

JERSEY CITY PARKING PLAN

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

April 2020

DRAFT





JC Parking Plan: Community Engagement Summary

Overview

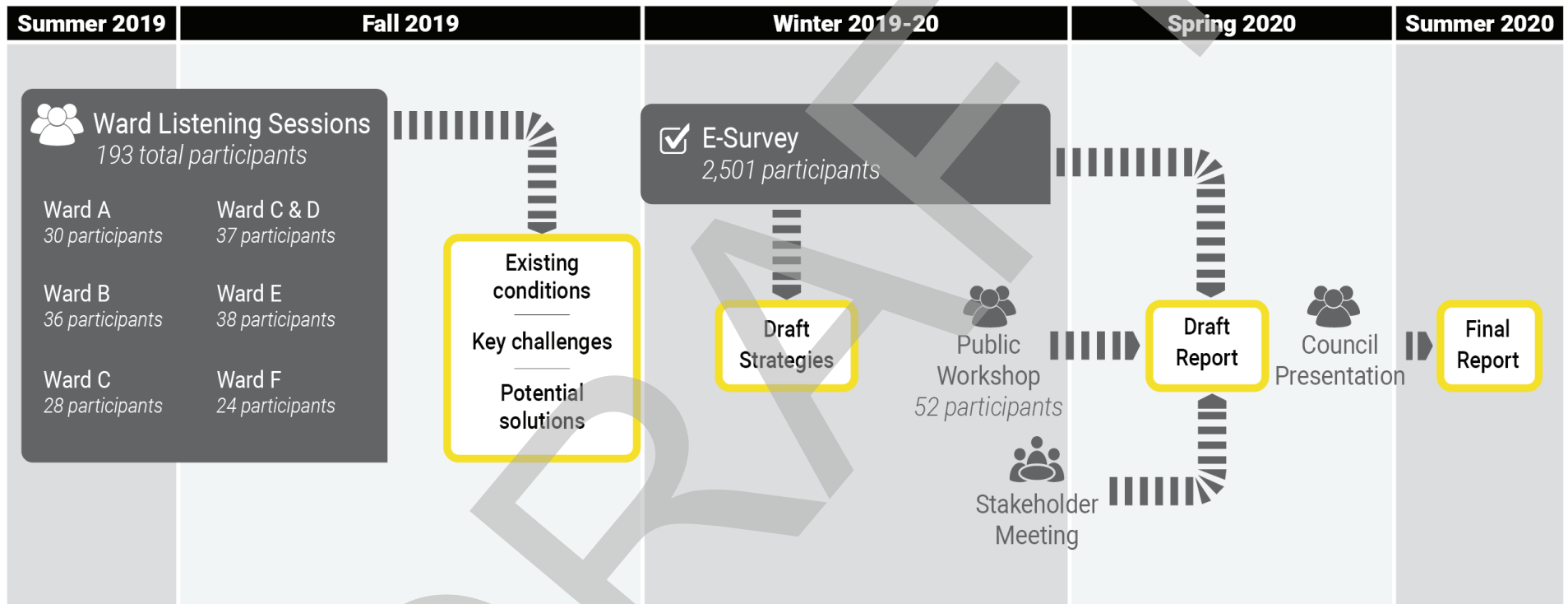
The community engagement process was designed as a multi-pronged engagement effort that sought community and stakeholder input at key project milestones. Community engagement helped the project team define the parking challenge and develop potential solutions. The process included the following:

Task	Role in Study
Ward-based community meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide overview of study and community engagement process • Gain a strong understanding of major challenges and identify areas with the greatest parking challenges in each ward • Accept feedback on potential solutions
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain perspective of various City and regional agencies • Oversight of technical tasks • Share feedback from the public • Modify data collection process • Make recommendations for community engagement • Document review
Public perception survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand existing parking environment • Gain feedback on community priorities and challenges • Gauge support for potential solutions
Public Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present draft recommendations • Gauge support for and suggested modifications to draft recommendations • Provide additional opportunity to understand challenges and opportunities
Stakeholder meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain input on how parking impacts businesses and public housing residents • Gauge support for and suggested modifications to draft recommendations • Discuss potential engagement strategies moving forward
Public meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present updated draft recommendations • Encourage public comments for additional revisions to draft recommendations

Figure 1 on the following page illustrates the community engagement process, highlighting how the meetings and e-survey informed the technical tasks.

This memo is a high-level summary of the community engagement that took place as a part of the JC Parking Plan. This memo highlights key findings, lessons learned, and suggestions for future engagement. It concludes with an appendix that includes meeting summaries, the public perception survey summary, and the public participation plan.

Figure 1 Summary of the JC Parking Plan Community Engagement Process



Key Findings

The engagement effort played an essential role in defining current parking challenges and finding appropriate strategies to improve parking management. The key findings are summarized below.

