

Staff Report

2019 DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY (FINAL REPORT)

December 17, 2019

BACKGROUND:

On October 16, 2018, City Council directed staff to proceed with a study of the Downtown Central Business District (CBD) parking system. The purpose of the study was to take a comprehensive look at the Downtown and make professional recommendations for items including, but not limited to, what it would take to make the Parking Fund a self-sustaining business enterprise (covering all operational and capital costs), options for Downtown employees in a shared parking environment, adequacy of parking supply, and any “best practices” in parking that would benefit the district as a whole.

On March 26, 2019, City Council approved a professional service agreement with Walker Consultants to begin the study of Downtown parking. The result of that effort is a final report, which has been attached to this document.

HISTORY OF DOWNTOWN PARKING LOTS (CBD):

Beginning in December of 1965 (ORD. 2106), the original CBD parking lots, which were converted from an existing railyard, were constructed using Revenue Bonds in the amount of \$440,000 (\$3,560,762 in 2019 dollars). Then in 1971 (ORD. 2374), the City had to issue an additional \$100,000 (\$630,750 in 2019 dollars) in Revenue Bonds because of increased project costs. In 2019 dollars that would equate to an approximate investment of \$4,191,500 to construct the Downtown parking lots.

On September 19, 1967, Ordinance 2208 established the rates for the “Railroad Parking Lot” to be \$0.10 per hour with a 5-hour time limit. In today’s dollars, that is approximately \$0.77/hr. This history is only to provide the context of the original funding strategy of the investment in the Downtown parking infrastructure. The calculation to 2019 dollars was done using the CPI Inflation Calculator found on the Bureau of Labor Statistics website.

RECENT HISTORY OF PARKING SYSTEM ITEMS:

- May 5, 2017: Staff report on “Campustown/Downtown Business District, Intermodal Facility, And Surrounding Neighborhood Parking Review” was presented to City Council.
 - Purpose: To outline best-practices or “philosophies” to guide the development of the City’s parking system.

- November 28, 2017: Staff report on “Parking System Improvements.”
 - Purpose: Look at comparable City parking fines and fees (meter rates and permit parking), as well as a financial analysis of Downtown and Campustown parking systems with a staff estimation for “break-even” meter rates to cover operations and capital expenses.

- October 16, 2018: Staff report on “Downtown Parking.”
 - Purpose: Staff response to two issues; 1) Look at scope and cost for a comprehensive Downtown Parking Study, 2) Look at solutions to address employee parking in Downtown.

- November 13, 2018: Staff report on an “Update on Downtown Parking Items.”
 - Purpose: Present to City Council options on; 1) A scope and estimated fee for an RFP to conduct a comprehensive study of Downtown parking, 2) A trial employee hang-tag program for 4-hour stalls, and 3) Estimated cost to covert Downtown meters to be able to take credit cards.

- January 22, 2019: Staff report on “Review of The Downtown Parking Meter Fees.”
 - Purpose: Given the increased meter rates, staff compared expected revenues versus the actual revenues over the last fiscal year. Also, the report looked at the anticipated effect of dropping the rates down to \$0.50/hr across all Downtown meters.

RECENT METER RATE CHANGES:

The original tiered-rate increase of \$1.00/hr, \$0.75/hr, and \$0.50/hr went into effect on July 2, 2018, in both Downtown and Campustown. After the January 22nd report that evaluated the revenues related to the rate change, City Council directed staff to reduce all Downtown meters to \$0.50/hr based upon strong negative feedback from Downtown businesses. Because the direction was given during the winter, the conversion to the lower rate did not go into effect until March 20, 2019. It should be noted that the rates in Campustown have remained at the tiered rates.

2019 DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY:

Project timeline:

- April 5, 2019: Website sign-up for Downtown Parking Study updates
- April 25, 2019: Public Project Kick-Off
- May 1, 2019: Data Collection of Downtown Occupancy and Turnover Rates
- August 12, 2019: Initial Draft Study provided for staff review

- October 25, 2019: Steering Committee Meeting – Initial review of study recommendations with consulting team.
- November 6, 2019: City staff discussed the study with Downtown business owners at the Ames Main Street General Meeting held at Ames Main Street Offices.
- November 6, 2019: Steering Committee Meeting – finalize committee recommendations/response to the study
- November 25, 2019: Press Release notifying of Public Open House (on 12/2/19)
- December 2, 2019: Public Open House to review study recommendations
- December 3, 2019: Press Release – Reminder that public feedback ends December 6th
- December 17, 2019: Presentation of the final report to City Council

Summary of Public Comment (Attached in the Final Report):

- Website: 27 comments
- Public Meeting (12/2/19): 8 to 10 people in attendance, 3 left written comments
- Steering Committee Input & Comments

Steering Committee Members:

Purpose: To obtain feedback regarding the recommendations of the study from a group of businesses that represent Downtown with a diversity of type, employee-size, and geographic location within the CBD area.

- Drew Kamp – Ames Chamber, Director - Public Policy
- Sara Spohnheimer – The Frame Shop
- Kurt Jensen – First National Bank
- Eric Abrams – Duck Worth Wearing & the Loft
- Pat Breen – Aunt Maude's
- Damion Pregitzer – City of Ames, Traffic Engineer
- Kelly Diekmann – City of Ames, Planning Director

The following were asked to participate, but proposed an alternate representative:

- Mike Peterson – Emerhoff's Footwear
- Gary Youngberg – Ames Silversmithing
- Terry Stark – Chocolaterie Stam

PARKING STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Listed below is an abbreviated summary of the recommendations from the study. Also included are the responses to those recommendations by the members of the Steering Committee done on November 6, 2019. The committee either agrees with, modified, or does not agree with each of Walkers' recommendations.

- 1. Implement a short-term and long-term parking strategy that sets on-street time limits to three hours. Allocate CBD Lot X (62 of the 103 spaces existing 4-hour spaces) for long-term employee hangtag use.; the remaining stalls in CBD Lot X, Y, and Z become three hour free parking.**
 - Steering Committee Response: (Modified) Committee members feel strongly that the study supports that there is ample available parking such that the City can provide free long-term parking for employees in the Downtown CBD lots.

- 2. Maintain the existing employee parking hangtag program.**
 - Steering Committee Response: (Does Not Agree) Based on the response to recommendation no. 1 (above), the committee does not feel the hangtag program for Downtown employees is worth continuing because the study shows that there is adequate supply of parking (as of 2019).

- 3. Promote CBD Lot N, S, and Q as long-term parking; maintain the “Status Quo” in these lots.**
 - Steering Committee Response: (Agrees) Generally, the committee felt support for this philosophy because it appears to be working as-is (10-hr meters), and the study is recommending maintaining the 10-hour parking in these lots (i.e. “the status quo”).

- 4. Maintain existing sidewalks and public realm to promote greater walkability.**
 - Steering Committee Response: (Agrees) The committee agrees that walkability and walking safety should be a high priority for Downtown. They cited the Campustown Safety Walk as a model for something (or a version of it) they would like to see done on an annual basis in Downtown.

- 5. Consider a phased and incremental five-year parking rate strategy; the recommendation is to set meter rates to \$0.70/hr in FY 2022/23, \$0.90/hr in FY 2024/25 (district wide), and after that evaluate the needs for future rate increases.**

- Steering Committee Response: (Modified) The committee agrees that the evaluation of rates should be done on a bi-annual basis and that smaller incremental changes are preferred to significant rate increases.

However, they feel strongly that rates should only cover the operational costs of parking and that the capital improvements be funded in some other way. The only capital investment the committee members seemed to be in support of is transitioning to meters that take credit cards (directly, not through an app). These “smart” meters could also provide customer services such as real-time parking availability, and the City could be provided with continuous parking data.

6. Evaluate parking occupancies on-street and set target rates for occupancy (exceeding 85% occupancy would indicate the need for increasing rates in some or all areas to increase turnover and change patterns).

- Steering Committee Response: (Agrees) The committee generally agreed with Walker’s explanation that having target occupancies would be a good method to manage/evaluate Downtown parking. Other than what is shown in the report, no specific occupancy targets were discussed.

7. Consider 2nd violations fine increase.

- Steering Committee Response: (Modified) The committee did not have strong feelings regarding parking fines so long as a workable solution was found for employee parking. They did like the idea of having a parking ticket system that would allow for the first violation to be free, feeling that regulations can be confusing. Also, they agreed that the Police Department’s approach to evaluating fines is a well-established process and should continue as-is.

8. Form a Downtown Parking Advisory Committee.

- Steering Committee Response: (Agrees) The committee supports the idea of having an ongoing Downtown parking advisory committee to serve as a proactive way to discuss parking issues. The Ames Main Street was willing to take the lead on selecting a group of six to eight businesses to serve on the committee. City staff would be meeting annually with the group to discuss maintenance and safety issues, discuss the budget and any planned improvements (projects), and any potential rate changes (bi-annually) based on City Council’s policies.

POLICY ISSUES:

POLICY ISSUE NO. 1: DEFINE SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM PARKING; OPTIONS FOR EMPLOYEE PARKING IN DOWNTOWN

- The purpose of this policy is to provide a range of parking choices that support the majority of needs the Downtown (both customers and businesses alike).
- This policy issue relates to the parking study recommendations 1, 2, and 3 (above).

The turnover data within the Walker study shows that the majority of people parking in Downtown tend to be following the posted time limits of 2-hour, 4-hour, and 10-hour, respectively. However, the data collected shows in some areas (such as 5th Street) a desire for time limits longer than 2-hours based on the percent of overtime parking observed. Also, throughout the public input process, staff heard from business owners with a wide range of customer needs. Some have customers that may only require 10 to 20 minutes; others may require multiple hours to complete their shopping or appointments. The consensus was that customers should also be able to shop at multiple stores without concern of getting a ticket.

Walker indicated that the “sweet spot” for short-term parking is a 3-hour limit. In their experience, the 3-hour limit allows for most customers to finish their business while still promoting the healthy turnover of high-demand parking (on-street in front of businesses). It should be noted that the data would also indicate that a 3-hour limit would work for those areas that are currently marked as 4-hour limits as well. **Based on this information, the existing 2-hour and 4-hour limits should be changed to 3-hour parking** (short-term parking). This may also help to simplify regulations throughout the Downtown.

Long-term parking would then be defined as anything covering business hours. The limit should be set to capture the user needs without causing negative impacts on maintenance and operations of the parking system. This would also include discouraging the storing of vehicles. **Therefore, long-term could be defined as 10-hour parking (between 6 AM and 4 AM the following day), thus maintaining the over-night restriction of No Parking between the hours of 4 AM to 6 AM.**

Walker also looked at target occupancy rates for on-street and off-street (parking lots) parking. The study indicates that 85% occupancy is the “tipping point” for when a parking system becomes oversaturated and customers begin to struggle to find desirable parking near their destinations. Walker found that the average daily occupancy for the Downtown was 63% (Max peak observed CBD Lot Z = 82%; Min peak observed Lot Q = 18%), which would indicate that, for now, there is excess parking supply in the Downtown to meet demand. **Therefore, because the data shows the parking supply is below the 85% occupancy target, more spaces can be allocated for the long-term employee parking in the CBD lots.**

Finally, Walker's assessment of the employee hang-tag parking program is that it appears to be working well and that the City should consider keeping the program on a permanent basis. This is keeping with the concept listed under the "Parking Economics 101" that all parking in a CBD should have some cost. The report states, *"In providing parking to the downtown community, the City is administering a scarce resource that has intrinsic value and associated costs. Thus, parking should be viewed as an asset that requires continual stewardship to serve the goals of the downtown community"*. It also importantly notes that *"the City of Ames has identified a goal of creating a self-sustaining parking enterprise. In order to accomplish this, users must transition away from "free" parking with the actual costs of the system realized"*.

ALTERNATIVES FOR DESIGNATING SHORT- AND LONG-TERM PARKING:

- 1A. Establish a policy that defines short-term time limits as 3-hours and a long-term limit as 10-hours: convert on-street meters to 3-hour limit, maintain an Employee Hang-Tag system for Downtown at \$10/space/month in CBD Lot X only, thereby converting the remaining CBD lots (Y and Z) to 3-hour free parking and 24-hour Reserved.
- 1B. Establish a policy that defines short-term time limits as 3-hours and a long-term limit as 10-hours: convert on-street meters to 3-hour limit, abolish the Employee Hang-Tag program and establish CBD Lot X as 10-hour free parking; CBD Lots Y and Z would become 3-hour free and 24-hour Reserved.
- 1C. Establish a policy that defines short-term time limits as 3-hours and a long-term limit as 10-hours: convert on-street meters to 3-hour limit, abolish the Employee Hang-Tag program and establish CBD lots X, Y, and Z as 10-hour free parking on the southern half of the lots and 3-hour free parking on the northern half.

STAFF COMMENTS:

The short- and long-term time limits recommended by Walker appear to match with the user data collected during their study. The 3-hour and 10-hour time limits should cover most user needs while establishing a more simplified and easier to understand regulations. Under this approach, all on-street metered parking would be converted to 3-hour time limits, while metered parking lots would remain at the current 10-hour limit (status quo). **However, City Council direction needs to be given regarding the CBD parking lots X, Y, and Z, as to whether or not there should be a charge for employee parking.**

If City Council agrees with Walker's recommendation that the City continue to charge for employee parking in Downtown to better reflect the actual costs for maintaining the parking system, then staff would recommend moving forward with Alternative 1A shown above. The City would maintain the paid Employee Hang-Tag program at the current rate of \$10/space/month. This option would be most consistent with the current policy that the parking system should be self-funding.

If City Council agrees with the Steering Committee’s assessment of the parking data that because there is an excess of available parking (average occupancy < 85% in the CBD lots) employee parking can be free, staff would recommend moving forward with Alternative 1B or 1C. Under these alternatives, all 2-hour and 4-hour on-street metered parking would be converted 3-hour metered parking. CBD Lots X, Y and Z would be converted to 3-hour free, 10-hour free (to facilitate employee parking), and Reserved only in accordance with each option. Other metered parking lots in Downtown would remain as 10-hour parking (status quo). **However under this option, should the occupancy exceed the 85% threshold, City Council should be prepared to reconsider the free parking.**

POLICY ISSUE NO. 2: DEVELOP A PHASED AND INCREMENTAL RATE REVIEW POLICY FOR METER RATES, PERMIT, AND RESERVED PARKING, AND PARKING FINES.

- The purpose of this policy decision to create a framework for establishing rates that are updated in a timely manner and generate enough revenues to support the needs of the parking system.
- Responding to the parking study recommendations 5, 6, and 7.

As Walker outlines in the study, “If the City’s goal is to create a self-sustaining parking enterprise, it must contemplate increased meter rates over the long-term in order to maintain the existing parking infrastructure in a self-sustaining manner. If not, the burden of maintaining the existing system will fall on the general fund supported by Ames taxpayers. Previous rate increases were drastic, abrupt and uncoordinated, leaving stakeholders confused and unsatisfied. Walker believes that eventually rates will need to come up at some point in order to maintain the existing public parking service without creating an undue burden.”

The main issue under this policy is how to cover capital improvement costs. The current policy is that the Parking Fund should be self-sustaining, meaning it should not require General Obligation Bonds (taxes) or other funding sources such as Local Option Sales Tax or Road Use Tax Funds (which can only be used on parking within a street ROW). This policy was upheld by the City Council on January 22, 2019, under Question 3 of the staff report, when staff presented alternate options for funding.

The study indicates that the current break-even hourly rate is approximately \$1.50/hr based upon charging that rate for the 683 meters that exist today. However, it goes on to say that if the City considered charging a flat daily-rate for the CBD lot of \$3.00/day the break-even meter rate could drop to approximately \$1.22/hr. **It should be noted that offering free parking will make areas of paid parking more expensive because all parking areas have similar maintenance and enforcement costs.**

As far as comparable cities meter rates, historically, it has been treated as a “ceiling” such that Ames does not price itself over the market value, unless the needs of the system justify a higher rate. **The study advises keeping the current rates of \$0.50/hour** for now and considering increases to \$0.70/hour in FY 2022/23 and \$0.90/hour in FY 2024/25 (Walker recommends that the bi-annual adjustment not exceed a 40% change, if increasing rates).

ALTERNATIVES FOR RATE ADJUSTMENTS:

- 2A. Direct staff to adjust all parking rates and fees (maximum 40% increase) on a bi-annual basis beginning in FY 2022/23. **Delay any final decision on whether or not to cover both operational and capital costs from parking fee revenues only until staff develops within the next two years a long-range plan for parking system capital improvements.** This plan would cover the needs of the entire parking system.
- 2B. Direct staff to adjust all parking rates and fees (maximum 40% increase) on a bi-annual basis beginning in FY 2022/23, such that estimated revenues cover all anticipated **operational and capital costs** of the parking system. The evaluation for the needs of the parking system would take place in the previous fiscal year.
- 2C. Direct staff to adjust all parking rates and fees (maximum 40% increase) on a bi-annual basis beginning in FY 2022/23, such that estimated revenues cover all anticipated **operational costs only** of the parking system. Staff would make recommendations for how to pay for capital costs on a project-by-project basis. The evaluation for the needs of the parking system would take place in the previous fiscal year.

STAFF COMMENTS:

Staff recommends that under any alternative, City Council not change parking meter rates at this time. Over fiscal years 2020/21 and 2021/22, staff would conduct a data driven evaluation of the parking lot conditions to develop a long-range strategy for both future operations and capital improvement expenditures for the parking system. With this information, staff will be able to analyze if debt-financing the capital improvements can be feasibly covered through the projected bi-annual rate adjustments. **Therefore, at this time City Council does not have to decide whether or not the Parking Fund can be self-supporting, including the capital needs of the system, which is reflected in Alternative 2A.**

POLICY ISSUE NO. 3: ESTABLISH A DOWNTOWN PARKING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- The purpose of this policy is to create a district-specific public engagement strategy to enhance the ongoing communication between the City and the Downtown.
- Responding to the parking study recommendations 4 and 8.

The one item that was universally supported by Walker, the Steering Committee, and other Downtown businesses, was that an ongoing Downtown advisory committee was a good idea. Not only would such a group be able to discuss issues facing Downtown proactively, but it would serve as a way to help prioritize operational and maintenance needs. It may also help to plan for various improvements to infrastructure in the Downtown. For example, City staff meets annually with the Ames Bicycle Coalition to help make recommendations on how the City prioritizes investment in bike infrastructure.

From the study, “Walker recommends meeting on an annual basis to discuss parking trends and issues in downtown Ames. The committee would not have any official government capacity but could serve as a clearinghouse for the exchange of information and ideas. The meetings would serve as an opportunity to help the City deliver on its brand promise to provide parking turnover and availability to support downtown businesses and to assist the City roll out public relations campaigns for downtown parking program improvements. The Advisory Committee can help educate their patrons and members on the benefits of any coordinated policy actions and provide the City direct feedback on implementation.”

The study goes on to say, *“The goal is to forge a valuable public-private partnership that advises, improves public communications, and balances the needs of the downtown parking system for the benefit of all users.”*

ALTERNATIVES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WITH DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES:

- 3A. Direct staff to work with the Ames Main Street to establish an ongoing Downtown Parking Advisory Committee (meeting annually)
- 3B. Maintain the current practice of engaging Downtown on a project-by-project basis.

STAFF COMMENTS:

The Ames Main Street (Ames Chamber) is willing to take the lead on selecting the advisory committee members. City staff could present a report to the committee at the start of each budget cycle (sometime in late September or early October). It would not be a significant effort to present an update to the Downtown on budget issues or any planned projects in the upcoming year. It would also be a good time to conduct a review of safety and maintenance issues in Downtown so that they can be accounted for in the budget or

CIP. Therefore, staff supports working with this informal advisory committee of Ames Main Street.

Ames Main Street has put together an initial proposal for the Advisory Committee membership beginning September/October 2020:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>
Eric Abrams	Duckworth Wearing/The Loft
Pat Breen	Maude's
Kurt Jensen	First National Bank
Sara Spohnheimer	The Frame Shop
Gary Youngberg	Ames Silversmithing
Drew Kamp	Ames Main Street
Mindy Bergstrom	Cooks Emporium/Nook and Nest
Eliz Erbes	AVEC Design Build
Andrea Dahlberg	Dahlberg Portraits

It should be emphasized that this group is not an official committee of the City and would only provide feedback to Public Works staff regarding issues related to the parking system only.

PARKING RAMP FEASIBILITY:

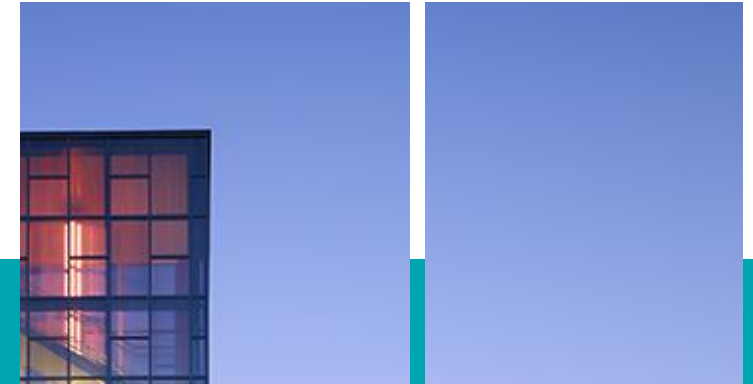
To address the issue of supply directly, Walker also conducted site feasibility and estimated a per-space cost for structured parking on Lot N (across from City Hall) and CBD Lot X (south of Wells Fargo). These two sights were chosen due to their potential to maximize the efficient use of space given the dimensional requirements of a multilevel parking ramp. The rule of thumb is structure parking should cost between \$20,000 and \$22,000 per space. However, Lot N was found to have a net cost of approximately \$33k/space, and CBD Lot X was found to have a net cost of approximately \$41k/space. The net cost per space of \$30k-\$40k would be considered a premium price for additional parking (if the sole purpose was for more parking spaces). **Therefore, because currently there is a sufficient amount of parking spaces in the Downtown area, the projected per space cost for the parking ramp is excessively high, and feedback from the public indicates that customers are not willing to pay the increased fees necessary to build structured parking, a parking ramp is not justified at this time.**



WALKER
CONSULTANTS

DOWNTOWN AMES PARKING STUDY FINAL PRESENTATION - DRAFT

December 17, 2019



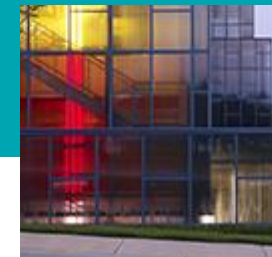
BUILDING ENVELOPE

FORENSIC RESTORATION

PARKING DESIGN

PARKING & MOBILITY

OPERATIONS & TECHNOLOGY



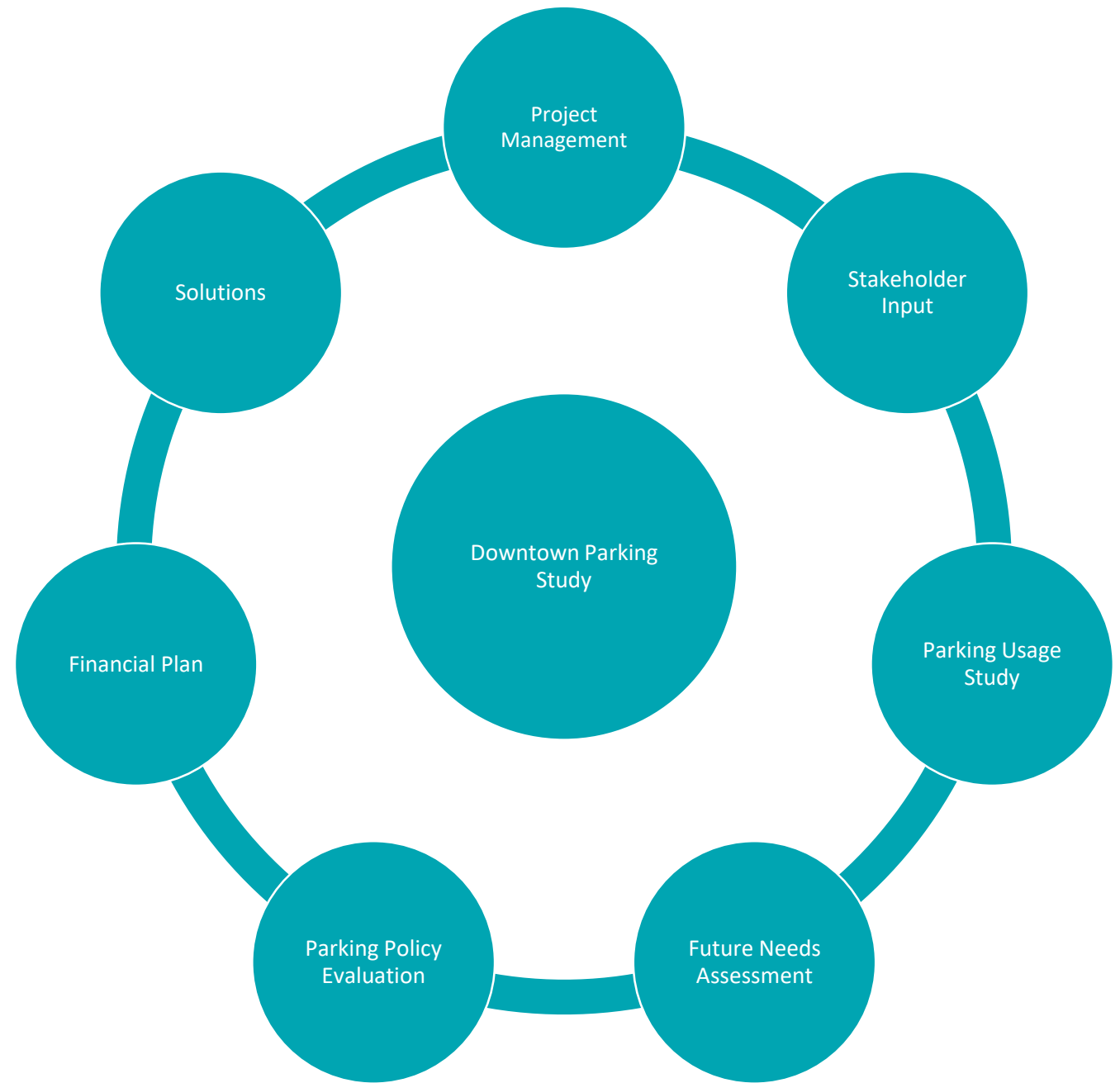
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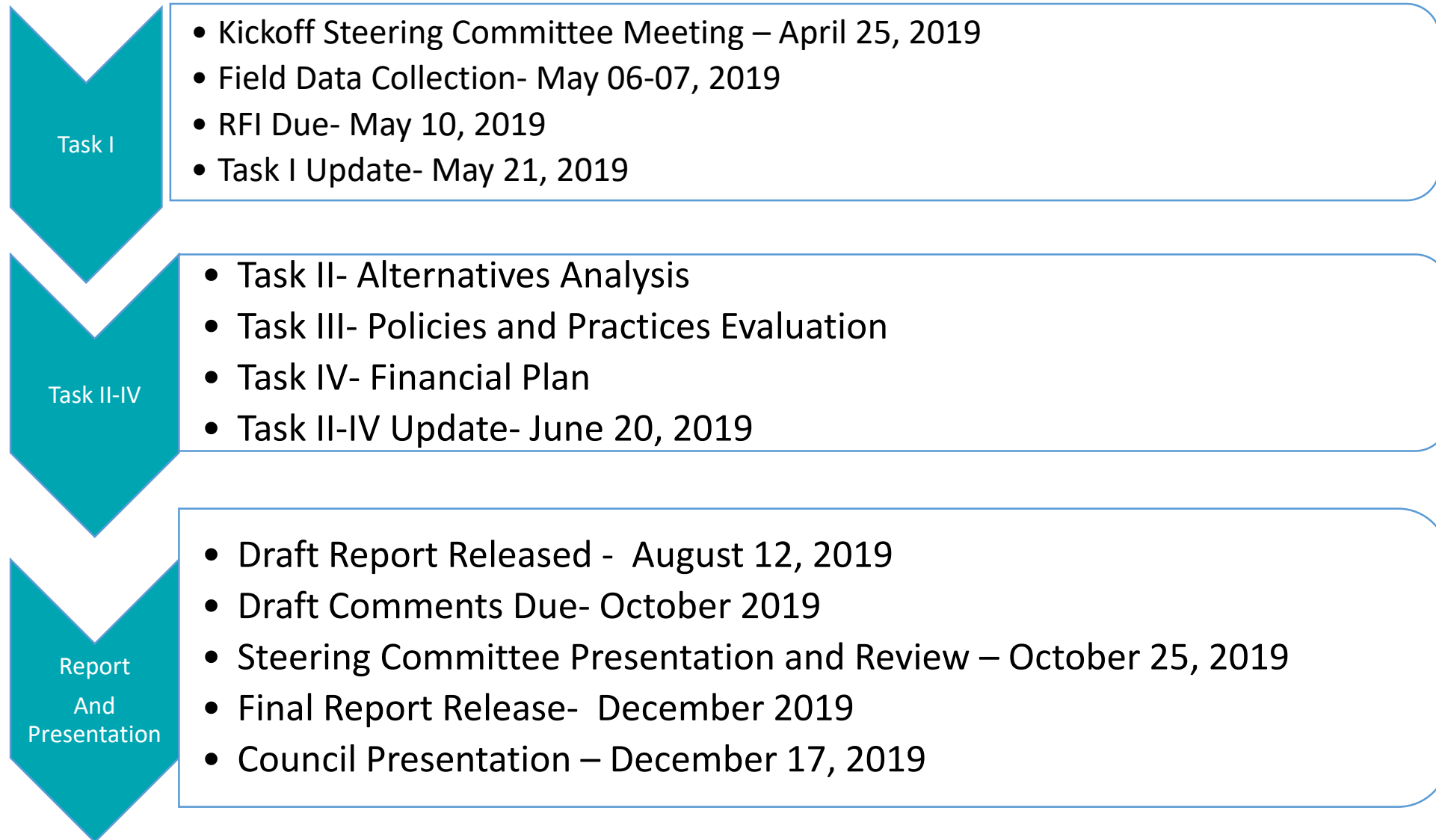
Project Overview	Supply- Demand Study	Parking Alternatives
Policy and Program Evaluation	Parking Financial Analysis	Recommendations

