

Section IV: Parking Management Plan – Strategies for Implementation

As a result of the data inventory process and continuing discussions with the Parking Steering Committee (PSC), specific parking management strategies have been identified and are recommended for implementation. Recommendations for changes in current policy/code and several near-term strategies will optimize the efficiency of the *existing* parking inventory in Downtown Spokane. Additional mid and longer-term strategies are also recommended for consideration. The consultant team believes all of the recommendations presented in the report are consistent with the Guiding Principles and Operating Principles for parking in Spokane.

Mid and long-term strategies should be incorporated into a process through which such strategies are evaluated within the context of operating principles and zone based implementation frameworks (see A. 1, 2 & 3, below). Nonetheless, we believe all the strategies recommended in this report will assist the City to more effectively manage its parking supply.

These recommendations are organized as follows:

- Policy Level Actions
- Parking Management Strategies – System-wide
- Parking Management Strategies - Zone based
- Marketing and Communications

A. IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION – POLICY LEVEL ACTIONS - (BY JUNE 2005)

The following policy elements have been included to ensure the goals of the parking management plan can be achieved by incorporating parking system management into the City's development policy. Application of the 85 percent full standard as the threshold for decision making (element 1 (a) (iv), below) becomes the unifying monitoring device connecting these various policy elements. Formalizing the policy recommendations assures that the life of the parking management plan extends beyond the first round of strategy implementation. As such, it is recommended that the Policy Recommendations be adopted immediately by the City of Spokane (no later than June 30, 2005).

- 1. Formalize and adopt a parking management framework which routinely addresses parking issues and plan implementation. The Parking Manager will act as a liaison to City Staff and the PSC provides advisory comments to the Mayor on parking issues in the Downtown. This framework would include the following elements:**
 - a. Adopt Policies and Rules to Guide Parking Management**
 - i. Guiding Principles for Parking Management as Council Resolution.**

The Guiding Principles provide a framework for managing parking and decision making in the downtown over time. The Guiding Principles will serve to guide future management decision-making as well as development of future parking facilities. Adopting these guidelines by Council Resolution assures the intent and purpose for parking management, established through consensus in this study, is carried out over time.

ii. **Establish “Parking Management Zones” based on desired economic uses and user types.**

Different segments of the downtown have different economic uses and represent different points of access into the downtown. The heart of downtown should represent the area in which the highest density of economic activity and access is intended to occur. Parking should be seen as a management tool that supports specific economic uses. The desired economic activity in a particular area of downtown should guide the decision making for the type of parking required.

It is recommended that Spokane establish five separate parking management zones, each having specific operational priorities. These zones are outlined in **Figures 1A and 1B** in **Section V** of this report.

iii. **Develop “Operating Principles” and an implementation framework that defines the priority purpose/use for parking in each parking management zone. Adopt the principles and framework by Council Resolution.**

The recommended Parking Management Zones should be established and the Operating Principles described in **Section V** should be used to guide the evaluation and management of day-to-day dynamics of parking activity. Operating principles are established to describe the primary purposes for parking within each parking management zone and to complement and reinforce the Guiding Principles established for the downtown.

iv. **Adopt the 85% Rule to facilitate/direct parking management strategies.**

The 85% Rule is a measure of parking utilization that acts as an objective benchmark against which parking management decisions are based. Within the parking industry, it is assumed that when an inventory of parking exceeds 85 percent occupancy in the peak hour, the supply becomes constrained and may not provide full and convenient access to its intended user. Once a supply of parking consistently exceeds 85 percent occupancy in the peak hour, the 85% Rule would recommend that parking management strategies be evaluated to bring peak hour occupancies to a level below 85 percent to assure intended uses are conveniently accommodated.

The parking inventory for Spokane revealed that existing peak hour occupancies in the Core Zone (Zone A) and West End Zone (Zone C) near 85 percent for on-street parking. Other zones are generally operating at less than 85 percent at the time of this study. Having the 85% Rule in effect will assure that a process for evaluating and responding to future parking activity in the downtown is in place.

b. Appoint a Parking Steering Committee.

The City should formally appoint a Parking Steering Committee consisting of a representative cross section of downtown interests. The formal charge of the Committee would be to (a) assist a Parking Manager (see c., below) in the implementation of the parking management plan; (b) review parking issues over time; and (c) provide advisory comments to the Mayor and City Council on strategy implementation based on the Guiding Principles for parking management and Operating Principles and strategies adopted for each parking management zone.