Parking Availability

- **Parking availability** was the most mentioned challenge across all wards and across all channels of outreach.
- Building a **centralized parking garage** was a frequently suggested potential solution. Yet, many residents expressed concerns about subsidizing parking, incentivizing driving, and aesthetics.
- Some members of the public said **parking minimums** should be increased. Meeting participants suggested that new developments did not have enough parking and were increasing competition for street space. However, other participants disagreed.
- It typically takes drivers less than 10 minutes to find a parking space when they arrive home. Residents of The Heights reported spending the most amount of time searching for parking.

Recommended Strategies

- **Shared parking initiatives** were a popular potential solution, but this recommendation has some challenges. Several residents expressed concerns about security, and TAC members noted shared parking would generate some logistical and enforcement challenges. Moreover, some neighborhoods (e.g., McGinley Square) do not have many off-street lots available.
- Most members of the public feel strongly that **curb cuts should be minimized** because they reduce on-street parking. This policy, however, was strongly opposed by individuals who were seeking to construct curb cuts to use their property for parking.
- Residents say **improving transit** is a potential solution because it may reduce the amount of driving and may even reduce car ownership. Residents of Bergen-Lafayette expressed at multiple meetings a strong interest in improving transit so they would not have to own a car.
- Results from the survey as well as community meetings revealed that opinions on **parking zones and residential permit parking** vary considerably, even within the same neighborhood.
- Participants at the public workshop showed **strong support for the draft recommended strategies** that were presented. These strategies included: tiered pricing at metered locations, using parking revenue to fund active transportation and transit infrastructure, graduated pricing for residential parking zones, and a program to restrict illegal curb cuts.

Cost

- **Paying for overnight parking is uncommon** in Jersey City – less than 10% of survey respondents pay for parking. Those who pay for parking typically pay \$100-\$199 a month per vehicle.
- **Raising the annual permit fee** to generate revenue for transit, centralized parking garages, and/or pedestrian, bicycle, or streetscape improvements was supported by roughly 30% to 50% of survey respondents. Participants at the community meetings and workshop suggested that an increased fee could work to reduce parking demand. Other participants raised equity concerns pertaining to cost increases.

Enforcement

- Survey respondents and meeting participants generally advocated for increased **parking enforcement**. However, there were concerns that parking enforcement has disproportionate impacts on lower income families or punishes people living in areas without off-street parking options. Concerns about over-enforcement were particularly common in Greenville and Bergen-Lafayette.

Lessons Learned

Parking is a concern for both drivers and non-drivers in Jersey City, and a key challenge for the outreach was channeling the focus on concerns into forward-thinking solutions that could improve quality of life. The following bullets outline some lessons learned from the engagement process:

