

City of Whitefish, MT

Parking Management Plan

October 21, 2019

Prepared by DIXON Resources Unlimited

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1 Introduction

Dixon Resources Unlimited (DIXON) was contracted by the City of Whitefish (City) to review existing parking conditions, analyze previous reports, and create actionable parking management recommendations for the downtown area.

The following Parking Management Plan (Plan) is based on analysis and summary of past studies and outlines implementation recommendations that address concerns related to parking availability. Information has been gathered through on-site review, stakeholder engagement, and interviews with key City staff.

Areas of evaluation include:

- On-street and off-street parking availability
- Enforcement practices, staffing, and strategies
- Permit program and citation processing
- Municipal codes
- Event and seasonal considerations
- Current technologies
- Public transportation & alternative modes

These recommendations are intended to serve as the foundation for developing short, medium, and long-term implementation steps for establishing a sustainable parking program in the City of Whitefish. Many of the suggested recommendations will have an immediate impact and require ongoing assessment. Implementation will require staffing to support initiatives, procurement, and community engagement.

2 Executive Summary

Operational assessment, review of previous studies, and stakeholder feedback supported the development of this Parking Management Plan (Plan). The purpose of this Executive Summary section is to highlight the high-level key strategies proposed. Detailed information may be found in the body of the report, including a comprehensive Implementation Grid, which includes additional phased action items. Municipal code recommendations may be found in the Appendix.

Summary of Key Findings:

- **Past Reports & Studies** – Previous parking studies, as related to parking demand in downtown Whitefish, demonstrate a pointed interest in construction of garage facilities. While the foundation of past recommendations indicates potential need for additional parking supply, DIXON found that the root issues related to parking in downtown Whitefish are largely related to lack of parking management best practice. To build a garage without addressing parking management issues will potentially result in costly and underutilized parking assets.
 - Recommendation: Initiate the recommendations outlined in the Plan before moving toward construction of facilities.
 - Recommendation: Focus on parking management as opposed to adding parking space inventory.

- **Operational Performance** -- An assessment of compliance, enforcement practice, and staffing indicates opportunity to focus on management strategies and facilitate strong patterns of community outreach.
 - Recommendation: Budget for one additional seasonal Parking Enforcement Officer for the summer months. Assign a central point of contact for parking-related initiatives who may focus on parking strategy implementation and outreach. Without an emphasis on community engagement and an infusion of staff resources, other recommendations in this Plan will be ineffective.

- **Technology** – A review of parking technologies demonstrates a lack of appropriate parking tools, which contributes to an inefficient work environment.
 - Recommendation: Procure a parking-specific citation management software and parking enforcement vehicle to create efficiency and consistent compliance.

- **Alternative Modes** – Stakeholder feedback indicates strong interest in reducing single occupancy vehicle miles traveled. As the City continues to grow and experience seasonal congestion, there is opportunity to initiate micro-shuttles in conjunction with park and ride lots located outside of the core of downtown.

- Recommendation: Focus on developing a targeted peak summer shuttle service pilot to include enhanced service levels during specific event periods, such as the 4th of July, Farmer’s Markets and Huckleberry Days.
- **Permit Program** – There is demonstrated demand for increased “all-day” employee parking options. Due to the lack of defined long-term parking spaces, “all-day” parkers must repark and shuffle their vehicles among short time-limit restricted spaces. This adversely affects those seeking short time-limit spaces, such as the retail patron.
 - Recommendation: Develop an “all-day” parking permit with focus on downtown employee needs. Sign appropriate areas for long term parking and ensure that parking enforcement officers are prepared to support and enforce the permit. The proposed parking coordinator should work closely with stakeholders to guarantee that feedback informs the permit program. The launch of an “all day” parking permit will support process for future residential permit programs. Section 7.3.1 describes possible locations for “all-day” permit spaces.

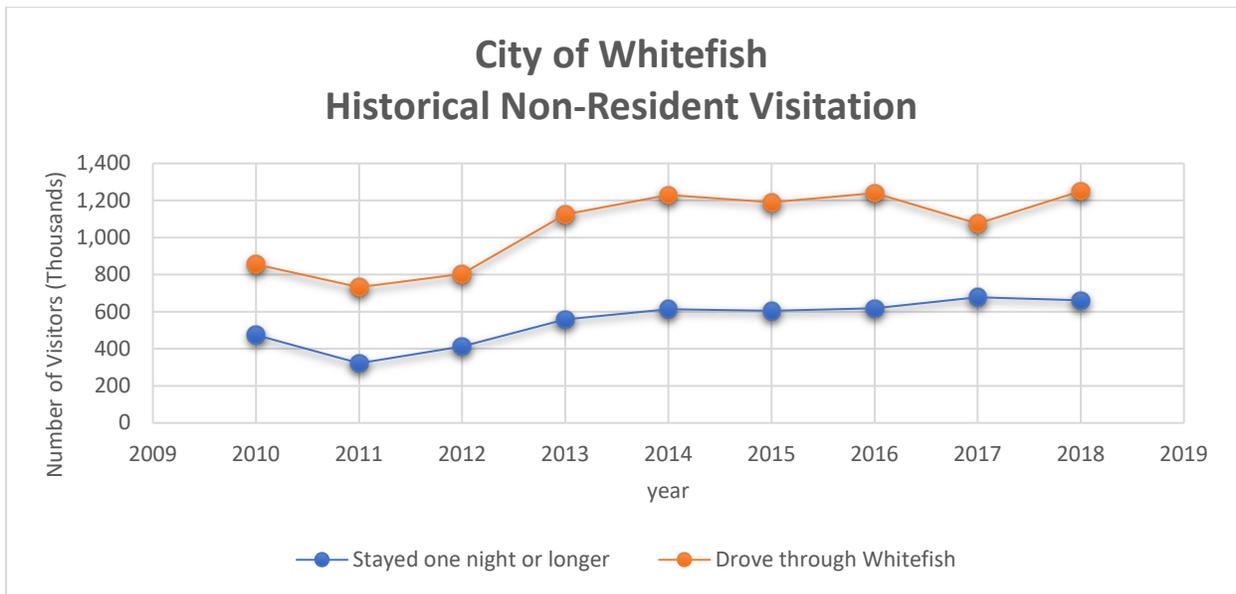
Figure 1. Key Strategies Planning

Key Strategies	2020				2021			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Budget for parking staff	■							
Procure a parking citation software tool	■■■■							
Provide a vehicle for parking staff	■■■■■							
Pilot a shuttle during summer and event periods		■■■						
Develop an "all-day" permit program			■■■■■■■■					

3 Background Studies

The City of Whitefish has a growing base of local year-round residents and a healthy increase in tourist visitation correlated to the proximate Glacier National Park, Whitefish Mountain Resort, Whitefish and Flathead Lakes. Since 2010, overnight transient visitation has increased by 39%, and the percentage of tourists driving through the City has increased by 46% (See Figure 2).¹

Figure 2. Non-Resident Visitation 2009-2018



While the total number of vehicles driving through the City may not directly correlate to parking demand, data also demonstrates that overnight visitation is increasing. City stakeholders complain that there is a lack of parking supply, especially in the peak of the summer season. In order to address growth and stakeholder concerns, the City of Whitefish has engaged in several studies to address parking demand in the downtown area. As visitation and vehicles increase, it will be important to prepare by addressing the variety of parking needs.

The following section summarizes each previous study and demonstrates analysis correlated to current conditions. DIXON does not intend to validate all information contained in previous studies. Instead, this summary will extrapolate past data and address how it relates to current operational recommendations contained in this Plan.

¹ Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR)

3.1 “Whitefish Downtown Business District Master Plan”

In 2006 the City adopted the “Whitefish Downtown Business District Master Plan” (Master Plan). This comprehensive document outlines existing conditions and recommendations related to transportation, land use, retail best practice, and parking. Traffic-related mitigations are presented, along with recommendations for pedestrian and bicycle friendly streets, a promenade, and trail connectivity. The Master Plan was updated in 2015 and minor revisions were accepted in 2018.

As related to parking in the core of the downtown business district, the Master Plan primarily focuses on ensuring that the retail area stays vital and competitive as a shopping destination, while accommodating parking demand as the community grows.

The 2006 Master Plan contains parking-specific suggestions which include prioritizing garage construction at 2nd Street and Spokane Avenue, along with a ground-floor retail component. Other site-specific parking is recommended at Central Avenue and 3rd Street and O’Shaughnessy off Depot Street. City Hall development is a high priority but does not include a parking component.

The 2015 updated Master Plan, revised in 2018, emphasizes the continuation of actionable projects designed to enhance the downtown for both visitors and locals. Parking recommendations are modified to include construction of the City Hall parking facility and continue to focus on construction of a garage at Spokane Avenue and 2nd Street.² Recommendations are separated into opportunities to be considered immediately (within 5 years) or “long term” (post 5-years). Garage construction is categorized as a “long term” recommendation, to be initiated within a 10-year timeframe, meaning before 2025. O’Shaughnessy parking is no longer a focus of the 2015/2018 updates. The corner of O’Brien Avenue and 2nd Street is revised from a previous public parking area to commercial, which reflects new development.

The 2015 & 2018 updates also focus on development of retail and parking at Central Avenue and 3rd Street. Strong recommendations include the initial step of purchasing land at 4th Street and Baker Avenue for initiation of a surface parking lot. This would be designed to replace surface parking at 3rd Street and Central Avenue, where the Master Plan suggests development of a retail anchor.

DIXON Assessment:

The Master Plan serves as foundation for ideals in the economic development of the downtown core and suggests a roadmap for immediate and long-term goals. As of 2019, the framework of possible parking development has changed and may be summarized by the following:

- The City Hall facility has been constructed to include a parking garage, which was not part of the 2006 Master Plan.

² Whitefish Downtown Business District Master Plan – Pages 17-18

- Land at 4th Street and Baker Avenue was originally recommended for City purchase. As of July of 2019, the parcel was purchased by a private party who has submitted a development proposal to City staff. The proposal contains commercial/retail on the ground floor and short-term rental/residential on upper floors. The block had been identified as a possible replacement surface parking lot, which would allow retail anchor development on the site of the existing surface lot at 3rd and Central Avenue.
- Suggested shared parking assets at Block 26 (Railway Street and Baker Avenue) and Block 37 (Luper and 1st Street) have not been initiated, as they are dependent upon larger redevelopment plans.
- The opportunity for construction of a parking garage at 2nd Street and Spokane Avenue remains attractive to stakeholders. Additionally, the site has high groundwater and unstable soils, which may significantly increase construction costs.

While the 2006 Master Plan recommended construction of a parking facility, immediate parking demand was satisfied by the construction of the City Hall facility. By 2015, updated Master Plan suggestions no longer prioritize immediate construction of garage assets and instead recommend development of the garage at 2nd Street and Spokane Avenue before 2025, in order to prepare for pending growth and demand. DIXON supports the ideas of the updated Master Plan but further suggests that the City strongly consider implementation of a robust parking management plan, as outlined in this report, prior to consideration of future construction of garages. By delaying garage construction, the City may pursue a cost-conscious approach that ensures efficient management of existing parking supply and balanced utilization of all parking assets.

The Master Plan points out that retail shoppers require easy parking options in close proximity to their destinations. This sentiment is consistent with parking industry best practice and supported by the findings in this Parking Management Plan. Parking availability must be maintained near store-front areas to ensure business success.

It is recommended that the City embrace the ideas of retail parking needs and also consider that the determination of effective parking supply should be assessed with current data in conjunction with a parking supply management plan that is rooted in best practice strategies.

3.2 2008 “Parking Demand and Preliminary Financial Analysis”

The 2008 study called “Parking Demand & Preliminary Financial Analysis,” herein referred to as “2008 Study,” identifies two primary goals:

1. To understand the current and projected parking demand, specifically in relation to master plan recommendations for the downtown core; and,
2. To analyze the financial impact of a proposed garage at 2nd Street & Spokane Avenue.

Data for the report was collected in June of 2007 and included on-site car counting five times per day (10am, 1pm, 4pm, 7pm, 10pm). The study states, “At the peak hour, roughly 1,042 of the 1,945 total parking spaces were occupied. Private off-street lots were roughly 54% occupied, while public lots were roughly 56% occupied. On-street spaces were roughly 52% occupied at the peak hour.”³ Since June is not considered the peak of the parking season, occupancy data was multiplied by 37% to account for potential parking demand in the height of summer. Additionally, occupancy data for on-street, public off-street, and private off-street spaces were increased for a second time to accommodate target utilization rates that promote reduced congestion. The 2008 Study used a target occupancy rate of 80% for on-street locations, and 85% for off-street locations.⁴

To summarize, the 2008 Study states that “the downtown study area as a whole likely operates at a surplus of several hundred spaces at the peak hour.” It also states that there are “localized shortages” on certain blocks that “...can often lead to an increased perception that there is a parking problem.”⁵

The report outlines a potential use case for new construction of a 218-stall garage at the corner of Spokane Avenue and 2nd Street, which was identified as the most desired location based on stakeholder exercises. The 218 stalls are allocated to the following needs:⁶

1. 80 spaces – to accommodate the lost surface lot spaces used for the garage footprint.
2. 50 spaces – for employees of the neighboring school.
3. 65 spaces – for growth in retail, including 17,040 square feet of anticipated new business near the garage footprint.
4. 23 spaces – for additional 3-hour or 4-hour time limit use.

The report does not assign value to construction of garage assets, and it is assumed that funding for the construction of a potential garage would be provided through the City’s General Fund or other sources. The report does, however, outline a cost model for ongoing garage maintenance and staffing. Estimates for the proposed 218 stall garage would carry an annual cost of \$322 per space, or \$70,270 total per year.⁷ Assumptions include two part-time staff to perform parking management duties and maintenance. The report suggests parking permit sales at a fee of \$50 per month per permit, which would generate revenues of \$33,000 annually.⁸ The estimated permit sales could offset ongoing maintenance cost, meaning that the proposed garage would operate at an annual “deficit of roughly \$40,000 to \$45,000....”⁷

³ Parking Demand and Preliminary Financial Analysis – Page 5

⁴ Parking Demand and Preliminary Financial Analysis – Page 11

⁵ Parking Demand and Preliminary Financial Analysis – Executive Summary, Page ii

⁶ Parking Demand and Preliminary Financial Analysis – Page 20

⁷ Parking Demand and Preliminary Financial Analysis – Page 27

⁸ Parking Demand and Preliminary Financial Analysis – Page 25

DIXON Assessment:

The occupancy data for the 2008 Study was collected in June of 2007, on the periphery of the summer peak season. To estimate the potential increase in demand during the summer, the data was then multiplied substantially. Because this data is now twelve years old and was modified to project factors such as tourist season and target occupancy, it's recommended that the City consider conducting a revised occupancy collection after implementing the initial parking management recommendations contained in this Parking Management Plan. Future data collection should mirror the City's parking occupancy study completed in August of 2018.

The report focuses on "localized shortages" during peak hours⁹ and does not address the neighboring blocks that, in some cases, have low to medium occupancy. Future occupancy assessments should be completed during the peak season and should include data and analysis for the comprehensive downtown area. The report shows occupancy data for the 26-blocks of downtown Whitefish but focuses assessment on a defined 10-block sub-area near Central Avenue. By showing isolated shortages in the 10-block sub-area, the report mutes the idea that there is abundant supply when the entire study area is included. High occupancy streets should be studied with consideration of other neighboring existing supply.

The report adjusts data to consider that the ideal parking occupancy should be 80%-85%. This target occupancy is well supported in the parking industry, as it is demonstrated to maintain localized availability and reduce congestion associated with drivers seeking a parking space. The way in which the target occupancy is factored into the equation for supply makes it appear as if the City operates at a parking shortage, which is not the case. The report clearly states that occupancy, even at the peak hour hovers just above 50%, which does not indicate a parking shortage.

The report does not specifically focus on parking management strategies and instead recommends building parking lots and garages. It does, however, include mention of "increasing parking enforcement efforts" as well as a recommendation to pursue potential "public-private agreements," both of which are also recommendations included in this Parking Management Plan.¹⁰

Importantly, the report shows the estimated staffing and maintenance cost for a new garage. While the cost estimates would need to be adjusted for inflation since 2008, the cost assessment is still very relevant and important for the City to consider. The City Hall garage cost \$38,000 per parking space, which does not account for the ongoing staffing, maintenance, technology and operational impact. As the City assesses potential funding options for new infrastructure, operational funds should be allocated to address staffing. Capital funds should be set aside to account for technology, cleaning, maintenance and sustainment of the garage asset(s).

⁹ Parking Demand and Preliminary Financial Analysis – Pages 5, 7-9

¹⁰ Parking Demand and Preliminary Financial Analysis – Page 22

3.3 2012 “Parking Structure Feasibility and Concept Design Study”

In 2012, the City contracted an assessment called “Parking Structure Feasibility and Concept Design Study” (2012 Study). Site-specific garage recommendations were presented, with a focus on the City Hall garage, which has now been constructed.

