

# CENTRAL CITY PARKING MASTER PLAN SUMMARY REPORT

Prepared for  
**THE CITY OF SACRAMENTO**



September 2006



# Central City Parking Master Plan

## Summary Report

September 2006



Prepared by

**DKS Associates**

TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS

8950 Cal Center Dr.  
Suite 340  
Sacramento, CA 95826

In association with

**Elsa Colman Consulting  
Rick Williams Consulting  
The Hoyt Company**

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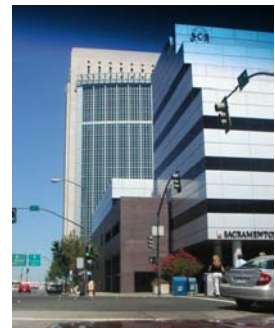
# Overview

## BACKGROUND

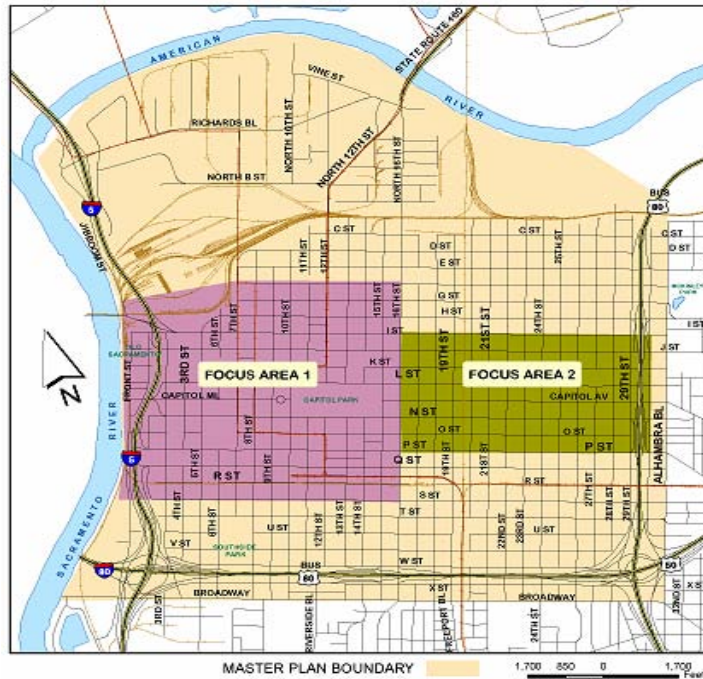
The downtown area of Sacramento, referred to as the Central City, is the regional hub for residents, employees, and visitors in the Sacramento Valley. The Central City is home to the State Capitol, state offices, office towers, private businesses, a major mall, numerous other stores, a historic district that is a major magnet for tourism and numerous residential neighborhoods. The downtown is at the heart of a multimodal transportation system that includes direct access to three major freeways: I-80, I-5, and US 50. The downtown is also at the heart of the region's light rail system and is served by many of the region's bus routes. As the Central City has continued to embrace new office, retail and residential projects; the ever-present parking issue has continued to weigh heavily on the minds of City policy makers, business owners, and area residents. The goal of developing a diverse downtown area with a mix of land uses has created challenges in the area of parking demand and supply.



To proactively address current and future development, Sacramento's City Council initiated a comprehensive on-street and off-street parking study in the Central City in January of 2005. The study area, identified in Figure 1, is defined as the area bounded by the Sacramento River on the west, the American River on the north, Alhambra Boulevard on the east and Broadway on the south. The product of that study is an inclusive Central City Parking Master Plan for the study area. This summary report provides an overview of the project findings and the recommendations that have emerged from the work. A more detailed documentation of the work in the project is provided in a separate final report.



**FIGURE 1 Central City Parking Master Plan Study Area**



The specific objectives for the Central City Parking Master Plan as stated by the City Council were as follows:

- To ensure sufficient parking to achieve the City’s economic and in-fill development goals and boost Smart Growth principles
- To ensure parking supply and rates that support transit, other alternative modes and air quality
- To evaluate rate structures supportive of a comprehensive parking strategy
- To provide a two-year, five-year and long-term outlook of parking supply versus demand and identify opportunities for meeting that demand
- To guide daily operations of the City’s on-street and off-street parking facilities
- To incorporate community stakeholders concerns

Some of the key policy questions to be addressed were:

- What is the role of parking in downtown development and economic vitality?
- How much additional parking should be expected from new developments?
- What is the role of the parking program in preserving residential neighborhoods?
- What is the role of parking in encouraging use of transit, carpooling, bicycling and walking?
- What is the role of on-street parking versus off-street parking?
- What are the financial goals for the parking program?

This project reflects a combination of technical analysis and strategic consensus building around policy recommendations that emerged from the technical analysis. The product of this process is a policy framework that provides a blueprint for decision-making for parking management in the Central City. Additional implementation planning will be required to carry out many of the policy recommendations.

### LISTENING TO THE COMMUNITY

Community and stakeholder involvement was a vital component of the study. Since January of 2005, the City gathered input from a diverse range of stakeholders, recognizing that many different viewpoints regarding parking needed to be understood and addressed in order to move the study forward. A Stakeholder Group of roughly 100 members representing developers, business owners, residents, special interest groups and representatives of government agencies met to provide formal input and comments on the work in the project. The Stakeholder Group met six times between January 2005 and June 2006. Stakeholder input was also sought in smaller groups designed to focus on specific issues in specific areas. Rounds of focus group meetings were held in June 2005, August 2005 and March 2006.



Public input was received in a variety of ways in addition to the stakeholder group meetings and focus group meetings. The public was provided information and given the opportunity to provide input at community organization meetings, a booth at a Farmers' Market in Cesar Chavez Park, a Public Open House and via emails, the webpage, and phone calls.



## DATA ON EXISTING PARKING SUPPLY & DATA COLLECTION



An extensive data collection effort was undertaken to ensure that the Central City Parking Master Plan is grounded in objective and accurate information about how much parking there is, where it is, who owns and operates it, what the fees are for using it and how much it is used at different times of day and different days of the week. As indicated in Table 1, roughly 65,000 parking spaces were surveyed in two parts of the Central City. The Core of the Central Business District - Focus Area 1 - had 49,043 spaces and the Midtown area – Focus Area 2 - had 15,007 spaces. Of all of the 64,050 spaces surveyed, 10,834 were on-street and 54,196 were off-street in lots or garages. Additional, more-limited data collection was performed for the remainder of the Central City where there were an additional 12,476 on-street spaces and 22,430 off-street spaces.

**TABLE 1 Summary of Parking Inventory and Occupancy Analysis**

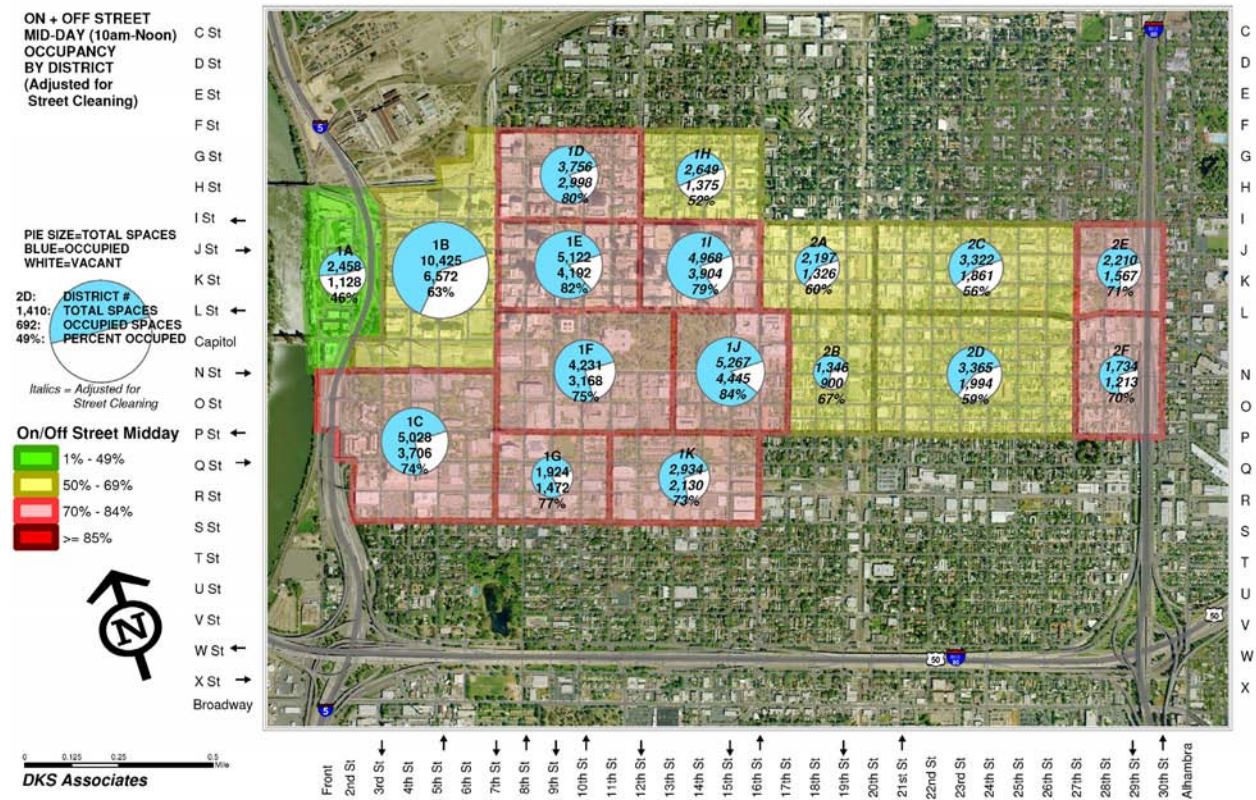
	Focus Area		
	1	2	Both
<b>Parking Spaces</b>			
<b>On Street</b>	<b>5,681</b>	<b>4,173</b>	<b>9,854</b>
<b>Off Street</b>	<b>43,352</b>	<b>10,834</b>	<b>54,196</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>49,043</b>	<b>15,007</b>	<b>64,050</b>
<b>Percent Occupied*</b>			
<b>On Street</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>77%</b>
<b>Off Street</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>69%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>Total Available Parking Spaces at Mid-day</b>	<b>13,732</b>	<b>5,553</b>	<b>19,215</b>

