

SCHEDULED PRESENTATION
Agenda Item No.: 5c
CC Mtg.: 02/12/2008

DATE: January 22, 2008
TO: Mayor and City Council Members
FROM: Public Works Department
SUBJECT: **HISTORIC DISTRICT PARKING UPDATE**

Mark Rackovan, Senior Civil Engineer/Traffic with the Public Works Department, will update the City Council on the Historic District Parking Management Plan, which assesses current parking supply and demand and recommends strategies that will be employed to effectively manage the existing parking supply over the next few years.

A public draft of the Parking Management Plan is currently available for comment and is attached for your information. Staff has provided copies of the document to key stakeholders in the District and has made the draft available via the City's website.

Submitted,



Richard J. Lorenz,
PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR/CITY ENGINEER

City of Folsom
Historic District
Parking Management 5-Year Plan
January 2008

Public Draft

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Background

A critical element in the revitalization of Folsom's Historic District (the District) is the effective management of the limited parking supply to ensure that visitors to the District have a reasonable chance of finding convenient parking, while still meeting the needs of employees, light rail riders, and residents. To that end, this report focuses on addressing the current parking situation in the District and the anticipated changes that will occur over the next four to six years, leading up to development of the next major parking structure in the District. As a separate effort, a parking consultant will prepare a long-range parking implementation plan which will identify the location, cost and funding for the next major parking structure in the District.

Objectives

There are three primary objectives of this Parking Management Plan; these are:

- Determine existing parking supply and utilization in the commercial portion of the Historic District under normal conditions
- Recommend strategies to maximize use of existing and planned parking while minimizing impacts to the surrounding residential areas, until such time as additional parking facilities can be constructed
- Identify opportunities for providing additional, cost-effective parking

Steering Committee

In order for a parking plan to be successful, the key stakeholders must play a role in its development, must agree with the problems the program will address, and must support the recommendations that are intended to address those problems. City staff and key stakeholders in the Historic District will oversee the development and implementation of this plan. The Committee shall include the following organizations:

- City Manager's Office
- Community Development
- Redevelopment and Housing
- Public Works
- Police
- Chamber of Commerce
- Historic District Merchant's Association
- Historic Folsom Resident's Association

Staff recommends that the stakeholders listed above establish an ad-hoc Parking Advisory Committee, which should meet on a quarterly basis over the life of this plan to establish objectives and performance measures, provide continuity and resolve parking issues that develop in the District.

Plan Format

The Parking Management Plan will focus on the parking issues in and around the commercial area of the Historic District. While the plan will not directly analyze parking in the surrounding residential areas, the ultimate recommendations of the plan should be designed to minimize impacts to the residential areas of the Historic District. It is assumed that the City will successfully adopt a Residential Permit Parking Program this year, and that this program will be made available to the Historic District residents should they decide to participate in such a program.

The recommendations of this plan are divided into two stages: short-term (immediate, cost-effective) solutions that can be implemented quickly as “early wins” to build project momentum; and longer-term solutions that require advance planning, financing and design/construction before benefits are realized.

Problem Identification

Determining the nature of (or perception of) parking issues in the Historic District can be derived from observations of District stakeholders, a review of prior parking studies, and an assessment of existing parking supply and demand.

Observed issues. The key parking observations conveyed to staff from various stakeholders are as follows:

- Light rail parking taking up parking for customers and employees
- Employees occupying premium parking spaces near retail, often in violation of posted time limits
- An overall lack of parking during the peak periods and special events
- Dedicated enforcement of parking time limits

Prior studies.

In April 2000, the City hired Chong Partners and Walker Parking Consultants to develop the “Historic District Parking Improvement and Implementation Plan.” The focus of this study was to evaluate four potential locations for parking structures: The Rail Block, Lake Natoma Inn, Trader’s Lane and the site at the corner of Sutter and Scott, formerly known as the Brann property and which is currently under development by Doug Scalzi. The report concluded that the Rail Block and Brann (Scalzi) sites were the preferred locations based on cost, impacts to existing parking, and related issues. With the Rail Block parking structure almost complete, and the Scalzi property no longer available as a dedicated parking structure site, this study requires an update to reflect current and planned conditions in the district.

In April 2005 the City performed a parking supply study to determine anticipated changes in the supply due to several significant changes in the Historic District, including completion of the light rail project and construction of the new parking structure. Staff made five recommendations, which are listed in Table 1 along with their current status.