The report identifies stakeholder engagement, financial estimates, geotechnical considerations, and disabled parking stall requirements. An exercise of traffic analysis at key intersections supports the idea that neighboring streets have projected capacity for new garages. The traffic assessment area includes 1st Street, 2nd Street, Baker Avenue, and Central Avenue. There is a clear statement that the westbound approach to Baker on 1st Street is subject to potential traffic delays based on development of garage structures. There is, however, no recommendation for immediate mitigation of delays, as the report estimates that impacts might be overstated.

The report emphasizes that surface lots are less ideal than garage structures and reaffirms the suggestion for construction of bookend garages at both 2nd Street and Baker Avenue and 2nd Street and Spokane Avenue, in order to support future growth in the retail core. Tax Increment Financing is encouraged as a viable way to fund the recommended two garages.

Recommendations for immediate garage construction at 2nd and Baker Avenue include two primary layouts, a one-story option and a two-story option, both with accommodation for the adjacent City Hall facility.

The report estimates downtown parking utilization ranging from 70% to 94%.¹¹ Actual occupancy counts were taken from the retail core sub-area, which is the two-block range centering on Central Avenue from 4th Street to Depot Street during a single day in August of 2012. This data was then compared to parking occupancy counts from the 2008 Study and shows a very slight increase in occupancy, from 62% to 65%. The report states, “the general demand conditions have not changed significantly...”¹²

The 2008 Study uses traffic counts to arrive at an adjustment factor, which is intended to account for the difference in season from when the parking occupancy was collected (June), versus the projected parking occupancy during the peak season (July). 37% was identified as a viable adjustment factor by comparing traffic counts from June to July. Traffic count data was collected near Columbia Falls, Montana, approximately ten miles away from downtown Whitefish. Due to questions of the validity of using traffic counts outside of downtown Whitefish, the 2012 Study accounts for an adjustment factor based on resort tax trends, instead of traffic. Resort tax comparisons from June 2011 to July 2011, show a demonstrated 32% increase, which becomes the adjustment factor for parking occupancy. This means that the actual parking counts, resulting in occupancy of

¹¹ Parking Structure Feasibility and Concept Design Study – Page 2

¹² Parking Structure Feasibility and Concept Design Study – Page 3

65%, were then multiplied by 32%. The report summary confirms that occupancy trends from the 2008 Study are consistent with the findings of the 2012 exercise.

DIXON Assessment:

Much of the 2012 Study relates to the recommended garage at 2nd Street and Baker Avenue. The proposed garage layouts, space requirements, and engineering factors related to the garage recommendation are no longer applicable, as the suggested garage has been constructed on the City Hall site.

In projecting the parking occupancy trends, the 2012 Study collects on-site utilization for the core retail sub-area, arguably the most dynamic retail area of the downtown. This footprint of data is then compared to the 2008 Study and is found to be similar at 65% occupied. To mirror the 2008 Study, the data is further adjusted by a metric of 32% to account for the projected increase in parking demand for the peak of summer. In this case, both the 2008 Study and the 2012 Study use similar tactics and arrive at similar conclusions, stating demand for garage(s).

It should be noted that there is negligible growth in the occupancy counts between the 5-year period. This may be attributed to the data collection dates selected. During both study periods, data was collected during the off-peak season, and then projected by an adjustment factor. The actual data collected doesn't show a demand that dictates need for a garage. It's the projection equation that results in an occupancy number demonstrating demand. At the time of this report, no true occupancy counts had been taken in July to confirm the actual growth or demand during the busiest time of year.

It's also important to consider that the 2012 Study focuses on the busiest block range, not the comprehensive downtown area. For future occupancy studies, the City should ensure that projection exercises consider a wider impact area. If possible, true parking space occupancy should be monitored and/or counted regularly in order to understand opportunities to better manage parking supply. Ongoing data collection can support data-driven decisions related to future facility and staffing needs.

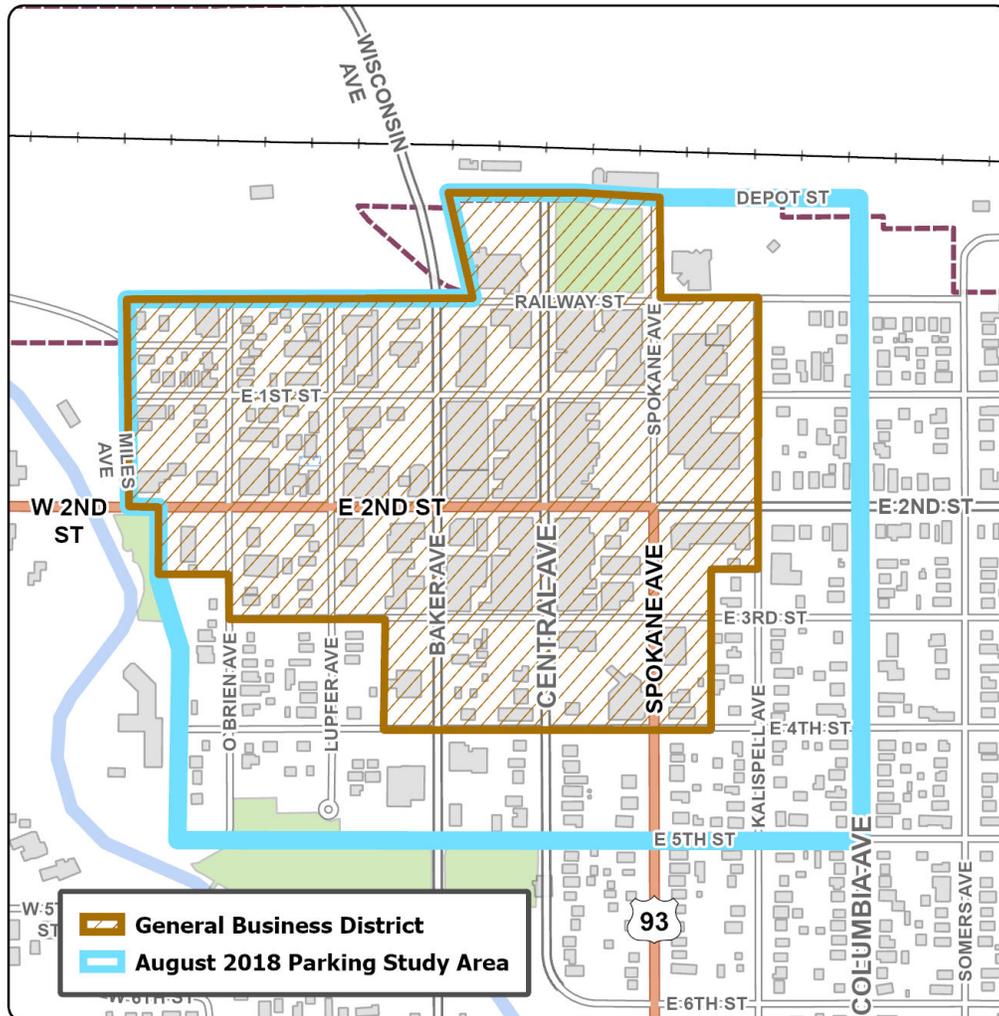
3.4 “Whitefish Downtown Parking Study - Summer 2018”

In August of 2018 the City collected occupancy data for the downtown area. Data was collected four times per day (10am, 1pm, 4pm, 7pm) on both a weekday and a weekend day to mirror collection methods from the 2008 Study, “Parking Demand & Preliminary Financial Analysis.” The 2008 Study data collection was performed in June of 2007, on the periphery of the summer season, in comparison to the 2018 data collection, which was performed in the peak of summer - August 16th and August 18th. 2008 Study data included an additional occupancy count per each day at 10pm.

The on-street footprint for data collection included the 105 block faces that were studied in the 2008 Study, and an expanded new area to include 25 more block faces on the southern side of 4th Street and the eastern side of Kalispell Avenue. For off-street parking

areas, data collection also mirrored the 2008 Study footprint and added a new area to include the Post Office, Pure West, Living Word Church and Interstate Bank surface lots.

Figure 3. August 2018 Parking Study Area



DIXON Assessment:

The 2018 occupancy data was collected and reviewed to identify times and areas where occupancy increased above the 85% target. Overall, occupancy percentages demonstrate a wide range of uses per each street and time of day. Approximately 12% of the surveyed data points are above the 85% target and the average occupancy per each time of day ranges from 37% to 63%. This means that there are streets often reaching occupancy during select times and there are streets that show a routinely low level of utilization, meaning below 40%.

Data from June of 2007 and data from August of 2018 show a few similar patterns. For example, high demand areas (such as Central Avenue and 2nd Street), at 1pm on weekdays in 2007 largely mirror high demand areas at 1pm on weekdays in 2018. But on

many streets, there are not consistent utilization patterns between the two studies. This may be attributed to many potential factors such as data collection methods, time of year, the new City Hall garage, or other changes in inventory. It might simply be that use patterns have changed over the last twelve years.

Interestingly, the 2008 Study identified 1pm to be the peak of on-street occupancy at an average of 52%¹³. Data from 2018 shows that on-street average occupancy at 1pm was 55% with the added footprint of 4th Street and Kalispell Avenue.

The “Whitefish Downtown Parking Study - Summer 2018” contains valuable data that indicates need for a dynamic strategy that can dissipate parking demand on select streets and increase demand on other streets that are currently underutilized. While there may not be an easy correlation between data from 2007 and data from 2018, we see that the 2008 Study’s assessment of “localized shortages” (Walker Executive Summary) continues to be the trend and most relevant factor.

3.5 Assessing Parking Supply

Assessment of parking supply is one important element in parking and traffic planning. But it is important to consider that changes in supply will not always impact driver behavior unless other factors and strategies are considered as well. The question becomes, “if I build parking, will it solve the root issue?” The City currently has a supply of spaces that are not chosen by routine parkers because of their locations, lack of associated wayfinding, or regulations that do not enable balanced utilization of parking assets. Building more parking before addressing the existing conditions may result in creation of expensive and underutilized assets. The following Parking Management Plan will outline recommended steps for managing and optimizing existing supply. As with any implementation plan, it’s important to think about a phased approach that initiates balance and relies on data for the support and evolution of the parking operation and program.

The management techniques recommended in this Plan are designed to improve the parking experience and create operational infrastructure that will enable data-driven decisions. To support a sustainable downtown core, a pro-active approach is recommended for management of valuable parking and street assets.

¹³ Parking Demand and Preliminary Financial Analysis – Page 5

4 Stakeholder Engagement

On-site interviews were conducted on May 13-14, 2019, and July 15-16, 2019. City staff, key stakeholders, and residents participated in meetings and a total of four public forums. Table 1 summarizes key ideas and suggestions captured during the interview period.

Feedback among stakeholders demonstrates consistent themes related to congestion and parking availability, employee parking options, local access, and transit enhancements.

Table 1. Summary of Stakeholder Meeting Feedback

Stakeholder Meeting	Stakeholder Ideas and Suggestions
Heart of Whitefish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build the proposed 2nd Street parking garage • Embrace Downtown Master Plan recommendations • Increase wayfinding • Refresh permit program for garage • Encourage an employee parking plan with education and outreach components • Focus on “carrot and stick” to encourage behavior
Public Forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build more parking • Increase transit • Create employee parking options • Manage existing parking • Improve wayfinding • Launch paid parking • Seek shared parking agreements • Address Residential permits and enforcement • Consider increased parking minimums for short-term rental units built • Time restrict on-street parking in Railway District
Chamber & Visitors Bureau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate employees on where best to park • Target the summer peak for traffic and parking • Build more parking • Find balance between additional parking supply and transit; consider new loops to connect attractions • Determine if Two-hour parking is long enough • Focus on local outreach; tourists are not bothered by the parking
Public Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration for employee parking • Improve curb paint & stripe parallel stalls • Add citation support for plows

Stakeholder Meeting	Stakeholder Ideas and Suggestions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve process for construction parking permits • Additional loading zone locations and regulations • Consider assessing the \$25 trailer fee • Embrace bike share • Create rideshare queuing and loading zones • Assess public transportation connections and park and ride locations
<p>Police Department, Parking Enforcement, Finance, Legal Services, City Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procure citation management software that is optimized for parking • Hire additional staff for enforcement • Add a shuttle to downtown during special events • Create parking for employees • Create a better parking experience through education • Adjust hours of enforcement operation to start and end later • Address double parking during commercial loading • Add an enforcement vehicle • Improve signage and curb painting • Create a pay to park system that offers the first two hours free
<p>Transportation, Rideshare & Shuttle Groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a drop-off location for shuttles and rideshare • Make transit a high priority • Improve collaboration and education for the region “How to Get Around” • Address congestion near schools • Review ADA access and parking stalls
<p>City Planning, Parks & Rec</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize customer parking in front of businesses • Create full day parking for employees • Improve wayfinding • Find and promote park and ride locations for peak • Use consistent signage and signage language • Manage construction vehicle parking • Increase secure bike parking • Support pedestrian crossing during events • Create and enforce oversized vehicle parking policy

5 The Parking Perception

In conjunction with stakeholder engagement, the on-site assessment indicates opportunities for short, medium, and long-term action items that will improve the parking experience and prepare the City for future growth.

Overwhelming stakeholder feedback targets concern over lack of parking availability and congestion. While this was a commonly discussed issue among locals, businesses, employees, and City staff, all groups also indicated that event periods and the peak of summer were the target of concern. During the popular 6-8 weeks of summer, general ability to find a parking space in the core of downtown diminishes, and that creates a poor customer experience. Parking is often the first and last experience that a visitor has in a downtown area.

Businesses expressed concern that patrons will be unable to park and shop and that parking availability will affect recruitment efforts for employees. Employees expressed concerns that they must move their cars several times per day to avoid parking citations. Others are concerned that congestion may diminish the vitality of the City as a destination. Interviewee comments reflected strong interest in walking no more than one to two blocks from parking space to final destination.

Feedback clearly identifies the importance of considering the parking needs of multiple types of users such as business owners, employees, visitors, and drivers who unload cargo or passengers.

6 Enforcement

6.1 Current Staffing and Enforcement Operation

The City shows commitment to enforcement by employing one full-time Parking Enforcement Officer (PEO) who works Monday through Friday, 8-hour shifts, usually between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. The PEO does not work on weekends, evenings, or holidays, and the Police provide minimal parking enforcement during these times. This single PEO reports to the Police Department and chooses which hours to work, creating inconsistent patterns of enforcement. The position works independently and has access to Police Department on-call radio, if additional support is required.

The City maintains free on-street and off-street surface lot parking, with time restrictions on core downtown streets. The PEO monitors time restricted area by walking the downtown core. Due to the substantial area to cover, certain sections of the City will receive enforcement coverage one time per day or not at all.

Vehicles with multiple citations that are left overnight may receive a 24-hour notice and the Police may be called to support abandoned vehicles.

While the PEO does not wear a standard uniform or safety vest, the position is well known by locals. Interviews with employees of the downtown indicate that many people park illegally when they know that the PEO is not in their neighborhood.

Enforcement practices related to the following areas are currently unclear to the PEO:

- Alley use for parking or loading
- Library parking lot and signage
- Spaces that are signed by business owners for private use
- Booting, towing and immobilizing vehicles
- Vehicles with multiple citations
- Oversized vehicle parking regulations
- ADA duration of stay
- Delivery drivers parking in ADA stalls

The PEO uses a Motorola handheld device with a Zebra mc67 printer. The software allows one photo to be taken and attached to each citation. Typically, the PEO takes a picture of the tire with the chalk mark. Citations, routes enforced, and other incidents are manually tracked and written in the PEO's paper notebook, which is carried during enforcement hours. This practice is inefficient and does not support the tracking and reporting necessary to facilitate a consistent appeals process. The handheld device does not allow the PEO to verify whether a parker has had a citation in the past. The PEO must call the court or sift through several past notebooks to see if there is a pattern of infractions.

Neighboring agencies use citation management software and tools to ensure adequate information can be shared during the appeals process. For example, the City of Kalispell uses a software/hardware system called Aims, which allows tracking, reporting, and the facilitation of warning-based management.

During the calendar year of 2018, the City issued 1,956 total citations, with approximately 15-25 citations given per day in the peak of summer. During the remainder of the year, excluding summer months, an approximate four citations were issued per day.

Citations may be contested in court. In 2018, 70 citations were overturned during the appeal process. Stakeholder feedback indicates that it is easy to avoid a parking citation, and that it is also easy to overturn a ticket.

6.2 Compliance & Management

Compliance means that parkers are generally following or attempting to follow the rules outlined. Consistent coverage of enforcement hours, in conjunction with other system-wide best practices will help create a culture of parking compliance. Currently, there is substantial opportunity to increase enforcement scheduling in order to cover gaps in the operational routine. Basic coverage of this task will encourage all parkers to adhere to posted time limits and regulations.

