

Downtown Parking Demand Management Action Plan

CENTRAL ATLANTA PROGRESS | ATLANTA DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
DOWNTOWN TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION



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STUDY PREPARED BY:



IN ASSOCIATION WITH:





Downtown Parking Demand Management Action Plan

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The Downtown Atlanta Parking Demand Management Action Plan was financed by funds made available by the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District (ADID) and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), in coordination with the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC).



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Executive Summary

Parking is an integral part of a balanced, linked, and sustainable multimodal transportation system and that is crucial to maintaining a viable Downtown. Providing convenient access for employees, residents, shoppers and visitors will ensure that Downtown Atlanta remains a vibrant hub of activity. Traditionally convenient access has meant expanding parking to meet an ever-growing demand. Today, providing access goes well beyond building more parking to include managing the supply, operation and demand for parking. Developing and promoting an efficient, easy-to-use parking system can help achieve the larger goals of the Downtown community: economic development, improving quality of life, and both encouraging and facilitating the use of all transportation modes.

The Downtown Parking Demand Management Action Plan (the Plan) was developed for the Downtown Transportation Management Association (TMA), Central Atlanta Progress and the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District by UrbanTrans Consultants, Inc. and Carl Walker, Inc. with assistance from Lanier Alternative Transportation Division and Transportation Management Systems. The Plan discusses the existing parking environment and how to optimize the parking supply, while supporting increased ridesharing, transit, walking, and bicycling. The recommendations include public and private actions needed to implement the plan, including zoning changes, public infrastructure investment, and appropriate parking projects and incentives.

The Project Mission is:

To understand Downtown Atlanta's parking needs and identify strategies and projects that enable public and private stakeholders to maximize the available parking supply in order to enhance Downtown economic development and increase attractiveness of all transportation modes.

Study Process

The Downtown TMA, a program of Central Atlanta Progress (CAP) and the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District (ADID), initiated this Action Plan to address current and future parking needs in Downtown Atlanta. The project began in February 2006



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and concluded in October of 2006. Working together with the Downtown business community, parking operators, residents, transit operators, the city government, and other stakeholders, the study addressed parking in the context of creating a vital and vibrant Downtown. Using an analysis of current parking conditions, best-practices research, and input from stakeholders and the broader community, the plan offers recommendations and action items toward achieving this end. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), with broad representation from the community, oversaw the planning process and assisted in defining the project mission and goals.

Key Findings

Parking Supply

- There are approximately 95,000 parking spaces in the study area in 109 parking structures and 325 surface lots.
- Approximately 67,000 of these spaces are located in parking structures, with 25,250 spaces in surface lots and an estimated 2,000 on-street spaces.

Operations

- Off-street parking is primarily privately operated with market forces driving decisions by property owners and operators related to parking.
- Property owners need to be involved in any efforts to change the quality of parking conditions.
- Various payment technologies are in use and the trend is toward unattended lots.

Off-Street Parking Pricing

- Parking rates are set by the market and vary with demand, especially during special events.

On-Street Parking

- The City of Atlanta manages the City's on-street parking within the study area, including:
 - 632 metered spaces
 - 386 marked spaces (without meters)
 - 1,084 unmarked spaces (estimated)

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- Current meter rates are uniform throughout the city at 1.5 minutes for each \$0.05 or \$2.00 per hour. A lower rate of 3.0 minutes for each \$0.05 or \$1.00 per hour is available near hospitals and City Hall.
- The City is currently in the process of evaluating two types of multi-space meters as part of a program to replace most of the existing electronic single-head meters with multi-space technology.

Short-Term Parking (fees based on short stays)

- The lack of short-term parking is a concern for business owners.
- There is not enough on-street capacity and operational disadvantages reduce the incentive for private off-street operators to offer short-term rates.
- Without municipal lots the City's leverage over off-street short-term pricing structure is limited.

Occupancy

- The combined occupancy rate for both off-street and metered/marked on-street parking was 66 percent, the same as for off-street parking alone.
- The least occupied area was around the Georgia Dome and World Congress Center, where occupancy is directly linked to special event activity.
- The most heavily occupied areas are around Grady Hospital, Georgia State University and government office buildings, where 82 percent of the off-street parking was occupied, and on-street parking was at 77 percent.

On-street Turnover Rates

- Timing on meters has to be set to properly serve short-term parking needs, encourage turn-over, and discourage long-term parkers from using meters.
- Overstays were a significant problem at one-hour meters, causing a loss of valuable short-term parking capacity.
- One-hour meters were occupied an average of 83 percent through the day but occupancy reached as high as 91 percent.

An overarching goal of this Action Plan is to promote a balanced mix of parking and alternative transportation. The Downtown parking system was reviewed in the context of improving walkability, bicycling conditions and encouraging both transit use and ridesharing.

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Bike Parking

- The current parking inventory includes 171 bicycle racks with 950 parking spots in the Downtown Action Plan study area.
- The existing bicycle racks are not always easy to see or access.
- Long-term secure and covered bicycle parking is lacking.

Walking Conditions

- Parking facilities, particularly surface parking lots, affect the streetscape and the walking environment.
- Zoning codes can require designs of parking facilities to improve continuity and pedestrian feel of the area.

Transit

- The study area is served by 6 MARTA rail stations, 20 MARTA bus routes, 8 Cobb County Transit bus routes, 7 Gwinnett County Transit bus routes, and 7 GRTA Xpress bus routes.
- The 2000 US Census reports 14.4% of all work trips to Downtown are by transit.
- Studies indicate that parking prices/availability are significant factors in transit usage to downtown areas.

Economic Development and Land Use

- Convenient access by automobile remains a factor that improves prospects for most retailers and service providers in Downtown Atlanta
- Surface parking lots often serve as placeholders for future development sites.

Recommendations

The elements of this plan provide strategic guidance and action steps for each of the goals. The action steps are organized into three implementation phases:

- Immediate 6 months
- Short-term 1-2 years
- Long-term 3-5 years

See the following table for Summary of Recommendations. Full recommendations and action items are included in Section 5 of the Downtown Parking Demand Management Action Plan.



Downtown Parking Demand Management Action Plan

Recommendations	Who Implements					Time Frame		
	<i>COA</i>	<i>TMA</i>	<i>CAP</i>	<i>Operators</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Immediate</i>	<i>Short-Term</i>	<i>Long-Term</i>
Goal A: Optimize the availability and use of Downtown’s existing parking resources to meet current and future demand.								
<p>A-1: Maintain Parking System Inventory</p> <p>The inventory associated with this Plan provides information about parking conditions and parking availability to not only those involved in development but also the public at large, including facilities available for paid public parking (monthly or transient) and parking rates.</p>		TMA	CAP	Parking		Immediate	Short-Term	
<p>A-2: Develop Complete Land-Use Data to Support Evaluation of Actual Parking Ratios in Atlanta and Future Parking Sufficiency</p> <p>Comprehensive land use information can be used in conjunction with building vacancy information and the vehicle accumulation data collected during the Plan’s development to determine parking demand ratios related to specific land uses within the Downtown area.</p>		TMA	CAP			Immediate	Short-Term	
<p>A-3: Encourage Shared Parking</p> <p>Encourage developers to perform a shared parking analysis and take advantage of opportunities to develop parking facilities that could be efficiently shared among multiple users.</p>	COA	TMA	CAP				Short-Term	
<p>A-4: Identify Land-Banking Opportunities</p> <p>Investigate the possibility of the city providing land for development of a parking structure, whether a standalone facility or part of a larger project that serves the needs of multiple generators in the area.</p>	COA						Short-Term	Long Term

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Recommendations	Who Implements					Time Frame		
	COA	TMA	CAP	Operators	Other	Immediate	Short-Term	Long-Term
<p>A-5: Improve Permitting Process</p> <p>Involve parking management firms in examining the permitting process required to obtain temporary parking facility permits, permanent parking facility permits, and associated business licenses.</p>	COA		CAP			Immediate	Short-Term	
<p>A-6: Implement Updated Downtown Parking Standards</p> <p>Setting appropriate parking maximums and minimums for the Downtown area will assist in a more efficient use of the existing parking supply.</p>	COA		CAP			Immediate		Long Term
<p>A-7: Explore a Fee-In-Lieu Program</p> <p>Fee-in-Lieu programs allow developers to contribute capital to a collective development fund that is used to provide municipal parking instead of meeting all parking requirements on-site.</p>	COA							Long Term
<p>A-8: Explore Condominium Funding Program</p> <p>Like a Fee-In-Lieu program, the condominium approach provides an avenue for businesses and residents to voluntarily purchase shares of a new parking facility by helping fund its construction.</p>	COA							Long Term
<p>A-9: Remove Overnight Parking Restrictions</p> <p>Examine the possibility of restricting overnight parking only on specific days when street cleaning activity is routinely scheduled.</p>	COA	TMA	CAP				Short-Term	

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Recommendations	Who Implements					Time Frame		
	COA	TMA	CAP	Operators	Other	Immediate	Short-Term	Long-Term
<p>A-10: Restore the Downtown Street Grid</p> <p>The reduction of block lengths in the specific locations proposed in the Imagine Downtown plan should be promoted as a means to reduce walking distances, expand parking options, and reduce pressure for the creation of new parking facilities.</p>	COA							Long Term
<p>Goal B: Identify parking management policies and programs that will increase the use of alternative transportation modes and contribute to an improved multimodal environment.</p>								
<p>B-1: Decrease Employer-Paid Parking Subsidies</p> <p>By balancing the costs of different travel options and offering employees a choice of how to spend a travel allowance, employers provide an economic incentive to choose something other than driving alone and the employer pays less for parking.</p>		TMA				Immediate		
<p>B-2: Increase Number of Preferential Parking Spaces for Carpools and Vanpools</p> <p>Five percent of all Downtown parking spaces should be made available for carpools and vanpools, especially desirable spots. Price discounts and special signs designating spots should be made available.</p>		TMA				Immediate	Short-Term	
<p>B-3: Implement Cash-Out Pilot Program</p> <p>Employees who participate in the pilot program are given the choice between a free parking spot and a monthly amount equivalent to the cost of parking spot.</p>		TMA				Immediate	Short-Term	

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Recommendations	Who Implements					Time Frame		
	COA	TMA	CAP	Operators	Other	Immediate	Short-Term	Long-Term
<p>B-4: Promote Car Sharing Car sharing supports alternative transportation usage, offering flexibility for both employees and residents who primarily use transit, bike, walk or share a ride.</p>		TMA					Short-Term	
<p>B-5: Include TDM Targets in Design Guidelines/Development Regulations Central Atlanta Progress is currently updating design guidelines for new development within Downtown. Trip-reduction targets (by square footage) in new development should be part of these design guidelines.</p>	COA	TMA	CAP				Short-Term	Long-Term
<p>B-6: Promote Free Parking Days for Alternative Mode Users As an added incentive to use alternative modes for the majority of work/school trips, employers can offer a limited number of free parking days per month.</p>		TMA					Short-Term	
<p>B-7: Include Commute Options Information in Parking Literature Provide information on biking, walking, taking transit and ridesharing in parking literature to expand the exposure to commute options.</p>		TMA		Transit			Short-Term	Long-Term
<p>B-8: Improve Walking and Bicycling Conditions and Safety Encourages walking and bicycling as primary modes Downtown, increases transit accessibility, and allows for parking only once for multiple destinations.</p>		TMA		Transit	APD	Immediate	Short-Term	
<p>B-9: Support Local Shuttle Systems Develop and implement downtown circulator shuttles to reduce the need for automobile trips between downtown destinations.</p>		TMA	CAP				Short-Term	

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Recommendations	Who Implements					Time Frame		
	COA	TMA	CAP	Operators	Other	Immediate	Short-Term	Long-Term
Goal C: Preserve and expand on-street parking to create a pedestrian- and retail-friendly Downtown, maximizing the availability of short-term parking to support that need.								
C-1: Expand and Improve On-Street Parking								
Expand on-street parking wherever possible within the limitations of maintaining necessary traffic flow (vehicles, transit, bicycles, etc).	COA	TMA	CAP				Short-Term	
C-2: Implement Planned Technical Improvements in the On-Street Program								
Continue the upgrade of the city's meter system through the phased conversion to multi-space meters	COA					Immediate	Short-Term	Long-Term
C-3: Test Variable Pricing and Time Limits for On-Street Parking								
Program multi-space meters to allow a longer stay after normal business hours to facilitate Downtown nightlife.	COA							Long-Term
C-4: Explore On-Street Smart-Card and Validation Program								
Smart-Cards are issued with a pre-paid value encoded on the card. The parking fee is deducted from the balance on the card and retailers can add value back.	COA							Long-Term
C-5: Expandable Loading Zones								
Metered spaces or unmetered on-street spaces along critical curb faces can be consolidated to create oversized loading zones, with no general parking allowed until after 9:30 A.M. each weekday.	COA						Short-Term	Long-Term

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Recommendations	Who Implements					Time Frame		
	COA	TMA	CAP	Operators	Other	Immediate	Short-Term	Long-Term
Goal D: Develop initiatives that support a public/private collaborative to promote parking availability, ease of use, common validation programs, high standards of facility safety, facility maintenance, and positive customer experiences.								
D-1: Greater City Involvement in Providing Public Parking								
Evaluate the benefits of an expanded municipal parking system and the development of a Parking Authority.	COA						Short-Term	Long-Term
D-2: Form Parking TAC/Collaborative								
Enlist the ongoing participation of the Action Plan's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) beyond the conclusion of the Plan's development.		TMA	CAP		TAC	Immediate		
D-3: Increase Parking Facility Security								
Initiate and sustain dialogue that will lead to creative, concrete and practical solutions for security concerns.		TMA	CAP		APD		Short-Term	
D-4: Promotion of Parking Technology								
Enlist local parking operators in implementation of technology that would be mutually beneficial to operators, owners, customers, and Downtown Atlanta.		TMA	CAP	Parking	TAC		Short-Term	
Goal E: Promote parking accessibility to Downtown visitors and reduce site-specific congestion related to special event traffic.								
E-1: Improve Special Events Communication								
Providing information ahead of time to Downtown travelers will assist in reducing the frustration surrounding event traffic congestion and higher parking pricing. Information on events can be coupled with providing information on travel alternatives, including travel routes and modes.		TMA	CAP		SEV		Short-Term	Long-Term

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Recommendations	Who Implements					Time Frame		
	COA	TMA	CAP	Operators	Other	Immediate	Short-Term	Long-Term
E-2: Form Special Events Task Force A task force that includes all special event stakeholders will further aid in planning of special events and the collection and dissemination of relevant information.		TMA	CAP		SEV		Short-Term	Long-Term
E-3: Explore Improved Real Time Traffic Information for Special Events Real time traffic information will aid travelers in making informed decisions about mode choices, route choices and time of day travel choices.	COA	TMA	CAP	GDOT	SETF		Short-Term	Long-Term
E-4: Provide Special Event Discounts for Carpools and Early Arrivals Economic incentives for alternative-mode use typically come in the form of free or discounted parking rates.		TMA						Long-Term
E-5: Residential Access Permits Provide identification permits to Downtown residents that allow quick identification for authorized access to their neighborhoods when street controls are in effect for special events traffic management.			TMA		APD		Short-Term	

Key for Implementing Agencies and Time Frames

COA: City of Atlanta

TMA: Downtown Transportation Management Association

CAP: Central Atlanta Progress and Downtown Community Improvement District

ADP: Atlanta Police Department

TAC: Technical Advisory Committee

SEV: Special Event Venues

SETF: Special Event Task Force

Immediate: In the next 6 months

Short-Term: In the next 1-2 years

Long-Term: In the next 3-5 years

1 Introduction

Parking is an integral part of a balanced, linked, and sustainable multimodal transportation system and that is crucial to maintaining a viable Downtown. Providing convenient access for employees, residents, shoppers and visitors will ensure that Downtown Atlanta remains a vibrant hub of activity. Traditionally convenient access has meant expanding parking to meet an ever-growing demand. Today, providing access goes well beyond building more parking to include managing the supply, operation and demand for parking. Developing and promoting an efficient, easy-to-use parking and access system can help achieve the larger goals of the Downtown community: economic development, improving quality of life, and both encouraging and facilitating the use of all transportation modes.

Economic development: Availability of parking often factors into the decision to work, locate a business, live or visit Downtown. Downtown Atlanta is a growing mixed-use environment that requires commercial, residential, and visitor parking. The Action Plan's study area currently has approximately 14,000 units of housing, 1.6 million square feet of retail, and 16.8 million square feet of office. Parking is a critical issue that has contributed to shaping how and where growth occurs in Downtown Atlanta. This Action Plan addresses the need for balance between long-term and short-term parking for all users, discusses special events parking, and identifies the benefits of a multimodal environment that contribute to a thriving business- and visitor-friendly climate.

Improving quality of life: Downtown Atlanta is changing as its residential population increases. The new population requires not only parking, but means to access jobs, shopping, and entertainment by foot, bicycle, and transit.

Alternative Transportation: Parking pricing and availability can have a significant impact on the modes people choose to use to access Downtown. Encouraging ridesharing, transit, bicycling, and walking can reduce parking demand, while resulting in less traffic congestion and air pollution.



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The Downtown Parking Demand Management Action Plan (the Plan) was developed for the Downtown Transportation Management Association (TMA), Central Atlanta Progress and the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District by UrbanTrans Consultants and Carl Walker, Inc. with assistance from Lanier Parking and Transportation Management Systems. The Plan discusses the existing parking environment and how to optimize utilization of the parking supply, while supporting increased ridesharing, transit, walking, and bicycling. The recommendations include public and private actions needed to implement the plan, including zoning changes, public infrastructure investment, and appropriate parking projects and incentives for both on-street and off-street parking.

The Project Mission is:

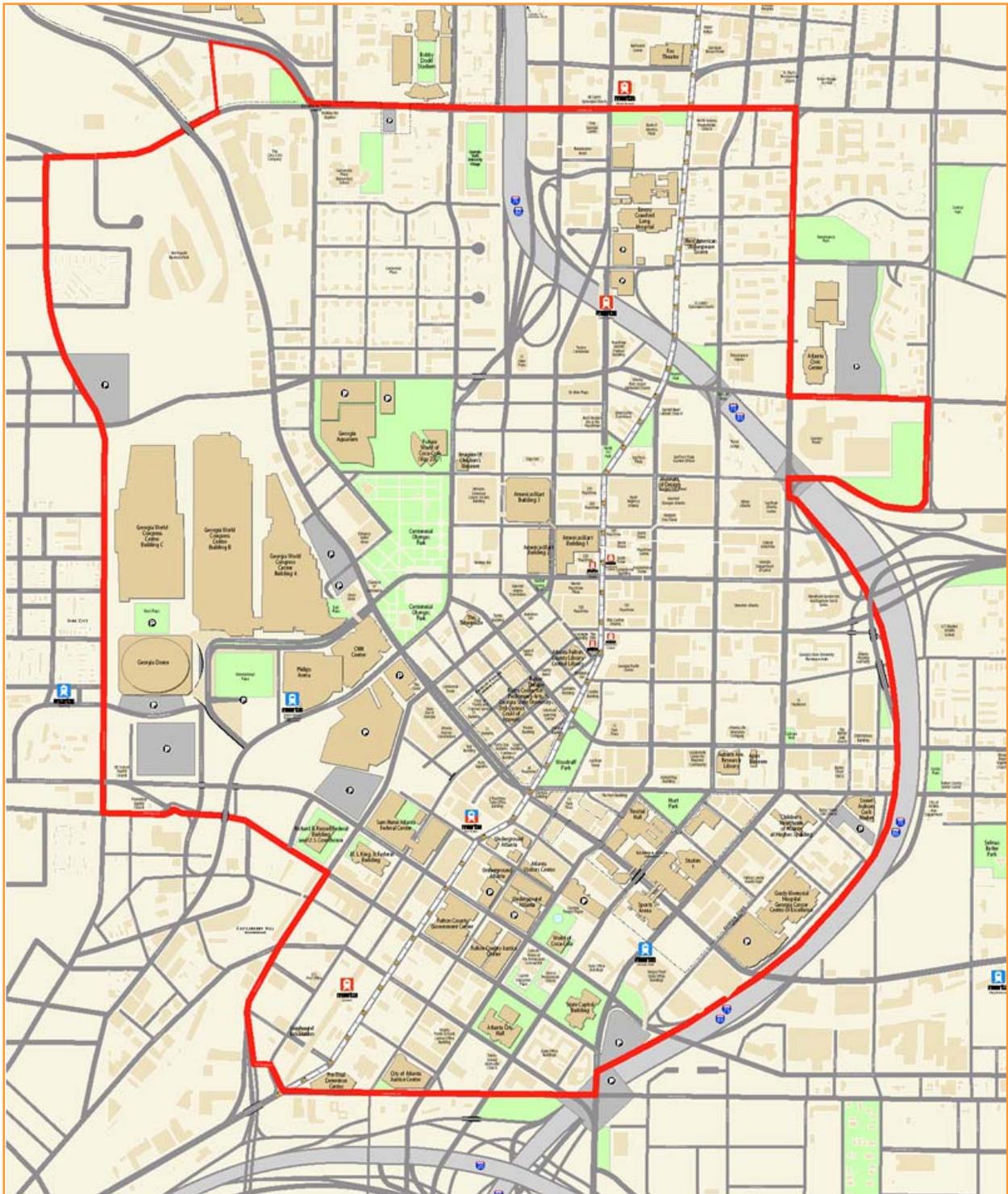
To understand Downtown Atlanta’s parking needs and identify strategies and projects that enable public and private stakeholders to maximize the available parking supply in order to enhance Downtown economic development and increase attractiveness of all transportation modes.

1.1 Action Plan Study Area

The Action Plan study area consists of the TMA boundaries (see Figure 1-1 on the following page). The parking study area was analyzed on a block-level basis. Adjacent areas, such as the Civic Center, were also considered.

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Figure 1-1: TMA boundary map



1.2 Study Organization

The Plan is divided into five sections, with supporting documents located in the appendices. Each section draws on data collected by the project team, research of proven practices in other cities and stakeholder input. The following sections, in addition to the introduction, are included:

Section 2: Study Process — Outlines the steps taken to ensure that a comprehensive public participation and data collection process occurred during the development of the Plan.

