

Despite its name, Carrboro is not car-friendly

Town launches web survey in hopes of improving limited parking situation



Because Carrboro only has 600 public spots, the municipal lots of Carrboro, like the one pictured above, often fill up. Parking in Carrboro is especially limited during weekends and fun-filled events. (Staff photo by Kelley Hamill)

Kelley Hamill
Staff Writer

The Problem

The town of Carrboro prides itself on its walkability; however, there are times when both visitors and residents need to drive. With driving comes the need for parking.

Currently, Carrboro has five municipal lots, with a total of 600 parking spaces downtown that are for public use.

Of the 600 public spots, 350 spots are a result of a five-year contract with the Hampton Inn and Suites, which allows parking spaces at the garage to be used for the public.

Trish McGuire, Town of Carrboro planning director, said many residents have been voicing concerns over a lack of available public parking downtown.

“One of the problems we’re facing is that there is a small amount of public parking, but there is a large amount of private parking,” said McGuire.

The Solution

In response to residents’ concerns, the Town of Carrboro has partnered with Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, a consulting firm in Raleigh, to launch the Downtown Carrboro Parking Study.

The study includes a survey available online to gather information on parking challenges that residents and visitors have experienced in downtown Carrboro.

“There are a lot of questions about how much parking there is and where there are places to park in town,” said McGuire. “We’re listening to everyone’s concerns and we’re doing our best to figure out what the solution is.”

In addition to the survey, a public parking forum was held at the Carrboro Elementary School, where residents could meet with town staff to provide feedback on the current parking situation and offer suggestions for improvements.

Residents Voice Concerns

Vicki Boyer, a Carrboro resident for nearly 18 years, attended the public parking forum last Thursday.

“There’s just not enough,” said Boyer in reference to the parking situation. “Some people want to promote biking instead of driving, but it’s not a realistic option for everyone.”

Boyer also suggested that Carrboro keep parking free downtown.

“Free parking makes people feel like they’re living in a small town because a village doesn’t charge to park,” said Boyer. “That’s why Chapel Hill has

more of a big town feeling.”

Residents aren’t the only ones inconvenienced by the lack of downtown parking. It’s also becoming a problem for local businesses.

Customers of the Spotted Dog in Carrboro generally park in the municipal lots off of Main Street and Roberson Street because street parking is minimal, said manager Zachary Fields.

“Last year Carrboro eliminated a parking spot on Weaver Street in order to put in bike racks and Carr Mill lots have a strict towing policy if you leave their premises,” said Fields.

Fields said that during times of high volume, like the weekend or events, customers could spend more than 20 minutes attempting to find parking.

The Town of Carrboro is encouraging all residents to give feedback during this 10-month process, either through the online survey, Facebook or Twitter.

To give feedback visit:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ParkCarrboro>
<https://www.facebook.com/CarrboroTownGov>
@CarrboroTownGov on Twitter