A PSC would routinely review downtown parking activity and advise the City on strategies and programs.

c. Engage a Downtown Parking Manager to support and facilitate the work of the Parking Steering Committee.

The complexity of parking and access is increasing as the City and the downtown grows through redevelopment and increased demand for access. A single person designated as the Downtown Parking Manager should be assigned to coordinate the parking program. The Parking Manager would act as a liaison to City staff through the Parking Steering Committee. The Committee will in turn provide advisory comments to appropriate City Staff, Mayor, and City Council on parking issues in the Downtown. The Parking Manager would report to the Parking Steering Committee to routinely review overall parking activity in the downtown as well as by zone. Information developed through periodic update of the parking inventory (i.e. 85% Rule) would be used to evaluate "action triggers." The PSC would review and recommend appropriate strategies for possible implementation as necessary. The City "process" for establishing a Parking Manager should be completed immediately to facilitate formation of the Steering Committee and timely implementation of elements of this plan.

2. Revise/refine existing meter bag policy, program and process.

It is apparent to the PSC and consultant team that meter bags are currently being used for purposes that conflict with the Guiding Principles, which prioritize metered areas of the downtown for customer/patron visits. Non-commercial vehicles routinely use meter bags and enforcement is difficult. The current annual cost of a meter bag is actually less than the current market rate for off-street parking, which can create an incentive to use a meter bag to avoid off-street parking.

The City should reaffirm (adopt) that the purpose and intent of a meter bag program is to provide a means for commercial users of the downtown to utilize existing parking meter stalls for:

- a) Durations in excess of the posted time stay
- b) Loading and unloading activity that requires an area greater than one parking stall

- c) Loading and unloading activity that requires near proximity to a building or site
- d) Use of a stall or stalls associated with a specific land use or project

The meter bag policy is intended to serve the following type of users:

- a) Permitted construction activities
- b) Moving companies
- c) Service contractors (i.e., phone, utility, maintenance, etc.)
- d) Other commercial uses as determined by the City of Spokane (i.e., approved valet uses, events, private tour bus loading/unloading, etc.)

A new procedure for use of the program would be implemented and include the following elements:

- A meter bag would only be issued for approved commercial uses by the City.
- A commercial vehicle must be licensed to a business and the business name must be displayed on the exterior of the vehicle.
- A meter bag will not be issued for personal use.
- Use of the meter bag is limited to a specifically defined time period, which would be printed onto a card that would be inserted into the meter bag for display at the meter removed from normal use.
- Use of the meter bag is to be limited to a specific meter or meters. These meters numbers would be noted on the card delimiting the time stay allowance.
- The cost of a meter bag would be determined based on the average annual gross revenue per meter in the downtown, prorated by hour, day, week, month and/or year, plus the City's reasonable cost of administration.

3. Initiate process to evaluate additional sources of funding for future parking development and parking system management.

The fiscal challenges of parking, transportation, and economic development in a downtown are common to many communities across the country. Rapid changes in development patterns over the past thirty years have resulted in significant changes to the urban landscape and many downtowns have had to re-examine services they provide and the revenue sources used to fund them. In most instances, communities use a combination of funding sources to cover transportation capacity needs. It is believed that some combination of the revenue sources (see **Section VI**) will be necessary to assure the feasibility of future structured parking in the downtown, particularly funding associated with a publicly owned facility. A single revenue source is unlikely to cover the cost of parking development.

4. Revise enforcement policy for metered parking to suspend enforcement on all federal holidays.

Survey work conducted by the DSP and discussions with the PSC indicated a lack of clarity as to actual days of enforcement in the downtown. The City currently enforces parking on Presidents Day and Veterans Day, which has created confusion among patrons. The PSC recommends that the City revise current policy to be consistent with the federal holiday schedule. The PSC believes this would reduce customer confusion and serve as a benefit to patrons using the downtown.

5. **Initiate process to develop policy that would lead to a prohibition on the development of new surface lot parking in the downtown (or Core Zone).**

The downtown has a significant number of surface parking lots. The recently completed inventory of parking also found that parking (particularly off-street) is significantly underutilized. As a means to (a) encourage the long-term feasibility to consolidate parking into structures, (b) discourage



razing older and historic buildings and, (c) support the vision of *The Plan for a New Downtown*, the City should develop a policy that prohibits the creation of new surface lots in the downtown. The policy development process should consider existing buildings that might be exempted or “grandfathered” from such a prohibition due to unsafe structural conditions. Nonetheless, getting to strict limitations and, preferably, a prohibition on surface parking lot development is a critical support element for *The Plan for a New Downtown*.

