PARKING STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

BLOOMINGTON CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PREPARED FOR

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON

BY

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The City of Bloomington in cooperation with the Commission for Bloomington Downtown has undertaken two studies of the Central Business District which together will form the basis for a revitalization plan. A **Downtown Market Analysis** was conducted to determine the economic viability of the area and to identify potential revitalization projects. A **Downtown Parking Study** was conducted to identify parking supply, usage and future demands.

The Downtown Parking Study report reviewed: the development impact and other issues related to downtown parking; the relationship between parking and the transportation system; the inventory of existing parking spaces; the utilization of existing parking spaces; the characteristics of parkers; and, parking policies and operational practices.

It was observed that with the development and expansion of suburban shopping centers, the downtown has become more of a center for government, finance, insurance, real estate and professional offices. As a result, the demand for parking space-hours has increased. The average duration of an off-street parker increased from 1.9 hours in 1972 to 2.6 hours in 1984. Similarly, on-street parking duration increased from 1.1 hours in 1972 to 1.5 hours in 1984. As employment downtown increases as a result of redevelopment projects, the demand for long term spaces will continue to increase. Long term parkers will require more space-hours and compete with short term parkers for convenient low cost spaces. Thus, the supply of long term spaces must be increased in conjunction with major development opportunities.

Next, it was indicated that parking facilities and policies are related to transportation system efficiency, travel mode choice, parking location choice, destination choice, and growth and development.

The inventory of existing parking revealed that 2,036 spaces exist on-street of which 793 have time restrictions, 39 are designated for special uses, and 1,204 are unregulated. There are 275 off-street parking facilities which provide 5,029 parking spaces. These parking facilities occupy about 30 acres (10 city blocks) and are operated as follows:

Operator	Number of Facilities	Number of Parking Spaces
City	8	603
County	3	73
Indiana University	15	478
Private (exclusive of residential)	249	3,875
Total	275	5,029

The 249 privately operated off-street parking facilities contain an average of 15 spaces. These small lots are scattered, difficult to find and use, are generally restricted for use by employees or patrons of specified businesses, and have low occupancy rates.

The maximum demand on the parking supply within the intensive study area is at about 11:00 AM when 81% of all on-street and 66% of all off-street spaces are occupied. During the six hours between 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM more than 75% of the curb spaces are consistently occupied, many of which were more than 90% occupied. When occupancy levels exceed 75% for sustained periods of time, an adequate supply of vacant spaces is not conveniently available to incoming motorists. This results in vehicles cruising through and around the business district in search of parking and adding to congestion.

Within the intensive study area, 5,564 different vehicles parked in 1,048 available curbside spaces for an average turnover of 5.3 vehicles per space during the 12 survey hours. The 5,564 different vehicles occupied curbside parking for a total of 8,522 hours for an average duration of about 1½ hours per vehicle. This represents an overall occupancy of 68% of the space-hours available during the 12 hour survey period. However, thirteen city blocks have occupancy rates higher than 75% during the 12 hours.

Off-street, 7,102 different vehicles parked in 2,931 available spaces for an average turnover of 2.4 vehicles/space and an average duration of about 2½ hours per vehicle. The overall occupancy rate was 52% for the 12 hour survey period.

The municipal parking facilities account for 603 spaces, half of which are located in the parking garage. Lots #2 and #4 each have low occupancy rates (about 40%) and accommodate long term parkers (3½ to 6½ hrs.). Lots #3 and #5 are highly occupied (over 70%) with shorter term parkers. The municipal parking garage with 303 spaces has less than 40% of its space-hours occupied; 54% during the peak hour. The 603 off-street parking spaces generate about $65,000 per year in meter fees and permits which is equivalent to about $108/space/year.

The $65,000/year of parking revenue combined with $85,000/year in parking fines comprises the parking fund. About 25% of the parking related revenues go to the General Fund. The balance of parking revenues are permitted to be used for a variety of parking and traffic operational purposes including the payment of principal and interest on bonds for parking facilities and devices.

The responsibility for developing, managing and operating the parking system is spread among the Board of Public Works, and the Planning, Redevelopment, and Police Departments. Thus, the responsibilities for performing various functions are fragmented among many persons, departments and agencies.

The characteristics and opinions of downtown parkers were determined through a questionaire survey. Most of the survey respondents were downtown workers who drive alone, park within one block of their destination, and believe that parking should be free.

These findings and observations lead to the following goals and objectives for improving the parking situation in downtown Bloomington.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Based on preceding discussions and data, the following goals and objectives are recommended to guide the development and operation of the parking system in downtown Bloomington.