Section 3: Existing Parking Conditions — To understand the role parking plays in the Downtown environment, a detailed analysis was conducted of the existing parking system. This section establishes the Downtown context and reviews the current off-street parking inventory, occupancy, and on-street turnover.

Section 4: Parking and the Downtown Environment – Discusses the relationship between parking and Downtown’s transportation system and future development.

Section 5: Recommendations and Action Plan – Provides detailed recommendations, action items, responsibilities, and general time frames.

2 Study Process

The Downtown TMA, a program of Central Atlanta Progress (CAP) and the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District (ADID), initiated this Action Plan to address current and future parking needs in Downtown Atlanta. The project began in February 2006 and concluded in August of 2006. Working together with the Downtown business community, parking operators, residents, transit operators, the city government, and other stakeholders, the study addressed parking in the context of creating a vital and vibrant Downtown. Using an analysis of current parking conditions, best-practices research, and input from stakeholders and the broader community, this plan offers recommendations and action items toward achieving this end. A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), with broad representation from the community, oversaw the planning process and assisted in defining the project mission and goals.

2.1 Community Input

The project team gathered input from stakeholders through TAC meetings, a parking workshop, stakeholder interviews, online surveys and on-street surveys to ensure that area businesses, property owners, and residents were informed about and had an opportunity to comment on the Action Plan as it was developed. Community input was used to identify issues and develop strategies for addressing those issues.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The project team and Downtown TMA formed a TAC to give input throughout the planning process. The TAC met three times, and all the members were invited to the parking workshop. The TAC included representatives from public agencies, the City of Atlanta, and advocacy organizations as well as parking operators, Downtown business owners, property managers, employers, residents, and event venue managers.

Parking Workshop

The project team organized a parking workshop on June 6, 2006, that was attended by 32 community members. The intent of the workshop was to provide interested community members with expert presentations on supply, demand, and special event parking strategies as well as gathering their input on parking issues and solutions.

Stakeholder Interviews

Interviews were conducted with 18 key stakeholder groups, including parking operators, special event venue managers, property owners, residential representatives, government representatives, and small business owners, to gather data on the existing Downtown parking system, its perceived needs, and solutions. Their input was used in the identification of major issues and strategies. Parking operators were also contacted individually to assist in the gathering of data.

Electronic Survey

The Downtown TMA conducted a qualitative online survey to gather feedback about transportation and parking Downtown, with 915 people responding to the survey. The survey asked questions about traveling Downtown, parking Downtown, parking resources, and transportation options. (See Appendix A for full survey results.)

Intercept Surveys

Between April 29th and May 11th 2006, staff members of the Downtown TMA and Ambassador Force collected 397 intercept surveys in seven Downtown Atlanta locations. Passersby answered five questions about their trip purpose, transportation mode, parking location, reason for parking, location choice, and reason for not taking transit, if they drove. Intercept surveys were designed to complement the electronic surveys and to reach a wider audience of Downtown visitors. (See Appendix A for full survey results.)

2.2 Best Practice Research

The study team gathered national parking best practices, examples, and case studies to identify a wide range of possibilities for Downtown Atlanta and to assist in determining the conditions required for successful strategy implementation. Several of the best practices and examples are referenced in Section 5: Recommendations and Action Plan. Appendix B includes detailed case studies from 11 municipalities.

2.3 Parking Field Data Collection Processes

Parking data was collected through field visits supplemented by information provided by area parking operators about the facilities they manage. The City of Atlanta's On-Street Parking Program Manager provided information about the City's on-street parking system and upcoming system improvements. Information gathered during the field visits was summarized by zones. Zones are geographic areas of Downtown that share similar characteristics.

Inventory of Parking Capacity ("Inventory")

The inventory of parking capacity is a combination of physical counts of parking spaces performed in the field by the study team, coupled with information provided by owners and operators of parking facilities, particularly those that did not allow access for security reasons. The field inventory data is summarized in a worksheet format. In addition to capacities, the worksheet includes other information such as daily parking rates, monthly parking rates, primary parking generator, and operator.

Off-Street Survey of Vehicle Accumulation ("Occupancy Survey")

Following the inventory, an occupancy survey was conducted in each zone to measure the peak accumulation of vehicles during normal business days. The occupancy surveys were conducted on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays during the months of March and April, which represent normal activity periods during the school year. The areas affected by parking for the state legislature and Georgia State University were conducted during a school week when the legislature was in session.

The study team was not able to gain access to some parking facilities (primarily federal and state parking structures) for security reasons. In those cases contact was made with those responsible for managing those facilities to obtain estimates of parking occupancy. The team was also not granted access to The Coca-Cola Company headquarters parking facilities, but information about facility capacity and typical occupancy was provided by the owners.

On-Street Turnover Survey

A license plate inventory was used to measure durations of stay at select groupings of on-street parking meters within the study area. Each grouping of meters was checked on a route that corresponded with the posted time limit. Meters with a 30-minute time limit were checked every 30 minutes. Meters with a one-hour time limit were checked every hour and two-hour meters were checked every two hours. The information was compiled and analyzed to determine the length of stay and time-limit overstay in each of the surveyed areas.

3 Existing Parking Conditions

The City of Atlanta has a highly developed parking system composed primarily of privately owned and operated parking facilities. There are approximately 95,000 parking spaces in the study area. That capacity is provided in a mix of surface lots and multi-level parking structures. The type of parking facility largely follows the pattern of density within the study area, with most multi-level parking structures concentrated near high-rise buildings. The bulk of surface parking available for public use is located on the edges of the core and south of Edgewood Avenue. On-street parking is available on most streets throughout the study area in metered, marked, and unmarked spaces.

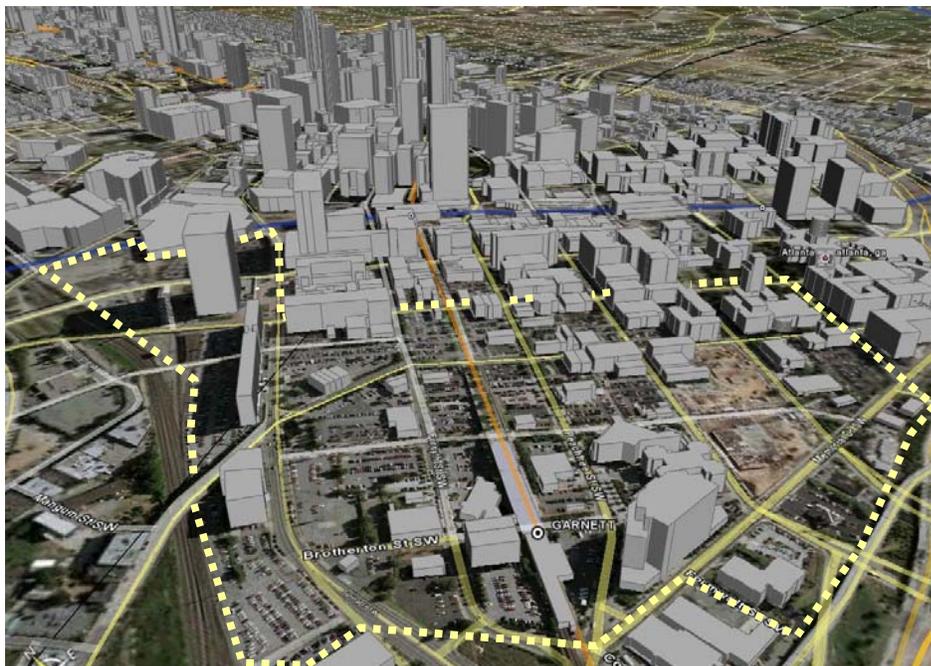
Figure 3-1: Study Area



Figure 3-2: East Area Surface Lot Concentration



Figure 3-3: South Area Surface Lot Concentration



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As would be expected in a city the size of Atlanta, paid parking is the dominant form of public parking in the Downtown area. Some employers provide parking at discounted rates or at no cost to their employees. According to the on-line parking survey, 23 percent of employees receive employer assistance and 8 percent receive some other type of subsidy, but the majority of parking for both employees and visitors is provided on a paid basis.

3.1 Ownership and Operation of Parking Facilities

Although the City of Atlanta owns two parking structures that are leased to the management of Underground Atlanta, the City is not heavily involved in providing off-street parking. A new facility is planned in the vicinity of City Hall, but that facility is intended to satisfy a particular need rather than representing any plan to expand the City's role in the parking market. The City does, however, manage all on-street parking, including planning, revenue collection, and enforcement functions.



The majority of Downtown parking facilities are operated by one of several parking management firms that are active in the market. In some cases the operating firm owns the property, but most facilities are operated under a lease or management agreement between the property owner and a commercial operator. This has a significant impact on market dynamics and the ability of the City to influence parking policies, practices, and pricing.

Operating agreements take one of two general forms: a lease or a management agreement. Under a lease the operator pays the property owner a fixed rent or a percentage of revenue for the right to operate the parking facility. Within certain limitations, a lease normally gives the operator full control of the operation, including operating practices and rates. Under a management agreement, the owner engages an operator to manage the parking facility for a fixed fee plus, in most cases, some participation in revenue or profits as a performance incentive. The owner retains ultimate control over decisions related to facility improvements, operating practices, and parking rates.

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Because paid parking is so well established in Atlanta local property owners understand the competitive nature of the parking business and know how to negotiate the most favorable financial terms for leases and management agreements. Competition among area parking operators for a limited number of leases and management contracts often leave parking operators with very small profit margins. This is typical of larger markets with a long history of paid parking operations.

Under management agreements or leases in which both the owner and operator share in the revenue, responsibility falls to the operator to generate as much revenue as possible for the owner in order to retain the contract at renewal. This is a disincentive for parking operators to commit to more expensive operating practices or facility improvements that consume profit margins or reduce the amount of revenue generated for the property owner.

The result of these market conditions is a degree of separation between property owners with the power to effect real change and managers making daily operational decisions. In order for the Downtown community to have significant impact on the quality of parking facilities and affect parking management practices, it is important that property owners be involved. Still, parking management firms are a strong force for change through their efforts to provide an attractive, competitive product and through their influence with owners to encourage responsible management practices and investment in facilities that improve the quality of those facilities and the level of service provided to the public.

Operating Practices

The range of operating practices for paid parking facilities in Downtown Atlanta is typical of cities of similar size. Most parking structures are equipped with ticket dispensers to issue tickets at the entrance and cashiers to collect fees at the exit. Most surface lots are equipped with some form of honor-pay system, either a manual coin box or an electronic multi-space meter. The move toward electronic multi-space meters has gained momentum over the past five years with several of the area operators installing these devices at their



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locations. Lots with multi-space meters normally have only one unit where customers can pay to park anywhere on the lot. The customer either keys in a space number with the payment, or the multi-space meter generates a receipt to be placed on the dashboard of the car as proof of payment. Periodically, an attendant tours the lot to verify that all occupied spaces have been paid for or that there is a valid receipt on each dash. The multi-space meters found on some surface lots in Atlanta provide the option to pay for parking by credit card. This is a positive step toward offering a higher level of service to Atlanta parking customers. Multi-space meters also reduce the problem of "picking" that has resulted in ticketing or booting when unauthorized persons have removed money from manual coin boxes. It should be noted, however, that modern designs for manual coin boxes have dramatically reduced the picking problem.



These practices reflect a strong trend in the parking industry to move away from attended lots, though this movement is still less apparent in Atlanta than in other cities of comparable size. Some surface lots that were previously staffed are now equipped with automated pay stations, but most



changes on surface lots consist of an upgrade to more modern equipment (multi-space meters) on lots that previously operated with manual coin boxes. There has also been some limited experimentation in Atlanta with "Credit Card In/Out" systems that allow customers to enter and exit the lot by inserting a credit card in a reader at both the entrance and exit. Some lots allow payment by cell phone, a concept that is relatively new in the industry. The cell phone payment program requires that participants subscribe to the service, placing a credit card on file to absorb the parking fees or providing a credit card number over the phone at the time of use.

Automated "Pay-on-Foot" stations that allow customers to pay for their parking in a building lobby or garage elevator area before they exit have not been widely adopted in Atlanta's parking garages. This is the dominant form of revenue collection in garages located in Europe but is far less common in the United States.

Enforcement on surface lots that operate on an honor system includes ticketing (with a penalty for non-payment), booting, and towing. Some operators and individual property owners engage commercial booting companies to conduct the enforcement and, in some cases, this has resulted in rather aggressive and even questionable enforcement practices. This can be expected when booting fees are the revenue source rather than payment of the normal parking fees.

3.2 On-Street Parking System

The on-street parking system is managed as a program of the City of Atlanta Department of Public Works. It currently consists of:

- Metered parking spaces with time limits
- Marked on-street spaces — in most cases with posted time limits
- Unmarked parking along curbs — with or without posted time limits
- Loading zones
- Taxi stands
- Reserved spaces —primarily around the State Capitol, Fulton County Courthouse and Atlanta City Hall

The defined Downtown area for this analysis includes:

- 632 metered spaces
- 386 marked spaces (without meters)
- 1,084 unmarked spaces (estimated)

The focus of this Action Plan is on metered parking spaces since that category makes up the majority of the on-street capacity in areas where on-street parking is most critical.

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The City of Atlanta's Program Manager is responsible for collection of parking meter revenues, physical maintenance of parking meters, and meter enforcement. The authorized staffing level is 27 full-time employees:

- 1 Program Manager
- 1 Collections Supervisor
- 2 Meter Collectors
- 1 Maintenance Supervisor
- 2 Meter Maintenance Technicians
- 20 non-sworn enforcement officers

This staff is responsible for a total of 1,831 metered spaces that extend outside of the Downtown area, primarily into Midtown and Buckhead.

Current meter rates are uniform throughout the city at 1.5 minutes for each \$0.05 or \$2.00 per hour. A lower rate of 3.0 minutes for each \$0.05 or \$1.00 per hour is available near hospitals and City Hall. These rates are consistent regardless of the time limit on the meter.

The City of Atlanta's Parking Ordinance allows 24-hour enforcement for the meter system Monday-Saturday but enforcement officers are not normally on duty in the evening. Enforcement officers do patrol meters during events and issue tickets on expired meters. The existing ordinance makes no provision for longer meter stays during evening hours. The fines associated with parking violations are \$10 for an expired meter or overstaying the posted time limit and \$25 for parking in a restricted area.

Although sworn officers of the Atlanta Police Department are authorized to write illegal parking citations related to illegal parking, all of the enforcement staff working in the Parking Meter Program are non-sworn officers with no responsibilities other than parking enforcement. More than 61,000 parking citations were written through the first half of 2006, including those written outside of the Downtown Study area.

Collection of parking citations is administered through the Municipal Court of Atlanta. Payments can be mailed, delivered in person, or paid by credit card over the phone or online through the City of Atlanta website.

System Improvements

In 2003-04 the City upgraded all of the existing mechanical parking meters to electronic meters. The City is currently in the process of evaluating two types of multi-space meters as part of a program to replace most of the existing electronic single-head meters with multi-space technology. The primary reasons for converting to this newer technology is to provide more operational flexibility, increase payment options for the customer and improve audit capabilities. Another strong motivator is the number of standard meters being lost to theft. Entire blocks of meter heads have been removed and destroyed in order to access their cash canisters. This represents not only a loss of capital for the destroyed equipment but also a loss of revenue for the period that the meters are missing from the curb. Multi-space meters are substantially more secure than standard parking meters. Because the units are heavily armored, break-ins are rare.

Two types of multi-space meters are currently being tested in the field. Both are the "Pay-and-Display" variety, which produce a receipt that parkers place in a visible place on the dashboard of their vehicles to verify payment. Both units allow payment by bills, coin, credit card, and debit card. They are solar powered and have the capability of transmitting information via radio signal. This transmission capability is used for real-time processing of credit card transactions and to provide other management information, including usage statistics, revenue reports, and malfunction alerts. Revenue reports that provide information about the amount of revenue that has been taken in by the multi-space meter provides more effective audit control than standard electronic meters. Alerts about malfunctions also enable supervisors to monitor the status of all units in the field and respond quickly to specific mechanical problems as they occur.

The current plan is to install approximately 250 multi-space meters on curb faces where the number of spaces justify the more expensive equipment. Single-head electronic meters will remain in place along curb faces with only two or three spaces.

Another technological improvement being implemented is an upgrade of the existing field enforcement system for identifying meter time-limit violators and issuing tickets. At present, time-limit enforcement is accomplished through manual recording of license plate numbers. When a license plate is found in the same space beyond the allowed time limit, a manual ticket

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is issued. Enforcement officers must call the Parking Program office to determine if a specific vehicle (identified by license plate) is a repeat violator. In reality, scofflaw enforcement is currently a function of the field experience of the enforcement officers who recognize vehicles as repeat violators in their area. When they believe they recognize a repeat offender, officers call the office to research the license plate number and verify that further enforcement action such as booting or towing is warranted.

New technology will allow enforcement officers to key license plate numbers into a handheld computer that will automatically alert the officer when a vehicle has overstayed the time limit and provide the means of writing the ticket, using information that the officer keys into the device. The device also contains a scofflaw list that is downloaded from a master database daily. Whenever a new ticket is being processed in the hand-held, it will automatically search the resident scofflaw list for that license plate number. This will greatly improve the efficiency of the enforcement system, particularly in prompt detection of repeat violators whose violations have occurred in different enforcement zones.

A graphic inventory of On-Street Parking is included in Appendix C.

3.3 Parking Rates

Perceptions and opinions about parking rates in Atlanta encountered during the course of the Plan's development were fairly consistent. Most survey respondents felt that normal daily and monthly contract rates were fairly reasonable, and chose their parking based on location over price. Some believed that rates were too low to encourage increased use of alternative transportation modes. There were strong opinions that rates for special events beyond the parking facilities controlled by the venues were too high, but further discussion revealed that the greater concern was the inconsistency of facility rates from day to day. Parking rates at garages and lots in the vicinity of event venues vary according to the size of the event and the resulting demand for parking.





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Rates for both transient parking (paid upon each use) and monthly contract parking in Atlanta follow a normal market pattern with higher rates near the core and concentrations of demand generators. As shown in Figure 3-5, rates fall as the distance increases between the demand generator and the parking location. Generally, this translates into higher rates near the Downtown core and lower rates moving away from the core, however specific large parking demand generators outside of the core disrupt this pattern.

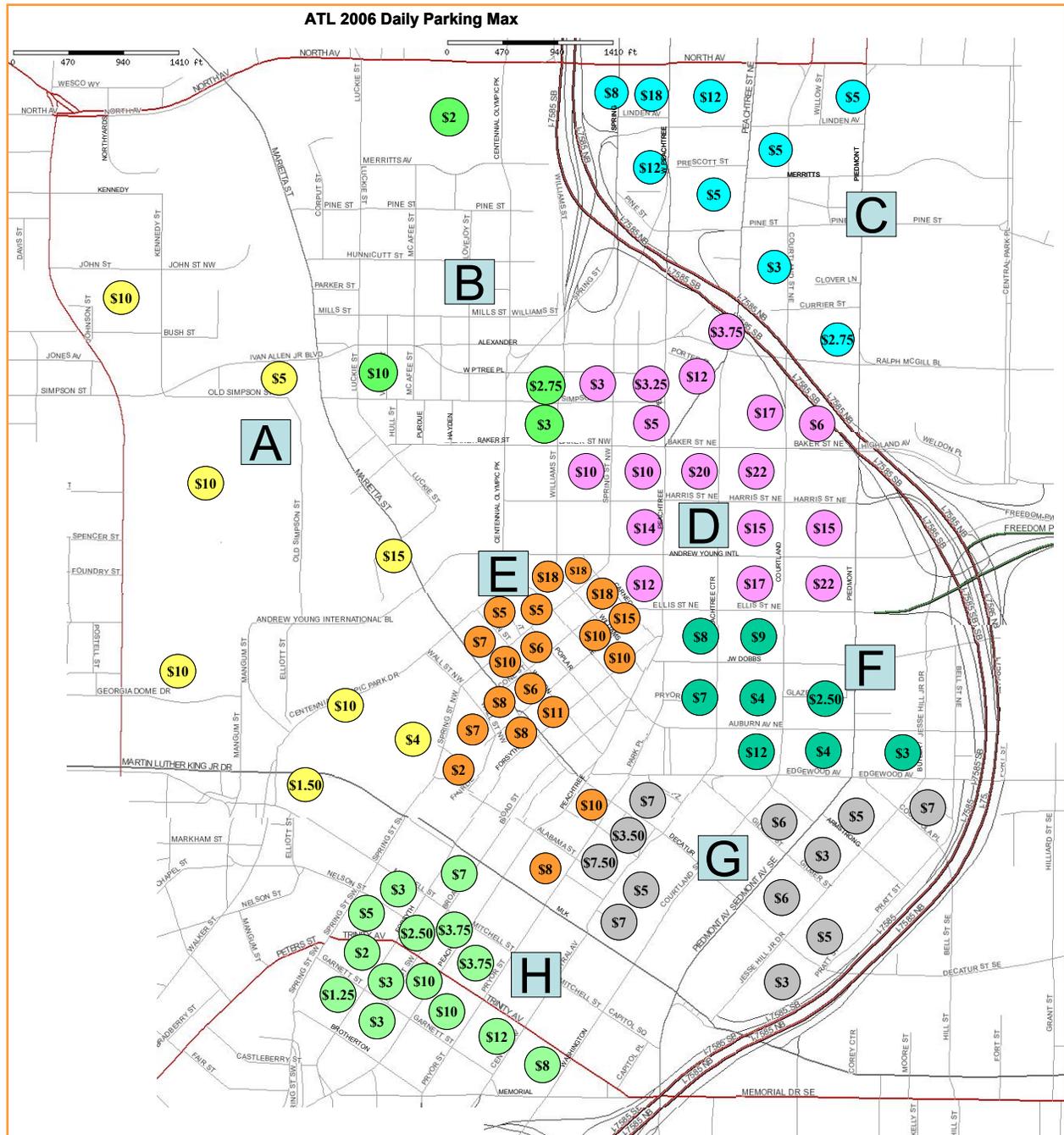
In some cases an oversupply of parking in specific areas has kept rates low. An example is some of the facilities in the Fairlie-Poplar district, an area of fairly high demand with an oversupply of parking. All-day parking is still available for as little as \$5 per day and, at many lots, customers who arrive before 9 A.M. ("Early Bird Special") can pay as little as \$3 per day.