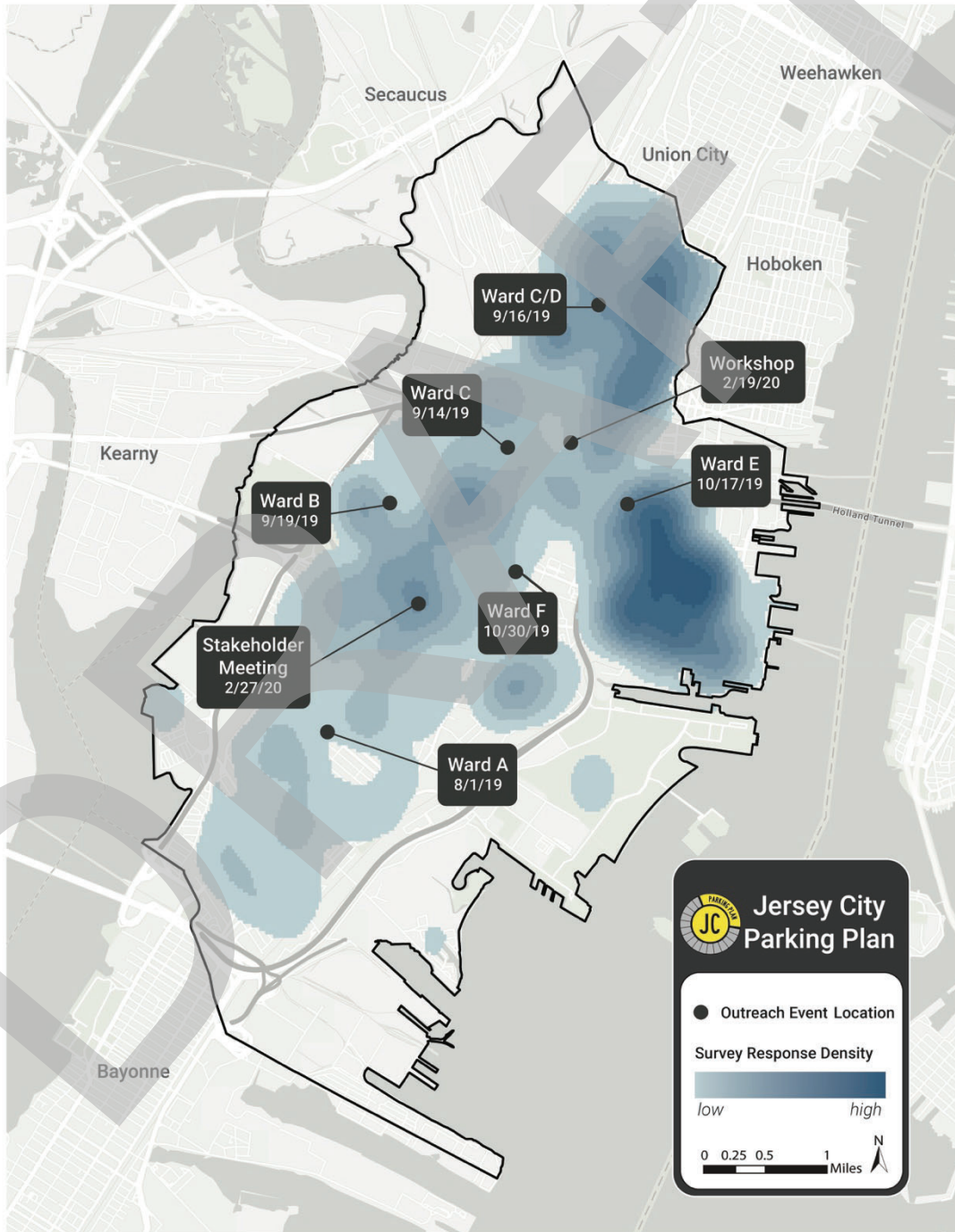
- **Start community engagement early.** The community engagement process began early in the study, which allowed an opportunity for the project team to work with the public to define the array of issues pertaining to parking.
- **Get on the agenda of existing community meetings.** Stand alone parking meetings are certainly useful, but those meetings tend to attract mostly drivers. In addition to having a higher turnout, attending regularly scheduled meetings can help the City receive feedback from a more representative sample of Jersey City residents.
- **Meetings should work to engage all participants.** Parking meetings often attract vocal members of the community who are frustrated with the parking situation in their neighborhood. Planning for everyone – through structured group activities, written comment forms, and live polling activities – can help the project team understand the needs of everyone, not just the loudest voices. The 1-2-4-All exercise used at the ward-based community meetings and the live polling tool used at the public workshop helped document feedback from all participants.
- **Be transparent about the complexity of parking.** Acknowledge that solutions to parking problems are not always easy so that community members do not expect immediate fixes.
- **Surveys should not be limited to online platforms.** The project team worked with libraries, council members, and community-based organizations to share paper copies of the online survey. Although only about 1% of surveys were submitted on paper copies, those surveys helped boost participation among under-represented groups.
- **Special Improvement Districts (SIDs) are enthusiastic partners.** The SIDs welcomed the opportunities to be involved. SIDs helped distribute the survey and advertise meetings. At the stakeholder meeting, the SIDs offered to support the City as they implement recommendations.
- **Although parking challenges are citywide, parking solutions are community level.** Limited availability, too many curb cuts, and lack of alternatives to driving were mentioned at nearly every part of the community engagement process. Yet, strategies to address these challenges require a more nuanced look at the communities than a citywide parking study can accommodate. This is particularly true for parking permit zones and enforcement.

Suggestions for Future Engagement

The most important suggestion for future engagement is to continue to communicate through attending established community meetings. Periodic updates can help build community trust and help remind community members that they are important partners in improving parking management. Additional suggestions include:

- **Continue to collaborate with the SIDs.** The SIDs have offered to help with outreach, data collection, and document review. They may be able to progress the conversations in their community and help develop creative solutions.
- **Conduct targeted outreach in Wards A and F.** Although the community meetings in Wards A and F were well attended, residents of these wards were under-represented in the survey and public workshop (Figure 2). A follow-up meeting is recommended.

Figure 2 Survey Response Density and Outreach Event Locations



- **Ask representatives from parking enforcement to join meetings with community.** These meetings are opportunities to develop community-oriented enforcement, which aims to personalize officers and share goals of enforcement policies.
- **Include non-drivers.** The community engagement effort thus far over-represents car owners. As a result, there were topics that were not discussed. For instance, traffic safety was not commonly mentioned, even though on-street parking plays an important role in reducing pedestrian visibility. Other topics related to parking that were not discussed in detail with the public include housing affordability, dedication of street space, and equity considerations.
- **Host focus groups.** Many groups were under-represented by the survey, including seniors, low English proficiency populations, and non-white community members. Consider more focused conversations to incorporate their input.