Table 1 Historic District Parking Supply Study, April 2005 Staff Recommendations and Status as of January 2008		
Recommendation	Status	Description
Develop a new surface parking lot at the Baker property.	Partially Completed	The property owned by Cindy Baker, located in the northwest corner of the Leidesdorff/Gold Lake intersection, has been leased by the City and currently provides time-limit parking for 28 vehicles. The lot could be expanded with additional paving and marking in adjacent city-owned property to add an additional 20 spaces. The City recognizes the importance of parking at this location and recently renewed a the lease with Ms. Baker.
Time Limit Parking	Completed	Various time limits were posted in key lots, geared towards discouraging light rail and employee parking in spaces that would better serve customers. The time limit and hours may need to be re-evaluated to determine if they are adequately serving the parking needs in the district. Consistent enforcement has also been identified as an issue, although violation rates have not been quantified.
Create a Parking Enforcement Officer position	Not Complete	Consistent enforcement is critical to ensure compliance with posted parking regulations. Folsom PD's traffic division has several critical missions and cannot devote the required level of consistency. Creation of either a full- or part-time parking enforcement position remains an important goal.
Prohibit/Restrict Charter Bus Services	Unknown	Charter bus operations have used the Traders Lane lot as a meeting point for taking charter trips up to the Sierras, leaving behind several long-term parked vehicles. Staff does not know if the Merchant's Association has contacted the company to request that they relocated – assuming this activity is still occurring.
Encourage employees to utilize alley parking	Unknown	There are a few parking spaces in the alley running between Sutter and Figueroa from Riley to Reading; these spaces are not well known by visitors but could be convenient parking for employees. It is unknown if the Merchant's Association actively pursued this recommendation, but it would not make a significant difference.

Existing Parking Conditions

As of November 2007 there were 1,041 parking spaces in the District; of these, 360 were on private property. Private parking spaces are subject to restrictions on who the property owner allows to park there; therefore, for the purposes of this parking plan, the private parking was counted but was not included in the analysis of the District's immediate needs.

The remaining 681 public parking spaces are a combination of on-street (232) and off-street lots (449). Time limits have been established for 315 of these spaces, focused mostly around the light rail plaza, Traders Lane and on-street parking. Tables 2 and 3 summarize the existing parking supply in the District.

Location	Public Lots		Private Lots	Total Off-Street Parking		
	Timed	Untimed	Untimed ¹	Timed	Untimed	Total
LRT parking	0	104	n/a	0	104	104
Rail Block	81	29	n/a	81	29	110
Traders Lane	23	102	16	23	118	141
Baker Lot ²	28	0	0	28	0	28
Riley/Scott	0	82	18	0	100	100
Gold Lake	n/a	n/a	270	0	270	270
Moose/Eagle	n/a	n/a	20	0	20	20
Alley parking	0	0	21	0	21	21
Other private lots	n/a	n/a	15	0	15	15
Totals	132	317	360	132	677	809