1. recognize parking as an integral and important component of downtown revitalization and the traffic system:

    a. coordinate parking with revitalization plans
    b. coordinate parking to enhance the retention and expansion of existing businesses
    c. coordinate parking with transit and traffic circulation plans,

2. promote higher turnover of on-street parking:

    a. shorten time durations
    b. intensify enforcement,

3. encourage greater usage of off-street facilities:

    a. make off-street spaces more attractive (signage, landscaping, lighting, maintenance)
    b. encourage consolidation of small private lots for more efficient utilization
    c. adopt an appropriate parking fee schedule (hour, month, year),

4. designate adequate spaces for special purposes:

    a. conveniently located spaces for handicapped
    b. adequate number and size of transit stops
    c. designated loading zones in active delivery areas.

5. increase supply of public off-street spaces in conjunction with major development opportunities.

    a. link new public parking physically and financially to development projects
    b. encourage and provide policy support for additional University parking,

6. increase parking revenue devoted to parking system:

    a. intensify enforcement
    b. dedicate greater portion of parking revenues for parking purposes
    c. adopt a moderate and fair parking fee schedule
    d. dispose of existing under utilized lots
    e. sell or lease air-rights of existing garage,

7. consolidate parking system management:

    a. operation
    b. maintenance
    c. enforcement.

The following paragraphs discuss various alternative actions in support of the preceding goals and objectives:

PARKING GARAGE

Additional amounts of public off-street parking spaces are warranted only if associated with major development or redevelopment projects. Such a major private project has been proposed for the half block along Fifth Street facing the Courthouse. Here, a retail/office building is proposed to contain approximately 100,000 square feet of new and/or renovated space. The proposed development would be more intensely occupied and used than the existing space which is contained in several individual buildings with walk-up second and third floors.

The proposed private development, in order to be successful, must have an adequate supply of parking associated with it. The report showed that existing nearby parking spaces are highly utilized and cannot absorb a significant increase in demand. Therefore, additional spaces are required for the proposed development.

Three candidate sites for a new parking garage were suggested as a result of downtown planning conducted by the Redevelopment Commission of the City of Bloomington. Those candidate sites were studied in detail with the result that Site C was recommended by the Consultants.

Site A

Site A is located on the half block south of Fourth Street between College and Walnut. Acquisition and relocation of five businesses would be required to assemble the site. A three level garage with continuous two-direction ramps would have a total of 305 spaces. However, 45 existing private spaces would be displaced resulting in a net gain of 260 spaces. Ingress and egress would be from both College and Walnut (one-way pair of streets) with inbound and out-bound drives separated to avoid traffic conflicts. An optional enclosed overhead walkway (approximately 225' long) would connect the third level of the garage with the rear of the proposed redevelopment project. The cost of such a garage is estimated to be about $2.9 million including $0.9 million in fixed costs. The cost per net new space is about $11,131.

Site B

Site B is located on the half block west of Walnut Street, south of Fourth Street, but excluding the Morrow Building at the south end of the block. Acquisition and relocation of four businesses would be required to assemble this site. A four level garage with continuous two directional ramps would have a total of 343 spaces. However, 64 existing private spaces would be displaced resulting in a net gain of 279 spaces. Ingress and egress would be from both Fourth Street (two directional) and Walnut Street (one way). An optional overhead walkway (approximately 225' long) would connect the third level of the garage with the rear of the proposed redevelopment project. The cost of such a garage is estimated at about $2.9 million including about $0.6 million in fixed costs. The cost per net new space is $10,258.

Site C

Site C is located on the half block north of Fourth Street between Walnut and Washington. Acquisition and relocation of four businesses would be required to assemble this site. A 3½ level garage with continuous two directional ramps would have a total of 379 spaces. However, 87 public and 5 private spaces would be displaced resulting in a net gain of 287 spaces. Ingress and egress would be both from Washington and Walnut which are one-way streets. An optional overhead walkway (approximately 100' long) would connect the fourth level of the garage with the proposed redevelopment project. Also, a garage at this site could be connected to Kirkwood via the existing alley walkway. A garage at this location could also accommodate the downtown waiting facility for patrons of Bloomington Transit. The cost of such a garage is estimated to be about $3.1 million including $0.7 million of fixed costs. The cost per net new space is estimated to be $10,930.

Conclusions

Each of the three sites were studied in detail and compared in terms of design features, number of spaces, total cost, cost per space, vehicle and pedestrian access, and impacts on existing business retention and potential revitalization opportunities.

While each of the sites have advantages and disadvantages, it is the Consultant's conclusion that Site C offers the best opportunity to assure the financial success of both the garage and of a proposed nearby revitalization project, and to serve the parking requirements of the existing downtown area.

