

City of Paso Robles

Summary of Downtown Parking Studies

I. DOWNTOWN PARKING AND CIRCULATION ANALYSIS – SEPTEMBER 2002

In the fall of 2001, the City Council retained the services of Kimley-Horn and Associates to prepare an independent study reviewing parking and circulation in the Downtown. The resultant Downtown Parking and Circulation Analysis examined the existing parking and traffic conditions in the Downtown core of Paso Robles. The study encompassed the area bounded by 17th Street on the north, Riverside Avenue on the east, 6th Street on the south, and Olive Street on the west.

The study identified existing and future parking demands in the downtown, areas for new parking lots, and ways to divert through traffic from the downtown (in order to eliminate the need to widen Spring Street and 13th Street to 4-lanes), and financing options for implementing the recommended action plan.

The Action Plan provided a series of actions to address parking and circulation needs of Downtown Paso Robles, including:

- Time parking zones
- Enforced parking restrictions via 'pay for parking'
- Building facilities to increase supply

During spring, summer, and fall of 2002, the City:

Held a Public Workshop to receive input and suggestions on the study. Circulated the Draft study to the City's ad-hoc Parking and Circulation Committee for review and comment, as well as development of recommendations regarding establishment of an action plan. Held public hearings and a public workshop to discuss the findings of the study and to develop an action plan. Adopted an action plan for addressing the short, medium, and long-range parking needs of Downtown and identifying ways to respond to traffic increases without widening Spring Street or otherwise negatively affecting the Downtown.

ACTION PLAN OVERVIEW

At its October 29, 2002 meeting, the City Council approved specific components of the recommended Downtown Parking and Circulation Action Plan.

The Action Plan included:

- Angled parking,
- Signage, and
- Public information.

With approval of the Action Plan, the City Council further directed staff to prepare a budget proposal for consideration during upcoming budget cycles; considering the following items:

- Increasing the supply of new parking spaces in the downtown core area;
- Researching the components of a shuttle service between either the transit center or Robbins field; and
- Directing the City Manager to contact the Fair to see if the City can use their parking facilities.

INDIVIDUAL COMPONENTS OF CITY'S ACTION PLAN

Short-Term (2002-2005) current/projected demand for 100 spaces.

Do one of the following:

- Rely on business owners to control the parking of their employees, thereby freeing up additional on and off-street parking spaces for customers, for a three-year period (ending December 31, 2005). Prior to the close of the three year period, review the potential need for time restricted parking; or

- Direct staff to prepare a FY 03-04 budget proposal to enforce parking time limits. The time limits would restrict parking between 10 AM and 2 PM weekdays and would apply to areas identified in the Kimley-Horn study:
 - i. No time limits in public parking lots at 12th & Railroad, Spring between 12th and 13th, and south of City Hall, and along 11th Street and outside of the core area institute time limits as defined below in ii, iii, iv.
 - ii. A time limit of 4 hours on Spring and Pine Streets south of 12th.
 - iii. A time limit of 2 hours on Park & Pine Streets, from 12th to 14th Streets, and in the parking lot east of Marv's Pizza.
 - iv. A time limit of 4 hours on 12th, 13th, and 14th Streets.
 - v. When development occurs at the NE and SE corners of 4th and Spring Streets, propose a budget for modifying lane configurations to channel a lane of traffic east on 4th Street and north on Pine Street.

Mid-Term (2006-2009); projected demand for 350 additional spaces:

Reevaluate the need for time-restricted parking. Consider whether to extend the favorable parking ratio for new development in the downtown area. Budget for acquisition and design of a facility to expand the number of off-street parking spaces within Area IV (as defined in the Kimley-Horn report). The location of the additional off-street parking would be based on opportunity for purchase of land. Property would be improved for surface level parking as an interim measure, with future structured parking as a long-range plan.

Once the 13th Street bridge project is complete, as a trial measure, close off 13th Street for a two-week period in the block between Railroad and Park Streets, installing traffic counting devices elsewhere to determine the patterns of traffic that result from the change. This trial would include installing directional signs at 10th and 16th Streets, designed to channel traffic to Riverside and Creston Roads. Depending upon the outcome of the trial (measured in terms of reasonable success in redirecting traffic), consider the budget for a permanent barrier.

Encourage Main Street to work with downtown merchants to formulate and implement programs that provide incentives for employees to park outside of the downtown core area. (To the extent that these programs are successful, it may not be necessary to pursue less attractive and more expensive measures to free up customer parking in the downtown core area.)

Long-Term (2010 and beyond); projected demand for 550 more spaces:

Reevaluate the need for time-restricted parking. Consider whether to further extend the favorable parking ratio for new development in the downtown area. Design and construct one or more multi-level parking lots to service Area IV as defined by the Kimley-Horn Report.

