

## Save the spots: Downtown Portland launches parking campaign



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PORTLAND, Mich. -

Even though Downtown Portland offers parking lots and street parking, some customers and residents think that there is a parking problem.

“There was always a perception of a big parking problem, and there isn’t,” said Downtown Development Authority Director and Main Street Manager Patrick Reagan. “The problem is that you cannot always find it in front of the place you want to go.”

To encourage employees and business owners in the downtown area not to park on the street, or in front of their stores, the Main Street Committee will be putting flyers thanking people for parking in a lot, and offering them a small award.

“We are going to put out fliers for people who are parking in the parking lots thanking them for utilizing one the lots,” said Reagan. “(The flier is go to say) ‘We appreciate you doing that, here is 10 percent off your next visit at Cheeky Monkeys.’”

The opposite will go for those vehicles parked on the street. The committee is going to be placing fliers on those vehicles that will thank them for coming to the downtown area, and letting the owner know of the parking lots.

“As humans, we all want to park at the closed spot, and business owners and employees do the same thing,” said Reagan. “That is not good for business.”

Reagan pointed out a study conducted in 2003 that shows a medium city’s downtown business can lose over \$150 a day.

“The point isn’t so much the dollars, but the point that it costs the business,” said Reagan. “If we save those spots for visitors and customers it helps everybody out.”

This program is going to happen intermittently throughout the next couple months, and the DDA and Main Street Committee is going to see if the mind-set of parking changes.

“We want to see how it works, it’s a pilot project right now to get people thinking about how they are parking and how it affects them and their downtown neighbors,” said Reagan.

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