\* On-street occupancy reflects spaces lost to street cleaning.

Overall there is appears to be adequate unused and available parking to meet current parking demand in the Central City, but there is some variation in the space availability by sub-area as indicated in Figure 2. The overall mid-day occupancy level is about 70% but some areas approach 80 to 85% peak-hour occupancies. There are 64,050 total spaces in the Focus Areas 1 and 2, of which approximately 19,215 (30%) are empty and available in the peak hour. Based on recent estimates of the cost of constructing new parking spaces in a downtown garage of \$20,000 to \$25,000 per space, this represents roughly \$400 million dollars in underutilized parking assets. Although the unoccupied spaces were not all publicly available, the weekday occupancy rate for publicly available spaces was roughly the same.



FIGURE 2 Weekday Mid-day Occupancy by Analysis Area

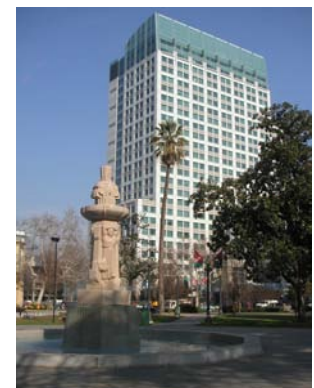


## IMPACTS OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENT ON PARKING SUPPLY / DEMAND RELATIONSHIP

Considerable development is expected to occur in the Central City through infill projects and redevelopment, and some of this new development is already underway. In recent decades, growth has been concentrated in office development. In addition to continued growth in the office sector, future growth is expected in residential and restaurant / entertainment / nightlife categories. The impacts of this additional development on the parking supply/demand relationship is primarily dependent upon more effective management of existing parking assets and the amount of parking provided with each new project.

### Office Development

The parking demand associated with office development can be generally satisfied if parking is provided at the current minimum-parking requirement of one space per 600 square feet of development. The





## Overview

maximum amount of parking allowed is one space per 500 square feet of development. The typical government office project has a parking demand slightly lower than the zoning minimum, while the typical private office project has a parking demand slightly higher than the zoning maximum. The current off-street parking surplus in much of the core business district provides a buffer to accommodate demand variations. However, if office employees continue to park on-street rather than in typically more expensive off-street locations, short-term parking for visitors and business customers will become more difficult to find.



### Residential Development

Many new residential units are anticipated in the Central City. Zoning requirements for parking associated with this type of development is typically one off-street space per unit, plus limited parking for visitors. As many households have more than one vehicle, parking demand is anticipated to exceed the zoning code's minimum off-street supply. In some areas of the City, particularly in the core business district, the excess parking demand could be accommodated in off-street facilities that are under-utilized at night. However, in much of midtown, the additional demand can only be accommodated on-street. This could result in increased demand for on-street parking, particularly in the evening hours, when existing residents, new residents, and visitors / business patrons compete for on-street spaces.

### Restaurant / Entertainment / Night Life Development

The Central City has already experienced evening on-street parking shortages due to development of restaurants in areas without convenient, affordable and available off-street parking. Off-street parking that is perceived as safe and within a reasonable walking distance is necessary not only to mitigate impacts to residents of the affected areas, but also to ensure the continued economic viability of the business enterprises. Since many of these projects involve re-use of existing structures without sufficient parking, continued development in this business sector provides a significant parking supply challenge. As new retail, restaurant and entertainment development occurs in the Central City, arrangement will need to be made to allow for use of existing off-street capacity in area garages or new parking will have to be provided with the new uses to accommodate the demand. Other measures will also be needed to prevent the businesses customers from parking on-street in the residential neighborhoods and taking the spaces needed by residents.



### MANAGING THE PARKING SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Satisfying the numerous goals for parking in the Central City requires balancing the needs and interests of many different stakeholders – Central City residents, business owners, employers, developers, government agencies, shoppers, tourists and other visitors. Most people who come to the Central City rely on the automobile, either as the driver or as a passenger, and so parking is a necessary element of the economic vibrancy and livability of the area.

But conditions are changing with redevelopment in the Central City. Densities are increasing and there is a greater mix of uses. These changes are making walking, bicycling, ridesharing and transit even more attractive than they currently are as viable modes of travel. How parking is managed can have a significant impact on this viability. Most people who come to the Central City have choices about how they travel and, if they drive, they have a choice about where they park. Parking supply, price and restrictions are important determinants of how people chose to travel.

The Central City Parking Master Plan is a set of policy recommendations designed to guide the City in its management of the portion of Central City parking supply over which it has control or influence. The Plan is designed to be a blueprint for how to manage the supply, price and restrictions of city owned or operated parking. But the policy recommendations of this plan also provide support for alternative modes and the reduction of vehicle trips. The recommendations recognize that different people who travel to the Central City have different needs and identify the priorities of the different groups of travelers for parking.

This project has reflected a combination of technical analysis and strategic consensus building around policy recommendations that emerged from the technical analysis. The product of this process is a policy framework for decision-making for parking management in the Central City. Additional implementation planning will be required to carry out many of the policy recommendations. As these implementation details are developed, there will be additional opportunities for stakeholder and public input. A logical process for notifying potentially-affected businesses and residents about the implementation planning will be followed to ensure that there is adequate knowledge of the proposed implementation details. This will include maps of the areas to be affected by the changes and the hours that changes will be in effect. As elements of the Plan move forward to implementation, there will also be adequate monitoring of how the elements affect parking demand and space use to allow for fine-tuning of the measures being implemented.

### DEVELOPMENT OF GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The City staff and consultants for the Master Plan worked with the City Council to identify specific goals and objectives for parking in the Central City. The staff and consultants drew on previous documents to find statements of the City's priorities and policies relative to parking and formulated a draft set of goals. The City Council reviewed the draft list and added its own refinements. The final goals adopted by the City Council on August 2, 2005 were as follows:

1. Support the citywide goals of economic development, livable neighborhoods, achieving sustainability and improving public safety
2. Supply parking to meet need
3. Use time limits, rates and enforcement to manage parking supply efficiently
4. Modify the Residential Parking Program to manage the retail/residential interface
5. Minimize the negative impacts of parking
6. Make parking safe, secure, attractive and convenient
7. Operate City-owned parking in a financial sound manner
8. Promote alternative modes of transportation and walkable communities
9. Provide transportation options to encourage use of existing parking supply

The objectives developed for each goal and the recommendations that have emerged from the project are described in the sections that follow.

# Goal 1

## Support the Citywide Goals of Economic Development, Livable Neighborhoods, Achieving Sustainability and Improving Public Safety

Sacramento has a vibrant urban core of which it can be proud. Through a concerted effort by the City Council, the City's many commissions and a dedicated City staff, the City has been able to make the Sacramento Central City a desirable place to live, work, shop and visit. The City's General Plan and its many other planning documents include clear policy statements that support an approach to continued development and redevelopment of the Central City in a way that enhances the livability, sustainability and safety of the Central City neighborhoods.



Meeting this goal will require a careful balancing of the need for parking with the long-range goal of reducing reliance on the automobile in the Central City. As reliance on the automobile is reduced, greater density of development can be supported with less land and at lower overall cost. Higher densities will create more compact environments with Central City origins and destinations closer together. This will allow for more travel by foot or bicycle and a greater density of trip demand to support transit and ridesharing. In the current environment in the Central City, many trips still need to be made by automobile. Many who travel to the Central City do not have other convenient options and for some, the automobile is simply a personal choice. To compete with other parts of the region for new development and for customers or employees for existing land uses, parking that is reasonably convenient and reasonably priced may be critical to Central City success.