Plan for and implement measures to direct Spring Street traffic east to the Riverside Avenue corridor, based on a new rail underpass or overpass being constructed at 4th and Pine / Riverside.

STUDY FINDINGS

Supply - There are approximately 2,968 public parking spaces downtown. The number of parking spaces is sufficient to meet the current customer and employee demand. However, these spaces are located throughout downtown and not in areas where demand is highest.

Location - The study demonstrates that there are enough parking spaces downtown to meet demand. However, many of the parking spaces are not located in areas where people want to park.

In the commercial core, there is an existing deficit of approximately 161 parking spaces. The core is bounded by 13th and 14th Streets on the north, Riverside Street on the east, 10th Street on the south, and Vine Street on the west.

Demand - Parking demand varies significantly by time-of-day and day-of-the-week. The average demand for on-street parking is the highest in the commercial core, most notably in the area around City Park. Public parking lots with the highest average demand on weekdays are the Spring Street lot, the Railroad Street lot, and the 12th Street lot. The public lots are typically 60% full on weekdays, with occupancy decreasing on the weekends. Weekday demand tends to decrease after 6 pm, except near restaurants and the movie theatre.

Circulation

Planned Improvements - The Circulation Element of the Paso Robles General Plan identifies the need to widen Spring Street and 13th Street to 4-lanes. Widening these roadways would accommodate traffic projections associated with future development throughout the City.

Alternatives - There are alternatives to widening Spring and 13th Streets. One alternative is to divert traffic that uses these streets to other roads in the downtown that have excess capacity. A proportion of traffic (perhaps as much as one-third) using Spring Street and/or 13th Street is passing through downtown in route to other areas. Diversion of the downtown core through traffic will reduce traffic volume on Spring Street and/or 13th Street and may eliminate the need for widening.

NEXT STEPS

Implementation

The approved Action Plan involves a multi-faceted approach to addressing the downtown parking and circulation needs.

A budget for implementation of the Action Plan will be developed and released for public review and comment as part of the next budget cycle (Fiscal Year 2003/2004).

II. DOWNTOWN PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN – MARCH 2008

On May 30, 2007, the City Council directed staff to explore the feasibility and cost of establishing time-restricted zones downtown as a way to manage public parking supply. The City retained the services of Parking Design Group PDG to assist in this effort. The City released the report for public review on March 3, 2008.

The City commissioned Parking Design Group to develop a downtown Parking Management Plan in order to ensure adequate parking supply for the community, businesses, and patrons. This study determined that downtown does not have a lack of parking spaces; therefore, this Plan did not include a recommendation to increase parking spaces. The study determined the perceived parking congestion was attributable to a lack of turnover in these spaces.

The study focused on ensuring an adequate supply of parking during peak periods of demand. The City also Council asked Parking Design Group to explore the feasibility and cost of implementing a time-regulated parking system in the downtown as a tool to ensure an adequate supply of convenient parking for customers and visitors. *The study determined that downtown employees, instead of patrons, were using prime parking spaces.* This creates an illusion to visitors that there are not enough parking spaces. It also adds to the amount of congestion on city streets.

Short-term parking for patrons, from two to three hours, should be located nearest to restaurants, retail, and service-oriented businesses. Employees should park in long-term parking located further away. Restrictions placed upon employees may encourage them to seek alternate places to park or may encourage use of alternate modes of transportation.

The use of time-regulated parking, along with penalties for violators, will increase parking turnover; however, success is directly related to enforcement. Technology for enforcement varies greatly and while costly, proper

management and enforcement of a time regulated parking system can ensure drivers will accept a new parking system and alter behavior.

Time-regulated parking systems require signage, enforcement personnel, and equipment. These facets of the system are costly and the revenues collected from parking citations will not be enough to cover expenses. Based on the Plan's estimates, as of 2008, the General Fund would need to supplement the parking system in excess of \$115,000 annually.

A self-sustaining program would require a pay-to-park system. Such a system requires motorists to pay for parking spaces. It was recommended the City start a trial period with a low fee to introduce the parking system to patrons and then vary the fees based on demand. Such fees might encourage higher parking turnover, ensure the preferred 10% to 15% space availability, and encourage drivers to find alternate parking or alternate modes of transportation.

The net revenue collected from a pay-to-park program could also meet the Council's stated goal of generating parking revenue to fund parking improvements, including increasing parking supply through spaces and facilities, new signage, beautification projects, and the Downtown Parking Management Plan.