STUDY PROCESS

- I. Supply and Demand Study
- II. Alternatives Analysis
- III. Policies and Practices
- IV. Financial Plan
- V. Recommendations



STUDY SCHEDULE



STAKEHOLDER INPUT

- Walker conducted a stakeholder/ steering committee workshop **April 25, 2019** to **identify issues** related to parking, **document the existing user experience** with the parking system, and **convene a group** of downtown leaders to **enhance communications** and **articulate common goals** for downtown parking.
- The general group consensus is that parking space availability is typically not an issue in the downtown, however, **there are peak hours of the day and days of the week in which parking space availability can become an issue on a block-to-block basis.**
- **Goal is to maintain public parking access and space availability for customers and employees downtown.**

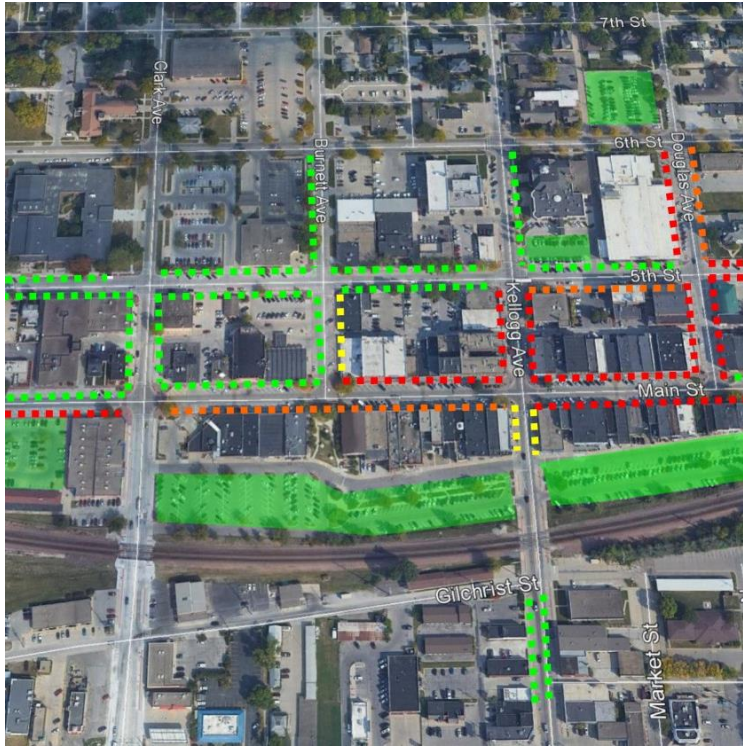
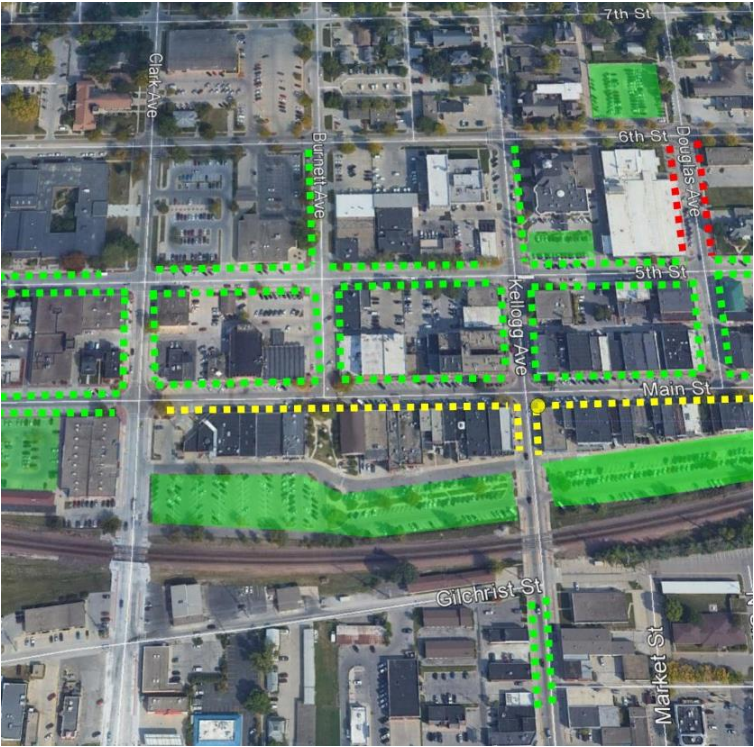
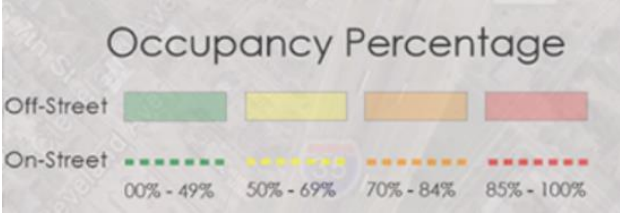
PARKING INVENTORY

- A total of 1,187 spaces were inventoried across the Study Area
- On street = 450 spaces
- Off-street = 737 spaces

onstreet 2-hr.	144
onstreet 4-hr.	278
onstreet ADA	20
onstreet 10 min, free	8
Onstreet sub-total	450
Off-street, 2-hr. lot	83
Off-street, 4-hr. lot	183
Off-street, 10-hr. lot	126
Off-street, reserved 24 hr.	140
10 min. free	8
free parking no time limit	180
ADA	17
Off-street sub-total	737
TOTAL	1,187

For purposes of our analysis Lot M (City Hall) was excluded from the inventory and peak hour observation.

PARKING OCCUPANCY



■ 9:00 AM Occupancy = 39%

■ 1:00 PM Occupancy = 50%

■ 6:00 PM Occupancy = 45%

At the peak hour, Walker observed over 599 vacant spaces

PEAK HOUR 1:30 PM OCCUPANCY

Lot ID	Inventory	1:30 PM	Occupancy %
Lot MM (City Hall)	54	16	30%
Downtown Lot N (City Hall)	86	29	34%
Downtown Lot Q (Library)	84	15	18%
Lot S (Kellogg)	30	7	23%
Downtown Lot V (Depot)	126	53	42%
Downtown Lot X (CBD)	120	80	67%
Downtown Lot Y (CBD)	96	73	76%
Downtown Lot Z (CBD)	141	115	82%

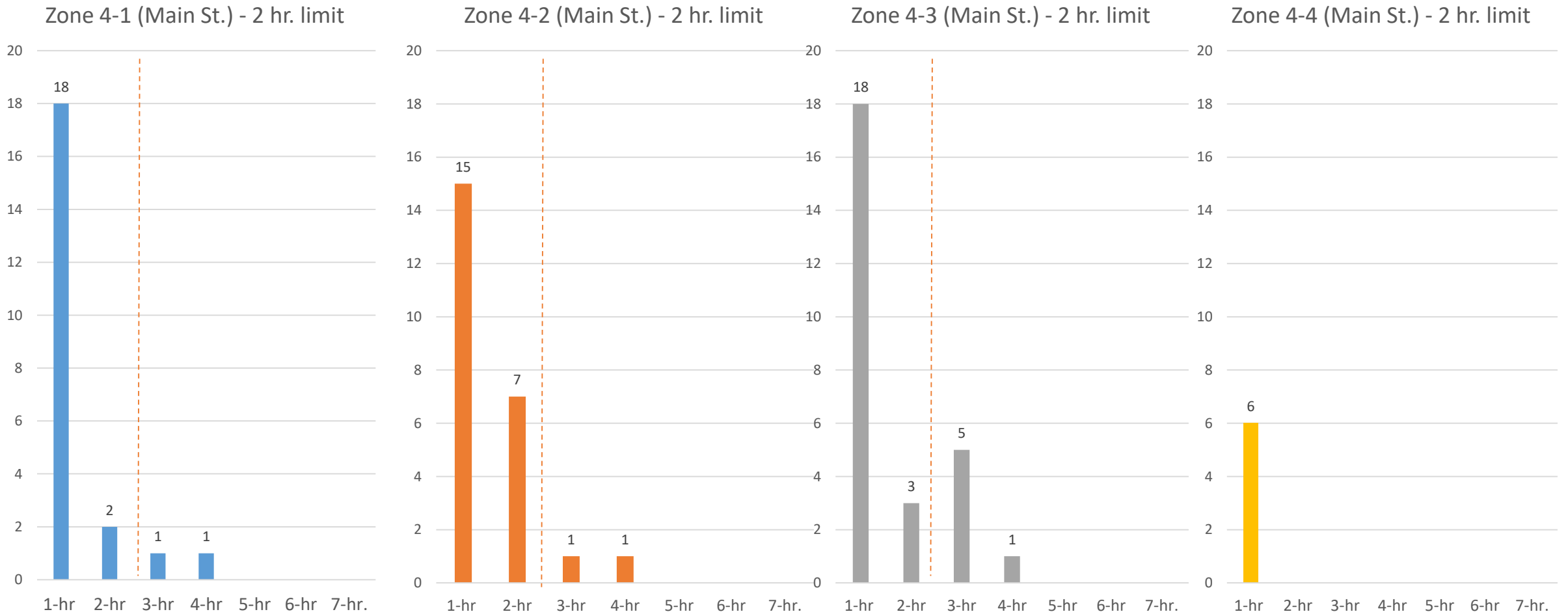
TURNOVER AND DURATION ANALYSIS

- Walker performed a turnover and duration survey using a license plate recognition (LPR) camera based system
- A route was driven between the enforcement hours of 9 am to 6 pm on Thursday May 02, 2019
- License plates were recorded across on street block faces and off-street facilities on the hour
- Parked vehicle dwell time was ascertained by plate read, time stamp, and geolocation

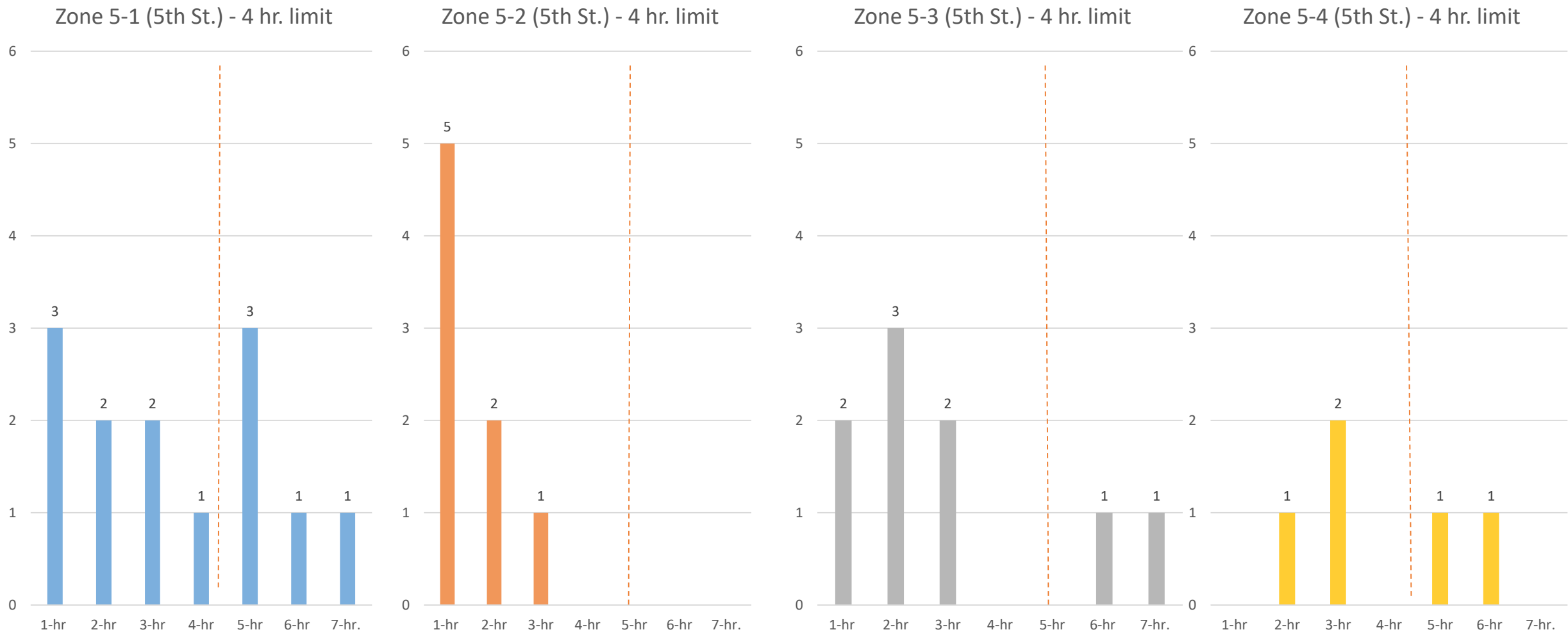


Mounted camera based system

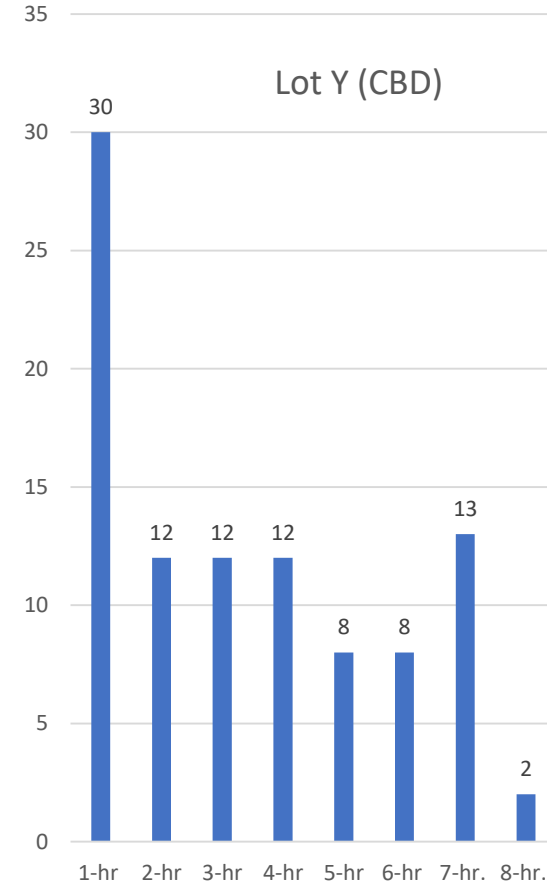
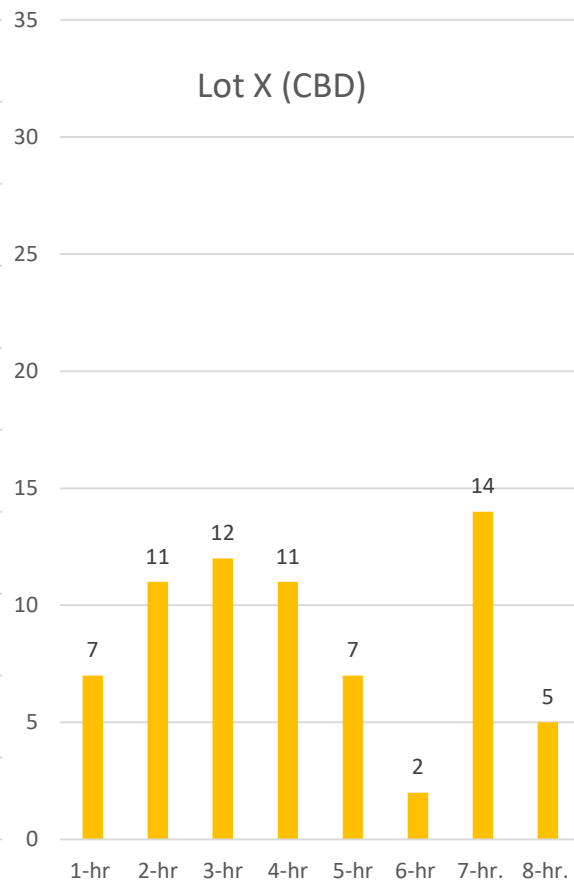
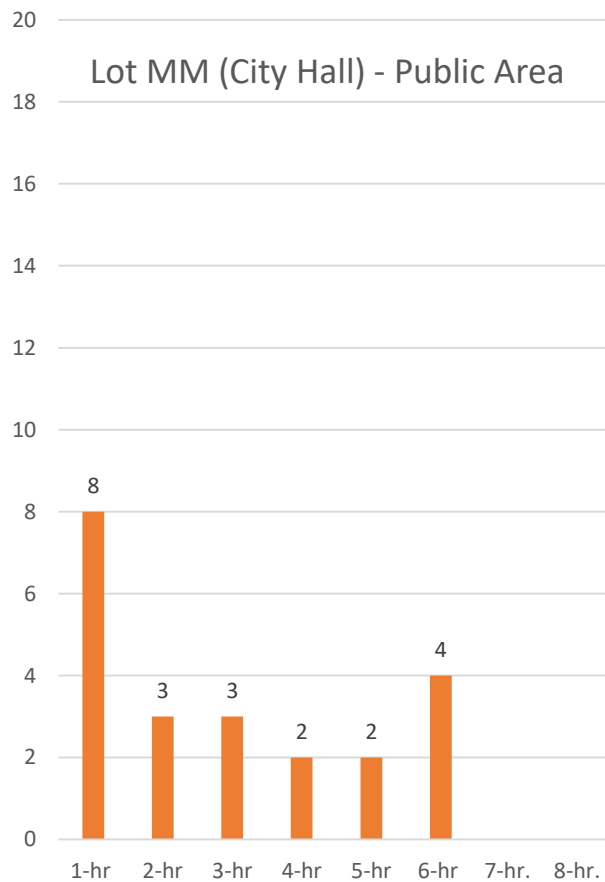
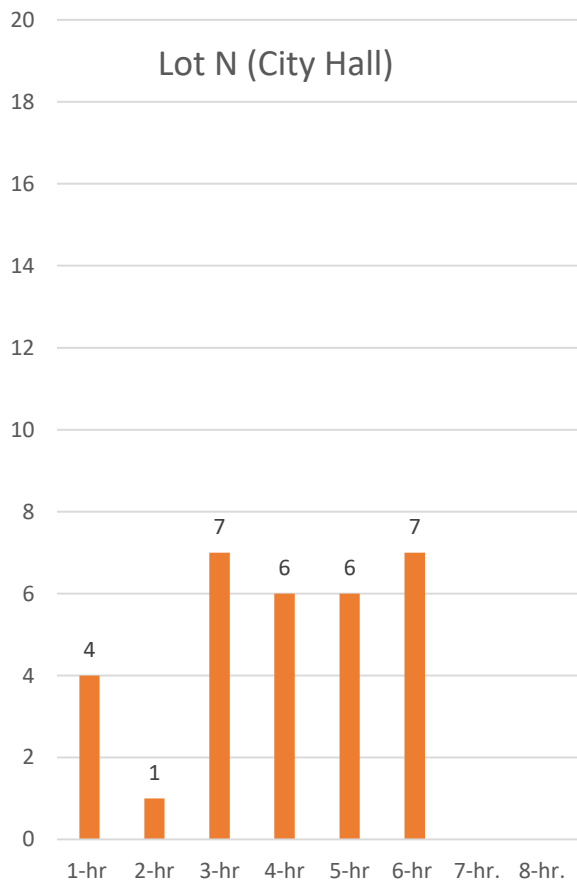
MOST VEHICLES ARE DWELLING FOR TWO HOURS OR LESS ON MAIN ST., ADHERING TO POSTED ONSTREET TIME LIMITS



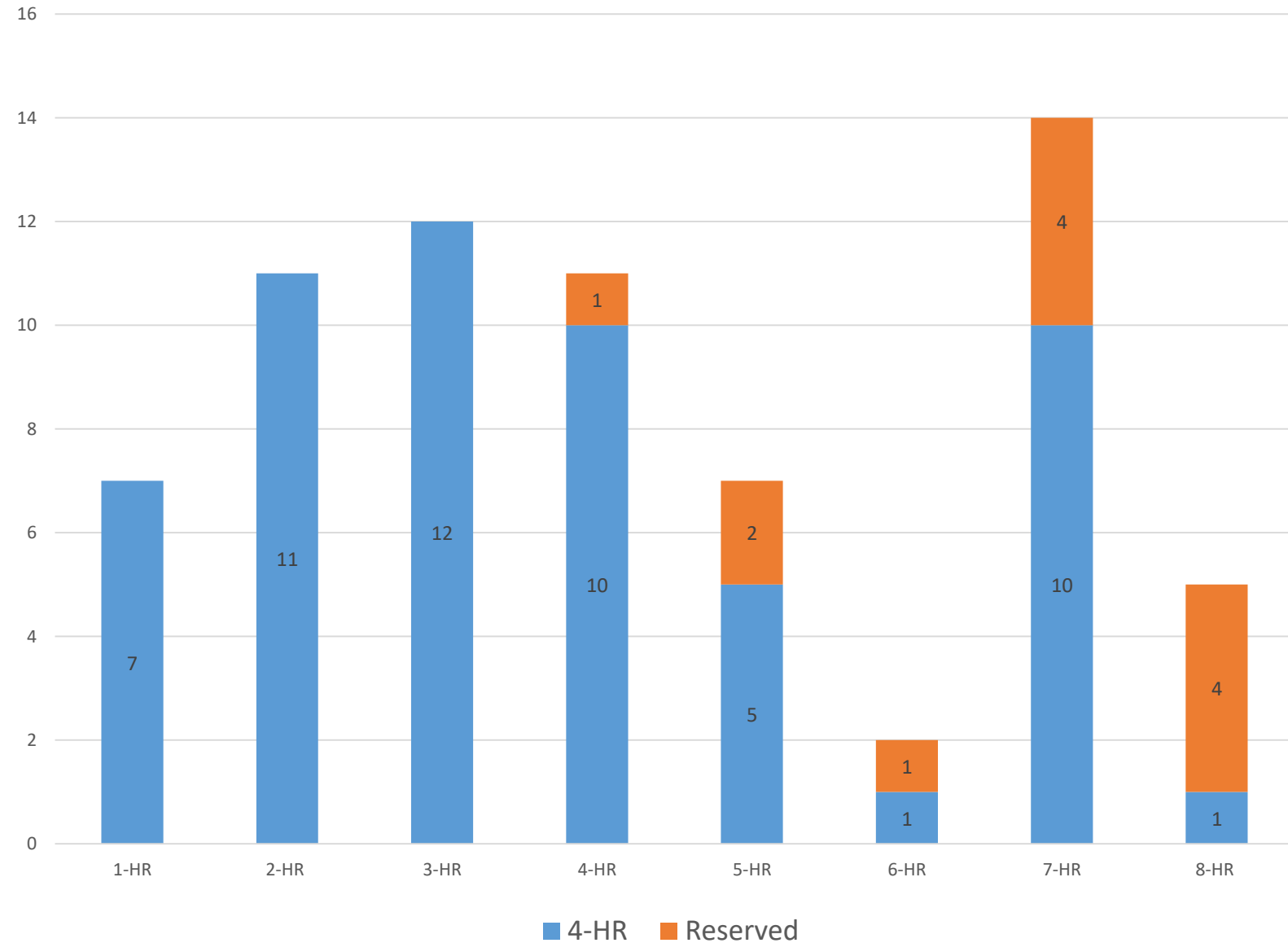
ZONE 5-1 SAW THE HIGHEST RATE OF OVER-STAY VEHICLES ONSTREET



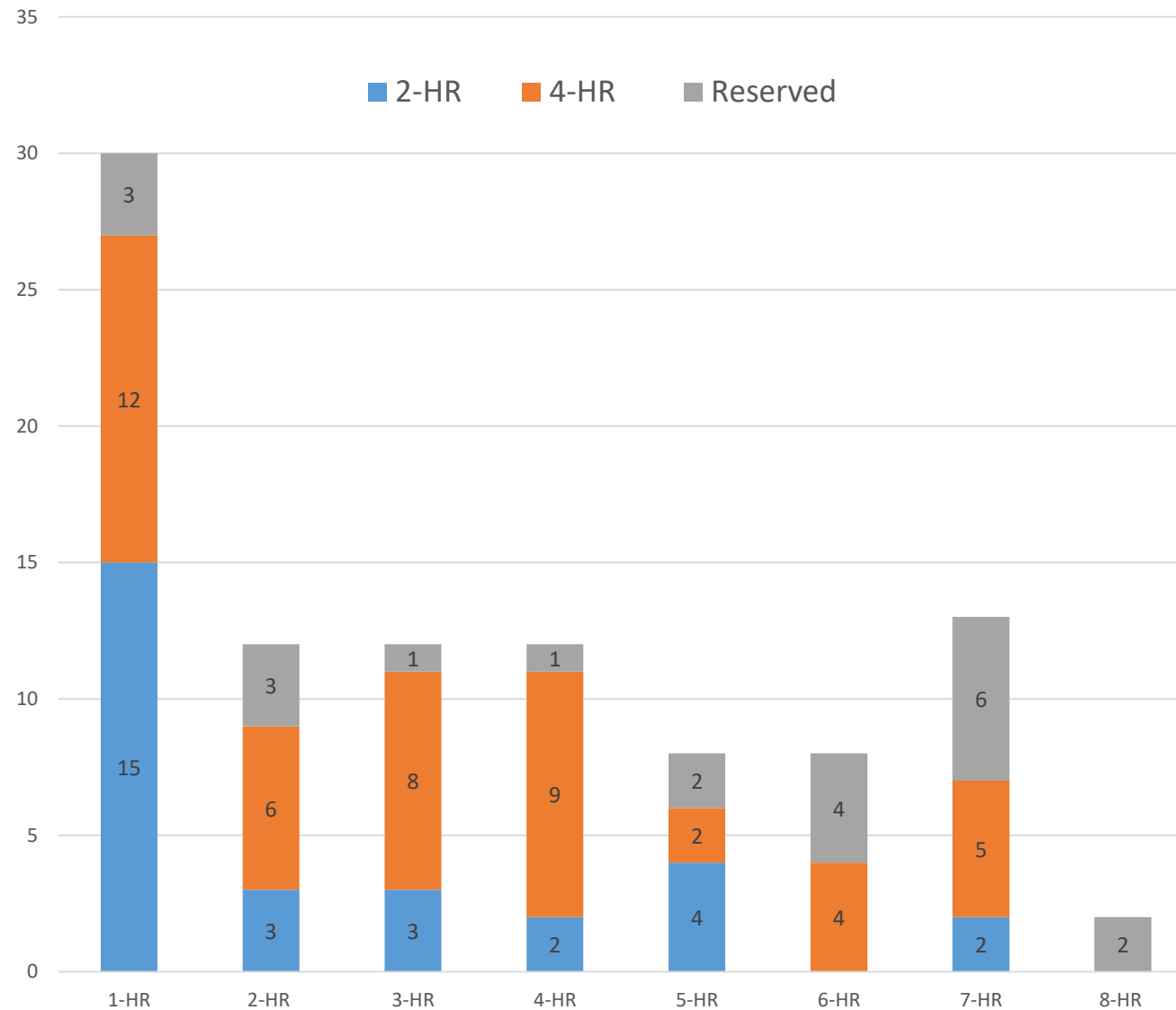
OFF-STREET LOTS ARE GENERALLY SUPPORTING LONG-TERM PARKING, CARS PARKED GREATER THAN TWO HOURS



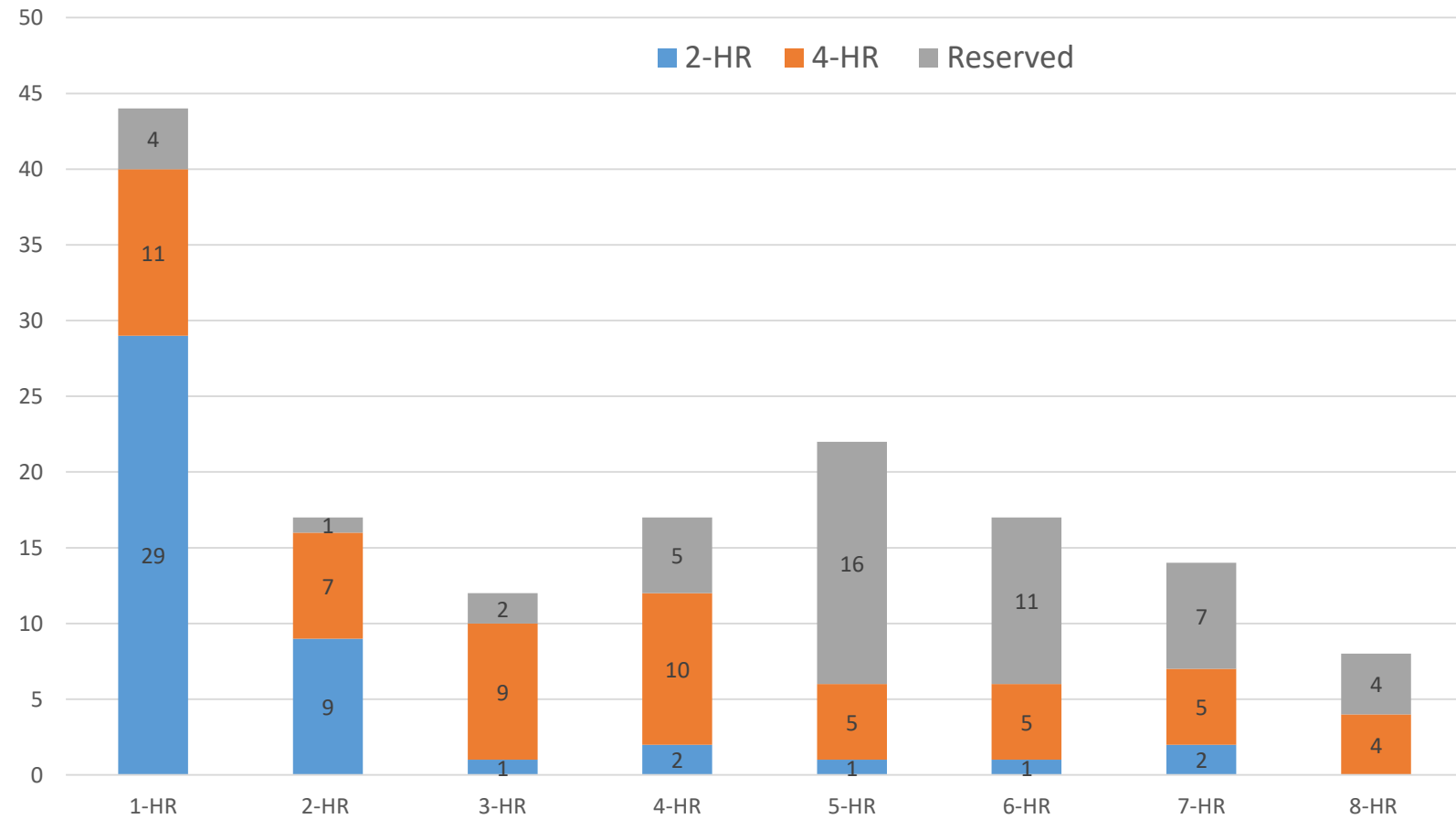
CBD LOT X PROVIDES 4-HR AND RESERVED SPACES



CBD LOT Y PROVIDES 2-HR, 4-HR, AND RESERVED SPACES



CBD LOT Z HAS A MIX OF 2-HR, 4-HR AND RESERVED SPACES



Parking Program Evaluation and Alternatives Analysis

KEY PROGRAM EVALUATION FINDINGS

- ✓ **The existing enforcement program is creating parking turnover and space availability.**
- ✓ The City of Ames parking program is keeping pace with industry standards in technology and customer service with smart card meters and mobile payment options.
- ✓ The City maintains adequate parking wayfinding and signage and markets public parking online
- Employee parking needs are not sufficiently being met with the existing time limit mix of two-hour, four-hour, ten-hour and reserved spaces across existing CBD lots.

