

COMMUNITY REPORT: ADEQUATE PARKING IN DOWNTOWN AUBURN

Auburn University Community Planning

INTRODUCTION AND TOPIC

Public parking in Downtown Auburn is available through a combination of metered and non-metered on- street parking, surface parking lots and parking decks, that contains both metered and leased parking. There are also numerous parking spaces allocated to the public through private business and church lots. Some argue, however, that this is not enough and that Auburn, both the city and university, should increase its parking to accommodate the growing number of people in the area. Population in the Auburn-Opelika area has been growing exponentially over the past few decades. Auburn University and Southern Union attendance numbers have continued to grow as well. With this, there have been numerous student housing apartments built in recent years that has made traffic in downtown Auburn worsen and competition for parking more frequent. This leads to people being turned-off to the idea of going downtown for food, shopping, or other occasions or activities such as nightlife, which could hurt economic growth downtown.

Currently, there is a lingering concern among many business owners and the general public that there is a lack of parking in the downtown area. The city is currently working on expanding parking to some extent through multiple projects and proposals. However, the parking management of existing facilities is important as well. There have been issues that have led to the underutilization misuse of parking such as student parking, employee parking downtown, and the performance of private parking facilities. In a growing college town and community such as Auburn, economic efficiency and growth is vital to the downtown area and can directly have an impact on the university as well. If people see Downtown Auburn as a place that is uninviting to commuters, which is how a majority of people reach downtown, then businesses and establishments will suffer.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

With parking, it is important to address the reason for people using the parking facilities and when they are most being used. It is also important to understanding people's struggles with finding said parking spots, as well as receiving insightful feedback and ideas about improving parking downtown. Through establishing relevant and useful research questions, we can discover these things by asking those who commonly park downtown, who could more accurately defined as the stakeholders. Without these stakeholders, many businesses in downtown Auburn would cease to exist and therefore, there would be no need for parking.

This is where qualitative research comes in: it is important to make these observations and distinctions. You cannot easily reduce these descriptions to numbers—as you can the findings from quantitative research (though you can achieve this through an encoding process). Qualitative research studies can provide you with details about human behavior, emotion, and personality characteristics that quantitative studies cannot match. Qualitative data includes information about user behaviors, needs, desires, routines, use cases, and a variety of other information that is essential in designing a product that will actually fit into a user’s life. Empirical or quantitative data does typically provide user or consumer insight. Qualitative research is a more in-depth way of getting to the core of the user’s behaviors, emotions and/or personality characteristics that quantitative research cannot match.

There were several questions that wanted to be identified while beginning the research of parking downtown:

1. Who uses downtown parking facilities/ What brought them there?

This would help determine if and why people were using downtown parking. Was it work that brought them to downtown? Was the lack of on-campus parking at Auburn University enough to make them, in many cases, pay to park downtown throughout their classes? Or were they simply parking downtown to shop, eat, or visit other local businesses? This, along with the other research question, would help understand the users of downtown parking and troubleshooting solutions of parking downtown.

3. How would you describe the availability of parking in the downtown area?

- **What ideas or thoughts do you have that would improve downtown parking?**

This is overall a good opportunity to gather feedback and ideas from stakeholders and people of the community about parking. Even if the ideas are completely useless or too extreme, making the interviewee and their opinion or voice being heard is extremely valuable in gaining honest feedback.

2. How long did it take to find a spot?

- **What time are you typically searching/ using it parking facilities?**
- **How far are you commuting to reach downtown Auburn?**

Building off of the previous question, establishing a baseline for commuting times and when people are usually searching for spots is important. Parking could be, and typically is, drastically different on a normal Tuesday afternoon versus a normal Friday night. Knowing the intention of the commuter is a great step to addressing parking needs.

4. How do you feel about the current downtown pricing and hours?

- **Have you ever received any parking citations by the City of Auburn?**
- **Would you be willing to pay more for parking if it meant more available spaces?**

These questions are building off of number 3. Gaining the insight and opinions of the users and stakeholders is a great thing to do in qualitative research especially regarding something as conditional as parking.

With these research questions, the overall goal was to further understand those who parking downtown by answering questions of why and when they were parking. Gaining valuable

opinions, ideas, and experiences of parking downtown can also help further identify the strengths and weaknesses that parking facilities in Auburn possess.