By adding a second PEO during the busy summer season and creating Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for parking enforcement, the City may create the compliance necessary to understand the utilization patterns, especially as related to perceived shortages in time limit restricted spaces. Without emphasis on increased compliance, the recommendations in this Plan will not be attainable. Successful parking management depends on a foundation of compliance. To facilitate clean communication and expectations for PEO staff, the City should consider assigning all parking-related strategy and staffing to one accountable City staff member.

The PEO currently reports to the Police Department. Since the Police Department is, and should be focused on health and safety, the City could consider moving parking enforcement and the overall ownership of parking management under an alternate department. Police must give appropriate attention to emergencies and the safety of the community, and therefore may not have ability to consistently assess parking utilization and create longer-term parking management strategies. Currently, parking-related tasks are performed by many City departments and there is not a single contact who understands how each task may impact the overall parking system. For example, Public Works intersects with current parking operations by addressing select customer complaints, painting curbs and stalls, and installing signage. Finance sells permits and manages garage technology. Appeals and other complaints are funneled to several potential City contacts. It's important that a single point of contact influence improved communication and ultimately understand how to accommodate growth in parking

demand. Trends will not be easily determined without a central point of contact, to be referred to in this report as “parking coordinator.”

Consolidating accountability to one contact will also allow ongoing support and attention to staffing needs, assessment of data, and trends in complaints, which is crucial for decision-making processes. Regardless of where PEO(s) are organized, it’s important that PEOs should be covering enforcement areas consistently and that a defined parking coordinator assess productivity and the resulting increase in compliance. As enforcement effectiveness improves, the number of citations may initially increase. Once the community learns that a parking citation is probable, parkers will be more likely to follow posted regulations and the overall number of citations is expected to decrease.

The assigned parking coordinator should use a process called gap management to ensure that officers are using time efficiently. Gap management involves assessment of notices (citations and warnings) and field coverage to understand officer performance and how variations in notices affect compliance. It’s important to note that it is not a recommendation to write more citations or penalize parkers in any way. In reality, if consistent enforcement is applied, the number of citations being issued will decrease over time as the compliance rate increases. Parking management should focus on creating a customer-centric environment where parkers receive friendly education and warnings, where applicable.

6.3 Citation Management

Parking citations are currently written through the Police Department’s software system, digiTICKET by Saltus Technologies. Citations connect to Tyler Technologies New World software, then transfer to FullCourt, which is a software designed to support court cases and incidents. While this software system has been optimized for Police Department use, it is not specifically designed for parking citation management which presents some inefficiencies.

With the current citation hardware, a PEO can write a citation without any ability to understand the details that are important for management of a parking system. Citations are written and processed without a corresponding database to show scofflaw or routine violators. Instead, the PEO documents enforcement areas and license plates of violators by writing them in a small notebook. Past violations or enforcement routes are researched by flipping through notes from one or two old notebooks. This results in inconsistencies related to enforcement practice and coverage of enforcement area, especially as related to 2-hour versus 3-hour time-restricted areas. Ultimately, many streets are not receiving a consistent pattern of enforcement, nor are tickets consistently issued to repeat offenders.

Standard software used for parking citation management can track vehicle plate, location and number of infractions per person or license plate, which provides context and ability to address patterns of violations. The City is currently unable to perform these basic

functions related to enforcement best practice. Additionally, the basic function of the existing software is unreliable. A vehicle with multiple infractions should be given the chance to change behavior. If that's unsuccessful, vehicles that routinely do not comply, should be immobilized. In standard parking citation management software, there are opportunities to review reports and data related to timing of notices, routing infractions, and specific streets or areas where a modification of rules might be relevant.

Importantly, some parking citation management software systems allow PEOs to issue and track warning notices using handheld devices. This is an important feature because it facilitates an Ambassador approach and customer-friendly enforcement. Many communities offer warning notices for first infractions, which create opportunities to educate about parking regulations.

The City should consider procurement of a citation management software and handheld devices designed for writing parking citations and warnings. There are many low-cost options that can track vehicles and provide reporting for understanding compliance and gap management. Parking industry citation devices allow the PEO to take multiple photos of the violation, track the vehicle and the exact location of the infraction. Software may also offer a customer portal, allowing violators easy access to pay and appeal citations online. An updated citation management software could connect to the existing FullCourt software; it may not require integration with the existing Tyler Technologies system, unless specified by City staff.

Handheld devices also often allow communication features such as phone calls and texting. These features support a process of communication and ensure ability for communication during emergencies or safety-related incidents.

Current enforcement practice involves physical chalking of tires to monitor time limits. Citation management software and handheld technologies often offer digital chalking features that allow officers to record the valve stem location with a date and time stamp. This is a relatively manual process and in the longer term should be supplemented with a more efficient mobile license plate recognition program (Section 7.2).

In the longer term and as needs increase, the City should consider adding an automated parking permit management software as well. A permit management solution would allow integration, tracking, reporting and real-time validation of permits.

By utilizing tools that enable best practice, the City will take a powerful initial step toward managing existing parking supply and gathering data associated with parking demand. Consistent enforcement in conjunction with review of data, will provide a platform for understanding where valuable parking assets are well-utilized or poorly utilized, average duration of stay, and rate of compliance.

6.3.1 Citation Fees

The most common citation issued is for Overtime Parking, which results in a \$20 fee. In 2007 the Overtime Parking citation increased from a fee of \$5, which should positively support the compliance initiative. As enforcement practice becomes more consistent and patterns emerge, the City should assess citation fees, to make sure that the fees continue to support goals. Fees should remain high enough to encourage compliance so that parkers do not choose a citation over parking improperly in a restricted area.

Upon implementation of citation management software, the City will have better ability to create and enforce a citation fee structure that involves escalation of fees for those with multiple infractions. A common escalation fee structure might involve a \$20 fee for first and second infractions. Should an individual receive a third infraction, the fees may increase substantially to \$40. This simple measure helps to prevent routine abuse.

Table 2. Infraction Fees

Infraction	Fee
Street for Storage	85.00
Parking Wrong Side of Street	50.00
No Parking - City Beach	100.00
Overtime Parking	20.00
Handicap Parking	100.00
Nuisance Parking	75.00
No Parking Zone - Downtown	50.00

6.4 Ambassador Approach

Enforcement personnel have opportunities to create a customer-focused approach. PEOs working in the field may write citations and strive for compliance in parking, while also performing as advocates for the community. It is recommended that SOPs and training for staff include measures for providing a balanced and friendly approach to work in the field. Many communities label parking positions as “Ambassadors,” as this name indicates a commitment to providing service and education with less focus on the punitive nature of citations.

Ambassadors can be a positive presence in the community, offering smiles and answering visitor questions. While monitoring parking, there’s often opportunity to educate on where best to park and how to access different areas of downtown. Ambassadors may be empowered to use their



Image 1. Parking Ambassador Example - Flagstaff, AZ

time to ensure that parkers understand the regulations and have extra opportunity to choose to follow posted restrictions. This is especially effective in communities with higher levels of tourism, like Whitefish. Under an Ambassador model, it's common to promote warnings for first time infractions. The recommended parking citation management software makes it possible to catalog and review the number of infractions per vehicle and enables a warning-based approach. In order to further promote a warning-based approach, it's recommended that the City allow payment of a first-time citation to be applied toward the purchase of a permit. This model offers additional good will and educational opportunity for those who work in the downtown core.

Some communities offer additional "Ambassador" measures to create positive compliance. For example, in some cities, infractions may be overturned when the violator takes an educational quiz that highlights why parking restrictions support a healthy retail district. In the City of Las Vegas, tickets may be "paid" and resolved by donating school supplies or holiday toy drives for those in need. This may be unorthodox, but it manifests as a positive community-driven initiative.

Enforcement - Implementation Guide
Near-Term Steps
A. Budget for seasonal staff to support parking initiatives.
B. Adopt a parking Ambassador model and require safety vests and uniforms for all Ambassadors who work in proximity to traffic.
C. Create SOPs for Ambassadors and staff who perform parking-related tasks. Update training to include an Ambassador approach, ensuring customer service guidelines and expectations. Procedures should include parameters for first time warnings and education.
D. Assign a parking coordinator to be responsible for parking goals, Ambassador training, and ongoing assessment of parking demand and programs.
E. Procure parking citation management software and handheld devices to support basic enforcement best practice. Integrate citation management software with FullCourt and ParkMobile (existing permit software system).
Mid-Term Steps:
F. Increase Ambassador staffing hours to cover the full area of downtown during daytime, early evening hours (8am-8pm) and weekends during summer and peak event periods.
Long-Term Steps:
G. Continue to monitor data and staffing levels to ensure compliance in parking.
H. Communicate with parking stakeholders, staff, and community about trends in the revised compliance model.
I. Consider organizing a defined parking department.

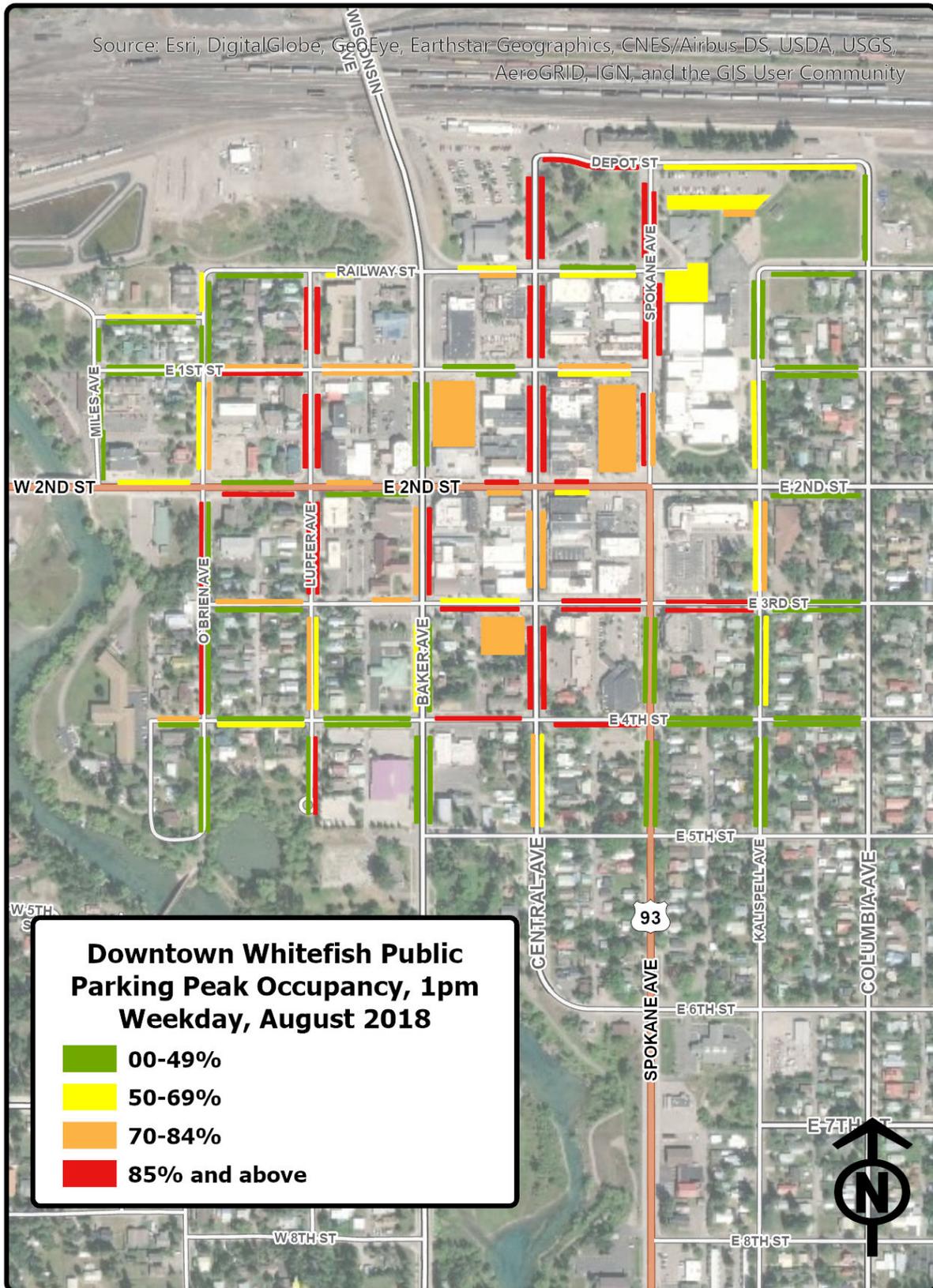
7 Parking Demand Management

Parking Demand Management is a broad term used to describe management methods that support a healthy parking environment, ensure parking availability, reduce single occupancy trips, and promote alternative and sustainable modes of transportation such as transit, biking, walking and carpooling. The parking industry embraces a wide range of best practice in Parking Demand Management to comprehensively and effectively manage parking demand and availability. Research and best practice indicate that the standard target occupancy for any given block range should be 85%. As an example, this equates to pursuing a target of approximately 1-2 open parking spaces per block face at any given time. At this rate of occupancy, there are enough vacant spaces to maximize use of parking assets, minimize congestion from drivers searching for spaces, and reduce oversupply of spaces. Oversupply of parking means that there are more spaces than required, which is an inefficient and costly use of valuable space and land.

While 85% is a very specific target number used for creating processes related to managing a parking system, in real life scenarios, a well-managed parking system will see some fluctuation in patterns of use. Therefore, it may be more useful to target an occupancy range such as 65%-85%. Striving for occupancy target and/or range may involve consideration of seasonal, hourly, or event-related swings in demand. In the case of the City, events and summer season justify that a tiered and responsive parking management plan addresses increased demand for select periods. Meeting occupancy targets will involve a range of strategies, some of which will shift during seasonal change.

Additional strategies for managing parking demand include use of time limits, paid parking, and permit areas. When used in conjunction with compliance-based enforcement, these strategies will improve availability and remove frustration from the parking experience. For the City of Whitefish, strong parking demand funnels toward Spokane Avenue, Central Avenue, and the blocks in between 1st and 4th Streets. Because patrons of local business will seek to park in the core of downtown, the City should consider strategies to distribute the parking demand for better optimization of all parking assets. Interviews indicate that there is a common perception that there isn't anywhere to park; however, there is often availability on peripheral streets and surface lots. Ample wayfinding is also key in ensuring that parkers find available areas (Section 6.2).

Figure 4. August 2018 Parking Study Area – Peak Occupancy, 1pm Weekday



7.1 Time Limits & Signage

Downtown time limit regulations are posted in City-owned surface lots, in the City garage, and on select streets. The standard on-street time limit is 2-hours and the standard off-street time limit is 3-hours. There is also a small pool of 30-minute and ADA spaces. The assignment of these time limits is designed to promote a turnover of vehicles, where stalls become available frequently, which increases opportunity for short term parkers. Short term parking is especially important for patrons of businesses in the downtown core.

Using time limits to support a parking management program is a trusted industry best practice when used and enforced appropriately. The City has opportunity to create compliance in time restricted areas, which will support the intention behind the time limit regulations. Without consistent enforcement, the time limit rules are ineffective as a management tool. As discussed in Sections 5.2 and 5.3, it is recommended that the City increase enforcement staffing levels and hours of enforcement in order to strive for compliance.

An ideally managed area will allocate shorter time-limit spaces near the highest demand areas and will have adequate allocation of longer time-limit spaces in off-street locations or on the periphery of high demand areas. This approach will diffuse the concentration of demand and prioritize convenient parking options for short-term visits. A variety of time limits is crucial to a balanced management plan and supports parkers with different needs. The City currently has a high volume of long-term parkers (those parking for longer than 2-3 hours) who park in short time-limit spaces and move their cars every few hours to avoid potential citations. Time limit allocations should be designed to minimize activity that promotes re-parking and shuffling of cars, which is inefficient and unpleasant for the parker. Shuffling also contributes to increased congestion.

The City has a high number of spaces with no time limit assignment. Should the City increase consistency in enforcement, the long-term parkers who are routinely parking in short time-limit spaces will spread to unrestricted areas. The City should consider adding time limits and signage to the unrestricted blocks to prepare for the shift in behavior created by consistent enforcement. Once standard compliance is created, there will be opportunity to understand the true demand for short and long-term space needs.