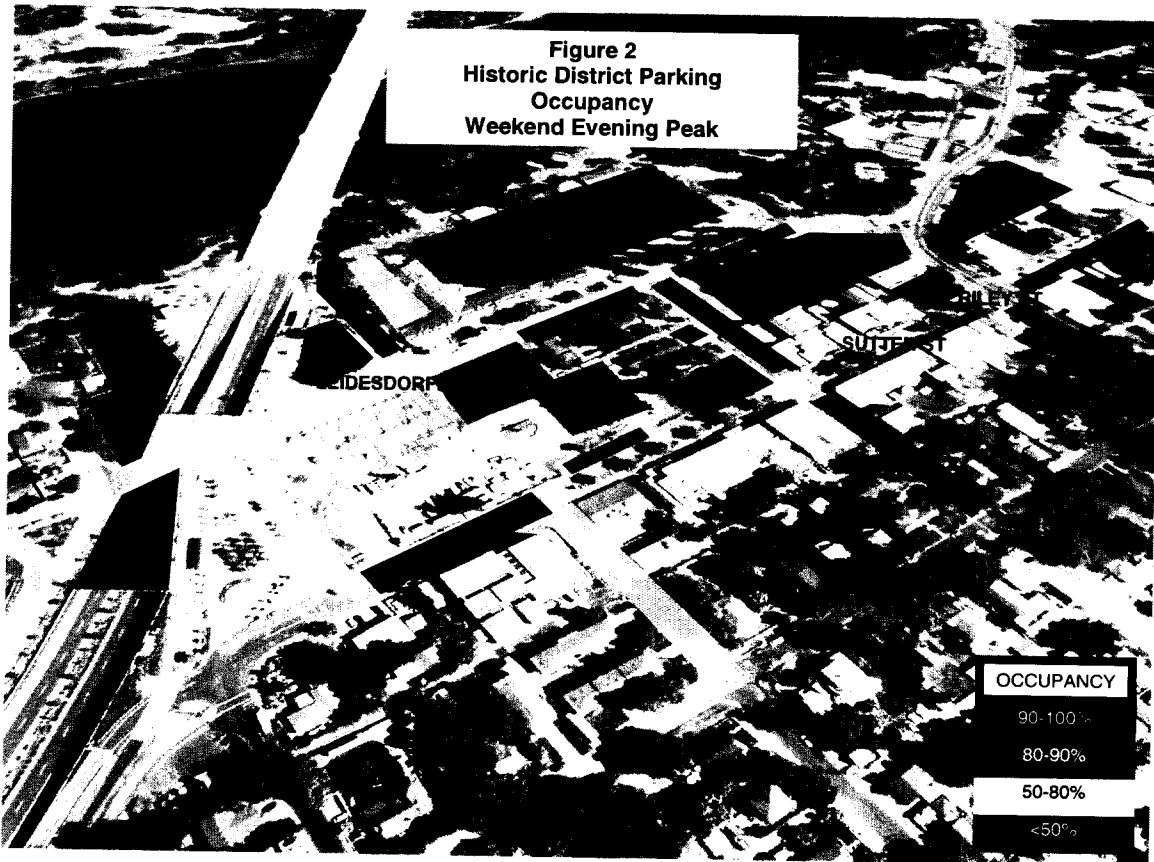
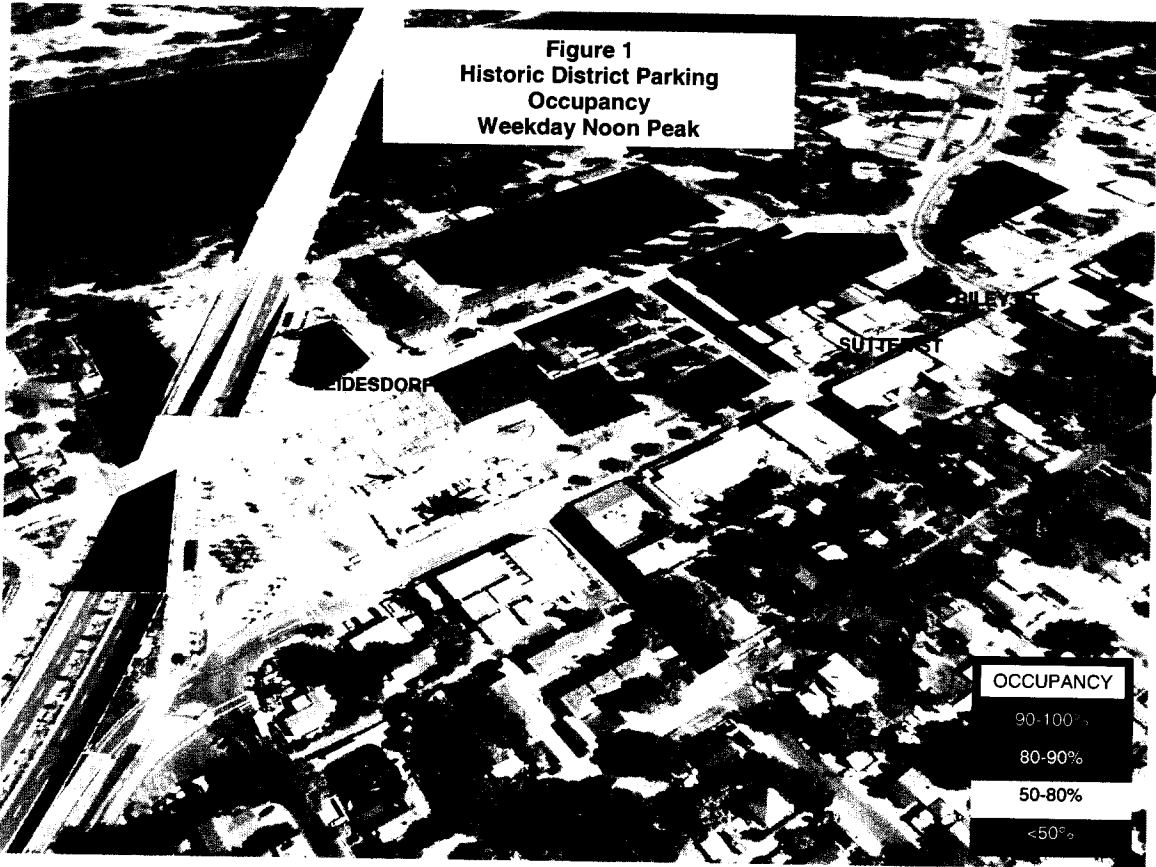
1. Private parking is subject to restrictions imposed by the property owner and is generally reserved solely for customers of that property