B. PARKING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES – SYSTEM-WIDE

Based on the recently completed capacity and usage survey of the parking inventory a number of parking strategies are recommended for near-term implementation. The strategies proposed here have system-wide impacts that will assist the City to optimize the use and accessibility of existing parking in Downtown Spokane.

A number of mid and longer-term recommendations have been developed as well, some of which are targeted at the development of new parking supply. The consultant team believes all of the recommendations presented in the report are consistent with the Guiding Principles and Operating Principles for parking in Spokane. Nonetheless, the mid and long-term recommendations should be reviewed and forwarded for implementation through the Parking Manager and Parking Steering Committee process recommended above.

Strategies targeted for particular parking management zones follow this section.

Near-Term Implementation - (by December 2006)

The following strategies are recommended for near-term implementation.

1. **Initiate customer service training for on-street enforcement personnel.**

The recently completed parking survey for downtown recorded a very high rate of customer violation of time zones, which translates into a particularly high issuance of parking tickets. This situation can lead to perceptions by customers of an unfriendly downtown. A common concern expressed by stakeholders through this process and

documented in customer surveys by the BID is the need for customer service training for enforcement personnel. The City should consider (a) developing a customer service policy and protocol for review and approval by the City Council and (b) implementing an on-going training program for enforcement personnel to establish a consistent and managed program of customer relations.

2. Restrict/eliminate taxi zones in downtown by consolidating taxi with hotel zones.

Approximately 11 taxi zones are currently dispersed through the core of downtown. Taxi zones, which do not include the combined loading/taxi zones, are infrequently utilized in the downtown based on the observed pattern of use of existing zones in the downtown. It is doubtful the randomness of calls for taxi services can be accommodated with specifically dedicated taxi pickup/drop off zones. Conversion of taxi zones to metered parking stalls may result in additional parking spaces downtown, particularly if taxi operations were assumed to shift to existing hotel zones.



Inventory found little use of existing Taxi Zones

For this reason taxi zones should be restricted to maximize the availability of short-term customer/patron parking. If queuing/staging areas for taxis are necessary then taxi zones can be established in periphery areas of the downtown where parking is underutilized. Pick-up and drop-off for taxis should be accommodated in conjunction with existing hotel parking zones. Creation of a taxi zone should be considered an exception to the City's adopted priority for use of on-street parking (i.e., customer/patron parking).

A new procedure for use of the program should be implemented and include the following elements:

- Evaluation of creating on-street taxi zones would be initiated at the request of the PSC and all interested stakeholders.
- A request for an on-street taxi zone should be considered an exception to the intended use for on-street parking stalls.
- The decision to create a taxi zone should be based on whether the zone is for the purpose of picking-up/dropping-off customers or queuing/staging of idle taxis.
- Queuing/staging of taxis should not be allowed in the core area of downtown. Such zones can be created, if necessary, in peripheral areas of the downtown where parking utilization has been demonstrated to be less than 85% in the peak hour.
- Pick-up and drop-off zones for taxi customers should be evaluated based on the quantity of calls for taxi pick-ups/drop-offs to a specific block face location in the downtown. A taxi zone should only be created when there is an actual demonstrated need for such a zone at a specific downtown location that would justify the loss of a metered, short-term parking stall.

3. Reduce/eliminate passenger loading zones.



Passenger zones are currently underutilized

Forty (40) passenger-loading zones are located throughout the downtown south of the river. In many cases, the passenger loading zones are associated with commercial loading zones. There appears to be confusion by customers on how to use the zones as evidenced by usage data. Recent field observations (**see Section II**) found very low and random use of the zones (averaging just 15%). If the current zones were converted to metered customer parking, about 72 metered customer stalls could be created. This would result in capacity for 367 new daily trips to the downtown,¹ approximately \$45,360 in annual revenue to the City and \$1.44 million in future parking development savings.

Passenger loading zones should be restricted to maximize the availability of short-term customer/patron parking. Creation of a passenger-loading zone should be considered an exception to the City's adopted priority for use of on-street parking (i.e., customer/patron parking).

A new procedure for allowing passenger loading zones should be implemented and include the following elements:

- Evaluation of creation of on-street passenger loading zones would be initiated at the request of a building owner or business.
- A request for an on-street passenger-loading zone should be considered an exception to the intended use for on-street parking stalls.
- A determination to create a passenger loading zone should consider whether the zone provides a necessary service to an adjacent land use that cannot be accommodated by a metered parking stall.