CONTRIBUTION TO A LARGER CONVERSATION

The objective of this research is not to find a “perfect solution” to parking in downtown Auburn, rather it aims to observe the stakeholder and answer the questions related to why or how it is such a persisting and growing issue. Parking is a topic that is controversial in most, if not all, cities / towns / communities. As a more and more people flood Auburn and the surrounding area to live, work and play, many arrive on four wheels — cars, which are creating massive headaches for city officials and residents. While researching literature reviews and scholarly articles, there were many great ideas and proposals that could contribute to the conversation that is parking issues in Auburn.

One article reviewed, *Regulating On-Street Parking* (Calthrop, Edward and Stef Proost), looks at the pricing of on-street versus off-street (which is usually private) parking facilities and cost and theorizes that optimal government regulation of on-street parking prices to match that of off-street. They conclude this by suggesting that optimal on-street fee(s) equal the marginal cost of off-street parking in the best and most optimal circumstances. With this, it suggests that on-street parking would be best suited to match that of off-street parking.

Downtown Auburn mostly consist of on-street, public parking that is controlled by government-set pricing and rates. Most of them, where parking fees are placed, are controlled by two-hour limits. Auburn currently has 528 parking spots downtown (according to the City of Auburn’s website) that can be used by the public. This, of course, is not including university parking areas, which are restricted to staff, personnel, administration, and students during university hours, which correlates to that of downtown pricing hours for parking.

This piece can be important because, while conducting the qualitative research for parking in downtown Auburn, the relationship between parking and its consumers or users can be made. It is not right to simply assume that downtown parking has identical consumers. Many individuals who park downtown are employees, but many of which are provided spots in the municipal parking deck. Also, it is important to acknowledge that a lot of students use parking downtown, especially those who have one or two classes on the northeast side of campus. It is important to understand the relation of the consumer and the product to therefore price, plan, and accommodate parking in downtown Auburn.

The Transformation of the Parking Industry (Klein, Michael), provides a look into the future of the parking and mobility industry, its issues and objective of improving accessibility and mobility, all by industry experts who are providing their perspectives. It goes over topics such as industry shifts, curbside management, parking principles, transportation and parking industry themes, and many more. With it, there have been several seismic shifts that have reshaped the parking industry, mainly on making parking management more efficient and improving customer satisfaction. Doing so can be providing automated, cashless payment systems, rethinking parking along with walkable or bikeable communities, or even the Parksmart program initiated by the USGBC.

Another important topic is curbside parking and management, which Auburn has a lot of. Growing trends see many downtown centers accommodating their curbsides to ride-hailing companies, mass transits, mobile vendors, ADA access, and more. Just allowing curbside space for parking can greatly increase congestion in downtowns, especially when there is no space for the previously mentioned. The transportation and parking themes, especially recently, have seen a growing number of add-on, such as customer service and satisfaction or urban mobility. But of course, not all are new, many are topics that have been around for decades. The overall themes for transportation and parking, not including the ones already mentioned, also includes safety, efficiency and effectiveness, management theory and application, professionalism and education, technology explosion, paradigm and cultural shifts, and governance.

This article can be a great resource while conducting research or collecting data for parking in downtown Auburn because it shows the shifts and change in dynamics that the parking profession has changed in the past few decades. Changes, especially with technology, has played an important role in the way downtown parking and transportation has changed. Things like Uber or Lyft, along with bike-share programs and others, have changed the way people move. With this, it is also important to consider the changes that the area of Auburn and Opelika has seen over the past few decades as well, which also play into the challenges that the planners and parking facilities have come against.

In terms of technology, and the idea of using technology to better manage parking or alleviate the stress of parking, in *An Advanced Parking Navigation System for Downtown Parking* (Chen, Zhibin, Stephen Spana, Yafeng Yin, and Yuchuan Du), the authors develop a novel parking navigation system for downtown parking that aims to mitigate parking competition by guiding drivers to appropriate vacant parking spaces. In many dense cities, finding a parking space, especially during peak travel or commuter times, can be stressful to even the most patient individual. The text provides a lot of valuable quantitative data, such as the percentage of traffic searches for parking spots and the inevitable waste of time, resources, and other things associated with being stuck in traffic.

