



DECEMBER FREE P! Parking Program (Conclusions & Next steps)

How we got here:

- Spring 2017: Downtown Parking Committee commits to a review of the December Free P! program **for 2018**
- BDBA/DPC: coordinate two membership workshops to explore “what does success look like” regarding December Free P! parking
- Workshop generates a revised option for Free P! parking: **Modified Program:** *Maintain free parking in municipally-owned spaces. December 1-31. At all off-street parking in surface lots and 414 Locust Street garage. Paid parking on-street.*
- BDBA Executive Director & Board Chairman meet with 38 members to discuss further. ALL PARTIES AGREE that BDBA will execute a survey of the membership presenting three options for consideration **in 2017**.
- Councillor Meed Ward launches a Free P! December survey for the general public. It will remain online until October 1st 2017

The Survey:

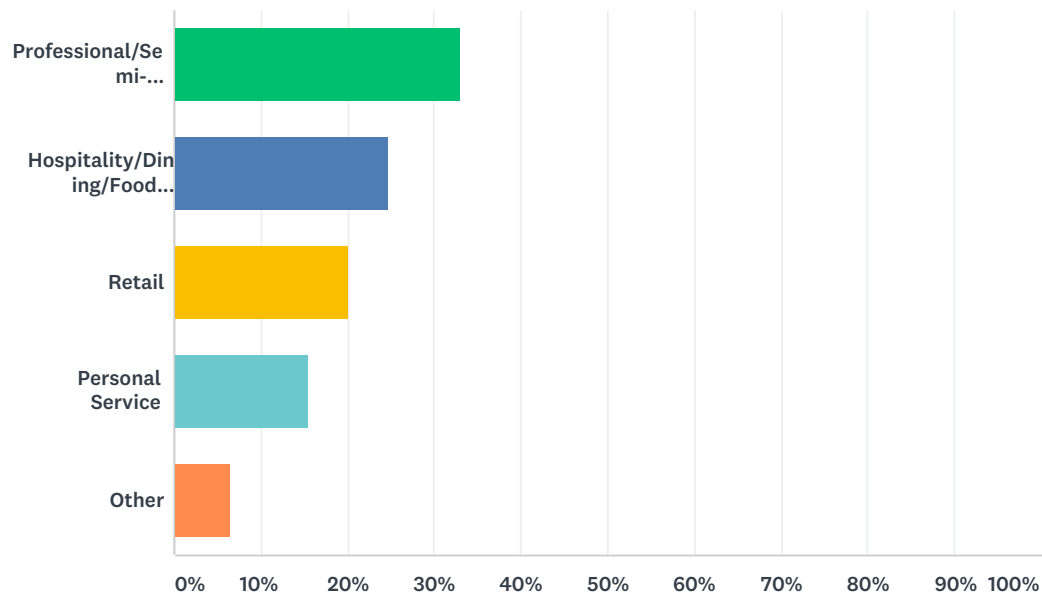
- July/August BDBA conducts a “One Minute Parking Survey” of its 435 members
- Survey results collected electronically and by hard copy (door to door efforts: Executive Director and Block Captains)
- Survey states: Your Burlington Downtown Business Association will take a position based on the majority of responses from our membership. It will be communicated to the entire downtown business membership and Downtown Parking Committee in September, 2017. Our goal is to receive comment a minimum of 200 responses.
- The BDBA received 154 responses (35.4%)

Next Steps:

- 1) **(September 13th)** Board approval/direction to Executive Director
- 2) DPC (September 28th): Review of surveys and BDBA Board motion – action plan for December 2017
- 3) October 5th: Meeting of BDBA/DPC staff and Downtown membership to review next steps and action plan 2017+

Q2 My business type is best described as:

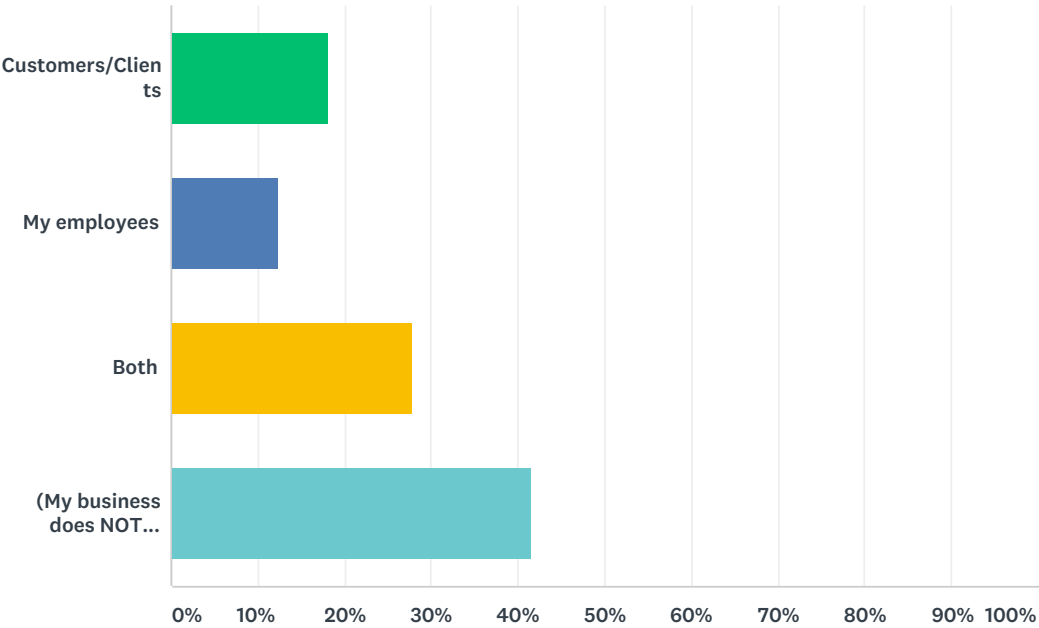
Answered: 154 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Professional/Semi- Professional	33.12%	51
Hospitality/Dining/Food Service	24.68%	38
Retail	20.13%	31
Personal Service	15.58%	24
Other	6.49%	10
TOTAL		154

Q3 My business provides on-site parking for the following:

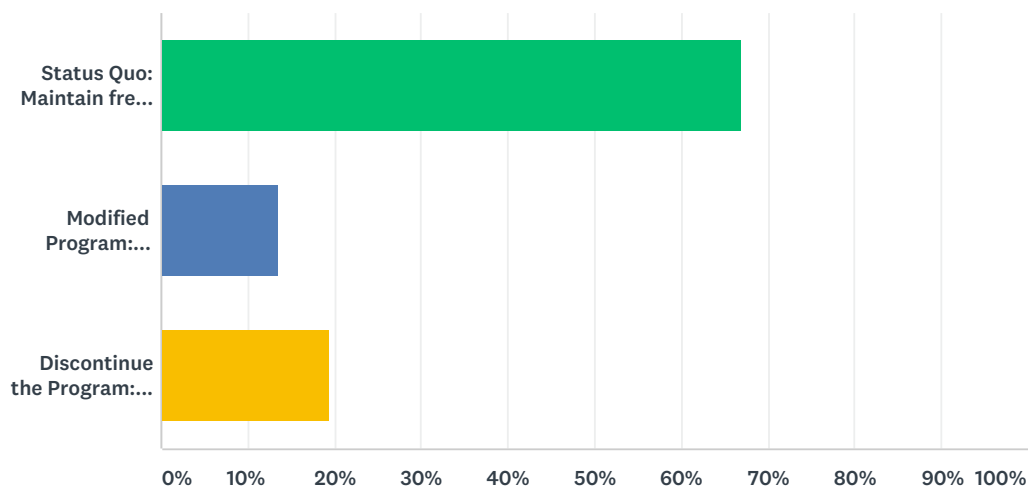
Answered: 154 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Customers/Clients	18.18%	28
My employees	12.34%	19
Both	27.92%	43
(My business does NOT provide on-site parking)	41.56%	64
TOTAL		154

Q4 My business supports the following approach to the Free P! December 2017 campaign (choose one only):

Answered: 154 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Status Quo: Maintain free parking in municipally-owned spaces. December 1-31. At all on-street parking spaces AND off-street parking in surface lots and 414 Locust Street garage.	66.88%	103
Modified Program: Maintain free parking in municipally-owned spaces. December 1-31. At all off-street parking in surface lots and 414 Locust Street garage. Paid parking on-street.	13.64%	21
Discontinue the Program: Stand down on the Free P! December 2017 campaign.	19.48%	30
TOTAL		154

One MINUTE survey: Free P

RESPONSES

- Let's not confuse people with options 1 and 2 on Q4 (above)
- Having partial pay on street and free lot access will create confusion and (issue) tickets to patrons
- I feel so strongly about this that I did the survey twice. How does the city's budget planning affected by no free p?
- It does not make our business any better and takes away parking spaces that could be used for our customers

Make sure the free parking is for shoppers NOT employees of downtown businesses. There should also be a time restriction so people dont take advantage and park all day . This avoids people who live downtown using parking spaces. This is for shoppers only . Last year i couldnt even find a spot to buy a coffee at starbucks for the entire month of December.