ON-STREET PARKING

In order to assure adequate usage and revenues for existing and proposed off-street parking facilities, their use by intermediate and long term parkers must be encouraged.

Therefore, the role of on-street parking should be to provide convenient, low cost, short term, high turnover parking for patrons of business, commercial and governmental establishments.

Currently, the average duration of vehicles parked on-street is about 1.5 hours, up from 1.1 hours in 1972. It should be the objective to reduce the average duration of on-street parkers through enforcement and fee schedules which make off-street parking more desirable for intermediate and long term parkers.

Several alternatives exist for accomplishing this objective: (a) shorter posted durations and stricter enforcement; (b) shorter meter durations and stricter enforcement; or (c) combination of these techniques.

Shorter Posted Durations and Stricter Enforcement

Currently, 793 spaces have posted durations of which 94 have one hour or less limitations while the balance have two hour limitations. Generally, the spaces with limitations of one hour or less are scattered throughout the entire central business district. None of the spaces are metered. Enforcement is performed by civilian deputies who mark autos and return after the regulatory period to ticket those autos which remain.

One option to increase turnover is to post signs with shorter limits and to intensify enforcement. Duration should be shortest around the Courthouse and longest in the fringes of the business district. Variable length durations are difficult to enforce without meters. To effectively enforce such posted regulations would require more persons assigned to enforcement duties with little or no additional compensating revenue. Furthermore, without the enforcement, no assurances of off-street parking usage or revenue can be made.

Shorter Meter Durations and Stricter Enforcement

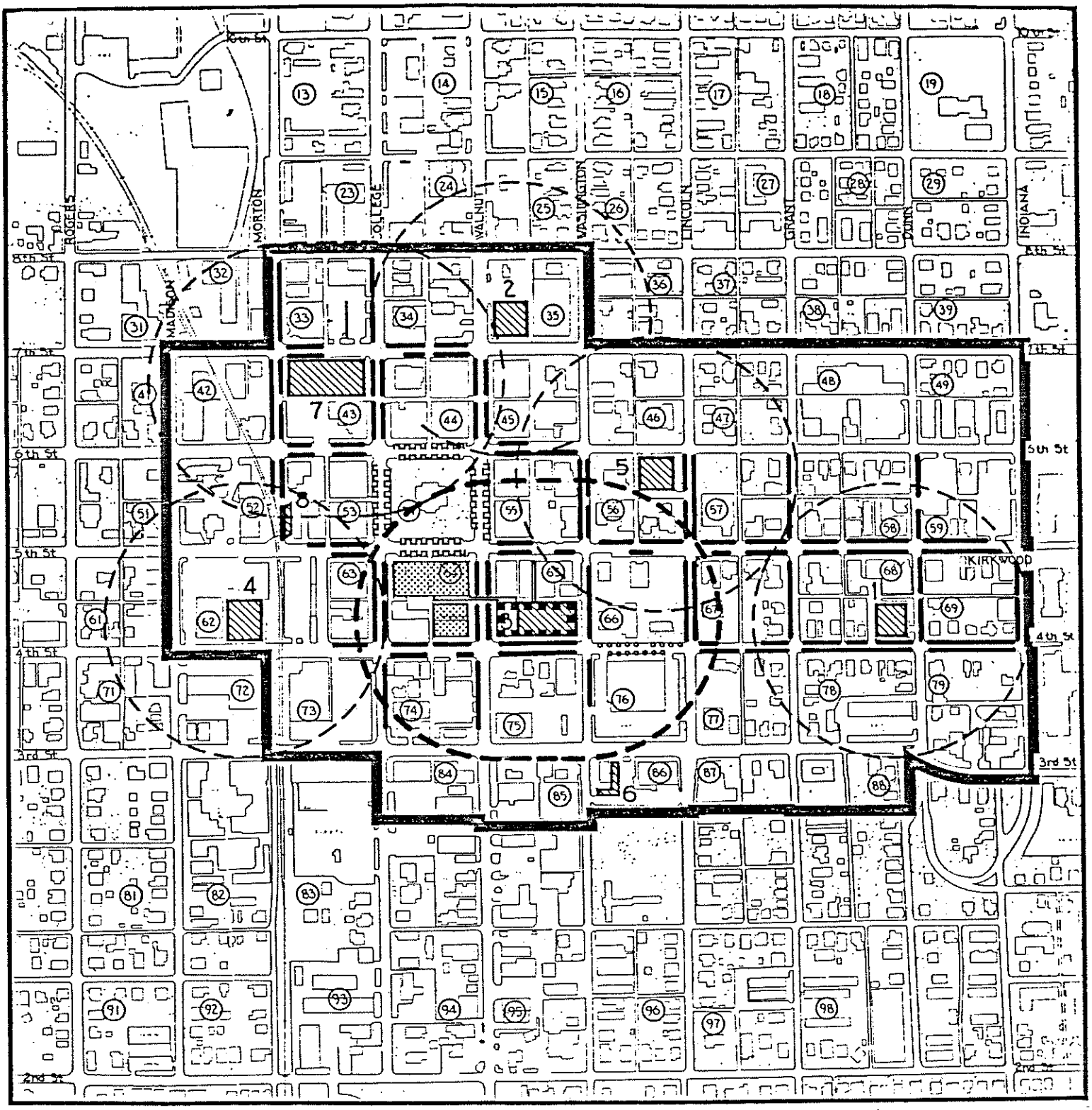
Reinstalling and reimposing parking meters and intensifying enforcement is a second option having the objective of increasing on-street parking turnover.