The lowest rates are found in the southeast quadrant in zones F, G, and H, where a large number of surface lots operate. Surface parking can be provided at a lower cost than structured parking in the same location because of the difference in construction cost.

It is worth noting that parking rates at major hotels are significantly higher than rates available in nearby parking facilities and are the highest rates in the market. This is not an unusual pattern. Hotels charge what the market will bear and the high percentage of business travelers using those hotels are not as sensitive to parking rates as the general public because parking fees are generally billed as part of the room charge and paid through a business expense account. Daily parking rates in the hotel district are as high as \$20-\$22 and \$18 near the Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel while parking is available in adjacent blocks for as little as \$5-\$6 per day.

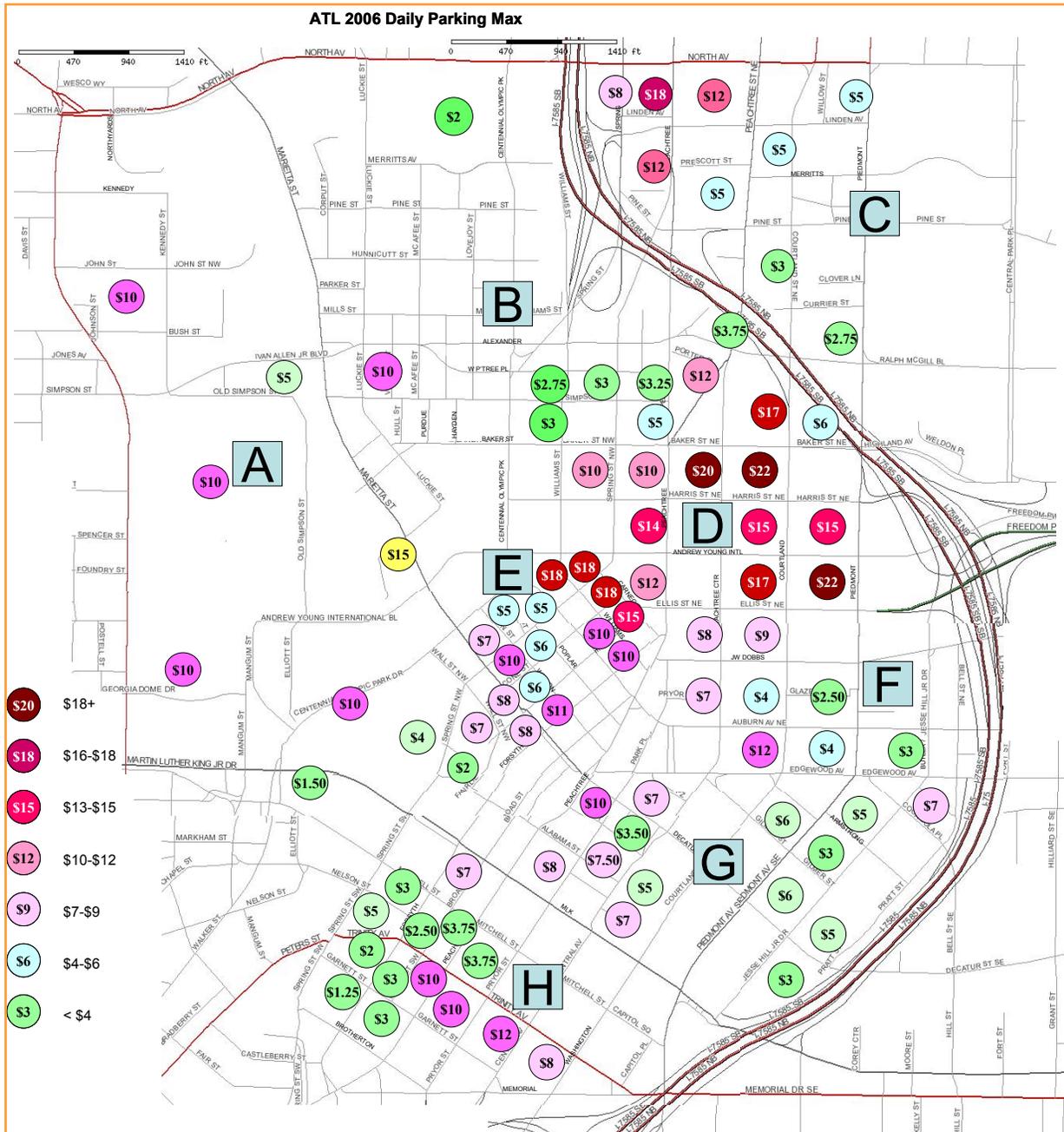
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Figure 3-4: Daily Maximum Parking Rates (Color-Coded by Zone)



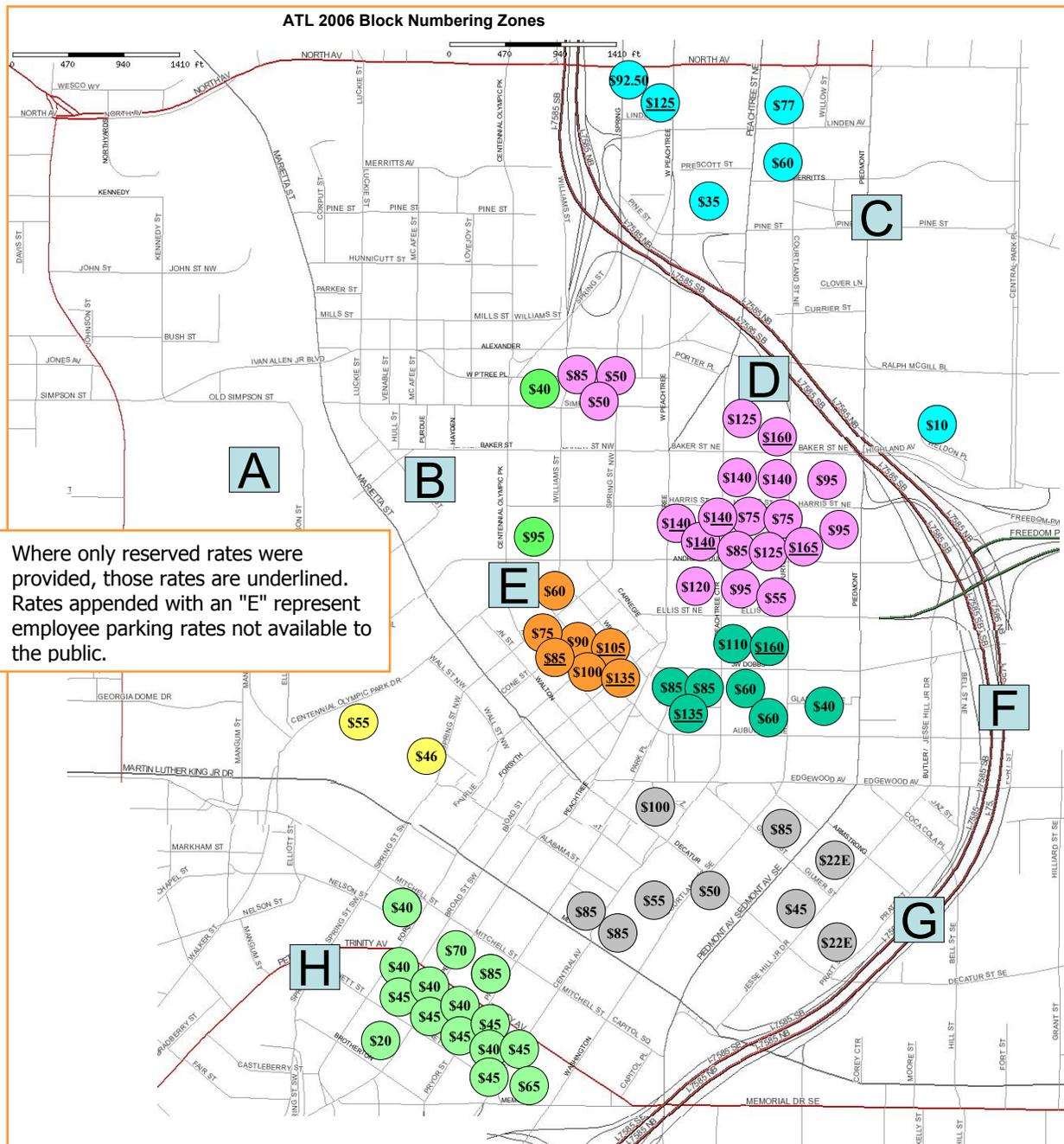
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Figure 3-5: Daily Maximum Parking Rates (Color-Coded by Magnitude)



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Figure 3-6: Monthly Parking Rates.



Cost Comparison to Other Cities

The following tables (Figures 3-7 and 3-8) show the results of the most recent Colliers International Survey of parking rates in cities across the United States. This survey of 2005 rates provides a good comparison because the collection method was consistent among the various cities surveyed. The results have been grouped by geographic area for the most relevant comparison. The general conclusion to be drawn from this information is that parking rates for off-street parking in Atlanta are low compared to its relative size in the region.

Daily Parking Rates

Figure 3-7 ranks each city in its region according to the median rate for daily parking. Atlanta ranks just below the regional mid-point with a median rate of \$10.00 per day. The highest median rate of \$17.50 was in Raleigh, North Carolina despite the fact that parking in Raleigh was considered "Abundant." Rates drop at a steady pace through regional cities to \$8.00 in Orlando and West Palm Beach, and a regional low of \$6.00 in Memphis despite the fact that parking availability in those cities was considered only "Fair."

Monthly Parking Rates

Figure 3-8 ranks each city within its region according to the median rate for monthly contract parking. Atlanta ranks 4th out of 11 cities in the region with a median rate of \$95 per month. Nashville ranks 1st with a rate of \$125 and West Palm Beach ranks last at \$52.

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Figure 3-7: Daily Parking Rates: National Comparison by Geographic Area

Region	CITY	High	Low	Median	Availability
C	Chicago, IL	\$ 32.00	\$ 24.00	\$ 25.00	Fair
C	Minneapolis, MN	\$ 20.00	\$ 2.00	\$ 12.00	Fair
C	St. Louis, MO	\$ 24.00	\$ 5.00	\$ 11.00	Fair
C	Indianapolis, IN	\$ 17.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 10.00	Fair
C	Louisville, KY	\$ 12.00	\$ 8.00	\$ 10.00	Fair
C	Cleveland, OH	\$ 17.50	\$ 2.00	\$ 8.25	Fair
C	Denver, CO	\$ 20.00	\$ 5.00	\$ 8.00	Fair
C	Kansas City, MO	\$ 16.00	\$ 3.50	\$ 8.00	Abundant
C	Boise, ID	\$ 12.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 8.00	Abundant
C	Detroit, MI	\$ 10.00	\$ 3.50	\$ 8.00	Fair
C	Cincinnati, OH	\$ 15.00	\$ 2.25	\$ 7.00	Fair
C	Milwaukee, WI	\$ 8.00	\$ 6.00	\$ 7.00	Fair
	Average	\$ 16.96	\$ 5.60	\$ 10.19	
	Median	\$ 16.50	\$ 3.50	\$ 8.13	
NE	New York, NY - Midtown	\$ 75.85	\$ 29.90	\$ 41.00	Fair
NE	New York, NY - Downtown	\$ 40.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 33.00	Fair
NE	Boston, MA	\$ 36.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 32.00	Fair
NE	Philadelphia, PA	\$ 24.00	\$ 13.00	\$ 20.00	Fair
NE	Hartford, CT	\$ 25.00	\$ 9.00	\$ 19.25	Fair
NE	Pleasanton/Walnut Creek, CA	\$ 30.00	\$ 4.00	\$ 15.00	Limited
NE	Washington, DC	\$ 15.00	\$ 10.00	\$ 13.50	Limited
NE	Baltimore, MD	\$ 19.82	\$ 3.00	\$ 9.14	Fair
	Average	\$ 33.21	\$ 14.86	\$ 22.86	
	Median	\$ 27.50	\$ 11.50	\$ 19.63	
S	Raleigh, NC	\$ 20.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 17.50	Abundant
S	Ft. Lauderdale, FL	\$ 25.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 16.00	Fair
S	Miami, FL	\$ 18.50	\$ 9.75	\$ 13.40	Fair
S	Jacksonville, FL	\$ 15.00	\$ 10.00	\$ 12.50	Fair
S	Tampa, FL	\$ 18.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 10.00	Limited
S	Atlanta, GA	\$ 15.00	\$ 5.00	\$ 10.00	Abundant
S	Nashville, TN	\$ 18.00	\$ 5.00	\$ 8.50	Limited
S	Orlando, FL	\$ 17.00	\$ 4.00	\$ 8.00	Fair
S	West Palm Beach, FL	\$ 8.00	\$ 8.00	\$ 8.00	Fair
S	Memphis, TN	\$ 12.00	\$ 2.00	\$ 6.00	Fair
S	Columbia, SC	N/A	N/A	N/A	Limited
	Average	\$ 16.65	\$ 7.68	\$ 10.99	
	Median	\$ 17.50	\$ 6.50	\$ 10.00	
SW	Austin, TX	\$ 15.00	\$ 5.00	\$ 8.00	Fair
SW	Houston, TX	\$ 9.25	\$ 3.90	\$ 6.80	Fair
SW	Dallas, TX	\$ 16.00	\$ 4.00	\$ 6.00	Abundant
	Average	\$ 13.42	\$ 4.30	\$ 6.93	
	Median	\$ 15.00	\$ 4.00	\$ 6.80	
W	Honolulu, HI	\$ 48.00	\$ 21.00	\$ 30.00	Limited
W	San Francisco, CA	\$ 40.00	\$ 9.00	\$ 23.00	Fair
W	Los Angeles, CA	\$ 35.00	\$ 4.00	\$ 22.80	Fair
W	San Diego, CA	\$ 28.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 20.00	Fair
W	Oakland, CA	\$ 22.00	\$ 10.00	\$ 20.00	Fair
W	San Jose/Silicon Valley, CA	\$ 25.00	\$ 12.50	\$ 18.75	Fair
W	Seattle, WA	\$ 26.00	\$ 10.00	\$ 18.00	Fair
W	Reno, NV	\$ 20.00	\$ 10.00	\$ 15.00	Limited
W	Sacramento, CA	\$ 22.00	\$ 8.00	\$ 14.00	Limited
W	Pittsburgh, PA	\$ 19.00	\$ 10.00	\$ 12.50	Limited
W	Portland, OR	\$ 16.00	\$ 5.00	\$ 8.50	Fair
W	Fresno, CA	\$ 10.00	\$ 6.00	\$ 8.00	Abundant
W	Phoenix, AZ	\$ 8.00	\$ 6.00	\$ 7.00	Fair
W	Bakersfield, CA	\$ 7.00	\$ 5.00	\$ 6.50	Fair
	Average	\$ 23.29	\$ 9.39	\$ 16.00	
	Median	\$ 22.00	\$ 9.50	\$ 16.50	
	AVERAGE	21.32	8.67	14.04	

Source: Colliers International Survey, 2006

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Figure 3-8: Monthly Parking Rates: National Comparison by Geographic Area

MONTHLY CONTRACT PARKING RATES - National Comparison by Geographic Area

Region	CITY	Unreserved Monthly Parking			Reserved Monthly Parking			Avg. Wait (Months)	Parking Availability
		High	Low	Median	High	Low	Median		
C	Chicago, IL	\$ 340.00	\$ 260.00	\$ 289.00	\$ 385.00	\$ 345.00	\$ 377.50		Fair
C	Detroit, MI	\$ 170.00	\$ 130.00	\$ 155.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 165.00	\$ 180.00		Fair
C	Minneapolis, MN	\$ 310.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 139.00	\$ 335.00	\$ 85.00	\$ 159.00	2.5	Fair
C	Milwaukee, WI	\$ 140.00	\$ 130.00	\$ 135.00	\$ 165.00	\$ 155.00	\$ 160.00	2.0	Fair
C	Cleveland, OH	\$ 225.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 135.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 150.00		Fair
C	Denver, CO	\$ 200.00	\$ 90.00	\$ 120.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 120.00	\$ 150.00		Fair
C	Indianapolis, IN	\$ 165.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 107.50	\$ 175.00	\$ 120.00	\$ 146.00		Fair
C	St. Louis, MO	\$ 130.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 105.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 140.00		Fair
C	Louisville, KY	\$ 125.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 130.00	\$ 95.00	\$ 112.00		Fair
C	Kansas City, MO	\$ 126.00	\$ 65.00	\$ 80.00	\$ 187.00	\$ 70.00	\$ 105.00	2.0	Abundant
C	Cincinnati, OH	\$ 175.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 76.00	N/A	N/A	N/A		Fair
C	Boise, ID	\$ 80.00	\$ 60.00	\$ 70.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 90.00	\$ 95.00		Abundant
	Average	\$ 182.17	\$ 85.83	\$ 125.96	\$ 207.00	\$ 133.64	\$ 161.32		
	Median	\$ 167.50	\$ 70.00	\$ 113.75	\$ 187.00	\$ 120.00	\$ 150.00		
NE	New York, NY - Midtown	\$ 798.30	\$ 350.75	\$ 491.80	\$ 750.00	\$ 400.75	\$ 576.20		Fair
NE	New York, NY - Downtown	\$ 650.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 444.40	\$ 651.00	\$ 485.25	\$ 585.00		Fair
NE	Boston, MA	\$ 500.00	\$ 300.00	\$ 425.00	\$ 700.00	\$ 380.00	\$ 450.00		Fair
NE	Philadelphia, PA	\$ 380.00	\$ 290.00	\$ 317.50	\$ 480.00	\$ 330.00	\$ 405.00	2.0	Fair
NE	Washington, DC	\$ 300.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 265.00	\$ 500.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 470.00		Limited
NE	Hartford, CT	\$ 222.60	\$ 121.90	\$ 196.10	\$ 310.05	\$ 310.05	\$ 310.05	3.0	Fair
NE	Baltimore, MD	\$ 239.60	\$ 48.15	\$ 122.04	\$ 270.00	\$ 195.00	\$ 232.50	9.5	Fair
NE	Pleasanton/Walnut Creek, CA	\$ 70.00	N/A	\$ 35.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 75.00		Limited
	Average	\$ 395.06	\$ 230.11	\$ 287.11	\$ 470.13	\$ 318.88	\$ 387.97		
	Median	\$ 340.00	\$ 290.00	\$ 291.25	\$ 490.00	\$ 355.00	\$ 427.50		
S	Nashville, TN	\$ 168.00	\$ 65.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 180.00	\$ 138.00	\$ 142.00	1.0	Limited
S	Tampa, FL	\$ 133.50	\$ 85.60	\$ 118.00	\$ 240.00	\$ 187.50	\$ 192.00	6.0	Limited
S	Miami, FL	\$ 129.00	\$ 91.50	\$ 110.00	\$ 198.00	\$ 85.00	\$ 137.00		Fair
S	Atlanta, GA	\$ 125.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 95.00	\$ 160.00	\$ 70.00	\$ 115.00		Abundant
S	Orlando, FL	\$ 100.00	\$ 65.00	\$ 82.50	\$ 160.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 155.00	1.0	Fair
S	Raleigh, NC	\$ 90.00	\$ 55.00	\$ 72.50	\$ 90.00	\$ 55.00	\$ 72.50	3.0	Abundant
S	Rt. Lauderdale, FL	\$ 90.00	\$ 21.00	\$ 68.00	\$ 100.00	N/A	N/A		Fair
S	Columbia, SC	\$ 85.00	\$ 52.00	\$ 65.00	\$ 131.00	\$ 70.00	\$ 100.00		Limited
S	Jacksonville, FL	\$ 77.00	\$ 57.00	\$ 65.00	\$ 95.00	\$ 70.00	\$ 80.00	1.0	Fair
S	Memphis, TN	\$ 90.00	\$ 20.00	\$ 57.00	\$ 135.00	\$ 65.00	\$ 100.00		Fair
S	West Palm Beach, FL	\$ 85.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 52.00	\$ 105.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 78.00		Fair
	Average	\$ 106.59	\$ 53.83	\$ 82.73	\$ 144.91	\$ 94.05	\$ 117.15		
	Median	\$ 90.00	\$ 55.00	\$ 72.50	\$ 135.00	\$ 70.00	\$ 107.50		
SW	Houston, TX	\$ 200.00	\$ 85.00	\$ 147.50	\$ 245.00	\$ 135.00	\$ 212.50		Fair
SW	Austin, TX	\$ 150.00	\$ 80.00	\$ 115.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 170.00		Fair
SW	Dallas, TX	\$ 100.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 65.00	\$ 180.00	\$ 90.00	\$ 120.00		Abundant
	Average	\$ 150.00	\$ 68.33	\$ 109.17	\$ 225.00	\$ 108.33	\$ 167.50		
	Median	\$ 150.00	\$ 80.00	\$ 115.00	\$ 245.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 170.00		
W	San Francisco, CA	\$ 500.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 350.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 215.00	\$ 375.00		Fair
W	Pittsburgh, PA	\$ 330.00	\$ 185.00	\$ 277.00	\$ 326.00	\$ 205.00	\$ 312.50	6.0	Limited
W	Seattle, WA	\$ 260.00	\$ 182.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 420.00	\$ 260.00	\$ 360.00	2.0	Fair
W	Los Angeles, CA	\$ 288.00	\$ 80.00	\$ 185.00	\$ 440.00	\$ 130.00	\$ 227.50		Fair
W	Sacramento, CA	\$ 220.00	\$ 125.00	\$ 165.00	\$ 210.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 175.00	3.0	Limited
W	Honolulu, HI	\$ 185.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 160.00	\$ 310.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 235.00	3.0	Limited
W	San Diego, CA	\$ 175.00	\$ 115.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 260.00	\$ 145.00	\$ 195.00	3.0	Fair
W	Oakland, CA	\$ 180.00	\$ 105.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 225.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 185.00		Fair
W	Portland, OR	\$ 180.00	\$ 110.00	\$ 137.50	\$ 200.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 165.00	2.0	Fair
W	San Jose/Silicon Valley, CA	\$ 100.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 150.00		Fair
W	Reno, NV	\$ 55.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 45.00	\$ 80.00	\$ 45.00	\$ 55.00	2.0	Limited
W	Fresno, CA	\$ 85.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 45.00	\$ 85.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 45.00		Abundant
W	Phoenix, AZ	\$ 55.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 43.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 59.00		Fair
W	Bakersfield, CA	\$ 50.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 40.00	\$ 65.00	\$ 43.00	\$ 45.00		Fair
	Average	\$ 190.21	\$ 95.86	\$ 148.04	\$ 249.71	\$ 129.50	\$ 184.57		
	Median	\$ 180.00	\$ 102.50	\$ 150.00	\$ 217.50	\$ 147.50	\$ 180.00		
	AVERAGE	\$ 200.67	\$ 101.70	\$ 148.30	\$ 251.13	\$ 154.34	\$ 198.61		

Source: Colliers International 2006

On-Street Parking Rates

The rate for on-street metered spaces is a uniform \$2.00 per hour (in \$.05 increments) except near hospitals and in the vicinity of City Hall, which has a reduced rate of \$1.00 per hour. The essential issue related to rates is that the on-street rates should be in proper balance with short-term rates at nearby off-street facilities whenever possible. In Atlanta, often the relationship between on-street and off-street hourly rates is disproportionate, with the cost of metered parking being lower than the cost to park for a similar length of time in an off-street facility.

