

Final Report

**Downtown Parking and Circulation
Analysis and Action Plan**

Prepared for:
City of El Paso de Robles

September 2002

FINAL REPORT

**DOWNTOWN PARKING AND CIRCULATION ANALYSIS
AND ACTION PLAN**

Prepared for:

City of El Paso de Robles
1000 Spring Street
El Paso de Robles, CA 93446

Prepared by:

Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.
Los Angeles Office
18425 Burbank Blvd., Suite 509
Tarzana, California 91356

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099048000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

- Parking demand has consistently been one of the most important issues to downtown business owners for over 30 years. In the 1970's, a Business Improvement District (BIA) was established, public lots were constructed and meters were removed from downtown streets.
- An assessment district was established in the 1980's to fund the construction of additional public lots in locations identified by Main Street. The City stopped requiring off-street parking for new businesses in the 1990's to facilitate redevelopment. Revitalization success in the 2000's has led to both real and perceived parking problems in the downtown area.
- The City initiated this Downtown Parking and Circulation Analysis and Action Plan to provide the City of El Paso de Robles and the downtown business community with a better understanding of the current downtown parking demand and the options for addressing current and projected parking needs.
- Traffic volumes on Spring Street and on 13th Street have been increasing and are forecast to require additional lanes in the future. This report describes alternative improvements to widening Spring Street and 13th Street to 4 lanes.

Study Area and Objectives

- An ad-hoc committee comprised of business owners and City decision-makers was formed to guide the completion of this study.
- This study was conducted in downtown Paso Robles, between 6th Street, 17th Street, Olive Street and Riverside Drive. The figure below illustrates the study area.



- There were four primary objectives established for the parking component of the study:
 - Quantify the existing and future demand for spaces in public lots and on City streets
 - Validate what the City believed were the most important issues for business owners
 - Develop a plan for increasing the current and future parking supply
 - Develop solutions that are not out-of-character with the downtown
- The objective that was established for the circulation component of the study was to define alternative improvements to the widening Spring Street and 13th Street.

Summary of Parking Issues

- There are approximately 2,968 public (customer and employee) parking spaces within the study area. This includes 327 spaces in the City's six public lots and 2,641 on-street spaces. There are also approximately 1,113 parking spaces in the larger private lots within the study area.
- In general, there is a sufficient number of parking spaces downtown to meet the current customer and employee demand. However, parking demand exceeds the available supply in most of the public lots and on streets around the park during certain times of the day, and on different days of the week. The weekday business hours typically have the highest demand overall.
- There are no time restrictions that limit how long a vehicle can be parked in a public parking space. Employees, and to a lesser extent, customers, park for long periods of time in spaces that could be utilized better, and for shorter time periods, by customers.
- Downtown employees and customers expect to be able to park within one block of their destination. This "expected walk distance" results in the perception that there are not enough parking spaces, and the belief that this shortage decreases business activity.
- Based on the expected walk distance, approximately 100 more spaces are needed in the downtown core in 2002. The immediate solution to this focused parking problem is to restrict the length of time a vehicle can be parked in some of the space around the park area in order to increase parking "turnover". Many of the downtown business owners already require their employees to park for long time periods in the public lots, or the street spaces, away from the core downtown business area. However, because not all of the downtown business owners require their employees to do this, the self-enforcement is not working. This issue is creating bad feelings between some of the business owners, and between the business owners and the City.
- Unless there is a change in the expected walk distance, planned development by 2007 would require approximately 350 more spaces than exist now. Longer-term solutions to increase the public parking supply are necessary for the future development and redevelopment plans to be successful. These solutions include additional public parking spaces in lots and/or structures, as well as enforced, time restricted spaces to increase parking turnover.
- Based upon input from the public and the ad-hoc committee, this report describes three optional action plans to improve the existing parking situation, and recommendations to plan for increasing the public parking supply in the future.

Summary of Circulation Issues

- The City's General Plan Circulation Element recommends widening Spring Street and 13th Street to four lanes (two lanes in each direction). Many of the downtown business owners do not want the roadways to be widened because parking would be removed.
- This report describes alternative solutions, including physical changes to the roadway network, traffic signal timing modifications and "traffic calming" strategies to divert through traffic away from downtown.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. was retained by the City of El Paso de Robles to complete a downtown parking and circulation analysis and action plan. The study effort included the following efforts:

- Formation of an ad-hoc committee, comprised of Planning Commission and City Council members as well as business owners and tenants.
- A field inventory to identify the number of parking spaces on the streets and in the public parking lots.
- Field surveys to quantify the average and peak demand for parking spaces on weekdays, Saturdays and on Sundays.
- License plate surveys to determine how long vehicles are typically parked in different spaces.
- Development and analysis of potential short-term and long-term solutions to better manage the existing public parking spaces and provide for additional parking spaces in the future.
- Development and analysis of potential alternative improvement to widening Spring Street and 13th Street to four-lanes in the future.
- Meetings with the ad-hoc committee to assess the feasibility and public acceptance/reaction to the potential solutions.
- A public meeting to present the potential solutions considered by the committee.
- Completion of this report to describe the alternative action plans.

Initial Input From the Public and Committee Members

At the beginning of the study, the ad-hoc committee members were asked to describe what they thought the parking issues were, and what some potential solutions could be. During the field surveys, questionnaire surveys were distributed to approximately 100 employees and customers asking the same basic questions. A summary of the results of the ad-hoc committee input and the informal public surveys are provided in **Table 1**. All of the comments and survey results are provided in the Appendix A to this report.

Table 1 – Committee and Community Input Summary

| Committee Member Comments/Ideas | Community Survey Results/Ideas |
|--|--|
| Financing new lots/structures is the key issue | 40% of respondents were employees |
| Lack of enforcement is a reason for the problem | 45% of employees are not told where to park |
| Restrictions have been unsuccessful in the past | 50% said they would pay for parking |
| Define employee incentives to park further away | Keep free parking for employees |
| Charge for parking (meters, permits, for-pay lots) | Use vacant private lots for parking during the day |
| Build a parking structure downtown | Build another parking lot |

Source: Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. - July 2002

2. PARKING ANALYSIS

Study Area

The study area includes the downtown area bound by 6th Street to the south, 17th Street to the north, Olive Street to the west and Riverside Drive to the east. [Figure 1](#) illustrates the study area boundary.

Parking Supply

Parking Inventory

An inventory of the current parking supply was completed to begin the data collection effort. All on-street and off-street parking spaces were recorded. Average parking occupancy and average parking duration was observed and recorded during two weekdays, two Saturdays and two Sundays in November 2001. The hours between 7 AM and 9 PM were surveyed each day.

[Figure 2](#) illustrates the location of off-street public parking spaces available in the City's parking lots. [Figure 3](#) illustrates the location of on-street public parking spaces in the downtown study area.

Study Area Analysis Zones

The study area was divided into five analysis zones to increase data collection efficiency and to designate the analysis results more specifically. [Figure 4](#) illustrates the study area parking analysis zones.

Table 2 provides a summary of the parking inventory by type of space within each analysis zone. Detailed inventory numbers by street and lot are provided in the technical Appendix B of this report.