4. Strategically reduce the number of commercial loading zones

Within the boundaries of the South Study Zone area there are a total of 119 CLZ's. Of that total 47 are in the Core Zone, 13 are in the Convention Center Zone, 10 in the West End Zone and 49 in the Periphery Zone. Each CLZ differs in total size ranging from 20 to 140 feet. If these stalls were converted to standard on-street metered parking stalls, 207 metered stalls could be "added back" to the supply.²

Overall, the entire demonstrated use of CLZ's in the South Study Zone reaches an average of just 13% of all potential vehicle hours during which a patron vehicle could be

¹ This assumes an average turnover of 5.1 trips per day at a downtown parking stall over a 10 hour operating day.

² Unlike PLZ's it is important to recognize the important and necessary function that CLZ's provide for business and the movement of freight and other services into and out of the downtown. It is doubtful that 100% conversion of CLZ's to on-street metered parking would occur (as it could with PLZ's). Nonetheless, an analysis of the actual utilization of CLZ's is important to the overall discussion of on-street parking. Strategic reduction of CLZ spaces, based on utilization, is clearly a relevant and cost-effective parking management strategy.

parked. In general, it is accurate to say that current CLZ zones may be overprovided based on actual demonstrated use (see **Section II**).

The consultant team is not suggesting significant reductions in CLZ's given the need for on-going freight and delivery access in the downtown. This analysis demonstrates, however, that further investigation of underutilized or poorly placed CLZ's, particularly in the Core Zone, would be prudent and beneficial. The City should consider developing definitive criteria for citing future CLZ's in the downtown and make better use of combination zones that serve commercial loading and unloading in the morning hours while also serving customer/visitor needs (as metered parking) during the midday and afternoon peaks. The Parking Steering Committee could assist the City in developing business/customer-friendly standards for the placement of CLZ's as well as strategic reductions in the current number of underutilized loading areas.

5. Continue periodic re-striping of on-street parking.

The majority of on-street parking within the study area is striped. Striping is effective because it assists the customer in identifying a parking stall, thereby creating a sense of order and convenience. (*On-street parking has been restriped in August/September 2004.*)

6. Re-capture parking in on-street areas by adding parking in currently designated no parking areas and/or through use of angled parking to maximize parking in existing metered areas.

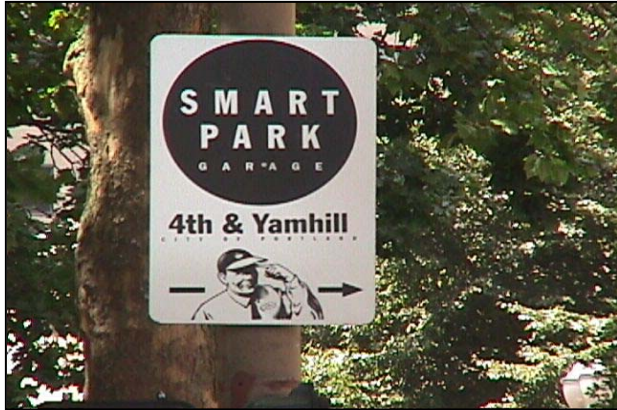
The Downtown Spokane Partnership recently completed a detailed analysis of block faces in the downtown that are currently no parking zones. This report recommends transitioning these block faces to metered parking areas. Many of these block faces could "add back" metered parking with minimal impact to the traffic system, thereby cost effectively increasing on-street parking supply. Adding curbside parking (parallel and/or angled) will increase capacity, slow traffic speeds through the downtown and enhance the 'walkability' of affected block faces. Additionally, the DSP conducted another analysis that identifies areas where existing parallel parking stalls can be converted to angled parking, resulting in a net increase in total parking stalls.³ Every stall recaptured will result in a savings of \$20,000 in potential parking construction costs and return the City an average of \$630 in parking revenue.

It is recommended that the Downtown Parking Manager and Parking Steering Committee thoroughly evaluate the DSP reports and move toward implementation of the recommendations in areas where metered and angled parking can be added to the supply recognizing traffic and/or safety impacts. This level of analysis would be beyond the scope of this study and require consultation with certified traffic engineers. Nonetheless, the opportunity to recapture on-street parking will add parking to the downtown supply and improve the pedestrian environment for future development/redevelopment.

7. Conduct an evaluation of existing signage in the downtown and remove/eliminate obsolete and confusing signage from the public right of way.

The downtown currently has informational and/or directional signage in the public right of way that is confusing and obsolete. For instance, signage along Riverside prohibits parking between 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. Existing public parking directional signage is

³ See DSP report to Roger Flint (Director of Spokane Public Works), dated March 10, 2004.



