

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A walkable environment that accommodates market demand while minimizing the negative impacts of growth is an important element in promoting the City's downtown revitalization. There are many factors that contribute to the creation of a walkable downtown. These include the availability and use of transit, the mix and proximity of land uses, the sense and perception of safety, the attractiveness and directness of sidewalks, and the location, type and cost of parking.

The work completed for this project focused on the parking and sidewalk elements of creating a walkable downtown. The project work activities included a review of effective parking practices throughout the country, an assessment of existing parking (on and off-street) and sidewalk conditions and issues in the Downtown, recommendations for parking revisions and proposed parking and sidewalk ordinance revisions.

Parking Issues

Several issues were identified during the assessment and analysis phases of the project.

These include:

- The value and importance of proper use of on-street parking is not well understood in the City. On-street parking spaces have been provided long term to private individuals either through bagging of meters or decisions to leave important blocks of the downtown without any parking regulation;
- Current parking functions are disbursed in different City agencies and departments, making development and enforcement of a comprehensive parking strategy difficult;
- Existing State-controlled surface lots comprise much of the land available for development in the downtown area;
- Many buildings available for redevelopment do not have on-site parking and as a result, prospective redevelopers may be discouraged by minimum parking requirements;
- Existing on-street metered parking is generally at capacity and may be insufficient; however, this is difficult to determine because on-street parking regulation and enforcement is inconsistent;
- Existing on-street parking is not market priced, resulting in long term parkers making the spaces inaccessible for short term users;

- Commuters with handicapped parking placards regularly abuse on-street parking regulations by parking on-street all day at meters with perceived impunity;
- “Security” concerns may have unnecessarily eliminated on-street parking spaces;
- The City currently has a number of parking requirements in its zoning ordinance that incorporate innovative parking strategies, but many of these requirements are not currently being put in place during site development approval;
- The City currently must follow RSIS parking requirements, which decrease on-street parking and change the character of the urban area;
- There is excess capacity in some off-street facilities, but available information is inadequate to access that capacity.

Identified Issues and Recommendations

Innovative parking techniques utilized throughout the country, along with traditional parking management guidelines, were reviewed in light of the parking issues identified for Trenton’s Downtown to develop a number of specific recommendations.

Land Use and Zoning Ordinance Revisions

1. Approve suggested revisions to the zoning code related to parking and enforce the new and retained regulations, including:
 - a. Incentives to developers for shared use parking and in-lieu fees; and
 - b. District-specific provisions relating to parking minimums, maximums, credits, and limitations on new parking facilities.
2. Approve suggested revisions to the Residential Site Standards and provide to the Department of Community Affairs.
3. Modify Redevelopment Plans to provide consistency with the parking revisions proposed for the zoning ordinance.

Other City Code Modifications

4. Establish a formal policy for permitting only the temporary “bagging” of meters for private use and for prohibiting the permanent allocation of on-street spaces for private use.

Centralize Parking Policy and Administration

5. Move all parking related functions to a centralized agency that has responsibility for planning, implementation, maintenance and enforcement of parking policy.
6. Regularly and consistently enforce all on-street parking regulations.
7. Using fees collected through a Parking District Program, establish a process for obtaining land for off-street publicly owned parking facilities.
8. Regularly inventory, and as necessary, repair and replace meters.

Parking Management

9. Clearly and comprehensively delineate parking restrictions for all on-street parking areas.
10. Place passenger and truck loading zones at the corners of streets in areas that would benefit from 20 minute parking restrictions, including the 100 and 200 blocks of East State Street and the 100 block of South Warren Street.
11. Provide better signage and information for available off-street parking areas.

Address Handicapped Parking Abuse

12. Modify on-street parking to prohibit parking on city streets until after 10am. Since most commuters must begin work prior to that time, on-street parking will be less attractive. Since all vehicles, including those with handicapped parking license plates or placards, can be ticketed during periods when parking is prohibited, enforcement of this provision before 10am should free up on-street parking for its intended purpose.
13. Pursue revisions to the state statute that currently allows unrestricted on-street parking for vehicles with handicapped plates or placards.

Properly Value and Maintain On-street Supply

14. In conjunction with increased enforcement, review existing meter rates and assess the need to increase the rates.
15. Achieve the cooperation of downtown employers and employees in directing workers not to park in on-street spaces. Emphasize locating suitable off-street parking areas for persons with disabilities.

Establish and Enhance Parking District Programs

16. Enlist the support of downtown businesses for increased enforcement and increased rates by establishing a process / mechanism for directing all or a portion of meter revenue increases to fund streetscape improvements in the downtown area.

17. Enhance the residential parking permit program through annual renewal of permits, including business owners, and increased enforcement. Fund the renewal in whole or in part with revenues from the established parking district.

18. Aggressively collect the yearly per-space parking fee through a space inventory program. Raise the fee so that a portion of the increase can be used to fund the inventory and collection process, as well as parking district program costs. (\$30 per space is a typical average in other jurisdictions with such fees). Emphasize the existence of the fee when attempting to get developers to consider reductions in parking.

Intergovernmental Parking Coordination

19. Working with and/or through the Capital City Redevelopment Corporation, convene regular meetings with State, and county officials to further investigate opportunities for programs to share parking, reduce parking demand through employee commute options programs and convert surface lots into redevelopment parcels with comparable parking in structured and/or alternate locations.

20. Work with the State to develop a screening program that would allow surrounding business owners to lease available spacing in the parking garage under the state house.

21. Work with the State to promote greater use of the Perry Street park-and-ride lot by state workers and non-state workers.

Location Specific Recommendations

In addition to these higher level recommendations, the following recommendations were identified for issues identified at specific locations in the Downtown:

- Establish on-street parking restrictions along the south side of West Lafayette Street between Barrack and South Warren Streets.
- Strictly prohibit parking on sidewalks and plazas, including along Peace Street and the plaza of the state Health and Human Services building off the 100 block of Lafayette Street.

- Enforce existing “no parking” restrictions in all areas, especially including the 0-100 block of West State Street, the 0-100 block of North Broad Street, the 100 block of Lafayette Street, and the north side of Ernie Kovacs Place.
- Install better signage and striping to indicate on-street parking regulations along the 100 block of East Hanover Street.
- Place 20 minute passenger and truck loading zone at the corners of the 100 and 200 blocks of East State Street and the 100 block of South Warren Street.
- Install metered parking at the locations where on-street parking is currently restricted: the west side of Chancery Lane and the 100 block of East Front Street.