### OBJECTIVE

**1.1 Ensure that adequate parking is provided with new development to prevent adverse impacts on existing land uses and to support a synergistic mix of land uses including office, residential, retail, restaurant and entertainment**

The Central City of Sacramento has been the location of a substantial amount of new development over the past five years. During that time, 5 million square feet of new office development has occurred with most of that located in the central core or Focus Area 1. This has resulted in an increase in employment in the Central City of roughly 19,000 jobs. Much of the new office

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1.1 Establish flexible parking ranges for all types of development to allow developers flexibility to match parking with the needs of the specific project and develop a process to allow approval of adjustments to the minimum and maximum parking requirements when a proposed development project is consistent with the City's economic development goals
- 1.1.2 Require that institutional developments (hospitals, museums, universities, etc.) provide a parking plan as part of the development EIR

## Goal 1

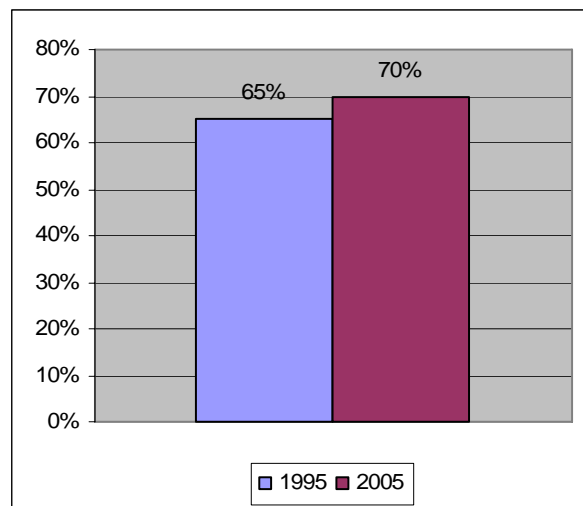
development has been for the State of California which is not subject to the City's zoning code requirements for parking. Most of the new development by the State has been built with less parking than the demand generated by the new offices.

At the same time, there has been a significant expansion of the amount of restaurant and entertainment floor area with most of that occurring in midtown at the eastern edge of Focus Area 1 and on both the eastern and western edge of Focus Area 2. Much of this new development has been allowed to occur at the discretion of the City without new parking as a way to encourage new development. As the new development has occurred without supplying the parking equal to the demand generated, the existing surplus of Central City parking has been reduced. In the core commercial area of the Central City, the midday parking occupancy has increased from 65% in 1995 to 70% in 2005.

There is a need to properly manage the parking supply to ensure that the Central City continues to develop as a high-density, mixed-use urban core that efficiently and effectively serves as the region's downtown and the seat of the state government. The nature of Central City developments is changing as the density and mix of uses increases. As the density and mix of uses increase, the role of the automobile will change as well. There is a need for some flexibility to allow innovative development that might benefit the Central City to be built even though it might deviate from the parking standards designed for the "average" development.



**Figure 3 Midday Parking Occupancy in Central City**



**OBJECTIVE**

**1.2 Adopt City policies and standards that support new development in the Central City**

Because the City benefits from continued development and redevelopment of quality projects in the Central City, the City’s requirements for parking should be sufficiently flexible to allow variations that allow parking requirements to be tailored to the specific land-use type and location. The parking requirements should be applied in a way that maintains a reasonably tight parking situation. Over-supply of parking will result in unnecessarily high cost of development, reduction in the fees that can be charged for parking and a reduced incentive for use of alternative modes.



**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.2.1 Adopt City policy and guidelines to allow a developer to pay an “in-lieu-of-parking” fee for development of less than the minimum required parking
- 1.2.2 Allow flexibility for reduction in the minimum required parking by as much as 10% when a parking-demand reduction can be demonstrated because of factors such as the development is adequately served by transit, mixed-use development allows for shared use of parking, the lease costs for parking for tenants is clearly separated from the lease cost for floor space , or there are no reserved spaces. The reduction is to be allowed only when the developer can demonstrate that the reduction in parking demand can sustained for at least 10 years
- 1.2.3 Adopt new guidelines and standards to recognize creative methods such as tandem, car lift and valet parking that can provide more parking in less space

**OBJECTIVE**

**1.3 Allow flexibility in City policy to tailor requirements to the nature of new development proposed**

Parking minimums are used by cities across the country to ensure adequate parking is provided for new development to avoid spillover problems in adjacent neighborhoods. Maximums are used to ensure that parking is not oversupplied in urban centers where there is a commitment to alternative mode use and efficient use of land. Developments are not all alike even when they are for the same use.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

(See Recommendations for Objectives 1.1 and 1.2).



## Goal 1

There are circumstances under which deviation from the requirements might be desirable to promote development that would benefit the Central City. The City can benefit from policies that allow some flexibility to adjust requirements to match the specific needs of projects that would benefit the Central City.

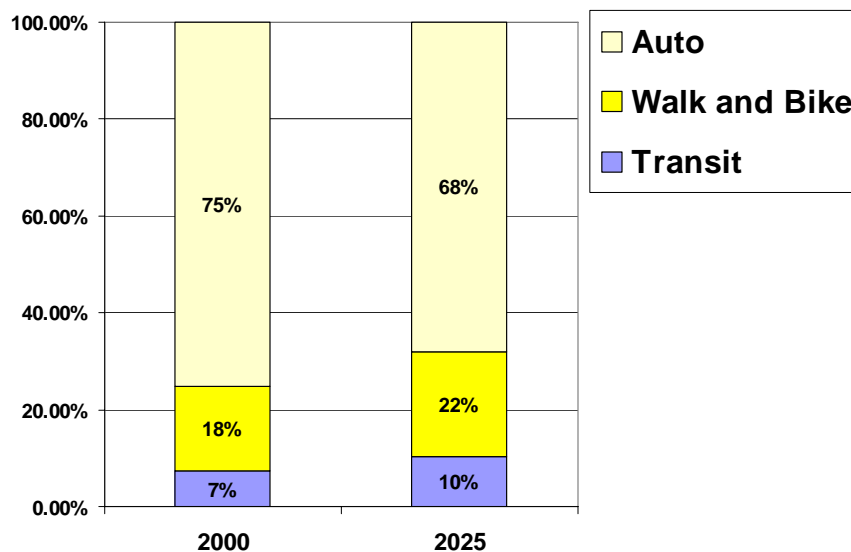
The nature of a new development might be such that the people traveling to it, whether they are employees, visitors or residents, may make less use of driving alone than the average for the area. Providing the minimum parking required by the zoning code might result in oversupply of parking. Alternatively, a new development where the developer feels more parking is required than allowed by the maximum, might provide a new Central City tenant that provides a major economic benefit that might attract other types of supporting businesses that require less than the maximum parking. Offices for national headquarters or other businesses with high-level executives often require high levels of parking to attract the executives, but their presence in the urban core can create the demand for spin-off business such as financial institutions that employ workers that make less use of driving alone as their mode to work.



## Goal 2 Supply Parking to Meet Need

Like all of California’s major cities, Sacramento is relatively young. Most of the growth in the Sacramento metropolitan area occurred well after the automobile became the dominant mode for travel in urban areas. As a result, the Central City like the other parts of Sacramento formed with a reliance on access by automobile. With this has come the need for parking as a place to store the automobile for people while they are in the Central City. In 2000, roughly 75% of travel to or from the Central City was by automobile as indicated in Figure 4.

**FIGURE 4 Expected Change in Travel Mode for Central City Travel**



Source: Travel forecast data provided by Sacramento Area Council of Governments

As the Central City continues to develop and redevelop, the density of uses increases and use of transit, ridesharing, bicycling, and walking become more attractive options. Reliance on the automobile in the Central City is expected to decrease over time. Current projections suggest that the share of trips by automobile will decrease to about 68% by 2025. While this reduction will allow for more efficient use of land in the Central City, there will still be a need for parking to support growth. As a result of these mode shifts, the Central City is likely to experience a growth in person travel of 45% between 2000 and 2025, but an increase in vehicle trips of only about 30%.

Parking minimums are used to ensure that adequate parking is provided for new development. The market for new development normally requires that there be adequate parking available for a new development to entreat tenants. Parking maximums are used to ensure that parking is not oversupplied in urban centers where there is a commitment to alternative mode use and efficient use of land.



## Goal 2

Many western cities have eliminated minimums for downtown areas but the results have not always been desirable. The City of Berkeley eliminated the minimum-parking requirement for the downtown in the 1970s as a demonstration of progressive transportation policy and to provide support for the new BART system that served the downtown. Two large office buildings were built without any additional parking and the downtown suddenly had a parking deficiency. By 1985 the overall parking occupancy in the downtown was close to 90 percent which is above the parking industry standards for maximum operating capacity. Most parking professionals consider publicly available parking to be operating at capacity when the spaces are 85 percent occupied.