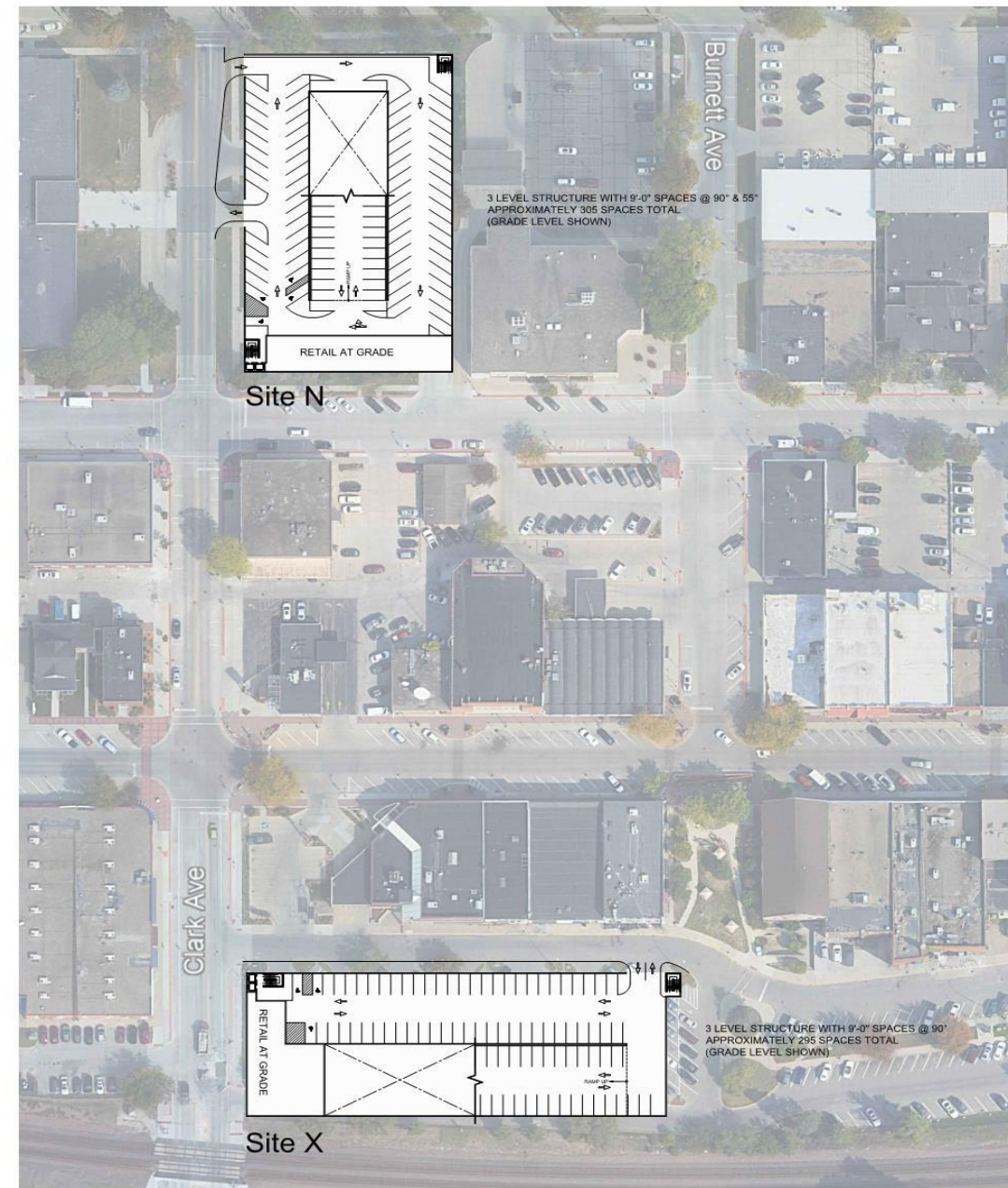


PARKING STRUCTURE FEASIBILITY

- Walker considered future demand scenarios and concluded that the parking system has enough existing capacity to absorb an additional demand for parking 479 spaces.
- In consideration of future needs, Walker explored the feasibility of a parking structure in the CBD, evaluating the two most suitable sites considering efficiency, potential limits and benefits, and order of magnitude costs.
- **Walker is not recommending a parking structure in the CBD at this time.**

SITE N AND SITE X

	Weight	Site N Garage		Site X Garage	
		Rating	Score	Rating	Score
Proximity/ Walking Distance	4	1	4	4	16
Construction Costs	4	2	8	2	8
Cost per Net Space Gained	5	2	10	1	5
Location	5	2	10	5	25
Land Availability	4	5	20	5	20
Traffic Impact	3	4	12	2	6
Mixed- Use Potential	4	3	12	3	12
Aesthetics	2	3	6	3	6
Increased Capacity	4	2	8	1	4
Temporary Displacement	4	2	8	2	8
Site Wayfinding	3	3	9	3	9
Total			107		119



OPINION ON PROBABLE COSTS

	Site N Parking structure	Site X Parking structure
Proposed Capacity	345 spaces	295 spaces
Net Capacity	259 spaces	175 spaces
Total Costs	\$8.62 M	7.36 M
Net Costs per space	\$33,281	\$41,150

Parking Financial Analysis

PARKING ECONOMICS 101

- **The City of Ames has identified a goal of creating a self-sustaining parking enterprise. Currently, the public parking program is not self-sustaining.**
- There is fundamentally no such thing as a “free” parking space, costs are either born directly or indirectly by users, the public and/or the downtown community at large.
- In providing parking to the public, the City is administering a scarce resource that has intrinsic value and associated costs.
- The City of Ames provides free hourly off-street parking on a time enforced basis with on-street meter rates applied.
- Parking hourly rates, according to base modeling assumptions applied, would need to be an estimated \$1.50 per hour for the City to “break-even” or keep pace with expenditures.

PARKING RATE MODEL

- **Walker created a revenue model to establish a conceptual “break-even” rate for the parking system.**
- If rates are not implemented off-street and on-street rates only are applied, with an escalation period of five years, a meter rate of \$1.50 per hour would be required to break even over a five-year period.
- If off-street rates are adopted over a five year period, assuming a rate of \$3 per day is charged at 266 existing two-hour and four-hour spaces at CBD Lot X,Y and Z, a potential off-street revenue of approximately \$140,000 could be realized if modeling assumptions are met. Two revenue sources, on-street and off-street fees, could bring a lower break even amount of \$1.22 per hour.
- Currently, a benchmark of Iowa peer cities found an average hourly rate of \$0.86 in FY 2019.

Recommendations

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Implement a short-term and long-term parking strategy that sets on-street time limits to three hours; allocate CBD Lot X for long-term employee hang tag use.
2. Maintain the existing 4-hr. employee parking hang tag program; evaluate the long-term feasibility of rates at lot x, Y, and Z.
3. Promote CBD Lot N, S and Q as long term parking maintaining the status quo arrangement.
4. Maintain existing sidewalks and public realm to promote greater walkability.
5. Increase fine schedule for violators.
6. Consider a phased and incremental five-year meter strategy.
7. Evaluate parking occupancies on-street and set target rates for occupancy.
8. Form a Downtown Parking Advisory Committee.

Q&A



December 13, 2019

Damion Pregitzer, P.E., PTOE
Traffic Engineer/ Airport Manager
515 Clark Avenue
Ames, IA 50010

Re: *Downtown Ames Parking Study Final Report*
Walker Project No. 21-4494.00

Dear Damion,

Walker is pleased to submit the following final report of our parking study for Downtown Ames, Iowa. The study includes a summary of our study process, a parking supply-demand analysis, a review of existing program policies and practices, and a preliminary financial and parking structure site feasibility assessment with recommendations for City consideration provided herein.

We hope that our analysis assists you in planning for the growth of the parking system to accommodate the parking needs of multiple users including visitors and employees.

We appreciate the opportunity to be of service to you on this project. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

WALKER CONSULTANTS

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John W. Dorsett".

John Dorsett, AICP, CPP
Senior Vice President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Garza".

David Garza
Analyst

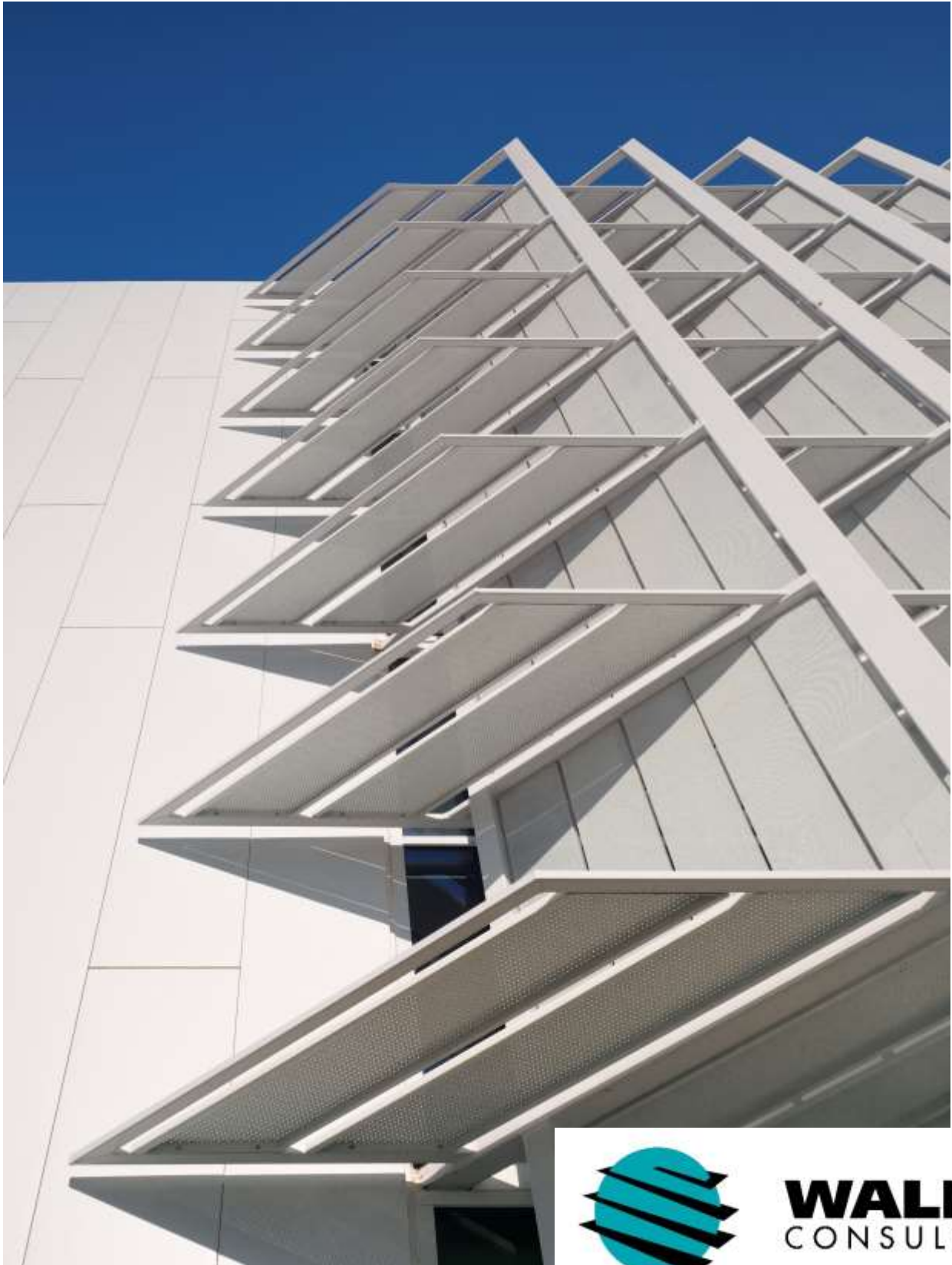


FINAL REPORT

Downtown Ames Parking Study

December 13, 2019

Damion Pregitzer, P.E., PTOE
Traffic Engineer/ Airport Manager
City of Ames



WALKER
CONSULTANTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Downtown continues on its trajectory of redevelopment, civic leaders understand that parking and access remain a critical part of the Downtown's continued success. To address existing user challenges comprehensively and formulate a plan for the downtown, civic leaders issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) in early 2019 seeking the help of a qualified firm to deliver a Downtown Parking Study ("Study"). The City of Ames ("City") selected Walker Consultants ("Walker") to deliver a downtown parking study for the City.

The Study herein provides downtown stakeholders and the community at-large with strategies and tools to address and improve the user parking experience downtown as well as ensure that downtown parking assets are managed in a way that reflects the primary goals and needs of the community.

The Study Team divided its work into the following five key areas:

- Step One: Discovery/Stakeholder Input
- Step Two: Supply/Demand Analysis
- Step Three: Review of Parking Policy and Practices
- Step Four: Alternatives Analysis
- Step Five: Recommendations and Implementation

To understand the unique user issues and challenges of the existing parking system, the City and Walker formulated a downtown parking advisory committee which received critical stakeholder input and feedback for this Study in late April 2019. The committee provided the Walker Study Team with overarching goals and questions for the Study to evaluate. Chief among these are the following:

- Is the parking inventory adequate to meet existing and future user needs;
- Are parkers adhering to posted parking enforcement rules and regulations;
- Are parking spaces turning over as intended creating parking space availability;
- Is there a plan to address employee parking in the downtown, and, is employee parking a limiting factor on future downtown growth;
- How can the downtown parking system accommodate both short-term and long-term parking users;
- What are the ongoing financial requirements to maintain a public parking system;
- Can the public parking program be self-sustaining or will it require continued public subsidy;
- How does parking fit within the overall goals of the downtown community; and
- What are the more long-range parking infrastructure considerations that need to be addressed by the downtown community?

We believe that the issues addressed in our Study are representative of the community and downtown stakeholders and provide the context for our recommendations. In addition to qualitative data received via stakeholder input, Walker also collected formal parking inventory and occupancy data to quantify the level of parking activity downtown and observe first-hand existing conditions. In addition, Walker performed a parking turnover and duration survey to understand how parking users are interacting with posted rules and regulations, quantifying the efficacy of the parking enforcement program.

Across a sixteen-block downtown study area, Walker surveyed approximately 1,187 parking spaces available for public use. The user availability of the spaces is as follows:

- On-Street Spaces – 450 spaces
- Public Off-Street Facilities – 737 spaces

Occupancy counts were performed for a typical weekday. **Overall utilization peaked across the afternoon hours, between 1-3 p.m. when total occupancy observed equaled 50 percent. While the Study Team observed over 599 vacant spaces across the study area, parking “hot-spots” were observed in select areas.**

Key Findings:

- Overall, there is an ample number of existing parking spaces downtown available for public use, however “hot-spots” and a **low walking-distance tolerance are shaping public opinion about parking problems.**
- Utilization at Downtown CBD Lots X, Y, and Z, strategically located behind the Main Street retail corridor, saw utilization rates between 67 to 82 percent at the peak hour, indicating high usage, but, with spaces still available. On the other hand, existing surface lots across the CBD periphery saw utilization rates below 50 percent at the peak hour (CBD Lots N, Q, S, V).
- On-street two-hour parking along Main Street similarly saw utilization rates between 60 to 80 percent, depending upon block face, at the peak hour.
- Vehicles are generally adhering to the posted time limits with parking spaces turning over as intended, however, parking “hot-spot” areas of “over-stayed” vehicles were found through a turnover and duration survey.
- CBD Lots X and Z have a concentration of short-term use of one-hour-only stays, indicating that customers and visitors are utilizing these facilities. Moreover, survey results also suggest employee parking for three hours or more.
- With a few notable exceptions, surface lots are generally supporting more long-term parking usage, defined as three hours or more.
- **The existing enforcement program is creating parking turnover and space availability.**
- The City of Ames parking program is keeping pace with industry standards in technology and customer service with smart card meters and mobile payment options.
- **Employee parking needs are not sufficiently being met with the existing time limit mix of two-hour, four-hour, ten-hour and reserved spaces across existing CBD lots.**
- The existing public parking program expenditures are exceeding revenues and are not on course to “break even” under existing market conditions.
- The construction of a parking structure in the existing market could not economically support itself with user fees and would therefore require significant public subsidy. Given the high parking-space availability and high cost of this option, **Walker is not recommending the construction of a parking structure in the Ames CBD at the present time.**
- Parking rates are only assessed at on-street meters in the CBD. With the exception of reserved parking in surface lots, off-street parking is provided at no cost to the user. Moreover, based on the results of this study, we understand that the downtown community is sensitive to significant rate increases to hourly parking.

PARKING ECONOMICS 101

Walker finds that a general overview of parking is first needed to establish a context for decision-making regarding the parking system. **Fundamentally, there is no such thing as a free parking space. At the end of the day, someone is paying both directly and indirectly the true costs of “free” parking.** If parkers are not paying directly than who is?

- Developers pay for parking when they are required to meet off-street parking zoning requirements which raises project costs which are passed along to end consumers of their product.
- Employers pay through higher office rents.
- Consumers pay in the sales price of goods and services; retailers pass along costs to consumers.
- The community pays through taxes levied for the delivery of services including downtown parking.

In providing parking to the downtown community, the City is administering a scarce resource that has intrinsic value and associated costs. Thus, parking should be viewed as an asset that requires continual stewardship to serve the goals of the downtown community.

Moreover, The City of Ames has identified a goal of creating a self-sustaining parking enterprise. In order to accomplish this, users must transition away from “free” parking with the actual costs of the system realized.

There are two primary reasons why communities decide to adopt parking rates. **The first is to induce human behavior using economics.** Users of the parking system will quickly modify their parking behaviors if they incur costs in the form of user fees. For instance, if rates are charged for on-street parking, employees will be motivated to find long-term parking areas that are either less expensive or free, keeping prime spots available for business patrons. Most users will see the convenience of nearby on-street parking and opt to pay the rates, while a small percentage might not be willing to pay and will go out of the way to find free parking farther away. This balances parking utilization to address the supply and demand challenges. (Time limits also often influence the behavior of parking patrons.)

The second reason a city chooses to adopt rates is to create a self-sustaining parking enforcement program. The intention is not to create a profit center from parking revenues, but to pool revenues into a self-sustaining parking auxiliary fund that resources parking administration to include the debt service and maintenance requirements of all existing public parking facilities. On-street meter rates, surface lot and parking structure rates, if there are parking structures in the system, all comprise potential parking revenue sources. **The revenues of one source alone are often insufficient to cover total parking system costs. One strategy Walker has seen employed in numerous public parking programs across the country is for revenues to be pooled together from multiple parking assets in the public parking portfolio.**

The City has chosen to provide free parking access across existing public lots on a timed hourly basis, however, there are costs to maintaining these facilities. Foregoing hourly rates across public lots, the City has chosen to adopt rates on street; \$0.50 an hour for all metered spaces inside the CBD.

It is unlikely that the revenue that the City is foregoing by providing users with free hourly surface lot parking can be made with on-street meter revenue and that the system can “break even” increasing only meter rates.

Walker evaluated actual 2017 rates at \$0.20 per hour, before policy changes went into effect. For FY 2019, we have estimated potential meter revenues assuming the \$0.50 hourly rate and an average daily occupancy of 48 percent, assuming a modest decrease in occupancy in this period. If hourly meter rates increase incrementally by 40 percent over a three-year and five-year period, a rate of \$0.90 per hour could eventually be realized. However, **actual “break-even” hourly rates estimated will likely be above \$0.90 per hour by FY 2025. Making broad market assumptions regarding revenue and expenditure growth over a five-year period, a meter rate “break-even” of \$1.50 per hour is estimated with the following list of assumptions made:**

- Assumes rate increase applied across **683 CBD meters only**;
- No surface lot rates are applied by FY 2025;
- Expenditure CAGR of 2 percent per annum;
- Assumes no increases from other parking fund revenue categories;
- Assumes an average daily occupancy rate of 39 percent;
- Assumes approximately \$50 per space per annum estimated is set aside into a sinking fund for capital improvements including meter hardware replacement, enforcement technology equipment replacement, crack sealing and asphalt lot resurfacing, major parking signage replacement and other miscellaneous capital requirements. [\$62,650 estimated annualized sinking fund placement].

If off-street rates are adopted, meter “break-even” rates would likely be lower than what is estimated above for on-street.

Assuming, for modeling purposes that by FY 2025, rates are implemented off-street at CBD Lot X, Y and Z, and, that 266 existing two-hour and four-spaces charge a flat daily rate of \$3.00 per day for 302 days out of the year with an estimated average daily occupancy rate of 58 percent, an off-street revenue of approximately \$139,778 is estimated if the above assumptions are met. An additional off-street CBD lot revenue source could potentially bring on-street daily “break-evens” to \$1.22, if the above assumptions are met.

Walker performed a peer cities hourly meter rate survey and found an average hourly rate of \$0.86 used to inform our rate analysis model. In five years our model assumes rates can normalize just above the peer cities current average identified to \$0.90 an hour.

To ameliorate user-challenges and enhance the existing public parking program, Walker recommends that stakeholders consider the following series of recommendations.

1. **IMPLEMENT A SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM PARKING STRATEGY THAT SETS ON-STREET TIME LIMITS TO THREE-HOURS; ALLOCATE CBD LOT X FOR LONG-TERM EMPLOYEE HANG TAG USE**

Walker recommends that the City implement a strategy to promote employee parking at off-street public lots, while, maintaining more visible on-street spaces for short-term customer and visitor use.

Walker advocates on-street spaces be provided for greater short-term customer and visitor use with a three-hour limit, with surface lots supporting more long-term parking needs from employees and other all-day users, needing three or more hours to park. Walker defines long-term as ten hours, or all day parking. Our reasoning is three-fold:

- On-street spaces are often the most visible parking spaces for motorists and closest to store fronts; therefore, on-street spaces should be treated as premium spaces.
- Motorists often form perceptions of parking-space availability based upon on-street space occupancy.
- Greater turnover and space availability is recommended on street, which can balance the parking distribution. We see this in the occupancy results from our data collection; higher occupancies were found closest to Main Street and lower occupancies were found along the CBD periphery.

While we recommend that off-street lots provide greater long-term parking options, these facilities should not discourage short-term users either. For this reason, we recommend that the two-hour spaces remain in place across CBD Lots.

2. MAINTAIN THE EXISTING 4-HOUR EMPLOYEE PARKING HANG TAG PROGRAM, EVALUATE THE LONG-TERM FEASIBILITY OF RATES ACROSS DOWNTOWN CBD LOTS X, Y, AND Z EXISTING 2-HR AND 4-HR TIME LIMITED SPACES

Walker heard through steering committee members that employee parking is a greater concern than customer parking. Employers are concerned that they do not have an adequate parking solution presently in place for their employees.

Furthermore, in the turnover data that we analyzed, we found that long-term parkers are occupying existing four-hour spaces. The City has implemented a hang-tag program within the last twelve-month period, to provide employees more parking spaces, allowing hang-tag parking in 4-hour spaces across CBD lots for \$10 per month.

Walker recommends that the hang-tag program be continued to provide employee parking options at a nominal monthly costs. We recommend the City allocate CBD Lot X, 62 of the 103 existing 4-hour spaces as long-term employee hang tag use spaces.

Long-term, we recommend that the City evaluate rates for CBD Lots X, Y, and Z existing two-hour and four-hour spaces with the understanding that on-street rates alone cannot subsidize the ongoing capital and maintenance requirements of the off-street public parking system. Operating free off-street parking places an onus for any rate increase on the on-street system alone.

3. PROMOTE CBD LOT N, S, AND Q AS LONG-TERM PARKING BY MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO PARKING ARRANGEMENT

CBD Lots N, S, and Q all saw utilization rates of 50 percent or less at the peak hour. The location of these facilities is along the CBD periphery or in areas without a heavy concentration of uses. **To better distribute the parking demand, Walker recommends that the City promote these facilities as long-term parking areas for employees.** We reason, that employees *can* and *should* walk farther for parking than customers and short-term users. There is ample space availability across the entire CBD area, however, these spaces are two or sometimes three blocks away from users' destinations. The City must promote greater walking across the downtown district starting with outreach to employers and employees. No ordinance needs to be enacted for action on this item as it is a voluntary program.

4. MAINTAIN EXISTING SIDEWALKS AND PUBLIC REALM TO PROMOTE GREATER WALKABILITY

In order to encourage more peripheral employee parking, The City must ensure the sidewalks and existing public realm are kept clean, safe and attractive for greater pedestrian use per existing policies, ordinances and zoning standards. Downtown Ames is compact and highly walkable. Its blocks are scaled to support greater pedestrian activity with an attractive historic core building stock, and, with building facades oriented towards the street with minimal curb-cuts and sidewalk interruptions. Improving lighting and maintaining the downtown sidewalk network can enhance the safety and attractiveness of the public right-of-way, encouraging greater walkability. The City currently has an arrangement in place, and should maintain that to ensure greater walkability.