2. Private property owned by Baker family; currently leased by City of Folsom for public parking.

Table 3 Existing Parking Supply: On-Street Parking				
Street	Block	Timed	Untimed	Total
Reading Street	North of Leidesdorff	10	0	10
	Leidesdorff to Sutter	0	0	0
	Sutter to Figueroa	5	5	10
Gold Lake Circle	North of Leidesdorff	24	0	0
Decatur Street	Sutter to Figueroa	12	6	18
Wool Street	Leidesdorff to Sutter	18	4	22
	Sutter to Figueroa	17	0	17
Riley Street	North of Leidesdorff	0	0	0
	Leidesdorff to Sutter	0	0	0
	Sutter to Figueroa	14	0	14
Scott Street	Leidesdorff to Sutter	0	3	3
	Sutter to Figueroa	0	12	12
Leidesdorff Street	Reading to Decatur	0	0	0
	Decatur to Wool	19	4	23
	Wool to Riley	0	11	11
Sutter Street	Reading to Decatur	25	0	25
	Decatur to Wool	19	4	23
	Wool to Riley	0	0	0
	Riley to Scott	20	0	20
Totals		183	49	232

City staff collected information peak period demand in October and November 2007; the results indicated approximately 65 percent of public parking is used during the weekday lunch and weekend evening peaks; this is lower than previous studies, which indicated 75 percent utilization during the same peak periods. Staff will continue to perform demand studies throughout the year to establish a consistent baseline of demand data.

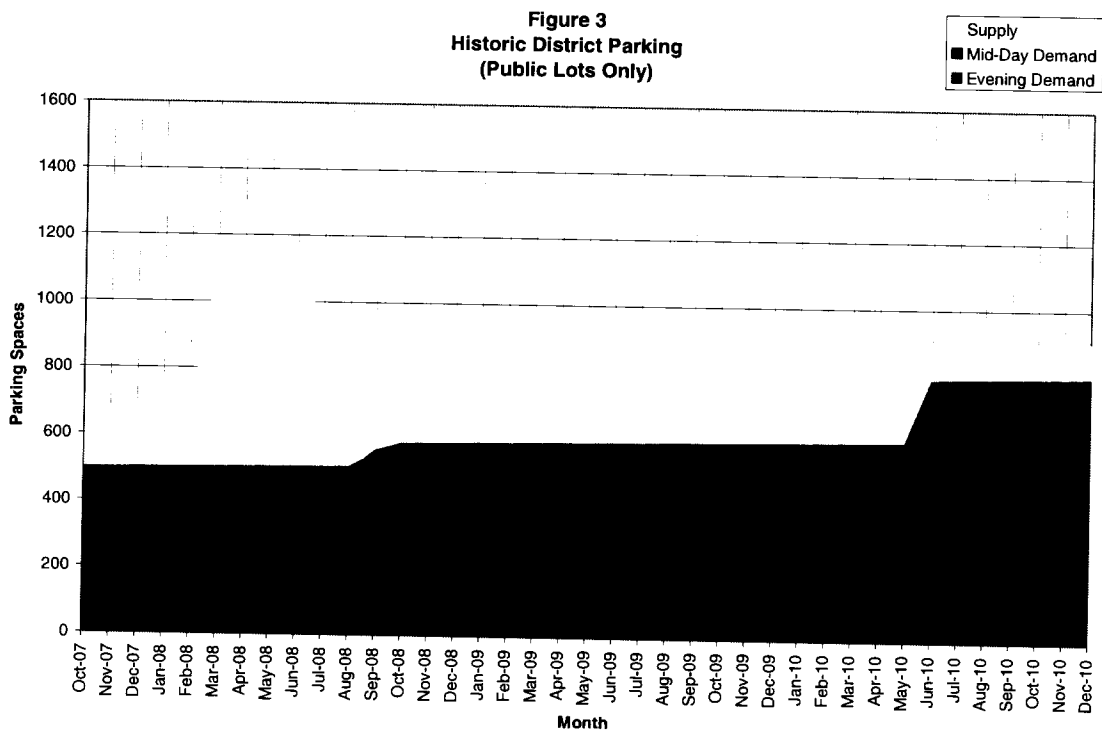
Figures 1 and 2 depict parking occupancy during the weekday lunch and weekend evening peak periods in terms of percent occupancy. The perception that there is a routine lack of parking is driven by the uneven distribution of parking in the District. An analysis of parking occupancy by block and by lot confirms what several observers have already noted – that the eastern end of the District is usually 90 to 100 percent occupied, while the western end – where most of the peak period parking exists – currently is underutilized.