This is especially a newer concept, given the technological advancement within the last two or three decades along with the widespread adoption of smartphones. Using these technologies, various advanced parking management approaches, such as parking reservations, parking, parking information provisions, and parking guidance have been explored to help drivers find open parking spaces quickly. It is envisioned that the system can access the status information of parking facilities via sensing and wireless communication technologies, and drivers can access the system via their smartphones. Drivers' real-time locations and their parking space preferences would be used and under such a stable matching, drivers will be guided to their most appropriate spaces (if any) at all times, and thus no driver can benefit from disobeying the navigation system.

Using an efficient and useful technology such as this, would easily guide drivers to open parking spaces and substantially reduce their cruising time for parking, which would cut down on many things such as CO2 emissions, fuel consumption, provide cleaner air, etc. It can give the driver(s) a sense of empowerment and optimism, which would make commuting and parking downtown a more enjoyable or pleasurable experience.

Downtown Auburn does currently use a technology that provides individuals with available parking spaces. However, these spots are only located in the Gay Street Parking Lot and Municipal Parking Deck and only consist of 158 of the 528 spots located downtown. These “smart lots” and their status are not well-known, given that in order to access the information, you have to go to Auburn’s city website, go to the downtown parking section, and then select the link that will send you to the downtown parking application. If, at all, it would be best for the city to have a stand-alone application that can be downloaded on any smartphone that would make the smart lots more accessible. But especially with the limits of parking, providing the users of the facilities with further knowledge or insight would be a huge step forward for the city.

Discovering the problem(s) and possible solution(s) to parking in Auburn could be used using these articles and sets of research. Cities, as many urban designers and city planners stress, are grounds for experimentation to find out what works and what does not. Auburn, which has been quite proactive in terms of planning, zoning, and sustainability could contribute to this research and become a testing ground—a “poster child” if you will—of how compact downtowns with limited space for parking could resolve such issues.

RESEARCH PROCESSES AND METHODS

Observation

To look further into parking and its limited number of spaces, it was important to make real-life field observations.

The questions that were looking to be answered:

- How much parking is available at the given times of observation?
- Was the downtown area more congested from traffic due to lack of available parking?
- Where were most people attempting to find parking spots? Which area was most/ completely full?

The following observations were held on Friday, February 21 and Sunday, February 23. Especially during this time, it was important ensure that no sporting event or city-wide celebration did not interfere or skew the recordings that were being made.

- Observation 1: Friday at 9:00am:

Many spots located in or near the municipal parking deck located off of N Gay St. were full, assuming this is due to many of these spots were being used or occupied by those employed by businesses downtown. Much of the parking spots located along College St., in front of Samford Lawn were full as well, assuming many off-campus commuter students use them for morning classes. A lot of spots around Toomer’s Drugs and in front of Pieology were taken as well. But many located along N College St. were available at this time.

Downtown traffic, as it appeared, was normal and did not seem to be congested or backed up due to people looking or driving around for spots. The traffic was nothing unusual or anything extreme. During this time, no observations were made of people driving around looking for spots, as many people driving downtown were simply appearing to pass through.

- Observation 2: Friday at 8:00pm

This observation was much different than the one made the morning of. Much of the parking was being used, especially located around bars such as SkyBar, 1716, and Bourbon Street assuming that this was due to the crowds of people that regular the establishments, especially on weekends. A handful of available spots were present, however, many of them were filled as quickly as the observations were made. Parking at this time seemed to be much more competitive.

Traffic was busy, especially in the intersection of N College and Magnolia. Another thing observed was the large influx of pedestrians, which added to the business of downtown at this time. Crosswalks stayed busy, which caused many drivers turning right to yield, which further backed up traffic. Traffic was further backed-up from Ubers or Lyfts constantly stopping in the streets to pick someone up or drop them off at the previous destinations. I did notice a couple of cars circle the block a couple of times, also assuming that they were searching for the “perfect spot” near the bars.

- Observation 3: Sunday at 1:00pm

Parking downtown at this time was full. Also, during this time, many church services were releasing, and assumptions can be made that many of these people had parked for places to eat or visit in downtown. Traffic was not particularly busy, nothing compared to that of Friday night. There were not many pedestrians in Samford Park or walking along N College compared to the two observations previously made. This can be excused with the fact that it was Sunday, many people’s day of rest, and the weather was not particularly inviting as it was sprinkling with a heavy overcast.