5. INCREASE FINE SCHEDULE FOR VIOLATORS

The current fine schedule is too low to have the punitive effects needed to induce the right parking behaviors. The first violation within seven days is only \$10 with fines increasing to \$20 if unpaid after seven days. Walker believes that this fine rate is too low to correct habitual violators. Many people are willing to risk getting a parking citation because they know that if they're caught, the \$10 penalty will be modest. **We recommend that the City create a higher penalty for 2nd violations, increasing the amount to \$30 to achieve intended compliance results.** The intention of this action is not do increase parking revenues, but, to set the expectations for parking rules and regulations downtown.

6. CONSIDER A PHASED AND INCREMENTAL FIVE-YEAR METER RATE STRATEGY BASED UPON THE PERFORMANCE AND OPERATIONAL NEEDS OF THE PARKING SYSTEM

If the City's goal is to create a self-sustaining parking enterprise, it must contemplate increased meter rates over the long-term in order to maintain the existing parking infrastructure in a self-sustaining manner. If not, the burden of maintaining the existing system will fall on the general fund supported by Ames tax payers. Previous rate increases were drastic, abrupt and uncoordinated, leaving stakeholders confused and unsatisfied. Walker believes that eventually rates will need to come up at some point in order to maintain the existing public parking service without creating an undue burden.

Walker recommends a more coordinated, phased, five-year rate adjustment bringing hourly rates to \$0.90 by FY 2025 with an evaluation performed every two years of the results. We estimate this will provide the parking fund an additional \$228,000 approximated in revenue by FY 2025, with the first increase to \$0.70 occurring in FY

2023 and the second increase to \$0.90 by FY 2025. **The \$0.90 hourly rate is in line with Iowa peer cities which are characterized with an average hourly rate of \$0.86.** However, by 2025, peer cities rates will likely increase as well. In our assessment, rate increases should not exceed 40 percent every two years. Any meter rate increases need to be in response to the performance needs of the parking system.

7. CONTINUE TO EVALUATE PARKING OCCUPANCIES ON STREET AND SET TARGET RATES FOR OCCUPANCY

Conducting routine and consistent parking enforcement creates the parking space availability and turnover needed to support existing businesses. **Walker recommends that the City continue its enforcement program as currently administered with 1 FTE enforcement officer. In addition, we recommend that the City create on-street occupancy targets. At any given time, every block face should have 1-2 parking spaces open.** Rates and enforcement create turnover and space availability. Occupancies on street should not exceed 85 percent.

Of note, data should be compiled and reviewed on an overall downtown wide basis with trends ascertained regarding average parking space occupancy over an extended review period. Should patterns emerge whereby occupancies average over 85 percent continuously, the City can respond with targeted enforcement or consideration of rate strategies within the adopted rate evaluation framework. Rate changes should only be made on an aggregate downtown side basis given a two-year evaluation framework in response to the performance needs of the parking system.

Smart meter technologies allow for enhanced space monitoring in addition to physical space counts performed on a routine basis. The benefits of upgrading smart meters to single-head IPS smart meters is the data analytics capabilities which can provide more data on which to evaluate and set policies. IPS is a parking meter manufacturer and technology provider based out of San Diego, California. Single-space IPS smart meters' costs approximated are \$525 per unit assuming the existing parking meter, including pole and housing can be repurposed. Add an additional \$375 for a new meter with pole.

Walker recommends that City create a routine space occupancy monitoring protocol to ensure that policies are achieving desired results. The City should perform occupancy counts once per quarter or month, to affirm the findings of this study with results regularly communicated to stakeholders. Policies should be amended in response to occupancy data until desired results are achieved.

8. FORM A DOWNTOWN PARKING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Walker recommends that the City consider forming a downtown parking advisory committee with broad representation of interests including members of the downtown business community, owners, retailers, restaurateurs, downtown institutions and organizations including the Chamber, and a City staff designate. The purpose of this committee would be to provide a sounding board to the City regarding downtown parking.

Walker recommends meeting on an annual basis to discuss parking trends and issues in downtown Ames. The committee would not have any official government capacity or policy setting role but could serve as a clearinghouse for the exchange of information and ideas. The meetings would serve as an opportunity to help the

City deliver on its brand promise to provide parking turnover and availability to support downtown businesses and to assist the City roll out public relations campaigns for downtown parking program improvements. **The Advisory Committee can help educate their patrons and members on the benefits of any coordinated policy actions and provide the City direct feedback on implementation.**

The goal is to forge a valuable public-private partnership that advises, improves public communications, and balances the needs of the downtown parking system for the benefit of all users.

IMPLEMENTATION AND PROBABLE COSTS MATRIX

Action	Description	Timescale	Costs
Implement a long-term and short-term parking strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase on-street time limits to three hours. 2. Designate surface lots N, S, and Q as “long-term” or “daily” parking by maintaining the status quo parking arrangement. 3. Make known long-term parking areas across all information-sharing platforms. 4. Strictly enforce on-street parking time limits as posted. 5. Evaluate on-street occupancies on a routine basis and communicate survey results. 6. Maintain the employee hang-tag parking program as it currently exists, promote CBD Lot X as hang-tag employee parking. 7. Increase 2nd violation fine schedule to \$30. 8. Evaluate the long-term feasibility for adopting rates for existing two-hour and four-hour parking spaces at CBD Lots X, Y and Z. 	FY '20- '21	\$
Consider a phased meter rate strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate a five-year phased rate increase by FY 2025. 2. Adjust hourly meter rate to \$0.70 by FY 2023 and \$0.90 by FY 2025. 	FY '23- '25	\$
Create a downtown parking advisory committee	Create a voluntary committee of downtown stakeholders to advise the City on parking issues.	FY '19-'25	No initial direct costs anticipated

*Costs opinions are provided on an order of magnitude basis in 2019 dollars. Actual costs will vary.

Legend

\$ = <\$25,000

\$\$ = >\$25,000

\$\$\$ = >\$100,000



01 Introduction and Discovery

The following section of this report details the project background, study goals and objectives, study process and discovery for the Downtown Ames Parking Study.

INTRODUCTION

Downtown is the commercial and cultural heart of the Ames community. Over the last fifteen years, the Downtown has undergone a transformation from a once underutilized district into a premier, fully-activated destination and gathering place for the community.

As Downtown continues on its trajectory of redevelopment, civic leaders understand that parking and access remain a critical part of the Downtown's continued success. To address existing user challenges comprehensively and formulate a plan for the downtown, civic leaders issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) in early 2019 seeking the help of a qualified firm to deliver a Downtown Parking Study ("Study").

In the Spring 2019, the City selected Walker to perform the Study with formal work beginning in April 2019.

STUDY TEAM

The study team, Walker Consultants, is the industry's leading and largest parking and mobility consulting firm in the United States, committed daily to helping communities solve their most vexing parking and mobility challenges. Walker has successfully delivered over a thousand municipal downtown parking studies in its more than 40-year history, and brings the industry's leading parking planning, operations, and technology experience to every engagement.

STUDY PROCESS

The following figure represents the Study Process:

Figure 1: Parking Plan Study Process



Source: Walker Consultants, 2019

STEP ONE: DISCOVERY/STAKEHOLDER INPUT

The first step of our Study was to elicit stakeholder input to understand and document the experience of parkers in the downtown. Information was derived from a steering committee workshop held on April 25, 2019.

STEP TWO: SUPPLY/DEMAND ANALYSIS

In addition to the qualitative feedback that we received, we collected quantifiable parking survey data. This included parking space inventories and occupancies collected over two days of field observations by the Study Team and a documentation of observed parking enforcement hours and rates. In this phase we analyzed the parking supply and demand in the downtown to establish a baseline for downtown parking conditions. In addition to an occupancy survey, we performed a parking space turnover and duration survey to quantify parking space turnover for on-street spaces and select off-street facilities.

STEP THREE: REVIEW OF PARKING POLICY AND PRACTICES AND ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

After establishing baseline existing conditions, we reviewed parking policies and practices providing an objective outsiders look at the rules that govern parking and the activities that the City employs to enforce these rules. We

reviewed parking enforcement policies and practices, existing rates and hours of enforcement, parking signage and wayfinding, equipment and technology, existing land use practices and zoning impacts on parking obtained through City provided data. The purpose of this analysis is to assess objectively the performance of the existing parking program and uncover any opportunities for improvements.

STEP FOUR: FINANCIAL PLAN

The financial plan undertaken anticipates the market demand, operating revenues, operating expenses, and debt service for any proposed improvements to the existing parking system. The analysis in this section is intended to help guide decisions that must be made to promote a financially sustainable parking system.

STEP FIVE: ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

In concert with an evaluation of the existing and future supply-demand conditions, we considered alternatives to maximize existing space capacity and consider opportunities for additional parking infrastructure. While additional parking infrastructure might not be needed now, we considered scenarios and alternatives in which additional parking supply could be added providing a high-level assessment of impact and costs.

Here we considered proximity to uses, opportunistic sites and locations, feasibility and probable order of magnitude costs.

STEP FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

In the final phase of our analysis, we created a series of recommendations for the City and stakeholders to consider adopting, and, an implementation matrix which details recommended item prioritization, phasing and probable order of magnitude costs.

STUDY TIMELINE

The following figure depicts the project timeline for the Study.

Figure 2: Project Timeline

Project Phase	April 2019	May 2019	June 2019	July 2019	August 2019	September 2019
Project Kick-Off	April 25, 2019 workshop					
Meeting – Input Session	April 25, 2019 workshop					
RFI Issued	April 26, 2019					
I. Input						
II. Supply and Demand Analysis						
III. Review of Parking Policies and Practices						
IV. Financial Plan						
V. Alternatives Analysis						
VI. Recommendations						
Draft Report release					August 12, 2019	
Draft Comments Deadline					December 06, 2019	
Final Report Issued						December 13, 2019
Final Presentation						December 17, 2019

Source: Walker Consultants, 2019

DISCOVERY

Project discovery is an information-gathering process intended to be a “deep-dive” exploration into the unique issues, user-experience, and operational workings of the downtown parking system.

Qualitative and quantitative methods were employed for the Study and included a steering committee workshop in which qualitative feedback was received. **A steering committee was assembled by the City, representing diverse downtown business and institutional interests, to serve in an advisory capacity providing the Study Team with critical feedback as well as outline of goals for the project.**

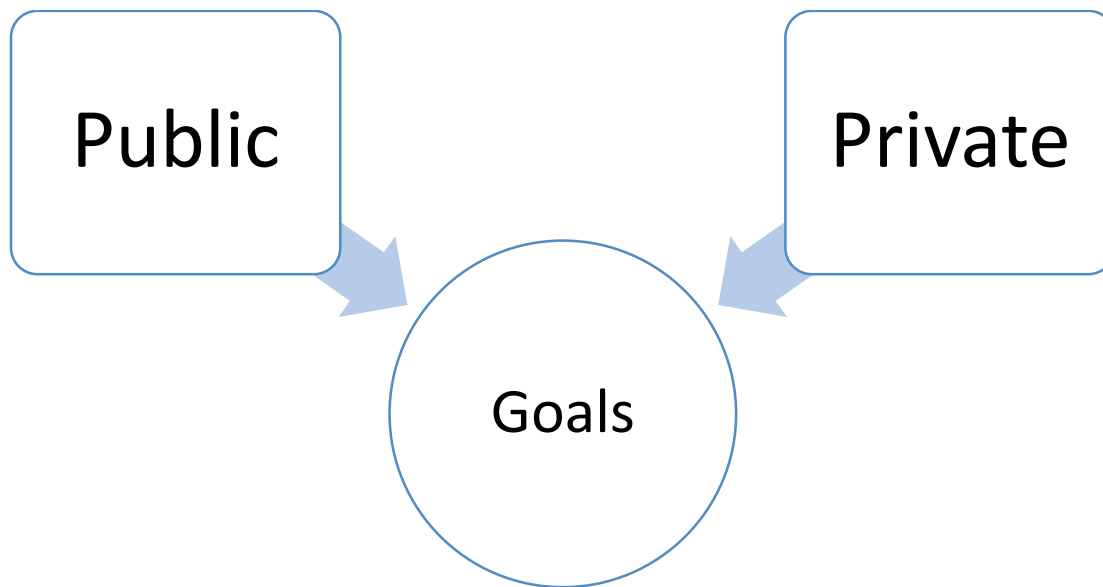
Qualitative information received regarding committee members’ unique parking issues and experiences, direct Study Team field observations and formal data collection, and parking program and financial information provided by the City, and, evaluated by Walker, formed the basis for the Study Team’s analytical conclusions and recommendations.

STUDY GOALS

Ultimately downtown parking is a partnership forged between the public and private sector to deliver a common good. **The primary goal of this Study is to help strengthen the public-private partnership and identify solutions that work best for the downtown community in the delivery of a public parking program.** In doing this, the Study intends to accomplish the following:

- Collect and analyze data to make objective and informed evaluations regarding the downtown parking program;
- Determine if the existing parking supply is adequate to meet current and future user needs;
- Consider the downtown parking user experience and identify program enhancement opportunities to improve the overall user experience;
- Evaluate the financial requirements of maintaining a public parking program; and
- Educate the public regarding downtown parking.

Figure 3: Public-Private Goal-Seeking Study Process



Source: Walker Consultants, 2019

STEERING COMMITTEE

Downtown merchants, business owners, and institutional representatives formed the basis of this group. A steering committee workshop was held on April 25, 2019.

Workshop outcomes included the following:

- **Issue identification** regarding downtown parking;
- **Documentation** of existing parking conditions at the institutional and user-levels;
- **Convening** groups of downtown leaders and stakeholders to articulate a common community challenge and vision for parking downtown; and
- **Enhanced communications** with the downtown community and an increased awareness.

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

Over the course of the session, participants expressed ideas and concerns related to parking in the downtown. The following list represents our summary of the discussion items raised by stakeholders:

- Employee parking v. customer parking uses and needs;
- Parking enforcement practices;
- Is enforcement being carried out consistently and fairly;
- Parking rate escalations and the context for rate changes;
- Parking system operational requirements;
- Library parking;
- First National Bank parking;
- Main Street retail and restaurant parking needs and specific uses;
- Monthly parking;
- The mix of parking lot time limited spaces;
- Parking benefits district or business improvement district;
- Walking distance tolerances in downtown;
- Seasonality factors
- Biking storage requirements;
- Planning for future development parking needs;
- Door front access mentality;
- Farmers Market parking needs;
- Parking technology opportunities;
- Age demographics of community and comfort using technology;
- Meters accepting additional forms of payment;
- City Hall parking; and
- Heavy daytime usage today reflecting current mix of businesses.

The **general group consensus is that parking space availability is typically not an issue in the downtown, however, there are peak hours of the day and days of the week in which parking space availability can become an issue on a block-to-block basis.** The mix of on-street and off-street public parking options has provided business patrons and employees with available parking options, but, walking between destinations and parking areas has been an issue in the downtown. Generally, people like to be able to be within front-door proximity to their destination and do not like to walk very far, the group found. Seasonality factors influence walking distance tolerances with warmer weather encouraging greater walking distances.


Parking rate increases have recently been an issue for certain Main Street businesses. However, available, free off-street parking has helped allay some concerns about customer and employee parking. **The group agrees that parking for their employees is currently a greater issue than for their customers.** Steering committee members said they would like to see current and future parking needs addressed and explore program enhancement

opportunities to support **the goal of maintaining public parking access and space availability for customers and employees downtown.**

OVERARCHING STUDY QUESTIONS

Based upon feedback received through the Steering Committee process, with the input of City staff officials provided, The Study Team formulated the following over-arching questions to be addressed by the Study:

- Is the parking inventory adequate to meet existing and future user needs;
- Are parkers adhering to posted parking enforcement rules and regulations;
- Are parking spaces turning over as intended to create parking space availability;
- Is there a plan to address employee parking in the downtown, and, is employee parking a limiting factor on future growth downtown;
- How can the downtown parking system accommodate short-term and long-term parking users;
- What are the ongoing financial requirements to maintain a public parking system;
- Can the public parking program be self-sustaining or will it require a continued public subsidy;
- How does parking fit within the overall goals of the downtown community; and
- What are more long-range parking infrastructure considerations that need to be addressed by the downtown community as it continues to grow organically?



02

Supply & Demand Analysis

The findings of the supply and demand component of the project are the foundation of an effective parking plan. Before we can identify opportunities to develop or improve parking or recommend changes to existing parking policies, we must first have a solid understanding of existing conditions within the Study Area. Our understanding of existing conditions begins with stakeholder outreach provided by the parking steering committee to determine the parking habits and preferences of typical users which includes an identification of obstacles and opportunities for improvement as reviewed in the previous sections of this report. These qualitative findings are combined with the parking supply and demand and turnover and duration data to develop a comprehensive picture of parking conditions in the downtown. This analysis provides a framework for recommendations and strategies that result from the study process.

The project team conducted field inventory and occupancy counts on Wednesday May 01, 2019 and a field turnover and duration survey on Thursday May 02, 2019 to observe typical parking conditions in the downtown Study Area. The objective of our field work was to answer the following questions:

- What is the parking supply?
- What is the parking demand?
- Is there a surplus or deficit?
- Is additional parking required? If so, how much?
- Who needs additional parking?
- Are parkers adhering to posted time limits?
- Is the parking program achieving its goal of parking turnover and space availability?

STUDY AREA

The parking study area, as determined by the City, is bounded by Lincoln Way to the south, 6th Street to the north (including Library Lot Q), Duff Avenue to the east, and Grand Avenue to the west. The nearly sixteen-block Study Area comprises the Ames central business district and includes daytime office, professional services, retail, restaurant, and government uses.

The following figure depicts the Study Area.

Figure 4: Study Area



Source: Walker Consultants, 2019

HOW MANY PUBLIC USE PARKING SPACES ARE IN THE DOWNTOWN?

The project team identified approximately 1,187 spaces across the Study Area available for public parking use. This includes all on-street and off-street surface lots.

Figure 5: Space Inventory Summary



On-Street spaces include all two-hour and four-hour metered spaces, ADA spaces, and free ten-minute spaces.

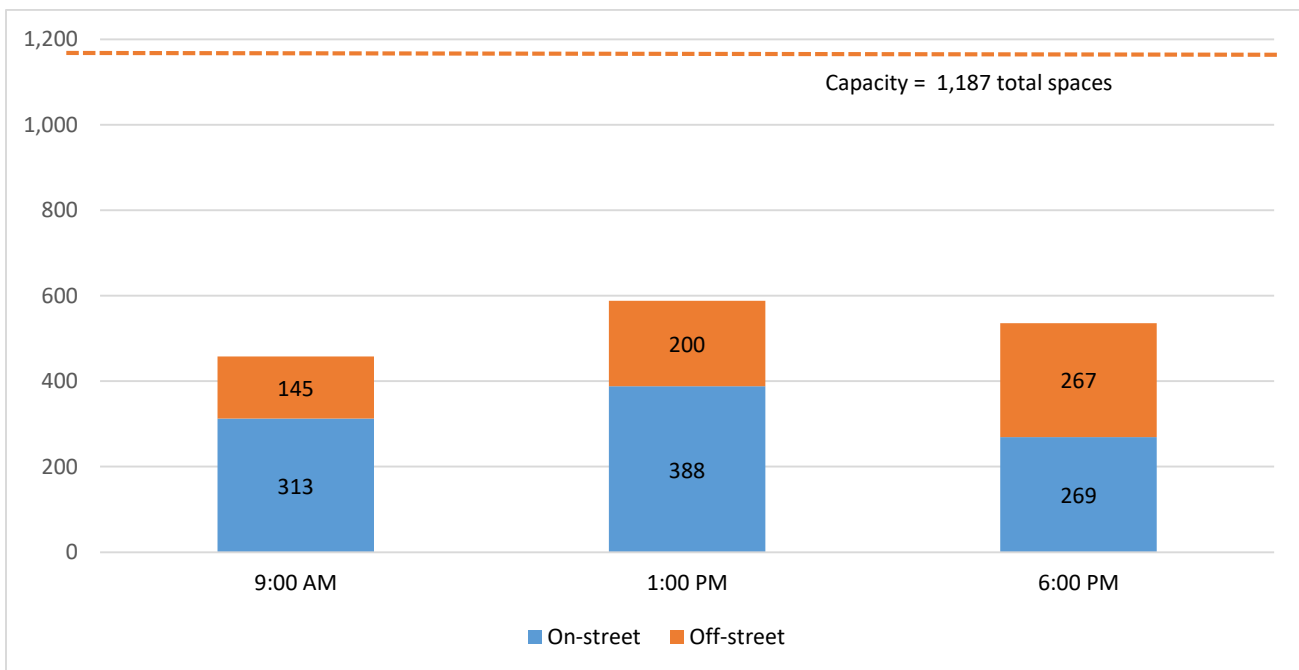
Public Off-Street spaces are categorized as public lots operated by the City of Ames, providing unreserved two-hour, four-hour, and ten-hour time enforced parking and monthly 24/7 reserved parking spaces.

PARKING SPACE OCCUPANCY

Parking space occupancy was recorded on Wednesday May 01, 2019 across morning, afternoon, and evening hours. The day of the week and hours selected are intended to be representative of typical weekday conditions. Counts were performed between the hours of 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. to capture daytime and evening activity and the multiplicity of uses across the office and professional services sector and the food, beverage and retail sectors.

Appendix A: Field and Occupancy Data provides a more detailed showing of inventory and occupancy results by block.

Figure 6: Parking Space Occupancy – Typical Weekday



Source: Walker Consultants, 2019

Recorded space occupancy peaked across the afternoon hours, between 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. with 50 percent of total spaces occupied, or 588 spaces occupied. **At the “peak hour” approximately 599 vacant spaces were observed across the Study Area, indicating a surplus of spaces available.**

While overall occupancy remained approximately 50 percent across the peak hours of the day, with an overall surplus of available parking identified, parking “hot-spot” areas were observed across several block faces.

The following figure illustrates parking space occupancy at the block level for on-street and off-street spaces at the 1 p.m. peak hour.

Occupancy is displayed using a “heat map” with color ranges given to occupancy percentages on an on-street and off-street block basis. The color red represents occupancy of 85 percent or greater; the highest level of recorded occupancy, indicating little to no space availability. The color orange designates 70 to 84 percent occupancy, which indicates healthy occupancy levels with remaining space availability. Yellow represents 50 to 69 percent occupancy and green, 49 percent or lower, indicating both high vacancy and ample space availability.

Figure 7: Peak Hour Occupancy “Heat Map” – 1 PM



Source: Walker Consultants, 2019

Downtown Lots X, Y and Z saw utilization rates between 67 to 82 percent at the peak hour indicating a high usage, but, with spaces still available. Lots N, S, and Q had an occupancy rate of less than 50 percent indicating ample space availability at the peak hour.

On-street spaces on Main Street, between Clark Avenue and Duff Avenue, with the exception of the southern block face between Clark Avenue and Burnett Avenue, saw utilization rates between 70 to 84 percent at the peak hour. Additionally, on-street spaces on both sides of Douglas Avenue, between Main Street and 5th Street, were functionally full. High on-street vacancies were found across 5th Street at the peak hour.

TURNOVER AND DURATION SURVEY

In addition to collecting and analyzing parking space occupancy data, Walker also performed a parking space turnover and duration survey utilizing license plate recognition (LPR) technology. A predetermined route was driven between posted hours of enforcement from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Thursday May 02, 2019. Specifically, license plates were recorded across on-street and select off-street facilities by the hour. Parked vehicle dwell times were ascertained by license plate read, time stamping and geo-locating parked vehicles each hour of the recorded survey.

The purpose of this survey is to determine if parkers are adhering to the posted time limits across on-street and off-street facilities, as well as to evaluate whether or not parking spaces are turning over as intended, creating parking space availability across daytime enforcement hours.

With a few notable exceptions, parkers generally are adhering to time limits and posted regulations. The following figures provide a summary analysis of the LPR survey conducted across downtown block-faces and select off-street facilities.

LPR SURVEY METHODOLOGY

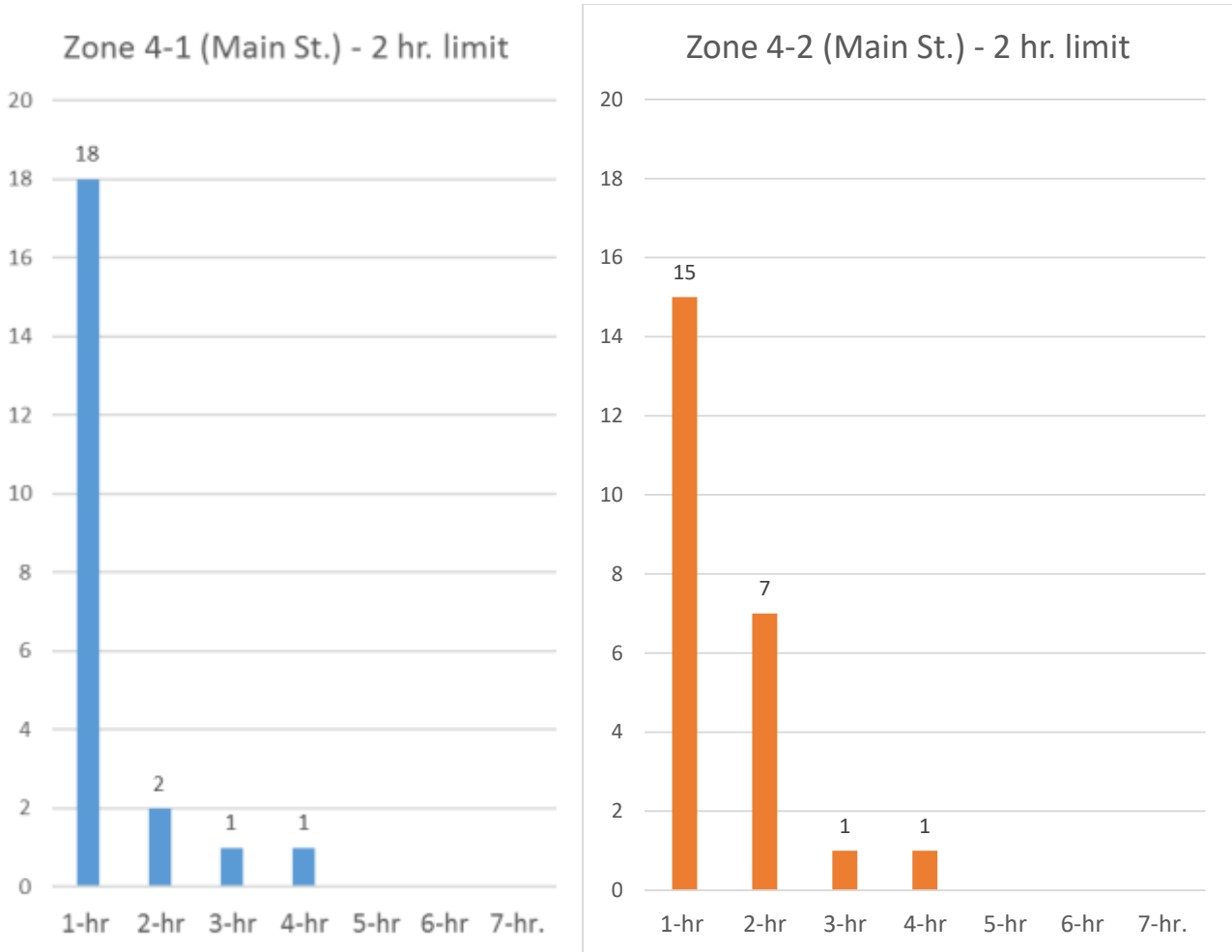
Existing naming conventions established by the City for on-street block zones and off-street public lots were maintained for interpretation and analysis. The “x-axis” on each of the following graphs shows number of parked cars identified by plate within a parking space while the “y-axis” indicates the amount of times each parked car was counted within the parking space. A methodological note, “cars counted” is not an aggregate total car count, but, a recognition of repeat plate readings expressed numerically.

An LPR enforcement route was driven on an hourly basis, with plate reads time stamped and geo-located. Each time the patrol vehicle passed a space, passed by only once on a tight hourly basis, was a new opportunity to “recognize” a plate. On this basis, vehicle dwell time patterns were established with our interpretation and are provided in the following sub-section.

ON-STREET TURNOVER ANALYSIS

The following figures summarize our analysis of the on-street turnover and duration study. **Appendix B: Facility ID Map** provides a corresponding map to understand where activity is occurring spatially across the CBD.