Ideally, the cost of parking at on-street meters is higher than for off-street alternatives. When on-street parking is the lowest cost option, it increases the demand for those spaces and tends to lengthen the average stay. When on-street parking is more expensive than parking in a lot or garage, it provides an incentive for parkers to use those off-street facilities, particularly for longer stays. This frees up more on-street capacity to serve more parkers who, at the higher rates, will limit the duration of their stays.

It is not uncommon to find unbalanced municipal systems, often as the result of political pressures from businesses and other constituencies to keep meter rates low. The motivation is to provide a source of low-cost parking to the public.

Unfortunately, the result is normally the reverse of what is intended. Low meter rates fill up on-street spaces so that visitors and customers who need to

park for only a short time cannot find a convenient on-street space. Parking appears to be scarcer than it really is. Enforcement of time limits can reduce some of this effect, but enforcement is not as effective as the economic incentive that applies to every parker and parking decision.

It is easy to achieve the proper balance in cities that have some form of municipal parking system because both on-street spaces and off-street facilities are controlled by the municipality.





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In that situation the municipality can set higher rates for its on-street meters in an area higher than the rates offered at its off-street lots or garages.

In Atlanta, however, virtually all short-term parking rates at off-street lots and garages are set by owners and private operators. In many cases, it is simply not feasible for the City to assign on-street rates that are higher than nearby off-street rates because those facilities charge a flat fee of \$3 - \$6 for anyone who parks, regardless of their length of stay. This places a heavy burden on the on-street system to provide reasonably priced short-term parking in many areas of the city where there is no alternative. There simply is not enough on-street parking capacity to provide that kind of support, even if on-street capacity were increased substantially through the conversion of travel lanes. The reason is that short-term on-street parking benefits only the destinations that are very close by. That is why metered spaces in one area will be full when metered spaces three blocks away are only half full. The available metered spaces are considered too far away for short-stay parkers. The effective market area for true short-stay parkers is much smaller than for parkers staying for two hours or more, and shorter time limits reduce the effective market even further.

Complicating this problem is the fact that off-street facilities can capitalize on the limited amount of on-street parking in the immediate area by ignoring meter rates when setting rates for off-street hourly parking. The quantity of "convenient" on-street spaces is so small they simply are not a factor in the market. The only real competition is between off-street facilities that set their rates against each other, not against the meter rates.

The fact that a parking citation for an expired meter is only \$10 also contributes to the problem in some areas where the cost of a single citation is less than the cost of parking in a garage or surface lot. This encourages people to choose to park in the metered spaces, even if they are likely to overstay the posted time limit.

The conclusion is that, without the leverage of municipal off-street parking facilities that can offer short-term parking at lower rates than "reasonable" on-street meter rates; the City cannot control the rates for short-term parking in the market, regardless of how it sets rates and time limits for its parking meters. Because localized concentrations of parkers create a demand for short-term parking that normally exceeds on-street capacity, the number of on-street spaces is

too small to have any real effect on the pricing of short-term parking at privately owned lots and garages.

3.4 Short-Term Parking Availability

A specific issue identified by Downtown retailers is the lack of hourly rates for short-term parking. Most surface parking lots that are not staffed offer only flat-rate parking. In many areas a limited number of on-street spaces are the only source of short-term parking nearby.

This specific concern was addressed in a meeting with area parking operators. Their response was one of economics. Typical stays in some areas are for a duration that warrants an all-day rate, so lots in those areas are not checked frequently through the day in order to minimize labor costs. Another challenge when offering hourly rates is the high incidence of underpayment. When hourly rates are offered, some customers pay the minimum amount, even though they know that they will be staying longer. In effect, they gamble that they will leave before the lot checker returns for a second check. To reduce the potential revenue loss, operators would have to check the lots more frequently, which represents a substantial increase in operating cost.

A flat rate helps assure that each customer pays for the full length of stay because the minimum fee is the all-day rate. The lot checker simply verifies that payment has been made for each occupied space and takes appropriate enforcement action on those not paid.

Provision of hourly options on-street or in privately owned surface lots is a challenge in much of the Downtown area. As explained in the previous section, the lack of municipally controlled parking facilities that would allow the City to offer reasonable hourly rates will continue to limit the availability of low-cost short-term parking in many areas of Downtown.

3.5 Parking Inventory and Occupancy

A full inventory of all public and private parking facilities accessible to the study team within the Action Plan study area was conducted during the course of the Plan's development. The

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inventory includes information about capacity, the nature of the facility (garage or surface lot), identification of the operator, rates, and other pertinent information that is included in a master worksheet provided as a deliverable with the Action Plan. See Appendix D for a list of all locations inventoried by zone and by block.

Just over 94,000 parking spaces were inventoried within the study area, including 109 parking structures and 325 surface lots. Approximately 67,000 of these spaces are located in parking structures, with 25,250 spaces in surface lots and an estimated 2,000 on-street spaces. The number of on-street spaces is an estimate because it includes unmarked, unsigned curb faces that may or may not be used as parking depending on conditions. However, the vast majority of on-street spaces included in the inventory are clearly identified as either metered spaces, marked spaces, or unmarked parking along active streets.

Analysis Zones

To aid data organization and analysis, the Action Plan study area was divided into eight analysis zones as shown in Figure 3-9. The analysis zones were defined according to the predominant land use in each zone or by designations already recognized in the community.

Zone A — Major Events District

This zone is dominated by major event venues including the Georgia Dome, Georgia World Congress Center (GWCC), Philips Arena, and CNN Center. The Centennial Olympic Park area to the east was not included in the same zone because the size, nature, and pattern of event activity in these two areas are substantially different.

Zone B — Centennial Olympic Park District

Zone B, which lies between Marietta Street and Spring Street, includes the tourist venues in the Centennial Olympic Park area: the Georgia Aquarium, Centennial Olympic Park, the soon-to-open, relocated World of Coca-Cola, and Imagine It! The Children's Museum of Atlanta. Zone B is anchored at the north end by the Coca-Cola world headquarters and includes the AmericasMart complex, the Centennial Place neighborhood to the north, and portions of the planned development within Centennial Hill.

Zone C — SoNo (South of North) District

This zone is the only portion of the Action Plan's study area that lies east of the I-75/85 Downtown Connector. The principal generators of parking in this area are Emory Crawford Long Hospital, the Georgia Power corporate headquarters, and interspersed residential developments.

Zone D — Hotel District

The Hotel District extends north from Ellis Street between the Downtown Connector on the east and Spring Street on the west. The majority of large hotels in the Downtown area are located in this zone along with the Peachtree Center office and retail complex as well as two of the city's tallest high-rise buildings, the SunTrust Plaza building, located at 303 Peachtree Street and the 191 Peachtree Street building.

Zone E — Fairlie-Poplar District

The Fairlie-Poplar District comprises the southwest portion of the Downtown core, with several high-rise buildings in its northeast portion that give way to a collection of older, medium-height buildings that have become a center for residential conversions. A portion of this zone is a historic district. The Fairlie-Poplar District is also the location of a growing arts focus along Luckie Street, with the Tabernacle, Rialto Center for the Performing Arts, and the Balzer Theater at Herren's.

Zone F — East Downtown/Sweet Auburn District

The smallest of the eight analysis zones, this area is located south of the Hotel District and east of the Fairlie-Poplar District, extending to the I-75/85 Downtown Connector. It is bordered by Grady Memorial Hospital and Georgia State University to the south. At the east end is the historic Sweet Auburn District, currently undergoing redevelopment activity. This area is the location of the Citizens Trust Bank headquarters building and the Atlanta Life Insurance Company. The west end of this zone includes a portion of Downtown core buildings, including the Georgia-Pacific tower located at 133 Peachtree Street.

Zone G — Institutional District

Zone G is the location of two of the largest institutions in Downtown Atlanta: Grady Memorial Hospital and Georgia State University. These two institutions take up most of the real estate and generate most of the parking demand in an area that extends from the edge of Zone F south to Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive and the government buildings to the south. The west end of the zone includes half of Underground Atlanta (the portion that lies between Central Avenue and Pryor Street).

Zone H — Government District

Although a number of businesses are located south of Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive between Spring Street and the interstate system, the vast majority of this area consists of a combination of federal, state, county and city government offices. The state capitol and supporting state office buildings are concentrated in the eastern portion with city, county and federal offices taking up most of the area to the southwest, including the judicial complex at the south end of the Study area.

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Figure 3-9: Inventory and Analysis Zones



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Parking Occupancy

Following the inventory, an occupancy survey was conducted in each zone to measure the peak accumulation of vehicles during normal business days. The tables below (Figures 3-10 and 3-11) summarize capacities and occupancy by zone and by facility type. Additional analysis is provided by zone.

Figure 3-10: Summary of Off-Street Capacity and Occupancy by Zone

SUMMARY OF OFF-STREET CAPACITY AND OCCUPANCY STATISTICS												
Zone	Zone Description	Facilities		Capacity		Occupancy		% Occupancy		Capacity	Occupancy	%
		Lots	Garages	Lots	Garages	Lots	Garages	Lots	Garages	TOTAL	TOTAL	Occupancy
A	Major Event	29	8	7,122	9,238	1,940	6,130	27%	66%	16,360	8,070	49%
B	Centennial	61	11	2,711	3,894	1,389	2,528	51%	65%	6,605	3,917	59%
C	Civic Center	45	13	2,565	8,013	2,738	4,870	107%	61%	10,578	7,607	72%
D	Hotel	35	27	3,009	14,630	2,338	8,331	78%	57%	17,639	10,669	60%
E	Fairlie-Poplar	40	12	2,532	5,995	1,709	3,420	67%	57%	8,527	5,129	60%
F	East/Sweet Aub.	23	17	1,862	8,022	1,207	5,586	65%	70%	9,884	6,793	69%
G	Institutional	20	19	970	13,080	811	11,032	84%	84%	14,050	11,843	84%
H	Governmental	63	8	4,476	4,155	2,988	3,723	67%	90%	8,631	6,711	78%
TOTALS:		316	115	25,247	67,027	15,119	45,619	60%	68%	92,274	60,738	66%
Excluding Major Events District:												
<u>Zones B-H</u>		287	107	18,125	57,789	13,180	39,489	73%	68%	75,914	52,669	69%
Southern Institutional and Government Areas:												
<u>Zones G&H</u>		83	27	5,446	17,235	3,799	14,755	70%	86%	22,681	18,554	82%

Figure 3-11: Summary of On-Street Capacity and Occupancy by Zone

Summary of Inventory & Occupancy of Metered and Marked On-Street Spaces									
	Inventory		Occupancy		% Occupancy		TOTAL		
	Meter	Marked	Meter	Marked	Meter	Marked	Capacity	Occ.	% Occ.
Zone A	0	0	0	0			0	0	
Zone B	11	40	6	13	55%	33%	51	19	37%
Zone C	14	32	0	16	0%	50%	46	16	35%
Zone D	35	28	15	0	43%	0%	63	15	24%
Zone E	120	69	61	24	51%	35%	189	85	45%
Zone F	31	62	16	49	52%	79%	93	65	70%
Zone G	178	65	141	47	79%	72%	243	188	77%
Zone H	243	90	194	61	80%	68%	333	255	77%
TOTALS:	632	386	433	210	69%	54%	1,018	643	63%

The combined occupancy rate for both off-street and metered/marked on-street parking was 66 percent, the same rate as the off-street parking alone. However, there were an additional 1,331 vehicles not included in the above table. These vehicles were parked at sections of

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unmarked curb, parked illegally, or parked in spaces not clearly defined as legitimate parking. In a number of cases, vehicles were parked along curbs in streets considered too narrow to support on-street parking at those curbs. There were a significant number of police and other official vehicles parked at curbs marked "No Parking." Most of these extra vehicles were in Zones E/ Fairlie-Poplar (121), G/ Institutional (151) and H/ Government (208). Including these additional vehicles brings the total to 62,712 parked vehicles within the study area.

Two sub-group analyses are provided at the bottom of Figure 3-10. The first examines the study area without the large unoccupied event parking facilities associated with the GWCC and Georgia Dome. The result is an overall occupancy rate of 69 percent which is 3 percent higher than the 66 percent rate with the empty event parking facilities included. This 69 percent should be considered a better indication of overall occupancy in the business areas.

The second sub-grouping analysis combines Zones G/ Institutional and H/ Government. In these two areas 82 percent of the off-street parking was occupied. These were also the areas with the highest occupancy for on-street parking, at 77 percent in both zones. The number of vehicles parked along unmarked sections of the street or parked illegally was also the highest in these two areas, followed by the Fairlie-Poplar District.

Occupancy in the north half of the Action Plan's study area, in Zones A-D, was lower than those in the south half of the study area. At 49 percent, occupancy was lowest in Zone A (Major Events) because there were no large events taking place at the time that this area was surveyed.

The following is a ranking of the zones according to level of off-street occupancy, highest to lowest:

G	Institutional District	84%
H	Government District	78%
C	SoNo District	72%
F	East/Sweet Auburn District	69%
D	Hotel District	60%
E	Fairlie-Poplar District	60%
B	Centennial Olympic Park District	59%
A	Major Events district	49%

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Occupancy of On-Street Spaces

Occupancy rates for metered spaces in all but two zones were relatively low at 55 percent or less. This does not mean, however, that open metered spaces or marked spaces were available uniformly throughout the zone. Figure 3-12 below shows that 91 of the 178 meters located in Zone G (Institutional) were on block faces that were 100 percent full. That means 51 percent of the meter capacity was on block faces that were 100 percent full. The percentage is even higher in Zone H (Government) at 68 percent. With most of the full blocks concentrated near area parking generators, there is little question that parkers visiting those destinations in Zones G and H have difficulty finding convenient on-street parking. The problem is also reflected in the high number of illegal parkers found in these two zones. These parkers were not able to find metered or marked parking spaces near their destination and chose to park along block faces marked "No Parking" rather than pay the high cost of short-term parking in an off-street lot.

Figure 3-12: Analysis of Full Block Faces by Zone

Analysis of Full Block Faces by Zone							
	Number of Block Faces by Zone	# of Meters by Zone	# of Marked Spaces by Zone	# of Meters on Full Block Faces	# of Marked Spaces on Full Block Faces	% of Meters on Full Block Faces	% of Marked Spaces on Full Block Faces
Zone A	97	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A
Zone B	171	11	40	6	13	55%	33%
Zone C	76	14	32	0	6	0%	19%
Zone D	114	35	28	3	0	9%	0%
Zone E	164	120	69	38	10	32%	14%
Zone F	64	31	62	14	23	45%	37%
Zone G	98	178	65	91	18	51%	28%
Zone H	129	243	90	165	55	68%	61%
TOTAL:	913	632	386	317	125	50%	32%

Turnover Analysis — On-Street Spaces

An important measurement in evaluating a downtown parking system is turnover of on-street spaces. Space-for-space, on-street parking is the most important component of the city's parking system. It is intended to serve the short-term parking needs of visitors and customers to Downtown businesses and, to an increasing degree, Downtown residents.

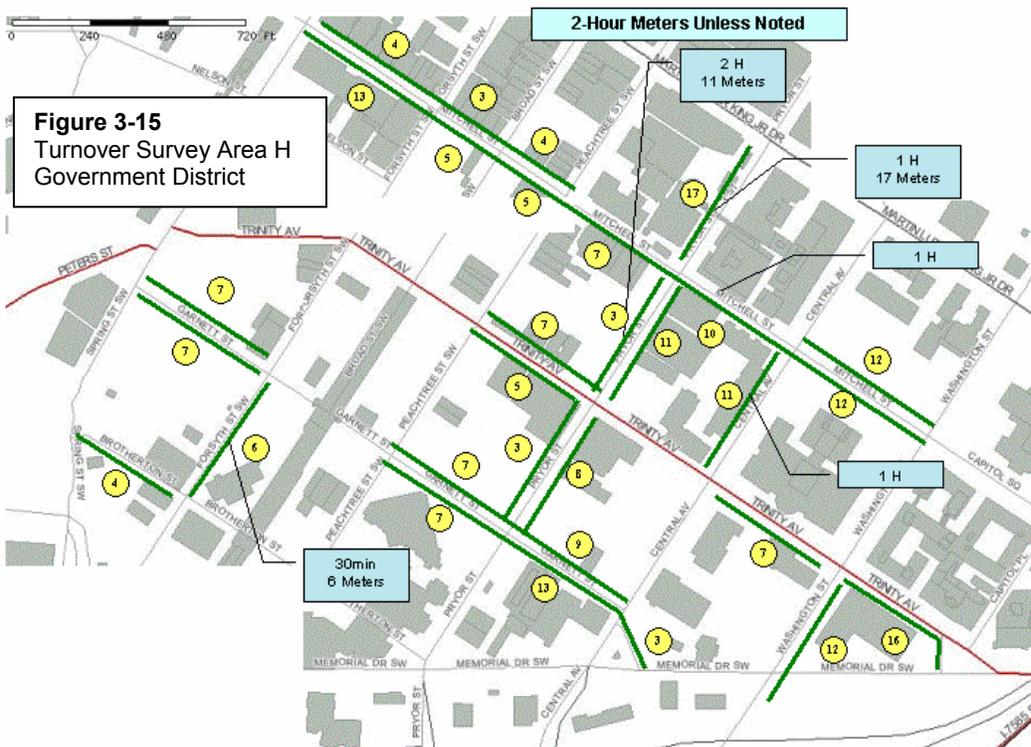
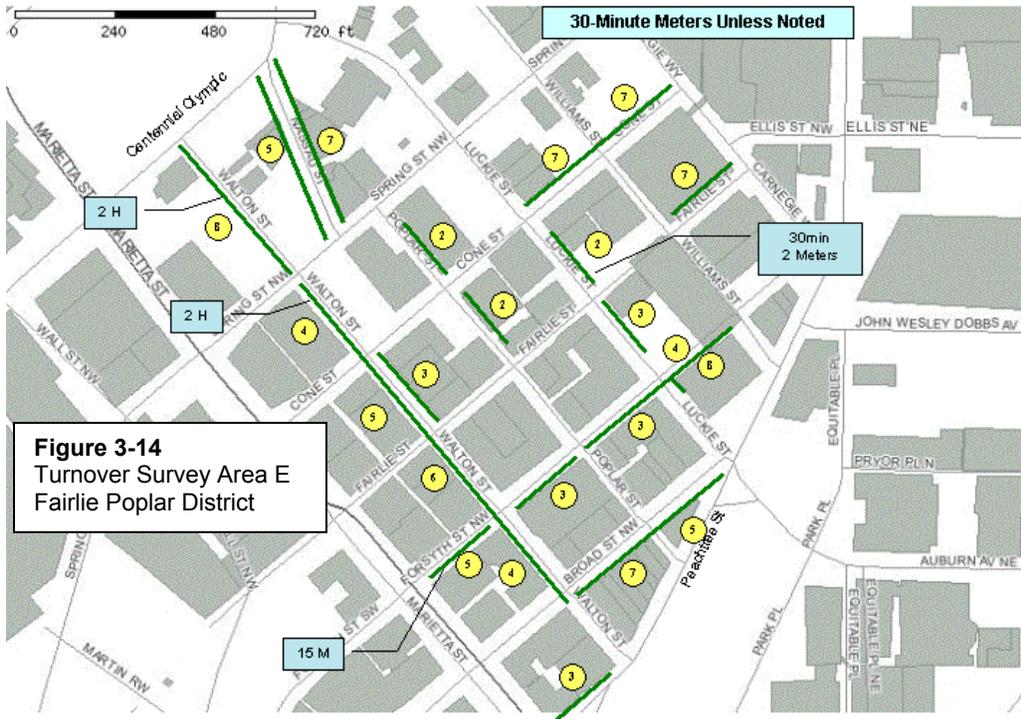


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“Turnover” is the number of times a space is used by different parkers during the course of a day. Higher turnover means that each space is serving more people each day than if the turnover rate is low. However, even though turnover does provide a quantifiable measurement for analysis, it is not the sole measurement of system efficiency. On-street spaces provide the best support in a given area when the length of stay allowed in those spaces is appropriate for the majority of short-term visitors or customers who are likely to use them. High turnover can be achieved by setting a time limit that is too short to properly serve the area. The result of this improper match between time limits and need normally results in a low level of service and a high violation rate. Maintaining an appropriate relationship between time limits and parker needs requires ongoing reassessment of area land uses, typical lengths of stay, and the availability of short-term parking in off-street facilities. Still, turnover is an important measurement of whether on-street parking is performing as intended or being abused by long-term parkers who should be parking elsewhere.