- The Burlington downtown does not have sufficient parking allocations to sustain free parking for a length of time.
- Visitors and residents love the FreeP program and by keeping it status quo it there will not be confusion about where it is free.
- We have observed due to free parking the parking lot is always full of it customers who are willing to pay to get a spot never manage to get one
- I remember the day when all public lots were free parking all year around. This was very helpful to my business since my clients have to pay for parking currently. To consider removing free December parking is to raise expenses once again, this would be an anti-business move.

I believe that the congestion caused by FreeP in December is a larger deterrent to visiting downtown than the cost of parking would be.

- I believe that merchants should consider reimbursing patrons for their parking instead.

I still love the idea of this program--it allows shoppers to park and run in to grab a quick gift, house warming, or stocking stuffer. Perhaps employees/staff of all business should register their license plates and fines will be issued to any who park longer than 3 hours on the street or in a lot (unless they have the monthly permit)? To lessen the parking burden how about we

- offer free bus rides to the Brant street or the John Street terminal for the month of December ?
- Due to the volume of cars it may be advisable to limit free parking to two hours instead of three.

The parking machines are the number one complaint of our customers. Burlington has a large elderly population, and we get a lot of the at the book store, along with all their complaints about those parking meters. They are hard to use and expensive. The longer and more free parking you can offer the better.

90 % of my clients come in commenting on the frustration of the parking machines. i.e. won't take my money, won't print ticket, won't give me enough time, won't take credit card, glare on machine so can't read instructions, won't allow me to give more money to give more time...does not indicate that if you put too much money in close to 6:00, it just spits it back out with no explanation, says.... after putting money in, that machine is out of order and find another without giving money back. Parking has not been an issue for my clients but those machines are effecting my business!

- This program has made it very difficult for my clients to find parking. In fact they refer to it as "December no parking"
- Free parking in December helps the downtown compete.
- I feel the free P is taken by staff that work downtown. My staff is not allowed to use the free P unless they are shopping. Free P is abused and customers can't find any parking,
- There is already very little parking in front of my store. I feel that having the free parking during December is imperative for a successful and stress free December.
- We need to be part of the Bigger Concern of Future Supply and Development
- City employees should not have free parking and/or should have to park on the top floors of the parking garage and be limited to the parking lots at the perimeter of the core
- Same complaint as always, there is not enough parking on the east side of downtown. Huge numbers of complaints from patients especially when meters don't work! Nasty meter maid too!
- She is ticket crazy!
- No one wants to pay for parking to shop or do business in downtown Burlington. When most all services are in Malls with free parking.

This was a very helpful service in December for various reasons.

Firstly, our staff loved not having to pay and be able to park closer to the building.

Secondly, we only have so many underground spots available for guests. It is a busy time for residents to entertain their families and having free on street parking was so well received by our residents and their families.

Free P is a great idea. Unfortunately it doesn't seem to have accomplished the intended goal. To be truthful, we hear more griping from clients in December as they say parking is more difficult to find in December. We know you have made many efforts to ensure the program is not abused, but the unfortunate reality is that it is continually abused, mostly by staff of downtown businesses. The continuation of free weekend parking is ideal as it kes coming to Downtown Burlington appealing and "feel good", but we don't feel it's either necessary or properly used in December. On another note, we hear nothing but negativity about the "new" machines. She use them ourselves and also notice the same issues we hear clients complain about. The machines are slow, unresponsive, cumbersome, repetitive & often times don't work at all. We would love the opportunity to explain all of the issues with the machines.

I believe this program has not served us well at all over the past 5 years and we do not support it. If the parking garage on Locust would be free for the month and ONLY that location, we would support this. Otherwise, the lack of parking spaces in our downtown core do not service our already existing customer base and FREE P is used by staff and visitor parking for our condos that do not have ANY visitor parking. This is over 500+ condo units between Bunton's Wharf, The Baxter, 360 on Pearl, Pearl and Pine and two apartment buildings on John St.

- Great service for December for clients. Would be beneficial for the summer time too.

The free parking program makes it convenient for patrons to explore and visit the downtown area. It would be a shame to discourage that in the month of December when it is likely that people will be attending various social functions in the core and perhaps would also encourage exploration of local shops.

- The program seems to be working at attracting more people to the downtown core. It is a great incentive for people to come downtown. Keep it in place!
- Perhaps take a look at designating a parking lot for employee parking so that the remaining spaces are available for the paying customers.
- Downtown businesses appreciate the much needed support from the city. I have received positive feedback from many of my customers regarding this program. Thank you!

