

Effects of the introduction of parking regulations in small cities (Bladel, NL case study)

Shopping facilities in smaller cities and municipalities mainly attracts local inhabitants that come to buy their daily groceries, so no fun shopping visitors... These different functions might also be reflected in a differentiated parking approach between districts of one and the same city or municipality.

Problem definition

The Hapert district of the City of Bladel (NL) had no real parking policy nor regulations, until they noticed that existing on-street parking places around the shopping area always were occupied by long term parked cars (of employees and inhabitants). Shop keepers started complaining and asked for few regulations.

Objectives

A small user-oriented feasibility study was about to give direction to the introduction of 4 possible parking measures in order to reduce the long-term parking without influencing short term parking (no negative effects on customers)

Description

The effect of 4 potential changes were assessed:

- *Change of the total amount of on-street parking*
- *The introduction of paid on-street parking*
- *Limitation of parking time*
- *Change of location of parking places (further distances)*

Impact & outcomes

The study showed that the number of shoppers using the car will decrease with the introduction of paid parking. Most clients indicated that they would go to a different shopping area.

With this measure, only a limited number of locals are planning to visit the centre but to stay shorter, less often get to the centre, or switch to a different mode of transport like cycling or walking.

The measure involving the least expected behavioural changes, is the introduction of parking duration limitation.

These outcomes of the small-scale study show that ‘standard’ parking solutions seldom are applicable and transferable. All conditions (influencing factors) need to be considered carefully before drawing conclusions including stubborn prejudices (of shop keepers and car drivers).

At least – in this case – it opened the discussion on a local parking policy.

Barriers / constraints and how they have been overcome

This case illustrates once more how emotionally ‘parking’ can be. A user needs study is one way of handling it, but be careful with the self-fulfilling prophecy effect (‘you get what you have asked for’... Off course people are not happy to pay...)

Other, more scientific, studies show that (paid) parking is not the main influencing factor weather customers buy in shop x or y.

And parking is never for free either the customer/visitor of inhabitant of the city will pay. (G.Mingardo, Erasmus Rotterdam)

Further information available at / from

Van der Waerden, P., Moolenaar, L. & Van Gerwen, D. (2015) Potential Effects of Parking Measures in Multifunctional Centers of Small Towns in the Netherlands, Proceedings of 22nd International Conference on Recent Advance in Retailing and Services Science, Montreal Canada.

Translation of the Dutch document Parkeren en gedrag - Een totaaloverzicht van alle relevante kennis op het gebied van parkeren en gedrag (CROW).

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