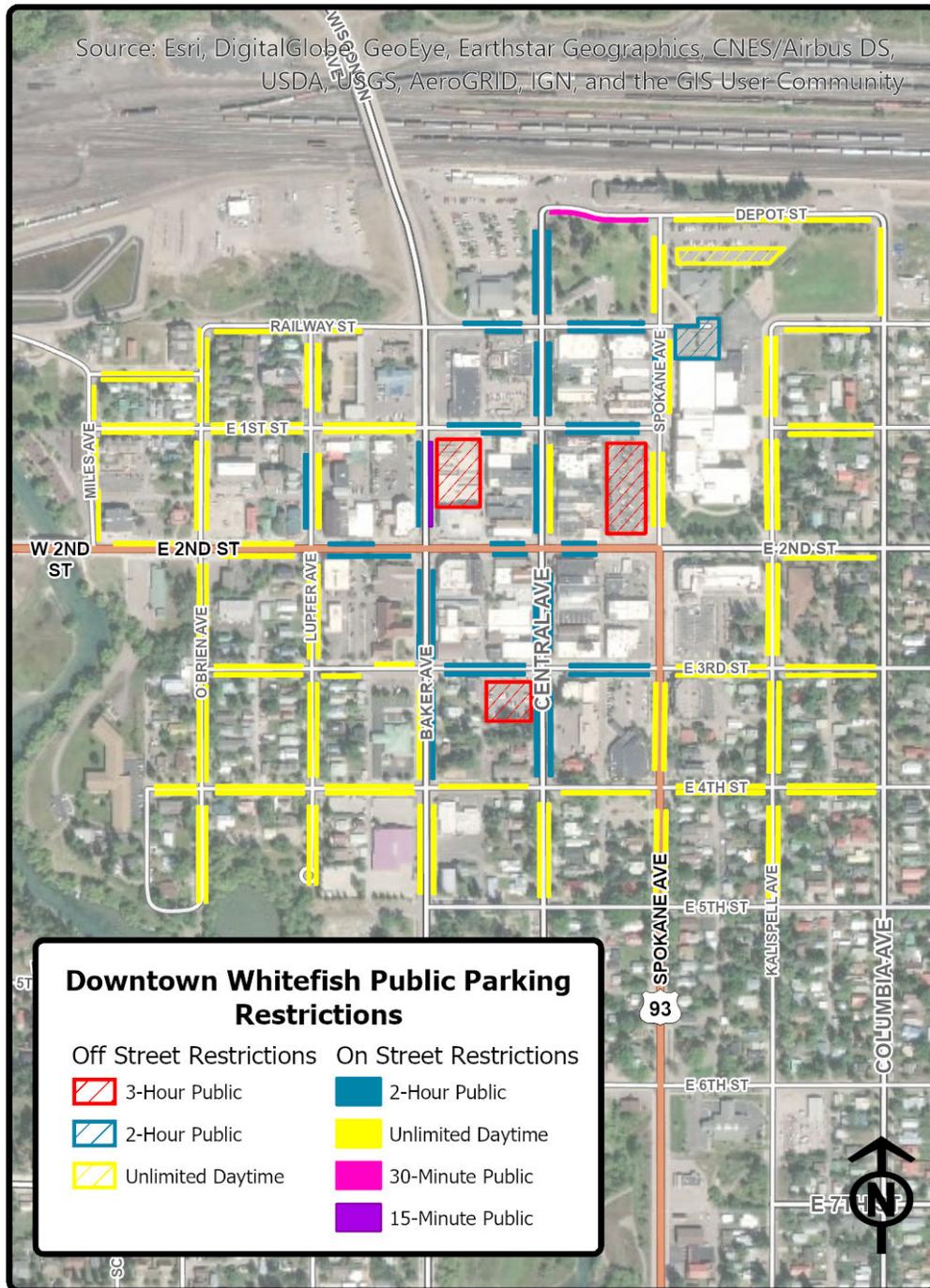
Importantly, modifications to time limit restrictions concurrent with improved enforcement, will support a behavioral change related to walking. Feedback from the community indicates a strong desire and expectation to park within one block of destination. Implementation of increased parking management will result in many parkers walking slightly farther from parking space to destination. The City should be prepared to support the community with outreach efforts as walking expectations are realigned.

The impact of streets without time restriction can be seen on O'Brien and Lupfer, near 2nd Street. Stakeholder interviews indicate that employees of local businesses in this area park all day, both in front of businesses and in the neighboring residential area. This spillover parking is a current complaint of neighboring businesses and residents. It's

important that the City consider adding time-limit restriction to several block ranges in the Railway area in order to save spaces for short-term parkers and business patrons.

Per the 2018 Downtown Parking Study, there are approximately 75 block-faces in the downtown core without signage and assigned time limit parking restrictions. Based on this data, which was collected in mid-August, one-third of these blocks without restriction experience moments when occupancy is above 85%. The combined average occupancy for unrestricted streets that never reach 85% is only 26%, indicating that availability exists for long term parking; yet it is not well-utilized.

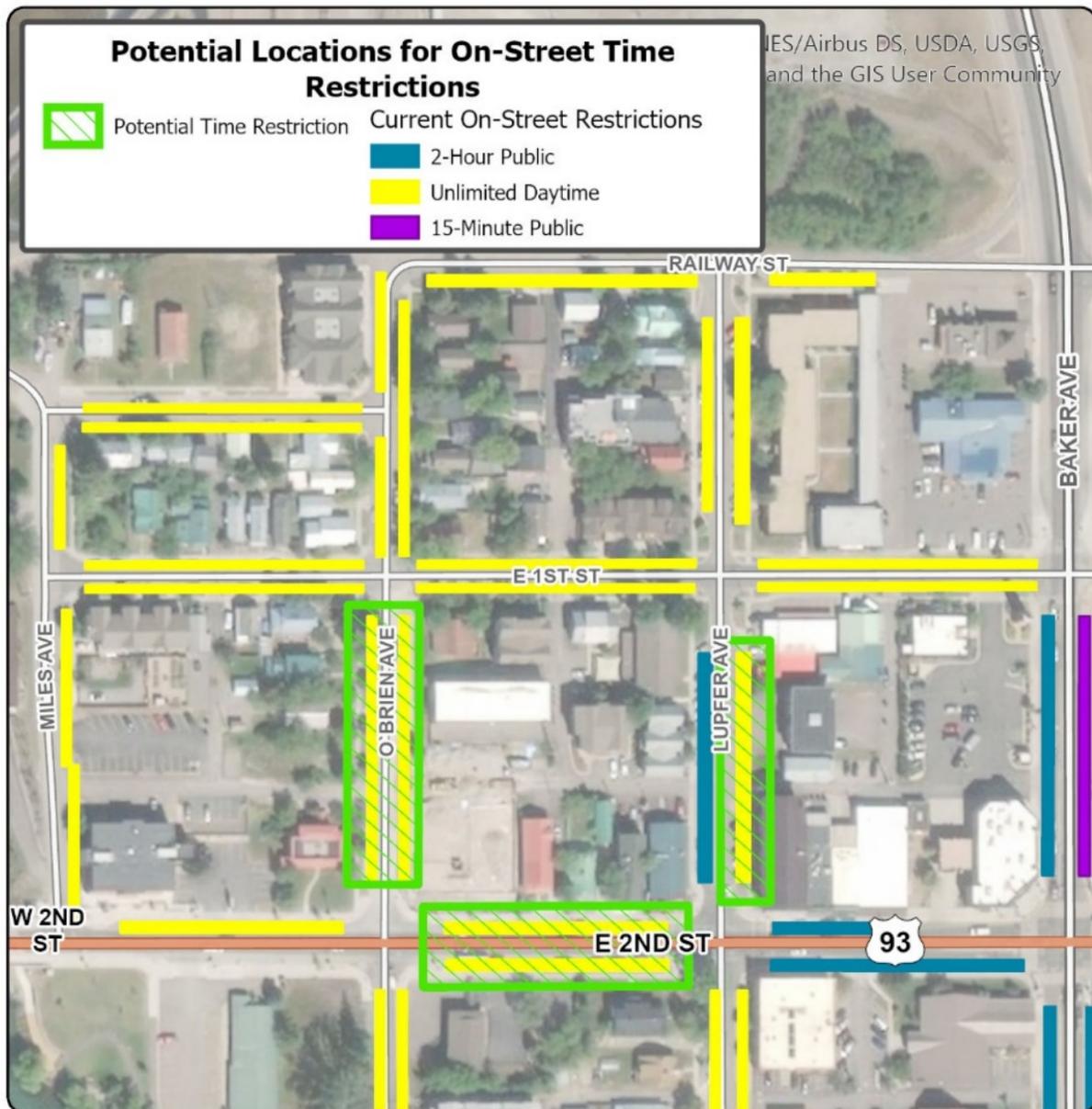
Figure 5. Downtown Whitefish Parking Restrictions



It is recommended that the City extend the hours of operation for time limits to be signed and enforced seven days per week, 8am to 8pm. This will increase turnover and availability in short time-limit spaces. Especially during the peak of summer, there is high demand for parking after 6pm and on weekends. By extending the hours of operation for

time-limits, the City can create a consistent expectation for parkers who currently abuse time limit restrictions in the evenings and on weekends. For example, evening parkers may arrive at 3pm or 4pm. Since they know that time restrictions end at 6pm, they can easily stay for 6 to 8 hours without consequence and without promoting turnover near retail and restaurants.

Figure 6. Railway District Locations for Time Restriction



Signage language should be consistent and present in all areas. Clearly posted regulations will reduce confusion and violator appeals. If the City modifies enforcement patterns and hours of operation, it will be important to ensure that signage is updated and reflects the changes in the operation.

Signage should include hours and days of operation, as well as consequences for overnight parking. For example, adding language about towing will increase compliance. Signs that read, “No Parking 2am-6am” should also warn “Towing Enforced” or “Violators Will Be Towed.”

Importantly, balanced parking systems do not emerge with a single shift in regulation. Often, many strategies must coincide in order to produce clear and consistent patterns of use. It’s recommended that the City establish a culture that supports on-going assessment of the program. For example, the City may find that upon implementation of regulations on unrestricted streets, there may be newly affected areas with parking problems to address. By reviewing data, embracing stakeholder feedback, and taking a proactive approach to problem-solving, the City may continue to evolve the operation in bite-sized phases that increase utilization in under-parked areas and reduce congestion in the highest demand areas.



Image 2. Whitefish Parking Signs

7.2 Wayfinding

The City boasts a healthy wayfinding program that consistently notes major landmarks and decision-making points. Signage includes a brown “P” to show direction toward parking locations. Downtown signage designs were supported by the Heart of Whitefish, a not-for-profit volunteer-based association interested in maintaining and developing vitality. Since the original installation in 2011, there has been an increase in out-of-state visitors who would benefit from increased breadcrumb signage. The placement of wayfinding signs near the City Hall garage should be assessed to increase visibility for those unfamiliar with the area.

Opportunity exists to strategize wayfinding signage that promotes underutilized parking areas. An ideal wayfinding program leads vehicles to park quickly, which can reduce congestion and reduce frustration related to finding a spot. As the City strives for compliance and better utilization of localized parking areas, it will become increasingly important to evolve the wayfinding signage. Increased management of the parking system will result in new trends and patterns of use, which may change the demand for wayfinding. It’s recommended that the wayfinding program receive ongoing assessment.



Image 3. Whitefish Wayfinding

Through a recent community effort, the City is currently facilitating the installation of an additional 109 wayfinding signs, directly targeted at mapping and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. The program received support from the Heart of Whitefish, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, local volunteers, Whitefish Legacy Partners, and the Montana Office of Tourism. Signage follows the basic design and branding of larger City wayfinding.



Image 4. Whitefish Pedestrian & Bike Trail Wayfinding

7.3 Employee Options & Permits

In each stakeholder meeting, interview and forum, participants expressed concern for employees of downtown businesses. The City currently offers City Hall garage “leased” parking, which is sold for \$30/month for uncovered areas and \$40/month for covered areas. The program is designed to encourage a safe designated location for employees who require all day parking. The program currently has capacity to sell more permits.

Permits are sold through a company called ParkMobile, which tracks payment and active license plates per each permit. A single permit may include access for up to ten license plates, although the intention is to only allow parking for one license plate per permit at any given time. Despite the intent of the parking permit program, stakeholder feedback and on-site assessment indicate that many employees choose to park on-street in areas restricted to 2 or 3 hours. To avoid citations, employees move their cars every few hours. This activity, known as reparking, is unpleasant and inefficient for both employees, business owners, and City PEO staff. It undermines the intent of time restriction regulations and eliminates possibility for parking demand management goals. Employees can take parking spots away from paying customers.

Because on-street parking is free and fear of citations is low, there is little reason for many employees and business owners to be attracted to a paid permit program. Should the City implement recommendations related to enforcement, employees of businesses will seek convenient and accessible options for parking all day. It is suggested that the City create an employee permit program with applicable parking options in several locations throughout the downtown core. Employees who work near 4th Street, for example, should have a designated convenient location as close to their destination as other factors allow. The City should map out an allocation of surface lot spaces and block faces that are currently unrestricted and allocate those areas to employee permits.

It's also possible to create areas with diverse use – to accommodate both transient parkers and employees who display the appropriate permit or license plate. For example, a block face that demonstrates low occupancy could be restricted to 3-hour parking or the applicable all-day employee permit. Another idea would be to allocate twenty spaces in the surface lot at 2nd Street and Spokane Avenue for all day employee permits from 8am to 6pm. After 6pm, the spaces could become available for any vehicle. A successful program will require several locations for permit-holders. Permit hours and allocated spaces can be modified based upon program demand and utilization. There may be a need to reduce and/or expand.

Business vitality depends on parking for both patrons and employees. To implement an employee parking permit program, it's recommended that the City assign staff to manage the program, ideally a defined parking coordinator. The new coordinator should then focus on creating a permit implementation committee to engage with business owners, managers, employees, residents and downtown stakeholders on ideas for the program. The implementation committee should include at least one city staff, one business owner, one manager of a large downtown business, one employee and one resident who lives near downtown. By initiating a group such as this, members can represent their perspectives and focus on engagement with peers and co-workers.

It is recommended that the City charge a fee for employee permits and consider that the fee must be affordable for the program to be successful. Assignment of a fee is an important way for the City to sustain the program and pay for the management of the parking operation. Stakeholders indicated that many employees may not be able to afford

a \$30 - \$40 per month fee, which is the current rate in the garage. Permit cost should be carefully assessed by the proposed implementation committee and stakeholders.

It is recommended that the City create a permit cost structure that includes a low-income permit rate for qualifying employees. For example, if an employee has the ability to demonstrate pay stubs that verify income level, the employee should be eligible for an affordable permit rate.

Permit cost and parking location are key components. Perhaps the most important element will be community engagement, education, and marketing of the employee program. The implementation committee should work to connect with as many people as possible to ensure that all voices are represented. Once the program launches, it will remain important to continue the dialogue, assess the performance, and connect with the seasonal transient workforce.

7.3.1 All Day Employee Permit Model

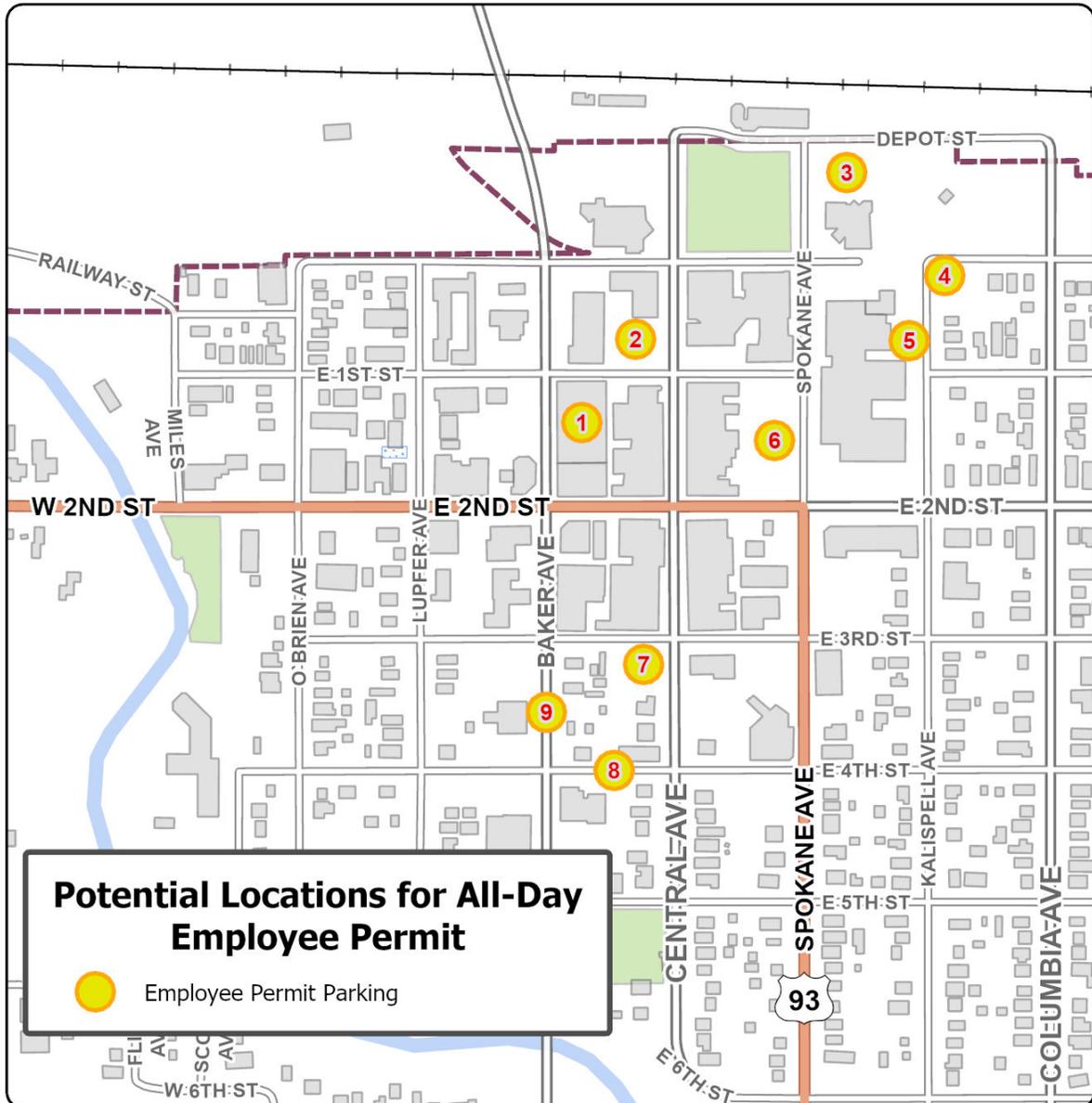
During interviews, business owners and employees of downtown demonstrated interest in all-day parking options located in close proximity to their businesses. Stakeholders said that the City Hall garage is simply not convenient enough for all businesses and that employee parking options would ideally be located within two blocks of destination. As an option, the City may consider allocating all-day permit spaces in each of the quadrants of downtown. This idea is consistent with past City operations. Prior to construction of the City Hall garage, the City Clerk's office managed a permit program that included options in City-owned surface parking lots.