Projected Parking Supply and Demand

While this parking management plan does account for the projected supply and demand changes resulting from approved projects (such as the Folsom Station and Folsom Power & Light developments) and the upcoming Streetscape Improvement Project, a parking implementation study will be commissioned by the City to assess long-range parking supply and demand in the Historic District. The parking implementation study will also assess the current parking generation rate employed by the City, and will explore the feasibility of constructing new parking structures on several locations in the District and funding strategies.

Staff prepared a parking supply and demand trendline based on the data collected in late 2007, and assuming development of known projects over the next three years. Additionally, an annual growth rate of two percent was assumed to account for regional growth and/or unforeseen development changes within the District. Figure 3 depicts the parking demand trend in graphical format.



The following observations can be made based on the information in Figure 3:

- There is currently a nominal availability (slightly under 200) of parking during typical weekday lunch and weekend dinner peaks. This parking is quickly consumed during special events or higher-than-normal peaks.

- Following completion of the Rail Block parking structure, the supply will increase by between 330 and 450 spaces until construction begins on the Folsom Station project and public plaza improvements
- There will continue to be adequate parking supply during construction of Folsom Station, but upon completion of the project the available parking supply during peak periods will drop to under 100 spaces

Assuming the two percent growth rate roughly approximates changes in parking demand over time, it is estimated that peak period demand will exceed available supply by year 2013 or 2014 (a more detailed long range forecast will be prepared by a parking consultant later this year).

Parking Management Strategies

Rail Plaza Parking Structure

The new facility located at the corner of Leidesdorff and Reading will not only add 330 new parking spaces within the structure, but will also disencumber the balance of the Rail Plaza, which is currently used for construction staging.

The new parking structure should be allocated to serve both the short- and long-term needs of visitors and employees. To that end, staff is recommending that the lower levels of the structure be signed for time limit parking, while the roof and possibly portions of the third level be untimed. It is not expected that the spaces at the top of the structure will be desirable for light rail patrons, but if it appears that these spaces are being excessively used by light rail patrons, then early morning parking restrictions will be added.

While the remaining surface portions of the Rail Plaza could be opened up and provide roughly 100 public parking spaces, staff does not recommend this at this time. With construction of Folsom Station imminent, it would not be advisable to condition motorists to park in this location. The area could be made available for special event parking if necessary.

Time Limit Parking

Time limit parking has already been introduced into the District, with limited success. In general the value of time limit parking is that it reserves premium parking for customers, and makes the most popular spaces (i.e., the ones that fill fastest and earliest) function optimally. In most cases either 2- or 3-hour time limits serve the needs of more than 80 percent of customers/visitors, but the specific needs of Folsom's Historic District will be determined based on a series of Parking Turnover studies which are currently under way.

Typically off-street parking does not require time limits, but in the District's case the public lots are premium spaces and often are consumed by long-term parkers. Therefore both the Traders Lane and Rail Block lots have time limits on some or all spaces. Additional time limits may be considered in Traders Lane and in the public lot below the Powerhouse Pub to help disperse employee parking.