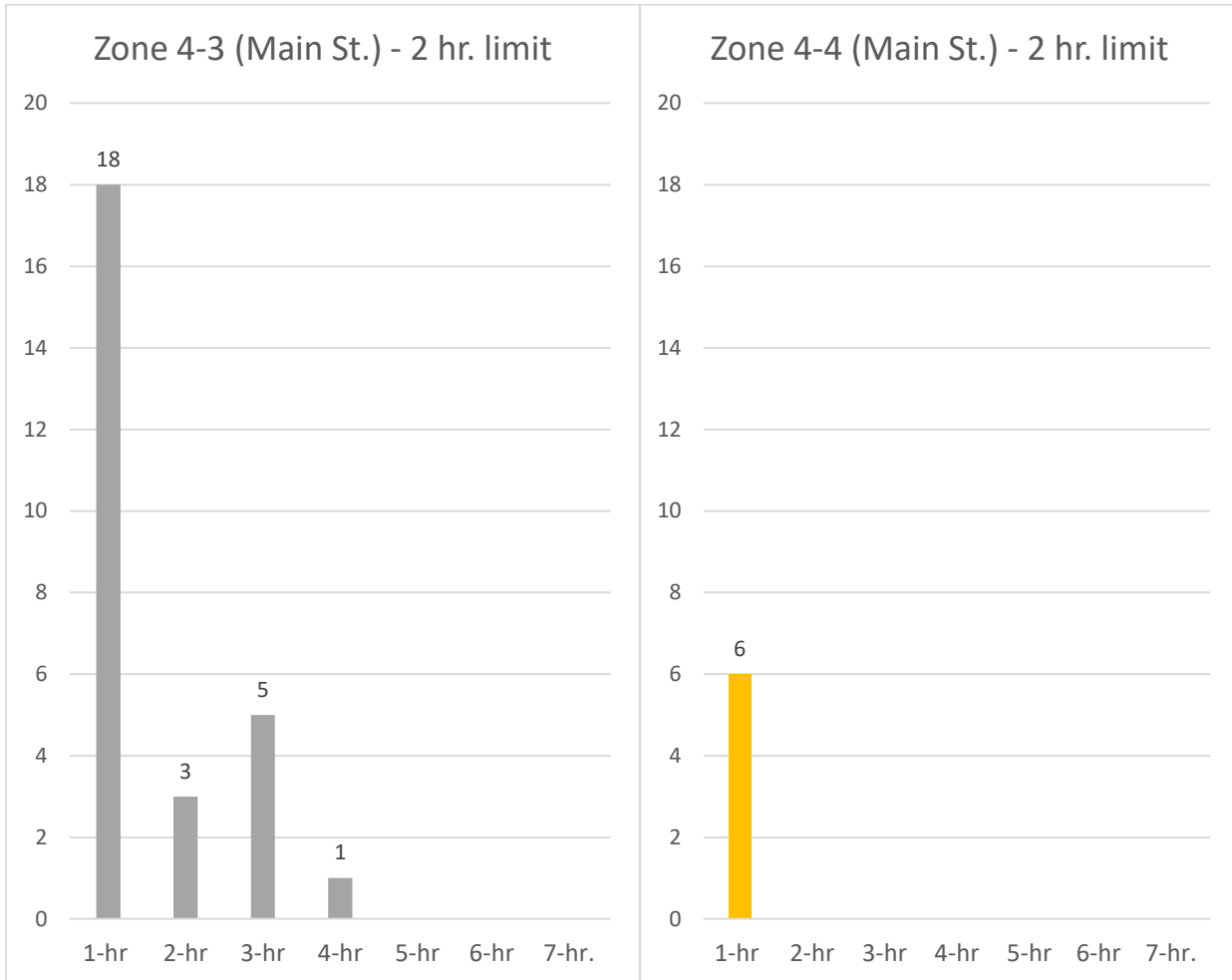
Figure 8: On-street Zone 4-1 and Zone 4-2 (Main Street)- Duration Summary



Source: Walker Consultants, 2019

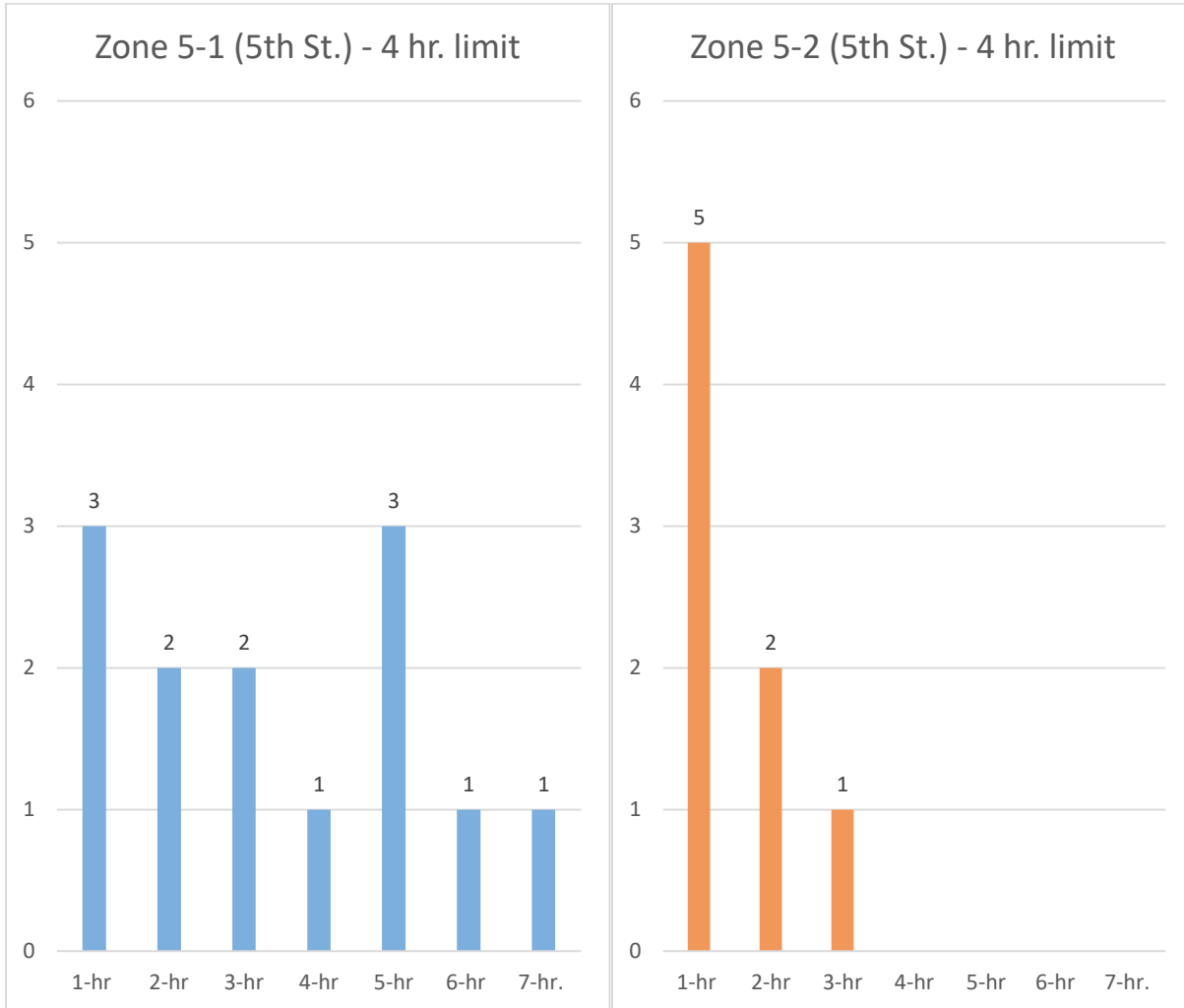
Across Zone 4-1 and Zone 4-2, one vehicle on each respective block face stayed longer than the two-hour time limit.

Figure 9: Zone 4-3 and Zone 4-4 (Main Street)- Duration Summary



Source: Walker Consultants, 2019

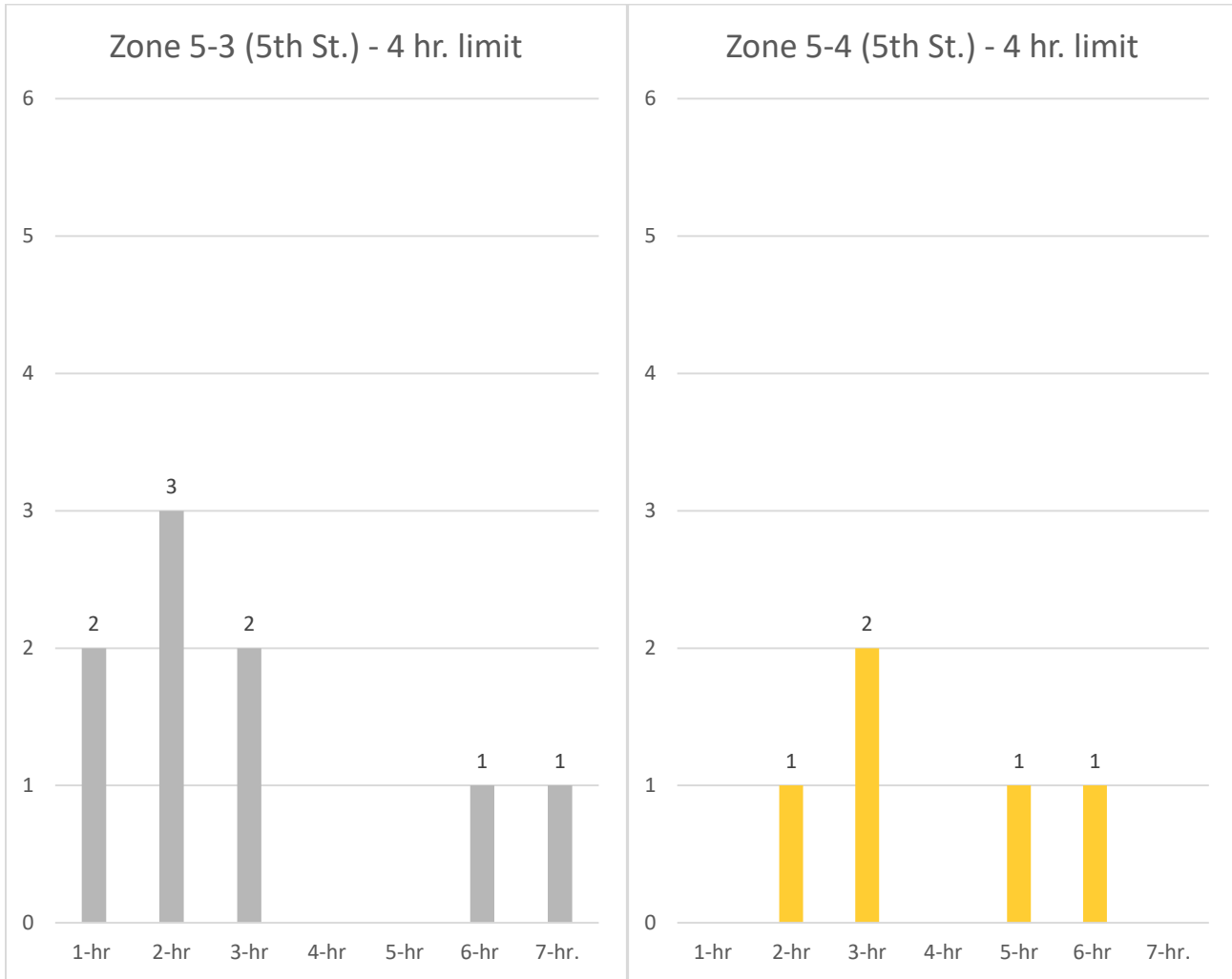
Zone 4-3 saw 5 vehicles parked for three hours. On this block face, parkers are dwelling past the three-hour time limit. Zone 4-4 saw no cars overstaying the posted two-hour limit.

Figure 10: Zone 5-1 and Zone 5-2 (5th Street) – Duration Summary


Source: Walker Consultants, 2019

Zone 5-1 and Zone 5-2 maintain a four-hour time limit. Zone 5-1 saw three vehicles dwelling for five hours, one hour passed the posted time limit. One car was dwelling for seven hours. For Zone 5-2, no cars stayed passed the four-hour time limit.

Figure 11: Zone 5-3 and Zone 5-4 (5th Street) - Duration Summary



Source: Walker Consultants, 2019

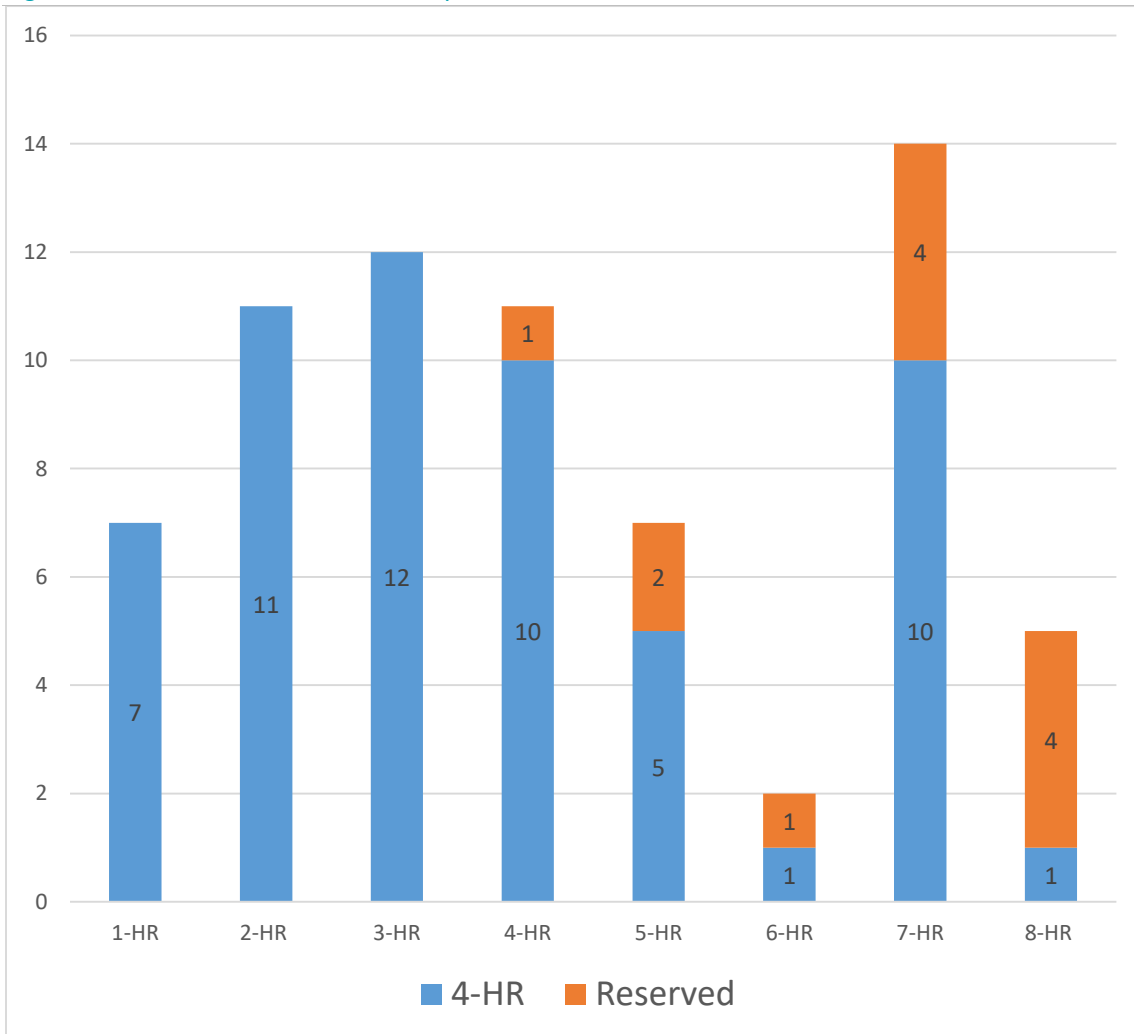
Zone 5-3 and Zone 5-4 have a four-hour time limit requirement. One vehicle on each respective block face overstayed the four-hour limit up to seven hours, for Zone 5-3, and six hours for Zone 5-4.

OFF-STREET CBD LOTS ANALYSIS

Walker surveyed select off-street surface lots which offer parking on a two-hour, four-hour, ten-hour and reserved space basis, depending upon the facility. The legend displays the type of space surveyed with the “x-axis” indicating the amount of time that space was occupied.

Downtown Lots X, Y, and Z provide nearly 45 percent of the public surface space inventory downtown (excluding City vehicle only parking). The time-hour mix of spaces was evaluated to ascertain how the time limit spaces are being occupied, identifying patterns based upon the current usage.

Figure 12: CBD Lot X – Duration Summary

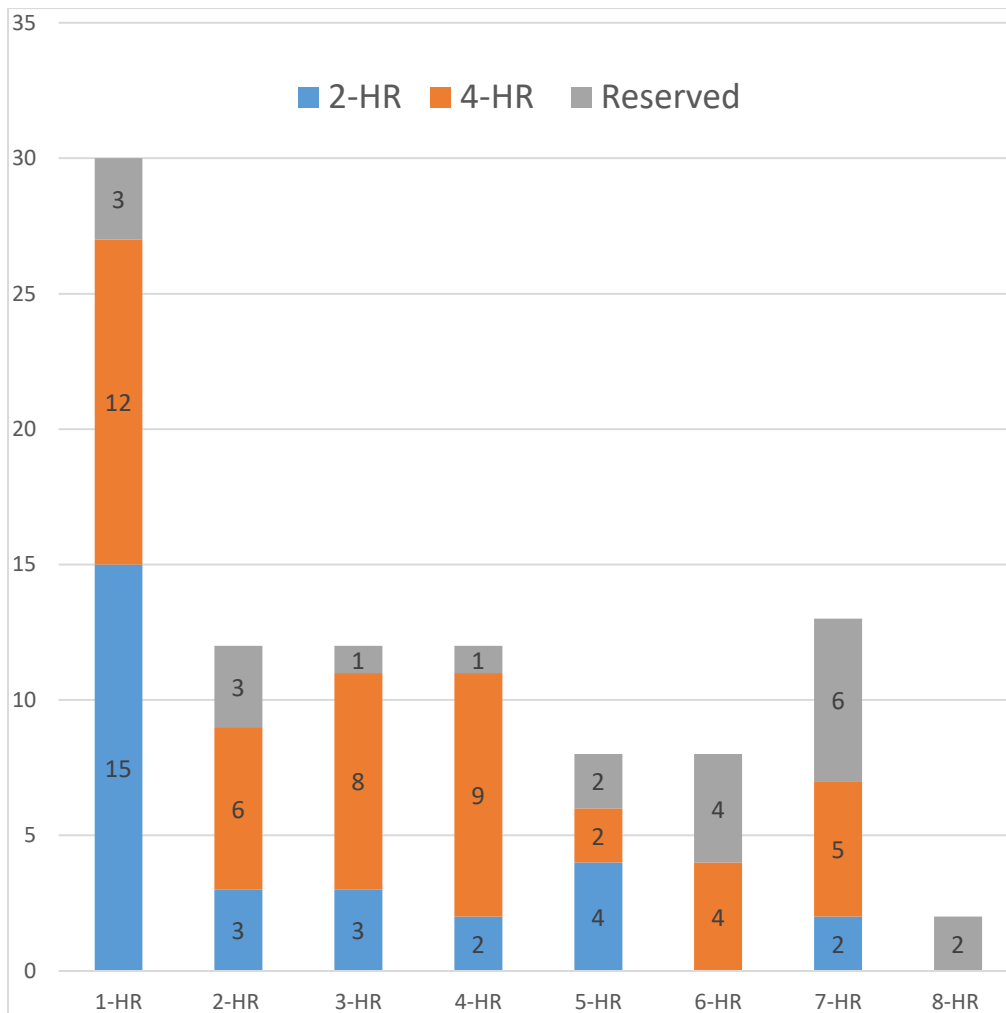


Source: Walker Consultants, 2019

Downtown CBD Lot X has a mix of four-hour and 24 hour reserved spaces (103 four-hour spaces; 15 reserved). The use of four-hour spaces peaks with a dwelling time of three hours; twelve cars staying three hours. However, 10 vehicles observed are using four-hour spaces as long-term seven-hour parking. **Walker did not observe hang-tags on vehicles. It is likely some of this vehicle population could be hang-tag monthly parkers legally allowed to park in four-hour spaces with placards per the 2019 policy adjustment (see discussion in “Parking Policies and Practices”).**

Official reserved spaces marked by signage are seeing long-term parking dwell times of seven and eight hours. Four vehicles are staying in their reserved space for eight hour stays.

Figure 13: CBD Lot Y – Duration Summary

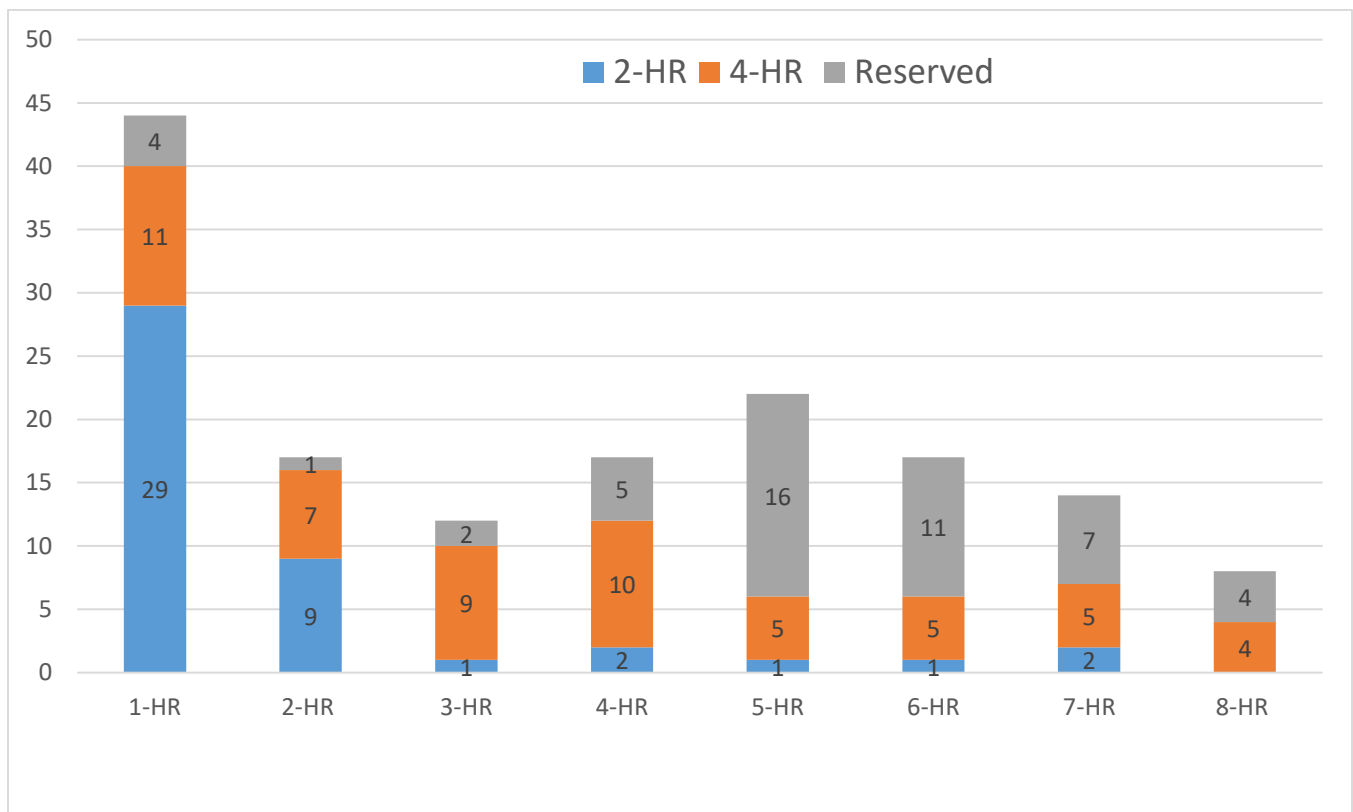


Source: Walker Consultants, 2019

Downtown CBD Lot Y has a mix of two-hour, four-hour and reserved spaces (33 two-hour spaces; 32 four-hour spaces, 31 reserved). Of general note, the use characteristics of this lot skews towards short-term, one-hour parking use, likely reflecting the heavy retail customer use. Two-hour spaces saw 15 vehicles staying for one single hour with some vehicles dwelling passed the allotted two-hour limit. Four-hour parking spaces saw 6, 8, and 9 cars parked for two, three, and four hours respectively.

Five vehicles stayed for seven hours. Again, it is likely a percentage of this population could have monthly hang-tags not observed by Walker. Six vehicles dwelled for seven hours in reserved spaces with two vehicles staying for eight hours.

Figure 14: CBD Lot Z – Duration Summary

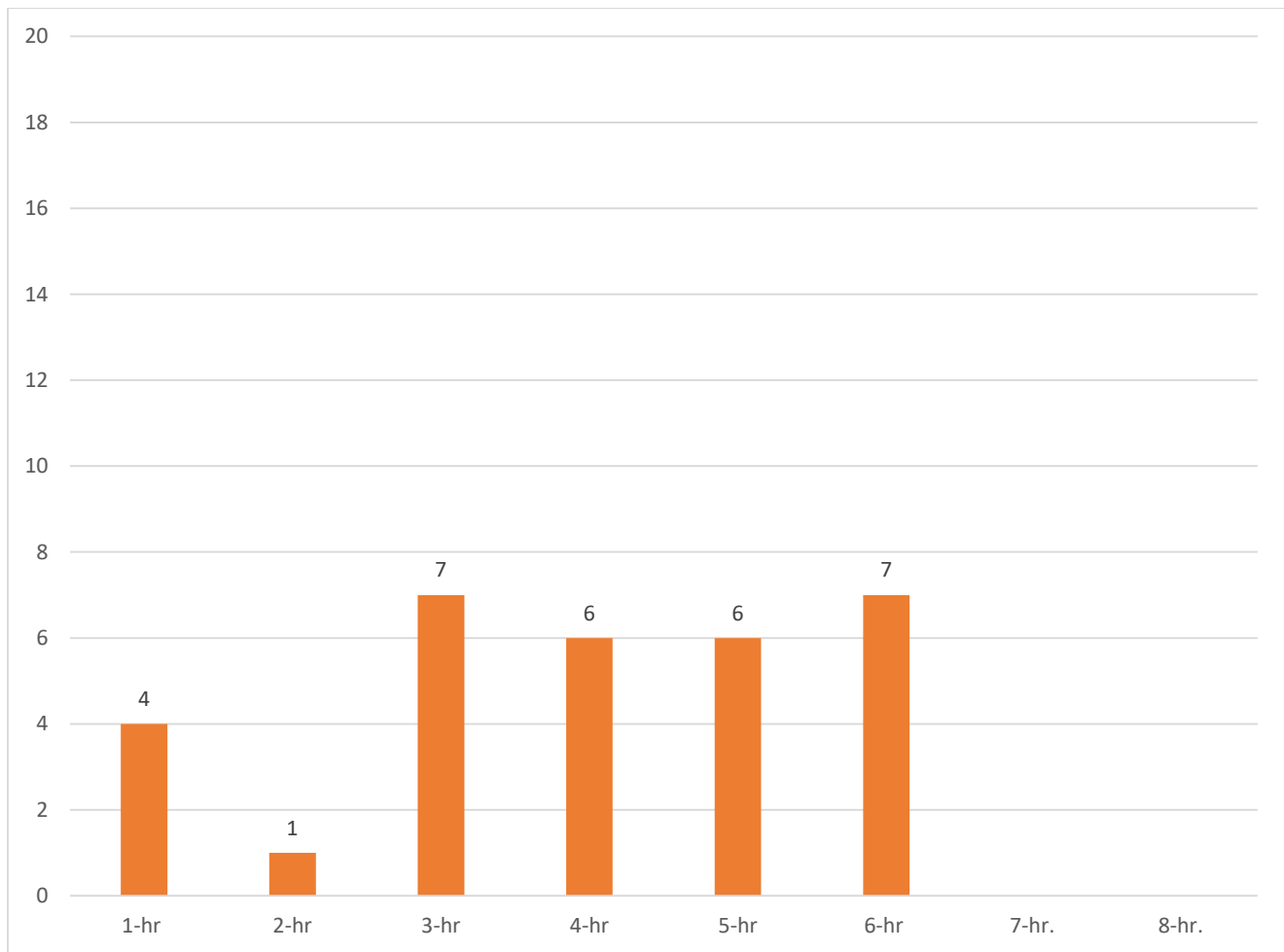


Source: Walker Consultants, 2019

Downtown CBD Lot Z has a mix of two-hour, four-hour and reserved spaces (50 two-hour spaces, 48 four-hour spaces, and 42 reserved). Similarly, the distribution of dwelling time is skewed towards greater short-term use; of one hour. Approximately 29 vehicles occupying two-hour spaces are staying for a single hour. Some vehicles are staying passed the two-hour posted allotment. Ten vehicles in a four-hour space stayed just four hours with

some vehicles remaining passed the allotted four-hour limit. Again, it is possible a percentage of this vehicle population could be monthly hang-tag holders. Reserved spaces peaked with sixteen vehicles staying for only five hours, tapering off past the five-hour mark.