Parking remains a huge issue for us at Bodhi Bar. 4 metered spots removed across the street for the condo build. Limited parking on John street. Reserved drop off spots for the Baxter. No parking along Lakeshore Road. I have d customers call in to cancel orders because they could not find parking. When events occur, typically resulting in Brant Street closure, this further removes downtown parking availability and had pedestrians attracted to Brant street. Each of these events has resulted in a proven decline in sales. I've pursued paying for my own parking with local lot owners. This is cost-prohibitive and difficult to manage.

We're hoping for some modifications to the free parking program - although we are huge supporters of it, we have noticed that street parking poses an issue during December, as many patrons or downtown employees park for much longer than usual, eliminating the 'sharing' aspect of things. Thank you! Keep up the awesome work!

- Doesn't really impact us, our business, or our clients, but I think it is a great idea and great for Downtown!

My personal experience for Lot 7 is that that you can generally find parking most days. When we get into December the parking lot fills by 10 am. Not sure this is attracting people to visit the down town or is it the local community, employees taking advantage of free parking.

I like the concept but I am not sure the current method is achieving the desired goal.

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- The families of our residents enjoy the free parking during that time of the year.
- I've heard comments both ways. I'm not sure on which way to go on this.
- Our customers cannot read and or decipher the parking lot machines. We have to teach them to count the number of steps involved in paying for parking (a concern when the machine is out of order). Every day I assist countless customers on Locust Street, who can read, with the parking machine and how to operate it!
- Get rid of paid parking at all times. It's killing the businesses downtown.Cheers
- fix the parking machines. so many people I know complain of the ease of use
- Feel that free parking doesn't just encourage people to come downtown to shop/use services, but removes a barrier from people wanting to come downtown but who don't want to have to pay for parking and search for a 'free' spot.

I have no issue with the Free P Parking Program in December other than I feel it is being abused. I park in my office driveway but pay for space in the adjacent parking lot for my two employees. In December they sometimes have difficulty finding a space at non-peak shopping periods. I believe that downtown employees are using the free parking as a perk to be closer

- work or as an opportunity to drive to work. More monitoring is certainly required to ensure that the shoppers are benefitting rather than downtown employees.
- I would like to say continue status quo only if our monthly passes don't go up to pay for this program... I actually think that free parking is nice to draw people to the downtown core, however
- businesses should not have to cover this!

Free parking for the month of December is not only a nice gesture - it increases the foot traffic in the city. The more people in the downtown core - the better it is for all local businesses. I can speak on a personal note - being able to tell postential customers that the city offers free parking 100% helps to close the deal when booking large group reservations (ie holiday parties).

- Please do not take away this program.

- I think there will be more spots to park if it is paid for. They are here to do business and move on.

The notion that free parking enhances or encourages shopping in the downtown area is simply not correct. The clientele who frequent our shops care not about the cost of parking but rather the availability of parking. The free parking concept is too difficult to police and is generally abused by non shoppers.

Consider the option at Mapleview mall. In December people spend literally 20 minutes or more looking for parking spaces. Availability is the issue whether free or not.

I don't see the current rates being an issue. So that the 'extra' money earned in the January to November time frame and invest it into downtown promotions. As well, work with the owner of the large lot on Pearl above the Catholic church to make 'x' number of his spots available to the public as well. His patrons are mostly downtown workers who are there by permit and arrive early in the morning. Opening the lot to the public would not inhibit their typical daily flow. The payment terminal on the city lot between Pearl and Elizabeth could be used for the

- public to purchase their time. with some sort of revenue splitting in place there could be more spaces available to the public and more revenue for both the city and the landlord.
- Please keep me up to date on the number of responses, I am willing to assist engagement any way I can. Sean
- There is also a definite lack of parking spots and we hear this from customers endlessly. As well, the metres should be programmed to be more user friendly.
- We only have 2 parking spots available. Our clients love the fact that they can come shop and get their hair done in December and have free parking.
- December free parking is an incentive to boost customer traffic in the downtown core.

If you could figure a way to stop staff from parking in the lots because it's now closer to their work then the freeP would work perfectly. It's a tough one because some people are so selfish.

- Maybe give them free parking at a lot further away from downtown. I find my clients have a more difficult time parking in December than any other month because of this.
- We have great feedback from our guests on the free parking through the month of December. Also allows people to enjoy there night and take a cab home responsibly.