Right of way signage: Portland



Right of way signage: Vancouver, WA

in the right of way but is not tied to any off-street parking. It is recommended that the Downtown Parking Manager and Parking Steering Committee conduct a thorough physical evaluation of signage related to parking and implement a process to remove unnecessary signage.

8. Develop and strategically place a new and unique wayfinding signage package in the right of way to direct visitors to publicly accessible off-street locations.

The PSC should develop distinct, recognizable and intuitive directional signage on the roadways that directs customers to specific parking publicly available facilities. This will be of greatest importance at primary portals into the downtown, at major traffic intersections and at primary points of ingress at targeted facilities. It is also recommended that the signage package be consistent with, and complementary of, the signage package developed for off-street facilities (see 9, below).

9. Develop a signage package of uniform design, logo and color for placement in publicly available off-street locations.

Creating a uniform signage package that incorporates a unique logo and color scheme for public parking facilities will establish a sense of recognition, identity and customer orientation for users of the downtown parking system. The challenge for Spokane will be to work in partnership with private owners and operators of parking to display a uniform and consistent “parking message” at key privately owned/operated facilities in the downtown.

The following is recommended:

- a. Develop a signage package that incorporates a uniform design, logo, and color scheme into all informational signage related to parking.
- b. Evaluate land use and code implications of the signage package program particularly size, design and placement issues associated with off-street facilities, and initiate changes as appropriate.
- c. Identify key locations throughout the downtown that would best serve as customer parking lots/garages (by location, size and proximity to visitor destinations).
- d. “Brand” each off-street public facility, open to public access, with the established “logo” package.

- e. Utilize signage to display clear and simple rate information by time of day, day of week and/or event.
- f. Investigate the purchase and installation of such signage for private owners as part of shared use parking agreements (see 10, below).

10. Negotiate shared use and/or lease agreements with owners of private surface lots and parking structures to provide for an interim supply of parking per desired use(s).

Twenty-eight private lots and garages were inventoried during the data survey. Eight of these facilities are located within the Core Zone and are significantly underutilized, even during peak times.⁴ At the peak hour these lots have 1,879 empty stalls (1,102 in the Core Zone) and generally display signage that is inconsistent and confusing to customers and visitors. The ability of the parking system to “capture” as many of these stalls as are available in the peak hour for more active management will provide a relatively low cost and effective near-term strategy for mitigating existing access constraints during peak demand periods.

It is recommended that the PSC:

- a. Initiate an effort to work with owners of private lots to enter into shared use agreements to allow underutilized parking to be made available to customer/visitor or employee uses (as appropriate).
- b. Explore the development of incentives to encourage such agreements (i.e., signage, landscaping, lighting, sidewalk improvements, leasing, etc.)

11. Develop and implement minimum appearance standards for existing surface parking in the downtown.



Existing surface parking facilities in the downtown vary in quality and design. The Downtown Parking Manager and the Parking Steering Committee should develop a set of base appearance standards that would be applied over time to all existing surface parking facilities in the downtown. These standards would parallel those already in place for new surface parking lot development. Development of this policy should include discussions with all stakeholders including parking lot and building owners.

Standards now in place for new surface parking that would be applied to existing surface lots include:

Older lot created before standards developed

- a. Quality of surface
- b. Location/orientation of pedestrian pathways and abutting sidewalks

⁴ Peak hour occupancy in off-street facilities is 65.6% for the entire South Study area and 66.7% in the Core Zone.

c. Landscaping, signage and lighting standards

There are no current processes in place to require existing lots to meet specific appearance standards. As such, the Parking Steering Committee should investigate possible incentives that could be adopted for use in leveraging private sector participation in surface lot upgrades. These could include limited reduction in City property taxes equal to the cost of upgrade, infrastructure grants, etc. The PSC should engage all stakeholders including lot and building owners in the process.



Lot developed using minimum uniform standards

12. Develop a mitigation plan for publicly available parking supply lost to development and/or redevelopment of existing parking sites.

The recently completed survey of parking in the downtown did not reveal an overall parking "deficit" in the downtown. Current data indicates that a significant number of parking stalls now exist (off-street) to meet growing demand. However, a large percentage of the parking supply that is currently "available" is located on surface parking lots.⁵ The *Plan for a New Downtown* calls for significant development and redevelopment of many of these parcels in the downtown. As such, development of these sites would likely result in a net loss of supply unless policies, programs and strategies were in place to assure that existing demand is somehow accommodated as new development occurs.