In Portland, Oregon a lid was placed on the total amount of non-residential parking that could be provided in the downtown. As the City approached the lid, new developments began buying parking lots to support new developments. Many of the parking lots were providing parking for older, historic buildings that did not have dedicated parking. The inability to add more parking to the downtown began to jeopardize the economic viability of the older historic buildings. To address this, Portland eliminated its downtown parking lid and expanded maximum parking ratios from just the downtown to all Central City business districts. Parking maximums in Portland are coordinated and supported with specific transit, bike, walk and rideshare mode split goals established for each Central City Business District to assure balanced access and capacity for growth.

When new development does not supply adequate parking to meet the demand of the project that is being developed a number of adverse impacts can result:

- Spill-over parking in adjacent areas with limited parking
- Inadequate parking access to retail and entertainment businesses
- Local government is required to supply parking to satisfy local residents and local merchants

A delicate balance must be maintained in the Central City between state and local government functions, office development, major shopping districts, several vibrant restaurant and entertainment districts, Old Sacramento and other tourism attractions and many neighborhoods. Care must be taken to avoid the undesirable impacts of undersupply of parking.

**OBJECTIVE**

**2.1 Use parking minimum (ratios) to ensure developers provide most of the new parking needed**

An assessment of existing rates of parking demand in the Central City indicated that the some adjustments in parking minimums and maximums might be warranted. The current minimum for office development (one space per 600 square feet) appears to be adequate on average, but the current maximum for office (one space per 500 square feet) allows less than the current demand for private office space. Most private office developments generated demand in the range from one space per 450 square feet to one space per 500 square feet.

Adjustment of the parking minimum for residential development outside of Focus Area 1 appears to be needed to ensure adequate parking for larger units (over 2000 square feet). Parking maximums for residential development are also recommended to ensure that a balance of supply and demand is maintained. Additional recommendations appeared warranted to ensure that parking provided by new residential units is used by the residents of the development and not leased for other uses. This included a recommendation that at least one space per residential unit be provided within 500 feet and one that residents of new residential units not be allowed to participate in the City’s Residential Permit Parking program for on-street spaces.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1.1 Maintain current parking minimum of one space per 600 square feet for office and adjust maximum to one space per 400 square feet
- 2.1.2 Maintain current minimum parking requirement for residential development of one space per unit in Focus Area 1. In the remainder of the Central City set the minimum at a base level of one space per unit plus 0.5 additional space per unit for units over 2000 square feet. Also create a flexible parking range for residential development by specifying maximums by type of unit, density of development and/or location in the Central City
- 2.1.3 Require that at least one space per unit for residential development be provided within 500 feet
- 2.1.4 Restrict residents of new residential developments from participating in the City’s Residential Permit Parking program



## Goal 2

Restoring a parking requirement for retail and entertainment in the C-3 Zone and the Arts and Entertainment District appears justified to avoid a worsening of already-existing parking deficiencies. The requirement could be reduced or eliminated if adequate existing parking supply can be demonstrated.

- 2.1.5 Require off-street parking for all retail and entertainment development in the Central City outside of the Merged Downtown Redevelopment Area or east of 14<sup>th</sup> Street but allow for reduction in the required parking by as much as 100% for any retail or entertainment business in the Central City if it can be demonstrated that adequate publicly available off-street parking exists within a three-block radius of the subject site during the hours that the business would operate



**OBJECTIVE**

**2.2 The City of Sacramento should act as a broker when feasible to supply parking when the private sector does not**

When the private sector has not provided adequate parking to meet the commercial and residential needs of an area, the City should act as a broker to identify ways that parking can be provided. If there is under-utilized private parking in the area, the City may act as a broker to work with the private owner of the parking to make it available when the need is greatest. This may occur in the evenings and on weekends when parking used for commuters may be available for use by restaurants, entertainment venues or weekend festivals.

When the City cannot broker arrangements to make private parking available in an area where a deficiency has been identified, the City may elect to take responsibility for supplying additional parking. When this is necessary, the City should work with the area businesses to find ways to provide financial support for the parking being added. This is likely to take the form of in-lieu-of-parking fees collected when a developer does not build at the minimum parking ratios required for a development or by forming a benefit assessment district among the businesses in the area affected. Any efforts to use public funding resources to accommodate parking demand generated by private sector development should be coordinated through public/private partnerships that balance cost responsibility for meeting parking demand.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.2.1 Broker agreements among business owners and owners of private parking to supply additional publicly available parking when a parking deficiency exists either by making private parking available to the general public during the times of greatest need or by constructing new parking
- 2.2.2 Broker with other parking facility owners and operators to supply additional publicly available parking for special events
- 2.2.3 Consider use of a Benefit Assessment District to fund new parking where there is a deficiency of parking for existing commercial land uses
- 2.2.4 Cooperate with the City of West Sacramento to identify opportunities for mutually beneficial reciprocal use of available parking facilities



## Goal 2

### OBJECTIVE

#### **2.3 Take a strategic approach to parking master planning that will allow short-term decisions to be made consistent with long-term strategies or plans**

The long-term health of the Central City will depend on efficient use of space. Surface parking can provide a short-term solution for parking needs, but is rarely the best use of valuable downtown property. The livability of the Central City is enhanced by continuous activities along the commercial streets and is harmed by parking lots breaking up the continuity of commercial development. When the use of vacant lots is permitted by the City for surface parking, it should only be in cases where there is a demonstrated short-term parking deficiency and a long-term plan for development of the property for a higher use.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.3.1 Formulate a City policy to permit interim use of vacant lots for parking outside of the Merged Downtown Redevelopment Area with exemption from some of the requirements for parking when there is a demonstrated need
- 2.3.2 Formulate a City policy to allow continued operation of existing stand alone parking lots in the Central City conditioned on obtaining and maintaining a permit and meeting certain minimum conditions for signing, lighting, surfacing, design standards, accessible spaces and safe and clean operation



**OBJECTIVE**

**2.4 Provide adequate monitoring of parking supply and utilization to be able to identify deficiencies or conflicts when they develop**

The adequacy of parking in an area in the Central City can change over time as a result of new development, changes in tenants in a commercial building or changes in the popularity of a neighborhood. The best way to monitor the parking supply and demand in an area is to conduct periodic inventories of the spaces available and a count of the vehicles parked in the spaces at different times of day. A thorough inventory and occupancy count was conducted as part of the Central City Parking Master Plan. A periodic update of the inventory and occupancy count can help to identify parking surpluses and deficiencies as they arise.

A process is also needed to track the variances to parking requirements that are granted. This should also include tracking how existing parking spaces are attached to new developments to meet the parking requirement. Care should be taken to assure neighboring residents and businesses that existing parking spaces are not being double counted in determining how parking requirements for development are being met.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.4.1 Conduct occupancy counts for all publicly available parking in the Core (Focus Area 1) and Midtown (Focus Area 2) at least every three years to identify deficiencies
- 2.4.2 Track additions and subtractions of parking and parking variances as new development occurs

## Goal 2

### OBJECTIVE

#### **2.5 Pursue opportunities to increase the amount of parking provided by existing facilities**

There are ways that the amount of parking provided in the space already allocated to parking in the Central City can be increased without increasing the amount of valuable land devoted to parking. In garages and surface lots, spaces can sometimes be re-striped to more efficiently accommodate parking in the space available. This sometimes means increasing the number of spaces devoted to compact cars. Attendant parking can also be used in garages and lots to allow tandem parking or stacked parking. Where there is adequate ceiling height in attendant garages, parking elevators can also be used to park two vehicles in a single space.

The amount of parking accommodated in on-street spaces can also be increased in some cases by marking spaces in areas where spaces are not marked, re-striping spaces where shorter spaces can be used, use of angle parking where street width and traffic volumes are appropriate, and reduction of colored curb space where land use changes have reduced the need for curb-use restriction.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.5.1 Stripe spaces in un-metered on-street parking to increase the number of parking spaces provided
- 2.5.2 Re-stripe on-street and off-street spaces to increase the number of spaces provided, where possible
- 2.5.3 Consider use of angle parking on streets where the angle parking will not interfere with safe traffic operations or compromise the historic nature of the area
- 2.5.4 Monitor use of colored zones and modify to increase parking spaces provided where zones are not needed
- 2.5.5 Evaluate use of red zones adjacent to crosswalks and increase parking spaces provided where appropriate



# Goal 3

## Use Time Limits, Rates and Enforcement to Manage Parking Supply Efficiently



City owned and operated parking spaces in the Central City can be managed in a variety of ways to produce the most effective use of the parking spaces available and in the long-term to help achieve the most efficient use of valuable Central City land. Travelers make choice about how to travel to the Central City and where to park if they chose to drive. They make these choices based on the cost to park and the amount of time allowed at different parking locations. Rates and time limits can also affect someone’s choice of whether to travel to the Central City or whether to choose an alternative location in the metropolitan area. The City has the opportunity to use time limits, rates and other restrictions to influence where people park and for how long while also trying to keep the Central City a desirable destination for regional travelers.

