

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to ensure that the Village, in cooperation and coordination with the Downtown Downers Grove Management Corporation (DMC), is using best practices as they plan and manage available parking in a manner that best serves downtown Downers Grove. Several stakeholder groups compete for a limited amount of parking, including commuters, shoppers, downtown employees, downtown residents and visitors. The Village commissioned Rich and Associates to complete a comprehensive downtown parking study that evaluates current available parking and parking demand, allocation of parking spaces by user groups, and future parking demand in the downtown based on current demand and future development scenarios. Current parking management practices were also reviewed and recommendations made for more effective use of existing parking.

The data collection for this study included a parking space inventory, land use review, parking utilization analysis, pedestrian surveys, business and resident surveys, stakeholder interviews, review of current parking operations, signage, enforcement and marketing and a benchmark of best practices.

This final report includes the study results to fully document recommendations with implementation schedules, costs and benefits. Recommendations are categorized as near-term, mid-term and long-term.

Results

Parking Utilization

As part of the analysis of parking utilization the consultant looked at the total amount of parking, the percentages of public and private parking, the location of parking with respect to destinations, and the occupancy ratios at various days and times.

This analysis found that after discounting parking spaces used by commuters during the daytime hours publicly provided parking comprises about 45 percent of the parking supply, with the balance of 55 percent being privately controlled. During the evening hours, with the availability of vacated commuter spaces, publicly provided and available parking equals more than one half of the available parking supply. An industry recognized best practice is that a minimum of 50 percent of the parking supply be publicly controlled, which helps to facilitate multi-purpose trips and a more pedestrian friendly environment. Within the study area, the BNSF railroad tracks and frequent trains provide at least a perceptual barrier between north and south downtown parking. Parking that is over two blocks away from most user destinations is also not typically perceived as available. For these reasons the study evaluated parking availability north and south of the railroad tracks separately, as well as discounted some of the on-street parking on peripheral streets in the downtown

area. When removing daytime, public commuter parking and outer peripheral parking, and evaluating parking on the north side of the railroad tracks the study results found occupancy levels as high as 98 percent during weekday, daytime hours on the north side of the railroad tracks and 85 percent on the south side of the railroad tracks. Levels exceeding 85 percent occupancy are generally perceived as inadequate by users because they have to “hunt” for parking which may not necessarily be right at one’s destination.

The single parking garage in the downtown is currently achieving a 90 percent occupancy at peak weekday times. The daily fee spaces on levels three and four of the parking garage were observed to reach 100 percent occupancy while the designated employee parking on level two of the garage reaches about 82 percent occupancy. The first floor of the garage which is primarily signed and designated for shopper parking achieves about 70 percent occupancy during the day but also reached as high as 90 percent during the evening hours.

Future Parking Demand

The Draft 2011 Comprehensive Plan identifies several downtown catalyst sites for development although at present there are no definite plans of square footage or parking needs for any of these sites. These sites may be candidates for a public/private partnership to provide additional structured parking. Development on the north side of the tracks has limited options for a standalone parking structure and therefore any parking structure developed would probably be part of an overall private development or a potential public/private partnership in order to provide additional public parking.

Development sites for a standalone parking structure on the south side of the tracks which have been discussed in other studies include the Library Lot and/or the Village Hall lot.

Adequacy of Accessible Parking Spaces

Other analysis specifically requested as part of the study was a review of designated handicap accessible spaces. This review showed that the Village will need to provide an additional 10 spaces in publicly provided parking lots to meet minimum Federal and Illinois State guidelines. Should new guidelines being considered by the United States Access Board for providing a minimum number of handicap accessible spaces on-street be adopted, then the Village could be required to provide up to 26 additional handicap accessible spaces on-street within the downtown.

Adequacy of Current Parking Time Limits

The majority of the on-street and publicly controlled off-streets spaces had parking time limits in the range of 2, 3 and 4 hours depending on location. These limits are considered reasonable by most downtown patrons who reported they are able to complete their business. However, the two-hour on-street time limit does result in some employees parking on the street and periodically moving their vehicle to avoid a parking citation. Presently the Village does not have an ordinance that would restrict this shuffling of vehicles.

Although the time limits are appropriate for most customers for their visits, there are also a number of businesses such as dry cleaners, bakeries and pizza shops that would benefit from having short-

term (10 to 15 minute), high turnover spaces available for customers needing to make a very quick stop.

Signage

Issues with signage were observed although it is understood that the Village is in the process of implementing a signage improvement program. Recommendations for incorporating standard types of parking signs to direct patrons to available parking have been provided.

Condition of Off Street Parking Lots

There were also some issues identified with the conditions of the parking surface in several lots that would benefit from a formal review program for budgeting of lot and parking deck maintenance and improvements. Having sufficient funds to provide for necessary maintenance and upgrades to the parking system may necessitate having as well, a formal program and forecast of necessary parking rate increases for permit parking. Although daily fee parking cannot be increased without the concurrence of Metra, permit rates are subject to the Village's discretion. An additional revenue source could be weekend overnight parking which presently is free of charge.

