



**Management of Downtown Space Small Group Stakeholder Meeting
September 22, 2015
Meeting Notes**

MEETING PURPOSE:

As a group, explore and collect input on strategies/actions to balance public safety concerns and uses of public space in ways that positively contribute to a vibrant and safe downtown Asheville.

Small group discussion responses:

What opportunities and challenges do you see with respect to the pilot program idea presented by staff?

Opportunities	Challenges
Another tool/symbol to mark areas for busking	Boxes are demoralizing
Denote zones by a symbol	Buskers won't stand in a box
Create a system that creates space between performers	Boxes too small for bands, bands will go elsewhere and cause the same concern
Create special performance spaces/zones around areas where there is enough public space	Travelers attracted to AVL b/c of regulations enacted by other cities - wearing permits plummets tips
Designate multiple areas where the activity should occur	100 ft. distance is too much
Permit but without a lot of limitations	One person act and one set up in front of Rhubarb won't draw a crowd
"Semi" permit – just for high traffic spots as an alt. trial/pilot. Allow buskers to "learn" by not preventing bad busking. Give travelers more opportunities if they will have better behavior	No consideration of non-audible acts
Permit for sales, Sav. GA – working artist permit (services), different permit for sales of music with restrictions on places – non competitive for business	
Consider Spiritex Corner	
Consider categories of performers as outlined in ABC proposal	

How do we maintain a safe physical environment among multiple users?

- Create more pedestrian space by:
 - Extending sidewalk space in the high impact areas
 - Creating some pedestrian only streets
- Concern about overcrowding at specific locations (Pack Sq/Patton/Biltmore Corner)

- Research other cities such as New Orleans
- Public restroom availability
- Keep parking spaces available
- Adjust city service schedules to align with when the greatest # of people are present in downtown
- Engage CVB to be partners in programming/marketing
- Performance zones:
 - Consider specific zones for street performances; Would the downtown need more than 8 spaces?
 - Look at all uses in the performance zones and balance uses
 - Consider parking decks, other options
 - Seek to separate busking spaces to create safe zones between them; expand safety
 - Engage street performers to create exciting performance zones. These spaces/could be the generator of the traffic and not just react to where the traffic is

How to maximize, ensure, and/or preserve an environment for street performances? What is the process for permitting/allowing the sale of goods? How do we distinguish between performers and panhandlers?

- Police consistent in enforcement – some are allowed creating us/them
- ADA willing to try to a shutdown for events/performances
- Permitting makes accountability for all
- Study nature of space; location of street furniture; parking spaces; crosswalks; accessibilities; sharing businesses
- Could focus on performance zones – good for artists/performances, safety; permitting
 - Open spaces use for busking? Parks?
 - Create a space to go see buskers
 - Moving the problem of congestion
 - Encourage busking on Wall Street
 - Use parking spot and play in the spot facing sidewalk
- Opportunities to sell goods and services
 - Permitted area to sell wares legally
 - Permit opportunity to sell wares for a day
 - Get businesses to sell on behalf of buskers

How do we assure accessibility to businesses?

- Permitting
- Performance zones (taking into account residents, businesses, performance)
- Work with CVB on marketing the areas (performance zones)
- Businesses need to ask buskers to maintain access to restaurants and businesses

How do we better utilize public spaces as part of the solution?

- Friendly law enforcement presence
- Expand pushcart program into parks – buskers could sell their music
- Performance zones in addition to open busking
- Activate Pack Square for more uses such busking and sales

How to assure/manage issues with dogs?

- Create a sense of pride in the space downtown
- Expand waste program by making more bags accessible to more people including store owners
- Increase waste receptacles

How do we manage noise in an enforceable way? How do we address amplification?

- Have a busker liaison to help monitor noise level (Santa Monica)
- Balance noise
- No amplification – some interest in creating a no-amplification policy that would include time of day guidelines

How do we create an environment where people want to behave within the law? How do we ensure police enforcement is consistent?

- Recognize we are all stakeholders in the hospitality industry
- Benevolent, friendly presence (law enforcement)
- Use consistent park/police presence to address aggressive behavior in Pritchard Park
- Encourage good busking
- Permitting street performing
- People need transparency; permitting helps with transparency