Additional On-Street Parking

Staff has identified locations where existing paved travel lanes may serve the District better if they are converted to on-street parking. The three locations which staff recommends for immediate conversion to time-limit, on-street parking are:

- Scott Street between Sutter and Leidesdorff. This block is currently posted as a No Parking zone; staff proposes to remove the parking restrictions on to create 4 to 6 additional on-street spaces. Should additional frontage improvements be pursued along the east side of the block (the Moose/Eagle Lodge side), specifically to consolidate the entrance to the two lodges into one driveway, an additional 2 or 3 on-street parking spaces could be created.
- Leidesdorff between Gold Lake and Reading. The current bus lane on this section of Leidesdorff is not being used by any fixed route transit providers. Converting the westbound bus loading zone on into parking would create 9 or 10 on-street parking spaces
- Leidesdorff, west of Riley. The eastbound shoulder lane was converted to on-street parking in 2007, but the parking was stopped approximately 200 feet before Riley to preserve a shared left/right turn lane. Extending the existing on-street parking lane on eastbound Leidesdorff all the way to Riley Street would create an additional 4 to 5 on-street spaces. The driveway exiting the Traders Lane lot limits the amount of parking that could be allowed however, so there should be additional discussion on whether to preserve this driveway or not.
- Wool Street, between Sutter and Leidesdorff. There are currently fourteen diagonal parking spaces on Wool Street, north of Sutter Street. There is room to add 2 or 3 more diagonal spaces between the two driveways leading into the Traders Lane parking lot. If the driveways were redesigned to be slightly narrower, perhaps another space or two could be added.

In total, roughly 20 to 25 new on-street parking spaces can be added to the existing parking supply, which would at least partially compensate for the loss of on-street parking during the Sutter Streetscape Improvement Project.

Parking Meters

Staff does not recommend the use of parking meters in the District at this time. While there are clear advantages to the use of parking meters, such as ease of enforcement and revenue to fund enforcement or additional parking, the disadvantages to the District are significant. The cost to install and maintain the meters for such a small amount of on-street parking would divert funds away from other, more beneficial improvements and could possibly drive customers away to nearby shopping districts that do not have metered parking.

Parking Enforcement

Time limit parking is only effective if motorists respect the posted limits, and often this will only occur if there is a perception of consistent enforcement. The City of Folsom does not have a Parking Authority or Agency, and instead must rely on Folsom Police to perform parking enforcement. This is generally not an efficient use of sworn peace officers, who have other critical missions they should be performing rather than issuing parking citations. The City is exploring the feasibility of creating either a full- or part-time parking enforcement position, or using non-sworn police staff (such as the Citizens Assisting Police volunteers) to perform parking enforcement.

A separate effort is currently underway to establish a Permit Parking ordinance, which would enable neighborhoods to establish permit parking zones. This concept can be expanded into the commercial portion of the Historic District to create employee permit parking zones.

Parking Demand Reduction Methods

Given that there are only a few feasible, cost-effective methods of adding parking capacity in the District, the City and the merchants should explore methods of reducing the demand on the existing parking. Demand reduction efforts should be focused on long-term parkers, particularly employees. This can be accomplished through the following methods:

Transit incentives. Encourage use of Light Rail and bus transit by subsidizing transit fares and allowing flexible work schedules. Often, groups of employers can work together to obtain bulk transit pass rates at a lower cost and distribute the passes to their employees as a benefit. Currently the light rail system's operating hours are not conducive to this strategy, but the City will continue to explore the feasibility of expanding the hours of operation.

Remote Parking with Shuttle. Introducing an off-site location for employee parking and providing a safe and convenient shuttle system can displace long-term parked vehicles out of the District and open up more space for

visitors. This can be done on a regular basis or during special events, but may require employee incentives to encourage its use.

Pool Vehicles/Guaranteed Rides Home. A key element in asking employees to leave their personal vehicle at home (or in a remote lot) is ensuring that they will retain some of the flexibility and convenience that comes with having one's own vehicle. Employers can create incentives by guaranteeing the employee that they will have a ride to their car or home at any time necessary. Some districts will also purchase a small number of fuel efficient, low-cost vehicles that will be available to any employee that needs to use one to run an errand or for overnight use.