Figure 7 demonstrates possible locations for all-day access, to include the following:

1. City Hall Garage: Permit access currently exists; consider increasing allocation of all-day spaces and reducing the cost of existing permits. The garage has opportunity to host 30 more permit-allocated spaces to bring the total to 170 permit spaces.
2. 1st Street and Central Avenue: The City may consider a lease of the vacant lot at the northwest corner of 1st and Central as an option for all day employee parking. Permit pricing should be structured to be less expensive than other all-day permits in order to accommodate the needs of service workers.
3. Depot Lot: Allocate 10 spaces.
4. Railway Street & Kalispell Avenue Corner Lot: Consider purchase of land. Cap soils and allocate for all-day employee parking until further developed for possible affordable housing.
5. The Whitefish Middle School: Seek an agreement with the Middle School for shared use of the school parking lot during summer months when school is not in session.
6. Spokane Avenue & 2nd Street Surface Lot: Allocate 25 all-day spaces.
7. Central & 3rd Street Surface Lot: Allocate 20 all-day corner spaces.

8. 4th Street, between Central Avenue and Baker Avenue: Allocate on-street spaces to be all-day permit eligible. (Add two-hour restricted spaces on 4th Street, between Central Avenue and Spokane Avenue, in order to preserve spaces for short term parkers who seek access to the businesses in the area.)
9. Peripheral On-Street: Consider allocating additional underutilized on-street spaces, such as Baker Avenue, between 3rd Street and 4th Street.

Figure 7. Potential Locations for All-Day Permits



To maximize utilization, signage can be created to allow all day permits, as well as transient 2-hour or 3-hour time limited parking. By making spaces eligible for both, the City may minimize times that reserved stalls are vacant.

It is important to consider that in a new permit program the allocation of spaces is expected to evolve as the true demand is determined. Currently, there may be 210 to 567 employee vehicles parking in the downtown on any given day. This number was identified by the Montana State University, Western Transportation Institute, City of Whitefish Downtown Employer/Employee Parking Survey Results, dated April of 2019. True employee parking demand is likely subject to daily and seasonal fluctuations.

Once the City initiates an all-day employee permit program, in conjunction with consistent enforcement of time-limit signage, the City will begin collection of real time data. Data, along with stakeholder feedback, can be used for ongoing assessment and continued outreach.

7.3.2 All Day Employee Permit Pricing

Interviews indicate that the pricing of existing garage permits may be cumbersome to some employees and it's suggested that the City consider recalibration of permit pricing. Current pricing is \$30 per month for uncovered and \$40 per month for covered spaces. At these rates, garage utilization is not maximized. The current pricing was determined by feedback and collaborative process with the local businesses.

Program success is dependent upon consistent participation and will need to be accessible for all employees. It is suggested that the City consider reducing the cost of lease spaces to a level that encourages more downtown employees to purchase them. Pricing permits at an accessible rate will allow access for those who must drive and will help support the ongoing sustainability of parking initiatives. Meanwhile, there will be increased motive for select employees to embrace carpooling, walking, biking, and shuttling.

7.4 Residential Parking Pilot

Residents on the periphery of the downtown core experience intermittent spillover parking that may affect their ability to park near their homes. Feedback from stakeholder meetings indicates that areas near Central Avenue and south of 4th Street, the Railway District, and Kalispell Avenue regularly experience an influx of parked vehicles that are not local to the neighborhood.

Spillover parking involves drivers seeking parking spaces in the residential neighborhood, for the purpose of avoiding time restricted spaces or other regulated parking. It can also identify that a localized shortage of parking spaces exists in the immediate block range.

When the City initiates new parking regulations or introduces consistent enforcement for compliance, there is increased risk for spillover into the neighborhoods. As a preventative measure the City should be prepared to initiate measures to protect neighborhood parking. Updating the municipal code is suggested as a mid-term action item (Section 8). For immediate focus, the parking coordinator should initiate engagement with local

downtown businesses and residents to proactively discuss permit program ideas and process for implementation. While a residential program is not likely relevant for all areas, preparation for permit programs allows residents the ability to enact a permit program if necessary and desired by surrounding neighbors.

Residents who live in the core of downtown may also be affected by increased management of parking assets. Downtown residential unit construction requires the offering of one parking space per above ground-floor unit and two parking spaces for ground-floor units; but there may be residents or short-term renters who have more than one vehicle. There could be a benefit to separating residential permitting programs, in order to create separate rules for downtown versus non-downtown residents. All permit zones, along with rules, should be carefully mapped and outlined for the public. Eligibility requirements and permit availability should be clearly established so that there is a cap to the number of permits available per address. If the City elects to offer more than one or two permits per address, an escalated or tiered permit rate structure is suggested, thereby enforcing an increased cost for those seeking subsequent permits.

While there are isolated occurrences of spillover parking during the event periods, generally neighborhoods are well serviced by existing on-street parking spaces. However, 4th Street at Central and the Railway District, due to proximity to local businesses, demonstrate a routine pattern of high occupancy during daytime business hours. An anticipated increase in construction of nightly rentals is expected to further aggravate these areas of parking shortage. It's recommended that the proposed parking coordinator initiate outreach in the Railway District to begin conversation related to a residential permit pilot program. It's important that all residents and businesses are encouraged to participate, as implementation of new permitting will affect all those who live and work in the area. If the parking coordinator initiates a parking permit implementation committee, there may be opportunity to coordinate committee efforts on both an employee permit overhaul and residential permit pilot.



Image 5. Railway District

Should the parking coordinator find that there is strong interest in residential permitting in Railway, staff should create parameters for a pilot, seek public feedback and Council approval. The launch of a residential pilot must contain exact parameters for acquisition of permits, planned enforcement, visitor permit guidelines, and benchmarks for success. It might be found that residents are interested in the idea of residential permitting, but don't want to pursue steps required for acquisition of permits; in other words, many

residents may want permitting, but will be unhappy when asked to provide proof of residency and hassle with requirements of visitor permitting. Further, compliance enforcement must be available in order to ensure that permitting regulations are followed and the intent of the program is satisfied. A program such as this will require additional staffing support.

A new permit program can be initiated through the City's existing permit management software solution, ParkMobile, which will allow one consistent online permitting portal for customers. Permitting solutions may also be integrated with the suggested citation management software and License Plate Recognition (LPR) systems, allowing real-time permit status to be reviewed by Ambassadors. By using license plate-based technologies, there is no need for physical permits to be displayed. The license plate can become the identifier and the technologies identify flagged plates or inactive permits.

7.5 Striping

The City endures harsh winters that often lead to faded paint striping on the streets. City staff are devoted to re-painting each spring and summer as resources and time allow. There is current opportunity to infuse resources into the Public Works team to support striping of faded parking stalls and curbs and to paint new stalls in areas where none are delineated.

By adding striping to new or unmarked areas, the City can promote and enforce more efficient use of parking spaces. Ultimately, more vehicles will fit on a block face if parked efficiently within allocated lines. The City should also ensure that striping and space allocation for American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) parking is compliant with State and Federal laws.

Parking Demand Management - Implementation Guide

Near-Term Steps

- A. Assign City staff to initiate a parking permit implementation committee focused on creation of an all-day employee permit program and potential residential permit program pilot.
- B. Budget for increased time-limit downtown signage to address gaps in signage and a pending all day employee permit program.
- C. Audit existing signage inventory, placement and language to prepare for changes to parking restrictions and enforcement.
- D. Support curb painting and striping to better define efficient parking options on blocks where delineation doesn't exist.
- E. Support goals related to Parking Demand Management best practice. Infuse a dialogue about parking that supports active problem-solving and engagement.

Mid-Term Steps:

- F. Extend the summer season operational hours of time-limit restrictions to include nights and weekends. Consider that support may be most relevant in the summer peak season.
- G. Modify signage to reflect changes. Add signage and rules to unrestricted block faces.
- H. Create the parameters for an employee permit program, including assignment of long-term parking areas, low income permits, and pricing structure.
 - i. Engage with the implementation committee and business community.
 - ii. Coordinate the launch with other enforcement strategies.
 - iii. Assess permit management software and necessary integrations for online purchase of permits.
- I. Create the parameters for a residential permit pilot program for the Railway District, arranged to coincide with enforcement strategies and an all-day employee permit program.
 - i. Engage with Railway District neighbors and surrounding businesses.
 - ii. Seek Council approval of a residential permitting pilot.
 - iii. Establish process for permit acquisition, permit caps, visitor permit rules, and benchmarks for success.
- J. Update municipal code to include opportunity for creation of permit zones.

Long-Term Steps:

- K. Continue engagement regarding the employee permit program, residential permit pilot, and other parking strategies.
- L. Review and share data. Modify strategy, signage, and permits based on utilization and community feedback.
- M. Assess wayfinding signage and evolve the program to support increased parking in underutilized areas.

8 Technology

The parking industry is bustling with technologies that promote efficiency in operations. Technologies can be useful for compliance-based enforcement, citation management, and permit management. Importantly, the data and reporting from current technology solutions will allow the City to understand benchmarks and gaps in operations and utilization. As discussed in Section 5.3, the City should first consider procurement of an integrated parking citation management software and handheld devices. As a mid-term goal, the City should also initiate a permit software system to coincide with employee permitting. This section will address additional technology considerations.

8.1 Garage Fixed LPR

The City Hall garage utilizes a License Plate Recognition (LPR) camera system that reads license plates from a fixed position on the ceiling. The cameras recognize license plate numbers on vehicles that enter and exit the permit-required area of the garage. The system cross-references the license plates with the active list of applicable permitted plates. Any violator plates are logged for the parking enforcement team to guide enforcement.

The PEO looks at the license plates flagged by the system but must review the results on the computer in the office to receive the data. The PEO does not have the ability to access this information from out in the field or within the garage due to integration issues and lack of Wi-Fi in certain sections of the garage. The PEO reviews the flagged license plates from the computer station in the office, manually writes license plate numbers in a notebook or prints the information to then walk to the garage to verify if the flagged license plates are indeed violators of the permit area. This process is inefficient and leads to a low level of enforcement and corresponding compliance.

Several City staff expressed concern about the accuracy of the LPR data. It is a known factor that snow and dirt on license plates can impact the system's ability to read effectively. Also, the state of Montana has over 200 license plate designs that can contribute to errors.

The system was purchased through a vendor no longer in business, known as Federal Signal - Safety and Security Systems. The account is now managed by a company called MinuteMan Security Technologies, but the agreement has lapsed. There has been no

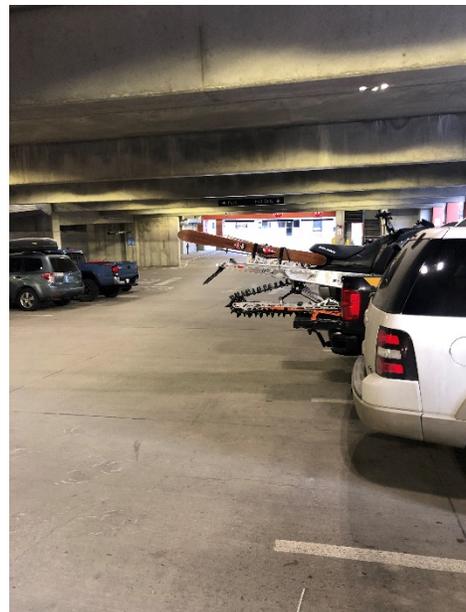


Image 6. City Hall Garage

agreement for extended warranty, and basic software upgrades may not have been managed.

Because the server package is hosted by Genetec, an industry leader in LPR, there is opportunity to potentially salvage and update the existing hardware in the garage. The current Sharp 3 cameras require an upgrade from version 11.4 to 11.7, which is a relatively simple update. Revised firmware would increase the accuracy of the Montana license plate reads and allow the cameras to better delineate direction of travel. The system may also be eligible for a software upgrade, which can be performed at a cost estimated at \$1,000 or less.

Implementing these simple tactics will improve the service of the LPR system and increase the accountability for plate reads. However, these basic updates will not solve the larger issue, which is that the flagged permits should feed into an automated enforcement system. In some cases, by the time the PEO returns to the garage to search for a flagged license plate, the vehicle has already left. Ideally, enforcement should happen in real time with automated tools.

Should the City procure a citation management software, the existing Genetec LPR information can be easily integrated with the new citation management software provider. This would give the PEO immediate access and ability to enforce in real time.

Permits are currently sold online through a ParkMobile system. Businesses may purchase permit access to covered or uncovered parking and may provide up to ten license plates per permit, although the intention is that only one plate should be allowed to enter at any given time.

Garage utilization levels require assessment, as there are usually open spaces with the exception of event periods. There may be opportunity to oversell the covered allocation of permits based on ability for permit-holders to utilize spaces in alternate areas of the garage. Overselling of permits may support a better utilization rate and allow more cars



Image 7. City Hall Garage – Leased Parking Entrance

to park; although there is currently little incentive to choose to purchase a permit.

As the City develops a system-wide approach to management of parking in the downtown, the fixed LPR system should be considered. It would be possible to continue to use it, as long as small updates are supported, and a service agreement is renewed. Should an employee permit program emerge, the garage permits must be assessed in conjunction with new permit area so that pricing corresponds.

The garage hosts two Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations. It's recommended that the

City consider additional EV stations to accommodate market trends and support sustainability goals.

8.2 Mobile LPR

The PEO enforcement process currently involves the use of manual chalking techniques. The PEO physically marks white chalk on the tires of vehicles, writes notes (in a notebook) related to where and when the chalking happened, then returns two or more hours later to see if the vehicle has moved. Most citation management software has a digital chalking features that allow the officer to record the valve stem location with a date and time stamp within the handheld device application. If the City implements a citation management software and device plan, there will likely be opportunity for digital chalking through devices.

To take the technology a step further toward efficiency, it's recommended that the City consider devoting a vehicle to the Ambassador(s), which is currently part of the FY2020 approved City budget. Immense time will be saved if enforcement doesn't have to rely on walking the entire downtown area several times per day. A vehicle will improve the footprint of enforcement and create ability for a more comprehensive and consistent operation.

Ideally, the enforcement vehicle would also carry mobile LPR, which can automatically log parked vehicle license plates, check for valid permits as it passes, and track corresponding time limit violations. Mobile LPR involves mounting cameras onto a vehicle, along with a laptop-type device to be visible to the driver. The software program will cross reference permit holders and time limits and paid parking status, if applicable. It can support and facilitate efficient citation processing.

Mobile LPR technology is commonly used as a parking management tool as it creates enhanced efficiency in creating compliance. License plate data is not allowed for use outside of the processing of citations. City agencies typically are required to post their policy related to data retention, demonstrating that license plates will not be used for unauthorized purpose outside of enforcement practice. The plate data can be used to support Police in identifying scofflaw or license plates that relate to a crime or person of interest.