Table 2 – Parking Supply Inventory

| Analysis Zone | On-Street Spaces | Off-Street Spaces* | Number of Spaces |
|---------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| I | 480 | 0 | 480 |
| II | 584 | 0 | 584 |
| III | 358 | 99 | 457 |
| IV | 833 | 206 | 1,039 |
| V | 386 | 22 | 408 |
| Totals | 2,641 | 327 | 2,968 |

Source: Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. - July 2002

** It should be noted that the exact number of on-street spaces within the study areas could not be defined because not all of the spaces are designated with striping marks.*

Figure 1 - Study Area Boundary

Figure 2 - Off-Street Public Parking Supply Locations

Figure 3 - On-Street Public Parking Supply Locations

Figure 4 - Parking Analysis Zones

Expected Walking Distance

The distance that employees and customers are willing to walk between where they park and their destination is located is related to how large the area is, the number and type of different destinations there are, and how far away they have historically had to park. In Paso Robles, that distance is about one-block, or one minute for employees and “regular” customers than in larger downtown areas. As a result, concentrated “parking problems” are perceived to be more widespread. Customers and tourists that visit downtown more infrequently likely have different expectations regarding how far they have to walk from their parking space to their destination (about 3-4 blocks, or 2 ½ minutes). [Figure 5](#) illustrates the estimated walking distance radius from three points of high activity, based upon an informal assessment conducted during the field inventory and demand surveys.

Existing Parking Demand

The existing utilization of the on-street and off-street parking spaces throughout the study area was surveyed and recorded in order to define the existing parking demand. Demand for parking spaces included analysis of the average parking occupancy – how often the spaces were occupied, and the average parking duration – on average, how long the same vehicle was parked within the same parking space. The following paragraphs describe the methodology used to define occupancy and duration for the on-street and off-street parking spaces.

Average Parking Occupancy

Parking occupancy data was collected and recorded in one-hour intervals throughout each day. A two-person survey team recorded the number of available and occupied spaces for each parking area. This data was used to develop spreadsheets that identify the number of spaces available and the number of spaces occupied on each street and within each public lot in of each the analysis zones. **Table 3** provides a summary of the on-street average occupancy of parking spaces by Analysis Zone for different typical days.

Table 3 – On-Street Average Parking Occupancy

| Analysis Zone | WEEKDAY | | | SATURDAY | | | SUNDAY | | |
|---------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | Morning 7am–11pm | Afternoon 11am–3pm | Evening 3pm–9pm | Morning 7am–11pm | Afternoon 11am–3pm | Evening 3pm–9pm | Morning 7am–11pm | Afternoon 11am–3pm | Evening 3pm–9pm |
| I | 19% | 22% | 23% | 20% | 23% | 23% | 31% | 23% | 21% |
| II | 30% | 36% | 24% | 25% | 24% | 21% | 31% | 28% | 22% |
| III | 31% | 31% | 24% | 23% | 24% | 19% | 18% | 19% | 18% |
| IV | 39% | 66% | 46% | 35% | 52% | 48% | 23% | 38% | 30% |
| V | 26% | 30% | 29% | 27% | 27% | 25% | 42% | 30% | 21% |
| AVG. | 29% | 37% | 29% | 26% | 30% | 27% | 29% | 28% | 22% |

Source: Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. - July 2002

Table 3 indicates that the average demand for on-street parking in each of the analysis zones is relatively low. Zone IV has the highest average demand in the study area – the zone around the park, where the theatre and many other businesses are located. On average, demand is about the same each day. The weekday afternoon period represents the highest study area average, at 37%.

Figure 5 - Downtown Walking Distance Radius

It should be noted that the average demand in each Analysis Zone, and average demand in the study area in general, is skewed by certain on-street parking locations and specific one-hour time periods with significantly lower demand. There are definitely certain blocks that are up to 100% occupied at certain times on different days. This represents the “peak” demand, and not the average. Peak demand is discussed later in this report. Table 3 is intended to provide a general idea of occupancy. Detailed street-by-street occupancy data for each hour surveyed and each analysis zone and street are provided in the technical Appendix C of this report.

Table 4 provides a summary of the off-street (public lot) average occupancy of parking spaces by Analysis Zone for different typical days.

Table 4 – Off-Street (Public Lot) Average Parking Occupancy

| Lot | WEEKDAY | | | SATURDAY | | | SUNDAY | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| | Morning 7am–11pm | Afternoon 11am–3pm | Evening 3pm–9pm | Morning 7am–11pm | Afternoon 11am–3pm | Evening 3pm–9pm | Morning 7am–11pm | Afternoon 11am–3pm | Evening 3pm–9pm |
| Transit Center | 50% | 70% | 62% | 25% | 39% | 47% | 15% | 21% | 22% |
| Spring Street | 67% | 75% | 70% | 8% | 13% | 38% | 5% | 10% | 32% |
| City Hall | 47% | 51% | 42% | 15% | 29% | 19% | 3% | 8% | 10% |
| Railroad Lot | 75% | 80% | 74% | 30% | 40% | 52% | 11% | 17% | 22% |
| 12 th Street | 74% | 76% | 67% | 47% | 54% | 36% | 9% | 21% | 20% |
| Park Street | 43% | 66% | 56% | 26% | 39% | 49% | 7% | 22% | 14% |
| AVG. | 55% | 70% | 62% | 22% | 36% | 40% | 8% | 17% | 20% |

Source: Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. - July 2002

Table 4 indicates that the average demand for off-street parking in the public lots is highest during weekdays, consistently during the afternoon. The lots with the highest average demand on weekdays are the Spring Street lot the Railroad lot and the 12th Street lot. The Railroad Street lot has the highest average Saturday demand. The Transit Center lot has the highest average Sunday demand.

The lowest average demand is on Sunday mornings. The City Hall lot experienced the lowest average demand on weekdays on the days the field surveys were conducted, however, this lot seemed to be more occupied on weekdays since that time.

It should be noted that the “average” percentages are skewed by specific time periods with significantly lower or higher demand than the other reporting periods. This summarized information is intended to provide a general idea of occupancy. Detailed lot-by-lot occupancy data for each hour surveyed and each analysis zone and lot are provided in the technical appendix of this report. The detailed data indicates that off-street parking space demand varies widely by time-of-day, and day-of-week, with some lots at or over 100% occupancy on weekdays around noon.

The Urban Land Institute has established guiding principals for providing additional public parking spaces. The principals are summarized below:

- When demand is at **70%** on average, agencies should be **planning** for additional parking spaces.
- When demand is at **80%** on average, agencies should be **designing** for additional parking spaces.
- When demand is at **90%** on average, agencies should be **constructing** additional parking spaces.

Peak Parking Occupancy

Peak parking occupancy throughout the study area is obviously higher than average parking occupancy, and varies significantly on a block-by-block basis for on-street parking. This is especially true in Analysis Zones I, II and III and V. Less variation was observed in Analysis Zone IV, where the demand is highest. The off-street (public lot) peak occupancy varies more by time-of-day than by location.

Typically, local agencies and even private developments (shopping centers as an example) do not plan or provide for “peak” conditions, unless that peak is observed consistently. The peak demand in Zone IV is consistent, and should be addressed by increasing the supply, either by promoting “turnover” or adding public parking spaces, or both.

[Table 5](#) provides a description of the peak times and percentages observed for the on-street and public lot spaces by Analysis Zone. [Figure 6](#) illustrates the peak occupancy of the on-street spaces in Analysis Zone IV.

Table 5 – Peak Parking Occupancy

| Analysis Zone | On-Street Spaces | | Off-Street (Public Lot) Spaces | |
|---------------|------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|
| | Peak and Time | Street Location | Peak and Time | Lot Location |
| I | 50% on Sundays 7am-11am | Vine, Oak, 8 th and 9 th Streets | N/A | N/A |
| II | 65% on weekdays 11am-1pm | Vine, Oak, 14 th , 15 th and 16 th Streets | N/A | N/A |
| III | 90% on weekdays 11am-1pm | Park and Pine Streets | 85% on weekdays 11am-1pm | Transit Center Lot |
| IV | 100% on weekdays 11am-1pm | Spring, Park, Pine, Railroad, 11 th , 12 th and 13 th Streets | 100% on weekdays 11am-1pm | Spring Street, 12 th Street and Railroad Lot |
| V | 90% | Park, Pine and Railroad Streets | 100% on weekdays 11am-1pm | Park Street Lot |

Source: Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. - July 2002

Figure 6 - Analysis Zone IV Peak Occupancy

Parking Duration

Parking duration defines how long, on average, a specific vehicle is parked in one parking space without being moved. Duration data helps determine how many vehicles park in any one particular parking space throughout the course of a day, and helps to determine the “effective supply”. This “turn over” rate is dependent upon the length of time a car is parked without being moved. This data is used to develop an average rate for a general area.