Interview

As previously mentioned, there were several questions that were sought out to be answered during this research. The best way(s) to research these issues and discover answers would be to interview those who use downtown parking facilities. This was done by conducting in-person interviews with those who work in downtown businesses. Those who also visit downtown for dining or entertainment, along with those who park for classes, could be interviewed as well.

Finding participants was easy, they were approached downtown, and I introduced myself and the overall topic and outcome of the research and asked if they would like to participate. The interviews did not take up a large amount of the interviewee’s time, unless they wanted to have a more general or open-ended discussion following the interview.

The interview conducted involved four participants, although only one was needed for the project. I, as the researcher, felt that it was best to interview people of different age, background, etc. to gain a larger perspective on the opinions of parking downtown. Although those interviewed disclosed their name, occupation, and general place of residence, none of their personal or private information will not be shared at any time as discussed during the conclusion of the interview. The questions asked during the interview match or closely resemble the starting research questions. Following, you can find an example of questions asked during the interview.

1. What caused/prompted you to park downtown/What brought you here?
 Work Student/classes Shop/Eat/Drink Sports event Visiting
(If work, ask if they are provided a spot by these businesses. If someone is provided a spot by their employer void questions 2, 3, 4, & 8.)
2. How long did it (typically) take to find a spot (answer in minutes)? _____
3. What time are you typically searching/ using parking facilities?
 5am-7am 8am-10am 11am-1pm 2pm-5pm Anytime after 6pm
4. How far is your commute to reach downtown Auburn (answer in minutes)? _____
5. How would you describe the availability of parking in the downtown area? _____

6. Would you pay more for parking if it meant more availability? _____
7. Have you ever received any parking citations by the City of Auburn? YES NO NO ANSWER
8. How do you feel about current downtown parking prices and hours? (\$1.00/hour (Monday-Friday, 8am-6pm) _____
9. What ideas or thoughts do you have that would improve downtown parking? _____

Survey

The questions asked in the survey would be the exact same as asked during the interview so refer to the interview questions listed on the previous page (7). This survey, along with the community event, was proposed as more of a hypothetical or “what if” scenario, allowed for the consideration of how a topic-specific survey would be administered. This survey would need to be able to reach the stakeholders and would need to be easily accessible to those who are trying to be reached.

This survey would be administered in a number of ways. Online would be the most efficient, economical, and environmentally friendly way to reach a mass number of people. One great resource that is commonly used to create an online survey is Google Forms. This allows me to create a survey and administer it out to a large number of people. Creating a link to the survey and posting the survey via social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) would be successful in reaching a mass number of people. It could also be posted on many Facebook neighborhood pages, sent to any large groups (group messages containing many Auburn residents), and simply used to gain further feedback with comments.

It is important to reach a wide number of age demographics, especially while discussing something as impactful and conditional as parking downtown. Online surveys, especially using social media, could hinder the survey from reaching much older demographics. However, this could be resolved making sure people are aware of the survey and ensure that the survey is posted to the appropriate places with enough time for response. It could also be useful to use different publications, such as The Auburn Plainsman, to administer the survey to their subscribers as well.

These questions would be important because they will build more upon my interview questions and will allow me to gain more feedback from the people who are (hypothetically) being surveyed. Surveys can be open-ended and could allow for the individual being surveyed to provide as much feedback as they are able or willing.

Community Event

When discussing parking the downtown parking of Auburn, it is important to include the insight and opinion of those who have used/ will use it. Creating an event in which these people can come and discuss their ideas or provide input to the topic overall, whether improving parking should be accepted or forgotten, is key to qualitative research. It can establish the basis of where and how to move forward on improving parking downtown, or it could also change the trajectory of the project all together. For this project, the community participation event would be in-person and would feature a broad spectrum of individuals from the community, given that Auburn is a home to an international university and large-scale manufacturing facilities.

Location and date for many people regarding community events or meetings is important, and it can really determine the types of people that come. Ideally, this community event would take place at a larger-scale facility or meeting place, whether at a less formal location, such as city park or outdoor space, or somewhere more formal like a civic center or larger auditorium, as long as the capacity is available to feature a larger meeting of people (anywhere from 20-60 people, if we are being optimistic). This would provide a large enough space to comfortably facilitate the meeting, and in many circumstances, would give more a more formal feel and setting to the event. This would entice more people to come and would help gather more feedback and information because of it. Of course, time date is important as well, so holding the meeting on a weekday, sometime in the evening would appeal more people than if it were held on the weekends.

