

# PLACEMAKING DEFINED AND REDEFINED

By J.C. Porter

The *Green Garage Certification Standard* was recently released, and with it, parking professionals were introduced to a new language that may be unfamiliar to some. If you have not yet had a chance to purchase the new certification standard, I highly recommend you do so through the Green Parking Council (GPC, an affiliate of the International Parking Institute).

The rating system is divided into four sections: management, programs, technology, and structure design and innovation. Three of the four sections will be familiar to most parking professionals, but the section on programs may include some new industry language taken from urban planning, transportation demand management (TDM), and other specialties.

## Placemaking

Placemaking is how the garage interacts as a business entity within the community. What opportunities exist for placemaking? You can contribute to an economic or municipal development organization, create a public meeting space for community members to use, or support local artists. You may also create an area for food trucks, add green space and living walls to the garage, and provide access to the garage for local sporting events, youth activities, and other neighborhood gatherings. The idea is that the garage becomes more than storage for cars—it is transformed into a place for people. And not just patrons on their way in and out but also as a place for people to gather and meet—a destination or neighborhood landmark.

## TMA/TMOs

Transportation management associations (TMAs) or transportation management organizations (TMOs) are member-controlled, nonprofit, private organizations that provide transportation services in a particular area. They are generally public-private partnerships primarily consisting of area businesses with local government support. The garage owner or operator can provide support and information to its patrons about alternative transportation programs and strategies by joining these local organizations.

Access to mass transit can be more challenging if the garage is not located next to a bus stop or light rail station. Working with the local transit provider, you



may be able to see if your location is a possible option for a new transit stop, which will provide another option for your patrons. Having transit stops located near your garage also helps provide a last-leg option for patrons who choose to park in your facilities and ride public transit to their final destination or run errands during the day.

## Sharing

Carshare is an all-inclusive rental program that allows commuters to rent a vehicle by the hour. Providing

parking spaces for carshare vehicles adds more options for garage patrons to use, whether they drive their own car, ride public transportation, or ride their bike. A rideshare program is a carpool or vanpool program that helps reduce costs to the commuter and reduces single-occupant vehicles on the roadway, which reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Providing parking for rideshare programs helps organizations in or around your facilities meet their commuter option goals and introduces a new type of customer to your garage. Moreover, drivers will be more likely to patronize your garage on the days they do not use the car share.

Bicycle parking in or around a garage provides options for bike commuters and vehicle commuters or building tenants to store bikes for short trips or last-mile commute options. Bikeshare is the ability to rent a bike by the hour to use for short trips without having one's bike in the area. Having a bike rental program is a viable option if there is not a bikeshare in your community and you want to offer the convenience of providing a bike to your patrons so they do not have to bring their own bicycles.

Providing these extra amenities helps set your facility apart from others. You will create a more loyal clientele because you are seen as part of the community, and it also assists you in getting one step closer to your garage becoming a Certified Green Garage. **P**



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