



**NAPA COUNTY GRAND JURY  
2016-2017**

**May 31, 2017**

**Final Report**

**CAN'T FIND A PARKING SPOT IN  
DOWNTOWN NAPA?**



# CAN'T FIND A PARKING SPOT IN DOWNTOWN NAPA?

## SUMMARY

During the past several years, strong economic growth has brought more traffic to downtown Napa. Downtown is attracting visitors and locals alike with more restaurants, wine bars, entertainment, and shopping. As a result, many residents who were used to parking in front of their favorite shop or restaurant feel that downtown lacks sufficient parking. The 2016-2017 Grand Jury researched the availability of parking spaces in downtown Napa and found that currently there is ample parking. Therefore, this perception is not supported by the facts. As described in *The City of Napa Downtown Parking Plan* (Parking Plan), there are ample parking spaces available in downtown parking lots and garages.

The Grand Jury also investigated the City's progress in implementing the Parking Plan schedule, as well as other related parking issues. Following a series of interviews with the agencies concerned, the Grand Jury concluded that significant progress is being made to expand the downtown parking supply in order to accommodate future needs. However, additional steps by the City, such as consolidating parking management and supporting parking enforcement, are warranted. In addition, the Parking Plan must be regularly updated by the City to reflect new developments in the Downtown and Oxbow Districts.

## GLOSSARY

Block Face Parking Restriction: A block face is the portion of a street between two intersections, including all on-street parking, both sides. Even if a vehicle is parked for only 10 minutes it cannot return and park in the same block face for a specified period (e.g., 4 hours), or risk getting a citation.

Parking and Business Improvement Area (PBIA): Areas which act as a funding mechanism for business district revitalization and management. They include assessments on businesses and/or properties within the defined boundaries. The funds collected are used to provide services for the mutual benefit of the businesses and properties being assessed.

Parking Exempt District (PE District): A district where a parking impact fee is imposed on the parking demand generated by net new non-residential development located within the boundaries of the district.

Parking Impact Fee: A fee paid to a city in lieu of providing required parking on-site.

## BACKGROUND

Since 1999, there has been \$1.6 billion in public and private investment in Downtown Napa<sup>1</sup>. The Downtown Specific Plan was approved by the City in 2012, to guide accelerated growth. The Archer Hotel and the *First Street Napa* mall are both scheduled to open in 2017. There are an ever-increasing number of restaurants and tasting rooms opening in downtown. The historic downtown Post Office on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street will be transformed into a hotel in the next few years, and the Oxbow District continues to grow in popularity with the addition of the Culinary Institute of America and the Napa River Dry Bypass. All these will impact the demand for parking in downtown Napa.

The Parking Plan, an outgrowth of the 2012 *Downtown Specific Plan* described above, and produced by Walker Parking Consultants, seeks to:

- Guide City policy and decisions regarding managing the current public parking supply in the Downtown and Oxbow Districts
- Optimize the existing parking stock
- Expand future public parking supply based upon projected development
- Develop a financing strategy to build new parking garages and replace older garages over time
- Enhance parking safety and security

The Parking Plan assessed the current parking inventory and produced a list of actions with a detailed implementation schedule to assure that parking supply remains ahead of demand. The status of the recommended actions is shown in Appendix 1.

The Parking Plan also highlighted many challenges facing the City's parking system. One of these challenges is that specific operations and their funding are dispersed throughout various departments and divisions within the City. Parks and Recreation Services oversees maintenance of parking garages (partially funded by an assessment on annual business license renewals). The General Fund supports maintenance, security, and citation appeals. Public Works manages the on-street parking supply and inventory. The Police Department oversees parking enforcement which is paid for with citation revenue. This decentralized approach is cumbersome at best.

## METHODOLOGY

The Grand Jury began this investigation by reading The Parking Plan to understand its purpose, assumptions, methods, and recommendations. The Jury also read the *Downtown Parking Impact Fee Nexus Study*, completed in 2016, also prepared by Walker Parking Consultants. The Impact Study was commissioned by the Napa City Council to update the amount of the Parking Impact Fee. From there, the Jury reviewed several years of news articles to keep us abreast of the dynamic downtown parking picture.

The Grand Jury conducted interviews with:

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<sup>1</sup> Downtown Napa, "Economic Development Activity in Downtown Napa," City of Napa, <http://www.cityofnapa.org/index.php?....> (accessed March 19, 2017)

- The Mayor of the City of Napa to get a perspective on development and its impact on parking in Downtown Napa
- Other senior city officials who provided:
  - a history of downtown development
  - an in-depth discussion of parking needs
  - an updated Implementation Schedule detailing completed and in-process measures
  - an explanation of the need for paid parking
  - parking management responsibilities
  - parking enforcement details

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Parking Areas**

The greater downtown has two distinct parking areas, the Downtown District shown in Appendix 2 and the Oxbow District shown in Appendix 3. The former offers surface parking, which includes on-street parking, parking lots, and garage parking. In the Oxbow District, the City manages just the surface street parking since most of the parking areas are privately owned. The Parking Plan focused primarily on the Downtown District, and acknowledged parking needs in the Oxbow District.