A frequent problem with on-street systems is that downtown business and government employees occupy spaces intended for visitors and customers. Those employees park for most or all of the day, consuming valuable on-street parking capacity. If parked at a meter, they will feed the meter unless ticketed for overstaying the posted time limit. If parked at a space without a meter, there is no cost for using that space unless ticketed for an overstay of the time limit. Employees will "play the system" in order to take advantage of low-cost or free on-street space because it is often the most convenient space available. The turnover analysis is designed to assess whether posted time limits are being respected or if there is a significant problem of employees using on-street spaces for all-day parking.

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The Turnover Survey included a total of 334 meters:

- 86 30-minute meters
- 106 one-hour meters
- 142 two-hour meters

The survey process involved recording the last four digits of each parked vehicle license plate along a predetermined route. Each set of meters was checked on a route that corresponded with the posted time limit. Meters with a 30-minute time limit were checked every 30 minutes. Meters with a one-hour time limit were checked every hour and two-hour meters were checked every two hours. The results of those surveys are summarized in the tables that follow.

30-Minute Meters

A total of 86 30-minute meters were checked, representing 731 available meter hours and a potential for 1,462 30-minute parkers during the eight-hour survey period (see Figure 3-15). A total of 461 meter hours were consumed during the survey period which represents 63 percent of the total meter time available (461 / 731 meter hours). However, 188 of the 453 parkers stayed beyond the 30-minute time limit, consuming an additional 322 meter hours, or 44 percent of the additional available hours. The lost capacity as the result of these overstays represents a potential 644 additional 30-minute parkers. This potential loss is mitigated by the fact that, on average, 37 percent of the metered spaces were empty through the day. The lowest percentage of spaces available at any point was 26 percent at 4:30 P.M. At occupancy rates above 85 percent, parker overstays have a much higher impact because there is a much greater likelihood that drivers are not able to find a space. With a lower overall occupancy rate, it is not as likely that parkers were not able to find a space.



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Figure 3-15: 30 Minute Meter Turnover Analysis

Meters In Survey:	86																
Potential 30 Min. Parkers per Meter:	17																
Potential 30 Minute Parkers:	1,462																
Total Available Meter Time:	731 Hrs.																
Total Actual Parkers:	453																
Consumed Meter Time:	461 Hrs.																
% of Available Meter Time Consumed:	63%																
Length of Stay (Hrs.)	0.5 hr.	1.0 hr.	1.5 hr.	2.0 hr.	2.5 hr.	3.0 hr.	3.5 hr.	4.0 hr.	4.5 hr.	5.0 hr.	5.5 hr.	6.0 hr.	6.5 hr.	7.0 hr.	7.5 hr.	8.0 hr.	Total
Number of Parkers by Length of Stay:	265	93	46	14	10	9	3	2	3	1	0	1	1	3	0	2	453 Parkers
% of Total Parkers:	58%	21%	10%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	
Time Consumed by Length of Stay:	132.5	93	69	28	25	27	10.5	8	13.5	5	0	6	6.5	21	0	16	461 Hrs.
% of Meter Hours Consumed:	18.1%	12.7%	9.4%	3.8%	3.4%	3.7%	1.4%	1.1%	1.8%	0.7%	0.0%	0.8%	0.9%	2.9%	0.0%	2.2%	63%
Number of Overstay Parkers:		93	46	14	10	9	3	2	3	1	0	1	1	3	0	2	188
																	42%
Overstay Hours:		92.5	68.5	27.5	24.5	26.5	10	7.5	13	4.5	0	5.5	6	20.5	0	15.5	322 Hrs.
% of Total Meter Time Consumed by Overstays:		12.7%	9.4%	3.8%	3.4%	3.6%	1.4%	1.0%	1.8%	0.6%	0.0%	0.8%	0.8%	2.8%	0.0%	2.1%	44%
Potential 30 Minute Parkers Lost Due to Overstays: (if meters were fully occupied)		185	137	55	49	53	20	15	26	9	0	11	12	41	0	31	644 Parkers
																	44%

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One-Hour Meters

The overstay problem was more significant at meters with a one-hour time limit. As shown in the Figure 3-16, one-hour meters were occupied an average of 83 percent through the day but occupancy reached as high as 91 percent with occupancy at or above 85 percent for six of the eight hours of the survey. Without question this impacted the availability of space for short term parkers, with 23 percent of the total meter time taken up by overstays. This represents 198 additional one-hour parkers who might have used that space on the survey day.

The fact that open parking spaces are seldom distributed evenly throughout a zone means that convenient on-street spaces were readily available in some areas but very difficult to find in others.

Figure 3-16: One Hour Meter Turnover Analysis

Meters in Survey:		106								
Potential 1-Hour Parkers per Meter:		8								
Potential 1-Hour Parkers:		848								
Total Meter Hours Available:		848								
		1 hr.	2 hr.	3 hr.	4 hr.	5 hr.	6 hr.	7 hr.	8 hr.	TTL
Total Parkers:		386	88	14	12	3	3	2	1	509
% of Parkers by Length of Stay:		75.8%	17.3%	2.8%	2.4%	0.6%	0.6%	0.4%	0	
Meter Time Consumed (hrs.):		386	176	42	48	15	18	14	8	707
% of Meter Time Consumed:		45.5%	20.8%	5.0%	5.7%	1.8%	2.1%	1.7%	0.9%	83%
Overstay Parkers:			88	14	12	3	3	2	1	123
% of Total Parkers:										24%
Overstay Hours:			88	28	36	12	15	12	7	198
% of Meter Time Consumed by Overstays:			10.4%	3.3%	4.2%	1.4%	1.8%	1.4%	0.8%	23%
Potential 1-Hour Parkers Lost to Overstay:			88	28	36	12	15	12	7	198

Time:	9:30	10:30	11:30	12:30	13:30	14:30	15:30	16:30	
Occupancy:	75%	88%	89%	87%	91%	85%	85%	70%	Occupancy By Hour
Meters Occupied:	80	93	94	92	96	90	90	74	

Two-Hour Meters

Overstay parkers had a much smaller impact on capacity at two-hour meters, with only 12 percent of the total 372 parkers overstaying the time limit and an average occupancy of 75.4 percent in the 142 metered spaces surveyed (see Figure 3-17). Peak occupancy at two-hour meters remained close to the average, so approximately 25% of the total capacity was available

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throughout the day. However, space was scarce on some blocks while other blocks within the zone had a significant surplus.

Figure 3-17: Two Hour Meter Turnover Analysis

Meters Surveyed:	142				
Total Meter Hours Available:	1,136				
Total Potential 2 Hr. Parkers:	568				
	2 hr.	4 hr.	6 hr.	8 hr.	Total
Total Parkers:	328	35	6	3	372
% of Parkers by Length of Stay:	88.2%	9.4%	1.6%	0.8%	
Meter Time Consumed (hrs.):	656	140	36	24	856
% of Meter Time Consumed:	45.5%	20.8%	5.0%	5.7%	75.4%
Overstay Parkers:		35	6	3	44
% of Total Parkers:					12%
Overstay Hours		70	24	18	112
% of Meter Time Consumed by Overstays:		10.4%	3.3%	4.2%	9.9%
Potential S/T Parkers Lost to Overstay		88	28	36	56

3.6 Specific Parking Conditions and Issues

This section addresses specific parking conditions and issues found in Downtown Atlanta through field observations and discussions with various representatives of the Downtown business, governmental, and residential communities. To provide context, issues are addressed with a general description of parking conditions in the various zones, but a significant crossover of issues occurs between zones, particularly those related to security.

Zones A and B — Centennial Olympic Park and Major Events Districts

A significant and growing component of the Downtown Atlanta parking market is event parking. In the past, event parking was generated primarily by evening events at Philips Arena or the Georgia Dome along with daytime convention activity at the GWCC and the AmericasMart complex. With the arrival of the Georgia Aquarium, event parking has become a daily component of Downtown parking activity, particularly in the vicinity of the Georgia Aquarium where both formal and informal parking lots have been opened and staffed to serve the large volume of visitors to the Aquarium. It is likely that there may be some moderation in the average daily attendance at the Aquarium over time, and a reduction in parking demand, but

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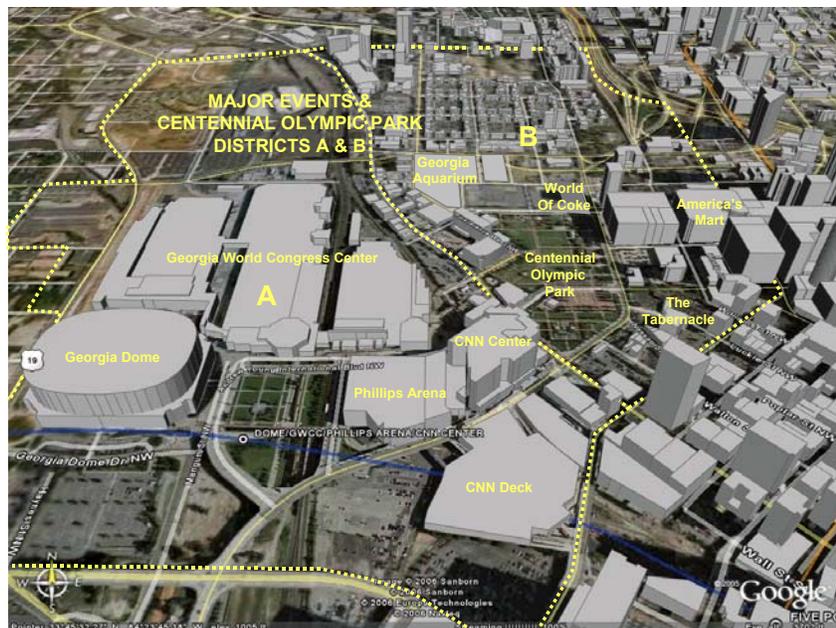
that change may be limited by the Aquarium's strong regional draw and the ability of the facility to sustain interest.

AmericasMart

The five-million-square-foot AmericasMart consists of three major buildings – the Merchandise Mart, Apparel Mart, and Gift Mart – each taking up a full block in three contiguous blocks between Spring Street and Centennial Olympic Park Drive. The complex is served by 1,134 parking spaces located in two garages under the Gift Mart and Apparel Mart. Although there is continuous activity at the marts throughout the year, the periods of greatest activity and parking demand are during five major Apparel Mart shows and four major Gift Mart shows each year. March and September shows generally operate for one Saturday through Tuesday time period. The January and July shows last for two weeks and host 60,000 to 90,000 participants. While other significant meetings take place during the year these major shows generate a significantly larger volume of traffic and parking demand.

Parking in the area of the AmericasMart has been reduced dramatically over the past several years as land used for surface parking lots has been re-developed for other uses. This lack of convenient parking has been problematic to the operations of the Mart. For example, the Dallas Convention Center has used the lack of identifiable parking for the AmericasMart as a competitive marketing tool.

In addition to its two on-site parking garages and a number of non-affiliated parking facilities in the immediate area, AmericasMart sometimes rents nearby parking



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facilities, including a large garage located at Andrew Young International Boulevard and Peachtree Street. The Mart also relies heavily on off-site parking facilities, including Turner Field, with shuttle support for its largest events. Information about parking and shuttle service is provided on the mart website. Maps to alternate parking locations are also provided to arriving drivers when Mart garages are full. Additionally, the Civic Center has provided a location for large event vehicle staging though that location may not be available in the future.

Area hotels routinely provide shuttle service between hotels and the Marts during major events. Some hotels located outside the immediate Downtown area transport attendees to the closest MARTA station for the short ride to AmericasMart.

There are two significant and growing shared parking opportunities for the Mart's garages. During slower periods, the Mart provides parking to support events at nearby hotels, including the Westin Peachtree Plaza and Holiday Inn Express. The Mart's parking facilities also serve the additional demand created by visitors to the Georgia Aquarium, but those visitors sometimes compete for parking space with Mart visitors, requiring the Mart to take action to reserve space for its own clients and customers.

The Mart hires off-duty police officers to control traffic during major events and provides roving security officers who patrol area parking facilities. As an extra security and public relations measure, patrols extend to area parking facilities that are not associated with the Mart because any incidents at those locations during Mart events reflect on the Mart itself.

Georgia World Congress Center and Georgia Dome

The Georgia World Congress Center (GWCC) and Georgia Dome control in excess of 6,000 parking spaces located in two parking structures and a series of surface lots. The Red Deck east of the Dome has 2,000 spaces and the Gold Deck located between the Dome and GWCC Building C has 315 spaces. Surface parking north of the facilities was



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recently expanded by approximately 1,000 spaces. A large staging area is also located north of the GWCC facilities.

Events at the Georgia Dome fill the available facilities approximately 15 times a year. Parking for the GWCC typically fills 50 to 75 times a year. Coordination among the Georgia World Congress Center, the Georgia Dome, and Centennial Olympic Park avoids overlap booking of events that would exceed this shared parking capacity.

All parking controlled by the GWCC and Dome for Atlanta Falcons football games is pre-sold with game tickets. Anyone coming to the game without a pre-sold parking pass must use secondary lots that are not part of the GWCC/Dome system, including three decks along Centennial Olympic Park Drive — the CNN Deck, Centennial Deck, and Georgia Bar Association Garage — and a number of surface parking lots operated primarily during Dome events. Information about multiple event overlap and parking options is automatically sent out to 8,000 – 12,000 members via email.

A staff of 2,600 is required to support a full attendance event at the Dome. Parking is provided only for a small number of regular staff during those events and most of the staff take MARTA. This leaves nearly all on-site parking for those attending the event. Twenty-five to thirty off-duty Atlanta Police Department officers are employed for traffic control and security during large events. This core staff is supplemented by approximately 70 security officers. Security patrols are provided during all GWCC events regardless of size.

Large conventions at the GWCC are heavily supported by large shuttle buses that transport attendees between the hotel district and the convention center throughout the day. The Dome promotes the use of MARTA for Falcons games and makes MARTA passes available as part of its ticket sales process. MARTA is heavily used on game days but fans regularly complain about long waits after the game because train capacity is not sufficient to handle the loads.



Philips Arena

Philips Arena is supported by a small "Premium Parking" deck located below the arena and the larger CNN deck located between Spring Street and Centennial Olympic Park Drive. The GWCC/Dome Red Deck is also available for large Arena events. The CNN deck is shared with a large number of parkers working in CNN Center who park primarily on the second level of the deck (card access only). The upper level is available to the public. Parking demand for events at Philips Arena also spills out into the surface lots located along Centennial Olympic Park Drive and Luckie Street.

Georgia Aquarium

The opening of the Georgia Aquarium has greatly affected parking in Downtown Atlanta, particularly the Centennial Olympic Park area, perhaps more than any other change in Downtown in the last five years. The primary impact is introduction of an everyday event into the area. Despite the fact that the Aquarium has its own 1,600-space parking deck, the phenomenal success of the Georgia



Aquarium and the consistently high visitor volume has generated considerable new surface parking activity in an area to the northwest of the facility that previously had little activity. Entrepreneurs have set up parking operations on nearly every paved surface within walking distance of the Aquarium with attendants and flaggers to draw drivers to their locations. Over the first few months of operation the prices for those off-property lots stabilized at \$10 per car on Friday and during the weekend parking. They have been successful despite the fact that the Aquarium's Parking Garage has never filled to capacity.

With high parking rates around the Aquarium, visitors and employees have also found free on-street parking in the Centennial Place neighborhood to the north of the Aquarium property. Visitors who park in the Centennial Place neighborhood are willing to walk the distance for free parking.

ZONE C —SoNo (South of North) District

The area that has come to be called SoNo is the portion of the Action Plan study area that lies on the east side of the I-75/85 Downtown Connector south of North Avenue, separated from the balance of the Downtown area by the connector itself. The most prominent parking generators in this district are located at opposite ends of the area. High-rise buildings, including the Bank of America Plaza (600 Peachtree Street) and One Georgia Center (600 West Peachtree Street) are located in the northwest section along with Emory Crawford Long Hospital. At the southeast end of the district is the Georgia Power headquarters complex. The balance of the area includes a mix of businesses, churches and a new concentration of high quality multi-family housing.

Georgia Power provides for all of its parking needs on its own campus and implements a “Smart Ride” alternative transportation program working with the Downtown TMA. The other land uses in the southern half of this zone are relatively self-sufficient in terms of satisfying their own parking demands. The situation is more challenging in the northwest quadrant of the zone, where the higher density of high-rise buildings and the hospital have strained available parking resources. There is significant “shopping” for monthly parking by employees who work in area office buildings. Additionally, some shared parking arrangements between different land uses exists.

For example, the Bank of America Plaza leases space in a church parking deck located across the street.

Emory Crawford Long Hospital provides parking for its staff, patients, and visitors in two large parking garages and several surface lots located near the hospital. All of these facilities are heavily



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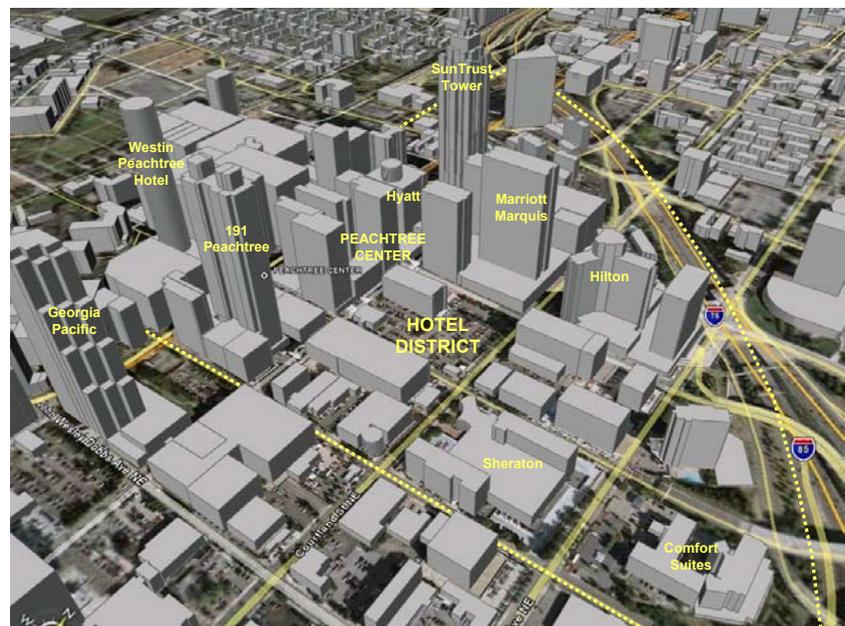
occupied on a regular basis and the hospital continues to impact the parking market outside of the properties that it owns. Parking needs are generally met in this area, but not without effort and ingenuity on the part of both employers and employees.

ZONE D — Hotel District

The Hotel District, along with Peachtree Center, has the largest concentration of parking in the Downtown area, with more than 17,000 spaces. Occupancy levels for parking facilities in this area vary significantly according to the occupancy levels in the hotels and the functions taking place in their facilities. Hotels typically need a larger contingency of parking capacity in comparison to most other land uses (excluding other large event venues) because of wide swings in activity, yet little parking is provided for the large number of hotel employees and shared parking opportunities are limited by the hotels' inability to commit that space on a regular basis. It is frequently needed to support hotel activity, so availability of parking for non-hotel guests is hit-or-miss depending on what is happening at each hotel day-to-day.

Committing space to monthly contract parkers not associated with the hotel is not a valid prospect and most shared parking is in the form of parking provided by non-hotel parking facilities, such as the SunTrust Garden Plaza parking garage (303 Peachtree Center Avenue), in support of evening hotel events.

Nearly all of the major hotels offer valet parking that allows them to park more cars in a limited amount of garage space. That service is normally contracted to a private valet service. There is no parking for buses at several of the largest hotels where all parking is in a parking structure. Buses are





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referred to the Civic Center or to other nearby hotels with adjacent surface lots that can accommodate larger vehicles. However, buses staging in traffic lanes near hotels routinely affect traffic flow in this area. Large events at hotels also affect traffic flow in the Hotel District as the result of large truck offloading in association with those events. There is no satisfactory provision for large vehicle offloading and no available space to provide offloading capability without affecting travel lanes. Further, it has been reported by the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau that the lack of well coordinated and organized coach parking has lead to Downtown Atlanta being perceived as inhospitable to tour group operators.

The availability of economical parking for hotel employees is a recruitment and retention issue. One hotel manager stated that it is rare for employees working at one of their suburban hotel locations to transfer to their Downtown property because they often live closer to the suburban location and can park there for free. Hotel managers suggest that most employees take MARTA. Several hotels provide employee parking at the Civic Center with a shuttle to the hotel. The shuttle is provided not only as a convenience but also because of employee concerns about walking to the Civic Center lot, particularly after dark. Only a very limited number of hotel employees park on-site, leaving virtually all on-site parking capacity to serve hotel guests and visitors.

Security of parking facilities is a particular concern for hotel operators. The highest demand for hotel parking occurs during regional conferences that draw from an area within reasonable driving distance. Attendees are often from smaller towns and cities where most parking is free. When faced with the Downtown hotel parking rates that are higher than they are accustomed to, many of these visitors park on one of the area surface lots near the hotel that offer less expensive parking, particularly at night. They often have a lower awareness of security issues and are more likely to leave valuables exposed inside their parked vehicles, inviting break-ins. Some of the lots were designed primarily for daytime parking and have insufficient nighttime lighting to serve as a deterrent. There has also been some history of questionable booting practices at some surface parking lots, but that issue seems to have been resolved. For example, the Hilton Atlanta Hotel restricts its parking referrals only to those nearby locations where security is provided.

