

From: David Loken <dtloken@gmail.com>
Date: March 6, 2023 at 12:27:22 PM CST
To: "Brostoff, Jonathan" <Jonathan.Brostoff@milwaukee.gov>
Cc: "Bauman, Robert" <rjbauma@milwaukee.gov>
Subject: Downtown Parking

Alder Brostoff,

Now that Alder Bauman has recently brought up revoking the recent changes to paid parking downtown I thought I would write expressing my opposition to removing this recently instituted change. Not only would it be irresponsible to remove the fees from a sorely needed revenue perspective, but also detrimental to the pedestrian experience and built environment due to the extra congestion and degradation cars bring with unnecessary downtown trips, much of which are cars circling for street parking (demand based pricing addresses this! Parking would actually be easier, albeit more expensive in high demand times). For instance, I usually do not drive downtown and either ride a bike or the bus whether it's to my office near Vel R. Philips & Wisconsin or for leisure outside of working hours. When I take the bus, that winds up being a \$4 roundtrip; it's more than fair to ask drivers to pay a pittance towards some of the societal costs associated with driving and storing their personally owned vehicles in the public right of way downtown.

I would suggest Milwaukee smartly follow what was set out by the undisputed academic expert on parking, Professor Donald Shoup (see his work: "The High Cost of Free Parking") and jump fully into demand based pricing & parking management which could even include free parking at times should demand fall low enough. I say: do not listen to the loud but demonstrably false anecdotes by property owners and businesses regarding parking. It's no surprise that time and time again studies have shown business owners to drastically overestimate the importance of street parking and the number of their customers which arrive by personal auto while simultaneously underestimating pedestrian and bicycle customers. Personally I would go even further and remove street parking from Wisconsin Ave. and Water St. entirely in favor of dedicated bus & bike lanes which would dramatically speed up transit through downtown. For far too long we've sacrificed the quality of transit & squandered our most valuable asset (Milwaukee's wonderful transit oriented pre-car built environment) in these critical corridors to placate a few dozen drivers at a time, most of which could fit on a single streetcar or bus or easily find parking in one of the thousands of garage spots located steps from any downtown destination.

We're never going to move the needle on improving transit and pedestrian life here if we only do half measures because we're unwilling to possibly upset or inconvenience a single driver or bow to outdated beliefs on parking. Just a reminder that Amsterdam and many other Dutch cities famously once resembled Milwaukee's dangerous car choked streets in the post-WWII era, they however chose a different path.

Best,

David Loken