The effective supply is equal to the actual parking capacity less a cushion needed for user convenience. The effective supply is typically equal to 85-90% of the actual supply. Parking turnover is an important component in determining the parking demand as it compares with the effective supply. It helps define the actual capacity of the parking space inventory. For example, an employee-serving parking space that accommodates a vehicle arriving at 7 AM and not leaving until 5 PM provides for one parked vehicle. A commercial customer space may provide parking for 8 to 10 vehicles during the same time period. Lower parking turnover (longer average parking duration) compromises the parking supply. As an example, a supply of 500 spaces can accommodate 2,000 vehicles if the turnover rate is 4 cars per space, per day. If the turnover rate is only 2 cars per day, the same 500 spaces only accommodate 1,000 vehicles.

Average parking duration/turnover was observed and recorded at 12 different specific locations throughout the study area. Each designated parking space was observed hourly and recorded by identifying the license plate number of the vehicle parked.

The parking turnover rate was determined by calculating the average duration that vehicles were parked in the spaces surveyed hourly from 8 AM to 10 PM. **Table 6** provides a summary of the average parking duration by analysis zone on a weekday, Saturday and Sunday.

Table 6 – Average Parking Duration

| Analysis Zone | WEEKDAY (Hours/Minutes) | | SATURDAY (Hours/Minutes) | | SUNDAY (Hours/Minutes) | |
|---------------|----------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| | On-Street | Off-Street | On-Street | Off-Street | On-Street | Off-Street |
| I | 6:30 | N/A | 2:30 | N/A | 2:00 | N/A |
| II | 4:00 | N/A | 2:45 | N/A | 2:15 | N/A |
| III | 3:30 | 4:30 | 2:30 | 4:00 | 3:00 | 3:15 |
| IV | 4:00 | 5:30 | 2:00 | 3:15 | 1:45 | 2:15 |
| V | 6:00 | 6:30 | 2:00 | 3:45 | 2:00 | 3:00 |
| AVG. | 4:45 | 5:30 | 2:15 | 3:45 | 2:15 | 2:45 |

Source: Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. July 2002

Table 6 indicates that the average duration of parked vehicles in the study area is significantly longer on weekdays compared to Saturdays and Sundays. The turn over rate varies by Analysis Zone, and is generally longer for the off-street (public lot) spaces. The longer duration is a typical characteristic of spaces used by employees.

Future Parking Demand

Developing future parking demand estimates is not an exact science, and relies upon many different assumptions. These assumptions include, but are not limited to:

- Known development plans
- The type and size of planned developments
- General Plan land use designations
- Population forecasts
- The development climate and the economy
- The make-up of existing land uses
- Trip generation expected from planned developments
- Expected walk distance/time between the parking space and the destination

Downtown Paso Robles has experienced significant change in the last ten years. New land uses (restaurants, theatres and boutique shops) have replaced many of the previous land uses. The new uses have revitalized downtown, and the result is increased trip generation more demand for parking spaces.

The City's General Plan includes land use projections and zoning that would allow for continued change, revitalization and growth. The projections allow for continued redevelopment activity, occupancy of 2nd and 3rd stories of existing buildings, increased commercial densification and development of vacant property. The timing of these change is dependant upon the economy and City efforts to continue revitalizing more of the downtown area.

The number of parking spaces that will be required in the future depends upon many variables, including the type, size and location of the development. City parking code requirements typically tie the trip generation rate of new developments to the number of parking spaces that would be required. The requirements also consider how long a vehicle would be parked, which is related to the combination of downtown land uses.

City staff provided land use projection data and the location and type of planned redevelopment projects. This information was used to develop future parking demand estimates. The land use projections are based upon the additional square footage of development that is allowed by the current zoning designations for each study area block. [Figure 7](#) illustrates the location of additional allowable densities. Detailed land use projections are provided in Appendix D of this report. The location and type of specific, known redevelopment projects were also identified. [Figure 8](#) illustrates the location of probable development projects.

Based upon the future land use information, and assuming there is no change in the expected walk distance, approximately 350 additional parking spaces would be needed in the downtown area to accommodate future parking demand. [Table 7](#) presents a summary of the existing and future parking demand estimates, and identifies the number of surplus or deficit spaces. For the purposes of this analysis, and based upon input from City staff, the future development plans are targeted for 2007. Therefore, the future parking demand estimates are provided for 2007. Table 7 indicates that there are a surplus number of parking spaces in the study area now, but a deficit of about 161 spaces in Zone IV. In the future, there would be a parking space of approximately 350 spaces, concentrated in Zones III, IV and V.

Table 7 – Existing and Future Parking Demand Estimates

| Analysis Zone | Total Number of Existing Spaces* | Number of Spaces Needed Now | Existing Surplus or (Deficit) | Number of Spaces Needed Future (2007) | Future Surplus or (Deficit) Based Upon Existing Supply |
|----------------------|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| I | 480 | 300 | 180 | 480 | 0 |
| II | 584 | 400 | 184 | 450 | 134 |
| III | 457 | 400 | 57 | 590 | (133) |
| IV | 1,039 | 1,200 | (161) | 1,300 | (261) |
| V | 408 | 400 | 8 | 500 | (92) |
| Totals | 2,968 | 2,700 | 268 | 3,290 | (352) |

Source: Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. July 2002

* Total number of spaces includes on-street and off-street public parking spaces.

Figure 7 - Downtown Land Use Projections

Figure 8 - Location of Probable Development Projects

3. SUMMARY OF PARKING ISSUES

Completing the field surveys, evaluating the occupancy and duration results and working with the ad-hoc committee identified the parking issues and potential solutions. The paragraphs below describe the existing and future parking issues, and the potential solutions considered in more detail.

Existing Parking Issues

- **There are enough parking spaces in the study area to meet existing demand.** The supply of parking spaces in the study area in general is sufficient to meet the average demand, but many of the spaces are not located in the areas where people want to park. Based upon the current expected walk distance, there is a need for more parking spaces in Zone IV, especially during peak times. The spaces could be provided by increasing parking turnover (decreasing the average length of time a vehicle is parking without moving), increasing the actual number of public parking spaces, or a combination of increased turnover and additional supply.
- **There are approximately 100 more spaces needed in the downtown core.** Demand for parking spaces exceeds the effective supply in Analysis Zone IV and in the areas immediately adjacent to the south and north of zone IV. There are not enough parking spaces to meet the consistent peak customer and employee parking demand during many time periods in these areas. The highest peak demand is during the middle of the day on weekdays, when businesses are operating and many of the restaurants get customers from outside of the downtown area. Weekday evenings are the next busiest times, for much of the same reason – businesses are still open, restaurants are serving dinner, and the theatres start to get more movie-goers.
- **Spring Street and 13th Street act as barriers to the parking supply.** Although there are significant number of surplus parking spaces in Zones I and II, Spring Street acts as a barrier to pedestrian traffic. Not as many people are willing to park in the available on-street spaces in these zones. There are also some surplus spaces in Zone III, which are more accessible, but the sidewalks on Park and Pine Streets south of 11th Street may be prohibiting people from parking there. There are only a few surplus parking spaces in Zone V. However, 13th Street also acts as a barrier to pedestrian traffic, especially during times where there is heavy vehicular traffic.
- **Employee parking occupies many of the prime “customer” spaces.** Long-term employee parking in the on-street spaces adjacent to the downtown core should be minimized. Many business owners expressed that they require their employees to park in the public lots in the on-street spaces away from the core – but not all business owners. This creates ill-will and parking demand problems.
- **There are no time restrictions for parking spaces.** The lack of parking restrictions to limit how long a vehicle can be parked in the same space results in low parking turnover. The employees in the area know this, and use the time restricted spaces for long-term or all day parking, resulting in fewer parking spaces available for customers.