- I think the program has value, with modifications, it could be great! I really do believe some of the solutions that were discussed at the 2 workshops could make the program successful.

If the city of Burlington is to continue this practice they should conduct a study during the period of the month of free parking surveying people parking during various times of day to get a

- better understanding of who is using it and who is abusing it.
- August should be free too
- Paid parking has been a bone of contention since the new metres have been installed. Clients have found them to be difficult to use.
- What is the cost? ?
- my students really appreciate this service and all of them use it to stay in the downtown core longer
- Zero parking near the core of downtown- that only happen in December because all downtown employees take our customers parking

I also think the new meter system which enables you to visit several shops in your paid time is amazing! I use it and my wife loves it; definitely contributes to more utilization of our downtown

- Great program!!!lets keep it going

While the existence or not of the program does not materially affect my business, I am advised by a number of merchants that the influx of cars drawn by the program causes frustration for

- those unable to find parking, so the program, according to them, is counter-productive.
- Maintain a limit of 3 hrs max, to prevent staff from the local shops from parking.
- business owners who pay for the lots during the year(as we do) should continue to park in those lots to free spaces up on the street for customers.

It appears that the city run lots at corner of Locust and Caroline and the lot on Locust Street are used primarily by city employees and other business staff as they fill up very early in the

- am so it isn't shoppers that use these lots. Additionally, for those of us who pay for a monthly parking spot all year it is hard to find parking if not at the lot by about 8:30 to 9:00 am.
- its silly to create more obstacles for businesses in downtown Burlington by taking away services.

I personally don't see the issue with free P in Dec since it's being patrolled by the parking authorities to ensure everyone is in compliance with the time limits. Im unsure of what revenue is lost to the municipality by doing this campaign and as such if there are other programs that are in dire need of more funding that these monies would offset however - the bigger issue for me as a downtown business owner is the now year-round problems with the pay stations that are deployed. I help people out daily with these machines, they are confusing, time

consuming and some of them don't work very well. My business specifically benefits from free after 6 and weekend parking, as that is when the majority of my classes are in operation and

- my clients would need the parking. Cheers.
- Anything to alleviate the terrible and confusing parking meters.

Free Parking is very beneficial for the Holiday Season when prospects/customers tend to drop in to purchase Gifts. Makes it easier to drop(in) & shop and is good promotion to existing

- customers to let their friends & families know about coming to downtown Burlington. Competitive advantage to malls and other areas/cities where parking is free over the holiday season.

- We rely on both visitor parking in the townhouse complex (which is used for both visitors of the residential owners as well as clients for the businesses in the area) and street parking in the areas of Pine Street/Martha/Pearl. I believe the free parking program for the month of December is a great way to bring people to the downtown areas, as well as a nice thing for clients/patrons of local businesses. Thank you
- December was the slowest sales month since we opened, so I cannot say this program helped at all. **My employees liked the free parking, but most customers had trouble finding parking and the condo building visitors using this definitely has impact availability.**
- Patients really enjoy the Month of December and the free
- I think it's great to offer to our patients- so many of them are happy about it!
- The number one complaint we receive from our customers is that they have to pay for parking to come and shop in our store. Having free parking all the time in our busiest month of the year would be extremely beneficial!
- I feel the incentive to free parking to get people down to the core is critical and should be expanded to other shopping holiday. What those are?...I am not sure but I believe, to compete with malls and other locations, it is necessary. I would further expand the parking situation for restaurants that over night parking in lots and on streets is fine as long as the cars are gone by 9am the next morning for Saturday and Sunday. This will help with drinking and driving and give incentives for people to bring their car down here, stay a few extra hours out to enjoy the downtown at night and not worry about D and D.
- Unfortunately moving forward with the "Free P" for the month of December the **abusers hinder customer traffic flow**. Discontinuing the program is the only answer.
- Our clients find it hard to find parking when it is free!
- It has been requested by so many patients that free parking in downtown needs to be 1December - end of February due to slippery conditions and risk of falls
- I parked at JBH this morning.....2 hours 9 to 11am.....\$15. I do thing the hourly rates are an issue at all! Parking tickets are hated.....why not have a monthly draw and pay the fine for at least one if not five downtown shoppers? Ken
- I appreciated the effort when Free P came out. Nothing ventured nothing gained. Unfortunately its not perfect. Time for a change.
- This program was good when it launched, but the dynamic has changed. Free parking does not encourage more patronage downtown in my opinion.
- **Discontinue the program, downtown employees and RESIDENTS abuse it by parking in spaces designated for my customers!**
- Free parking in December truly helps to increase all business downtown for the holiday season. Cheers!