The City should begin the process for outlining a definitive action plan for mitigating the possible loss of parking supply through development and redevelopment. In the mean time, several specific strategies for better managing existing supplies and identification of shared parking opportunities are outlined in this plan (see specifically items 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9 and 10, above), which would maximize and encourage use of existing "surpluses" of parking identified in the parking survey in the near to mid-term.

13. Develop a policy that encourages private sector development of publicly available parking in the downtown and/or implementation of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs to increase access capacity to the downtown.

Developers generally provide and manage parking to serve exclusive accessory uses to their particular site. As such, sites are often developed without benefit of a process or policy that would allow for discussions to maximize both the accessory and public supply of parking in a given private project or to encourage employees to use alternative transportation modes.

⁵ This is particularly true in the Convention Center and Periphery Zones.

Given the cost of parking development, it would be important and useful for the City to encourage the development of publicly available parking and TDM programs/infrastructure in future private development projects. The opportunity to incent either more flexible management of private supplies (allowing general public access) or additional supply for public use within a private project should be explored as well as TDM systems that could reduce overall development costs.

The first step to creating a "toolbox" of incentives requires development of a formal policy that would allow the City to offer incentives if specific public parking and transportation goals were met in the context of a private downtown development.

Mid-Term Implementation – (by June 2007)

The following strategies are recommended for mid-term implementation.

14. Begin implementation of a program for upgrading surface lots to provide a minimum appearance standard (i.e., lighting, quality of surface, signage and stall striping).

Upgrades to existing surface parking facilities should begin upon completion of a policy, program and plan developed as a result of efforts outlined in B. 11, above.

15. Create and implement a package of incentives for the private development of publicly available parking supply and TDM options in the downtown.

It is recommended that the City create and implement a package of incentives that would be made available to private developers that allow for or add publicly available parking into downtown development projects. Similar incentives would be created for privately initiated Transportation Demand Management programs. The package of incentives would follow adoption of a parking incentive policy described in B. 13, above.

Examples of development incentives currently available in other jurisdictions include (but are not limited to):

- Floor Area Ratio (FAR) bonuses
- Height bonuses
- Permit fee waivers
- Impact fee waivers
- Supply/revenue agreements⁶
- Property tax abatements

16. Consider a strategy for future parking pricing.

The operating principles developed for each parking zone contain options for the implementation of on-street parking pricing as assets under the City's ownership/control. Options can range from pricing parking in specific areas (e.g., City-owned off-street parking) to pricing specific users (e.g., employees, all day parkers, etc.) to a comprehensive system of pricing that would include metering on- and off-street. At present, the City does not own any off-street parking. The City only controls pricing for on-street parking.

⁶ Revenue agreements are lease agreements whereby the City agrees to a guaranteed lease for spaces at a negotiated rate per stall.

Together with City staff, the Parking Steering Committee should begin discussion of a coordinated strategy for how parking pricing would be implemented as the demand for parking and new parking supply evolve in the mid- to long-term, specifically in facilities owned or controlled by the City. Once developed, the parking pricing strategy should be presented to the City Council for review and approval.

The outline of strategy issues presented below is intended to inform the City on major decision and management guidelines should pricing become necessary as a means to maximize and facilitate access capacity.

a. Pricing on-street parking and enforcement to increase efficiency and capacity.

As the 85% Rule triggers additional and more aggressive management of the supply, Spokane may at some future point consider more complex systems for pricing parking and enforcement. At that point pricing would be intended to (a) facilitate more efficient turnover, (b) encourage use of specific facilities in specific management zones (i.e., short-term vs. employee parking), (c) encourage use of alternative modes, (d) remain consistent with comparable cities and markets and (e) provide funding source for new supply and alternative mode options.

In the context of pricing, Spokane should also consider new technologies available and in place in other cities that allow for flexibility in the management of parking pricing and contribute and complement Spokane's existing and desired urban form. "Multi-space metering" and "pay-and-display" systems are an example of these types of technology, which allow a City to charge for parking without "cluttering" the pedestrian way with individual meters.

b. Create varied rate structures to incent employee parking in specific areas.

By creating rate structures that encourage off-street parking, the City can allow rate to influence employees' decisions on where to park (for instance, lower monthly rate to park in off-street location, higher rate in specific on-street locations).



17. **Consider options that would establish a funding program to support future development of new supply.**

Given the existing "market rate" for parking in Spokane, it is doubtful that new parking supply will be self-supporting.

The cost of new development is expensive. Therefore, *collaborative efforts* must be initiated that recognize that multiple funding sources will need to be developed and implemented.