Future Parking Issues

- **Existing parking issues will worsen if not addressed.** Although the existing parking issues a refocused to the core, Zone IV area in 2002, the issues will have a more negative impact in the future if they are not addressed. Specifically, the downtown business community (the City and the business owners, and Main Street) need to start resolving issues now, and start working now on future supply solutions. This will require organized cooperation of adjacent business owners for self-enforcement, identification of financing for short-term (low-cost) and longer term (construction-related) solutions.
- **Increased population will increase parking demand.** The population of Paso Robles is expected to be approximately 35,000 by 2015-2020. As the City grows, activity in the downtown will also grow.
- **There are plans for additional redevelopment.** Planned downtown development within the next 5 years will result in more parking demand, primarily in Zones III and IV.
- **New development would require new spaces.** The anticipated level of development in the downtown area will require about 350 more spaces by 2007 and 550 more spaces by 2012.
- **There are optional ways to accommodate future demand.** The optional solutions to accommodating the demand that will result form new additional development are described in detail in the following sections of this report. In general, the solutions range from expanding the average walk distance, financing additional lots, a parking structure, and/or implementing enforced time restrictions.

Example Cities with Similar Issues

Other communities experience parking issues that are similar to the issues in downtown Paso Robles. The ad-hoc committee requested that some “best practice” research was conducted to help identify potential solutions that other communities have tried. [Table 8](#) represents a summary of how other similar communities have resolved (or how they now planning to resolve) their parking issues.

Table 8 – Comparable City Experiences

| City | Parking Issue to Solve | What They Did |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Ventura, California | There was little activity downtown. Downtown plan for revitalization completed that identified a parking structure as catalyst for growth, part of redevelopment policy. | The City constructed a 500 space parking structure before a new downtown theatre, at a cost of \$6.5M. City paid with capital funds initially identified for a proposed convention center. |
| Thousand Oaks, California | T.O. Blvd., represents the “downtown” area. Too many employees were parking in customer spaces. More spaces were needed throughout entire study area. | Business owners initiated shared parking agreements with each other. A site for a new surface lot was identified, and business owners are in the process of buying it. |
| Prescott, Arizona | The City population is about 23,000, and the downtown businesses are built around a park. Development of building 2nd floors increased employee, customer and visitor parking demand. City had time restricted spaces. | The City already had time restricted spaces. They are building a new 425 space, mixed-use parking structure that will be completed by 2003. There are 52 residential units and 6,000 s.f. of retail. The 10.2M cost was shared: \$4.2M in public funds, and \$6M in private funds. |
| Studio City, California | Ventura Boulevard in Studio City, a community that is part of Los Angeles, represents a linear “downtown” area. There has been a significant amount of redevelopment in the past 5 years - old business turnover to newer businesses. There are more people and more demand for parking spaces. | The City is going to use parking meter funds and general obligation bonds to pay for the conversion of an existing public lot and an adjacent private lot into a structure site. Spaces on the lower level will be reserved for private use, to replace the private lot spaces. The City is also going to provide new signage to indicate where the structure is located. |

Source: Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. - July 2002

The Urban Transportation Monitor conducted a nationwide survey in March 2001 on downtown parking issues. Questionnaires were faxed to 150 cities in the U.S. Altogether 31 completed questionnaires were received (21% response rate). A summary of the responses that are related to the parking issues in downtown Paso Robles are provided below:

- Current total of off-street private and public spaces available in the CBD for smaller cities 2,800. There are 2,968 on-street and off-street public spaces in Paso Robles.
- Approximately 71% of the parking in smaller cities and 33% of the parking in larger cities is free.
- On average, about 700 off-street parking spaces are owned by smaller cities (public). There are 327 off-street public spaces in the lots in downtown Paso Robles.

- The total number of on-street parking spaces in the CBD of smaller cities is 900. There are 2,641 in Paso Robles.
- About 2% of the smaller cities have no minimum or maximum parking requirement per floor area.
- The shortest maximum time period allowed for on-street parking in the CBD of smaller cities is 42 minutes.
- The longest maximum time period allowed for on-street parking in the CBD of smaller cities is approximately 4 hours.

Parking Code Requirements

This section of the report describes the current downtown parking requirements for businesses, based upon the parking code. It should be noted that the existing conditions and recommendations apply to the entire City parking code requirements, and not just to the downtown area.

Existing Code Conditions

- The reduced parking requirements for new downtown buildings expire on January 1, 2004.
- The City allows for 25% of the spaces to be allocated to small cars, or “compact spaces”. This allowance is too generous for the 2002 Paso Robles vehicle mix, which has a heavy truck and large vehicle percentage.
- The parking lot geometric design standards are too generous
- There is no detailed "shared parking" section in the zoning code.

Code Recommendations

- Extend the reduced parking requirements for new downtown buildings for 5 more years. This action has been successful in stimulating downtown development and redevelopment. Although not requiring on-site parking has led to some of the parking shortage that exists in Zone IV, requiring parking would likely result in a decline of new business activity.
- Revise the small car % allowance in OP, OP overlay, C, M RC and PM zones
- Revise the parking lot design standards to reflect current practices for geometric design.
- Create a "Shared Parking" section in the zoning ordinance for mixed use developments in accordance with Urban Land Institute (ULI) guidelines
- Fire Lane: A minimum of 24 ft. must be kept clear. Required turning radius is dependent upon the angle of the turn.

Accessible Parking

When a business, State or local government agency, or other covered entity re-stripes a parking lot, it must provide accessible parking spaces as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design. Failure to do so would violate the ADA. In addition, businesses or privately owned facilities that provide goods or services to the public have a continuing ADA obligation to remove barriers to access in existing parking lots when it is readily achievable to do so. Because re-striping is relatively inexpensive, it is readily achievable in most cases.

The ADA provide a design guide with information about how to create accessible car and van spaces and how many spaces to provide when parking lots are re-striped. The following paragraphs summarize the design guide. Appendix E provides the full design guide.

Accessible Parking Spaces for Cars

Accessible parking spaces for cars should have at least a 60-inch-wide access aisle located adjacent to the designated parking space. This width should be wide enough to permit a person using a wheelchair to enter or exit the car. The parking spaces should also be identified with a sign and located on level ground. The boundary of the access aisle must be marked. The end may be a squared or curved shape. Two parking spaces may share an access aisle.

An access aisle of at least 60-inch width must be level (1:50 maximum slope in all directions), be the same length as the adjacent parking space(s) it serves and must connect to an accessible route to the building. Ramps must not extend into the access aisle.

Van-Accessible Parking Spaces

At least one of eight accessible parking spaces must be van-accessible. Van-accessible parking spaces should have three features that are different from accessible spaces for cars:

- A wider access aisle (96" minimum width) to accommodate a wheelchair lift.
- Vertical clearance (98" minimum high clearance) to accommodate van height at the van parking space, the adjacent access aisle, and on the vehicular route to and from the van-accessible space. If the accessible route is located in front of the space, wheelstops need to be installed to keep vehicles from reducing the width to less than 36 inches.
- An additional sign that identifies the parking spaces as "van accessible", mounted high enough so the sign can be seen when a vehicle is parked in the space.

The number of accessible parking spaces is based on the total number of parking spaces provided (based on the 1998 California Building Code). The table on the following page identifies the number of spaces required for off-street parking lots/facilities.