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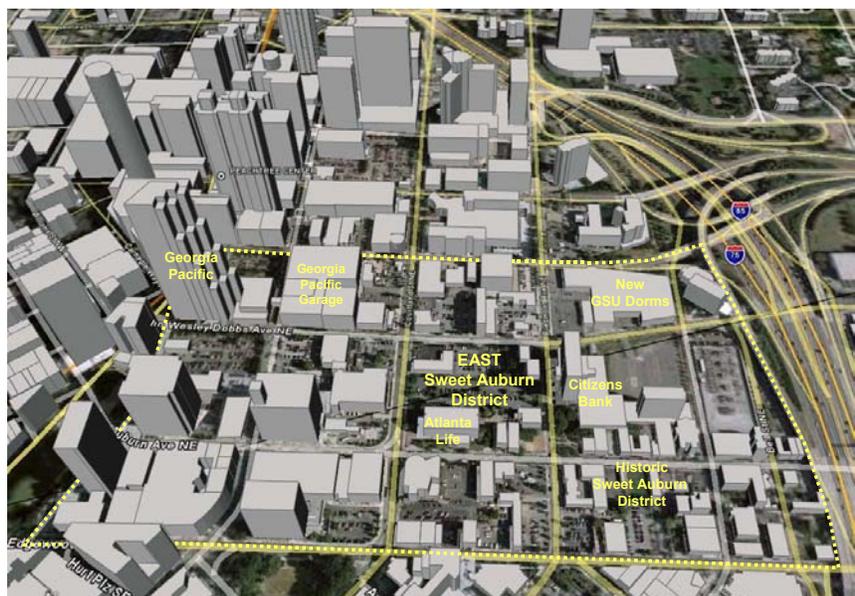
street is used as a staging area for residents to drop off their vehicles. Those residents leave the keys with the building concierge or security desk until the valet runner comes to park the vehicle. This kind of arrangement can be used in a small neighborhood setting where building staff and residents know all of the valet runners.

The lower half of Zone E includes the Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center, MARTA's Five Points Rail Station, and the western portion of Underground Atlanta. The Five Points MARTA Rail Station is the only connecting point between the North-South and East-West lines of the MARTA rail system, providing the most convenient access from this district (and Downtown) to any other point in the MARTA rail system.

The Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center has a large parking garage that provides parking for employees of the building and, for security reasons, is not open for public use.

ZONE F — East Downtown and Sweet Auburn District

Zone F, located directly east of the Fairlie-Poplar District is named for the historic Sweet Auburn area situated in its southeast corner on either side of Auburn Avenue. This zone extends into the Downtown core and includes one of the largest office buildings in the city, the Georgia-Pacific Building at 133 Peachtree Street. The Citizens Trust Bank Building at 75 Piedmont Avenue and Atlanta Life Insurance headquarters at 100 Auburn Avenue anchor the east end of the district, but most of the land area between Auburn Avenue and Ellis Street is occupied by surface lots. These lots provide a low-cost parking option for employees working in the district at buildings near the core as well as students who walk south to Georgia State University.



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Most lots in this district are low-quality operations and the walking environment can be uncomfortable, particularly in the winter when employees and students return to their vehicles at night. Still, low rates draw parkers from several blocks away.

There has been little real change in this zone for a number of years, but Georgia State University has recently undertaken construction of a large student housing project that will locate approximately 2,000 students in the northeast corner of the zone. Construction is also underway on a new mixed-use development between Edgewood Avenue and Auburn Avenue that includes a parking structure to support the project and provide additional transient parking for the area.

Zone F is a current source of surplus, low-cost parking but that surplus will shrink as new development continues, including the development already underway along the Auburn Avenue corridor.

ZONE G — Institutional District

Two large institutions, Georgia State University and Grady Memorial Hospital, are the dominant parking generators in Zone G in the southeast sector of the study area. These two institutions own extensive parking facilities in the area, including multiple parking structures, to provide parking for students, faculty, staff, patients, and visitors. Both have also secured off-site parking that is served by shuttle buses. Georgia State has, for some time, provided free parking for students at Turner Field with a shuttle that provides a very high level of service. There is typically no wait at the lot for a bus and the lot is patrolled full-time by mobile City of Atlanta police officers. The program was initiated, in part, to reduce the need to develop new structured parking on campus, but part of the reason for continuing the program is to provide students with a

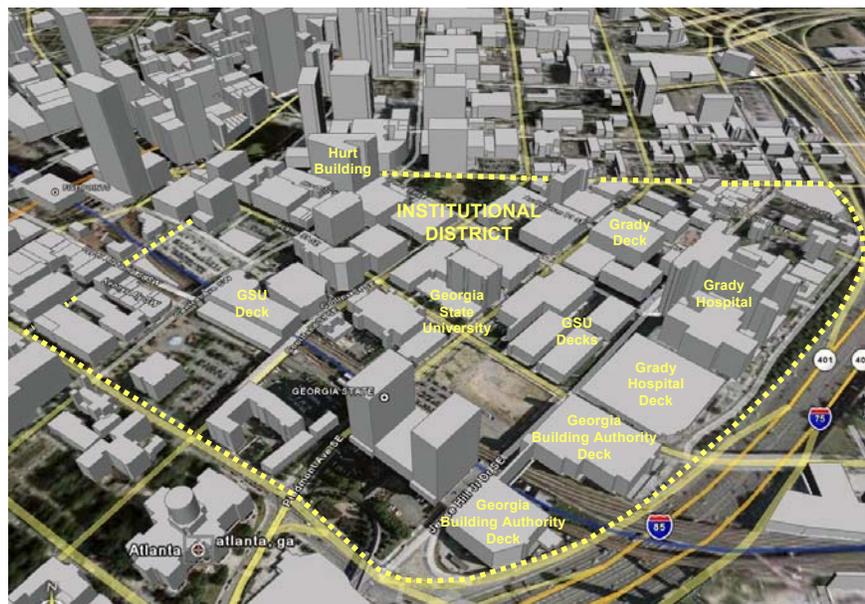


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no-cost option. There is routinely unoccupied space in some of the Georgia State parking decks.

Grady Memorial Hospital owns two large parking garages but leases additional parking space in other privately-owned facilities near the hospital in order to meet its demand. The hospital monitors its parking needs closely; seeking the most economical solutions to its parking needs while maintaining a high level of service to its patients. The Butler Street deck, the hospital's primary visitor and patient parking location, operates near capacity on a routine basis.

The State of Georgia also has two large parking decks at the south edge of the zone that serves employees of government offices to the south. The Georgia Building Authority garage on the south side of Decatur Street at the I-75/85 Connector also provides transient parking for the public and special rates for Georgia State University students.



ZONE H — Government District

The area south of Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive and east of Spring Street is defined as the Government District. The predominant land uses and parking generators in this district are associated with state, county, or city government facilities, with the Richard B. Russell Federal building in the northwest corner along with the Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center just across Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive in Zone E.

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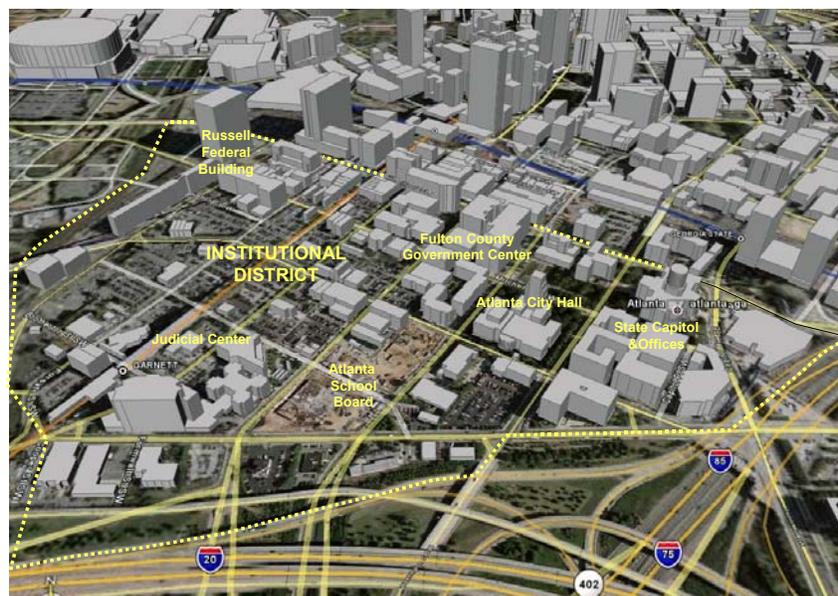
The east end of Zone H is the location of the Georgia State Capitol and supporting state office buildings, with county and city buildings located to the west. At the southwest end of the zone is the City's municipal court building and the MARTA Garnett Street Rail Station.

Unlike nearly all of the other zones in the Action Plan's study area, parking capacity in Zone H is evenly distributed between surface lots and parking structures. That mix will change as new parking structures are added to the area, the most recent being the Atlanta Board of Education parking garage built to support their new offices. The area is also supported by the two City-owned Underground Atlanta garages located just outside the zone to the north.

Rates for transient parking vary dramatically in this zone with little distance between facilities with very different rates. This is due in part to the unpleasant walking environment near some of the parking locations and the demand for short-term parking very close to City of Atlanta and Fulton County government offices.

Parking is provided for both city and county employees at rates well below the general Downtown market. This is a practice that has developed over time. Government administrators believe the practice is an issue for employee recruitment and retention; however, the commute into Downtown is considered the larger issue by one administrator. Fulton County provides 200 spaces for Fulton County employees in one of the Underground Atlanta garages as part of the county's financial

participation in construction of the garage. The county subsidizes the cost of employee parking in that garage, discounting the monthly rate from \$85 to \$20. There is a waiting list for this parking, and privileges at the garage are considered an important benefit for those assigned



there. Like Georgia State University, Fulton County also provides parking for employees at Turner Field with a county shuttle bus providing transportation to county offices. The City of Atlanta also provides a shuttle service for employees from a series of surface lots in the area to city offices, including the City Hall Annex and Garnett area.

During the field surveys, a large number of vehicles were found parked along street faces marked as “No Parking” areas. Many of these were police and other official vehicles near city and county office buildings and court buildings.

4 Parking and the Downtown Environment

One of the key elements of an overall parking management strategy is not only to understand the complexities of parking systems but also how those systems affect the current and future Downtown environment. How can parking policies encourage the use of alternative transportation modes? Will sufficient parking capacity merely sustain the current level of activity or support future growth and development? What is the position of parking with regard to land use priorities? These questions lie behind a general view of how parking fits into an overall Downtown growth plan.

4.1 Parking and Alternative Transportation

An overarching goal of this Action Plan is to promote a balanced mix of parking and alternative transportation. The Downtown parking system was reviewed in the context of improving walkability, bicycling conditions and encouraging both transit use and ridesharing.

The Downtown TMA is in a unique position to address parking in the context of promoting alternative transportation. Nationally, it is not uncommon for TMAs to have parking-management responsibilities. As a program of Central Atlanta Progress and the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District, the TMA will address parking management in new development as well as assist existing employers and property managers. Under current plans, the TMA will assist with maintenance of the parking inventory, coordinating parking planning Downtown, and providing information to developers, employers, property managers, and parking operators on facility design, management, and incentives for not driving alone. Specific strategies to achieve these objectives are included in Section 5: Recommendations and Action Plan.

Bicycle Parking

Bicycle parking can be considered an extension of the overall parking system. As parking facilities are built for automobiles, bicycles must be considered as well. As different automobile



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users require different types of parking (short-term, long-term, covered, etc.), so do bicycle users.

The current parking inventory includes 171 bicycle racks with 950 parking spots within the Downtown Action Plan study area. Racks are generally located near civic buildings and public spaces (libraries, plazas, courthouses) and around Georgia State University. These are designed to serve short-term parking needs, defined as highly visible bicycle parking for short-term visitors. To fully support short-term bicycle parking, racks should be located as close to the activity center (classrooms, entrances to government buildings, etc.) as possible. However, the existing bicycle racks are not always easy to see or access. Rack placement on loading docks or on streets not used by bicyclists leads to people locking bicycles to unsuitable objects when racks are actually available elsewhere. Eighty percent of the survey respondents who bicycle Downtown say they lock their bikes to anything secure rather than using bicycle racks.

In addition, long-term secure and covered bicycle parking, defined as covered parking for all day employees, residents and visitors is lacking. Downtown MARTA rail stations offer no bicycle parking, with the exception of the Garnett Station. In addition, residential developments such as Centennial Place and Alonzo F. Herndon Homes lack bicycle parking racks. (See Appendix E for complete list of bicycle rack locations.) Employees who bicycle to their places of employment require covered, secure (long-term) bicycle parking, as well as facilities in which to change clothes and (preferably) shower.

Walkability

One concern about the presence of Downtown parking facilities, particularly surface parking lots, is their effect on the streetscape and the walking environment. Uninterrupted streetscapes provide a much more interesting walking environment and shorten perceived walking distances. Blocks broken by open expanses of surface parking impact walkability and are generally avoided in the master planning process. In an effort to maintain and improve walkability, modern parking facilities often incorporate architectural treatments that complement the architectural context of the area. They also provide retail space at street level that maintains interest and functionality along an unbroken streetscape. In some cases, parking structures are wrapped

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with residential and retail components, or those components are incorporated at the ends of the structure that face similar buildings (the "bookends" concept). In the case of the Spring Street Garage in Greenville, SC, the elevator cores of the parking structure were designed to serve both the parking structure and the attached residential components in order to reduce the subsequent development cost of those added components. The photos that follow depict examples of these approaches.



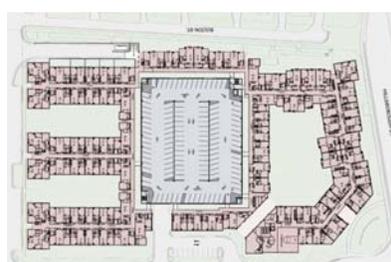
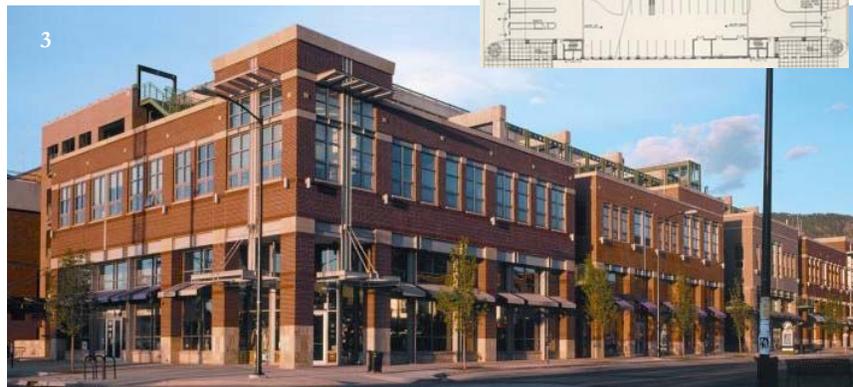
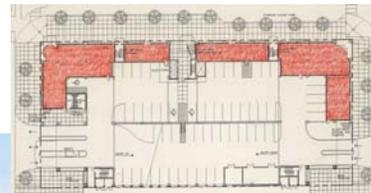
Bryan St. Garage
(1)
Savannah, GA

Plume Lane
Garage (2)
Norfolk, VA

15th & Pearl
Garage (3)
Boulder, CO



Examples of incorporation retail and residential parking



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“Bookends” Concept - Spring Street Garage - Greenville, SC

Garage stair-elevator tower designed to serve both the parking facility and future residential addition



Downtown Parking Demand Management Action Plan



**Layered Land Uses:
Residential above Parking
with Street Level Retail**

**LoDo District – Denver,
CO**



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The zoning code revisions currently being considered for Downtown Atlanta include specific design criteria for buildings that focus on maintaining the architectural and functional integrity of the street level environment. Those guidelines apply to parking structures, as well.

Transit Usage

Downtown Atlanta offers six (6) MARTA rail stations, 20 MARTA bus routes, eight (8) Cobb County Transit (CCT) routes, seven (7) Gwinnett County Transit routes, and seven (7) GRTA Xpress bus routes, and is the most transit-accessible activity center in Georgia. See Figure 4-1 for more detail about transit routes. According to the 2000 U.S. census, 14.4 percent of all work trips to Downtown occur by transit. The parking surveys also indicated a high level of transit usage to Downtown Atlanta.

Parking strategies can increase transit ridership and reduce single-occupant vehicle usage when implemented under the right circumstances. A study by Morrall and Bolger regarding the relationship between downtown parking supply and transit use in various Canadian and U.S. cities suggests that parking availability is a significant factor affecting transit ridership. This same study gives an example of Ottawa, Ontario, which experienced a high modal split and a reduction in single-occupant vehicle usage due to its policies for reducing parking supply. Ottawa eliminated free employee parking and introduced the Transit Way System, which provides frequent, direct express bus service to the downtown area on exclusive street rights-of-way.¹

A national Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) study found that parking prices, in particular, have a positive effect on transit ridership. In fact, the effect of parking prices was found to be *greater than* improvements in transit service. The most effective means of increasing transit ridership, however, is to increase the price of parking *and* improve transit service. In addition, improvements in transit frequency appear to have a greater effect than improvements in transit access. Finally, raising parking prices at the low end (e.g., from \$20 per

¹ *The Relationship Between Downtown Parking Supply and Transit Use; Morrall, J. and Bolger, D.; ITE Journal. 1996/02*

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Figure 4-1: Downtown Transit Routes



August 18, 2006
Data from MARTA and ARC



month to \$30 per month) is likely to have a greater effect on transit ridership than raising parking prices at the high end by the same amount (e.g., from \$90 to \$100).²

While Downtown Atlanta is accessible by transit, community members expressed the need for improvements to transit service to establish it as an attractive alternative to driving alone.

4.2 Parking and Future Development

During the course of this Action Plan, the project team reported inquiries about overall parking sufficiency in specific areas of the city that were being considered for development projects. The question of parking availability is fundamental to most development decisions. Whether a developer operates in a city that has minimum parking requirements or a city like Boston that has capped its downtown parking capacity, "How much parking?" is still a priority issue.

A realistic understanding of the character of a community and its expectations related to convenient access and parking is important to developers in gauging the viability of prospective projects. On occasion, the city's minimum parking requirements and the developer's projected parking needs simply do not align. In a competitive market where downtown office buildings have strong competition from well-developed suburban office centers where parking is plentiful, funding sources for downtown projects consider the question of parking support carefully.

Support for Retail and Service Businesses

For most retailers and service businesses located in Downtown Atlanta, convenient customer parking remains an important aspect of the viability of their businesses. Retail and service businesses that serve their customers on-premises depend on walk-in trade and customers who come to their storefronts from outside the walking area by car or other means. High density in the immediate area of the business increases the customer base even though that base may be

² *Strategies to Attract Auto Users to Public Transportation, TCRP Report 40*

composed primarily of daytime customers. Access via mass transit expands the market to other areas served by that mass transit, but the opportunity to start, grow, and sustain most retail and services businesses still improves in the expanded market that convenient automobile access provides.

Such is the case in Downtown Atlanta at present. It will change over time as increased density, a growing residential component, and improved transportation systems increase the reachable customer base, but convenient access by automobile remains a factor that improves prospects of success for most retailers and service providers in Downtown Atlanta.

4.3 Parking and Land-Use Priorities

The Role of Surface Parking

One of the questions that arose during the course of the public input process for the Action Plan was whether policies should be implemented to restrict the amount of land in Downtown Atlanta that is used for surface parking and whether future policies should discourage such use.

Parking is rarely the most profitable use of a downtown property and is normally a revenue generator of last resort. With few exceptions, parking lots exist because the property has not attracted a higher use. They often serve as placeholders for future development sites. In the meantime, they provide parking capacity that, in some cases, can help spur development.

A less obvious benefit of surface parking is its potential positive effect on the quality of development. The fact that surface parking provides a revenue stream to the property owner reduces pressure on the owner to sell the property for use below the site's full potential. Without a revenue stream to offset the holding cost of a property, the owner may be compelled to accept a reasonable sale offer from a buyer who intends to use the property in a way that is not compatible with neighborhood needs and goals. The revenue from a surface lot may enable the owner to hold the property for a potential buyer who plans a higher-quality development that will contribute to the neighborhood and, in most cases, provide a higher return for the owner. These are mutually beneficial goals. It is possible that the availability of parking revenues may delay development to some extent, but the logical result is a higher quality of development.

Regulations and Zoning for Parking

Regulations and requirements related to parking exist in several places in the City of Atlanta Code of Ordinances. Regulations concerning the act of parking are described in Part II: Chapter 150: Traffic and Vehicles: Article IV Stopping, Standing and Parking. Requirements for the physical condition and operations of parking lots exist in Part II: Chapter 30: Article XVII. Landscaping requirements are in Part II: Chapter 158.

Requirements for the size of parking facilities are located in the zoning section of Atlanta's Land Development Code. Parking requirements are included in each type of district and in the general requirements in Part 16: Chapter 28: Section 14. The Study area is currently covered by the first and 13th Special Public Interest (SPI) Districts. SPI-1 and SPI-13 contain no parking minimums for nonresidential uses and residential minimums are based on the floor-area ratios of the development. Currently, Central Atlanta Progress is working with the City of Atlanta to revise Downtown zoning to create a single SPI district with new parking requirements. The Action Plan section of this document includes suggestions for those new requirements.

5 Recommendations and Action Plan

This section outlines the recommendations of the Study. The recommendations are categorized into five sections, and seek to achieve the following goals:

- A. Optimize the availability and use of Downtown’s existing parking resources to meet current and future demand.
- B. Identify parking management policies and programs that will increase the use of alternative transportation modes and contribute to an improved multimodal environment.
- C. Preserve and expand on-street parking to create a pedestrian- and retail-friendly Downtown, maximizing the availability of short-term parking to support that need.
- D. Develop initiatives that support a public/private collaborative to promote parking availability, ease of use, common validation programs, high standards of facility safety, facility maintenance, and positive customer experiences.
- E. Promote parking accessibility for Downtown visitors and reduce site-specific congestion related to special event traffic.

The following three goals guided the entire plan development process:

- Promote a balanced mix of parking and alternative transportation that suits the needs of both Downtown businesses and residents.
- Encourage parking management strategies that support a vibrant, neighborhood-based mix of retail, service, and residential facilities.
- Clarify the role and influence of parking and multimodal transportation in promoting Downtown economic development objectives.

The elements of this plan provide strategic guidance and action steps for each of the goals. The action steps are organized into three implementation phases:

- Immediate 6 months
- Short-term 1-2 years
- Long-term 3-5 years

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Goal A: Optimize the availability and use of Downtown's existing parking resources to meet current and future demand.

A-1: Maintain Parking System Inventory. The parking inventory developed as part of this Action Plan is a valuable resource in assessing current conditions, and is also valuable as a long-term management tool. The inventory provides information about parking conditions and parking availability to not only those involved in development but also the public at large, including information about facilities available for paid public parking (monthly or transient) and parking rates.