Meters would be reinstalled around the Courthouse Square and at other locations where they have recently been removed. All meters would be reactivated and violations strictly enforced. Better enforcement by existing personnel would be possible because the need to mark autos would be eliminated.

However, reinstalling available meters would result in two hour durations throughout downtown. Furthermore, the reinstallation of meters around the Courthouse Square would not support opinions that such parking be free.

Combination of Meters and Enforcement

A third and recommended option is to retain the Courthouse Square as a **free** parking zone, but with a **one hour** limitation. Meters already removed need not be reinstalled but would be available for use in other locations. Strict enforcement of the one-hour limitation is recommended in conjunction with the free parking privilege.



BLOOMINGTON DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY

FIGURE E-1

MUNICIPAL PARKING RECOMMENDATIONS

ALTERNATIVE NEW SITE C

- LOCATIONS OF MUNICIPAL PARKING FACILITIES
- INTENSIVE STUDY AREA BOUNDARY
- SITE C
- PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT
- SERVICE AREA

ON-STREET REGULATIONS

- ¼ HR MAX., FREE
- 1 HR MAX., FREE
- 2 HR MAX., METER

SCALE

0 100 500 FEET

Beyond the Courthouse Square and within the service areas of the major public parking facilities, it is recommended that existing meters be reactivated and that existing surplus meters (previously removed from Courthouse Square) be installed to create a zone of **metered** parking with a **two hour** limitation at a fee of 5¢/ ½ hour. Strict enforcement of those metered spaces could be accomplished with existing personnel.

A special free zone is recommended on either side of Fourth Street in front of the Post Office for convenient 15 minute parking.

Beyond the two hour metered zone, parking would be free, generally without limitation. Special limitations should be reviewed on a case by case basis.

The recommended on-street zones are shown on the Figure with the following summary:

17	free spaces with ¼ hour limit
112	free spaces with 1 hour limit
510	metered spaces with 2 hour limit
409	free spaces with no limit.

This variable rate, variable duration recommendation is consistant with previously stated goals: 2a; 2b; 3c; 6a; and 6c.

CONSOLIDATION OF SMALL OFF-STREET LOTS

There are 249 privately operated off-street parking lots which contain an average of 15 spaces. These small lots are scattered, difficult to find and use, and are generally restricted to patrons and employees of specified establishments. Opportunities exist throughout the downtown area to consolidate small lots into larger more efficient ones.

Two examples of potential parking lot consolidations exist in the Kirkwood area in the vicinity of Grant and Dunn Streets. The occupancy rate of the Kirkwood Municipal Lot #1 exceeds 75% from mid-morning through the evening hours. At times, the lot is full or has only one or two vacancies. Meanwhile, surplus parking is available in adjacent and restricted private lots.

The consolidation and improvement of **existing** parking lots for use by the general public could add 76 spaces to the off-street supply. In each block, the existing alley is paired with a new parking aisle to provide access through the entire block to diagonal rows of parking. The number of off-street spaces can be increased from 189 to 265 in the two blocks.

At $5.00 per square foot for surface improvements, the cost for construction would be about $187,000 and $284,000 in each of the blocks. This amounts to about $4,700 for each of 100 additional spaces; or about $1,800 if pro-rated to all 265 spaces. These costs exclude the value of land.

PARKING FINANCING

The financing of a parking garage estimated to cost $3.14 million will require an annual debt service of $333,000. Net parking revenues from the garage (including private developer guarantees), the reinstatement of parking meters, and the dedication of 25% of other parking revenues will cover about half of the annual debt service requirement. The operating deficit will then have to be met by other financing methods. Other possible methods investigated by the report include: city wide property tax; special assessment district tax; and tax increment financing. The financing method chosen must consider, as a matter of public policy, the amount of financial burden that various benificiaries of the project should assume.