Table 9 - Minimum Number of Accessible Parking Spaces

| Total Number of Parking Spaces | Number of Accessible Parking Spaces Required |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1 to 25 | 1 |
| 26 to 50 | 2 |
| 51 to 75 | 3 |
| 76-100 | 4 |
| 101-150 | 5 |
| 151-200 | 6 |
| 201-300 | 7 |
| 301-400 | 8 |
| 401-500 | 9 |
| 501-1000 | 2% of total |
| 1001 and over | 20 + 1/100 spaces or fraction thereof |

Location

Accessible parking spaces must be located on the shortest accessible route of travel to an accessible facility entrance. Where buildings have multiple accessible entrances with adjacent parking, the accessible parking spaces must be dispersed and located closest to the accessible entrances.

When accessible parking spaces are added in an existing parking lot, locate the spaces on the most level ground close to the accessible entrance. An accessible route must always be provided from the accessible parking to the accessible entrance. An accessible route never has curbs or stairs, must be at least 3- feet wide, and has a firm, stable, slip-resistant surface. The slope along the accessible route should not be greater than 1:12 in the direction of travel.

Accessible parking spaces may be clustered in one or more lots if equivalent or greater accessibility is provided in terms of distance from the accessible entrance, parking fees, and convenience. Van-accessible parking spaces located in parking garages may be clustered on one floor (to accommodate the 98-inch minimum vertical height requirement).

Free Technical Assistance

Private business owners and State and local government agencies can obtain answers to technical and general questions about ADA Standards for accessible parking lot design and other issues by calling the ADA Information Line. Information about ADA-related IRS tax credits and deductions is also available from the ADA Information Line.

- *ADA Information Line: 800-514-0301 (voice), 800-514-0383 (tty)*

Internet

There is an ADA web site with access to ADA regulations, technical assistance materials, and general ADA information. It also provides links to other Federal agencies, and updates on new ADA requirements and enforcement efforts. The internet address is:

- *www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm*

Loading Zones

Off-Street Loading Areas

Commercial buildings typically provide at least one off-street loading space. Every commercial use or building with 15 or more parking spaces shall provide a minimum of one loading space within 10 feet of the use or building served. Loading docks should not be located between a building and a street frontage in commercial and industrial zones.

On-Street Loading Areas

There is a need for on-street loading areas in downtown Paso Robles, because not every business has off-street loading zone access. Areas that could be designated as on-street loading only should be minimized, and located dependant upon the type of business and access on different blocks within the downtown. There should be no more than one area for each block face. On-street loading zones should not be used as ‘regular’ parking spaces, unless the loading use is restricted to specific times and/or days.

Any on-street loading zone areas in downtown Paso Robles should be restricted to specific time/days because of the need for additional on-street public parking spaces. These areas would be considered as on-street loading bays where the turnover of vehicles is mandatory. Motorists should not stop a vehicle in a loading zone during these specific times/days, except for the purpose of loading or unloading passengers or materials.

Passenger loading zones should be designated for the purpose of loading and unloading passengers up to and not exceeding 3 minutes. In the case of a passenger this period is not to exceed 3 minutes, for materials the maximum is 30 minutes. These zones are often located in front of hotels, theatres, restaurants, night clubs, community halls and other venues where large groups of people are being dropped off or picked up. The turnover of vehicles is essential in maintaining traffic flow and providing a convenient spot for passenger pick up. A passenger zone sign without any times or days, should be in effect seven days a week, 24 hours a day, including holidays.

4. PARKING SOLUTIONS THAT WERE CONSIDERED

Several ideas and potential solutions were considered and discussed with the ad-hoc committee throughout the study process. The paragraphs below describe the ideas that were considered, and are divided into two categories of solutions: Policy and Physical.

Policy Solutions

- **Continue current downtown zoning code.** This policy has been successful in revitalizing the downtown. It has also led to the current parking shortages at peak times in Zone IV.
- **Require all new development to provide off-street parking.** This solution solves some of the cost issues and places responsibility directly to the new businesses that would operate and generate the new/additional parking demand. However, this action could result in a significant decrease in new development activity.
- **Require in-lieu fees for parking.** The City could require fees from new business owners instead of requiring them to provide for their own on-site parking spaces. These fees could be used to finance the construction of new public spaces. The amount of the fee could significantly decrease development activity.
- **Self enforce time-restricted parking.** Self-enforcement would require business owners to control the parking habits of their employees (where and when they park). Self-enforcement has not been very effective in the past, because not all business owners encourage and monitor their employee parking habits. In addition, other than requests or demand, there has not been any real “incentive” for most employees to park away from their job location. Employee incentives that were considered as part of this study, intended to motivate employees to park outside of the downtown core included:
 - free car washes/details, and gift certificates and/or discounts to downtown businesses
 - “reserved” spaces in public lots
 - recognition in downtown publications
 - construction of shade structure over some of the public lot spaces
 - any incentives that are provided need to be funded by someone (Main Street, the City, etc.), which would raise budget issues.
- **Formally enforce time-restricted parking.** Formal enforcement would include staff hired to enforce and write tickets for violations that are either meter-based or signed-only time restrictions. Enforcement could lead to more opportunities for customers to park, with shorter duration. However, enforcement could also result in more employees trying to find somewhere to park for longer time periods, and impact the adjacent retail parking lots. Strict and consistent enforcement should only be enacted if some of the other potential solutions to increase the supply are developed. Enforcement costs would be a budget issue.

The effect that time-restricting parking could have on the Zone IV parking demand is illustrated in [Figure 9](#). The figure indicates that enforced time restrictions could have the same effect as increasing the number of public parking spaces, because turnover would be improved, and long-term parkers would likely park outside of the downtown core. [Figure 10](#) illustrates the effect that enforcement would have on the study area. [Figure 11](#) indicates the potential time restriction for specific on-street locations.

Figure 9 - Effect of Time Restrictions on Zone IV Demand

Figure 10 - Effect of Time Restrictions on the Study Area

Figure 11 - Potential On-Street Time Restrictions

- **Develop shared-parking agreements.** Shared parking is defined as parking space that can be used to serve two or more individual land uses without conflict or encroachment. Agreements between the property owners, or the City and some of the owners of private lots could help expand or increase the effective parking supply. Shared parking works when demand is different at different times of the day. The details of the agreements would need to be defined, and could include a financial component. Example shared parking agreements are included in Appendix F of this report.
- **Develop a Business Improvement District (BID).** A BID is a property-based benefit assessment type district established under Section 36600 of the California Streets and Highway Code, also known as the Property and Business Improvement District law of 1994. BIDs allow a group of business or property owners to tax themselves to pay for improvements. BID contributions are either based upon property values or merchant sales tax. They must be approved by a majority vote of businesses or property owners in the designated area, and by the City Council. A sample BID agreement is included in Appendix G of this report.
- **Extend the expected walk distance.** Extending the expected walk distance and time would be related to future development and redevelopment activity outside of what is now the ‘core’ downtown area. This would result in the under-utilized public parking spaces outside of the core becoming more reasonable to shoppers, employees and other downtown visitors. The attraction of other uses between the available spaces and other destinations would extend this expected distance and time. If this were to happen, there would be less need to pursue increased supply or enforcement.

Physical Solutions

- **Re-stripe parking spaces on streets from parallel to angled parking.** Some of the streets in the downtown area are currently striped for angled parking, at about a 60 degree angle (i.e., 12th Street, Park Street, Pine Street). Modification of other street parking striping from parallel to angled could result in an increase of approximately 30% more spaces. However, not all of the streets may be able to accommodate angled parking without modification to the roadway or sidewalk widths, or the lane widths. This improvement and would likely need to be coordinated between the City and the adjacent property owners. Where feasible, this is a very cost-effective solution to providing some new spaces.
- **Construct another surface parking lot.** There are some vacant sites in the downtown area that could be used for public (surface) parking lots. One example is the lot across from the theatre that is currently unimproved, where many people already park. There are other potential sites that are relatively small (similar to the 12th Street and Park Street lots), but could still be used to accommodate additional public parking spaces. The City does not currently own any of the sites identified during this study. This is a significant budget issue.