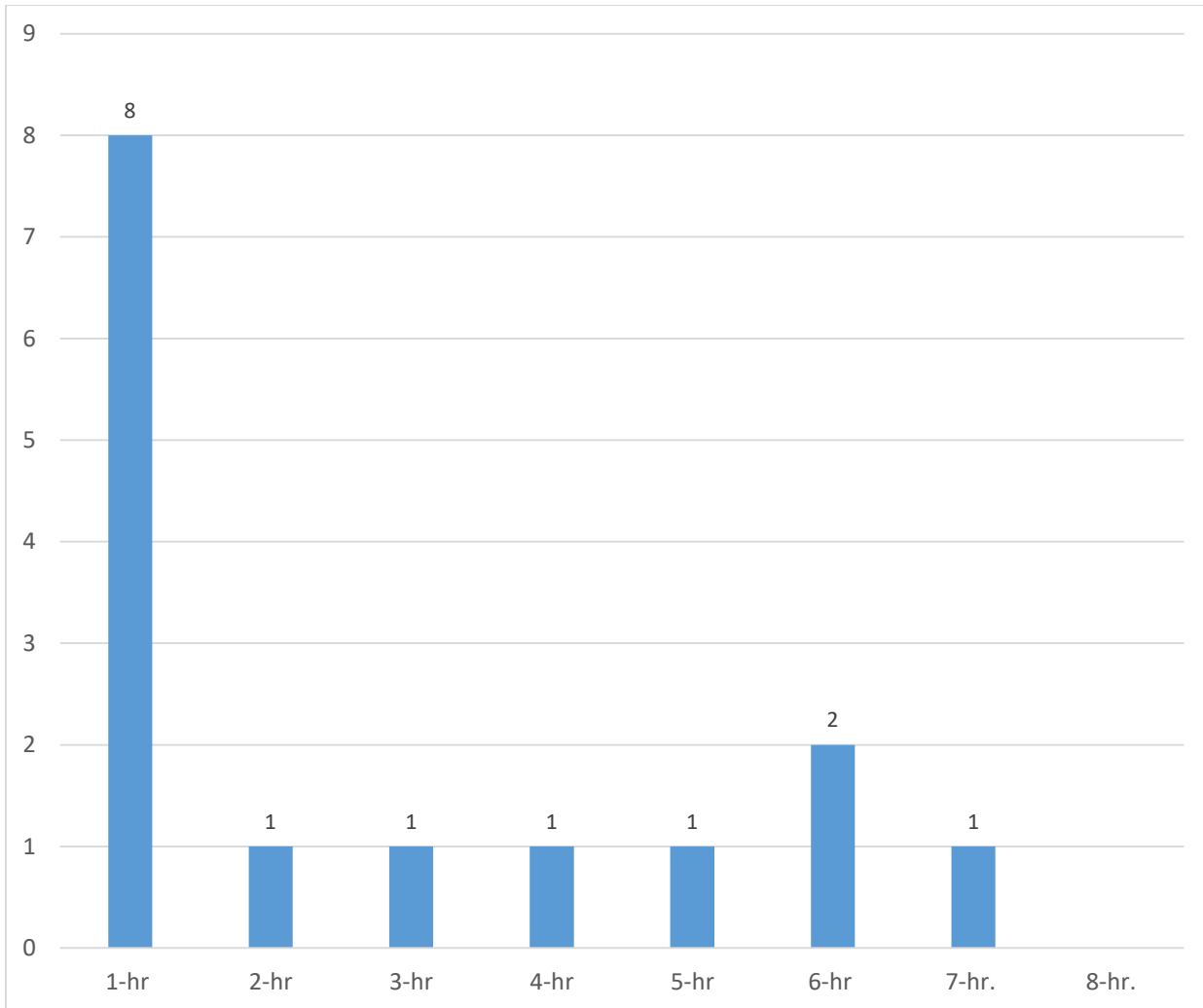
Figure 15: CBD Lot N (City Hall) - Duration Summary



Source: Walker Consultants, 2019

CBD Lot N (City Hall) provides a mix of hourly (41 ten-hour spaces) and reserved (30 spaces) as well as several free spaces (12). Vehicles are mostly staying three hours or more indicating more long-term parking usage.

Figure 16: CBD Lot S (Kellogg) – Duration Summary



Source: Walker Consultants, 2019

CBD Lot S (Kellogg) provides 27 ten-hour spaces. The data collected shows that this facility is being utilized more as short-term one-hour only parking.

TURNOVER AND DURATION SURVEY KEY FINDINGS

- Vehicles are generally adhering to the posted time limits;
- Some “hot-spot” areas of over-stayed vehicles were found by LPR survey;
- Surface lots are generally supporting more long-term parking, three-hours plus stays;
- CBD Lots X and Z have a high short-term use of one-hour only stays indicating that customers and visitors are utilizing these spaces as well as employees parking long term, three-plus hours;
- CBD Lots X, Y and Z all saw four-hour timed spaces with overstayed vehicles, with the acknowledgement that some of this vehicle population could be hang-tag holders;
- Lot S (Kellogg) is supporting more short-term parking with a concentration of one-hour only use;
- Lot N is supporting mostly long-term parking, three -hours plus.

POLICY ADJUSTMENTS

Based upon the data collected and analyzed, Walker offers the following framework for contemplating program adjustments:

- Does the short-term versus long-term mix of spaces need to be adjusted across select facilities?
- Do reserved spaces need to be reserved for 24 hours a day given the dwell time patterns observed?
- Can the four-hour time limit be simplified or modified to accommodate existing employee parking needs?

In the recommendations section of this report we offer proposals for the City to evaluate and consider based upon the information analyzed above.



03

Parking Policies and Practices Review

In this section of the report we review existing parking policies and practices. This includes a review of parking management downtown, goals of the parking program, parking enforcement policies and practices, existing rates and hours of enforcement, parking signage and wayfinding, equipment and technology, existing land use practices and zoning impacts on parking, as well as, program communications and public relations.

HOW IS PARKING BEING MANAGED DOWNTOWN?

The City of Ames owns/manages approximately 1,379 parking spaces downtown.

Hours of enforcement for parking meters are Monday through Saturday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. with free parking on Sunday's and City Holidays. **Meter rates are posted \$0.50 per hour in the downtown district. Hourly parking in all public lots is free and provided on a time-limited basis; two-hour, four-hour and ten-hour options are offered across select facilities.**

PARKING METER HISTORY

In 2018, the Ames City Council ("City Council") implemented a meter rate escalation from \$0.20 to \$1 per hour for all metered spaces in the downtown. Several Main Street business owners opposed the rate increase citing potential burdens to customer access. In April 2019, City Council reversed their 2018 rate decision reducing parking meter rates to \$0.50 per hour, the current hourly rate.

RESERVED PARKING PROGRAM

In November 2018 the City Council voted to implement an employee hang-tag program that permits downtown district employees to park across any of the four-hour free parking stalls for a monthly fee of \$10.

In addition to the recent hang-tag program, the City has historically provided a reserved space program. An individual seeking a reserved parking space in a municipal lot may grant a request to the city manager. The City Council, through policy resolution, determines the reserved space location and price. According to the code, spaces reserved shall be marked by signage stating that the space is reserved 24 hours per day. A permit tag must be displayed upon each vehicle that occupies a reserved space.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF PARKING SYSTEM

Parking is not usually an end in-and-of itself, but a means to serve broader goals which, might include- but are not limited to, the following:

- Greater access and utilization of existing downtown businesses;
- Expanded economic development opportunities;
- Enhanced daytime, night-time, and entertainment district usage;

- Increased downtown viability and attractiveness; and
- Improved prominence and regional appeal of the downtown.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Parking enforcement is conducted through the Ames Police Department with 1 FTE parking enforcement officer. Parking violation collections have 1.10 FTEs assigned conducting customer service and collections support. Parking operations, supported through the Department of Traffic and Engineering, has 2.15 FTEs assigned performing parking technician duties and other responsibilities as assigned.

PARKING ENFORCEMENT PRACTICES

Enforcement shifts are covered around the clock Monday through Saturday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. for all metered spaces and time-limited surface parking in the CBD. The enforcement officer chalks tires on a route basis.

PARKING FEES AND FINES

The City of Ames ordinance has established parking violation fees at ten dollars (\$10) for overtime parking. If this fine is paid within the first seven days of the violation, five dollars of the fine amount is waived. Illegal parking violations are twenty dollars (\$20), including snow route violations. Like overtime parking violations, five dollars is waived from the total amount if paid within seven days. Parking in an ADA space without an official placard is a hundred dollar (\$100) fine.

CITATION PROCESS

After a citation is issued from the parking enforcement officer, the following day, the citation is transferred to the City of Ames Finance Department and made available for customer payment. Payment can be made on line, through mail, in person or at a City-designated drop box. Customers that choose to appeal a ticket must notify the parking customer service representative that they wish to appeal. The citation is then reviewed by a coordinator with a decision made after review. The decision is then relayed to the customer, and, should they disagree with the results, they are then referred to the City Attorney to determine whether to take the appeal to a judge. Currently, all appeals must be made in person and are not available on line. According to city information, 70 appeals per month were made citywide in 2018; these appeals are not exclusively downtown violators. In FY 2018, the City estimates that approximately 89 percent of parking citations issued in the downtown were collected.

PARKING TECHNOLOGY

The City of Ames public parking program is keeping pace with industry standards in technology and customer service. The following table reviews how the City has implemented technology to provide customers with choice and convenience.

Table 1: Review of Parking Technology Actions

Technology	Action
✓ Smart Meters	In July 2012, the City installed smart card meters for all meters along Main Street and 5 th Street.
✓ Pay by Cell Phone	The City offers the ability for users to pay with the Park Mobile parking payment app for drivers with internet-enabled cell phones. In addition, the app provides users a map of the City's parking zones to show customers where parking is available in the Downtown. The Park Mobile app has the ability to show customers how much time they have left at the meter and to send advanced notifications when a meter time is about to expire. Parkmobile Wallet allows users to load funds tied to a user's credit card for easy smart phone parking payment options.
✓ On-line Parking Ticket Payment Method	The City offers on-line ticket payment one business day after the ticket is issued from a link from the City Parking page: https://click2gov.cityofames.org/Click2GovPT/ticketsearch.html

Source: Walker Consultants, 2019

Walker supports all of the actions shown in Table 1 as recommended best practices to improving customer convenience and ease of use. Additionally, Appendices A provides more detailed information on LPR enforcement technology for the City's review and consideration.

COMMUNICATIONS AND WEBSITE

The City of Ames maintains a parking web page for users. At this page, users can find information on parking regulations, snow routes, hours of enforcement, location of parking by interactive map, links to the parking payment and appeals process, and additional helpful information including the ParkSMART resource which educates users on parking signage and provides tips on how to avoid violations.

The City of Ames also accepts Parkmobile Wallet as a payment method for meters, which allows users to load funds that can be applied to any of the smart meters within the City meter inventory.

WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE

Existing parking wayfinding and signage helps motorists identify both on- and off-street public parking areas as well as provide them with information that they need to make decisions about parking. Walker reviewed the signage in Downtown and finds that the existing City signage is appropriately located and visible to motorists. The figure to the right displays hours of enforcement, availability to the public, lot identification and rate information. Consistent and uniform signage is important for motorists learning the system.

Figure 17: Existing Wayfinding and Signage- Municipal Lot S Example



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ON-STREET AND OFF-STREET PARKING

On-street parking and off-street spaces comprise a downtown parking system with the typical use of these spaces differing. In most well-managed parking systems, on-street spaces are offered as short-term parking with parking turnover and space availability managed either by time limits, rates, or some combination of both.

On-street spaces are often the most visible and accessible parking spaces to motorists. They are often in closer proximity to businesses and store fronts than off-street surface lots or structures, and, in a dense downtown environment, motorists often do not need to “know” where to find public parking if there is on-street supply available.

Off-street spaces are frequently promoted for greater long-term parking use, defined here as three hours or more, because they are often less visible to motorists and require greater user knowledge of location and public availability. Typically, off-street parking is best suited for employee parking because employee parking behavior is more routine and consistent, with downtown employees often having greater knowledge of the parking system than visitors and customers.

An effective parking management strategy recognizes that on-street spaces are best suited for more short-term use and off-street parking best suited for more long-term parking use. Walker supports this as an operational philosophy. Furthermore, the City has strategically positioned municipal off-street lots throughout the CBD, making this operational philosophy practical for the downtown.



04 Financial Plan

The following section of this report provides a thorough discussion of the financial requirements of administering a public parking program to downtown users. Walker understands that it is the City's goal to work towards creating a self-sustaining parking enterprise, while maintaining the quality of service system users have grown accustomed to.

However, Walker understands that there is a price sensitivity to hourly parking rates and that any rate increase needs to be measured and consistent with consumer expectations. In this context, we are providing the following analysis to help inform decision makers and the public. In this section we consider market demand factors, operating revenues, operating expenses and debt service for any proposed new parking facility or parking system enhancement. Most importantly we set the background for a financial plan with a necessary discussion of parking economics.

PARKING ECONOMICS 101

Fundamentally there is no such thing as free parking. Someone is either directly or indirectly paying the true costs of "free parking" downtown.

If parkers are not paying directly than who is?

- Developers pay for parking when they are required to meet off-street parking zoning requirements which raises project costs which are passed along to end consumers of their product.
- Employers pay through higher office rents.
- Consumers pay in the sales price of goods and services; retailers pass along costs to consumers.
- The community pays through taxes levied for the delivery of services including downtown parking.

In providing parking to the downtown community, the City is administering a scarce resource that has intrinsic value and associated costs. Thus, parking should be viewed as an asset that requires continual stewardship to serve the goals of the downtown community.

The healthy financial performance of the parking system is necessary to keep delivering on the overall downtown parking mission to provide parking space availability and turnover to support local businesses in the downtown.

Parking is not a profit center for most cities. As a point of fact, most parking revenues that a city collects go towards off-setting the capital and operating costs of a public parking program. This is too the case for the City of Ames.

PARKING SYSTEM BASICS

There are two primary reasons why communities decide to adopt parking rates. The first is to induce human behavior using economics. Users of the parking system will quickly modify their parking behaviors if they incur costs in the form of user fees. For instance, if rates are charged for on-street parking, employees will be motivated to find long-term parking areas that are either less expensive or free, keeping prime spots available for business patrons. Most users will see the convenience of nearby on-street parking and opt to pay the rates, while a small percentage might not be willing to pay and will go out of the way to find free parking farther away. This balances parking utilization to address the supply and demand challenges. (Time limits also often influence the behavior of parking patrons.)

The second reason a city chooses to adopt rates is to create a self-sustaining parking enforcement program. The intention is not to create a profit center from parking revenues, but to pool revenues into a self-sustaining parking auxiliary fund that resources parking administration to include the debt service and maintenance requirements of all existing public parking facilities. On-street meter rates, surface lot and parking structure rates, if there are parking structures in the system, all comprise potential parking revenue sources. The revenues of one source alone are often insufficient to cover total parking system costs. One strategy Walker has seen employed in numerous public parking programs across the country is for revenues to be pooled together from multiple parking assets in the public parking portfolio.

The City has chosen to provide free parking access across existing public lots on a timed hourly basis, however, there are costs to maintaining these facilities. Foregoing hourly rates across public lots, the City has chosen to adopt rates on street; \$0.50 an hour for all metered spaces inside the CBD.

The current program gives users the choice to pay for more premium front-door spaces on street, for a nominal rate, or seek out off-street surface spaces at no charge. **Providing users choices helps balance the parking demand, while, creating necessary turnover on street. Walker agrees that on-street spaces should be provided for greater short-term customer and visitor use and that surface lots should support more long-term parking, suited towards employees and long-term users. Our reasoning is three-fold:**

- On-street spaces are often the most visible parking spaces for motorists and nearest to store fronts; therefore, on-street spaces should be treated as premium spaces.
- Motorists often form perceptions of parking-space availability based upon on-street space occupancy.
- Greater turnover and space availability is recommended on street, which can balance the parking distribution, and, one way to manage that is through rates.

It is unlikely that the revenue that the City is foregoing by providing users with free hourly surface lot parking can be made up by on-street meter rates alone and that the system can “break even” increasing only meter rates. Some level of public subsidy will need to be continued if the community decides that “free” surface lot parking is an important priority for downtown users.

If communities decide to charge for surface lot parking, Walker has typically seen hourly rates priced lower than on-street rates. This incents long-term users to seek out cheaper parking farther away from their destination and walk a few more blocks. Adopting rates across municipal off-street facilities is a policy decision.

To provide more context for a financial plan, Walker reviewed the City Parking Program (“Program”) financials. Program historical revenues and expenditures were provided to Walker by the City for purposes of analysis of understanding the Program’s financial capacity, answering such questions as what is the “break-even” for the Program, and how can the City use its revenues to maintain the existing system while planning for future growth and expansion.

Walker was provided with financial information for the entire Program which comprises both East and West Parking Operations. West Operations includes Campus Town (outside of the Study Area) and surrounding environs lots (rentals) and meters (fee) and East Operations includes the Ames CBD lots (rentals) and meters (fee). **The Parking Lot Fund “Fund 540” includes total revenues and expenditures for both East and West operations.** Parking expenditure data received by Walker was not separated out by West or East operations with only totals provided. The following table displays **historical five-year Parking Lot Fund 540 revenue and expenditures** displaying the net operating income.

Table 2: Parking Lot Fund 540 Operating Statement – FY 2014 to FY 2018

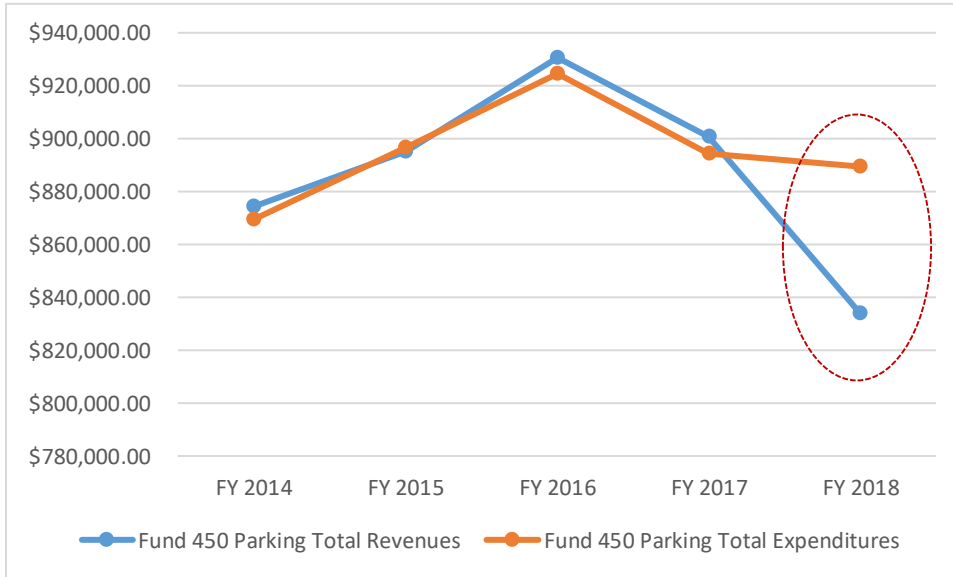
	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Fund 540 Parking Total Revenues	\$ 874,442	\$ 895,147	\$ 930,499	\$ 900,700	\$ 833,976
Fund 540 Parking Total Expenditures	\$ 869,641	\$ 896,686	\$ 924,623	\$ 894,280	\$ 889,465
NOI	4,801.00	(1,539.00)	5,876.00	6,420.00	(55,489.00)

Source: City of Ames, 2019

At FY 2018, the Parking Lot Fund was operating at a loss of \$55,489. **The purpose of this table is to show that the City is not profiting from parking; revenues are barely keeping pace with expenditures year-over-year with likely fund balances and transfers covering the annual operating requirements of the Program.** In FY 2016 and FY 2017 a nominal positive surplus was realized.

Over the five-year fiscal period, total revenues have decreased five percent while expenditures have increased two percent. The following figure shows the divergence between total revenues collected and expenditures in FY 2018.

Figure 18: Parking Lot Fund 540 Revenues and Expenditures – Five Year Trend



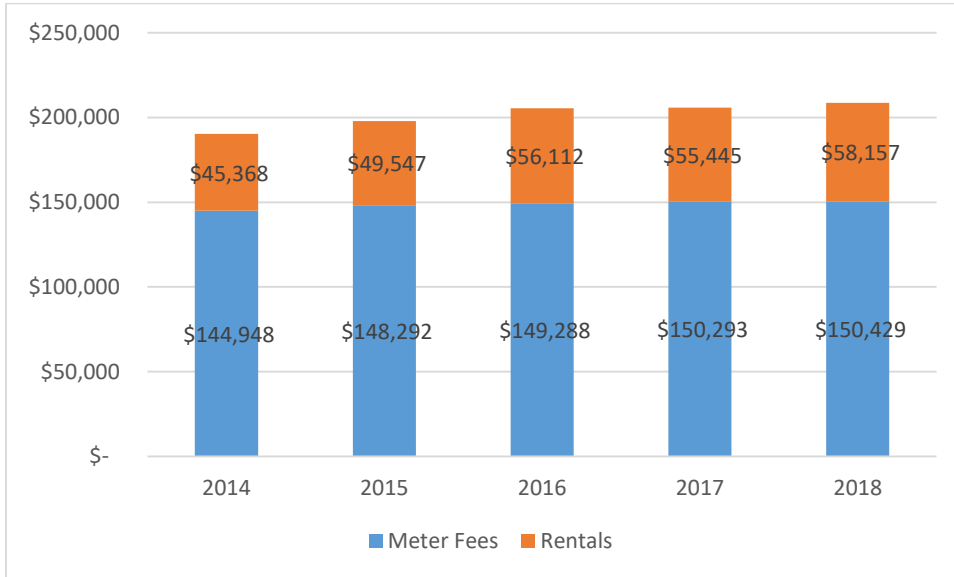
Source: City of Ames (data), Walker Consultants, 2019

The current Program, as measured by the latest fiscal year, is not “breaking even.”

EAST OPERATIONS REVENUES

The following figure depicts five-year revenues from FY 2014 through FY 2018 for downtown operations only (“East Operations”). Two existing revenue sources contribute to total fund revenues. In FY 2018, the most recent year, approximately \$209,000 (rounded) in revenues was collected from the downtown portion of the Program. In FY 2018, parking revenues downtown (East Operations) comprised nearly 25 percent of total Program revenues.

Figure 19: CBD Public Parking Program Revenues – FY 2014 to FY 2018



Source: City of Ames (data), Walker Consultants, 2019

Over the previous five-year fiscal period, total revenues have increased by 10 percent. Before FY 2018, meter rates were \$0.20 per hour.

RATE MODEL

Given the capacity to increase existing rates to meet expenditures and realize a self-sustaining parking auxiliary fund, the City will continue to subsidize the existing program assuming the status quo.

Walker created a basic rate model to assess the environment for phased rate increases over five-year period for the on-street parking meters. Note, this model makes broad assumptions about market revenue and expenditure growth and is intended to be used as a planning tool, not a predictive financial forecast.

Table 3: Parking Meter Rate Model – Five Year Estimated Revenues

	2017 Rate Actual	2019 Rate (estimated)	2023 Rate (40% increase)	2025 Rate (40% increase)
# of parking spaces	683	683	683	683
hours of operation	9	9	9	9
days a year	302	302	302	302
average daily occupancy	63%	48%	44%	40%
hourly rate	\$0.20	\$0.50	\$0.70	\$0.90
estimated annual meter revenue	\$232,250	\$440,894	\$571,769	\$668,302
estimated daily revenue per space	\$340	\$646	\$837	\$978

Source: Walker Consultants, 2019

Walker evaluated actual 2017 rates at \$0.20 per hour, before policy changes went into effect. For FY 2019, we have estimated potential meter revenues assuming the \$0.50 hourly rate and an average daily occupancy of 48 percent, assuming a modest decrease in occupancy in this period. If hourly meter rates increase incrementally by 40 percent over a three-year and five-year period, a rate of \$0.90 per hour could eventually be realized. However, **actual “break-even” hourly rates estimated will likely be above \$0.90 per hour by FY 2025. Making broad market assumptions regarding revenue and expenditure growth over a five-year period, a meter rate “break-even” of \$1.50 per hour is estimated with the following list of assumptions made:**

- Assumes rate increase applied across **683 CBD meters only**;
- No surface lot rates are applied by FY 2025;
- Expenditure CAGR of 2 percent per annum;
- Assumes no increases from other parking fund revenue categories;
- Assumes an average daily occupancy rate of 39 percent;
- Assumes approximately \$50 per space per annum estimated is set aside into a sinking fund for capital improvements including meter hardware replacement, enforcement technology equipment replacement, crack sealing and asphalt lot resurfacing, major parking signage replacement and other miscellaneous capital requirements. [\$62,650 estimated annualized sinking fund placement].

If off-street rates are adopted, meter “break-even” rates would likely be lower than what is estimated above for on-street.

Assuming, for modeling purposes that by FY 2025, rates are implemented off-street at CBD Lot X, Y and Z, and, that 266 existing two-hour and four-spaces charge a flat daily rate of \$3.00 per day for 302 days out of the year with an estimated average daily occupancy rate of 58 percent, an off-street revenue of approximately \$139,778 is estimated if the above assumptions are met. An additional off-street CBD lot revenue source could potentially bring on-street daily “break-evens” to \$1.22, if the above assumptions are met.

Walker performed a peer cities hourly meter rate survey and found an average hourly rate of \$0.86 used to inform our rate analysis model. **In five years our model assumes rates can normalize just above the peer cities average identified to \$0.90 an hour.**

Table 4: Peer Cities Meter Rate Survey

City	Meter Hourly Rate	
Dubuque	\$	0.75
Cedar Rapids	\$	0.90
Davenport	\$	0.50
Sioux City	\$	0.75
Council Bluffs	\$	1.00
Urbandale	\$	1.25
Average	\$	0.86

Source: Walker Consultants, 2019

We estimate that meter revenues could total nearly \$668,000 approximated assuming a stabilized rate environment by FY 2025 with an average daily occupancy of 40 percent. The revenue earned by meters would presumably be deposited into the same Parking Lot Fund that maintains existing free daily surface lots.

Assuming total parking expenditures continue to increase by 2 percent per annum to FY 2025, Total Parking Fund expenditures could surpass \$1 million. **With the addition of a potential \$228,000 approximated in additional meter revenues from the East Operations, the City could realize a more self-sustaining auxiliary fund. However, a gap would still remain for funding the construction of additional parking infrastructure such as a parking structure without user rates charged at such a facility. Walker assesses that it is unlikely that users will pay the needed monthly rates required for a parking structure to be self-sustaining under existing market conditions in CBD Ames.** The following parking alternatives analysis section provides a more detailed presentation of parking structure finance and feasibility.

05

Parking Alternatives Analysis

In addition to formal data collection, the project team conducted field observations documenting the condition and special use characteristics of the existing parking system in relation to the downtown urban form. We noted parking space geometrics (e.g. angled spaces versus parallel spaces), the location of parking assets, the condition of lots and on-street spaces, the proximity of parking to concentrated-use areas, building height and scale, and other notable physical characteristics that limit parking availability and inform an alternatives analysis.

EXISTING URBAN FORM

Downtown Ames Main Street maintains an attractive core historic building stock that is pre-automobile era. The minimal building setbacks, uniform building heights (2-3 stories only found), and building façade orientation, relative to the existing street network, creates a street wall and coherent human scale that is ripe for higher pedestrian use, enhanced place-making ability, and the right environment for small retail.

Since much of the core building stock remains intact in the core Main Street area, and is built to occupy entire city-blocks, off-street parking options are limited to peripheral areas or on parcels where buildings have been razed.

Ames has strategically provided off-street surface parking lots behind Main Street buildings (CBD Lots X, Y, Z) between the rail road tracks. This supply is in close proximity to Main Street businesses with many buildings providing back door entry/exit access shortening walking distances between parking areas and buildings. Moreover, many existing Main Street employees rely upon this surface parking for long-term daily parking usage.

ANGLED PARKING SPACES

Angled parking spaces make more efficient use of the existing curb space increasing the parking space inventory per block face. The following are pros and cons of angled parking:

Pros:

- Greater space efficiency (increases the number of car spaces per block face)
- Easier to pull-into spaces (no parallel parking skills needed)
- Easier to exit the car (doors have more space to open because of staggering)
- Traffic calming

Cons:

- Difficult to ascertain how far the driver needs to “pull-up” into a space
- Head-in parking may create challenges for drivers backing out into a driving lane (oncoming lane traffic must yield).

Where might angled parking be appropriate?

In a commercial main street area where traffic speed is reduced and where volumes are lower with adequate curb-to-curb width available, angled parking is a recommended on-street design solution.