18. **Routinely conduct parking inventory analyses in the downtown.**

The recently completed analysis of Spokane's parking inventory provides excellent information on parking utilization, turnover, and duration and peak hour capacity.

The need for this data is very important as a foundation piece for determining actions to maximize parking supply. Periodic monitoring of parking activity will allow Spokane to (a) better coordinate enforcement, (b) assure maximum utilization based on intended uses

and (c) provide solid evidence for the need to move to higher and/or more aggressive levels of parking management.

It is recommended that:

- a. A parking inventory analysis is conducted at least every two years. Information from these updates would be forwarded to the Parking Manager and the Parking Steering Committee for review, evaluation and development of strategy recommendations. Recommendations would be forwarded to the Mayor and City staff for consideration for implementation.⁷
- b. The City explore technology options that are available that would allow enforcement personnel to gather inventory data on a more frequent and/or targeted basis.

19. Consider a process that would identify strategically located land parcels that could be used as future off-street parking locations as a means to support the parking objectives of *The Plan for a New Downtown*.

The PSC should identify areas within each parking zone and in peripheral areas that would serve as strategic points of parking access in the downtown. This process should carefully consider the development and access needs envisioned in *The Plan for a New Downtown* to provide for convenient and efficient parking opportunities for patrons of the downtown. Strategically identifying future parking sites allows the PSC to work with stakeholders, the public and private sectors to effectively coordinate future parking supply needs (see 17, above, and Section VI on issues related to funding).

Long-Term Implementation – (by June 2009)

The following strategies are recommended for long-term implementation.

20. Complete development and open new supply to serve priority patron uses.

Completion of site identification, planning, outreach and funding efforts described in 12, 13, 15, 17 and 19, above, would be finalized and the project completed and opened to the public.

C. PARKING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES – ZONE BASED



Upon completion of the parking inventory, several specific recommendations for implementation within the specific parking management zones were developed. The following strategies are recommended for near-term to mid-term implementation.

Core Zone (Zone A)

1. Convert all current 10 to 30-minute, 1-hour and 2-hour meters in the Core Zone to 90 minutes.

The inventory of downtown parking indicated that the average patron stay in the Core Zone is 1 hour and 28 minutes (or 1.46 hours). At this time, 75 percent of metered parking in the Core Zone is for

⁷ Inventory updates could be provided by using existing enforcement personnel to conduct random sampling and/or parking counts. This is done in other cities (i.e., Kirkland and Vancouver, WA) and can result in significant cost savings as compared to comprehensive inventories similar to the one that supports this report and plan.

stays of one hour or less. The result is an extremely high rate of time stay violations (20.7 percent). Standardizing all metered parking in this zone at 90 minutes will better correlate allowed time stay to actual patron need and simplify access for customers using the zone.

Convention Center Zone (Zone B)

- 2. Convert current 10 to 30-minute and 1-hour meters in the Convention Center Zone to a minimum of 2-hour parking. Continue to provide strategically located longer-term parking stays (3 to 10-hours) throughout the zone and manage these areas to the 85% Rule.**

On-street parking in the Convention Center Zone is significantly underutilized at this time.⁸ The prevalence of 2-hour meters (54 percent of all meters in the zone) is well coordinated to average patron time stays (1.74 hours). Approximately 46 meters are now for stays of less than 2-hours and should be converted to longer time stay allowances.

The nature of the zone is impacted by the Convention Center, which can at times generate demand for time stays in excess of 2 hours. Given the underutilization of the zone, the City can afford to allow a greater mix of on-street time stays in the zone. Additional 3 and 10-hour zones near the Convention Center may be useful and appropriate.

As demand in the zone increases over time, the 85% Rule would eventually recommend a transition of all on-street parking in the zone to 2-hours. Until such time, greater flexibility for managing this zone is suggested by recent utilization data. The Parking Manager and PSC should routinely monitor this parking zone and make timely recommendations to City staff for initiating appropriate transitions in parking time stays.

- 3. Conduct a policy and strategy development process to create a plan for managing capacity in this zone as surface parking transitions to new development.**

The majority of the available supply of off-street parking in this zone is on surface parking lots. In the near term, a large “surplus” of parking exists to accommodate new demand and growth within the district. However, future loss of surface parking to redevelopment could create conflicts/constraints between existing and future commercial, residential and convention/cultural uses. Expectations about responsibility for creating new supply in the future should be discussed.