A good site investment would be one that is large enough to accommodate a multi-level parking structure at some point in the future, when finances for a structure are identified and when demand warrants the additional spaces. [Figure 12](#) illustrates the dimensions of some of the current public lot sites and the minimum requirements for a site that could accommodate a parking structure.

Figure 12 - Site Dimensions of Existing Public Parking Lots

- **Install parking meters.** Installation of parking meters is usually a very controversial issue. Such is the case in Paso Robles, since parking meters were removed decades ago. However, this should still be considered as a viable solution to the lengthy duration of average parked vehicles and also serves as a potential revenue generator for new public parking spaces. The price for metered parking represents “user fees” and is not a direct cost to the business owners or to the City.
- **Improve signage.** Better signage would help infrequent visitors identify the existing public off-street parking spaces.
- **Construct a parking garage somewhere within the study area.** A parking garage could be constructed somewhere within the study area to accommodate the existing and anticipated growth in parking demand. This would require that identification of the most feasible site, funding identified for the purchase of the site and design/construction of the garage.

Parking Improvement Costs

Table 10 presents general parking improvement cost information. This information was used to help assess the potential solutions developed throughout this study.

Table 10 – General Parking Improvement Costs

| Improvement Item | Cost | Note |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Parking meters | \$400/ea | \$320,000 for 800 for downtown spaces |
| Two enforcement personnel | \$80,000 - \$100,000/year | Could be part of Police or contracted |
| New surface lots | \$2,500 - \$4,000 / space | Land cost not included |
| Parking Structures cost | \$10,000-15,000 / space | Cost/space varies* land not included |
| 12”x18” Street Parking sign | \$100/ea | Cost includes pole and installation |
| 36”x48” Wayfinding sign | \$1,000/ea | Cost depends upon customization |

Source: Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. - July 2002

* Appendix X provides more detail about how much parking structures cost.

Financing Options

Several financing options were discussed and considered throughout this study effort. The following list summarizes the options for financing the parking and circulation improvements presented in this report.

- Fees from a downtown parking assessment district
- City financed with guaranteed revenue bonds
- Revenues generated by:
 - Income from on-street meters
 - Income from time restrictions
 - Income from off-street parking fees
- City financed with general obligation bonds
- City-wide impact development fees for investment in downtown parking
 - By land use type
 - By square footage

Additional financial information and data is provided in the Appendix H of this report.

New Parking Lot and Structure

The physical solutions for a new surface lot and parking structure require additional “due diligence” and consideration before the City and business owners can determine if the solution is viable. Once the demand for the additional spaces is defined and policy solutions (including time restrictions and enforcement) are exhausted, new facilities should be constructed. However, the process can take a long time, and should consider the following factors when identifying the most appropriate location/site for a public parking facility. These factors include, but are not limited to the following:

- Walking distance to destination(s)
- Environment
- Parking rate
- Land cost/improvement cost
- Street access and traffic patterns
- Historic preservation
- Coordination with Downtown plans
- Public acceptance

Table 11 presents a site evaluation matrix that was designed to compare and contrast different opportunity sites that could be considered for a new parking facility. The evaluation criteria were developed in coordination with the ad-hoc committee.

Table 11 – Site Evaluation Matrix

| Site | Does the City own the site? | Is site vacant land? | Is site large enough to accommodate a structure? | Is site central to future development plans? | Does the site serve Zone IV demand? |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| SE Corner 14 th /Railroad | No | No | Yes* | Yes | Yes |
| City Hall Lot | Yes | No** | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Pine between 10 th & 11th | No | Yes | No | Yes | Yes |
| SW Corner 13 th /Park | No | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Field at 6 th & 7 th | No | No | Yes | Yes | No |

Source: Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. - July 2002

* = The site would be large enough if combined with the adjacent public lot.

** = The site is developed as a public parking lot.

The criteria represent the most important issues for the City and the downtown business community. The table indicates that the site on the west-side of Pine, across from the theatres and the southeast corner of 14th/Railroad and have three “yes” responses – which means that they are good candidate sites for new parking lots. Neither of these sites is large enough to accommodate a parking structure, but the SE corner of 14th/Railroad (the Hunter Auto Body site) would be large enough if combined with the existing public Railroad Street lot now owned by the City. There are 42 spaces in the current railroad lot. About 50 more spaces could be constructed on the adjacent Hunter lot, and approximately 100 spaces could be accommodated if the two sites were combined and used as one surface lot. The combined site would then be able to accommodate a structure.

The matrix also indicates that the City Hall lot has four “yes” responses. This existing lot would be an ideal site for a future parking structure. An assessment of the study area was conducted to determine the best locations/sites for new public parking facilities, based upon development plans and the evaluation criteria. [Figure 13](#) illustrates opportunity sites for new public parking facilities. [Figure 14](#) illustrates the typical dimensions of a site that would accommodate a multi-level parking structure, and includes general costs.

Figure 13 - Opportunity Sites for New Public Parking Facilities

Figure 14 - Typical Site Dimensions for a New Parking Facility

5. CIRCULATION ANALYSIS

Background

The City's General Plan Circulation Element (October 2000) identified improvements to Spring Street and 13th Street in the downtown area. Based upon the future land use projections and growth in traffic, widening Spring Street and 13th Street to 4-lanes (two in each direction) was recommended. The City and the ad-hoc committee felt that these recommendations warranted further consideration, in part, because the improvements would likely require the removal of on-street parking. [Figure 15](#) illustrates the current study area traffic flow pattern and the objectives established to divert traffic out of the downtown core, and eliminate the need to widen the roadways to four-lanes. [Figure 16](#) illustrates the effect of through traffic diversion in the study area.

[Figure 17](#) presents the current and future traffic volume and level-of-service (LOS) forecasts on Spring and 13th Streets. [Figure 18](#) illustrates the existing Downtown roadway operating conditions.

Circulation Improvements Considered

Two alternative strategies (options) were developed to achieve the traffic diversion objectives. Key to each of the options considered was no parking removal. Option one is based upon "traffic calming" techniques, commonly used by public agencies to divert traffic to other roadways. [Figure 19](#) illustrates the traffic calming option and indicates the specific location of proposed improvements.

Option Two requires the closure of 13th Street, and is illustrated in [Figure 20](#). [Figure 21](#) illustrates the 13th Street Closure option in greater detail. The ad-hoc committee suggested that 13th Street be temporarily closed to assess the effect of the closure on achieving the diversion objectives.

13th Street is one of the three river crossings in the City, along with Niblick Road and 46th Street. 13th Street is the closest crossing to the City's main core and therefore serves as a main thoroughfare and the one of the primary roadways into and out of the downtown area.

From a public safety standpoint (police, fire and paramedics), the proposed closure is not the preferred approach to diverting traffic because it could impede or at least slow response time. The proposed closure may be able to be designed to allow access for public safety vehicles only.

Circulation Recommendations

The information below summarizes the recommended circulation improvements for each of the downtown roadways.

Spring Street Improvements

- Keep 2-lanes through Downtown
- Divert traffic to Pine and, eventually, Riverside
- Circulation Element recommended diversions
- Traffic signal timing could also divert traffic

13th Street Improvements

- One of the primary entrances into Downtown
- Diversion of traffic from Spring affects 13th
- Traffic Calming on 13th Street east of Spring
- Potential closure of 13th Street at Railroad

The recommended circulation improvements have been organized into short, medium and long range action items for the City to consider. The detailed action items are described below.