**TABLE 2 Comparisons of Parking Fees in Western Cities**

City	Downtown Hourly Meter Rate	Downtown Monthly Median Rate (off-street)	Downtown All Day Median Rate (off-street)	Assessment of Parking Availability
Boise, ID	\$ .75	\$70	\$8.00	Fair
Denver, CO	\$.20 - \$1.00	\$120	\$8.00	Fair
Los Angeles, CA	\$.25 - \$1.50	\$185	\$4.00 - \$33.00	Fair - Abundant
Portland, OR	\$1.25	\$150	\$7.50 - \$16.00	Fair
<b>Sacramento, CA</b>	<b>\$1.00</b>	<b>\$115 - \$180</b>	<b>\$6.00 - \$18.00</b>	<b>Fair - Abundant <sup>1</sup></b>
San Diego, CA	\$1.25	\$150	\$20.00	Fair
San Francisco, CA	\$1.50 - \$2.00	\$95 - \$675	\$23.00	Fair
Seattle, WA	\$1.50	\$160 - \$260	\$8.00 - \$26.00	Fair
Vancouver, BC	\$1.00 - \$4.00(C\$)	\$145 (C\$)	\$8.00 (C\$)	Fair - Limited
Vancouver, WA	\$.50	\$30 - \$60	\$2.00 - \$4.00	Abundant
<b>National Average</b>	<b>\$1.00</b>	<b>\$170</b>	<b>\$10.46</b>	

Source: Direct contact with City representatives/Colliers International 2005 CBD Parking Rate Survey.

NOTE: It is important to note that where a single rate is listed (as opposed to a range) that the rate reflects the median in those cities. Parking rates in all the cities listed provide numerous parking opportunities at rates both less than and more than the median.

<sup>1</sup> This is based on the recently completed (2005) DKS inventory of downtown parking. Peak hour occupancy was determined to be in the range of 65%.



## Goal 3

As indicated in Table 2, Sacramento is not unusual in the rates that are charged for parking in the Central City. Adjustment in rates to achieve more efficient parking patterns is still possible as peak occupancies increase to levels similar to cities with higher hourly, daily and monthly parking rates.

### OBJECTIVE

#### 3.1 Establish priority for parkers for each type of parking

The first step in effective management of City parking is identifying who are the top priority parkers for each location or parking facility. Parking in the Central City has to serve the very different needs of residents, businesses, employees and visitors but not at all times and not in the same locations. By identifying the relative priority of each type of parker for each location, the City can set time limits, rates and other restrictions to ensure that there is adequate parking for those identified as the highest priority. By setting target maximum occupancy rates for each facility, the City can set time limits and fees to maintain the occupancy at or below the desired maximum. The general rule of thumb in parking is that 85% occupancy represents the maximum practical capacity for a facility that has relatively frequent turnover (e.g., shopper/visitor parking). Locations with very little turnover can achieve occupancies over 90% (e.g., employee/commuter parking).



### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1.1 Recognize residents as the priority in Residential Parking Permit areas and recognize shoppers, visitors and other short-term users as the priority in on-street and City-operated off-street parking in the Core area
- 3.1.2 Recognize commuters and other long-term parkers as the priority in other off-street facilities
- 3.1.3 Set target mixes of short-term and long-term parkers in other City-operated garages to establish priorities for parkers



**OBJECTIVE**

**3.2 Use time limits to make sure priority parkers can find parking**



When a parking facility or on-street area are operating at maximum capacity, it is likely that some parkers who are identified as priority parkers for the location will have difficulty finding parking and may not be able to find parking at all. It is not unusual for

shoppers to have difficulty finding parking at locations where the all-day rate is low and there is not a time limit.

Commuters, who are generally the first parkers to arrive in the Central City each day, have the first opportunity to park in locations that are open to the public. If the all-day price is low and there is no time limit, the parking in the location may fill before the shoppers arrive and no spaces are available. The City can ensure that spaces are available for shoppers and other short-term priority parkers by setting the long-term rate high or by limiting the time that someone can park in the case of on-street parking. In many cities, the rates in facilities designed for shoppers are priced progressively – the longer one stays the higher the hourly cost. In these cities, the long-term rate is coordinated with an 85% occupancy standard to assure that customer/visitor access is maintained.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.2.1 Where appropriate, reduce the time limit for on-street spaces where short-term parkers are the priority from 2 hours to 90 minutes to discourage employee parking (Initial focus around office buildings in Core area where there is evidence of long-term use of short-term spaces by commuters)
- 3.2.2 Review methods for retaining existing long-term on-street parking in residential neighborhoods where off-street parking options are not available to ensure use of spaces is limited to residents and employees and visitors of neighboring businesses
- 3.2.3 Change metered time limits from long-term to short-term in areas that are transitioning into more active commercial, retail or entertainment places where there is a growing need to provide parking for visitors and other short-term parkers
- 3.2.4 Add meters to zones that are currently time-restricted when there is a demonstrated demand for short-term parking

## Goal 3

### OBJECTIVE

#### 3.3 Establish rates that encourage efficient use of spaces

Parking spaces are being used most efficiently when they operate at or near the practical capacity (roughly 85% for a facility), the parkers identified as the priority for the facility are being served and a priority parker can usually find a space during most of the day. A facility that operates completely full all day is not operating efficiently if it is not serving the parkers identified as the highest priority. The key to efficient operation is using occupancy benchmarks (i.e. 85% Rule), time limits and/or parking rates to make sure that the priority parkers have the opportunity to use the facility and operate at or near capacity for most of the day. Operating efficiently in this way may not produce the greatest revenue but might be the best way to meet the City's multi-dimensional objectives in the Central City.



### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.3.1 Increase rates to maintain occupancy rates in City-owned facilities at or below 85% of total capacity to insure adequate access to parking for priority users
- 3.3.2 Reduce the effective short-term rates in the Core area off-street facilities through an expanded merchant validation program to encourage use of the off-street spaces by shoppers and visitors and to reduce the overall demand for on-street spaces
- 3.3.3 Increase meter rates based on the 85% Rule and increase on-street enforcement to discourage long-term use of metered spaces by commuters in the Core area and to reflect the rates for nearby publicly available off-street facilities
- 3.3.4 Encourage State of California and County of Sacramento to work with City of Sacramento in establishing rates



**OBJECTIVE**

**3.4 Enforce parking restrictions and regulation to ensure the appropriate use of on-street parking**

Efficient use of the City owned and operated parking can be achieved through time limits, space restrictions and rates, but only if these mechanisms are enforced. Regular users of parking in an urban core quickly learn whether parking laws are enforced and when they are enforced. The City has a good record of enforcement particularly in the Central City. As a result there is fairly close adherence to the parking laws and restrictions. One indicator of the level of enforcement in a City is the ratio of enforcement officers to spaces patrolled (usually on-street spaces and metered off-street spaces). Table 3 provides a comparison of the Sacramento with a number of other western cities.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.4.1 Strictly enforce Disabled Parking, Loading Zone, Residential Permit Parking, time limits and meters throughout the Central City
- 3.4.2 Generate or support state legislation to help curb abuse of disabled placards
- 3.4.3 Update valet parking requirements and permitting process

**Table 3 Comparison of On-street Spaces Patrolled per Enforcement Officer**

City	On-street Metered Spaces Patrolled	Enforcement Officers	Ratio – Spaces per Officer
Sacramento	5,383	39	138
Seattle (WA)	10,000	69	145
Portland (OR)	8,400	50	168
Vancouver (WA)	2,000*	5	400
Fresno	2,200	15	146
San Luis Obispo	1,120	3.5	320
Redwood City	1,229**	2	614
Santa Rosa	815	4	204
Santa Cruz	766	8	96

\* May include off-street spaces as well as on-street  
 \*\* Includes a mix of metered and un-metered spaces

### Goal 3

While overall adherence to parking laws and restrictions is good in the Sacramento Central City, abuse of disabled spaces by people with borrowed, expired or counterfeit disabled placards was a problem. To address the problem, the City initiated a well-publicized campaign to reduce the abuse. Enforcement officers approached parkers using the placards and asked for verification of the disability. It is a requirement of the law that a person using the disabled placard must carry proof of the disability. Those who could not show appropriate verification were cited for illegal use of the Disabled Driver Placard. The campaign was successful in reducing the use of the spaces and more spaces were available to the legitimate users of the placards. The City is seeking additional ways to gain support for campaigns to reduce abuse.



Valet parking is becoming more common for restaurants in the Central City particularly in the Midtown areas where the demand for on-street spaces is high on weekend evenings. Valet parking can be a valuable management tool, but it also needs to be carefully monitored to ensure that employees are safe and careful drivers, there is not abuse of neighborhood RPP zones and the operation is safe and secure for the people using the service.