Loading Zones

The ability to provide spaces that could be designated loading zones during the early part of the day (when demand for parking is lower) and then striped such that they would be normal parking spaces during the busier parts of the day could overcome some issues with trucks occasionally blocking roadways to unload. Similar dual use of some on-street parking for commuter drop off during early morning hours and then normal time limited parking later in the morning could also benefit the downtown businesses and commuters.

Recommendation Summary

Finding	Recommendations
<p>1. Allocation of spaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Allocate some commuters to surplus private parking b. Convert some commuter spaces to downtown shopper spaces c. Consider converting some Village employee parking on top level by Village Hall to lower gated lot (Lot V) d. Consider allowing non-permit holders to park in vacant commuter spaces by 9:30 am instead of 12:00 noon. e. Consider late time restriction for daily fee parking on top level of garage so that spaces available for employees without permit
<p>2. ADA Compliance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Insufficient Handicap spaces per Federal and State guidelines b. Proposed Guidelines for on-street accessible spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Add 10 spaces in specific parking lots which are currently deficient b. May need to reconfigure 26 existing spaces to new handicap standards if guidelines adopted.
<p>3. Time limits appear appropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 2-hour on-street limit b. 3-hour limit in off-street lots appears to be appropriate c. Library parking d. There are businesses that would benefit from having short-term (10 – 15 minute) parking nearby for high turnover 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Maintain existing 2 hour time limit for on-street parking. b. Maintain 3-hour off-street limit. c. Consider dedicating spaces in Forest Lot South to 60 minute parking for library patrons. Could be center portion of lot leaving perimeter for 3 hours. d. Consider establishing on those blocks with appropriate need 1 or 2 short-term parking spaces at either end of block
<p>4. Additional Parking will be needed in future particularly on north side of the tracks to encourage additional investment and development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Begin process now of building up parking fund to provide additional parking structure on north side of tracks in conjunction with future demand. Could accommodate commuters, staff and visitors. b. Consider implementing a Special Service Area (SSA) to provide capital funds for development of needed parking c. Seek out opportunities for public / private partnerships for developing needed parking.
<p>5. Parking Enforcement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Numerous areas for enforcement staff to cover b. Starts early in morning and may not be extending hours late enough into afternoon c. Could cite person who 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Consider random hours and days that enforcement covers various areas b. Make sure that later afternoon hours are covered c. Consider implementing policy where first time violator receives a "courtesy ticket" (no fine attached). d. Village should consider enacting an anti-

<p>innocently overstays time limit d. Employees may move vehicles between on-street spaces to avoid citation</p>	<p>shuffling ordinance.</p>
<p>6. Lot Conditions a. Several lots had either the parking surface in deteriorating condition or had overgrown vegetation or insufficient lighting b. Valet spaces sometimes not clearly defined</p>	<p>a. Implement formal program to review condition of parking surface lots and the parking deck annually for potholes, faded stall markings or lighting issues. Insure that vegetation is trimmed. b. Restripe valet spaces with special color to distinguish from normal spaces</p>
<p>7. Signage and Wayfinding a. Village in process of implementing signage improvement program b. One-way streets may cause some confusion on destinations for some patrons after exiting vehicle c. Garage signs confusing</p>	<p>a. Continue proposed plan for improved signs around town following standard sign types and consistent format to direct patrons to parking garage and other parking. b. Add way-finding signs c. Signs in parking garage with where parking is permitted need to be addressed. Upside down color code. Eliminate numbering from ground floor spaces (confusing) and second floor employee area.</p>
<p>8. Marketing of Parking a. Clearly conveying rules and issues regarding parking and dispelling myths regarding parking</p>	<p>a. Continue process of analyzing parking issues through Village Parking Operations Group. Use opportunities with DMC to report on improvement efforts and problems</p>
<p>9. Parking Economics a. Rates should be adjusted periodically b. Parking not priced for level of convenience c. Handicap accessible parking provided free of charge in commuter lots</p>	<p>a. Adjust rates on a schedule (2 to 3 years) to keep up with rising costs and provide fund for maintaining and adding to parking b. Price commuter parking so that spaces more convenient to station cost more than more remote parking c. Charge for handicap accessible parking spaces just as for all other spaces in commuter lots.</p>
<p>10. Perceived lack of available overnight parking a. Free overnight parking is permitted on weekends</p>	<p>a. Charge for overnight parking permit on weekends.</p>
<p>11. Loading Zones a. Trucks can block roadways during deliveries</p>	<p>a. Consider striping spaces for use as loading zones during part of day but which can then be used as normal parking during later afternoon or evening.</p>
<p>12. Rail Station drop off parking a. Some commuters being dropped off will park in permitted lots while waiting for train</p>	<p>a. Convert on-street area outside Lot B for "kiss and ride" parking until 8:00 am</p>
<p>13. Updated Parking Occupancy Counts</p>	<p>a. Village should conducting parking occupancy counts on an annual basis</p>