Short

- Install directional signs at 10th and 16th Streets, designed to divert traffic to Riverside and Creston Roads.
- Close off 13th Street in the block between Railroad and Park Streets for a two-week trial period. This closure should include the installation of traffic counting devices on roadways throughout the downtown area, and on other roadways outside of downtown area.
- After the two-week roadway closure period, measure the effect on downtown traffic flows by comparing the changes in average daily traffic (ADT) volumes. A simple study should be completed that includes a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the temporary closure. This could include a roadway volume/capacity analysis, intersection level-of-service analysis and a resident and business owner survey that indicates the attitude of the community regarding the closure. The study should also indicate benefits (less congestion, decreased delay) and problems encountered (longer driving times, roadway not able to accommodate the additional traffic volumes) etc.

Medium

- When development occurs at the NE and SE corners of 4th and Spring Streets, propose a budget for modifying lane configurations to channel a lane of traffic east on 4th Street and north on Pine Street.
- If the temporary closure of 13th Street proves unsuccessful, begin design efforts to continue the traffic calming improvements that exist in some sections of the downtown area, to other areas.
- Pursue funding for Project Study Report level of documentation for the assessment of a new roadway connection between Spring Street and Pine Street, south of 4th Street to help divert traffic off of Spring Street in the downtown area.

Long

- Depending upon the outcome of the trial closure of 13th Street (measured in terms of reasonable success in redirecting traffic from 13th over to 10th and 16th Streets), consider the budget for a permanent closure or barrier.

Figure 15 - Current Traffic Flow and Diversion Objectives

Figure 16 - Effect of Through Traffic Diversion

Figure 17 - Traffic Volume and LOS Forecasts

Figure 18 - Existing Downtown Roadway Operating Conditions

Figure 19 - Traffic Calming Option

Figure 20 - 13th Street Closure Option

Figure 21 - 13th Street Closure Option Inset

6. ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION

Methodology

The environmental initial study completed for this project analyzes significant impacts that would result with and/or without implementation of any of the study recommendations. A full copy of Initial Study is provided as Appendix I to this report.

The Initial Study provides an assessment of the potential environmental effects of all aspects of the proposed project. Where applicable, the Initial Study notes any relevant mitigation measures, and in the case of certain major improvements (such as a parking structure), additional analysis may be needed when a design is submitted. It should be noted that any discretionary actions that are considered as a result of this plan would be subject to CEQA review.

The Initial Study analyzed the potential impacts associated with the Downtown Parking and Circulation Analysis and Action Plan as described under Item 7 above. It also identified the potential impacts that may derive from the implementation of a Parking and Circulation improvements within or around the Downtown core of Paso Robles. It also helps establish where mitigation measures can be appropriately incorporated into the project. However, it should be noted that discretionary actions related to land acquisition and construction of major public facilities pursuant to this plan would need to undergo separate environmental review.

Conclusions

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a “Potentially Significant Impact” or is “Potentially Significant Unless Mitigated,” as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use & Planning | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Circulation | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Population & Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities & Service Systems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geological Problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy & Mineral Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazards | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air Quality | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance | |

7. PUBLIC TRANSIT EVALUATION

Existing Terms & Service

The City currently has a fixed-route system with two 20-passenger buses and hourly service for \$1. The City also has a dial-a-ride service for \$2. The City wanted to determine if transit could help solve parking management issues.

Future Shuttle Consideration

Operating shuttles during peak times could help expand the distance between where people park and their destination, and result in motivating people to park more “remote” parking lots. This improvement would be more reasonable in the future, when the downtown area redevelopment expands to the south, and when additional public parking lots are developed. Operation of the circulator shuttles would also require financing, because it was assumed that the shuttles would be free.

Two alternative circulator shuttle routes were identified, based upon the future land use and redevelopment plans. **Table 12** summarizes and compares the two routes. [Figure 22](#) illustrates the Route 1 concept. [Figure 23](#) illustrates the Route 2 concept.

Table 12 – Optional Downtown Circulator Shuttle Route Comparisons

| Route Characteristic | Route 1: 7th Street to 11th Street | Route 2: 7th Street to 13th Street |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Round-Trip Distance | 0.8 miles | 1.2 miles |
| Route Trip Estimated Time | 5 minutes | 7 minutes |
| Service Days | Monday through Friday | Monday through Friday |
| Service Days per Year | 250 | 250 |
| Service Times | 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. | 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. |
| Number of Vehicles | 1 (20 to 22 seats) | 1 (20 to 22 seats) |
| Total Daily Vehicle Service Hours | 12 | 12 |
| Service Rate | \$25 per hour | \$25 per hour |
| Total Daily Cost | \$300 | \$300 |
| Total Annual Cost | \$75,000 | \$75,000 |

Source: Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. - July 2002

Figure 22 - Downtown Circulator Route 1

Figure 23 - Downtown Circulator Route 2

8. OPTIONAL PARKING SOLUTIONS

Short, medium and long range solutions have been identified and organized into three optional strategies for the City to consider. The following pages describe the detailed action items for each of the three strategies. Information is also provided that describes how the specific actions from the three strategies could be combined into a hybrid strategy, if necessary.

Option A: Increase Parking Turnover by Enforcing Time Restrictions

The primary element of this option is based upon beginning with a 3-month period of business self-enforcement of employees parking in spaces outside of the core for longer-term parking needs. This would require that the downtown business owners restrict the parking habits of their employees, making it clear that the alternative to self-enforcement is strictly enforced time limits for parking with fines.

Short Term

- Responsibility for controlling employee parking in the downtown area would fall to the business owners. No time restrictions would be applied to on-street or public parking lots. This would begin with a 3-month effort of self-enforcement, starting as soon as possible, to help reduce the average length of parking duration. Business owners could work closely with City staff and Main Street to initiate the enforcement and “get-the-word-out” about the intentions and possible results of the success or failure of the self-enforcement effort.
- Peak period time limitations (between the hours of 10 AM and 2 PM) could be provided in the form of temporary signage with different time limits in different locations. For example:
 - No time limits in public parking lots at 12th & Railroad, Spring between 12th and 13th, and south of City Hall, and along 11th Street and outside of the core area defined below.
 - A time limit of 4 hours on Spring Street and Pine Street south of 12th Street.
 - A time limit of 2 hours on Park & Pine Streets from 12th to 14th Street and in the parking lot east of Marv’s Pizza.
 - A time limit of 4 hours on 12th, 13th, and 14th Streets.

Medium Term

- At the end of the 3-month effort, assess the level of success by general observation, measuring the average parking occupancy of spaces available for customers and a Main Street survey.

Long Term

- If the voluntary enforcement by business owners does not work, business owners should be surveyed to determine if they are willing to pay for the \$80,000 - \$100,000 annual cost of providing enforcement personnel to implement timed parking restrictions and signage reflecting the applicable time limits.
- If the survey indicates that the business owners are not willing to provide annual the funding for time-limited parking, the question of funding should be brought to the City Council for its consideration.
- If the Council approves the funding request, proceed accordingly. If the Council denies the funding request, revert to Option B or C.

Benefits of Option A:

- The City’s fiscal constraints are considered. Expenditures on parking related improvements or enforcement will need to compete with other City priorities, including but not limited to Emergency Services staffing.

- This option provides business owners with an opportunity to control the employee “parking problem”. If the business owners successfully control the problem, it would not be necessary to take further steps to implement time-restricted parking at this time.
- This option eliminates the City’s concern with time restriction financing and competition with other City priorities by having the cost be the responsibility of the downtown business owners. It should be noted that during the public meeting held for this project, the business owners indicated that if self-enforcement were not successful, they would not want to pay for the enforcement.
- If there is no business owner support for funding enforcement, the Council could consider whether or not to fund enforcement or proceed with other options.
- It should be noted that in the long-term, there will still be a need to provide additional public parking supply, which would be a consideration under the Council’s future annual budget process.

