Parking Management Community Forum Report

Two community forums were held in downtown Augusta, GA on Tuesday, December 9, 2014 with one at 12 p.m. (Augusta Public Library) and another at 6 p.m. (Marbury Center) to help facilitate information exchange regarding parking management between members of the Augusta, GA downtown community. Members of the afternoon and evening panels were asked to address three broad questions to help initiate the discussion after which members of the audience shared thoughts regarding parking management. The following three questions were presented to panel members:

1. What are your thoughts about parking in Downtown Augusta?
2. What are the challenges with parking in Downtown Augusta?
3. What are the opportunities with parking in Downtown Augusta?

A variety of thoughts were shared regarding downtown parking management by the panel and audience members. Suggestions and/or thoughts from the panel and audience members generally included variations of the following:

1. Enforce current laws (i.e. two-hour parking limit)
2. Conduct a study to collect more information about parking use, issues, and possibilities
3. Repaint and use non-parking spots (some marked with yellow X) to increase available parking spaces
4. Leverage the Richmond County Board of Education parking deck
5. Leverage the 10th Street (Augusta Marriott) parking deck
6. Build a parking garage on or off the main road (possibly with SPLOST infrastructure funding)
7. Install parking meters in key locations (e.g. upper Broad Street) and for use during peak hours (e.g. lunch hours)
8. Offer paid parking permits for downtown residents and/or downtown employees
9. Do nothing to avoid adversely affecting downtown business growth

Addressing parking management steps may contain a number of options including possible combinations of the following:

1. Determine current parking needs and availability
2. Determine public opinion regarding parking needs and options
3. Explore/develop parking enforcement options
4. Assemble a Downtown Parking Committee
5. Develop and implement a comprehensive parking solution
6. Develop and implement a limited parking solution
7. Do nothing

Generally, the meetings were well-attended and a variety of views regarding downtown parking management were expressed. Opinions were shared about the need to further clean and promote downtown Augusta, about the possible adverse economic impact of paid parking solutions, and about the need for parking management solutions.