Who: Though my topic is relatively specific, this does not mean that it will decrease the number of available candidates that could participate, as the Auburn/ Opelika area is home to +95,000 people (2018 Census estimates). All it means is that people who use or has used the parking facilities downtown should be targeted, which is not at all a challenge. People who have never used these facilities, because they do not have personal means of transportation or other reasons, would not be appropriate participating in the event. This means, of course, that people no younger than 16 should attend, and given that many people over the age of 75 years old quit driving, the age range could be between 16 and 75 years old, to ensure that a large age demographic is targeted. On top of this (which can already be assumed) there is no racial or ethnical group that should be excluded from this participation. Auburn is home to many nationalities and races; therefore, the existing facilities are used as such, and it is important to receive feedback from as many people from the community as possible.

How: There is a large target audience that can be reached for the community event; therefore, it would be expected to use many different platforms to reach these audiences. One great way to reach a large group is with the use of social media platforms, especially Facebook, as it is one of the largest platforms and provides create tools for creating a community event. Facebook is popular for having specific groups. For example, neighborhood Facebook group, which involves people in the same neighborhood being involved in a private thread or updates involving neighborhood-related things. The city of Auburn and Opelika also have groups for the city as a whole, which would read a larger target audience. Facebook also allows you to “create an event”, which basically creates an entire page dedicated to a particular event and allows people to see updates, who all is going, and also allows them to confirm if they are or are not going to attend. Creating an interesting and informative Facebook page, and ensuring it is shared and reaches a lot of people, can be a

great way to gain attention. Your page would also allow you to gauge who and how many will be attending.

Another great way to release information about the event is to contact local newspaper/ article publishers, such as The Auburn Plainsman. This is great because it can be printed in physical form and spread out throughout the community. It can also be uploaded and shared digitally on the publisher's website. Creating flyers or posters and gaining permission to distribute them throughout the city and/ or university campus could be used as alternatives for those who many not regularly use, or even have, any of the social media platforms previously mentioned.

Incentive(s): There are many great ways to entice or persuade people to come to the event. First, it is important to establish what will be occurring at the event. List and explain what activities would be happening and how I, as the researcher, will be gathering and using the information from the participants. A great exercise is providing food and drinks at the event, which can be used as an incentive for people to attend. Also, it could be useful to give some sort of monetary incentive, but one that could benefit more than just one person. For example, give multiple participants the opportunity to win some sort of gift card to local establishments or business (where the winner could be chosen at random). This information would be covered within the event posts on social media/ publishers/ etc. to allow the readers to gather as much information of the meeting as possible.

What: An event can made participatory through a well-defined sequence of steps. First, as previously mentioned, a vision must be cast, identifying event goals and outcomes that will tap the passion and needs of participants and draw them into participation. The event, as I see it, would be one large discussion among everyone in attendance, each respecting the different ideas and perspectives of the community. It would be one where the participants actively drive the agenda, which requires establishing a fundamental set of expectations and guidelines to encourage co-equal behavior. This would require a multiple set of tools, but three important ones are respect, listening, and inclusion.

At the beginning of the event, a few ice breakers would be useful to allow everyone to begin actively engaging and conversing about different topics and ideas. At this time, as we have discussed in class, there will be emerging "leaders", a subset of participants quickly and steadily emerges as committed to seeing the format and the convening succeed. These are individuals who understand the community dynamics in play and strive to see the needs of fellow participants served.

Afterwards, the people would break out into different groups of 4-5 individuals (assuming the number of participants previously estimated). In these groups, we would discuss the topic of downtown parking, talking about what we like/ dislike, what works and what does not, and how we would fix some of the issues we discover along the way. Each individual would possess one or multiple documents to take notes, answer questions listed on said documents, and facilitate discussions within the group and jot down what was and was not working. This could also be a great time to have a design charrette, or charet, which would be a great time to facilitate a collaborative session between the participants to take a more creative approach to their notes or ideas. I was also considering providing a version of the interview questions within this package,

perhaps making them more open-ended than the original. As a researcher, I would rotate around the groups, and becoming a part of the discussion(s). I would also be sure to personally greet everyone which would give a personal touch to the experience. I would also take note of what has previously been discussed and passively listen to the group and try to facilitate these discussions or answer any questions that would be present.