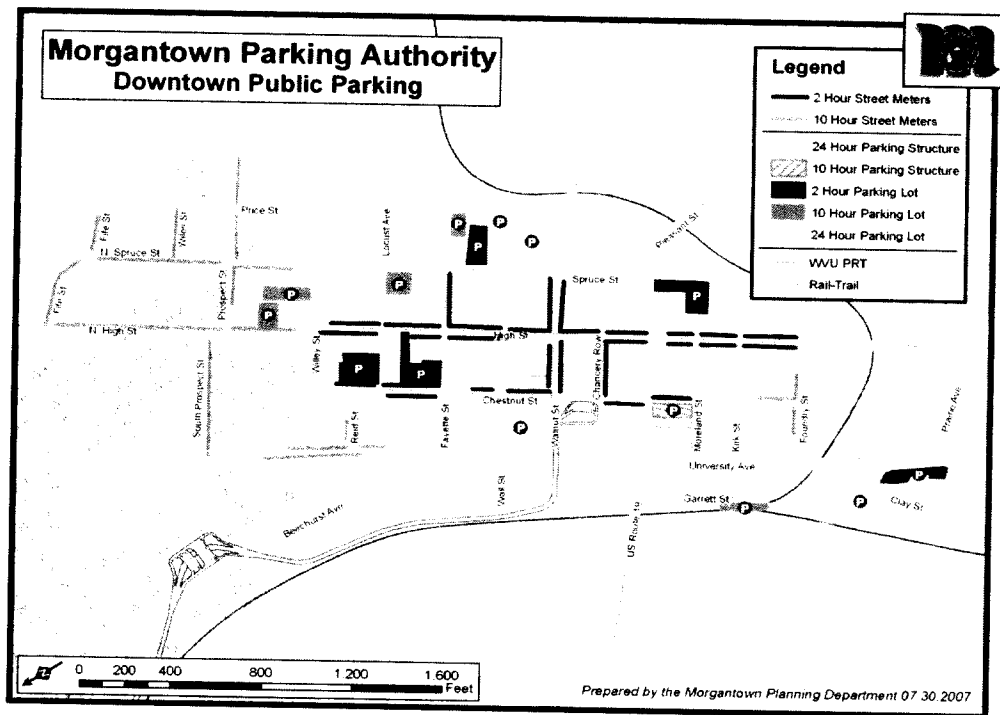
Valet/Pedicab Services. The Chamber of Commerce created valet parking and volunteer pedicab programs last year, which were successful methods of improving the use of less desirable parking spaces. These programs should continue to be supported and expanded if possible.

Improving Walk and Bicycle Access. A consistent network of safe bicycle and pedestrian trails, coupled with storage and shower facilities can promote non-motorized transportation use, freeing up additional parking for customers. The current Streetscape effort and a proposed bike storage facility in the new parking structure are near-term solutions that the City is pursuing; additional projects can be identified in the City's Pedestrian Master Plan. Many new developments incorporate storage and locker room facilities as Transportation Demand Management strategies, which would have the ancillary benefit of parking reduction.

Public Outreach

Utilizing printed media, the internet and signing, parking information can be conveyed to motorists to assist them with finding appropriate parking. Outreach can also remind employees of the importance of reserving premium parking for customers. For example, many employees do not equate the potential retail sales value that a visitor parking in a premium space has (estimated in one jurisdiction to be \$70,000 in gross annual sales). Some successful forms of outreach are described in the following pages.

Parking Map. Providing visitors with information in advance of their visit can assist them by navigating them to the parking nearest to their destination and advise them of any applicable time limits. One method is to create a parking map that shows the location of all public parking, associated time limits if any, and nearby points of interest. The map can be made available in printed form and via the internet, by establishing a parking website for the District. Figure 1 depicts a sample parking map from Morgantown, PA.



Both City staff and the Chamber of Commerce can play a role in the development of a parking website and map for the District.

Education. Other forms of parking information (or education) can familiarize both employees and customers with the Districts parking regulations. Windshield flyers, posted bulletins, or print media can convey employee education, such as the value of preserving a premium parking space for customers; or customer education, such as warning of time limit violations (in the form of a 'grace period' rather than a parking citation).

Salem Downtown Parking Employee Dos and Don'ts

YES 😊

- ✓ Park on-street downtown while shopping, dining or attending a non-work event – employees are customers, too (during non-work hours).
- ✓ Park off-street in a public or private garage or lot while working downtown.
- ✓ If you need a space, sign up for a monthly employee parking permit in a City garage—spaces are available.
- ✓ Consider alternate transportation to work: transit, bicycle, walking, etc.