Walker observed this practice working effectively along Main Street calming traffic and creating safe travel speeds through the corridor.

PARKING STRUCTURE FEASIBILITY

Walker is not recommending a parking structure in the CBD at this time. Our primary reasoning is two-fold:

- **Current demand has not reached a critical “tipping-point.”** Overall peak parking occupancies system wide neared only 50 percent at the peak hour of usage. The existing parking supply is adequate to meet the existing demand. Program adjustments can improve the existing usage and customer experience.
- **The City’s parking system cannot currently self-support a parking structure.** Current revenues are too low to cover the debt service and annualized operating expenses associated with a new facility. A new parking structure would require significant public subsidy from the City’s general fund.

Nevertheless, as the downtown continues to redevelop and densify, a parking structure might be warranted in the future.

Walker evaluated the current development landscape in downtown Ames and did not identify any known pipeline or proposed projects. For planning purposes, however, we considered notional future demand scenarios generated by residential, office, retail and restaurant land uses. Note, this scenario model is not intended to be predictive, but, serve only as a tool for planning purposes.

In our scenario, we consider a hypothetical parking demand generated.

Figure 20: Hypothetical Future Development Scenario – 10 Year Horizon

	Office (SF)	Retail Space (SF)	Residential Units
Units	30,000	20,000	150

Source: City of Ames, Walker Consultants, 2019.

Walker took the proposed land use quantities provided in the plan and modeled a notional recommended parking supply using *Urban Land Institute* (ULI) recommended base ratios. The following figure presents Walker’s own calculation based upon the information available.

Figure 21: Notional Future Development Scenario

Land Use	Units		ULI Base Ratio*		Recommended supply
Residential	250	x	1.15 per unit	=	288
Retail	20,000 GLA	x	4.0 /ksf GLA	=	80
Office	30,000 GLA	x	3.7 /ksf GLA	=	111
Total Spaces				=	479

*Urban Land Institute. *Shared Parking*, 3rd Edition.

Source: Walker Consultants, 2019

Walker’s modeled development scenario presents a suggested parking supply of 479 spaces. Assuming that the notional development is built within the next 10 years, speculative at this time, a demand for an additional 479 spaces could result. The above model should therefore be understood as a hypothetical need for future parking spaces given the above scenario, assuming that the notional development modeled does not provide its own off-street parking. Furthermore, assuming the above hypothetical growth modeled, the existing parking system has enough available capacity to absorb a demand for 479 additional spaces with nearly 600 vacant spaces observed at the peak hour of observations and higher levels of vacancy observed across the evening hours. However, occupancies system wide would increase, likely above 60 percent daytime occupancy assuming smaller residential parking demand across daytime hours.

In consideration of future needs, Walker explored the feasibility of a parking structure in the CBD, evaluating the two most suitable sites for a parking structure, taking input received from planning officials to explore the proposed site efficiency, potential limitations and benefits, and order-of-magnitude costs for a parking structure. **The following information is being provided for informational and planning purposes only.** Walker is not recommending a parking structure for the CBD at this time.

Walker evaluated two opportunity sites for a parking structure in the CBD. One site, CBD Lot X (“Site X”), is located at Clark Avenue and Main Street and would occupy the existing surface lot footprint. The second site, CBD Lot N (“Site N”), is located at Clark Avenue and Fifth Street and would occupy the existing surface lot footprint as well. Both sites are currently owned by the City.

The following figure depicts the opportunity sites in relation to the overall CBD. Walker considered a scenario whereby a Site X parking structure would have retail/office frontage along Clark Avenue with pedestrian access and transition to Tom Evans Plaza. Additionally, we considered a scenario whereby a Site N parking structure would have ground floor commercial space with frontage to 5th Street.

It is our understanding that the scale and height of the parking structure be incorporated into the existing urban form. Therefore, the height displayed is only three levels for each parking structure concept given the existing building fabric downtown is no more than two or three stories.

In our concept we display a ground level, typical level, and top level followed by a discussion regarding parking structure site efficiency, total space count, ingress/egress, vehicular circulation, and order of magnitude costs

Figure 22: Opportunity Sites – Site N and Site X

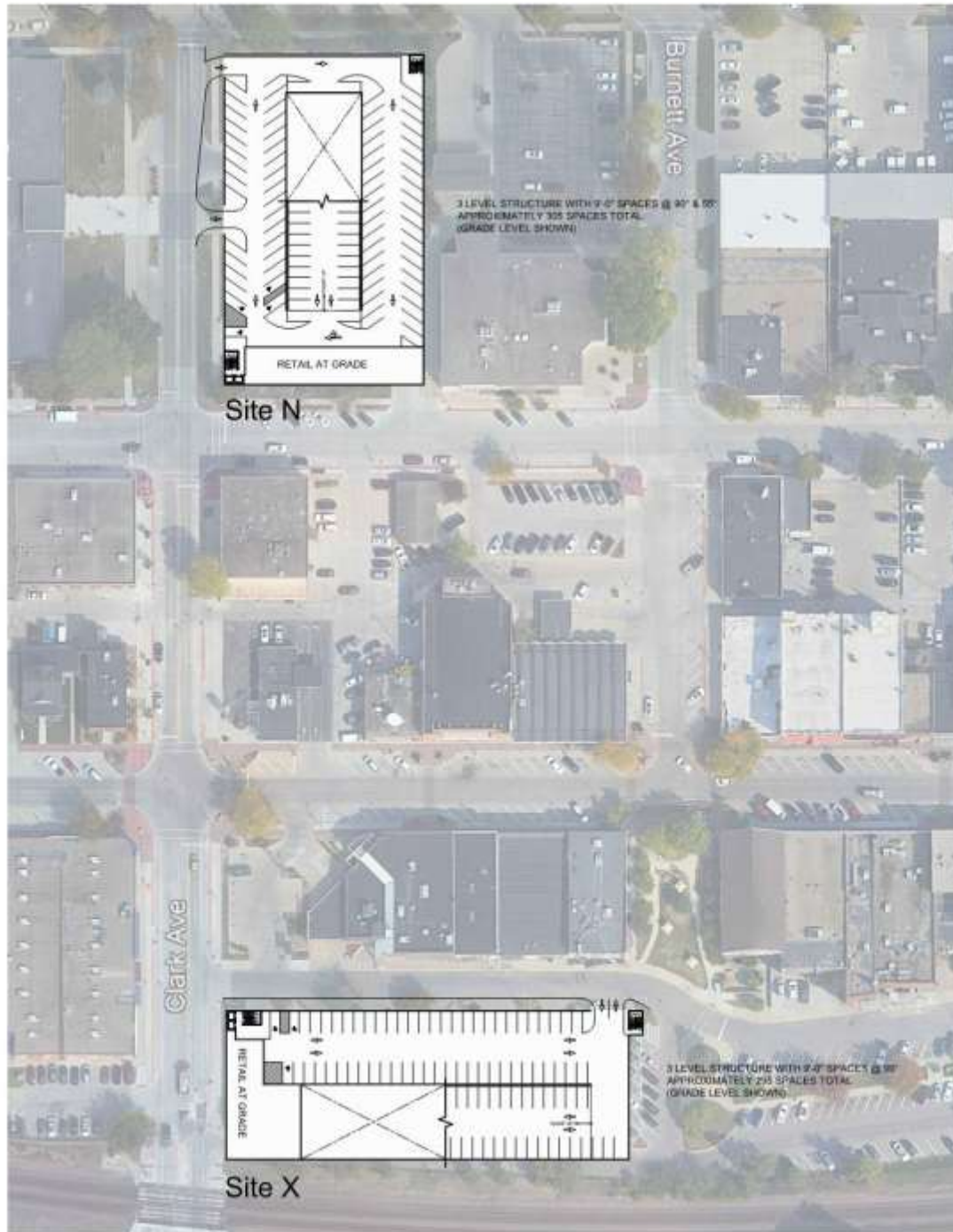
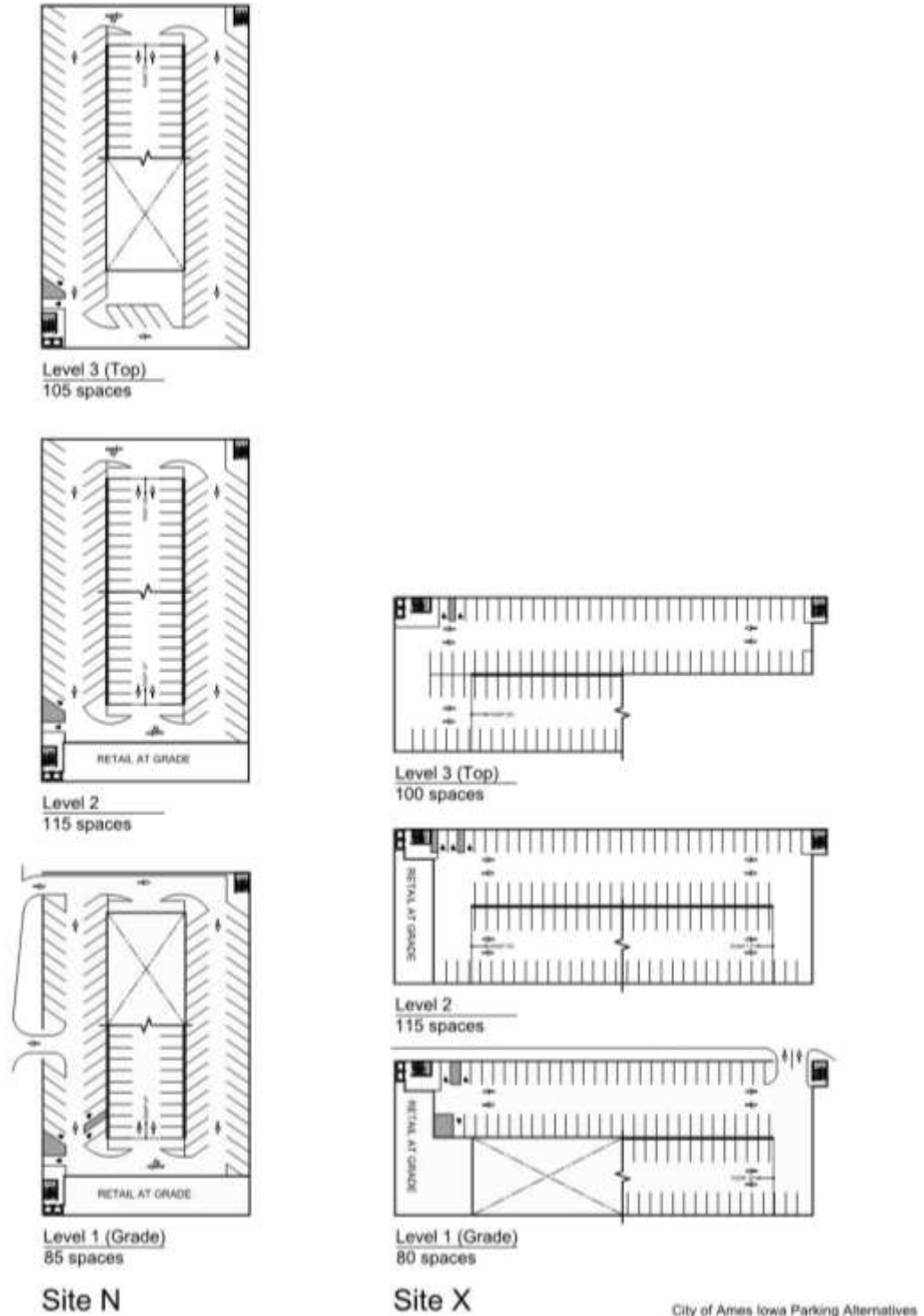


Figure 23: Site N and Site X – Parking Structure Conceptual Plan



SITE N CONCEPTUAL PARKING STRUCTURE

At the concept-level, the following features displayed at Site N include:

- **A three-level, 345- space parking structure.** At-grade capacity of 80 spaces is shown. The second level provides 115 spaces with the top level providing 100 spaces.
- **One-way traffic flow with angled parking.** The width of the site impacts the selection of this as a system. Angled spaces make it easier for drivers to enter/exit stalls with greater visibility.
- **Separate ingress and egress points.** An entry lane at is shown at the site's northwest corner of 6th Street and Clark Avenue. An exit lane is displayed mid-block for purposes of separate traffic flow.
- **Stairwell and elevator** displayed at the northeast and southwest quadrants of the site with pedestrian access to Clark Avenue and Fifth Street.
- **A net capacity of 259 spaces yielded.** Subtracting the existing surface lot capacity of 86 spaces from the proposed parking structure capacity [345 Site X parking structure capacity – 86 existing Lot N surface capacity = 259 net spaces].

SITE X CONCEPTUAL PARKING STRUCTURE

At the concept-level, the following features displayed at Site X include:

- **A three-level, 295- space parking structure.** At-grade capacity of 85 spaces is shown. The second level provides 115 spaces with the top level providing 105 spaces.
- **Two-way traffic flow with 90-degree parking.** The width of the site impacts the selection of this as a system. With this concept, drivers pass all stalls on the way both in and out of the parking structure.
- **Shared ingress/egress point.** An entry/exit lane is shown incorporating the existing surface lot drive aisle accommodating two-way traffic outside the parking structure.
- **Stairwell and elevator** displayed at the northwest and northeast quadrants of the site with pedestrian access to Clark Avenue and Tom Evans Plaza.
- **A net capacity of 175 spaces yielded.** Subtracting the existing surface lot capacity of 120 spaces from the proposed parking structure capacity [295 Site X parking structure capacity – 120 existing Lot X surface capacity = 175 net spaces].

While Site N yields a greater net space count, Site X is in closer proximity to Main Street and the concentration of business uses along the Main Street corridor. Additionally, the Tom Evans Plaza provides a pedestrian access point mid-block to Main Street. From a pedestrian standpoint, Site X provides better access, although, there are trade-offs and higher costs associated which we present in the following sub-section.

NEW FACILITY COSTS

Parking costs include land, construction, and operations and maintenance costs and can vary depending upon the local market. For an above-grade parking structure, Walker estimates construction costs to be \$20,000 to \$22,000 per space for the Ames CBD, supposing a parking structure efficiency of 325 square feet per space with modest architectural treatments. Assuming soft costs to be 20 percent of construction costs estimated, total project costs per space would total nearly \$25,000. Walker also assumes an annual operating cost per space of \$500 per space which includes cleaning, lighting, facility maintenance, insurance, equipment, and administration. **Walker is not recommending a parking structure in the CBD at this time. This conceptual cost statement is being provided only for information purposes.**

As a point of reference, it can be helpful to parse out the true cost of parking, including both capital and maintenance costs. Table 1 presents the monthly price of parking needed per space to break even (assuming amortization over 25 years at 5.0 percent interest), given the capital cost per space and annualized operating cost per space.

Table 5: Breakeven Costs per Space for New Facility

Project Cost Per Space	Annual Operating Cost Per Space				
	\$300	\$400	\$500	\$600	\$700
\$ 15,000	\$114	\$122	\$130	\$139	\$147
\$ 16,000	\$120	\$128	\$136	\$145	\$153
\$ 17,000	\$126	\$134	\$142	\$151	\$159
\$ 18,000	\$131	\$140	\$148	\$156	\$165
\$ 19,000	\$137	\$146	\$154	\$162	\$171
\$ 20,000	\$143	\$152	\$160	\$168	\$177
\$ 21,000	\$149	\$158	\$166	\$174	\$183
\$ 22,000	\$155	\$163	\$172	\$180	\$188
\$ 23,000	\$161	\$169	\$178	\$186	\$194
\$ 24,000	\$167	\$175	\$184	\$192	\$200
\$ 25,000	\$173	\$181	\$189	\$198	\$206

Rate: 5.0% Amortized Period: 25

Monthly Revenue Per Space Needed

The monthly revenue per space needed for break-even would be \$189. Currently the City charges only \$10 for monthly parking access to off-street lots. The market for monthly parking, as it currently exists, is too low to self-support a facility.

Table 6: Opinion on Probable Costs – Site N and Site X Comparison

	Site N Parking structure	Site X Parking structure
Proposed Capacity	345 spaces	295 spaces
Net Capacity	259 spaces	175 spaces
Total Costs	\$8.62 M	7.36 M
Net Costs per space	\$33,281	\$41,150

Site X parking structure has a higher net cost per added space, \$41,150 estimated. A Site N parking structure proves more efficient in total space capacity realized, 259 net spaces, and costs per added space estimated at \$33,281. However, as mentioned previously, Site X has greater potential for pedestrian access in the service of the existing retail corridor along Main Street.

PUBLIC FINANCE FUNDINGS MECHANISMS

Most structured parking facilities are not self-supporting. By this, we mean that operating revenues are insufficient to cover operating expenses and debt service. Because of this reality, it is often not possible for an owner to obtain 100 percent financing on their parking project without subsidies of some kind. There are a number of proven strategies that have been successfully used to fund parking facility capital projects. Approaches used to finance parking projects include federal and/or state grants, tax-increment financing, taxes from business improvement districts or parking tax districts, and net revenues from other facilities or parking assets, including meters and/or parking citations income.

Walker is including this section for informational purposes only given the significant community investment a parking structure represents and is not recommending or endorsing any of the options reviewed below.

Ways public infrastructure is funded

1. **Tax Supported-** this funding mechanism is entirely supported by taxation.
2. **Self-financed-** this applies to infrastructure provided on a user pay basis with fees sufficient to provide up-front costs.
3. **Public/Private-** this combines both funding thru taxation and user pay where the taxation subsidizes user cost.
4. **Grants or Loans-** supported by federal, state and local partners. Federal and state grant funding is extremely limited for parking structures, particularly free-standing parking facilities.

The following list represents potential funding sources presented to the City for further evaluation:

- Business Improvement Districts
- Parking Tax Districts
- General Obligation Bonds
- Revenue Bonds
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

CONCLUSION

Walker is not recommending the construction of a parking structure in the Ames CBD. Furthermore, the existing market conditions for a self-sustaining parking structure do not exist at present. The City and private stakeholders have discussed parking as a hindrance to future employment in the downtown and the ability to absorb a large-sized firm employer downtown. Under economic development considerations, a parking structure could be needed in the future. However, the financing and public-private mechanism for such an investment would need to be determined. Walker is not informed of any large corporate employer deciding to relocate to downtown Ames at present. Although, it is prudent for stakeholders to begin planning now for future downtown growth.



A Field and Occupancy Data Appendix

PARKING SPACE INVENTORY

Block	Lot ID/Block Face	Lot Name/Street Name	On street			Off-street						Inventory		
			2-HR. On street	4-HR. On street	ADA	Free, 10 min.	2-HR. Lot	4-HR. Lot	10-HR. Lot	Reserved, 24 HR.	Free Parking		Permit Parking	ADA
1	North	6th St.												0
	East	Clark Ave.												0
	South	5th St. Grand Ave.	24	2										26
	West	Ave.												0
	Lot MM (City Hall)	Lot MM							50			4		54
	Lot M	Lot M						9	2	132	6	43		192
	Lot Name/Street Name													0
2	North	6th St. Burnett Ave.												0
	East	Ave.		7										7
	South	5th St.	12	2										14
	West	Clark Ave.												0
	Lot N (City Hall)						41	30	12		3			86
	Lot Name/Street Name													0
3	North	6th St. Kellogg Ave.												0
	East	Ave.		7										7
	South	5th St. Burnett Ave.	16											16
	West	Ave.	4	1	7									12
	Lot Name/Street Name													0
4	North	6th St. Douglas Ave.		0										0
	East	Ave.		9	2									11
	South	5th St. Kellogg Ave.	16											16
	West	Ave.		9										9
	Lot S (Kellogg)						27			3				30
	Lot Name/Street Name													0

	West	Douglas Ave.	6	1					7
									0
		Lot Name/ Street Name							0
11	North	Main St.	14	1					15
	East	Clark Ave.							0
	South	Rail Road Tracks							0
	West	Grand Ave.							0
	Downtown Lot V (Depot)				124		2		126
									0
									0
		Lot Name/ Street Name							0
12	North	Main St.	22	1					23
	East	Kellogg Ave.		3					3
	South	Rail Road Tracks	0						0
	West	Clark Ave.	0						0
	Downtown Lot X (CBD)				103	15	2		120
	Downtown Lot Y (CBD)		33	32	31				96
		Lot Name/ Street Name							0
13	North	Main St.	38	1					39
	East	Duff Ave.	0						0
	South	Rail Road Tracks	0						0
	West	Kellogg Ave.		3					3
	Downtown Lot Z (CBD)		50	48	42		1		141
									0
		Lot Name/ Street Name							0
14	North	Rail Road Tracks							0
	East	Clark Ave.							0
	South	Lincoln Grand Ave.							0
	West								0
									0
		Lot Name/ Street Name							0
15	North	Gilchrist St.							0

East	Kellogg Ave.	8													8
South	Lincoln														0
West	Clark Ave.														0
<hr/>															
	Lot Name/ Street Name														0
16	North	Rail Road Tracks													0
	East	Duff Ave.													0
	South	Lincoln Way													0
	West	Kellogg Ave.	10	1											11
<hr/>															
	Lot Q (Library)														0
<hr/>															
															58
															22
															4
															84

**TO
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144 278 20 8 83 183 135 140 188 132 25 43 1,379

w/o Lot
MM

1,187

PARKING SPACE OCCUPANCY

Block	Lot ID/ Block Face	Lot Name/ Street Name	Inventory	9:00 AM	Occupancy %	1:30 PM	Occupancy %	6:00 PM	Occupancy %	
1	North	6th St.		0						
	East	Clark Ave.		0						
	South	5th St.		26	11	42 %	5	19 %	7	27 %
	West	Grand Ave.		0						
	Lot MM (City Hall)	Lot MM		54	33	61 %	16	30 %	4	7 %
	Lot M	Lot M		192	172	90 %	158	82 %	60	31 %
	<hr/>									
	Lot ID/ Block Face	Lot Name/ Street Name		0						
2	North	6th St.		0						
	East	Burnett Ave.		7	1	14 %	0	0 %	3	43 %
	South	5th St.		14	3	21 %	2	14 %	1	7 %
	West	Clark Ave.		0	0		0		0	
	Downtown Lot N (City Hall)			86	42	49 %	29	34 %	9	10 %
<hr/>										
	Lot ID/ Block Face	Lot Name/ Street Name		0						
3	North	6th St.		0						
	East	Kellogg Ave.		7	0	0 %	0	0 %	4	57 %
	South	5th St.		16	3	19 %	6	38 %	1	6 %

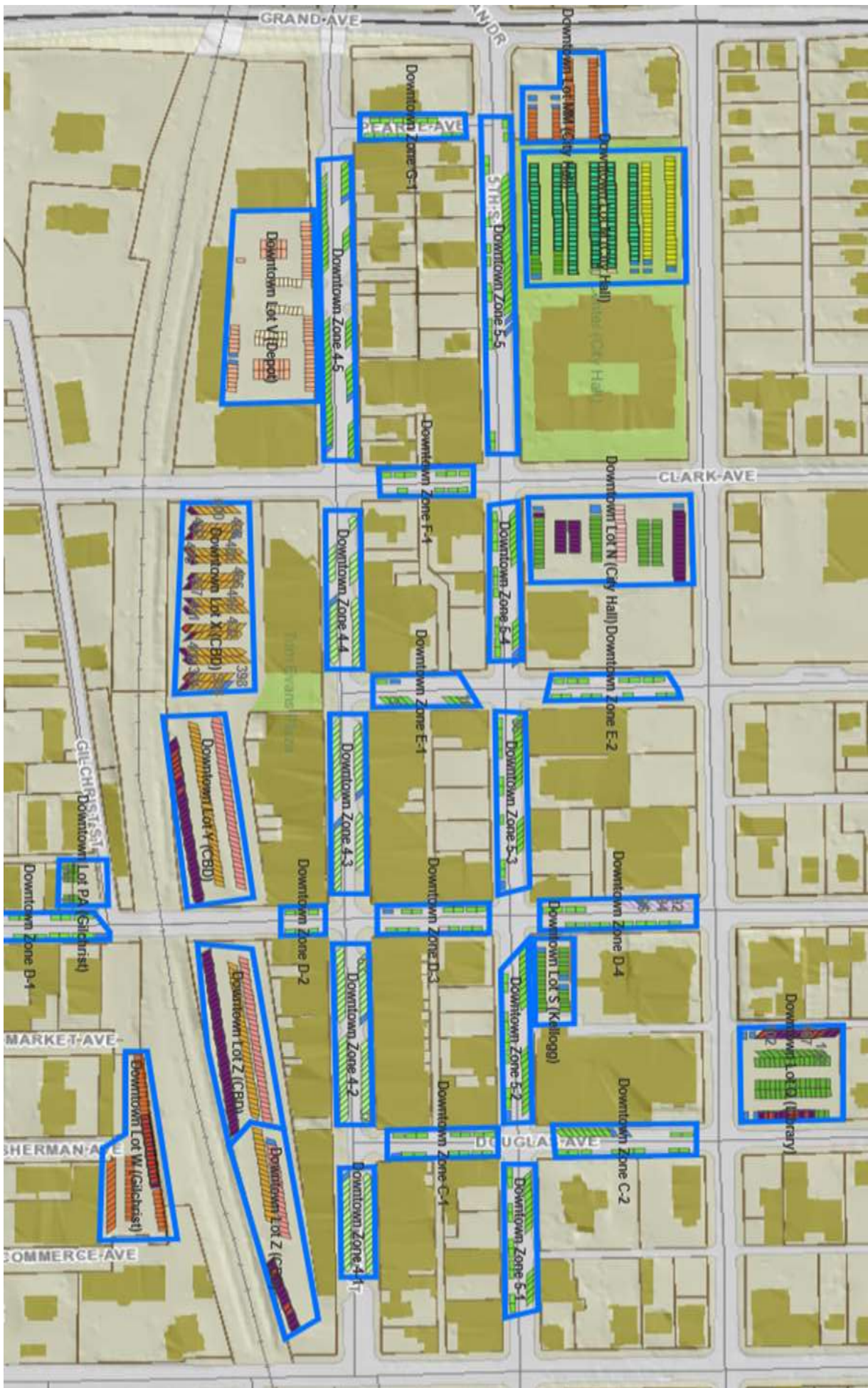
West	Burnett Ave.	12	0	0%	0	0%	4	33%
		0						
Lot ID/ Block Face	Lot Name/ Street Name	0						
4 North	6th St.	0						
East	Douglas Ave.	11	10	91%	12	109%	10	91%
South	5th St.	16	3	19%	5	31%	6	38%
West	Kellogg Ave.	9	1	11%	4	44%	3	33%
Lot S (Kellogg)		30	11	37%	7	23%	7	23%
		0						
Lot ID/ Block Face	Lot Name/ Street Name	0						
5 North	6th St.	0						
East	Duff Ave.	0						
South	5th St.	19	6	32%	9	47%	19	100%
West	Douglas Ave.	8	7	88%	6	75%	6	75%
		0						
		0						
Lot ID/ Block Face	Lot Name/ Street Name	0						
6 North	5th St.	12	3	25%	5	42%	6	50%
East	Clark Ave.	6	2	33%	2	33%	0	0%
South	Main St.	25	2	8%	5	20%	12	48%
West	Pearle Ave.	6	3	50%	1	17%	6	100%
		0						
		0						
Lot ID/ Block Face	Lot Name/ Street Name	0						
7 North	5th St.	11	3	27%	4	36%	1	9%
East	Burnett Ave.	2	0	0%	4	200%	1	50%
South	Main St.	16	2	13%	2	13%	5	31%
West	Clark Ave.	4	0	0%	1	25%	0	0%
		0						
		0						
Lot ID/ Block Face	Lot Name/ Street Name	0						
8 North	5th St.	10	2	20%	5	50%	2	20%
East	Kellogg Ave.	7	2	29%	2	29%	7	100%
South	Main St.	19	4	21%	14	74%	17	89%
West	Burnett Ave.	7	0	0%	3	43%	4	57%
		0						
		0						
Lot ID/ Block Face	Lot Name/ Street Name	0						
9 North	5th St.	10	5	50%	3	30%	7	70%
East	Douglas Ave.	7	2	29%	6	86%	6	86%

	South	Main St.	22	7	32 %	14	64 %	23	105 %
	West	Kellogg Ave.	7	2	29 %	4	57 %	6	86 %
			0						
			0						
	Lot ID/ Block Face	Lot Name/ Street Name	0						
10	North	5th St.	10	5	50 %	8	80 %	10	100 %
	East	Duff Ave.	0						
	South	Main St.	15	5	33 %	10	67 %	4	27 %
	West	Douglas Ave.	7	2	29 %	6	86 %	6	86 %
			0						
	Lot ID/ Block Face	Lot Name/ Street Name	0						
11	North	Main St.	15	0	0 %	1	7 %	14	93 %
	East	Clark Ave.	0						
	South	Rail Road Tracks	0						
	West	Grand Ave.	0						
	Downtown Lot V (Depot)		126	48	38 %	53	42 %	36	29 %
			0						
			0						
	Lot ID/ Block Face	Lot Name/ Street Name	0						
12	North	Main St.	23	12	52 %	18	78 %	17	74 %
	East	Kellogg Ave.	3	2	67 %	2	67 %	2	67 %
	South	Rail Road Tracks	0						
	West	Clark Ave.	0						
	Downtown Lot X (CBD)		120	58	48 %	80	67 %	53	44 %
	Downtown Lot Y (CBD)		96	40	42 %	73	76 %	50	52 %
			0						
	Lot ID/ Block Face	Lot Name/ Street Name	0						
13	North	Main St.	39	26	67 %	25	64 %	34	87 %
	East	Duff Ave.	0						
	South	Rail Road Tracks	0						
	West	Kellogg Ave.	3	2	48 %	2	82 %	2	67 %
	Downtown Lot Z (CBD)		141	67	48 %	115	82 %	94	67 %
			0						
	Lot ID/ Block Face	Lot Name/ Street Name	0						
14	North	Rail Road Tracks	0						
	East	Clark Ave.	0						
	South	Lincoln	0						
	West	Grand Ave.	0						
			0						
	Lot ID/ Block Face	Lot Name/ Street Name	0						
15	North	Gilchrist St.	0						

East	Kellogg Ave.	8	2	25 %	3	38 %	4	50 %
South	Lincoln	0						
West	Clark Ave.	0						
Lot ID/ Block Face		Lot Name/ Street Name						
16	North	Rail Road Tracks	0					
	East	Duff Ave.	0					
	South	Lincoln Way	0					
	West	Kellogg Ave.	11	5	45 %	1	9 %	7
			0					64 %
Lot Q (Library)			84	14	17 %	15	18 %	16
TOTAL					46 %		54 %	43 %
AL		1,379	630	746		596		
w/o Lot MM		1,187	458	588	39 %	536	50 %	45 %



B Facility ID Map



APPENDICES A: PARKING ENFORCEMENT TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION

USING LICENSE PLATE RECOGNITION TO ENFORCE TIME LIMITS

To be effective, posted time limits should be monitored and enforced. Typical enforcement methods include physically chalking tires or electronically tracking vehicle license plate numbers at intervals relevant to the posted time limits. The latest technology for tracking length of stay is with a vehicle mounted License Plate Recognition (LPR) system.