Immediate:

- Identify administrator (within Central Atlanta Progress or the Downtown TMA) to maintain and enhance the parking facility information created as part of this Action Plan.
 - The existing numbering system in the database allows locations to be added, deleted, subdivided, or combined with relative ease, while retaining a unique identifying number for each location that corresponds to a grid of numbered blocks. As parking is removed or added Downtown, it will be critical to make immediate updates.
- Distinguish what parking information will be available to the public (on the Central Atlanta Progress website) and what information will be kept internally for planning purposes.
- Enlist parking operators' assistance in keeping information about their locations current by providing them with the ability to make limited changes to the information via the Internet for the facilities they operate.
- Establish a schedule for updating graphic information on the website.

Short-Term:

- Convert the information from Microsoft Excel into a standard database program such as Microsoft Access. Provide parking operators password access to information regarding parking facilities they manage. Using passwords, operators could access their records at any time to update rates, operating hours, or other

information. Addition or deletion of location records must be limited to the administrator of the database. Operators would be responsible for advising the administrator when control of a location has changed hands. The administrator would make the necessary change to allow access to that record for the new operator.

Responsible: Central Atlanta Progress, Downtown TMA, and Parking Operators

A-2: Develop Complete Land-Use Data to Support Evaluation of Actual Parking Ratios in Atlanta and Future Parking Sufficiency. Central Atlanta Progress is in the process of compiling comprehensive land-use information that was not available at the time of the Action Plan's development. When completed, that information should be used in conjunction with building vacancy information and the vehicle accumulation data collected during the Plan's development to develop parking demand ratios related to the specific land uses within the Downtown area. The parking demand ratios can be applied to the Development Matrix (provided as part of the Study deliverables) for more accurate analysis and tracking of future parking sufficiency.

Immediate:

- Complete the land-use analysis, including a square-footages-by-land-use category for each building in the Downtown area.
- Compile vacancy information for buildings in the Downtown area by land-use category.
- Summarize the land-use analysis by category and apply preliminary parking demand ratios to estimate parking demand.
- Compare the computed parking demand estimate to actual vehicle accumulation documented during the Action Plan.
- Recalibrate initial parking ratios to reflect actual vehicle accumulation.
- Apply the adjusted ratios to prospective new developments using the Development Matrix to determine their impact on parking sufficiency.

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Short-Term:

- Maintain current land-use and vacancy information to support accurate tracking and projection of parking sufficiency through use of the Development Matrix model.

Responsible: Central Atlanta Progress, Downtown TMA

A-3: Encourage Shared Parking. Using the information available through the parking inventory database, Central Atlanta Progress and/or the Downtown TMA parking administrator should participate in the review and approval process for new Downtown developments as it relates to identifying shared-parking opportunities. With this information, the administrator can identify specific parking resources that may be shared with other nearby properties and work with property owners to facilitate shared parking opportunities.

The city should encourage developers to perform a shared parking analysis and take advantage of opportunities to develop parking facilities that could be efficiently shared among multiple users. Design guidelines should support building clustering to facilitate shared parking, shared yards, and common shipping/receiving areas.

Short-Term

- Establish a mechanism for examination and coordination of potential shared parking opportunities as part of the design/development review process. This mechanism would be used primarily to identify shared parking opportunities when multiple projects are being considered in the same sub-market.
- Provide information to developers about existing parking availability that would facilitate shared parking.
- Provide information to potential developers about compatible land uses in terms of shared parking opportunities.
- Consider shared parking potential in evaluating the mix of land uses as part of the review process for new developments.

Responsible: Central Atlanta Progress, Downtown TMA, City of Atlanta

A-4: Identify Land-Banking Opportunities. The lack of a suitable site for the development of parking can be a deal breaker for prospective development projects. A suitable site needs not only to be situated in the proper location, it must have the right dimensions for an efficient parking facility. The lack of a site with the proper dimensions can dramatically impact both the functionality and cost of a facility.

Suitable land can be made available to support large projects, but it can also be used as a means to facilitate the development of parking in areas where office, retail, and residential development consists of a collection of small projects, none of which is large enough to take on the development of structured parking alone. The city can provide land for development of a parking structure, whether a standalone facility or part of a larger project that serves the needs of multiple generators in the area.

Short-Term:

- Determine the legal requirements to vest the authority for land-banking and initiate any changes in statutes or ordinance needed to vest that authority.
- The city, or an agency empowered to do so, should identify suitable prospective sites for the future development of parking based on current development plans and the vision described in the Imagine Downtown plan. Sites acquired as part of the land-banking program can be used to provide open space until sufficient need arises to develop parking. Some of that land can be reserved as permanent open space as part of the acquisition plan. The dimensions of prospective sites should be appropriate for an efficient parking facility configuration.

Long-Term:

- Develop a land purchase financing strategy and undertake land purchases.

Responsible: The City of Atlanta or another agency empowered to hold land for this purpose

A-5: Improve Permitting Process. A concern expressed by the majority of parking management firms operating in Atlanta is the lengthy and unpredictable permitting process

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required to obtain temporary parking facility permits, permanent parking facility permits, and associated business licenses.

Immediate:

- Enlist parking operator representation on the committee reviewing the City of Atlanta's permitting process to fully understand parking-related issues and to clarify expectations for all those involved.

Short-Term:

- Consider an Internet-based process that allows parking operators to apply to the city online for temporary parking facility permits for locations where permits have previously been granted. Most, if not all, temporary parking facility permits are issued for locations that are operated only during special events. The Internet-based process would allow the city to exercise due care in approving an initial application, but would allow reissue of the \$25 permit via a website as long as the applicant is previously registered for that location.

Responsible: The City of Atlanta and Central Atlanta Progress

A-6: Implement Updated Downtown Parking Standards. Proposed Downtown zoning code revisions have been developed by Central Atlanta Progress with a great deal of stakeholder involvement as part of an overall transportation strategy for Downtown. Setting appropriate parking maximums and minimums for the Downtown area will assist in a more efficient use of the existing parking supply. Adoption of the SPI-1 Revised Code is already under consideration.

Portland, OR, Seattle, WA, and San Francisco, CA all have **parking maximums** in their downtown areas with the number of spots based on the square footage of the development. (Litman, Todd. *Parking Management Best Practices*, APA Press, 2006, 96-97.)

Immediate:

- Encourage adoption of the revised SPI-1 text, which recommends parking maximums of 2.5 spaces per 1,000 square feet of office floor area, or 1.5 spaces per 1,000 square feet of office in the Fairlie-Poplar area.

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- Encourage adoption of the revised SPI-1 text, which recommends a parking minimum of one space per 600 square feet for restaurants in the SoNo (South of North) area. See strategy A-7 for additional opportunities for establishing parking minimums.

Long-Term:

- Employ the Development Matrix tool provided as part of this Study to monitor parking capacity absorption in specific sub-zones resulting from actual changes in land uses, building occupancy, and the parking supply. This will involve field surveys of vehicle accumulation to validate theoretical demand changes predicted by the Development Matrix. The purpose of monitoring actual changes in parking demand is to determine to what extent the proposed parking capacity limits, coupled with TDM initiatives, actually reduce parking demand.
- Maintain a dialogue with Downtown real estate companies and property managers to evaluate the competitive impact of parking limits on Downtown leasing efforts and development decisions. Include up-to-date information about trends in population density within buildings in both the Downtown and suburban markets as part of ongoing evaluation of policies related to parking capacity limits and promotion of alternative transportation modes.

Responsible: The City of Atlanta and Central Atlanta Progress

A-7: Explore a Fee-In-Lieu Program. A fee-in-lieu program should be considered if additional parking minimums are established in emerging redevelopment areas of Atlanta where it is determined that the use of alternative transportation modes is not likely to offset base parking needs. Fee-in-lieu programs allow developers to contribute capital to a collective development fund that is used to provide municipal parking instead of meeting all parking requirements on-site. The city then uses these fees as a means to provide needed parking capacity when it is not possible or financially feasible for developers to provide that parking themselves. This is often the case in areas undergoing

Westport, CT: In the Historic District developers can pay a \$2000 **fee in lieu** per required parking spot. (Zimble, Robin, "Driving Urban Environments: Smart Growth Parking Best Practices," Maryland Governor's Office on Smart Growth).

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redevelopment of existing buildings, particularly with older buildings that were not originally designed to accommodate parking. It can also occur when height limitations preclude parking as part of the building. Fees-in-lieu provide the city with an alternative to granting waivers on parking requirements. Instead, developers contribute capital to the city for parking facility development or alternative transportation improvements.

In-lieu fee programs provide cities with a means to consolidate parking within a market sub-area, allowing for better land-use planning and providing greater shared parking opportunities.

Long-Term:

- Review implementing parking minimums with a supporting fee-in-lieu program by district. The Castleberry Hill area provides a possible test location. On-street parking is needed to support the desired development of restaurants and retail establishments, but the lack of residential parking may cause area residents who have no alternatives to take up critical on-street parking spaces. The rapid addition of business establishments without sufficient new parking support can also overload existing parking capacity.
- Include the use of fees-in-lieu as a funding strategy for any expanded municipal off-street parking development program.

Responsible: The City of Atlanta

A-8: Explore Condominium Funding Program. This strategy should be considered as a future source of capital for the development of new parking facilities, particularly in areas where they are needed to support smaller scale projects. This approach is similar to a fee-in-lieu program in that capital for the development of new parking facilities is provided, at least in part, by the ultimate users. Unlike fee-in-lieu programs that are in place to provide developers an alternative to meeting minimum parking requirements on-site, the condominium approach provides an avenue for businesses and residents to voluntarily purchase shares of a new parking facility by helping fund its construction. Each contributor owns the number of parking spaces represented by their contribution. The city or an agency empowered to do so assembles

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the land and secures the condominium obligations from participants. These contributions may provide some or all of the capital needed for the project, with the balance raised through normal funding mechanisms.

Long-Term:

- Include the use of condominium shares as a potential funding strategy for expanded municipal off-street parking development programs.
- Promote fully unbundled parking (parking sold separately from residential units) with residential development.

Responsible: The City of Atlanta

A-9: Remove Overnight Parking Restrictions. It is the understanding of the Action Plan team that overnight parking restrictions in the Fairlie-Poplar area facilitate street cleaning activity. If that is the case, and the restriction does not relate to emergency vehicle access, the city should examine the possibility of restricting overnight parking only on specific days when street cleaning activity is routinely scheduled.

Short-Term:

- Work with the City of Atlanta to establish street cleaning schedules.
- Revise the ordinance restricting all-night parking in the Fairlie-Poplar area (Chapter 150: Sec. 150-94: All-Night Parking) to reasonable restrictions accommodating street cleaning Downtown.
- Attend Downtown neighborhood meetings and other residential forums to gather input and inform residents of the changes.
- Ensure adequate signage notifying residents and visitors of the new policy.

Responsible: The City of Atlanta, Central Atlanta Progress, Downtown TMA

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A-10: Restore the Downtown Street Grid. The reduction of block lengths in the specific locations proposed in the Imagine Downtown plan should be promoted as a means to reduce walking distances, expand parking options, and reduce pressure for the creation of new parking facilities. Long blocks not only decrease walkability, they increase the perception of inconvenient walking distances for pedestrians between a parking facility or transit station and their Downtown destinations. Shortening blocks and creating additional lines of sight not only reduces actual walking distances, it adds routing flexibility and reduces the perception of distance. The result is an increase in acceptable walking distances which, in turn, increases the number of parking facilities and transit points considered to be within an acceptable walking distance.

Long-Term

- Support and encourage the addition of new streets and pedestrian pathways identified in the Imagine Downtown plan.
- Discourage the consolidation of existing blocks in conjunction with new development unless clear, walkable pathways are provided to allow convenient, unrestricted public access for pedestrians where the existing street is removed.

Responsible: The City of Atlanta

Goal B: Identify parking management policies and programs that will increase the use of alternative transportation modes and contribute to an improved multimodal environment.

B-1: Decrease Employer-Paid Parking Subsidies. Parking pricing is one of the most powerful tools available for influencing how people choose to travel to work. By charging for parking based on vehicle occupancy, employees are much more likely to switch from driving alone to sharing the ride.

In addition, employers can greatly reduce their parking expenses if the company does not subsidize employee parking. Proceeds from parking fees may be used to fund an employee transportation program that includes subsidized transit passes, rideshare incentives or a variety

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of other elements. Studies have shown that when employees are offered cash instead of a free parking space, nearly one-third will take the cash to use toward another travel option and forgo the free parking space (See B-3 for parking cash-out strategies).

Charging for parking is rarely popular with employees, who often view free parking as a right. For this reason, a decrease in subsidies must be implemented with care and sensitivity. This can be done in part by explaining that the employer is attempting to create an equal level of subsidies among all transportation options, rather than favoring single occupancy vehicle use by offering free parking. Employees will consider their commuting costs more realistically when the competitive advantage of free or discounted parking is taken away. By balancing the costs of different travel options and offering employees a choice of how to spend their travel allowance, employers provide an economic incentive to choose something other than driving alone and the employer pays less for parking.

Immediate:

- Meet and discuss pilot programs with key employers (public and private) who subsidize parking to equalize the parking price structure (up to market rate) with the price of transit. Possible employers include Atlanta Public Schools, Fulton County, City of Atlanta, SunTrust, and Georgia Regional Transportation Authority.
- Specifically encourage government agencies to lead by example by increasing parking pricing and subsidizing transit passes with the increased revenue.
- Develop employee-targeted materials for employers and property managers explaining the relationship between parking pricing and alternative mode usage and providing illustrations of parking cash-out/transportation allowance.

Responsible: Downtown TMA

B-2: Increase the Number of Preferential Parking Spaces for Carpools and Vanpools.

On average, five percent of all Downtown parking spaces should be made available for carpools and vanpools to impact ridesharing in the Downtown transportation system. Preferential parking spaces should be the most desirable in the parking facility (usually the spaces conveniently

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located near the entrance and/or exit, next to designated handicapped spaces) and/or discounted for the user. Parking spaces must be equipped with signage designating the space as reserved for a carpooler or vanpooler. The Downtown TMA encourages preferential parking as part of its commute options package and can assist with parking signage. Increasing implementation requires two approaches:

1. Continued encouragement on the employer end to support increased ridesharing.
2. Increased education for property managers and parking operators to discuss the benefits of preferential parking.

Note: Vanpool parking should be as wide as handicapped parking or convenient loading and unloading areas should be established.

Immediate:

- Review who controls parking at the TMA's large employer sites and develop a timeframe for contacting the appropriate decision makers.
- Apply for a CMAQ grant to pay for signage/stripping and to subsidize parking discounts for carpools and vanpools.

Short-Term:

- Implement a pilot program at 10 Downtown employer sites and provide a 10 percent parking discount for two carpool spaces at each identified location. Monitor and evaluate the pilot program.
- Write a case study with results and publicize the program to the larger Downtown community.
- Include language for preferential parking in new design guidelines/development regulations for Downtown, similar to the language included in the zoning regulations for SPI-12 (Sec. 16-18L.011).

Seattle, WA encourages **preferential carpool parking** programs for employers and provides discounted city parking permits for carpools in specially designated areas. (City of Seattle, Department of Transportation, "Carpool Parking in Downtown Seattle," www.seattle.gov/transportation/parking/carpool.htm)

Responsible: Downtown TMA

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B-3: Implement Cash-Out Pilot Program. Free parking at the workplace is a significant factor in encouraging drive-alone commuting. Few employers allow employees to apply the monthly value of the parking space to another alternative. This concept, parking cash-out, offers a win-win opportunity in minimizing the financial impact to the employer while giving employees more options in selecting their preferred travel option. Parking cash-out concurrently invests the employer in that desired travel mode. Parking cash-out alone can increase alternative mode use by more than 10 percent where convenient travel options are available. Parking cash-out does require a supportive environment in which parking is unbundled from tenant lease agreements and where a market rate for parking exists in the area.

A similar concept, transportation allowance, moves beyond flexing paid parking to providing employees a flat amount each month for transportation. If the employee wants a parking space, he/she must use the allowance to pay for it or use the allowance on a transit pass, vanpool seat, or even walking shoes. Employees may use their entire allowance to pay for a parking space (or supplement the allowance with their own money). Alternatively, they may select a less-expensive option such as riding the bus, vanpooling, or carpooling, in which case they may keep any surplus money not used for travel expenses. Indeed, if employees walk to work and incur no commuting costs, they may keep the entire amount.

Working with two commercial carshare providers, Arlington County, VA reserves 40 on-street parking spots near transit stops for **shared-car parking**. Each space has special signs indicating that it is a shared-car space. (Arlington County, Commuter Program, <http://www.commuterpage.com/carshare.htm>).

A little over half of the on-line survey respondents expressed interest in cash instead of a parking spot.

Immediate:

- Research which Downtown employers pay or subsidize parking and where parking is unbundled from leases.
- Apply for a CMAQ grant to implement a cash-out or transportation allowance pilot program at two employer locations.

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Short-Term:

- Implement the pilot programs, ideally at one public agency and one major private employer.
 - Determine an appropriate amount for the employee transportation allowance. It should be equal to or less than the cost of an employee parking space.
 - The allowance does not have to be new revenue. Instead, it can be reallocated from current parking-related expenses that the employer already pays.
 - If the business employs labor union members, they may view free parking as part of the mandated working conditions. To change parking policy, negotiation with union representatives may be required. They will usually ask that the free parking be replaced with something of equal or greater value. A transportation allowance may be suitable as that replacement.
 - Develop clear materials for employers and property managers explaining the relationship between parking pricing and alternative mode usage.
 - Monitor changes in travel behavior and develop case studies and evaluation of program.
- Use case studies to develop materials for employers and property managers demonstrating the benefits of cash-out, unbundling parking, and not subsidizing parking.

Responsible: Downtown TMA

B-4: Promote Car Sharing. A shared-car company, Flexcar, currently offers service Downtown with private vehicles available for rent by the hour and by the day. Both companies and individuals may use the service and car sharing supports alternative transportation usage, offering flexibility for both employees and residents who primarily use transit, bike, walk or share a ride.

Short-Term:

- Meet with the city to designate on-street parking spots for shared-car companies.
 - Spaces should be company-neutral (Flexcar, Zipcar, etc.).

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- Work with the city to determine a minimum and maximum number of appropriate spaces on-street.
- Once multi-space meters are implemented, explore Smart-Card features for shared-car users.
- Incorporate shared-car parking minimums into proposed design guidelines/ development regulations (see strategy B-5).
- Consider free hours as incentives as part of the overall TMA commute options package.

Responsible: Downtown TMA

B-5: Include TDM Targets in Design Guidelines/Development Regulations. Central Atlanta Progress is currently updating design guidelines for new development within Downtown. Trip-reduction targets (by square footage) in new development should be part of these design guidelines. In addition, many cities have adopted development regulations or ordinances in addition to zoning codes that address parking ratios and trip-reduction strategies. Unbundled parking is important to the success of many parking management strategies and allows residents and employers to rent, separately from their lease, as few or as many parking spaces as they like. For example, rather than renting an apartment with two parking spaces for \$1,000 per month, an individual can rent the apartment for \$850 per month with no parking spaces and choose to pay \$75.00 per parking space needed.

Short-Term:

- Use the section on transportation management in the current SPI-12 Buckhead/Lenox Stations Special Public Interest District zoning (Sec. 16-18L.011) as a baseline for design guidelines/development regulations for SPI-1. Include provisions for car-share parking and unbundling parking. Also include requirements for the TDM plan with trip-reduction targets for new large office and residential projects (see Appendix F for examples).
- Educate and promote unbundled parking spaces with new development as part of an overall commute options package. Include educational information in proposed design guidelines.

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Long-Term:

- Discuss including trip-reduction targets as part of zoning regulations. See SPI-12 (Sec. 16-18L.011) in Appendix F for example.
- Explore special parking districts for provision of centralized parking for new developments with 250,000 square feet or more. Parking districts create centralized control of parking spaces through the use of a single management entity. This allows the various land uses to share parking rather than allocating specific parking spaces to certain land uses and individuals. Shared parking reduces the number of spaces needed. At mixed-use developments, the various uses tend to have different parking demand peaks; an office, restaurant, and retail store can share parking because the office's peak parking demand will occur in the afternoon, the restaurant's in the evening, and the retail store's on the weekend.

Responsible: Central Atlanta Progress, Downtown TMA, City of Atlanta

B-6: Promote Free Parking Days for Alternative Mode Users. Alternative mode users occasionally need to drive Downtown. As an added incentive to use alternative modes for the majority of work/school trips, employers can offer a limited number of free parking days per month. Similar to a Guaranteed Ride Home program, this program helps remove the issues associated with using transportation alternatives.

Short-Term:

- Implement a pilot program, such as at Georgia State University, to provide a limited number of free parking vouchers for students who use alternative modes the majority of the time.
- Encourage employers to offer limited free parking as part of their commute options program.

Responsible: Downtown TMA

B-7: Include Commute Options Information in Parking

Literature. Provide information on biking, walking, taking transit and ridesharing in parking literature to expand the exposure to commute options and to reinforce the concept that the Downtown TMA is a one-stop resource for transportation Downtown.

Chicago, IL has a special **Downtown Transit Guide** and distributes over a half-million per year. (Chicago Transit Authority, <http://www.transitchicago.com/welcome/brochures.html>)

Short-Term:

- Publicize relevant information on commute alternatives in parking literature. For example, a list of Downtown attractions should include transit stops as well as nearby parking lots. Bicycle parking is included on the Downtown interactive parking map.
- Include instructions for how to purchase discounted transit passes in all parking literature.
- Develop a Downtown-oriented transit map with all transit providers, stops, and headways. Combine key transit lines/stops, including Downtown tourist loop shuttles/trolleys, with the parking map.
 - Obtain accurate GIS data of all transit routes and stops from all operators (MARTA, GRTA, CCT, GCT). Update data regularly.
 - Create an interactive website with a map of Downtown transit routes, including headways and stops, to accompany the parking website.
 - Create a print map of transit Downtown geared toward tourists and commuters.