## **Goal 4** **Modify the Residential Parking Program to Manage the Retail and Residential Interface**

The Central City has 20,000 housing units in a mixture of single-family residences, duplexes, and a variety of styles of multifamily complexes. Many of the residential units are in older homes that were built as large single-family homes but have since been converted to multi-family units. In other locations apartment buildings have been built on lots where single-family houses once stood. The increase in density in the Central City has placed more pressure on the limited amount of on-street parking that serves the neighborhoods. As the density in the Central city neighborhoods has increased, commercial development has increased also creating more demand for the on-street parking in the neighborhoods. The Residential Permit Parking program was created by the City to address the increased competition for on-street parking and preservation of the program is an important element of the continued redevelopment of the Central City.

### **OBJECTIVE**

#### **4.1 Operate Residential Permit Parking (RPP) areas in a way that protects the residential character of the neighborhoods and ensures adequate parking availability for residents while also supporting the needs of small, neighborhood-supporting business located in or adjacent to the areas**

Because the RPP restrictions have been in effect only until 6 P.M., the zones have addressed most of the midday conflict of commuters and residents but have not addressed the neighborhood intrusion that occurs in the evenings when restaurants and other entertainment businesses create parking demand after 6 P.M. Because many of the on-street spaces in the residential zones are not metered and those with meters are not enforced after 6 P.M., there is no economic incentive for customers of the restaurants and other entertainment business to seek parking outside of the residential neighborhood.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1.1 Extend parking restrictions and enforcement in Residential Permit Parking zones beyond 6 P.M.
- 4.1.2 Add meters or Pay-and-Display stations for short-term parking in residential areas around evening entertainment areas and enforce rates and time limits for all except residents and disabled parkers



## Goal 4

### OBJECTIVE

#### **4.2 Adopt policies that provide greater consistency and clarity in the Residential Permit Parking areas**

The Residential Permit Parking program has proven to be a valuable tool for managing parking in higher density residential areas in Sacramento, but there has not been a consistent set of criteria for creation of RPP zones and considerable variation in the restrictions incorporated in the different zones. The lack of criteria for the creation of a zone has made it difficult for the City staff to know when a new zone is warranted, and the lack of consistency in restrictions has created some confusion for visitors to the area. A clear set of criteria for creating a new RPP zone and guidelines for the restrictions to apply would make management of the program easier and increase the acceptance of the program by visitors to the Central City.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.2.1 Modify RPP ordinance to establish criteria for creating new zones, annexing neighborhoods into RPP zones, and evaluating existing RPP zones



## Goal 5 Minimize the Negative Impacts of Parking

Parking is one component of a system of mobility for Central City employees, visitors and residents. A certain amount of parking is needed to ensure the livability and economic vitality of each part of the Central City. But parking can bring with it negative impacts, particularly when too much parking is supplied. Parking can reduce the continuity of dense urban areas when parking lots or garages separate commercial business. If not adequately landscaped, surface lots can jeopardize the aesthetic beauty of a neighborhood.



Surface parking lots can also be a barrier to achieving densities that support transit. It is the policy of the City of Sacramento to minimize the negative impacts of parking while allowing or providing adequate parking to promote the livability and economic vitality of its commercial districts and neighborhoods

### OBJECTIVE

#### 5.1 Minimize the visual intrusion and other negative environmental impacts of parking

Negative impacts can result from parking when the parking is not adequately landscaped or is not designed to avoid surface runoff problems or other physical deterioration. A lack of lighting can also create areas where people congregate and are perceived by neighborhood residents as unsafe. Parking lots or structures can also disrupt the continuity of a commercial district if ground-floor retail is not provided.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1.1 Maintain existing requirements for lighting, landscaping, drainage and other improvements for permanent new parking
- 5.1.2 Adopt City policies to encourage or require use of ground floor for retail in new parking structures



## Goal 5

### OBJECTIVE

#### 5.2 Minimize the land devoted to parking in the Central City

Although surface parking lots are generally not the most beneficial use of downtown land, they are often profitable ways for property owners to make an economic use of vacant land. If the City is to promote continued redevelopment of the Central City as a sustainable urban core, the City must avoid the economic incentive for property owners to use vacant lots for parking.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.2.1 Maintain existing City policy to prohibit the addition of new stand-alone parking that is not associated with a specific new development



### OBJECTIVE

#### 5.3 Reduce the adverse impacts of commuter parking in residential neighborhoods

A lack of adequate parking near major employment sites can provide an incentive for use of alternative modes. If availability, quality or utility of the alternative modes is not adequate, however, the lack of parking may force commuters onto residential streets. While this may be appropriate in limited amounts in areas where the day-time parking by residents is minimal, extensive intrusion may reduce the mobility and travel convenience of the residents. The City should ensure that adequate parking is provided with new developments and that RPP programs are used to reduce the amount of commuter intrusion that occurs.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.3.1 Recommendations from Goal 2 address this objective. These recommendations address parking requirements for new development that ensure adequate parking is provided by the development to prevent adverse impacts on existing land uses and to support a synergistic mix of land uses. The recommendations from Goal 4 above also support this objective.



## Goal 6 Make Parking Safe, Secure, Attractive and Convenient

The individuals who park in the Sacramento Central City have many choices for where to park. If the City is to have appropriate influence on parking policy and the behavior of the Central City parkers, its own facilities must be sufficiently safe, secure, clean and attractive for parkers to choose the City facilities. The experience that people have using a City-operated parking space is also part of the experience that the individual has with the Central City. A safe and pleasant experience with parking increases the attractiveness of the Central City as a place to shop, eat, be entertained, tour, work or live.

### OBJECTIVE

#### **6.1 Provide adequate maintenance of City-owned parking so that it is safe, secure, clean and attractive for its users**

Providing adequate maintenance of City facilities and ensuring that they are safe and secure is an important part of overall parking management and making the Central City a desirable place for development. Parking spaces should be cleaned frequently, patrolled or monitored by video camera and well-lighted. The pedestrian entry and exit points should also be well lit and at points in the street system where there is regular pedestrian and vehicular activity during the hours that the facility is open.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1.1 Use Parking Fund to ensure adequate maintenance, cleaning and security of the City's parking assets



## Goal 6

### OBJECTIVE

#### 6.2 Make the use of on-street and other City-owned parking easy and convenient through information, good signage, convenient payment options, and logical access and exit points



An important element in making a parking experience a pleasant one is making it easy. This includes providing adequate information and signage so that people looking for parking know where it is and making paying for parking easy and convenient. Clear signage on the street is one way to let drivers know where they can find City (or publicly available) parking and the City has done a good job of identifying the City parking by the large “P” on the blue background and providing signs on most approaches. The City may want to consider expanding the signage program to include other publicly available facilities that follow City guidelines for pricing and restrictions on use.

The use of internet information is becoming more universally accepted as a way to get information for travel. The City already has parking information for its own off-street facilities on the City web site. This could be expanded to include other publicly available facilities that follow City guidelines for participation. The information might also be disseminated more widely by increases in the linkages that are made to the City’s parking information web page from other web pages such as stores, restaurants, night clubs and other businesses.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.2.1 Include information on non-City owned but publicly available parking on the City’s web site
- 6.2.2 Provide additional information and signage for bicycle parking in publicly available parking facilities
- 6.2.3 Pursue additional branding of the City’s parking facilities
- 6.2.4 Consider a real-time dynamic parking information system to help people locate available parking
- 6.2.5 Continue to replace old meters with new meters or pay stations that accept multiple payment methods including coins, bills and credit cards
- 6.2.6 Evaluate and address identified accessibility barriers for on-street parking
- 6.2.7 Continue to provide Transition Plans that will bring City parking into compliance with State and Federal accessibility guidelines and standards
- 6.2.8 Perform periodic utilization counts for accessible spaces reserved for disabled parkers to determine whether an increase in the number of accessible parking spaces is warranted



# Goal 7

## Operate City-Owned Parking in a Financially Sound Manner



The parking program can only meet the City’s objectives of financial stability if it generates enough revenue to cover all of the costs of the program. This includes adequately staffing the program at all levels, providing the appropriate technology for efficient and effective collection and enforcement, maintaining collection and enforcement equipment, supporting programs and services designed to reduce the need for parking, and providing parking when the private sector does not provide adequate parking or when additional parking is the appropriate incentive for new development. Generating adequate revenue to meet the City’s objectives means setting appropriate rates for the City-owned parking, then maintaining and marketing the City’s parking so that it is competitive with other parking facilities. But good financial performance also requires efficient management and the flexibility to use creative financing and funding mechanisms. How the City’s parking program is structured and managed is also critical to good financial performance.

### OBJECTIVE

#### 7.1 Ensure that the City’s parking program is financially self-sufficient

In a city the size of Sacramento and with the density of Sacramento’s Central City, parking can be at least a self-sufficient operation and almost certainly a revenue generator for the City. In some cases, prices for Central City parking are set artificially low to make the downtown area of a city appear more attractive to shoppers or other visitors who have as alternative options suburban locations where parking is free. In such cases, the city officials make a conscious decision to use potential parking revenue as a subsidy for the downtown. Such an approach can change the economics of downtown redevelopment and maintain a dependency on low-cost parking and land devoted to parking. It also often leaves the City’s parking department without sufficient operating funds to adequately maintain the City’s parking facilities. This in turn can result in additional lost revenue if potential

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1.1 Set parking fees and fines at levels that cover capital, operating, maintenance and enforcement costs and generate additional revenue to expand the parking program to meet the growing needs of the City
- 7.1.2 Consider creative mechanisms for financing parking operations to enhance the City’s ability to operate its parking facilities and provide revenue to support the various recommendations of the Master Plan



## Goal 7

customers find the City facilities unattractive or unsafe or if revenue collection equipment is not maintained and revenue cannot be collected from on-street meters.