NuPark, AIMS, Genetec and Tannery Creek Systems are examples of firms that offer a vehicle mounted LPR system that include special vehicle mounted cameras and software to capture the plate and vehicle location. As an option, some systems can capture the wheel stem location as the enforcement vehicle drives past the parked vehicle. A computer mounted inside the vehicle records the data, GPS position, and checks the data to determine if the vehicle was previously parked and determine the length of stay. In addition, plates can be compared to a database of permit parkers or list of wanted vehicles for other violations and additional corrective action.



Parking enforcement vehicle with cameras highlighted

Our opinion of cost for one LPR vehicle mounted system is \$35,000 - \$45,000, plus the cost of the vehicle. The systems can be deployed on most regular passenger vehicles and pick-up trucks and even specialized golf cart sized enforcement vehicles. In addition to the initial cost, there are on-going fees for cloud based services, software updates, and database support.

Another option is to use handheld electronic devices to manually scan each plate and allow the user to verify the plate number. In some cases, these systems can be augmented by using a smart phone as the enforcement device. While not as rugged or efficient as the actual handheld device, smart phones can be a lower priced option to increase the number of units if needed.

Handheld systems typically cost about \$5,000 per unit plus an on-going fee for cloud based services and software updates. Leasing this type of system may be an option, which greatly reduces the initial investment and is based on the number of units in service.

APPENDICES B: PUBLIC COMMENTS

VoterID	Submit Date	Please provide comments or questions related do the 2019 Downtown Ames Parking Study draft report. The report and meeting information can be found above. Please note: there is no character limit for responses, the response bar will continue to expand.
20561	10/28/2019 15:22	
20562	10/28/2019 15:44	Insufficient study conducted with questionable methodology.
20564	10/28/2019 16:13	<p>The narrative for the last 2 years is that the parking system was not self-funding and that turned out to be patently untrue. I contacted Mr. Pitcher who supplied documents showing that for the last 15 years of so, the parking system fund was, for all intents and purposes, self-funding. Some years were in the black and some in the red but it was essentially a break even proposition. The city then came along and wanted the fund to fund paving lots and other maintenance and raised the meter rates with very little input from DT business owners and customers. The outcry was deafening and some business's suffered as some customers refused to pay the higher rates. The change changed the atmosphere of DT Ames from a casual, drop in and shop to rush in and rush out. In addition, this change, a 400% increase in meter rates, actually resulted in less revenue being generated than had the rates simply doubled which was proposed by myself and other business owners. This change was incredibly short-sighted. Further, customers were driven to use the back free lots, thus reducing the meter revenue AND resulting in an unintended consequence of a lack of parking in the free lots. Thankfully, after numerous discussions and presentations to the City Council, the decision was made to reduce the rates back to 50 cents per hour andm lo and behold, people were parking in downtown Ames AND feeding the meters! While I have not seen the financials since the change to 50 cents per hour went into effect, I would suspect revenues are up. Finally, I would be remiss if I did not say, in the STRONGEST way possible, I find it a terrible misuse of city funds to pay a consultant \$70,000 to come in for a mere TWO DAYS and then make recommendations. TWO DAYS!!! Surely, this study should have little value as the data compiled is not a good, representative sample of what parking is like in Ames 365 days/year. There is little doubt 2 days in February, two days in July or 2 days in December would yiels substantially different results. I could go on but I hope you get the gist.</p>
20565	10/28/2019 16:39	<p>Good report. Utilize some of the less busy lots for employee parking and reserved spaces. Lot south of tracks and 200 block can be used for employee parking but needs better lighting and plant growth cut down to make the lot visible. Meters should have credit card readers. First ticket free, this is friendlier for visitors. As noted leverage smart enforcement with GPS. Feel the report represented any current issues and successes. City Council needs to set a clear direction for downtown parking. Is it to be subsidized by tax dollars or fully self sustaining. Full operational and capital may be difficult to accomplish. Set up a parking board make up of city and Ames Main Street Program to help provide guidance. Good things to look forward to, thanks for doing the study.</p>
20582	10/30/2019 13:53	<p>I appreciate that this study has affirmed what I had already perceived to be true- there is really no issues with parking downtown and there are almost always spots available, just maybe not the closest spot I desire. I've seen much worse in similarly populated cities. I work in the downtown area and have never had an issue with parking although these days I primarily walk or bike to work and I appreciate that downtown offers that for me.</p>
20585	10/31/2019 12:29	<p>I think the point of what exactly the point of paying for parking is important to quantify. Is it to maintain itself, which it had been doing? Is it to pay for potential upkeep? Is it to keep cars moving during the day, or prevent them from staying overnight? Is it to pay for other areas that don't pay for parking, like the Somerset area? I also have issue with the study being done over the course of two days, that seems awfully short a time to extrapolate a pattern from, and some of the findings I would dismiss as inconclusive, such as cars overstaying the 4 hour area. If photos were only taken of the plates, did they include cars that had hang tags? Also, in the chart that shows the yearly income from parking from 2015 to 2018, It shows a deficit during 2015 and 2018...2018, which had extra</p>

		expenses of meters being put in, an entire week of not collecting any funds, and a drastic drop in parking due to the meter rate going up. 2018 seems like it should be dismissed entirely from the study as far as earnings go, except as a lesson in what not to do. For the record, having a tiny space to type in thoughts is a horrible idea, and every time I have had to flip between tabs to check on the study, it starts me at the beginning of the entire response, which seems like a good way to have people NOT give a good response.
20588	10/31/2019 15:29	Downtown Ames needs a parking garage. Something similar to the parking garage at Mary Greeley Hospital. A facility that would start with two levels with the ability to have additional levels added if needed.
20622	11/4/2019 15:15	
20629	11/4/2019 18:12	I park in Lot V while working at my office located at 507 Main St. I am a real estate appraiser and come and go throughout the day. I often find that when I leave the lot and then return, 30 minutes or an hour later that the same spot is open and a person of habit, I often end up parking in the same spot. If a license recognition system is used I would expect to receive tickets even when I have left and returned at a later time. This same thing has happened in the past with tire markings, so to lunch a block or two away and come back with a mark still on the tire.
20688	11/17/2019 9:22	I don't believe that people should have to pay to shop or to go to the library! All street parking should be free and the city should find a different way to pay for these items. It would make Ames a much more welcoming place.
20730	11/25/2019 9:55	What about the long vehicles that stick out into the driving lanes on Main Street?
20778	11/30/2019 9:32	It is unfortunate that no community input went into this and recommendations are already being published in news sources. Vintage Ames.reThe scope of the study was skewed. Few, as in one building owner was represented, so the other's had no skin in the game. To pay 70,000 for a study that only focused on what City staff wanted is a gross waste of taxpayer money.
20792	12/2/2019 10:30	I love that we have a vital downtown-I fear raising parking rates will be counterproductive. We saw how when they were higher a while back how that affected businesses. Keep them as they are and raise parking fines!
20806	12/3/2019 10:35	As a local property tax payer I'd like to see the parking fund remain self-sufficient and not be supplemented by property tax.
20808	12/3/2019 11:44	Where is the information on why expenses are nearly \$900,000/yr! What goes into this?
20811	12/3/2019 13:29	If you want a thriving Main Street raising the meter fees is not going to help. In fact if you research this communities that have removed meter parking has invigorated Main Streets. Why shop downtown and risk a ticket when it is free to park at Walmart or Bestbuy or any other shopping retailer. Metered parking is not a money maker for the local government when you factor in the wages of enforcment and then the benefits package. Stop thinking of how to make money from parking and look at a tax base that profitable businesses could provide. Do some research on your own instead of paying thousands of dollars to a company to preform a study. I find it hard to believe that a city government as big as ours dosen't have the personnael to look into this on their own. Listen to your citizens and business owners. DO THE RIGHT THING.
20814	12/3/2019 21:32	RE: Response to Parking Study I was not able to attend the meeting on Monday, December 2, 2019. I am a business owner in the MCD. I have a prospective as a healthcare provider looking for close proximity parking for my customers, and from a business owner trying to secure enough parking for my employees. As a pediatric dentist, most of my customer basis are families with children from birth to 18 years of age, and close proximity parking to my business is essential for attracting and retaining customers. On an average 8-hour day, I usually serve 40-50 children, which equates to a lot of foot traffic. Frequently, parents have multiple children, strollers, infant carriers, which makes moving large distances difficult especially in the various weather conditions Iowa presents. They have scheduled appointments and are trying to arrive at our office at their scheduled appointments.

		<p>I am fortunate enough to have some limited customer parking, but I do have some families by choice that utilize the City of Ames metered parking system on the streets adjacent to my building and I generally hear very little concerns with the current parking rates. I have major concerns that a quick, rapid “market correction” of meter rates will drive customers away, as there are times that my limited parking does not have enough capacity for my customers and on street metered parking is necessary. I understand the self sustaining intention of a parking system, but this needs to be a gradual process and not a “flip the switch” overnight process. Human nature is one that adjusts better to slower, gradual changes versus rapid, abrupt choices. My second perspective is as a business owner. I currently have 10 employees, a but as my business has grown over the past 10 years with both customers and employees, I have had to shift more of my employee parking offsite. In the past 12 months, I have begun to utilize the surface Lot S for long term parking needs for my employees. I currently use approximately 5 stalls in Lot S on a daily on a Monday through Friday basis from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm. This lot is convenient due to the close proximity to my office building. I use a combination of the Smart Card and the Park Mobile App. There are pros/cons to each system, however as a business owner with a shortage of time I am going to focus on the cons from my prospective. Some of the cons to the Smart Cards are they require frequent trips to City Hall to reload the cards especially when you are using them daily for long term parking needs. Also, there are times that the meters do not work; do not recognize the card or in the winter precipitation can freeze the card slot. A Smart Card is employee dependent. I have had times when the employee forgets that card. I also have concerns that, if I load a larger dollar amount on the card you worry about the employee losing the card, an as the employer you are out the money. The Park Mobile app is good in theory for individual use to pay for parking, but is not practical for an employer to “pay for employee parking”. I currently use the App for three of my employees. On a daily basis, I have to open the app to load parking time for each of the employees, taking time out of my busy schedule. My solution to these systems, would be to expand of the long term parking tags to include 10 hours times to additional lots as well as expanding the ability to “reserve parking” in any lot from the city. As an employer, I understand to long term parking tags or reserved parking, will come at a cost. I understand that and believe that it is part of the cost of doing business. I expect to pay a usual customary rate for the parking that I am using. I would just like a system that is not so labor intensive on my part as a small business owner. Thank you for taking time to read my comments. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Sincerely, Dr. Matt Pyfferoen Pyfferoen Pediatric Dentistry 301 5th Street Ames, IA 50010</p>
20819	12/4/2019 14:36	You know who doesn't charge for parking? Amazon. Don't penalize our local businesses by imposing penalties for those that fight through our terrible traffic to go there.
20820	12/4/2019 16:48	I agree with the recommendations in the draft report. Additionally, I would like to see the current angled on-street parking converted to back-in configuration, which is safer than pull-in.
20822	12/4/2019 18:08	That's ridiculous!
20827	12/5/2019 6:07	Raising the parking rates AGAIN in the downtown area would be a really bad plan unless you want to see the area returned to see the defunct shell that it once was. BTW this form to object to this hike was next to impossible to find on your web site. Made me think that you are not really interested in viable feedback!
20828	12/5/2019 6:28	I don't think raising fees for parking meters is a good idea. You're charging people to shop at the local businesses. I don't carry enough change to feed the meter now. Increasing fees for overdue tickets is ok. Otherwise it's too easy to just pay a fine and not move your vehicle.
20832	12/5/2019 13:58	Please keep the meters and free parking behind Main St. We need to have turnover and the metered spots make this possible. I understand that meter rates may need to increase, and agree it should be done incrementally. It would be nice if the meters themselves took cards or if there was a standalone payment center to pay directly via credit card (similar to what's on campus).
20833	12/5/2019 15:17	Incremental rate increase on meters over next 5 years.

20834	12/5/2019 15:19	Incremental rate increase on meters over next 5 years. Find a way to get employees, all day customers off of mainstreet, enforce 2 hr limit. Convert 4hr free parking to 10hr free parking and eliminate hang tags.
20835	12/5/2019 19:35	Parking in downtown AMES SHOULD BE FREE If you want a vibrant downtown then you MUST make Parking Free Anything else will kill downtown shops. It is that simple.
20839	12/6/2019 11:24	There is of course no easy solution to car parking on Main Street. For many years before retirement, I worked in retail on main street. We encouraged our customers to park in back of the store near the railroad tracks — where it was free. We had a back entrance to the store and our shop was next to the Tom Evans park which offered a pleasant “walk through” to main street. But. No one seemed interested in doing this. Most people drove up and down main street looking for a space. I’m sure some ended up parked further away — requiring more steps — than if they took advantage of the free parking area in back of the store. This is a psychological problem. People simply did not like using the “south” parking area or even our store’s back entrance. They wanted the pleasure of main street entrances and main street parking. (As I recall, even the Farmers Market tried using the south parking lot without much success.) Random ideas Stores on the south side of main street should be encouraged to open an inviting back entrance. This is a good place for outside patios if the overlook was more inviting. People like to sit and watch other people. We have two small “walk through” parks from main street to the south parking. We really need a larger inviting walk-through to integrate the two areas. But this seems impossible without removing a building. 3. Could the railroad parking area be reconfigured to resemble a main street? Maybe with scattered areas for a food truck or vendor stand? Anything to change the feeling to a more positive inviting psychological feel. How about a series of shallow (but longer) permanent buildings abutting the tracks, facing north - to create a row of small retail structures that do not require a back entrance). Rent these spaces to encourage local, “starter” businesses that could be used to establish a clientele before moving to a longer permanent building. In other words think of the south parking as a second, smaller main street with interesting new retail. Too augment (not replace) main street. 3. Dinking around with a series of small irritating raises in the parking rates doesn’t sound like a good idea. It is an irritant to have these niggling increases every year or so. One moderate increase would be better. Maybe higher main street parking rates with lower off-main street (side street) parking rates lower.
20846	12/6/2019 21:54	If our roads are not “self-sustaining” why do we expect parking to be “self-sustaining”? The enterprise should operate with the current mix of general fund and user fees. The comparison cities used to arrive at the \$0.90/hr fee seem irrelevant and somewhat random. There appears to be no thought whatsoever as to future plans for downtown. This seems entirely based on toady’s reality with no thought to future development. By and large this so-called study had a. Very “canned” feel to it. Once again. The City of Ames has purchased a bland, consultant based analysis with almost no description of local involvement. Consultants must salivate every time they see the word “Ames” as they know they will have to deliver little of originality thus maximizing their profits.

OPEN HOUSE COMMENTS

Draft Report Recommendation	Support (Yes)	Does not support (no)	Comments
1. Implement a short-term and long term user parking strategy	x		There should be free parking area for library patrons.
2. Consider to evaluate parking occupancies on-street and set targets for occupancy			
3. Form a downtown parking advisory committee	x		
4. Maintain the existing sidewalks and public realm to promote walkability	x		
5. Promote CBD Lots S, Q, and N as long-term employee parking areas			
6. Increase the fine schedule for violators			
7. Consider a phased and incremental five year meter strategy			
8. Maintain the existing 4-hour employee parking hang tag program; evaluate the long-term feasibility of rates	x		
at CBD Lots X, Y and Z			
Draft Report Recommendation	Support (Yes)	Does not support (no)	Comments
1. Implement a short-term and long term user parking strategy			I am concerned about parking for library patrons. No other city makes you pay a meter to go to the library!
2. Consider to evaluate parking occupancies on-street and set targets for occupancy			Need more handicapped parking!!
3. Form a downtown parking advisory committee	x		
4. Maintain the existing sidewalks and public realm to promote walkability	x		
5. Promote CBD Lots S, Q, and N as long-term employee parking areas	x		
6. Increase the fine schedule for violators			
7. Consider a phased and incremental five year meter strategy			
8. Maintain the existing 4-hour employee parking hang tag program; evaluate the long-term feasibility of rates			
at CBD Lots X, Y and Z			
Draft Report Recommendation	Support (Yes)	Does not support (no)	Comments
1. Implement a short-term and long term user parking strategy	x		
2. Consider to evaluate parking occupancies on-street and set targets for occupancy	x		
3. Form a downtown parking advisory committee	x		
4. Maintain the existing sidewalks and public realm to promote walkability	x		
5. Promote CBD Lots S, Q, and N as long-term employee parking areas	Yes, except for Q		Q is needed for library customers and churches unless you know that the lot is not being well used.

6. Increase the fine schedule for violators	x		
7. Consider a phased and incremental five year meter strategy	Yes, but		There needs to be a ceiling, as you have already found, there is a limit to what people will pay
8. Maintain the existing 4-hour employee parking hang tag program; evaluate the long-term feasibility of rates	??		If they are not used consistently, maybe they need to change

28 October 2019

Mr. Damion Pregitzer, PTOE Traffic Engineer
 515 Clark Avenue
 Ames IA 50010

Dear Mr. Pregitzer:

Regarding the "lack of adequate parking and parking meter charges" debacle.

The projected increases in hourly parking rates will not provide adequate income to complete a "parking solution."

Surely a city that can afford most all new trucks, equipment, facilities, etc. could find a way to at least assist in funding a "parking solution" that would alleviate the parking problems facing downtown-located business owner, employee, and clients.

And while it may be argued that a City of Ames funded "parking" solution would mostly benefit a select group of the citizens of Ames, the city appears to have funded many such projects.

I appreciate the conundrum. I trust you will continue to seek a solution to the problem.

Sincerely,



Merrill Kim Sharp, Owner
 GREAT HARVEST BAKERY and CAFE

APPENDICES C: STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

DATE: November 18, 2019
TO: Damion Pregitzer
COMPANY: City of Ames
ADDRESS: 515 Clark Avenue
CITY/STATE: Ames, IA 50010
COPY TO: Kelly Diekmann
FROM: Garza, David
PROJECT NAME: City of Ames Downtown Parking Study
PROJECT NUMBER: 21-4494.00

OVERVIEW

A parking study steering committee (“Committee”) meeting was held on November 06, 2019 for the purpose of selecting and prioritizing recommendations made in the Downtown Ames Draft Parking Draft Study (“Study”), delivered by Walker Consultants (“Walker”) in the Fall 2019.

Walker previously provided an October 2019 presentation of Study main findings and recommendations to the Committee, providing time for the Committee to form a consensus on Study recommendations to move forward.

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

David Garza, Walker Consultants (Consultant)
Damion Pregitzer, City of Ames (Project Sponsor)

Drew Kamp, Ames Chamber of Commerce
Eric Abrams
Sara Sponhnhheimer
Kurt Jensen

MEETING ACTIONS

Walker reviewed all eight draft report recommendations with the Committee and provided the Committee the opportunity to either support or not support each recommendation prioritizing each with either a “high priority”, “medium priority” or “low priority” rating.

The following table below provides a summary of meeting actions. Columns present the consultant Study recommendation, the Committee motion on the recommendation, and notes regarding any modifications or requested Committee changes to the recommendation.

Table 7: Steering Committee Recommendations Evaluation Matrix – Summary

Consultant Recommendation	Steering Committee Motion	Priority / Comments
1. Implement a short-term and long term user parking strategy	Agrees with recommendation.	“High” priority. The Committee agrees that parking needs to support both short-term customer and visitor use and long-term employee usage and that the strategy of promoting on-street parking towards greater customer and visitor usage, while, maintaining off-street lots for employee parking is reasonable.
2. Consider to evaluate parking occupancies on-street and set targets for occupancy	Agrees with recommendation.	“High” priority. The Committee agrees that the City continue to monitor parking space occupancy, and, that smart meter data be reviewed on a more established basis to evaluate target occupancy and parking program space availability goals.
3. Form a downtown parking advisory committee	Agrees with recommendation.	“High” priority. The Committee agrees that a downtown parking advisory committee be formed to meet on an established basis to review parking program issues and goals. The Committee supports including additional advisory committee members’ TBD.
4. Maintain existing sidewalks and public realm to promote walkability	Agrees with recommendation.	“Medium” priority. The Committee supports the evaluation of safety, lighting, and streetscape maintenance and recommends the City conduct an annual safety walk.
5. Promote CBD Lots S, Q, and N as long-term employee parking areas	Agrees with recommendation.	“Low” priority. The Committee likes the idea of creating more long-term parking areas across currently underutilized lots. Lighting and safety improvements (shrubbery removal, visibility enhancements, etc.) will need to be made for employees to feel safe parking at these lots.
6. Increase the fine schedule for violators	Agrees with modification.	“Low” priority. The Committee supports the idea of a first “grace” warning with a 2 nd violation fee that is set higher using the standard City policy.
7. Consider a phased and incremental five year meter strategy	Agrees with modification.	The Committee agrees that a framework needs to be established for rate changes and that “phased” rate changes could be reasonable, if, at a minimum, they cover only operational expenditure increases. If the City is going to need to invest in capital requirements, it should be for credit card accepting smart meters. The question postulated by the Committee for the City to answer, is will the City cover capital expenditures to include basic lot repair and maintenance.
8. Maintain the existing 4-hour employee parking hang tag program; evaluate the long-term feasibility of rates at CBD Lots X, Y, Z	Disagrees with draft recommendation. Modification proposed.	Committee would like the City to evaluate the current mix of timed 4-hour spaces in CBD Lots and consider modifications to the existing 4-hour policy to support greater long-term parking up to ten hours.

Source: Walker Consultants, 2019

DATE: April 25, 2019
TO: Damion Pregetzer
FROM: David Garza
PROJECT NAME: Downtown Ames Parking Study

OVERVIEW

The City of Ames and selected parking study consultant, Walker Consultants, held the Downtown Ames Parking Study Kickoff meeting Thursday April 25, 2019 at the Ames Chamber of Commerce conference room to initiate the downtown parking study and hold the first steering committee meeting.

Attendees:

David Garza, Walker Consultants (project consultant)
Damion Pregetzer, City of Ames (project sponsor)

Kelly Diekmann, City of Ames
Drew Kamp, Ames Chamber of Commerce
Kurt Jensen, First National Bank
Pat Breen, Aunt Maude's
Sara Sponhheimer, Frame Shop

An overview of the study, process, and schedule was presented followed by a discussion of downtown parking related issues.

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION AND DISCUSSION

- Employee parking v. customer parking uses and needs;
- Parking enforcement practices;
- Is enforcement being carried out consistently and fairly;
- Parking rate escalations and the context for rate changes;
- Parking system operational requirements;
- Library parking;
- First National Bank parking;
- Main Street retail and restaurant parking needs and specific uses;
- Monthly parking;
- The mix of parking lot time limited spaces;
- Parking benefits district or business improvement district;
- Walking distance tolerances in downtown;
- Seasonality factors
- Biking storage requirements;
- Planning for future development parking needs;
- Door front access mentality;
- Farmers Market parking needs;
- Parking technology opportunities;
- Age demographics of community and comfort using technology;
- Meters accepting additional forms of payment;
- City Hall parking;

- New redevelopment opportunities;
- Heavy daytime usage today reflecting current mix of businesses;

The general group consensus is that parking space availability is typically not an issue in the downtown, however, there are peak hours of the day and days of the week in which parking space availability can become an issue on a block-to-block basis. The mix of on-street and off-street public parking options has provided business patrons and employees with available parking options. Walking between destinations and parking areas has been an issue in the downtown. Generally, people like to be able to be within front-door proximity to their destination and do not like to walk very far, said the group. Seasonality factors influence walking tolerances. Warmer weather encourages greater walking distances.

Parking rate increases have recently been an issue for certain Main Street businesses. However, available, free off-street parking has helped allay some concerns about customer and employee parking. The group agrees that parking for their employees is currently a greater challenge than for their customers. Steering committee members would like to see the Study address current parking needs and future parking considerations and explore program enhancement opportunities to support the goal of maintaining public parking access and space availability for customers and employees downtown.





December 12, 2019

Mayor and City Council
City of Ames
515 Clark Ave
Ames, IA 50010

Dear Mayor Haila and Members of the Ames City Council,

Thank you for your ongoing efforts related to finding the best possible solution to parking throughout Downtown Ames. You have listened to input from all who have given it, which is shown by the community input provided on the Downtown Parking Study, as well as the engagement, involvement, and recommendations of the Steering Committee.

Ames Main Street as an organization was well represented on the Steering Committee and we were pleased to see the growth, development, and overall flexibility of the plan and its recommendations throughout the planning process.

That said, Ames Main Street is supportive of the plan's recommendations, but we do feel it necessary to specifically note the importance of the following:

- Moving forward, it will be important to ensure we continue to aim for a maximum occupancy of the Downtown Ames public lots of 85% or less. This aligns with best practices in the industry and will ensure there is sufficient turnover and enough spots for new customers to find a spot as close to their final destination as possible.
- Ames Main Street agrees with the time limitations on parking in the CBD lots of 3-hours on the north side of the island and 10-hours on south side. This will prevent any overnight parking in the non-reserved spaces on the far south side of the CBD lots, and will provide employees of Downtown Ames businesses sufficient time to park for the entire work day without needing to move their car or risk getting a ticket and fine.
 - o If this is the path forward, the hang tag system would no longer be needed.
- With regards to increases in meter rates throughout Downtown Ames, it is imperative any increases are done in an incremental fashion, never exceed an increase of 40%, and align with our peer communities. Increases need to be reviewed and assessed for effectiveness and impact every two-years, with input from a to-be-created Downtown Parking Advisory Committee.
 - o This Advisory Committee will serve as a technical committee and not make any policy decisions, rather it will make recommendations to the Mayor and Council (with assistance from City staff), who will ultimately make all policy decisions.
- Parking revenue created by meter rates, fines, reserved spaces, etc. will need to meet operational expenses, but not capital expenses. Capital projects will need to utilize a multitude of public financing options to make them financially viable and sustainable.

- Smart meters, with credit card readers, need to be installed in Downtown Ames. The data collected by these meters can then be used to make informed parking policy decisions.
- Using Lot W along Gilchrist south of the railroad tracks between Kellogg Avenue and Duff Avenue for additional free parking is an option, but the area will need to be cleared of overgrown plants and shrubs, and lighting will need to be sufficient to provide sightlines to Main Street, thereby ensuring the necessary level of safety and comfort for lot users.

On behalf of Ames Main Street, we submit these recommendations to the Mayor and Council and note Ames Main Street feels these items are a true way to address the issues surrounding parking in Downtown Ames and will best serve all users of Downtown Ames' public parking options.

We thank you for your consideration of these recommendations and look forward to continuing to work with the City to find amenable solutions to parking in Downtown Ames.

Sincerely,



Kristin Roach
2019 Ames Main Street Board President



Drew Kamp
Executive Director