In addition to creating efficiency and reducing staffing associated with enforcement, LPR mitigates the problem of chalk being removed by the vehicle owner. With LPR, enforcement doesn't touch or mark the vehicle; the documented photo and time stamp of the violator can be used in the adjudication process should an appeal require back-up information.

8.3 Automated Parking Guidance System (APGS)

Static wayfinding signage can inform and support an easy parking experience by directing parkers toward parking garages, surface lots, and on-street parking options. As an additional measure, the City should consider coupling static wayfinding with an Automated Parking Guidance System (APGS) in the City Hall garage. The FY2020 City budget includes funding for this endeavor.

APGS systems collect real time occupancy data and transmit the information to digital wayfinding signage located inside or near the garage. Customer parkers can see the availability of parking before driving into the garage. Congestion and gridlock are often reduced inside the garage and on nearby streets. Digital signage may also indicate parking lot status, such as whether the garage is open or closed. It can show space availability and/or if the garage is full, as well as additional special event messaging. A well planned APGS allows drivers to prepare their route upon approach, thereby reducing the possibility of back-ups. Digital signage will require careful consideration and may require a variance based on current sign regulations.

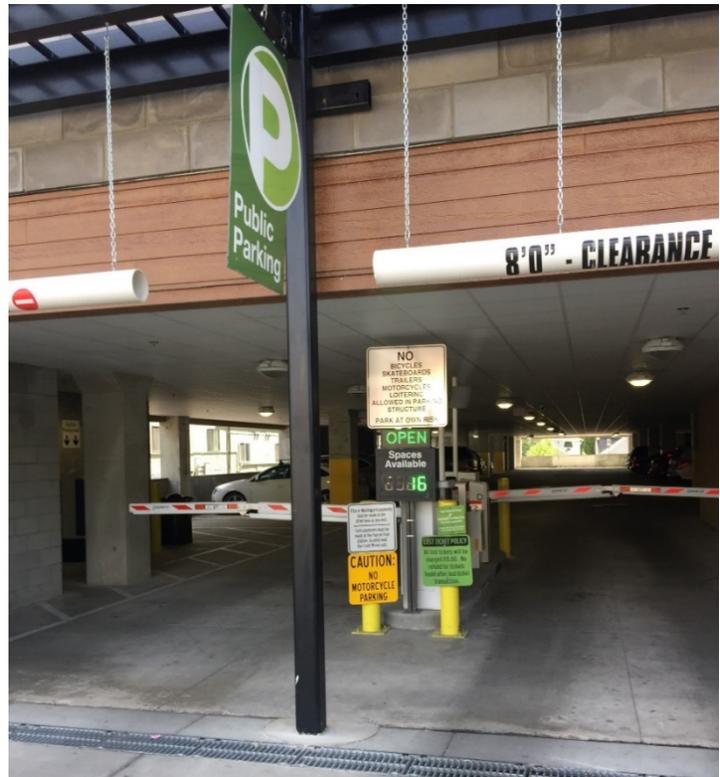


Image 8. Example APGS Digital Signage

Real time parking data may also be integrated with a variety of free parking applications, web sites, and phone or mapping applications, which allow parkers to plan their routes and parking destinations in advance. Data may be captured and assessed for establishing trends or anticipating traffic flow and future capacity levels.

Technology - Implementation Guide

Near-Term Steps

- A. Decide if the City would like to restore the fixed LPR system in the garage.
 - i. To keep the system, upgrade the cameras/firmware.
 - ii. Initiate a new service agreement.
 - iii. Fix settings for permits to function as desired.
 - iv. Upgrade the system for a small fee.
- B. Train Ambassador(s) on updated garage fixed-LPR functionality.
- C. Analyze and study garage occupancy to understand if there's opportunity for overselling covered permits to improve utilization.
- D. Arrange a site visit to a neighboring agency to see active use of a mobile LPR system. This exercise will lead to improved understanding of opportunity for efficiency.
- E. Purchase a devoted vehicle for the Ambassador(s).
- F. Procure an APGS for the garage that shows when the garage is near capacity, thereby minimizing drivers circling.

Mid-Term Steps:

- G. Assess the garage permit program, along with corresponding employee permit development.
- H. Continue to assess the enforcement program in the garage.

Long-Term Steps:

- I. Launch a mobile LPR program to create efficiency and minimize future staffing needs.
 - i. Post the policy related to LPR data.
- J. Assess and modify enforcement scheduling, beats, and procedures to maximize the operation.

9 Municipal Code Review

DIXON conducted an ordinance review to identify primary issues in the City’s municipal code that may affect current or future implementation of Parking Demand Management strategies. The following recommendations are designed to prepare the City for versatility in making program adjustments and for implementing future technologies. Full municipal code language is included as Appendix A.

DIXON recommends that the City perform a comprehensive code review in addition to the few key suggestions below.

9.1 Authority, Passenger Loading & TNCs (6-2-1)

Current code should be modified to promote authority to the city manager or city manager designee for designation of signage, commercial/passenger load zones, and parking restrictions. As the City continues to grow, it will become difficult for the city council to be involved in each detail and every modification to the street, as it pertains to parking management. At the procedural level, it’s recommended that the City create a process for addressing modifications that involves public engagement and announcement, which will ensure that there is adequate feedback to justify any change.

Code should be updated to reflect the emergence of Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) such as Uber and Lyft. Example modifications are included in Appendix A. It’s important that modifications support potential enforcement of passenger loading by adding language related to “active” loading/unloading.

9.2 Manner of Parking (6-2-3)

Code should be modified to create flexibility, rather than outlining exact street locations. It can become cumbersome to codify lists of all street regulations in the code, especially as the management of streets becomes more dynamic. Current code outlines exact locations where parking is required to be angled, rather than simply defining that the manner of parking is demonstrated by designated signage, and street/curb markings. Code should convey the important definitions of how one should park, without the exact street names attached.

9.3 Restricted Parking & Alley Use (6-2-4)

Code should be updated to reflect that restricted parking areas will be designated by signage. Again, the city manager or designee should be authorized to support modifications for restricted parking and signage, along with staff-level procedure that promotes community engagement. Signs should be erected to enable enforcement and understanding of street regulations. Use of alleys should be determined and uniformly

enforced among all alleys. Interviews indicate that alleys are inconsistently used for all day parking and or long periods of loading/unloading.

9.4 No Reparking – New Section

To improve compliance in time-limit areas and prevent vehicle shuffling, it is recommended that the City implement a “No Reparking” ordinance, which would prohibit parkers from removing chalk from tires or moving their vehicle slightly in order to defy time limit restrictions. In the City of Whitefish, there is a chronic issue of shuffling vehicles among 2-hour time limit stalls, which defies the sentiment behind the time limit regulation. Example language is offered in Appendix A. Also important for a “No Reparking” rule, corresponding signage must be posted in order to notify and enforce. To avoid signage clutter, the City could consider adding “No Reparking” signage at the beginning of each street or area.

9.5 Shared Mobility Devices – New Section

The emergence of shared mobility devices, such as scooters and dock-less bicycles, may disrupt the safety of City sidewalks and streets. It is recommended that the City embrace language that will enable control and consideration of potential future mobility devices. By initiating important code changes now, the City will be prepared to facilitate and regulate requests for shared mobility that may carry substantial impacts to the allocation of curb space.

9.6 Creation of Permit Areas – New Section

In order to prepare for future employee and residential permitted areas, the City should consider preparing an update to the municipal code. Example language is contained in Appendix A and demonstrates process for establishment of zone areas and corresponding signage, fees, and noticing. The existing City municipal code addresses permit “lease” options. It’s suggested that further detail is infused to address requirements for how a permit program is potentially requested and established. Many cities require a petitioning process and or a parking occupancy study in order to enact a residential zone. Importantly, permitting process should always incorporate and encourage a high level of engagement from stakeholders.

Procedural elements, or business rules, to the permitting programs should not be included in municipal code, such as program guidelines related to price, capping, permit sales process, visitor permit rules, and hours of operation.

Municipal Code - Implementation Guide

Near-Term Steps

- A. Modify existing Municipal Code to address the following:
- i. Designate authority to city manager or designee for modification of signage, time limits, and parking restrictions.
 - ii. Add mention of TNCs in all taxi/shuttle related language.
 - iii. Ensure loading rules always include the word “active” to support enforcement.

Mid-Term Steps:

- B. Propose new code to address the following:
- i. Add clarity to the language granting authority to city manager or designee for signage, permits, and regulations.
 - ii. Initiate a “No Reparking” rule.
 - iii. Add limitations for shared mobility devices.
 - iv. Establish permit zones.

Long-Term Steps:

- C. Complete a comprehensive overhaul of code related to parking and street management.

10 Alternate Modes

The City is located along a busy highway route that is heavily utilized by both transient and local vehicles. Recent years demonstrate growth in traffic demand (Figure 1) and it will become increasingly important for the City to embrace opportunity to reduce single occupancy vehicles to sustain a moderate traffic flow and maintain access to downtown.

The recommendations included in this Plan will support a healthy and balanced approach to management of parking spaces, reduce congestion related to drivers circling to seek a parking space, and improve the parking experience. Equally important to the steps outlined, the City should consider a strong campaign in support of alternate modes: transit, biking, walking, and carpooling, which will further reduce single occupant vehicles and corresponding congestion.

The City has demonstrated commitment to sustainable growth and has contracted Montana State University's Western Transportation Institute (WTI) to support a study related to alternate mode development and incentivization of walking, biking, carpooling and shuttling. The development of the WTI study coincides with the development of this parking Plan and includes the following:

- Development of a feasibility study of a pilot program to offer transit service and park and ride options during the summer peak season (June through August), to potentially coincide with existing service and parking lots;
- Multi-modal hub design, including a proposed location near Depot Park and an outline highlighting potential technology, and integration with local considerations;
- Marketing strategies outlining mobility options, with consideration for printed material needs, website information and promotion and on-street transit shelter signage; and,
- Analysis of positive impacts of walking and biking as related to parking demand and congestion

WTI survey information, compiled in April 2019, verifies that most employees travel to downtown Whitefish by car and very few commute by transit or carpool. Many employees travel from Kalispell or Columbia Falls and the average miles driven to work is 8.3. Only 37% of recent survey participants said that they were encouraged to park, or avoid parking, in a certain area of downtown. This demonstrates opportunity to both encourage local employees and business owners to travel by alternate method, and to create a marketing and educational campaign that ensures all employees understand the importance of parking regulations and compliance, as discussed in Section 5.2.

Survey data demonstrate that there is potential interest in parking in park-and-ride locations provided that there is corresponding frequent transit service available. It's suggested that the City consider a pilot enhancement to the existing transit and shuttle service, particularly during the peak summer months.

10.1 Shuttles & Public Transportation

Comprehensive shuttle and transit services are critical to the success of the Whitefish transportation system and must serve the needs of various segments of the population, including employees, shoppers, eventgoers, and visitors.

Eagle Transit provides a Kalispell-centric service which serves few Whitefish commuters. Based on limited service times on weekdays only, local commuters find the service schedule challenging. While there is interest in serving weekend travelers, there is no current funding to increase service levels. Eagle Transit maintains a robust paratransit, on-call service, with 150-170 rides given per day within the valley. The core Kalispell area retains the highest volume of ridership. Eagle Transit is working on a 5-year coordination plan that involves a peer review of Acadia National Park located in Maine. Acadia has a comparable ridership base and serves the neighboring National Park from the airport, motels and downtown businesses.

Flathead Transit offers existing service to and from Missoula which has a connection from Kalispell to Whitefish, but limited afternoon service times are unlikely to coincide with commuter patterns.

The S.N.O.W. Bus is another local service option, focused on a route from the Mountain Mall to the Whitefish Mountain Resort, the popular winter ski destination. The Big Mountain Commercial Association operates the S.N.O.W. Bus and provides stops at prominent hotels along the route. Shuttle service times are enhanced during the winter season, which means that many winter commuters are likely to find this option attractive if made aware of the service. Summer service times are infrequent and unlikely to fit commuter needs. Because summer is the busiest time, it's suggested that the S.N.O.W. Bus service idea is enhanced for a summer pilot.

There is opportunity to increase messaging and marketing related to existing transit and shuttle service. Few people know that there are transit options, and few understand the details of routes, frequency and cost.

10.2 Carpooling & Incentives

Carpooling is an effective way to reduce single occupancy vehicle miles traveled. Many cities find success in encouraging commuters with similar work schedules and routes to find each other and ride together. There are many web-based tools and applications that provide carpooling services focused on finding carpooling partners and tracking miles traveled. This can be an effective incentive for some commuters and can support positive messaging about commuting efficiently in the community. Scoop and Waze are two of the more recognizable carpooling apps, but there are others that are growing in popularity as well.

Other positive incentives for carpoolers may include discounted or free parking permits or reserved parking spaces in a desired area. Many cities work with local businesses to offer other incentives, such as coupons for free coffee or even cash raffle drawings.

To establish carpooling incentives that involve permits, the municipal code must be updated to facilitate permit options. Outreach and engagement should help dictate how best to incentivize behavioral change supporting carpooling and other alternative modes.

11 Special Event Mitigation

Special Event periods and the peak demand months of June through August present opportunities to focus on mitigating the impact of increased traffic and congestion in downtown. As the popularity of the downtown destination grows, event periods will continue to be the ideal time to pilot measures that may support a more balanced parking operation.

11.1 Peak Period Shuttles

WTI has gathered data to demonstrate that commuters would be interested in riding shuttles, if they were easy, frequent, and accessible. The City has opportunity to embrace a summer pilot shuttle service offering a park and ride location. If funding a larger summer pilot becomes a challenge, it's recommended that the City consider event-related shuttles for very specific periods, such as the week of the 4th of July, Farmer's Market days,



Image 9. Railway Street and Central Avenue – Event-Related Congestion

Huckleberry Days, or other Depot Park events. With strong marketing efforts, commuters and eventgoers are likely to embrace the idea of shuttling and enjoy the ease of not having to park a vehicle. Even small shuttle pilots involving isolated events may help support a behavioral change toward transit as a mode.

11.2 Shuttle & Rideshare Queuing

Ridesharing and ride-hailing services such as Uber and Lyft are beginning to find popularity in Whitefish. Importantly, visitors who travel from other parts of the country are well versed in using these services and often arrive in Whitefish and seek a ride from their favorite ridesharing company.

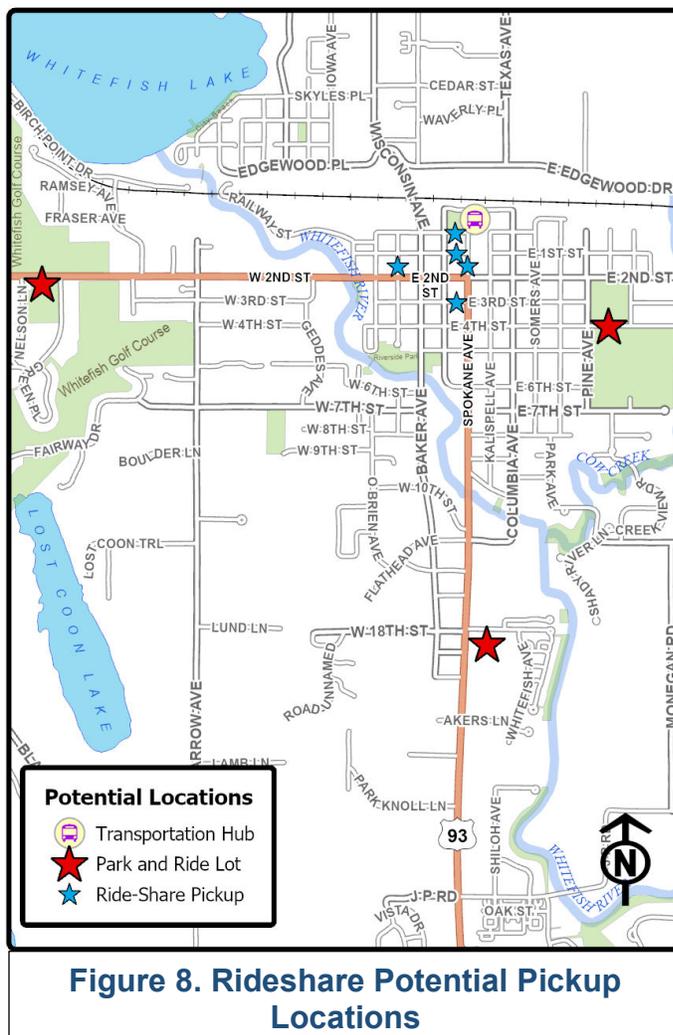
When a rideshare or ride-hailing service driver seeks a customer, the driver often must circle or wait in the middle of the drive lane. If all proximate parking spaces are full and the driver waits or loads passengers in the street, it can cause increased congestion and a back-up of vehicles waiting to pass.