To maintain an adequate supply of long and short-term parking with space availability between 10% and 15%, and have a fiscally balanced enforcement program, Parking Design Group recommended the following time-ordered strategies:

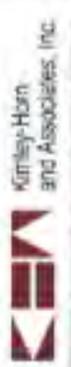
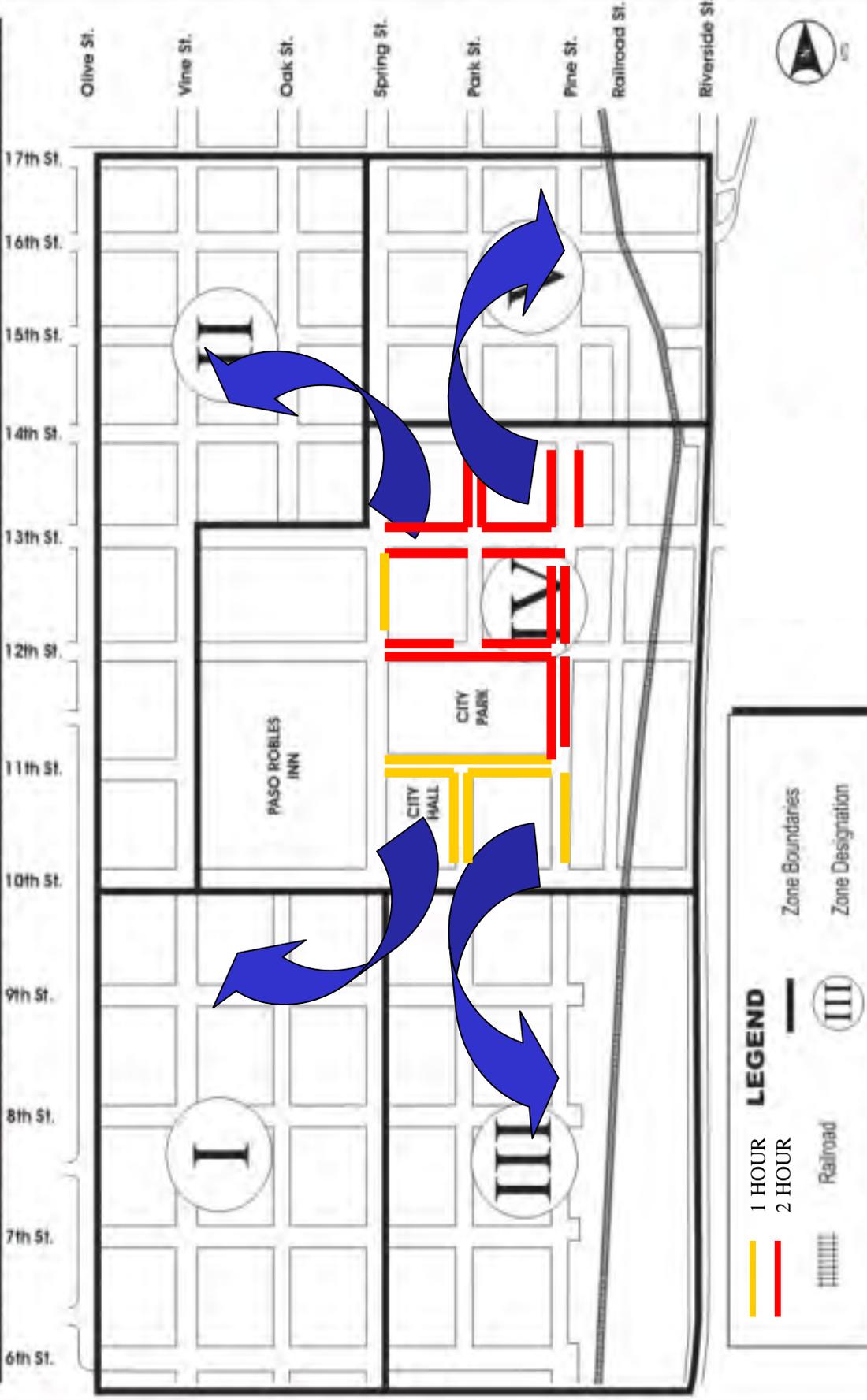
1. Develop a public and merchant information campaign.
2. Develop a uniform signage and wayfinding package.
3. Implement a time-regulated parking system with a pay-for-parking strategy to offset enforcement costs and provide funding for additional Downtown parking.
4. Initiate enforcement activities following a brief phase-in period.
5. Re-evaluate the existing per-space fee.
6. Implement a residential parking permit program if impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods are experienced.

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PROPOSED TIME RESTRICTED LOCATIONS

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EFFECT OF RESTRICTIONS IN ZONE IV ON THE STUDY AREA

Figure 10