online parking survey:

Property Related Parking Questions

1. What are your general hours of operation?
2. How many staff and visitors do you have per day?
3. How many parking stalls are allocated to your business? How often are they fully occupied?
4. Overall, how does parking availability affect your employees, customers, or suppliers?
5. Are there any local regulations or zoning laws that restrict your parking?
6. During which hours or days do you experience the highest parking demand?
7. What percentage of the parking outside your business is typically occupied during peak business hours? (If relevant, i.e. there is a parking lot, not just street parking)
8. Have you noticed parking problems i.e. customers struggling to find a spot?
9. Have you ever had complaints from customers or employees about availability of parking either on-site or off-site?
10. Do you use any technology i.e. parking management system or third-party parking management to track parking usage or ticket?
11. Do you have any issues with overflow parking from other lots and, if so, do you implement any enforcement strategies?
12. Would measures such as time restrictions or paid parking help to improve turnover i.e. making more parking available for your business?
13. Do you provide bicycle parking for employees or customers?
14. Do you have any issues with parking during winter conditions? Any loss of parking spaces in your lot?

Downtown Airdrie Parking Questions

15. Please rate your general experience regarding parking in Downtown Airdrie.
 - There is sufficient parking available most of the time.
 - There are specific times and locations where parking is hard to find.
 - There is often insufficient parking.
 - There is never enough parking.

16. How can parking information (e.g. restrictions, times in effect, etc.) be made clearer or more accessible?
- Improved signage.
 - Digital tools such as a parking app or an online map showing parking availability and restrictions.
 - Real-time parking availability updates.
 - No improvements needed.
17. What are your thoughts on incorporating paid parking in the Downtown?
- Good idea (Tell us more about your response)
 - Poor idea (Tell us more about your response)
18. Is there a time period when it is challenging to find parking in the Downtown? (Select all that apply)
- Weekday mornings
 - Weekday mid-days
 - Weekday afternoons
 - Weekday evenings
 - Weekends
 - I haven't had problems finding parking in the Downtown when I need it, regardless of the time of day
19. Do you use any apps or systems to find parking? How effective are they?
20. Is there anything that would make parking easier and more convenient for you or your business?