In the Central City parking revenue from on-street parking fees and enforcement goes to general revenue while revenue from off-street facilities goes into the Parking Enterprise Fund. Revenue and expenses have been separated between on-street and off-street and the two have been operated and managed by different City departments. In 2004, reorganization within the City combined the on-street and off-street operations and management into a single Parking Department under the City's Department of Transportation, but the revenue and cost allocations have remained separate. Combining the revenue and cost allocations could give the City more flexibility in managing the Central City Parking Program.

A variety of creative mechanisms are also available to help the City finance improvements in the Central City parking program or to increase the supply of Central City parking. One such mechanism might be the formation of a non-profit corporation to operate the Central City parking program. A non-profit corporation could give the City greater flexibility to assist with private developments that serves the City's interest.



### OBJECTIVE

#### **7.2 Offer City-owned public parking at a rate that recognizes the cost of providing parking and the economic value of the parking**

The space that is devoted to parking in the Central City is a valuable resource. The City has a responsibility to its residents to make the best possible economic use of that space and the value that it represents. The rate that is charged for parking should reflect the cost of providing the space, the economic value of the space and the relative priority of the expected users of the space.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

(See Recommendation 7.1.1)

**OBJECTIVE**

**7.3 Provide parking discounts when they reflect appropriate incentives for the use of City-owned parking and when the discount is financially feasible**

The City may choose to offer discounts to certain parkers as a way of making parking economically feasible for the parker or as a way of attracting a high priority parker to the downtown. In the past the City of Sacramento has chosen to subsidize parking for three groups of parkers:

- **Disabled Parkers** – All on-street spaces are free to anyone displaying a disable placard in their windshield.
- **Low Income Employees of Downtown Businesses** – Anyone earning less than \$12 per hour or volunteers or interns at a business within the downtown area can purchase a permit for \$.25 per half hour at specified City garages. In addition an employee who works 30 hours or less a week may purchase a permit allowing parking at \$1.00 per hour at specified garages. Regular rates at City garages are \$2.50 to \$3.00 per hour.
- **Shoppers** – Shopper who spend at least \$5 at a merchant participating in the City’s merchant validation program receive a coupon good for \$5 worth of parking in a City-owned garage or lot. The merchant that validates the parking ticket pays \$.50. Most of the participation in the City program is from the stores in the Downtown Plaza and Old Sacramento, but there are additional stores participating in the program.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.3.1 Maintain discounts for the disabled (free on-street), low-income workers, part-time workers and shoppers where appropriate



## Goal 7

### OBJECTIVE

#### **7.4 Structure the financial accounting from parking and parking enforcement with sufficient flexibility to allow maximum effectiveness in the parking program**

The City's existing method for accounting of parking costs and revenue represents a barrier for the most efficient management of the City's Central City parking resources. The division of funds between on-street and off-street makes it difficult to implement strategies that use time limits and rates to manage parking utilization. Any strategy that is designed to move parkers from on-street spaces to off-street spaces has the potential to shift the relative net-revenue between the two parts of the parking program. A successful strategy could result in a loss of net-revenue to one side of the program and an equal or greater gain to the other side, but the loss in net-revenue can result in inadequate maintenance or other operating expenses for the program losing the revenue. The City should have the flexibility to manage parking across the entire program without concern for the relative net-revenue to each side.

The City parking program provides services that benefit all parking owners and operators and not just the City-owned facilities. The City's parking enforcement is effective in keeping parkers from getting free or lower cost parking by using spaces illegally. Strict enforcement of meters, time limits, disabled spaces and residential permit parking spaces forces usually results in more parkers paying the higher rates of City-owned and other publicly available spaces. All parking operators, including the City, the County, the State and private parking owners benefit from good enforcement.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.4.1 Combine all revenue from the City's on- and off-street parking operations into a single Parking Enterprise Fund
- 7.4.2 Use the combined Parking Enterprise Fund to support all City parking programs or other programs to accommodate or reduce parking demand
- 7.4.3 Consider a parking surcharge on all commercial parking to provide funding for increased enforcement and promotion of alternative modes



Other services from which all parking operators also receive benefits include the following:

- Residential Permit Parking Program
- Business Permit Parking Program
- City brokering of private use of parking on nights and weekends
- Information about Central City parking

One way to ensure that the City can continue to provide the services that benefits all of the parking owners is to charge a surcharge on all paid parking in the Central City.

### OBJECTIVE

#### **7.5 Maintain all City-owned parking facilities and revenue collection equipment for maximum effectiveness and efficiency**

An important element in a well-managed parking program is efficient and effective collection of parking revenues and fines. If revenue collection equipment is not functioning properly, revenue may be lost or excessive maintenance costs may be incurred to keep older equipment operating adequately. Technology changes in the past ten years resulted in new types of revenue collection equipment that can provide higher collection percentages, increase the convenience for customers by providing more payment options (bills and credit cards in addition to coins), increase labor efficiency and increase the security of collections. The cost effectiveness of the City's revenue collection equipment should be reviewed regularly to determine whether new equipment or better maintenance of existing equipment might be warranted.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.5.1 Maintain revenue collection equipment for on-street and off-street operations and replace when and where appropriate





## Goal 7

### OBJECTIVE

#### **7.6 Provide operational policies and procedures to ensure that the City's parking program is run effectively, efficiently and according to the highest standards of the parking profession**

Effective and efficient management of the City's parking program requires clear and appropriate guidance on policies and procedures. This Central City Parking Plan provides the policy framework for how priorities are to be set by the Parking Department. The operation of the department can be enhanced by updating the department's employee manuals to insure that the policy framework is reflected in decision-making and actions at all levels within the department. These operational procedures should be supplemented with the best possible financial and operational reporting to support management and decision making by the Parking Department's managers and by the City Council when appropriate. These reporting systems should be automated to reduce the labor cost of collecting the information or reporting it and should be available to the department's managers in a timely manner to allow response at the appropriate time.

The City should also conduct regular assessments of where the department's systems or procedures can be modified to increase labor productivity and increase the security of collections. One such example is the merchant validation program. The existing manual system for validation of tickets by merchants could be modified to increase the efficiency of the program and lower the overall cost of the program to the City. An automated system that uses an

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.6.1. Update the City's employee manuals for parking-related functions
- 7.6.2. Enhance the financial and operational reporting capabilities to allow optimal financial management of the City's parking assets
- 7.6.3. Replace the City's parking validation system for shoppers with a system that has greater accountability and requires less administrative support from the City
- 7.6.4. Expand the Parking Manager's authority over setting of rates, time limits and hours of enforcement



electronic stamp of parking tickets by merchants will increase the accountability of the program. The additional revenue from the increased accountability and the greater labor efficiency should more than recover the costs of the new validation equipment.

**Goal 7**

## Goal 8

## Promote Alternative Modes of Transportation and Walkable Communities

The mobility needs of travelers to or within the Central City can be met in a variety of ways, many of which do not require that a parking space be provided. Use of alternative modes such as transit, vanpool, carpool, bicycle or walking can reduce the overall parking requirements of the Central City, a particular area within the Central City or a specific development. Many efforts are already underway to reduce reliance on the automobile for travel to or within the Central City. These include the provision of transit services, the Transportation System Management Program developed by the City for commercial developments that are projected to have 100 or more full-time equivalent employees, Transportation Management Associations such as the Downtown Partnership and the individual employee commute reduction programs of the City, the County and the State for their Central City employees.

### OBJECTIVE

#### **8.1 Reduce parking requirements when transit service to an area or opportunities for shared parking may reduce the parking demand**

Maintaining a balance between meeting parking demand to encourage new development and maintaining an incentive for use of alternative modes requires a careful monitoring of parking needs of proposed new development and flexibility in the zoning code to allow for reduction in the minimum parking requirements when less parking demand is expected.



### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1.1 Adjust parking requirements downward over time as transit service and ridership increase and there is a demonstrated reduction in the rate of automobile use in the Central City
- 8.1.2 Allow flexibility for reduction of the minimum parking requirements by up to 10% when the developer guarantees adequate and sustained financial support of alternative mode programs to achieve the parking demand reduction requested (in addition to Transportation Management Plan requirements)

## Goal 8

### OBJECTIVE

#### 8.2 Encourage use of RT services to and from the Central City

The mobility needs of travelers to and within the Central City can also be met with a minimum amount of parking by actions that encourage the use of the transit services that already exist. This can include promotion of RT park-and-ride lots outside of the Central City. It may also include promotion of RT services that pass through areas on the fringe of the Central City where there is surplus long-term parking.