Option B: Increase the Supply of Public Parking Spaces

In this option, the City would take action to increase the number of public, off-street parking spaces within Analysis Zone IV. The funding for these additional spaces would be contingent upon future budget allocations by the City and/or Redevelopment Agency. The location of the additional off-street parking would be based upon opportunities for purchase of land that is large enough to initially accommodate a surface parking lot, and structured parking in the future.

Short Term

- Provide additional angled on-street parking where it is feasible, and does not now exist.
- Propose a budget for new / additional signage to direct the general public to the public parking lots.
- In cooperation with Main Street, mark curb faces in selected blocks to designate on-street parking spaces “for customers”.
- Sign the “loading zone” area near Idlers as a public loading zone – intended for vehicles with a commercial license.
- The City should make a formal decision to begin the process of acquiring one or more pieces of property to construct additional public parking lots. This property should be large enough to accommodate a parking structure in the future, and should be located in the areas identified in the report as having demand in 2002 and in the future, based upon development plans (north of the park and south of City Hall).

Medium Term

- Provide on-street handicapped access parking when better turnover is achieved or when more spaces are provided. The location of the accessible spaces should be based upon eliminating the fewest possible parking spaces and would generally be near the street corners.
- Allow loading zones to be established by the Streets & Utilities Committee. On-street loading zones should be minimized and required on site when possible. On-street locations currently used as loading zones should be signed, enforced and available to all businesses on that block.
- Identify sites for property acquisition and begin the process of acquiring the property(ies).

Long Term

- Complete the process of acquiring property for the construction of additional parking spaces in the downtown area – especially north of the park and south of City Hall.

Benefits of Option B:

- The City's fiscal constraints are considered in this option by focusing on adding to the parking space supply over time and only as resources permit the increases. It is recognized that expenditures on parking related improvements or enforcement need to compete with other City priorities including but not limited to Emergency Services staffing.
- This option also focuses on increasing the parking space supply without imposing unequal restrictions on particular areas of downtown.
- In the short term, the responsibility for solving the parking constraints lies with the business owners and operators who should control the parking habits of their employees.

Option C: Increase Turnover by Installing Parking Meters

This option was defined so that a revenue stream for funding the parking solutions could be identified. Use of meters is considered as a use fee, and is a controversial issue with the downtown business owners. However, the Committee felt that the option should be explored because it is a viable solution that other cities have used successfully to control the parking turnover (duration) and fund parking improvements simultaneously. **Table 13** on the following page provides an example of the potential costs and revenue stream of two parking meter scenarios. There are no short, medium and long term actions associated with this option.

- Complete the action items in Options A and/or B. If the business owners are unwilling to pay for the enforcement personnel, and the City is unable to pay for the enforcement personnel, install parking meters.
- Time limitations at the meters could be provided in the form of temporary signage with different time limits in different locations. For example:
 - No time limits in public parking lots at 12th & Railroad, Spring between 12th and 13th, and south of City Hall, and along 11th Street and outside of the core area defined below:
 - A time limit of 4 hours on Spring Street and Pine Street south of 12th Street.
 - A time limit of 2 hours on Park and Pine Streets from 12th to 14th Street and in the parking lot east of Marv's Pizza.
 - A time limit of 4 hours on 12th, 13th, and 14th Streets.
 - Time limits would apply from 10 am through 2 pm on weekdays only.
- If the City Council approves the budget, the program would be implemented with revenues from parking meters paying for the cost of the meters and enforcement; any additional revenues would be saved in a fund to create additional off-street parking.
- If the Council denies the funding request, revert to Option B.

Benefits of Option C:

- The City's fiscal constraints are considered. Expenditures on parking related improvements or enforcement need to compete with other City priorities including but not limited to Emergency Services staffing.
- Provides business owners with an opportunity to control the employee "parking problem". If the business owners successfully control the problem, it would not be necessary to take further steps to implement time-restricted parking.
- If efforts of the business owners to control their employee parking are not successful, meters provide an effective "fall back" position to help encourage turn-over of parking spaces.
- Meters provide a tool for funding their own cost, enforcement and the construction of future parking lots / structures such as is being implemented in San Luis Obispo.

Table 13 - Comparison of Costs and Revenues for Enforcement Options

Combinations of Above Options / Related Factors:

- The process of providing increased supply of parking can be combined with either Option A or C.
- The strategies that are eventually pursued by the City should be based on assumptions that are tested in the field. For example:
 - Try temporary parking controls and assess their success before establishing permanent restrictions;
 - Insure that less expensive solutions are tested (e.g. new signage, public information, voluntary control of employee parking) before the City embarks on more expensive solutions (e.g. enforced parking, meters, parking structures).
- The preferred option should be based on public hearings before both the Planning Commission and City Council.
- An evaluation should be completed to determine the feasibility of having a private, outside company (or individual) construct a parking structure. This could be a mixed-use development that includes a parking structure element. Under this scenario, the owner would then lease the use of the structure back to the City, Main Street or another downtown organization. Upon conclusion of some preliminary research into this scenario, it appears that many cities have considered it, but none were found to have implemented this arrangement.

Cost-Effectiveness

The three options were evaluated for their cost-effectiveness and for the ability to phase the improvements so that the front-end costs are minimal.

The most cost effective solution would be to begin with the business owners supervising their own employees and dictating that they park outside of the core downtown area. There would be little or no cost for this effort, except for the time that employers would need to take to work with their employees.

Striping diagonal parking for some more of the on-street spaces would be a nominal cost, and could provide some immediate relief with a small number of additional spaces.

Improved signage indicating where additional public parking is available would also be a nominal cost and could help to manage the existing supply better by stretching the expected walk distance beyond the 1-block area that is predominate in the downtown. Approximately four signs should be located strategically in the downtown “gateways” should be installed. These signs could indicate the location of both public lots and streets that provide for long-term parking. A new sign should also be installed at the entrance to each public parking lot. The cost of these signs and the installation would be about \$10,000, but could be much more if they are elaborate. Some smaller signs could be installed along street bloc-faces indicating that long-term parking is allowed. The cost of each of these signs would be about \$100.

Construction of a new public parking lot would be less cost-effective than improved turnover caused by either self-enforcement or formal enforcement, but could be more cost effective than construction of a parking structure. The cost-effective comparison of a lot with a structure is somewhat dependant upon the existing use (whether or not it is already a parking lot), or whether or not the property and is already owned by the City.

Table 14 - summarizes some of the cost effectiveness issues associated with the different parking supply options.

Table 14 – Cost Effectiveness of Different Parking Supply Options

| Optional Solutions | Financial Implication | Comments |
|--|---|--|
| Time restriction enforced with no meters | Break even \$ each year. | No new additional spaces but better turnover. Long-term outside of core |
| Time restrictions with meters and revenue | About \$150,000 revenue each year (assumes \$.25/hour) | No new additional spaces but better turnover, which would place longer-term parking outside of the downtown core. |
| Construct new paved public parking lot (assume 75 spaces). | City owned lot = \$262,000 (\$3,500/space) | Lot purchase = \$500,000. Purchase lot = \$762,000 (\$10,600/space) |
| Construct new parking structure (assume 300 spaces). | Construction cost = \$10,000 – 15,000 for each space (above ground) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Property cost could be as much as \$500,000 if not owned by City. - Operations and maintenance would be about \$75,000/year - If there is a charge for parking in the structure at some time in the future, revenues could be \$200,000 - \$500,000/year |

Source: Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. - September 2002

Parking Action Plan Option Matrix

The matrix on the following page presents the downtown parking action plan options. The matrix identifies the short, medium and long-term actions described in each option on the preceding pages. It should be noted that potential revenues from parking meters are not included in the matrix. In addition, the costs for constructing new parking facilities (lots and/or structures) is not specifically identified in the matrix. This matrix should be considered by City staff and the downtown business community as a starting point of actions identified by the ad-hoc committee.