The fact is: Parking Management will not kill your high street - it will support the local economy.

Parking in an attractive city is less important to successful shops than shop-owners think.
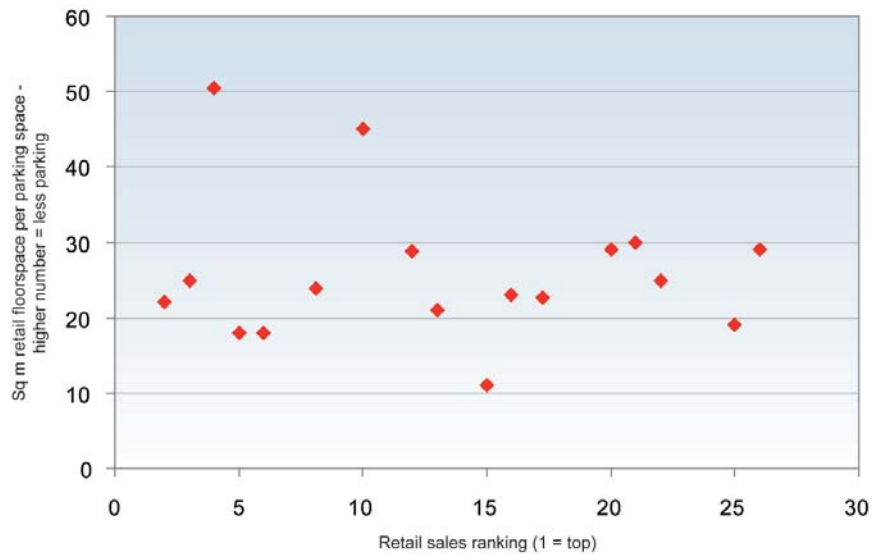
People choose where to shop based on the range and quality of shops, and the atmosphere of the place. Parking plays a role, but it is not the main factor. People who walk, cycle and take public transport to the shops visit more often and visit more shops than those who come by car. Research shows that there is NO relationship between how much parking you have and how successful your shopping centre is. Effective parking management can actually increase the attractiveness of the city centre, leading to more visitors.

Teller (2008) surveyed 1000 shoppers in Vienna, and asked them about their most frequently visited very large shopping mall, smaller shopping mall, very large shopping street area and smaller shopping street area. He found that the most important factors for them in choosing where to shop were the mix of shops, and the atmosphere. Parking availability had no significant impact on where people chose to shop. Reducing parking of course gives the opportunity to create more pedestrian space, which adds to the atmosphere of a centre. Similar results have been found in the Netherlands (Mingardo, 2012): approx. 70,000 people have been surveyed about their shopping behavior and the most important reasons to choose a shopping area were proximity to home, completeness of shops and completeness of products.

Sustrans (20006) carried out research at two shopping centers in Bristol, England. Over 40% of all customers travelled less than 800m to the two centers and only 22% came by car – though retailers thought the figure was around 44%. Similar research in Edinburgh City Centre (City of Edinburgh Council, 2006) found around 20% of shoppers travelling by car, whilst retailers thought that 40% of their customers parked in one of only 220 on-street parking spaces – in the centre of a city of 450,000 people. A survey in the centre of Rotterdam (Mingardo et al, 2009) shows that the modal split of shoppers is: 21.5% by car, 26.2% by public transport, 18.5% by bike and 33.6% on foot. Car borne shoppers account only for 23.8% of the total turnover (see figure below).
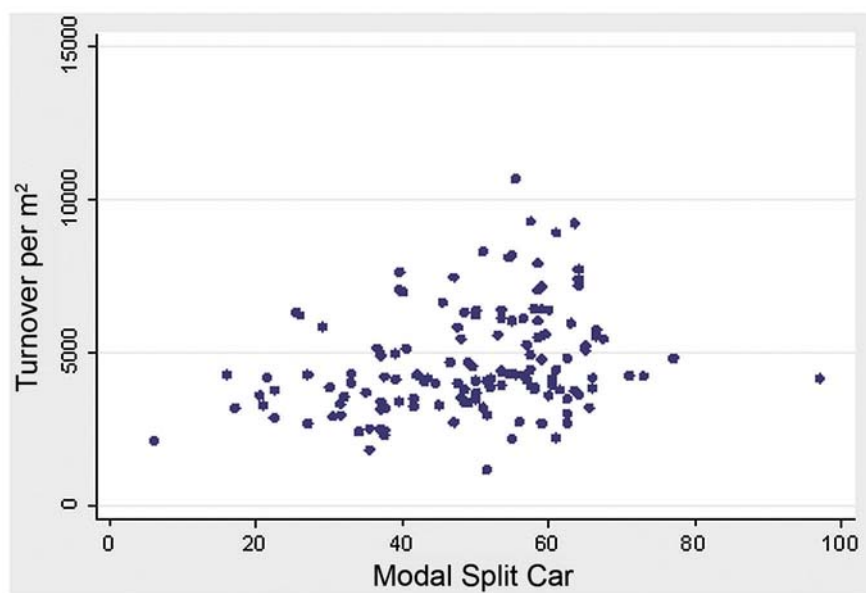
Modal split of the customers	%	Average expenditure per customer per week (€)	Average turnover per transport mode per week (€)	% of the Total turnover of the shops
Car	21.5	128.28	2,758.02	23.8
Public transport	26.2	73.30	1,920.46	16.6
Bike	18.5	88.80	1,642.80	14.2
Walk	33.6	156.06	5,243.62	45.3
Total	100.0		11,564.90	100.0

A 2004 study of retail success and parking in 21 UK shopping centers found a very slightly negative relationship between the number of parking spaces and retail success; whilst the more successful shopping centers had slightly more expensive parking (City of Edinburgh, 2005). This is shown in the graph below.

Source: City of Edinburgh, 2005

A similar study in the Netherlands on more than 200 shopping areas in the Randstad area has found no relationship between the percentage of customers travelling to the shopping area by car and the retail turnover, see figure below (Mingardo, 2012).

Source: Mingardo, 2012

The city of Maastricht is a good example that effective parking management can contribute to a more attractive city centre. Maastricht is the only city in the Netherlands that in the period 2005-2012, despite a 80% increase in the parking fees, has had an increase in the number of visitors of more than 20% (DTZ, 2012). Parking management was one of the key elements that contributed to this result. After the increase of the parking fee, the extra income has been invested, among others, in the construction of the underground Mosae Forum garage (in 2007). Before the opening of this garage the main square of the city – the Marketplein – was used as parking lot. Thanks to the new garage the square got back its original function, with plenty of cafe's and room for the market (Q-park, 2011).The illustration below show the square before and after the new parking policy.

If parking is not regulated, shoppers and visitors coming by car might experience difficulties in finding a place available close to where they want to be. When there is no parking management, parking in front of shops is often used by long-term parkers (not uncommonly by shopkeepers themselves!) instead of being available for customers. Henley is one of the many towns in UK where this is a problem; "It would be much better use of that bay if it had restricted parking in order to open it to a lot more users" is the suggestion of the Town centre manager about some of the parking in his local high street (Henley Standard, 2013).

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