West End Zone (Zone C)

- 4. Standardize on-street parking to 2 hours using the 85% Rule as a “trigger” for implementation and consider implementation of limited residential parking permit program for West End residents within 300 feet of building’s front door.**

On street parking in the West End Zone is heavily utilized throughout the day on weekdays, averaging 84.4 percent in the peak hour. The average time stay for the zone is 1.56 hours. Currently, about half the metered area is made up of 2-hour stalls, with a sizable supply (159 stalls) in 3 and 10-hour meters. Conflict for on street parking likely occurs between visitors, residents and employees. Also, publicly available off street parking in the zone is underutilized.

⁸ Peak hour occupancy reaches 63.5% between 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m.

As the district begins to exceed 85% of occupancy during the peak hour, attrition of 3 and 10-hour meters within the zone will need to occur. Over time, standardizing parking in the zone to 2 hours will create a more understandable system of access for customers using the zone at a time stay designation that is consistent with demonstrated patron demand. Overlaying a residential parking permit system, allowing residents of the West End to park longer than time stay designations within 300 feet of their address eliminates the need for 3 and 10 hour meters. Employees would be transitioned into available off-street supply. The 85% Rule provides a sound basis for determining the appropriate timing for initiating the conversion of the existing mix of on-street parking to a higher percentage of 2-hour meters.

Periphery Zone (Zone D)

5. Implement a higher mix of signed 3 & 10-hour parking stalls on-street in the Periphery Zone. Manage the Zone to the 85% Rule.

During the usage inventory, parking in the Periphery Zone never exceeded 38% in the peak hour, leaving capacity that could be used in the near and mid-term for longer-term stay opportunities. A large portion of on street parking in the zone is currently signed 2-hours (64 percent of stalls). In the near term, a greater proportion of parking in these zones should be signed for 3 and 10-hour parking, which will allow patrons willing to park just outside the Core Zone longer term stay opportunities as it will employees willing to park all day at 10 hour meters. In the long-term, transitioning the zone to stays to meters of less than 3 hours would be determined by future parking inventories measuring areas of usage that would exceed 85% occupancy in the peak hour. At this time, the zone should be managed with the highest level of flexibility to accommodate longer-term stay opportunities.

D. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

A successful parking system will require on-going marketing and communication. The foundation for a marketing and communication program is the signage and wayfinding package recommended in this report. Support of this system can be facilitated through informational maps and brochures about Spokane and its parking system distributed through Business Association, Visitor Services, Retail and Lodging networks.

It is recommended that the BID:

Partner with the City to continue and sustain a marketing and communication system for access in Spokane. The marketing/communication system would include (but not be limited to):

1. *Maps.* Develop maps that visually represent the parking zones (i.e., blue zone – Core - is customer parking, green zone is long-term parking) and identify the location of visitor versus employee facilities.
2. *Validation program.* Evaluate the feasibility of an expanded retail validation system more comprehensively available on lots throughout the downtown.
3. *TDM alternatives.* Incorporate alternative mode options (i.e., shuttles, transit, and bicycle) into parking communications materials.



4. *Valet Parking.* Explore with restaurant owners the feasibility and costs associated with implementation of valet programs to move customer vehicles to underutilized public facilities.
5. *City Ticket program.* Continue and enhance efforts to transition downtown employees out of Core Zone parking stalls into peripheral parking areas.

E. SUMMARY

The City of Spokane is striving to promote growth that fits into the future vision of downtown. A strong parking management plan is one tool that can assist the City in attaining its vision.

A strong parking management plan:

- Defines the intended use and purpose of the parking system.
- Manages the supply
- Enforces parking policies
- Monitors use and responds to changes in demand
- Maintains the intended function of and priorities for the overall system.

This plan has been developed to support the guiding principles and operating principles for parking and access in the downtown. As such, the plan and its strategies reflect the fundamental values and objectives stakeholders have for Downtown Spokane.

The parking management strategies were developed to optimize the use of existing parking resources in Downtown Spokane and realistically prepare for future new supply. These strategies include policy recommendations, near-term management recommendations, and on-going (mid- and long-term) management recommendations.

The strategies are presented in a logical sequence of activities and decision-making that build upon each other. We believe the parking management plan presented in this report will support on-going and sustainable economic vitality for Spokane by assuring access for customers and visitors to downtown and strategies that effectively respond to changes in demand over time.

As with any parking management program, the success of the plan is dependent upon its adoption into City policy. Parking management is an on-going process that requires the commitment of time, resources and public/private effort. The plan and its associated policies and strategies need formal endorsement by the City Council to assure implementation and on-going management of the parking system.