Passenger loading zones should be created on select side streets and near restaurants and bars. By allocating loading zones in multiple areas, the City encourages success of compliance by creating convenient locations. One passenger pick-up space per block would support a reduction in congestion related to circling rideshares and shuttles. The Depot area has opportunity and space requirements to offer a larger queue zone that would be attractive to larger hotel shuttles.

There may be strong enough demand to create year-round passenger queuing zones. However, if this seems a stretch during the quieter months, the City may consider embracing an event-related passenger queue zone, to be initiated during all times of anticipated high volume. Signage and outreach to local drivers will be important in the establishment of new process. Police should be asked to support the transition by educating drivers on where the new passenger load areas are located.

Event planners often work with Lyft, Uber, and hotel shuttles in order to establish drop-off and pick up zones that accommodate passenger needs. By establishing communication with the rideshares, it's possible to geo-fence pick up and drop off locations. Geo-fencing involves placing pins on maps, in geographic locations, which create a virtual "fence"

outlining the exact areas available for passenger loading. Once geo-fencing is enabled, the rideshare apps may show passengers and drivers exactly how to navigate to the "fenced" passenger load zones. The following image demonstrates potential locations for rideshare pickups, pending stakeholder feedback.



By focusing outreach on the drivers of local passenger services and shuttles, the City may find ways to improve marketing and education related to events. Drivers often receive feedback from guests and locals and should be encouraged to share their experiences with City staff and leadership.

Ridesharing companies also may provide the City with trip data for impacted destinations. This may help support understanding related to the impact of congestion at certain times and during peak periods.

11.3 Shared Parking Agreements

The City should consider pursuing shared parking agreements with private businesses and landowners that have parking availability. Options include churches, the VFW, and select businesses and banks, which operate during daytime hours, but have availability nights and weekends. The school lots may have opportunity to support shared parking agreements during summer months.

By considering partnerships, the City may maximize parking resources and create a more comprehensive approach to management of parking. Shared parking agreements often include a mutually beneficial arrangement where the City enjoys access to increased parking spaces and the private owner enjoys a monetized agreement or focused maintenance or enforcement services from the City. If the City provides services, signage or enforcement, the cost is likely to be much less than building a new parking garage.

By piloting shared parking agreements during peak periods and special events, the City may be able to define the audience of parkers and capture feedback and data related to the success of the pilot. As event periods grow, paid parking during event periods may become relevant, which would offer additional ability to offer revenue splits that incentivize private owners.

Shared agreements should be carefully contracted to avoid miscommunication. The City’s brand, signage, and marketing efforts can help support concise information to the public regarding the rules of the arrangement. The following are a few items for consideration:

- a. Term – The term should define an evaluation process for return on investment.
- b. Rules – Parameters for use should be clearly defined, such as available hours, number of spaces, and time restrictions.
- c. Maintenance – Cost and operational demand are important for budgeting.
- d. Utilities and Taxes – Outline responsible parties for cost-sharing.
- e. Signage – Signage should be consistent with City branding and should offer clear regulations.
- f. Enforcement/Security – Outline responsibility for enforcement, towing, and security issues.
- g. Insurance and Indemnification – Contracting should consider litigation.
- h. Termination – A termination clause should be well considered.

12 Future Implementation

As the recommendations of this Plan are implemented, the management practice of on-street and off-street parking assets will begin to evolve. The City will have new tools and opportunity for assessing data and parking demand, especially as it pertains to localized block ranges. In the longer term, staff resources should be allocated to a parking department in order to ensure that data related to growth is carefully monitored and shared with the community, City staff, and leadership. This section focuses on future ideas that should be carefully considered in conjunction with ongoing data assessment.

12.1 Dynamic Pricing & Paid Parking

Paid parking is another effective management strategy that could be considered in future phases of implementation. As stated above, other management strategies included in this report should be addressed first, such as assignment of a central parking contact, procurement of citation management software, and development of parking permit areas that support a balanced utilization among core downtown streets. Enforcement should be consistently monitored, and Ambassadors should seek educational opportunities to give warnings and educate those parking or visiting the area. Importantly, data should be assessed and shared.

Once the parking management program reaches a stable platform and has adequate data to demonstrate increased demand, the City should consider a paid parking pilot during event periods and/or specifically on Central Avenue. If parking occupancy trends are consistently demonstrating occupancy rates of 85% or higher, a paid parking pilot is the next suggested step for consideration.

Paid parking offers a range of benefits, including the ability to offer incentive programs, utilize rates that influence driver behavior and encourage reduction of single occupancy vehicles and use of alternate modes of transportation. Additionally, revenues from paid parking can help support the parking operation, required staffing and maintenance of downtown assets. A successful parking operation that generates revenue should sustain itself and reinvest any additional revenues into parking assets, maintenance needs or transportation resources that benefit the community.

When paid parking is combined with time restrictions, increased turnover is supported, and long-term parkers are more likely to seek spaces that are ideal for long-term customer parking. While longer time limits in some areas might improve a visitors' experience, they are not effective in reducing employee use of retail-driven spaces in the downtown.

In summary, once the management strategies of this Plan are implemented and the City is able to truly define data related to demand, only then should the City consider a paid parking pilot. Special event periods are ideal for paid parking as a tool to help support reduced congestion.

The City may consider that new paid parking technologies offer validation programs that can be used to continue to offer free 2-hour parking to customers. For example, in Paso Robles, CA, parkers register their plates for 2 free hours, then receive additional validations if they shop locally. This encourages the customer to stay as long as they wish, with free parking; meanwhile the program supports a balanced turnover of parking in the core of the destination.

12.2 Garage Construction & Financing

Once the initial steps of parking management are implemented, utilization of existing parking will become more balanced among all areas of the downtown, which will reduce the perception that there is a parking problem. While change is not anticipated to be quick, the benefits of the recommendations in this Plan will demonstrate as reduced congestion and an easier parking experience. The City will be able to review real data related to parking availability and will be prepared to make important decisions related to the construction of new garage assets.

After implementing the strategies contained in this Plan, and before moving forward with construction, the City should perform a revised parking occupancy study where data is collected during peak and non-peak, weekday, and weekend days/times. Occupancy trends will flux as changes outlined in this report are implemented.

Construction of new garage assets will be a substantial financial investment, requiring capital for construction, potential land purchase, and on-going maintenance support. Contributing factors to the cost of construction can vary immensely. The most basic 218-stall garage at the Spokane Avenue and 2nd Street location may cost \$38,000 per space. Cost is dependent upon factors such as soil remediation, deconstruction, land cost, financing cost, retail space, maintenance and on-going cost, or enhanced technologies.

Financing options will require careful consideration, along with budgeting for operations management and deferred maintenance.

The following are financing options used by some cities:

- Tax increment financing – This is relevant for locations where a large area is being revitalized or developed.
- In-Lieu Fees – This type of financing is not relevant because the City does not currently require parking construction to coincide with other development. If the City required parking minimums, then decided to charge a fee to developers in order to waive the minimum, only then there could be a revenue source for funding a garage.
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds – This type of funding may be relevant for construction of public facilities or development of community affordable housing and anti-poverty programs. A garage development is not likely to qualify.

13 Engagement and Outreach

Successful implementation of recommendations included in this Plan will require intense community outreach. Adjustments to parking regulations, and especially enforcement that impacts employees, should coincide with education-based programs that inform the public about changes and encourage a continued assessment and dialogue.

The City should delegate a City staff member to own the stakeholder outreach efforts and corresponding educational materials necessary for coordinating change with the business owners, locals, residents, associations, and employees.

The following materials should be considered and updated as part of an outreach plan:

1. The City website should offer “Getting Around” information for tourists and residents, with information about “How to Park.” Parking instructions should be positive and easy to read and understand.
2. Once website assets are initiated, “Getting Around” instructions should be infused into other community and tourist resources and websites.
3. For every step of phased implementation, flyers should be created and posted on the front of City Hall and in prominent business locations around town.
4. Radio and newspaper advertisements should be considered for large changes.
5. City staff should attend local association and volunteer group meetings to stay connected and be sure that communication is early and addresses community needs.
6. Public forums should be hosted when there is upcoming change. Comments from the public should be incorporated into Council meetings, packets and corresponding policy development.
7. In the longer term, the City should consider the development of a brand that allows positive recognition of parking.

Implementation Guide – Alternative Modes, Future Implementation

Near-Term Steps

- A. Consider an exercise to support a summer transit pilot that offers convenient service from the Mountain Mall to the North Library Lot in downtown Whitefish.
- B. Review options for carpooling incentives and engage with the downtown business community.
- C. Create a rideshare queue zone as a pilot during special events in the Depot area.
 - i. Launch an outreach plan to connect with shuttle providers, hotels, and TNCs.
- D. Start the conversation with private lot owners regarding shared use agreements, relevant for event periods.
- E. Revise a wayfinding plan for downtown to support “breadcrumbs” leading to underutilized parking resources.

Mid-Term Steps:

- F. Prepare a phased approach for a paid parking pilot program for an event period.
 - i. Design rates to deter traffic from areas closest to the event center.
 - ii. Add signage to correspond with the event paid parking.
 - iii. Focus on outreach and education for community members.
- G. Devote a City staffer to perform outreach and engagement.
 - i. Update the website, use diverse techniques to connect with stakeholders, and hold public forums for every substantial proposed change.
 - ii. Evolve the parking management program based on feedback received.

Long-Term Steps:

- H. Revisit ideas for constructing garage asset(s) and complete an annual revised occupancy study.
- I. Consider a paid parking pilot program for a defined area during the peak season, such as Central Avenue.
 - i. Use validations in order to offer 2 or more hours of free parking for customers.

14 Conclusion (Implementation Guide Summary)

Using background studies as a platform, it’s important that the City consider that parking availability is an important cornerstone of the downtown area. Improved access for customers is dependent upon management of the parking system. The phased implementation steps outlined in this Plan will support a balanced approach to management of parking assets.

The following Implementation Guide demonstrates near, mid, and long-term steps for initiating a comprehensive plan that considers industry best practice. This cost-conscious approach will result in improved parking experience and better utilization patterns of parking assets. It’s important to note that near-term steps could happen within the next one to two years; mid-term steps could be addressed within two to four years; and long-term steps could be addressed in four plus years. Many of the recommendations outlined depend on other recommendations in order to create a compliance-based ecosystem that results in the desired outcome. Most importantly, the City must consider that budgeting for parking-related staffing resources will be critical for implementation of the Plan. Without allocation of staff, there is very little chance that the Plan will be effective. The City may begin by adding seasonal PEO staffing support. In the longer term there may be opportunity to add a full-time communications position who also helps the City with parking outreach, housing initiatives, public works projects, utility rate changes, and climate action plan tasks.

Implementation Guide	
Section	Near-Term Steps (Years 1-2)
5. Enforcement	Budget for seasonal staff to support parking initiatives.
5. Enforcement	Adopt a parking Ambassador model and require safety vests and uniforms for all Ambassadors who work in proximity to traffic.
5. Enforcement	Create SOPs for Ambassadors and staff who perform parking-related tasks. Update training to include an Ambassador approach, ensuring customer service guidelines and expectations. Procedures should include parameters for first time warnings and education.
5. Enforcement	Procure parking citation management software and handheld devices to support basic enforcement best practice. Integrate citation management software with FullCourt and ParkMobile (existing permit software system).

Implementation Guide	
5. Enforcement	Assign a parking coordinator to be responsible for parking goals, Ambassador training, and ongoing assessment of parking demand and programs.
6. Parking Demand Management	Assign City staff, ideally the parking coordinator referenced, to initiate a parking permit implementation committee focused on creation of an all-day employee permit program and potential residential permit program pilot.
6. Parking Demand Management	Budget for increased time-limit downtown signage to address gaps in signage and a pending all day employee permit program.
6. Parking Demand Management	Audit existing signage inventory, placement and language to prepare for changes to parking restrictions and enforcement.
6. Parking Demand Management	Support curb painting and striping to better define efficient parking options on blocks where delineation doesn't exist.
6. Parking Demand Management	Assess wayfinding signage and evolve the program to support increased parking in underutilized areas.
6. Parking Demand Management	Support goals aligned with Parking Demand Management best practice. Infuse a dialogue about parking that supports active problem-solving and engagement.
7. Technology	Decide if the City would like to restore the fixed LPR system in the garage. i. To keep the system, upgrade the cameras/firmware. ii. Initiate a new service agreement. iii. Fix settings for permits to function as desired. iv. Upgrade the system for a small fee.
7. Technology	Train Ambassador(s) on updated garage fixed-LPR functionality.
7. Technology	Continue to analyze and study garage occupancy to understand if there's opportunity for overselling covered permits to improve utilization.
7. Technology	Purchase a devoted vehicle for the Ambassador(s).
7. Technology	Arrange a site visit to a neighboring agency to see active use of a mobile LPR system. This exercise will lead to improved understanding of opportunity for efficiency.

Implementation Guide	
8. Municipal Code Review	<p>A. Modify existing municipal code to address the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Designate authority to city manager or designee for modification of signage, time limits, and parking restrictions. ii. Add mention of TNCs in all taxi/shuttle related language. iii. Ensure loading rules always include the word “active” to support enforcement.
9. Alternative Modes 10. Special Event Mitigation 11. Future Implementation 12. Engagement and Outreach	Consider an exercise to support a summer transit pilot that offers convenient service from the Mountain Mall to the North Library Lot in downtown Whitefish.
9. Alternative Modes 10. Special Event Mitigation 11. Future Implementation 12. Engagement and Outreach	Review options for carpooling incentives and engage with the downtown business community.
9. Alternative Modes 10. Special Event Mitigation 11. Future Implementation 12. Engagement and Outreach	<p>Create a rideshare queue zone as a pilot during special events in the Depot area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Launch an outreach plan to connect with shuttle providers, hotels, and TNCs.
9. Alternative Modes 10. Special Event Mitigation 11. Future Implementation 12. Engagement and Outreach	Start the conversation with private lot owners regarding shared use agreements, relevant for event periods.
Section	Mid-Term Steps (Years 2 - 4)
5. Enforcement	Increase seasonal Ambassador staffing hours to cover the full area of downtown during daytime and early evening hours (8am-8pm) in the summer season.
6. Parking Demand Management	Modify signage to reflect changes. Add signage and rules to unrestricted block faces.
6. Parking Demand Management	<p>Create the parameters for an employee permit program, including assignment of long-term parking areas, low income permits, and pricing structure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Engage with the implementation committee and business community. ii. Coordinate the launch with other enforcement strategies. iii. Assess permit management software and necessary integrations for online purchase of permits.

Implementation Guide	
6. Parking Demand Management	<p>Create the parameters for a residential permit pilot program for the Railway District, arranged to coincide with enforcement strategies and an all-day employee permit program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Engage with Railway District neighbors and surrounding businesses. ii. Seek Council approval of a residential permitting pilot. iii. Establish process for permit acquisition, permit caps, visitor permit rules, and benchmarks for success.
6. Parking Demand Management	Update municipal code to include opportunity for creation of permit zones.
7. Technology	Continue to assess the enforcement program and permit program in the garage.
8. Municipal Code Review	<p>Propose NEW code to address the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Add clarity to the language granting authority to city manager or designee for signage, permits, and regulations. ii. Initiate a “No Reparking” rule. iii. Add limitations for shared mobility devices. iv. Establish permit zones.
9. Alternative Modes 10. Special Event Mitigation 11. Future Implementation 12. Engagement and Outreach	<p>Prepare a phased approach for a paid parking pilot program for an event period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Design rates to deter traffic from areas closest to the event center. ii. Add signage to correspond with the event paid parking. iii. Focus on outreach and education for community members.
9. Alternative Modes 10. Special Event Mitigation 11. Future Implementation 12. Engagement and Outreach	<p>Devote a City staffer to perform outreach and engagement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Update the website, use diverse techniques to connect with stakeholders, and hold public forums for every substantial proposed change.
Section	Long-Term Steps (Years 4 +)
5. Enforcement	Continue to monitor data and staffing levels to ensure compliance in parking.
5. Enforcement	Communicate with parking stakeholders, staff, and community about trends in the revised compliance model.

Implementation Guide	
6. Parking Demand Management	Continue engagement regarding the employee permit program, residential permit pilot, and other parking strategies.
6. Parking Demand Management	Review and share data. Modify strategy, signage, and permits based on utilization and community feedback.
7. Technology	Launch a mobile LPR program to create efficiency and minimize future staffing needs. i. Post the policy related to LPR data.
7. Technology	Assess and modify enforcement scheduling, beats and procedures to maximize the operation.
7. Technology	Procure a PGS for the garage that shows when the garage is near capacity, thereby minimizing drivers circling.
8. Municipal Code Review	Complete a comprehensive overhaul of code related to parking and street management.
9. Alternative Modes 10. Special Event Mitigation 11. Future Implementation 12. Engagement and Outreach	Revisit ideas for constructing garage asset(s) and complete a revised occupancy study.
9. Alternative Modes 10. Special Event Mitigation 11. Future Implementation 12. Engagement and Outreach	Continue to revise a wayfinding plan for downtown to support “breadcrumbs” leading to underutilized parking resources.
9. Alternative Modes 10. Special Event Mitigation 11. Future Implementation 12. Engagement and Outreach	Consider a paid parking pilot program for a defined area during the peak season, such as Central Avenue. i. Use validations in order to offer 2 or more hours of free parking for customers.