NO 😞

- ! Don't park on-street while working downtown (Monday - Saturday).
- ! Don't park on-street longer than two hours while shopping, dining or attending an event (outside of your work day).



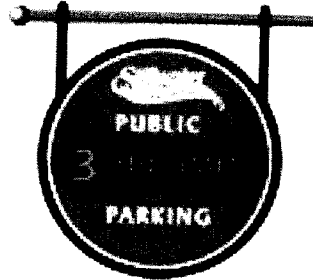
Questions?

Contact Jim Upham, Acting Parking Manager, City of Salem, 503-588-6133, or email jupham@cityofsalem.net

Or go to the City's website at www.cityofsalem.net and click on the *Quick Link* for "Downtown Parking Changes."

As with the parking map, both City and merchant resources can be employed to educate motorists. Employers can take it upon themselves to enclose parking reminders in paychecks, or post them in employee areas. The Chamber can also conduct periodic windshield flyer campaigns.

Signs/Markings. This is similar to the City's Wayfinding sign program, which is intended to guide motorists to the District. A network of parking signs that guide motorists to public parking and call out any associated time limits before the motorist enters the lot, can improve the motorist's experience and cut down on driving in search of parking.



Parking sign example from Stillwater, MN. Note the distinctive shape, color and fonts, along with prominent time limit information

It is recommended that parking information signs, if implemented in the District, should be consistent with the Wayfinding signs. The Wayfinding signs establish a theme, or 'brand' which motorists will associate with the District, and therefore will be better able to navigate to appropriate parking once they reach the District if they recognize the same design theme.

Summary of Recommendations

Rail Block Parking Structure

- Post bottom three levels with 2-hour time limit parking by March 2008
- Roof level will begin as untimed parking; if excessive light rail parking use develops, roof can be posted for no parking between midnight and 7 a.m.

Rail Block Surface Parking

- Existing surface parking (east of the turntable) will remain time limit parking; minor striping modifications by May 2008
- Current staging area should remain fenced off, with parking made available for special events only until construction begins on the public plaza improvements

Time Limit Parking

- Traders Lane parking lot: Convert two more rows of parking to time limit (row adjacent to Leidesdorff to remain untimed) by March 2008
- Staff will conduct parking turnover studies to evaluate time limit durations
- Advise HFRA of Residential Permit Parking program by March 2008

Additional On-Street Parking

- Remove parking restrictions on Scott Street between Sutter and Leidesdorff to create 4-6 additional on-street spaces by March 2008
- Convert westbound bus loading zone on Leidesdorff between Gold Lake and Reading into 9-10 on-street parking spaces by May 2008
- Extend existing on-street parking lane on eastbound Leidesdorff all the way to Riley Street to create an additional 4-5 on-street spaces by May 2008
- Add 3 to 4 new diagonal parking spaces on Wool at Traders Lane parking lot by May 2008

Alternative Modes

- Recommend continuation of valet and pedicab services
- Establish consistent Glenn LRT station shuttle bus service for all special events
- Evaluate cost/feasibility of extending transit hours to allow employees to utilize LRT parking lots as remote evening/special event parking

Parking Enforcement

- City should create parking enforcement officer position and conduct consistent, regular parking enforcement city-wide by July 2008

Parking Management/Outreach

- Formation of an ad-hoc Parking Advisory Committee to meet quarterly to review parking issues and consider strategies by March 2008
- City and Chamber should develop a parking website and printable parking map for new visitors to the District by May 2008
- Post parking wayfinding signs at major public parking lots, consistent with the Wayfinding guide sign design standards, and noting associated time limits by May 2008)

References

- 1) "Six Steps to a Good Parking Program", John D. Edwards PE, Institute of Transportation Engineers
- 2) "Parking Spaces/Community Spaces – Finding the Balance through Smart Growth Solutions", US Environmental Protection Agency; January 2006
- 3) "Your Downtown Parking Resource," Stillwater, MN, 2005
<<http://www.stillwaterparking.com>>
- 4) "Parking Authority", Morgantown, PA, June 13, 2007
<<http://www.morgantown.com/parking-authority.htm>>
- 5) "Salem Downtown Parking." City of Salem, OR, January 22, 2007
<<http://www.cityofsalem.net/departments/admserv/DowntownParking/index.html>>