### **Parking Supply**

The Parking Plan inventoried all public on-street and off-street parking, as well as most private parking facilities (see Appendix 4 for details). Off-street parking (surface lots and parking garages) accounts for the bulk of the supply. There is also a distinction between off-street public and off-street publicly owned. There are 1,747 “off-street public” spaces which are unrestricted and available to the general public, while 493 spaces are in publicly-owned lots but are only for specific user groups. For example, during business hours the City Hall parking lot is reserved for employees and Council members. This lot may be used by the public only when conducting business at City Hall. These spaces are open to the public during evenings and on the weekend.

### **Impact of Oxbow Development**

Oxbow Market popularity was already creating a parking problem in the Oxbow District when the new South Campus of the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) formally opened at Copia in 2017, sharing the available parking lot.

Oxbow’s growing popularity has made it a pressure point for Downtown Napa. Currently, the Napa Police Department has not been consistently enforcing two-hour limits for on-street parking in the Oxbow district.

## **Use of Parking Garages**

Napa plans to encourage use of its underutilized city parking garages. (See Appendix 3). Through introduction of paid street parking (e.g., parking meters), the City also hopes to move longer-term parkers into the free parking garages. This should help insure more available on-street parking in the downtown core for short-term users.

The Archer Hotel, which will open in late 2017, has paid for 137 spaces in the Pearl Street Garage. When the downtown mall is fully open, Pearl Street should get even more utilization. New signage will help direct drivers to City garages and downtown lots. Existing garages were updated in 2016 with fresh paint, better lighting, new signage, and working elevators. These primarily cosmetic updates cannot change the fact that these garages are approaching 40 years old and will eventually need to be replaced. The newer, more modern 5<sup>th</sup> Street garage is a sharp contrast to the cramped interiors of the older garages.

## **Parking Enforcement**

Currently, the Napa Police Department lacks both staff and reliably working equipment for proper parking enforcement. The service contract for parking enforcement equipment expired in 2013 and has not been renewed. With poorly functioning hardware and software, enforcement has declined as has the revenue that it produced. In past years, the revenue generated by enforcement more than paid for itself. The City employs only two Parking Enforcement Officers. The lack of sufficient parking officers makes it easy for violators to play the odds they won't get tickets on weekdays and can avoid parking tickets altogether on Saturdays. This doesn't help the revenue picture, and also sends the wrong message to the public that they can "beat the system" in the downtown.

## **Paid Parking – a tool to manage parking**

The City has identified that many downtown employees of both businesses and local government abuse short-term parking limits by moving their cars throughout the day to avoid ticketing. By doing so, they not only avoid fines, but also make parking difficult for people doing business and shopping in downtown. The City of Napa does not have block face parking restrictions (see Glossary) in place. The lack of block face parking restrictions permits vehicle operators to move their vehicles a few feet at specified intervals to avoid parking citations.

The Parking Plan highlighted this problem and recommended paid parking as a solution. The Parking Plan further recommended implementing various limited paid parking schemes to evaluate the best system. The City concluded this approach was too expensive but continues to study the matter and expects to implement paid parking in the future. With the advent of paid parking, the City expects to employ a full-time Parking Manager to oversee the process.

## **Parking Exempt District**

The City of Napa currently charges a parking impact fee for the parking demand generated by net new non-residential development located within the boundaries of the Parking Exempt District. The PE District boundaries, which were modified in 2005 to include 31 additional parcels (depicted in hash-mark shading) for a total of 189 parcels, are shown on the map in

Appendix 5. Development within the Parking Exempt District is expected to be the primary source of funding for the new parking garage slated for the former CineDome and skate park area in the West and Pearl Street section.

## **Financial**

Currently, there are several sources of operating revenue for the City's parking operations and maintenance. Parking Citations have been by far the largest source of operating revenue and are used to pay for parking enforcement. Any discussion of future parking needs must include sources of capital funding.

Recently the City has significantly increased the parking impact fee on "the parking demand generated by net new non-residential development located within the boundaries of the Parking Exempt District."<sup>2</sup> The parking impact fee was adopted in 2005 and originally set at \$7,500 per required parking space. In 2016, the Napa City Council approved an increase in the parking impact fee to \$23,000<sup>3</sup> per vehicle space. This fee is used to fund future projects which increase parking capacity within the specified area. This funding source is inadequate for the planned expenditures necessary to build a 300-350 space parking garage estimated at \$12-\$15 million.