Once a good stopping point is reached, it would be great for everyone to reunite as a whole and discuss at large what had been discussed within these groups. As the researcher, I would have a set of questions I would ask the body of participants and be sure to actively listen and respect each opinion or comment. As the facilitator of the meeting, once I feel as if I have gathered plentiful information, we could conclude the meeting by receiving any personal feedback about my presentation or the meeting. Or, if I feel as if this meeting did not meet my expectations, I could begin taking recommendations of how to improve the meeting and begin thinking about how the next one *could* be arranged. Also, continued dialogue and partnership with the business community of Auburn, Auburn University and its parking services, and the City will be essential to success.

Facilitation in participatory gatherings would honestly allow me as the researcher to do less. Success is indicated by drawing out collective energy when participants meet as a large group, and then providing guidance to establish small, focused groups of collaboration and interaction where participants drive. Facilitation roles should be distributed, tapping participants who understand the community dynamics in play, and who strive to see the needs of fellow participants served. Much work remains to be done in educating stakeholders about the potential for alternative event formats, and in creating a larger community of practice among those who organize and facilitate participatory events. So, accepting feedback at the end, as previously mentioned, would especially help moving forward and if I plan to hold another meeting afterward.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

All of the previous research processes and methods are great tools to have a community-based approach to solving or investigating a certain issue. Through this, there has been primary data collected from observations, interview, and secondary data from your literature review. All of this has contributed to the larger conversation that is addressing parking issues in downtown Auburn. Looking at the data collected, it looks as if there is a capacity in downtown Auburn that is reached pretty easily. With the construction of Evolve, 191 College, and The Standard, all of which are large apartment buildings that have been constructed downtown, it shows that Auburn is a growing city and is quickly growing and inviting more and more people. However, with this, there has not been much motivation or moves in terms of addressing parking downtown.

The people of Auburn are passionate about their city. Many of whom I discussed my topic informally or formally were more than willing to give their feedback on it. Auburn especially faces issues when there are large events occurring, whether sporting events or city-held public events, downtown is unbearable and can be impossible to find a spot or in some cases drive. For those who work downtown, fortunately, Auburn has constructed the municipal parking deck and facility which is where many of them get to park. But for visitors, shoppers, diners, or those looking for

entertainment, parking can be scarce at times, especially on Friday and Saturday nights. This can lead to a limit of foot traffic downtown and can hinder sales of businesses and establishments.

ANSWERING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions stated at the beginning of this paper were answered using the various research processes and methods. The research questions were:

1. Who uses downtown parking facilities/ What brought them there?
2. How long did it take to find a spot?
3. How would you describe the availability of parking in the downtown area?
4. How do you feel about the current downtown pricing and hours?

The average time spent looking for a spot downtown was around 7-9 minutes, and all were commuting downtown to shop, eat, and/or drink. Half of those interviewed believed that Auburn should construct more or better parking facilities. Another believed Auburn should be providing citizens with better forms of public transportation, such as buses, sidewalks, and bike lands.

All of those interviewed believed that parking was inadequate to some extent. It was proposed that as the city allows for the construction of more apartments, they should match it with parking facilities. It was also suggested that the city and university should work together to address parking needs. In terms of parking prices, everyone interviewed did not have anything *positive* to say about parking. It was mainly stated to be fair or reasonable, although it could be more affordable, and some thought it was too expensive for a little college town. It should also be noted that only one participant said that they would pay more for parking if it meant they were essentially guaranteed to find a spot.

CONCLUSION

The topic I have selected has become a hot topic in the community, especially in recent years as the university and the city grow and build rapidly to address the rise in population. Given that it is such a specific and present issue in the community, I do not believe it would be challenging to receive feedback or insight from participants in the future. Transportation, in general, is a touchy subject for most cities, towns, or communities. People are usually willing and able to give good feedback about this topic, pointing at the interviews as reference. But this community event would be a great and efficient way to gather people of the community and gather information.

There is certainly a concern throughout the community about parking in downtown Auburn and there are many who are able and willing to speak out about it. It is something that has become more and more of an issue as Auburn has continued to grow. Do I know how the issue should be solved or what would be the best solution? No. Do I know how many cars Auburn should address while constructing more parking? No. But I do know that there is a large number of people who work, shop, and dine in downtown Auburn who think that the city should address the issue. I have been fortunate enough to meet a few people throughout the community. Their feedback and perspectives are something that is extremely valuable in terms of planning for a better city and better parking.