Actions to encourage use of existing transit services can also take the form of subsidy of transit fares. This might include Universal Transit Passes that are provided to all of the individuals associated with a particular development. This might be all of the employees of a new office building or all of the residents of a new residential development. Because all of the people associated with the development are provided at a transit pass and not just the ones who plan to use it regularly, the Universal Transit Pass can usually be provided at a much lower cost per pass than the regular monthly pass sold to individuals. Research on the effectiveness of universal transit passes suggests that people who have the pass are much more likely to try to use transit for some of their travel than individuals in the same situation who do not have a pass.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.2.1 Seek funds to promote the use of Regional Transit's services and park-and-ride lots as a substitute for parking in the Central City
- 8.2.2 Work with Regional Transit on pilot program for transit passes for residents and an expanded pass program for employees



**OBJECTIVE**

**8.3 Support employer-based programs to reduce commute vehicle trips to the Central City**

The primary target for vehicle trip reduction in the Central City is commuters. Of the people traveling to destinations with the Central City, they are the ones who are most likely to consider a mode other than the private automobile. They are the most regular trip makers to the Central City, their destinations in the Central City (their job locations) are more concentrated in the areas best served by transit, and they tend to have the lowest auto occupancy when compared to people coming to the Central City for shopping, eating, entertainment or tourism. As a result, employer-based trip reduction programs are usually the most effective programs for achieving diversion from travel by personal automobile. The Central City already has a strong history with employer-based trip reduction programs.

The City’s TSM program requires that non—residential developments subject to the provision achieve at least a 35% reduction in automobile use (at least 35% of the person trips to and from the site must be by a mode other than auto driver). Developers must prepare a Transportation Management Plan that identifies measures that will be used in the new development to meet the vehicle trip reduction goal.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.3.1 Seek funds for Transportation Management Associations’ and employers’ promotion of transit, pedestrian and bicycle modes for Central City commute trips
- 8.3.2 Expand Transportation Systems Management program to include residential and mixed-use residential projects
- 8.3.3 Seek funds for a retrofit bicycle parking program to provide rebates to businesses for installation of bicycle parking
- 8.3.4 Revise Zoning Ordinance to require that all new developments provide bicycle parking including short-term parking for visitors
- 8.3.5 Require bicycle valet parking for special events.
- 8.3.6 Consider permanent bike parking services, such as a “bike station” where intense bicycle travel is expected.



## Goal 8

These measures include the following:

- Membership in a Transportation Management Association (TMA)
- Preferential and/or discount parking for carpools and vanpools
- Transit shelters or other transit supporting facilities
- Transit fare subsidy
- Vanpool or Buspool programs
- Showers an/or lockers to encourage bicycling and walking

In addition to the TSM program, the City may also be able to help reduce the overall need for parking in the Central City by lending its support to other programs. This may include support for the Transportation Management Associations that form to help employers achieve employee trip reductions. It may also include supporting programs to increase the amount of bicycle parking facilities in the Central City. Finally it may include support for voluntary programs such as privately operated car-sharing programs or programs to assist employers with multiple locations match employees with work locations based on proximity of the workplace to where they live.

- 8.3.7 Provide on-street bicycle parking where on-street vehicle parking is provided (Initial focus on streets with diagonal parking)
- 8.3.8 Consider car sharing programs
- 8.3.9 Consider a voluntary employer-based program that assists employers with multiple locations to have employees work at locations closest to where they live



## Goal 9

## Provide Transportation Options to Encourage Use of Existing Parking Supply

The parking space inventory and occupancy count identified a wide disparity in occupancy rates by area in the Central City. This disparity also changed by time of day. Even though there are pockets of high demand (occupancy at or near 85%) the overall occupancy in the Central City is only about 70%. This indicates that during the mid-day on most weekdays there is adequate parking overall but the spaces available may not be in the locations where the parking demand exists. This goal is intended to make the maximum use of existing parking by providing transportation services or physical improvements that produce a better linkage between the areas of surplus parking and the areas of high demand.

### OBJECTIVE

#### **9.1 Use the Parking Fund to provide transportation services that link Central City areas with surplus parking with areas of high parking demand/deficiency**

Linking high demand areas with surplus parking might take the form of shuttle services such as buses, trams or trolleys that provide a free or low-cost connection. It might also take the form of more conventional taxi cab service. The shuttle service might also provide linkage of other activities in the Central City making it possible for people in the Central City to visit multiple businesses or sites without needing a car. It might also enable Central City residents to get to shopping, restaurants, entertainment or work without using a car. One such shuttle service already operates in the Central City. The RT provides a discounted shuttle (regular fare is \$1.00 and discount fares are \$.50) that operates in a one-way loop on J and L Streets on a schedule of roughly every 15 minutes.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1.1 Consider using shuttle and taxi cab services to link available parking with popular trip destinations to address parking needs in areas without sufficient parking capacity
- 9.1.2 Seek funding for improved street lighting between existing parking garages and night-time entertainment areas



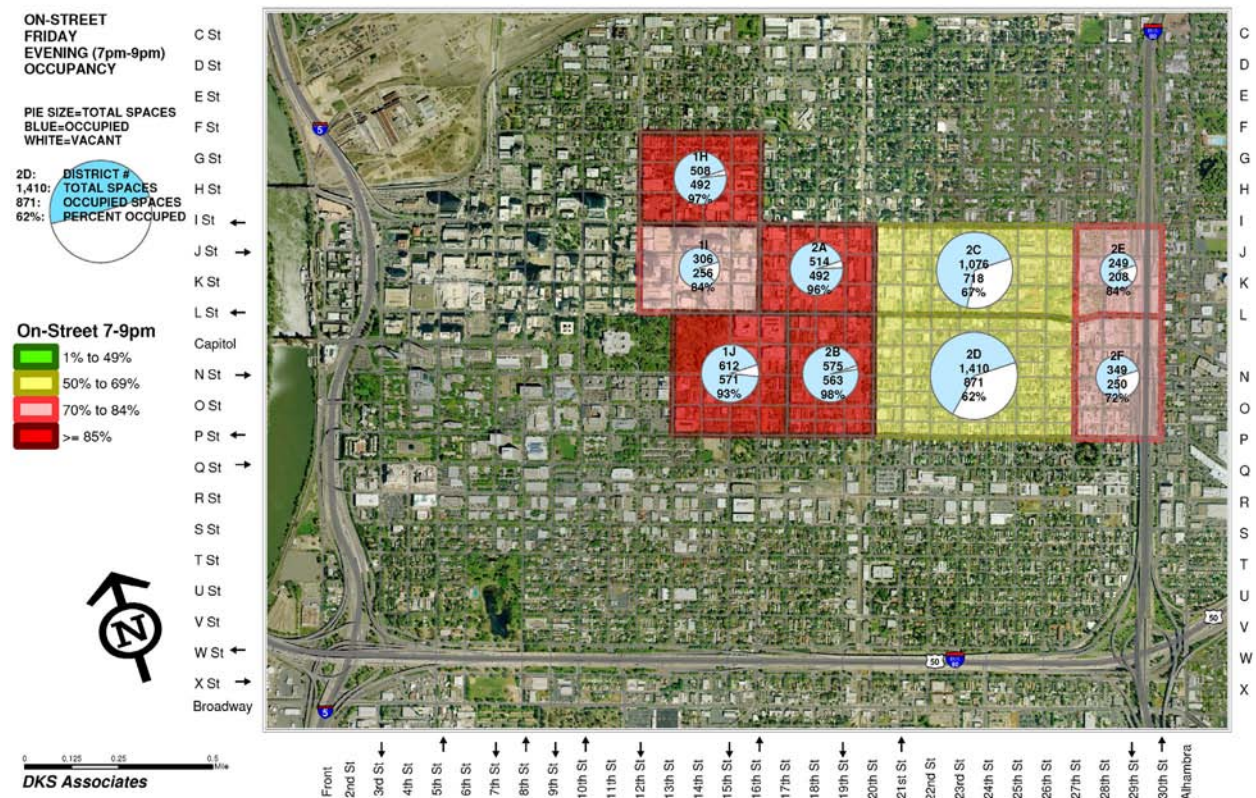


# Goal 9

The approach may also be to provide a more pleasant or secure walking connection between surplus parking and the location of high parking demand. This may be particularly appropriate in the evening or late night when restaurants or entertainment venues are open. Figure 5 indicates that on a Friday evening, there were several areas where the on-street parking demand exceeded 85% but garages with excess evening and late night capacity were available within three blocks.



**Figure 5 Friday Evening Parking Demand**



# Mayor and City Council

## MAYOR

Mayor Heather Fargo

## CITY COUNCIL

District 1, Ray Tretheway

District 2, Sandy Sheedy

District 3, Steve Cohn

District 4, Robert King Fong

District 5, Lauren Hammond

District 6, Kevin McCarty

District 7, Robbie Waters

District 8, Bonnie Pannell