15 Appendix A – Municipal Code Recommendations

15.1 Authority, Passenger Loading & TNCs

Current code should be modified to promote authority to the city manager or city manager designee for designation of signage, commercial/passenger load zones, and parking restrictions. As the City continues to grow, it will become difficult for the city council to be involved in each detail and every modification to the street, as it pertains to parking management. At the procedural level, it's recommended that the City create a process for addressing modifications that involves public engagement and announcement and ensures that there is adequate feedback to justify any change.

Code should be updated to reflect the emergence of Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) such as Uber and Lyft. Example modifications are highlighted below. It's important that modifications support potential enforcement of passenger loading by adding language related to "active" loading/unloading.

Chapter 2

STOPPING, STANDING AND PARKING

6-2-1: STANDING RESTRICTIONS:

A. Use Of Public Ways:

1. The city ~~council~~ **manager or designee** is authorized to, ~~by motion~~, designate such places upon the streets, avenues or highways of the city, as it may deem necessary, desirable or proper for pushcarts, lunch, popcorn or ice cream stands or wagons, and also for public and private hacks, buses and taxicabs **or TNCs** to stand when not employed in carrying passengers; no pushcart, lunch, popcorn, ice cream stand or wagon shall stand in or upon or be operated in or upon any public street, highway or other roadway in any place other than that so designated by the city ~~council~~ **manager or designee**, and no public or private hack, bus or taxicab **or TNC** shall stand or park upon any street in any business district at any place other than at the ~~location bus stop or taxicab or hack stand~~ **location** so designated by the city council, except that this provision shall not prevent the operator of any such vehicle from temporarily stopping in accordance with other parking regulations for the purpose of and while actually **actively** engaged in letting passengers into or out of such vehicle.

15.2 Manner of Parking

Code should be modified to create flexibility, rather than specifying exact street locations. It can become cumbersome to codify lists of all street regulations in the code, especially as the management of streets becomes more dynamic.

6-2-3: MANNER OF PARKING:

A. All motor vehicles shall park on the right hand side of the street with the outer edge of the motor vehicle parallel with the curb and within twelve inches (12") thereof, **or as marked by parking stalls or designated signage. In delineated angled parking stalls**, ~~except motor vehicles parking on Central Avenue between Railway Street and Third Street and on the west side of Spokane Avenue between Railway Street and Second Street where such~~ motor vehicles shall park at an angle of fifty two degrees (52°) to the curb with the right front wheel as close to the curb as possible.

15.3 Restricted Parking & Alley Use

Code should be updated to reflect that restricted parking areas will be designated by signage. Again, the city manager or designee should be authorized to support modifications to restricted parking and signage, along with staff-level procedure that promotes community engagement. Signs should be erected to enable enforcement and understanding of street regulations.

6-2-4: PROHIBITED AND RESTRICTED PARKING:

B. Limited Parking Areas shall be designated by signage and/or curb markings. : The City Council declares the following to be limited parking areas in which certain restrictions on parking are established, and it shall constitute a violation of this title for the owner or operator of any vehicle to violate the provisions of city-signed restrictions hereof. The city manager or designee City Council may, from time to time by motion, when it determines it advisable to do so, establish other and different limited parking areas within the City. The limited parking areas established which are in effect are as follows:

1. The area on the south side of Second Street extending from the northeast corner of the intersection of Second Street and Lupfer Avenue for a distance of fifty feet (50') from the fire hydrant located on the corner of the intersection is created a limited parking area and the parking of automobiles and other vehicles within said parking area hereby created for a period of more than twelve (12) minutes is forbidden and prohibited; provided, however, that parking within twelve feet (12') of said fire hydrant is expressly prohibited and forbidden.

[...]

C. Two-Hour Time Restricted Parking: It is unlawful for any person to park any "vehicle", as defined in section 6-1-2 of this title, for more than the posted time limit as designated by signage. or in excess of two (2) continuous or consecutive hours at any one time during the hours from eight o'clock (8:00) A.M. to six o'clock (6:00) P.M. in any one (1) parking space on the following described streets within the City: Baker Avenue from Railway Street to East Third Street; Central Avenue from Railway Street to East Fourth Street; Spokane Avenue from Railway Street to East Second Street; East First Street from Spokane Avenue to Baker Avenue; East Second Street from Spokane Avenue to Lupfer Avenue; East Third Street from Spokane Avenue to Baker Avenue;

[...]

D. Alley Parking Restrictions:

No person shall stop, stand or park a vehicle for any purpose other than for active loading or unloading of persons or materials in any alley. Vehicles engaged in active loading or unloading 1. All parking of vehicles in the alleys between Railroad and Third Streets and between Spokane and Lupfer Avenues shall be parallel parking only and all such vehicles shall stand as close as possible to one (1) side of the alley and in any case shall so stand as to permit other vehicles to pass, and all parking shall be restricted to a duration of fifteen (15) minutes only.

2. The sidewalks on the easterly side of the alley running north and south between Second and Third Streets and Central and Baker Avenues are designated as a pedestrian lane and parking is prohibited in the pedestrian lane.

3. Vehicles in alleys shall comply with the directions and orders of police officers.

15.4 Suggested Additional Sections – Signs, Signals & Markings

Code should designate authority to the city manager or city manager designee for placement of signage and curb markings. The follow is example language that could by modeled by the City.

Chapter X.X Signs, Signals, and Markings

Section X.X Authority to install

The city manager or designee shall have the power and duty to place and maintain or cause to be placed and maintained official traffic control devices when and as required to make effective the provisions of this Chapter. The city manager or designee is authorized to place and maintain signage or curb markings that when so signed or marked no person shall stop, stand or park a vehicle.

Section X.X Signs required for enforcement

No provision of the Vehicle Code of the state or of this Chapter for which signs are required shall be enforced against an alleged violator unless appropriate legible signs are in place giving notice of such provisions of the traffic laws.

Section X.X Hours of operation

The city manager or designee shall determine the hours and days during which any traffic control device or parking regulation shall be in operation or be in effect, except in those cases where such hours or days are specified in this Chapter.

Section X.X Marking of parking spaces

- A. The city manager or designee is authorized to install and maintain parking space markings adjacent to curbing to indicate where parking is permitted.
- B. No vehicle shall be stopped, left standing or parked other than within a single parking space.
- C. The city manager or designee is authorized to install and maintain angle parking space in any orientation other than at the angle to the curb or edge of the roadway indicated by signs or markings, or in any paid parking space in any orientation other than with the front of the vehicle closest to the curb, unless the space is expressly designated for "back in only" parking.

15.5 Suggested Additional Sections – Permits

In order to prepare for permit programs, the City should modify code to allow a versatile process of implementation. Below is example language.

Section X.X Parking permits

- A. The city manager or designee may issue parking permits with a term not to exceed one year. The city manager or designee may limit the number of permits issued if such limitation would further the goal to ensure that less than eighty five percent of the available parking spaces are occupied in the defined permit area. Applicants must submit documentation as established by city manager or designee.
- B. A vehicle with a valid parking permit shall be permitted to stand or be parked in an established permit zone for which the permit has been issued. Any vehicle that has not been issued a valid parking permit shall be subject to the requirements and restrictions related to parking as designated by signage and curb markings.
- C. A parking permit or any other permit as designated by the city manager shall not guarantee or reserve to the holder thereof a parking space within the designated parking permit zone.

15.6 No Reparking

To improve compliance in time-limit areas and prevent vehicle shuffling, it's recommended that the City implement a "no reparking" ordinance, which would prohibit parkers from removing chalk from tires or moving their vehicle slightly in order to defy time limit restrictions. In the City of Whitefish, there is a chronic issue of shuffling vehicles among 2-hour time limit stalls, which defies the sentiment behind the time limit regulation. Example language is offered below. Also important for a "no reparking" rule, corresponding signage must be posted in order to notify and enforce. To avoid signage clutter, the City could consider adding "no reparking" signage at the beginning of each street or area.

Sec. X-X. – No reparking.

When authorized signs are in place giving notice thereof, no person shall stop, stand or park any vehicle for a period of time longer than that designated by signs. Vehicles parked longer than posted time limits are subject to fine(s), immobilization and/or impoundment.

A vehicle will be deemed to have been parked longer than the posted time limit, if it has not been moved at least "out of the block face" or parking lot after the expiration of the maximum time limitation indicated on the posted signage or parking meter. A block face is defined as the block in which the vehicle is parked, bordered by an intersection at each end. A vehicle may not return to the initial block face or parking lot sooner than two hours following the expiration of the initial time period. Such vehicle may remain parked in such space for a period of time not to exceed that of the respective zone in which it is located.

15.7 Shared Mobility Devices

The emergence of shared mobility devices, such as scooters and dock-less bicycles, may disrupt the safety of City sidewalks and streets. It is recommended that the City embrace language that will enable control and consideration of potential future mobility devices. The following is robust example language that could be used to prepare.

Chapter X.X Shared Mobility Devices

Section X.X Purpose

Consistent with the City's goals of enhancing mobility and access, easing traffic congestion, and promoting sustainability, this Chapter creates a program to facilitate the use of shared mobility devices while ensuring the protection of public health and safety, including the safety of the public traveling by foot, bicycle, or vehicle on public sidewalks, streets, and other public rights-of-way.

Section X.X Definitions

For the purpose of this Chapter the following words and phrases shall have the meanings respectively ascribed to them by this Section:

Abandon. Leaving an item unattended for any length of time.

Operator. Any person or businesses entity selected by the City to participate in the Shared Mobility Device Program pursuant to this Chapter.

Public area. Any outdoor area that is open to the public for public use, whether owned or operated by the City or a private party.

Public right-of-way. Any public alley, parkway, public transportation path, roadway, sidewalk, or street that is owned, granted by easement, operated, or controlled by the City.

Shared mobility device. Any transportation device by which a person can be propelled, moved or drawn,

Section X.X Prohibited conduct

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Code, no person may:

- (a) Display, offer or make available for rent any shared mobility device within the City, unless the person has first obtained: (1) a valid shared mobility operator permit; and (2) a valid business license.
- (b) Abandon a shared mobility device not authorized by this Chapter in the public right-of-way or a public area in such a way that the device is available for rent; and
- (c) Abandon a shared mobility device in the public right-of-way or a public area in a manner that: (1) obstructs travel upon or blocks access to a public right-of-way; (2) poses an immediate public safety hazard; or (3) is otherwise prohibited by applicable laws or administrative regulations.

Section X.X Maximum number of shared mobility operator permits and shared mobility devices permitted.

- (a) The city manager may issue up to two shared mobility operator permits authorizing the deployment of a shared mobility device within the City.
- (b) The City Manager may establish the number of shared mobility devices authorized under each shared mobility operator permit. The city manager shall take into consideration market needs, the number of devices deployed in the City, device utilization, and any other criteria set forth in administrative regulations. The city manager's determinations under this Section shall constitute the final decision of the City and are not subject to further administrative review. No person shall fail to comply with the city manager's established device limitation.
- (c) At any time, the city manager or city council may reassess the number of shared mobility operator permits authorized for issuance or the number of total authorized devices should be reduced or increased.

Section X.X Shared mobility operator permit application procedure, fees, and requirements

- (a) Any person seeking to obtain a shared mobility operator permit shall submit a written application, signed under penalty of perjury, using the form designated by the city manager for that purpose.
- (b) Each shared mobility operator permit shall be valid for the term of one year.
- (c) The city council may establish permit fees and charges by resolution.

15.8 Establishment of Parking Permit Zones

In order to prepare for future employee and residential permitted areas, the City should consider updating municipal code. The following demonstrates example language that

designates process for establishment of zone areas and corresponding signage, fees, and noticing.

Chapter X.X Parking Permits

Section X.X Establishment of Parking Permit Zones

City Council delegates authority to the city manager to establish a parking permit zone within a designated primary parking district in accordance with the following criteria:

- A. In the proposed parking permit zone at least eighty percent of on-street parking spaces must be occupied during the surveys and studies or the on-street parking must be projected to be impacted by parking spillover from a more congested area and the establishment of the proposed parking permit zone is reasonable and necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the parking permit based on the parking analysis. The new statistic data, parking study and analysis shall be accessible to the public at the office of the city engineer.
- B. A notice to establish the proposed parking permit zone shall be sent to all addresses within the proposed parking permit zone. The city manager shall cause a notice of such proposed parking permit zone to be posted, at not more than one hundred feet intervals and at all street intersections, in the proposed parking permit zone. The notice shall clearly state the purpose of the new parking permit zone and the tentative boundaries of the proposed parking permit zone and that any interested persons shall be entitled to give public testimony within a month period from the date of the posted notice. Within this month period, the city manager will consider public testimony and will determine the effectiveness of the proposed boundaries of the parking permit zone.

Section X.X Issuance of Permits

- A. Parking permits in each zone shall be issued by the City in accordance with requirements set forth in this chapter. Each such permit shall be designed to be valid in the particular parking permit zone for which it is issued.
- B. The City is authorized to issue such rules and regulations necessary to implement this chapter that are consistent with it.

Section X.X Residential Parking Permits

- A. The city manager or designee shall issue residential parking permits with a term not to exceed one year to motor vehicles which comply with the requirements set forth in this chapter.
- B. A residential parking permit may be issued for a motor vehicle only upon permit application of the following person:
 - 1. The applicant must demonstrate that he or she is currently a resident of the zone for which the permit is to be issued; and
 - 2. The applicant must demonstrate that he or she has the vehicle registered in his or her name, or who has a vehicle for his or her exclusive use and under his or her control;
 - 3. Any motor vehicle to be issued a permit must have a vehicle registration indicating registration within the zone for which the permit is to be issued.

- C. The city manager may limit the number of permits issued to any resident or dwelling unit if such limitation would further the goal to ensure that less than eighty percent of the available on-street parking spaces are occupied.

Section X.X Visitor Parking Permit

- A. A visitor parking permit may be used on resident or nonresident vehicles. The city manager may authorize the issuance of visitor parking permits in any parking permit zone. The city manager may limit the number of permits issued if such limitation would further the goal to ensure that less than eighty percent of the available on-street parking spaces are occupied. When authorized, visitor parking permits may be issued under the following conditions:
 - 1. The applicant for a visitor parking permit has not reached the limits.
 - 2. Such other conditions and restrictions that the city manager, or his or her designee, deems appropriate.
- B. Visitor permits must be registered with the City and comply with permit regulations to be valid.
- C. A visitor permit shall, for the period determined by the city manager or designee, commencing upon the date indicated upon purchase of said permit authorized, exempt the applicable vehicle from parking time restrictions established pursuant to this chapter.

Section X.X Employee Parking Permits

- D. The city manager or designee may issue employee parking permits with a term not to exceed one year. The city manager or designee may limit the number of permits issued if such limitation would further the goal to ensure that less than eighty percent of the available on-street parking spaces are occupied. Employees shall complete an application for an employee permit and shall submit documentation verifying employment status. Such documentation requirements shall be established by the city manager or designee.
- E. A vehicle with a valid employee parking permit shall be permitted to stand or be parked in an employee parking permit zone for which the permit has been issued. Any vehicle that has not been issued a valid parking permit shall be subject to the requirements and restrictions related to parking within the parking zones.
- F. An employee parking permit or any other permit as designated by the city manager shall not guarantee or reserve to the holder thereof a parking space within the designated parking permit zone.
- G. This chapter shall not be interpreted or applied in a manner that shall abridge or alter regulations established by authority other than this chapter.

Section X.X Posting of Parking Permit Zone

The city manager or designee shall cause appropriate signs to be erected in the area, indicating prominently thereon the area prohibition or time limitation, period of its application, and conditions under which permit parking shall be exempt therefrom.

Section X.X Parking Permit Fees

The annual fee and renewal fee for residential parking permit and for visitor permits, or any other parking permit designated by the city council, shall be established by city council resolution.

Section X.X Penalties, Liability, and Enforcement

The following acts shall constitute fraudulent use of a permit punishable by a fine to be prescribed by city council resolution and/or revocation of any permit currently held. Violations of this chapter shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. No person shall falsely represent oneself as eligible for a parking permit or furnishing false information in an application therefor.
- B. No person shall sell, transfer or allow another person to use a parking permit issued pursuant to this chapter unless authorized to do so by this chapter.
- C. No person shall copy, produce, create or use any facsimile or counterfeit parking permit.