



Tool: Parking Audits

Provider: Smart Growth America and Charlier Associates, Inc.

Summary:

Parking audits provide a neutral setting where an impartial parking expert can evaluate local policies and practices and offer advice based on the state of the practice, with an emphasis on what works well and what should be avoided. The audit can be community-wide or can focus on a specific district.

Community Benefits:

Most Americans have grown up with the idea that auto parking should be plentiful and free. As a result, cities and commercial districts often struggle with parking policy and with implementation of supply and enforcement strategies. This issue is of crucial importance because parking policy can play a major role in encouraging infill and redevelopment and can also support a balanced, sustainable transportation system. By addressing all five elements of parking – demand, supply, economics, enforcement and administration – an audit helps local leaders and stakeholders see the issue in the context of overall growth management and economic strategies.

Subject Matter Covered:

A parking audit can concentrate on a specific district or neighborhood or can address citywide policies and programs (or both). This one-day program is designed to engage key stakeholders, which in the case of a commercial district might include local business and property owners, or in the case of a neighborhood could involve homeowners and residents. The audit can tackle specific issues like fee-in-lieu payments, on-street parking, shared parking or paid parking, among others. In some cases, a parking audit can help a community address much broader issues such as petroleum dependency and sustainability.

Outcomes:

- An engaging and enlightening evening public forum to provide information about the state of local parking practice nationally
- A locally-targeted set of how-to tools: ordinances, parking districts, zoning overlays and other strategies
- Answers to specific technical questions and problems
- Suggestions for low-cost ways to gather data and estimate demand
- Community members build a common vocabulary, debunk common myths, focus on shared values, build or validate common visions, and learn basic principles and practices
- Practical strategies for improving the built environment in ways that bring about increased economic vitality and greater sustainability