In Portland, OR, the number of **bicycle parking** spaces required depends on the land use and number of automobile spaces required. If 10 or more bicycle spaces are required, half must be covered. If the developer can't put in the bicycle racks themselves they can pay a fee-in-lieu to fund the city's bicycle parking program. The city has installed over 2,000 bicycle racks through the downtown area. The city has also defined rack specifications to ensure proper locking ability (City of Portland, City of Portland, Office of Transportation, <http://www.portlandonline.com/transportation/index.cfm?c=34813>).

Long-Term:

- Work with all transit operators to improve service, reliability, and convenience Downtown.

Responsible: Downtown TMA, Transit Operators

B-8: Improve Walking and Bicycling Conditions and Safety. Improved conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists will not only encourage walking and bicycling as primary modes Downtown, but increase transit accessibility, necessitating parking only once for multiple destinations and improving the overall livability and economic vitality of Downtown. Improvements are needed primarily in physical facilities, including bicycle parking, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes. Emphasis should also be placed on promoting bicycling and walking, however.

Immediate:

- Encourage adoption of the revised SPI-1 zoning regulations, which recommend one bicycle parking space for every 20 car spaces, up to 50 bicycle parking spots.
- Encourage MARTA to add bicycle racks at Downtown stations.

Short-Term:

- Work with property owners, managers, and the city to ensure bicycle parking is placed properly with no obstacles and sufficient lighting.
- Work with the City of Atlanta and Atlanta Police Department to increase enforcement of parked vehicles blocking sidewalks.
- Make sure any plan to add on-street parking is reviewed with bicycle safety in mind.
- Work with the City of Atlanta to repair out-of-line grates, potholes, and other obstacles to bicycle safety on Downtown streets.
- Work with the City of Atlanta to repair sidewalks, curb cuts, and other obstacles to pedestrian safety Downtown.
- Continue promoting the Downtown bicycle route map, effective cycling classes, walking route maps, and general walking and bicycling education.
- Work with MARTA on wayfinding information and signage at Downtown MARTA stations.

Responsible: Downtown TMA, Property Owners, APD, MARTA

B-9: Support Local Shuttle Systems. Implementation and development of Downtown transit systems facilitate moving around Downtown. A convenient shuttle system encourages off-site parking, taking transit into Downtown, parking once for multiple destinations, and economic development, especially of Downtown nightlife and tourist attractions.

Short-Term:

- Implement a Downtown circulator shuttle — DASH — with frequent headways that serves all Downtown populations and promotes the park-once concept.
- Review possible consolidation of government-run shuttles from Turner Field to government buildings.

Responsible: TMA, Central Atlanta Progress

Goal C: Preserve and expand on-street parking to create a pedestrian- and retail-friendly Downtown, maximizing the availability of short-term parking to support that need.

C-1: Expand and Improve On-Street Parking. Expand on-street parking wherever possible within the limitations of maintaining necessary traffic flow (vehicles, transit, bicycles, etc.), recognizing its contribution to pedestrian activity and importance to Downtown businesses.

On-street parking is the most convenient and, consequently, the most valuable asset of the parking system. The availability of on-street parking is critical in supporting retail and service business that depend on more than local walk-in customers. That is the primary reason for the initial development of parking meters, and it is still the primary reason for their use — the protection of valuable short-term, on-street parking.

Parked cars also provide a buffer between pedestrians on the sidewalk and moving vehicles on the street. Modern streetscape design generally assumes that some sort of buffer is needed between pedestrians and moving traffic, whether that buffer consists of landscaping features or parked cars. Parked cars and the activity of people moving back and forth to those cars adds activity and vitality to the streetscape. In areas with only marginal street-level activity, it can

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make a significant difference in perceptions of safety. A block without people or cars is much more foreboding than a block lined with parked cars. Cars on the street represent people, whether or not those people happen to be visible.

On-street parking tends to reduce the scale of an area, creating more of an impression of a neighborhood than of a high-rise corridor. This is consistent with recent livability design standards, including those promoted in Atlanta, that focus on architectural features at the street level and streetscape treatments that create more of a neighborhood atmosphere. In general the retention or restoration of on-street parking is recognized as contributing to overall street level vitality.

Short-Term:

- Incorporate a recognition of two important principles in the city's overall Downtown planning process:
 - The importance of on-street parking to Downtown business health as a source of convenient access.
 - The increasing importance of on-street parking as new development continues to reduce the amount of visible, convenient, and available off-street parking (surface lots).
- Discourage the removal of on-street parking in favor of additional traffic lanes in areas with any significant business presence where short-term parking is needed.

The majority of experience with the removal of on-street parking and the creation of downtown pedestrian malls has been a disappointing lack of expected activity and, in some cases, significant loss of business.

There are some exceptions, such as the 16th Street Mall in Denver, CO, where the absence of on-street parking and on-street traffic is replaced with nearby parking and a trolley system that moves continuously up and down the corridor.

Another example is the 3rd Street Promenade in Santa Monica, CA, where all vehicles are prohibited. However, the blocks on either side of the Promenade are lined with a heavy concentration of structured parking, accessed from the adjacent parallel streets.

Responsible: City of Atlanta, Central Atlanta Progress and the Downtown TMA

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C-2: Implement Planned Technical Improvements in the On-Street Program. The city is encouraged to continue the upgrade of its meter system through the phased conversion to multi-space meters which will:

- Expand payment mode options (credit card, debit card, Smart-Card)
- Provide valuable information for proper management of the meter program in support of overall parking system goals.
- Provide an opportunity for an efficient validation program if needed in the future

Immediate:

- The city should fully support the acquisition and implementation of advanced meter and enforcement technologies to support effective management of the on-street system and more effective control of repeat offenders that impact effective use of valuable on-street space.

Short-Term:

- Discontinue the current reduced rates (\$1.00 per hour) for on-street parking where it now exists (in the area of government offices and Grady Memorial Hospital) to encourage turnover and effective use of that space.
- Designate specific police parking zones to eliminate illegal parking by law enforcement officials.

Long-Term:

- Develop a monitoring program to track use, turnover, and revenue production by curb face rather than broad zones based on the additional statistical information that will be available through the new enforcement hardware and software.
- If enforcement problems persist in specific areas despite vigilant application of the expanded capabilities of the enforcement equipment, the city should consider modification of the parking enforcement ordinance to allow the posting and application of higher fines for meter overstays in those specific areas.
- Consider expansion of on-street parking system to include provision of alternatives for regularly returning service and delivery vehicles.

Responsible: City of Atlanta

C-3: Test Variable Pricing and Time Limits for On-Street Parking. By programming multi-space meters to allow a longer stay after normal business hours, restaurant customers would be able to park in metered on-street spaces for a time period that would allow them to comfortably eat dinner. Although a two-hour time limit would be sufficient for many diners, a three-hour limit would certainly suffice for most. This longer time limit would allow the city to enforce on-street time limits in those areas without incurring legitimate complaints from business owners about ticketing for expired meters. This would also increase parking revenues because on-street parking is not currently enforced during the evening when there are no major events, in part because the daytime time limits do not meet the legitimate needs of nighttime activity.

Long-Term:

- After installation of multi-space meters, the city should test variable time limits and rates in areas where longer stays are needed to provide convenient parking for restaurants and other businesses with evening trade. The rates for evening parking can also be reduced in the evening when demand is lower. This would make meter enforcement more acceptable while increasing space availability where it is needed. This may require a change in the city's parking ordinance.

Responsible: City of Atlanta

C-4: Explore On-Street Smart-Card and Validation Program. The key to an on-street validation program is the ability to overcome the fact that customers pay their parking at the time they park. Retailers or other businesses have no way to pay or reduce the parking fee because it has already been paid. Smart-Cards are issued with a pre-paid value encoded on the card. As it is used in a multi-meter (or standard electronic meter configured to accept Smart-Cards), the parking fee is deducted from the balance on the card. Multi-meters allow the user to indicate the amount of time to be charged. Standard in-place meters equipped to accept Smart-Cards reduce a specific amount each time the card is inserted up to the maximum time allowed at that meter.

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Implementation of a Smart-Card system would allow retailers to add value back to a customer's Smart-Card. Each participating business would have to purchase a coding device to add back value to a customer's card or an authorization system can be established to allow validations to be encoded at a central security/information desk in large buildings. Each encoding device is replenished via the Internet and payment of the replenishment amount can also be made over the Internet. The balance remaining in the device is reduced each time by the amount credited to a Smart-Card.

Long-Term:

- In conjunction with the installation of multi-space meters, the city should investigate implementation of a Smart-Card program that would allow Downtown retailers and other businesses to validate short-term on-street parking.

Responsible: City of Atlanta

C-5: Expandable Loading Zones. Metered spaces or unmetered on-street spaces along critical curb faces can be consolidated to create oversized loading zones, with no general parking allowed until after 9:30 A.M. each weekday. The expanded loading zones will facilitate the delivery process, allow more delivery vehicles to stay clear of travel lanes, and encourage early deliveries in order to take advantage of the time savings. This program would benefit from the installation of multi-meters because the multi-meters can be programmed to refuse payment until meter parking is allowed. The display can be programmed with a message, such as "Delivery Zone Only 5 A.M. – 9:30 A.M."

Short-Term

- To aid and encourage deliveries that do not impede a travel lane, conduct a test of the loading zone expansion program where a heavy concentration of retail or food and beverage establishments exists.

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Long-Term

- Based on pilot results, implement throughout Downtown.

Responsible: City of Atlanta

Goal D: Develop initiatives that support a public/private collaborative to promote parking availability, ease of use, common validation programs, high standards of facility safety, facility maintenance, and positive customer experiences.

D-1: Greater City Involvement in Providing Public Parking. The city should evaluate the benefits of an expanded municipal parking system as a strategic component of its economic development efforts. In doing so, the city should commit to basic financial principles designed to ensure that such an investment will provide assets that become, and remain, financially self-sufficient as quickly as possible.

The organization would be semi-autonomous, operating as a Parking Authority under Board supervision or as a functional extension of the Atlanta Development Authority. The Board should have a staggered appointment schedule for continuity. The primary function of the Authority would be to provide a mechanism, where needed, for consolidation of funding resources and coordination of the development of parking support in targeted development areas.

Parking facilities should be self-supporting, with the expectation that revenues from parking fees will be sufficient to cover debt service, operating costs, and maintenance reserves associated with any new parking structures within three years of opening, and that any initial shortfalls will be recouped within 10 years.

Decisions about the development of new parking facilities and their associated parking fees should be based on market conditions and market rates. Discounted parking to government employees is strongly discouraged unless that discount is fully offset by subsidy payments from



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the governmental agencies served. The length of any discount agreements should be limited to no more than two years to allow adjustment for changes in market rates.

In Tax Allocation Districts (TAD), parking facilities should be given high priority in obligations for distribution of incremental tax revenue increases associated with a new development.

The ability of a municipality with multiple parking facilities to implement system-wide innovations and service improvements can have a direct impact on municipal system customers and a "spill-over" effect to private facilities that must offer a comparable level of service in order to compete. The net effect of the municipality's larger presence in the market can be to elevate the overall level of service found within the competitive range of its facilities.

The introduction of improved technology and services by a municipal operation often establishes a proving ground for innovations that are later adopted by private parking facilities looking for ways to improve service to their tenants and customers. Private owners and operators sometimes hesitate to make an investment in new technology until the cost-benefit has been demonstrated. The municipal system, responding to the public's expectations, often leads the way, with privately owned facilities following that lead. The availability of a system of municipal parking facilities can also open the way for the application of advanced wayfinding systems, including ITS systems and supporting variable message signs.

The ability to develop parking capacity can be a useful tool as part of an overall economic development strategy. The ability to develop parking facilities gives the city, or the agency operating on its behalf, the ability to overcome obstacles to development that involve parking.

The Imagine Downtown vision plan and other planning documents reviewed as part of this effort are consistent in their emphasis on promoting mixed-use development in Downtown Atlanta. Mixed-use development is seen as a way to promote walkability, reduce vehicle trips and take full advantage of shared parking opportunities.

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In some cases mixed-use development may not come about as the result of a single large project (such as Atlantic Station) but may involve a combination of new construction and redevelopment of existing properties. That new construction may need to conform to the architectural flavor of the area and, as a result, provisions for on-site parking may be problematic. This is particularly true in the redevelopment of existing buildings when the new use generates more parking demand than the former use and the site will not accommodate the parking needed to make the project viable. The availability of strong transit support will be a mitigating factor, but the inability of multiple small-project developers to provide for their identified parking needs can be an obstacle to redevelopment activity.

The city can be an active part of the solution by developing a consolidated parking structure, sized appropriately for the specific location. The sizing would require consideration of:

- Available transit support
- Shared parking opportunities
- Captured market effects
- Live-work prospects within the development

By providing a parking structure to meet the consolidated needs of multiple small project components of a larger mixed-use area, the city can provide a parking solution that might not otherwise be available.

Short-Term:

- Central Atlanta Progress and the City of Atlanta should jointly examine the prospect of expanding the city's role in off-street parking or creating a semi-autonomous Parking Authority as a means to provide and direct parking support for Downtown Atlanta.
- If it is determined that the city should take on an expanded role in the form of a Parking Authority, management of on-street parking should be moved from the Department of Public Works to the new Authority. The existing staff should be retained under the new organization including the current Program Manager who,

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after only a short time in that position, has been instrumental in initiating significant program improvements.

Long-Term:

- If it is determined that an expanded role should be taken in the form of a Parking Authority, the following are the implementation steps that should be taken:
 - a. Draft Resolution creating the Parking Authority.
 - b. Draft of Parking Authority Management Agreement.
 - c. Review of resolution and agreement by Bond Council and City Attorney.
 - d. Develop preliminary organization structure and budget.
 - e. Provide public input opportunities based on Draft Resolution.
 - f. City Council refines and adopts Resolution creating the Authority.
 - g. Appoint Board members for Authority oversight.
 - h. Formalize internal Authority structure and positions.
 - i. Establish preliminary set of guiding principles defining the Authority's purpose and goals.
 - j. Submit Parking Authority Management Agreement for City Council approval.
 - k. Develop position description for Parking Authority Executive Director for approval by the Board and City Council.
 - l. Secure temporary (or permanent) office space.
 - m. Engage search firm for recruitment and hire Parking Authority Executive Director.
 - n. Hire Executive Director.
 - o. Refine staffing plan and develop formal budget for Board approval.
 - p. Hire key staff.
 - q. Develop operational plan and administrative/reporting processes.
 - r. Develop transition plan for transfer of on-street operations (if applicable).
 - s. Transition on-street operations to Authority (if applicable).
 - t. Develop strategic plan.
 - u. Develop financial plan.
 - v. Develop a community involvement strategy.

Responsible: City of Atlanta

D-2: Form Parking Technical Advisory Committee/Collaborative. The City of Atlanta, not as a governmental entity, but as a city, lacks a sustainable group of stakeholders and technical specialists to give ongoing attention to parking and transportation issues in the Downtown core. Parking and transportation are highly complex issues that are often attached to other complex issues related to economic health and development. They are not areas easily penetrated by "quick study" approaches.

Central Atlanta Progress should take advantage of the interest generated by this parking and transportation Action Plan to enlist the ongoing participation of the Action Plan Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) beyond the conclusion of the Plan's development.

Through the discussions and working sessions that have been part of the Plan's development, participants in the Technical Advisory Committee have gained a common understanding of some of the principles and dynamics of Downtown parking and transportation. That common framework of understanding forms an important basis for ongoing assessment of parking and transportation issues affecting Downtown Atlanta.

Immediate Ongoing:

- Form a permanent working committee of interested stakeholders and technical advisors to provide ongoing planning and guidance related to parking issues in the Downtown core. It is recommended that such a committee consist of a two-tiered membership on scheduled rotations of two and five years. Those invited and able to serve for five years would make up the core of the committee, supported by other members on the shorter two-year rotation. Terms within both tiers should alternate to provide continuity. Initial tasks should include decisions on how often the group meets, who facilitates the meetings, and the goals/mission of the group.
- The TAC would be authorized to create subcommittees as needed to address specific issues and initiatives. Those subcommittees would not be limited to members of the TAC, but could reach out to members of the community who may have particular expertise or interest in a specific issue. Although the envisioned TAC would not have

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decision-making authority, it is expected that the understanding and expertise developed by committee members through their ongoing participation would provide a recognized source of strategic and technical advice.

- Suggested Subcommittees include:
 - Parking Technology Subcommittee to review and promote the implementation of new parking technologies and standards for parking facilities
 - Marketing Subcommittee that begins activities by reviewing a standard and recognizable logo to identify participating public parking facilities that provide transient parking in the Downtown core and that meet the standards for membership. The logo can incorporate the international "P" symbol, but should be distinct to Downtown Atlanta.
 - Security Subcommittee to review the feasibility of a cooperative security program that focuses on parking facilities providing transient public parking.

Responsible: Central Atlanta Progress, Downtown TMA, TAC Members

D-3: Increase Parking Facility Security. Although Atlanta Police Department (APD) representatives have met with area parking operators in the past to address security issues, it would be productive for the Central Atlanta Progress/Downtown TMA parking administrator, acting with an independent perspective, to initiate and sustain dialogue that will lead to creative, concrete and practical solutions for some of the security concerns that were expressed during the course of this Action Plan. Both APD and parking operators exhibit a clear willingness to work toward solutions, but the process would benefit from leadership that has a community perspective and the ability to reach into the business community itself for needed support.

Short-Term:

- The parking administrator should act as liaison between parking operators and the Atlanta Police Department to research and implement ways to improve overall security

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at parking facilities in the Downtown area. This is considered a function of limited duration, aimed at encouraging new initiatives to address and solve known security problems.

Responsible: Central Atlanta Progress, Downtown TMA, Atlanta Police Department, Parking Collaborative Security Subcommittee

D-4: Promotion of Parking Technology. Enlist local parking operators in implementation of technology that would be mutually beneficial to operators, owners, customers, and Downtown Atlanta as a whole.

Short-Term:

- Engage public- and private-sector parking facility operators in the application of new parking technologies to improve the level of service, payment options, and security in Downtown parking facilities. Part of this effort would be to seek out technologies and equipment providers where interoperability between systems will provide opportunities for broad, cooperative parking programs such as Smart-Card applications.

Responsible: Central Atlanta Progress, Downtown TMA, Parking Collaborative Technology Subcommittee

Goal E: Promote parking accessibility to Downtown visitors and reduce site-specific congestion related to special event traffic.

E-1: Improve Special Events Communication. The Central Atlanta Progress website and e-mail updates would be extremely effective tools to disseminate information about when and where special events are occurring in Downtown Atlanta. Providing information ahead of time to Downtown travelers will assist in reducing the frustration surrounding event traffic congestion and higher parking pricing. Information on events can be coupled with providing information on travel alternatives, including travel routes and modes.

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Short-Term:

- Identify contacts at each special events venue and initiate quarterly meetings to update special events schedules and discuss anticipated effects on the parking and transportation system. Disseminate appropriate information on the Central Atlanta Progress website and via e-mail updates.

Long-Term:

- Work with event stakeholders to develop pre-event informational campaigns to inform special event travelers about traffic and parking conditions prior to special events. Work with the venues to identify the best methods to reach patrons prior to the event, such as through ticket sales, brochures, radio, etc.

Responsible: Central Atlanta Progress, Downtown TMA, Special Events Venues

E-2: Form Special Events Task Force. A task force that includes all special event stakeholders, including the local police, state police, event organizers (GWCC, Georgia Dome, etc.), city Department of Public Works, emergency services, GDOT, City Council, ARC, transit providers, media, etc. will further aid in planning of special events and the collection and dissemination of relevant information.

Short-Term:

- Building on the quarterly meetings initiated by Central Atlanta Progress and the Downtown TMA (strategy E-1), identify appropriate stakeholders for the Task Force.
- Determine if pre-event and post-event interagency/interjurisdictional meetings are held. Pre-event meetings would be used to prepare for the upcoming event. Post-event meetings would be used to address any problems that might have arisen so that they might be prevented at future events. Use information from these meetings to discuss larger event issues Downtown.

Long-Term:

- Develop a Downtown-wide venue management strategy, exploring alternative routes for event traffic, remote parking, overflow parking plans and other strategies comprehensively for the Downtown area.

Responsible: Central Atlanta Progress, Downtown TMA, Special Events Venues

E-3: Explore Improved Real Time Traffic Information for Special Events. Real time traffic information will aid travelers in making informed decisions about mode choices, route choices and time of day travel choices.

Short-Term:

- Ensure the city's Transportation Management Center is fully utilized for special events and that information on current traffic conditions is available for development of real time traffic tools.
- Implement real-time Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) messaging tools. Coordinated management and central control of a well-placed series of variable message signs (VMS) will allow arriving traffic to be directed along the route to their destinations, including primary parking facilities serving those destinations. During multiple events, this allows for more effective and timelier communication of conditions (including parking availability) and more effective control of traffic during both inbound and outbound cycles. It also has the benefit of directing arriving parkers near their intended destinations. The initial focus for such a system should be the concentration of tourist destinations around Centennial Olympic Park and the Georgia World Congress Center.

Long-Term:

- Coordinate with GDOT on integrating VMS on freeways and local feeder routes relating to major events Downtown. The changeable displays can inform about the event and roadway closures.
- Explore the possibility of a Highway Advisory Radio (HAR) system with GDOT. HAR uses a specific radio frequency to provide information to motorists by means of their in-vehicle radio system. This could be tied into all signage, static, variable, and event information.

Responsible: Central Atlanta Progress, Downtown TMA, GDOT, City of Atlanta, Special Events Task Force

E-4: Provide Special Event Discounts for Carpools and Early Arrivals. Economic incentives for alternative-mode use typically come in the form of free or discounted parking rates. Although most people who travel to special events carpool, it might be possible to set the bar very high, perhaps at four or more passengers per vehicle. This could be implemented only in the lots controlled by the event.

Long-Term:

- Work with venues to identify opportunities to charge lower rates for HOV or early arrivals.
- Disseminate information about the system to ticket holders.

Responsible: Downtown TMA

E-5: Residential Access Permits. Provide identification permits to Downtown residents that allow quick identification for authorized access to their neighborhoods when street controls are in effect for special events traffic management.

Short-Term:

- Explore option with Atlanta Police Department to determine the most effective method of identifying residents during special events.

Responsible: Downtown TMA, Atlanta Police Department.