## **FINDINGS**

The Grand Jury finds that:

- F1.** Current decentralized approach of parking management is cumbersome and inefficient.
- F2.** Adequate parking exists in the Downtown Area; existing parking garages are under-utilized.
- F3.** Parking enforcement is hampered by outdated equipment and lack of personnel.
- F4.** Short-term parking rules are ignored by many merchants and their employees.
- F5.** Parking is a problem in the Oxbow Area.
- F6.** The City has not identified funding for replacement of existing garages.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Grand Jury recommends that:

- R1.** The City Council Appoint a Parking Service Manager to manage the parking system and its' funding by June 30, 2018.
- R2.** The City Manager increase parking enforcement staff and replace obsolete equipment by June 30, 2018.
- R3.** The City Council amend the Municipal Code to make "re-parking" (block-face ordinance) in short-term spaces illegal by June 30, 2018.

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<sup>2</sup> City of Napa, "Downtown Parking Management Plan," 2015, page 36

<sup>3</sup> Yune, Howard, "Vacant Napa lot marked for future parking near downtown," The Napa Valley Register, December 20, 2016

- R4.** The City Manager update the parking plan annually to reflect new developments in the Downtown and Oxbow Districts

## **REQUEST FOR RESPONSES**

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05, the Grand Jury requests responses as follows:

From the following governing body:

- The City Council (Napa): **R1, R3**
- From the following individual:
- The Napa City Manager: **F3,R2, and R4**

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Grand Jury Parking Committee documents:

1. *City of Napa Parking Management Plan*.

Current Conditions: Field Work Summary

May 17, 2015 by Walker Parking Consultants

2. *City of Napa Downtown Parking Impact Fee Nexus Study*

April 6, 2016 by Walker Parking Consultants

3. *Envision Napa 2020 – City of Napa General Plan*, adopted December 1, 1998

(Reprint with amendments to September 3, 2015)

4. *Downtown Napa Specific Plan*; Chapter 6, Circulation and Parking May 2012

5. “Napa discusses downtown pay-to-park proposal.” Napa Valley Register (NVR) May 23, 2015

6. *Planning Commission Staff Report* July 7, 2016

7. “Builders’ parking fee triples as Napa banks money for downtown garage.” NVR September 22, 2016

8. “Developer cleared to build 171-unit Napa condo Project” NVR January 20, 2016

9. “Planners OK affordable housing complex on Coombsville Road.” NVR January 22, 2016

10. “Napa to lift parking requirements on six downtown properties.” NVR July 10, 2016

11. “Downtown Napa parking lots moving to 3-hour limit.” NVR February 07, 2017

12. “Napa Council Oks sale of parking lot to serve a hotel on post office site.” NVR February 08, 2017

13. “Sonoma and Napa counties innovate downtown parking.” North Bay Business Journal March 10, 2017

14. “Rezoning opens way to new Napa parking lot.” NVR March 23, 2017

Reports issued by the Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Grand Jury.

## Appendix 1

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### DOWNTOWN PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN-STATUS UPDATE 1/24/17

#### Implementation Measures Completed or in Process

##### Projects to increase Parking Supply (\*250 new spaces)

- |                          |               |                                 |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| • New lot X (CineDome)   | 163 spaces    | Completed Summer 2016           |
| • Lot G (North of Kohls) | 20 new spaces | Summer 2017*                    |
| • Third Street Lot       | 67 spaces     | Pending GP/rezone, summer 2017* |

##### Measures to improve City-Owned Parking Garages and Lots

- |  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| • Elevator replacement, Second Street Garage | Spring 2017*           |
| • Sign upgrades, garage interiors            | Completed January 2017 |
| • Sign upgrades, garage entrances            | Spring 2017            |
| • Re-striping (all garages)                  | Spring 2017            |
| • Landscaping garages exteriors              | Summer/Fall 2017*      |
| • Sign upgrades on surface lots              | February 2017*         |

##### Policies

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| • Expanded PE District to include 6 parcels on Main St. | Completed August 2016    |
| • Increased Parking Impact Fee, \$23,000/space          | Completed September 2016 |
| • Expanded Parking Benefit Zone (6 parcels)             | Completed November 2016  |

##### Existing Supply Management

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| • Relocated 33 permit spaces to all-day parking         | Completed December 2016 |
| • Converted 37 3-hour spaces in Pearl garage to all-day | Completed January 2017  |

#### Upcoming Implementation Measures

##### Foreseeable Projects to Increase Parking Supply

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| • New Parking Garage 300-350 spaces | Pending approved CineDome MP, property/funding Agreements, final design: Construction 2019/20* |
|-------------------------------------|--|

##### Measure to Improve Supply/Demand Management

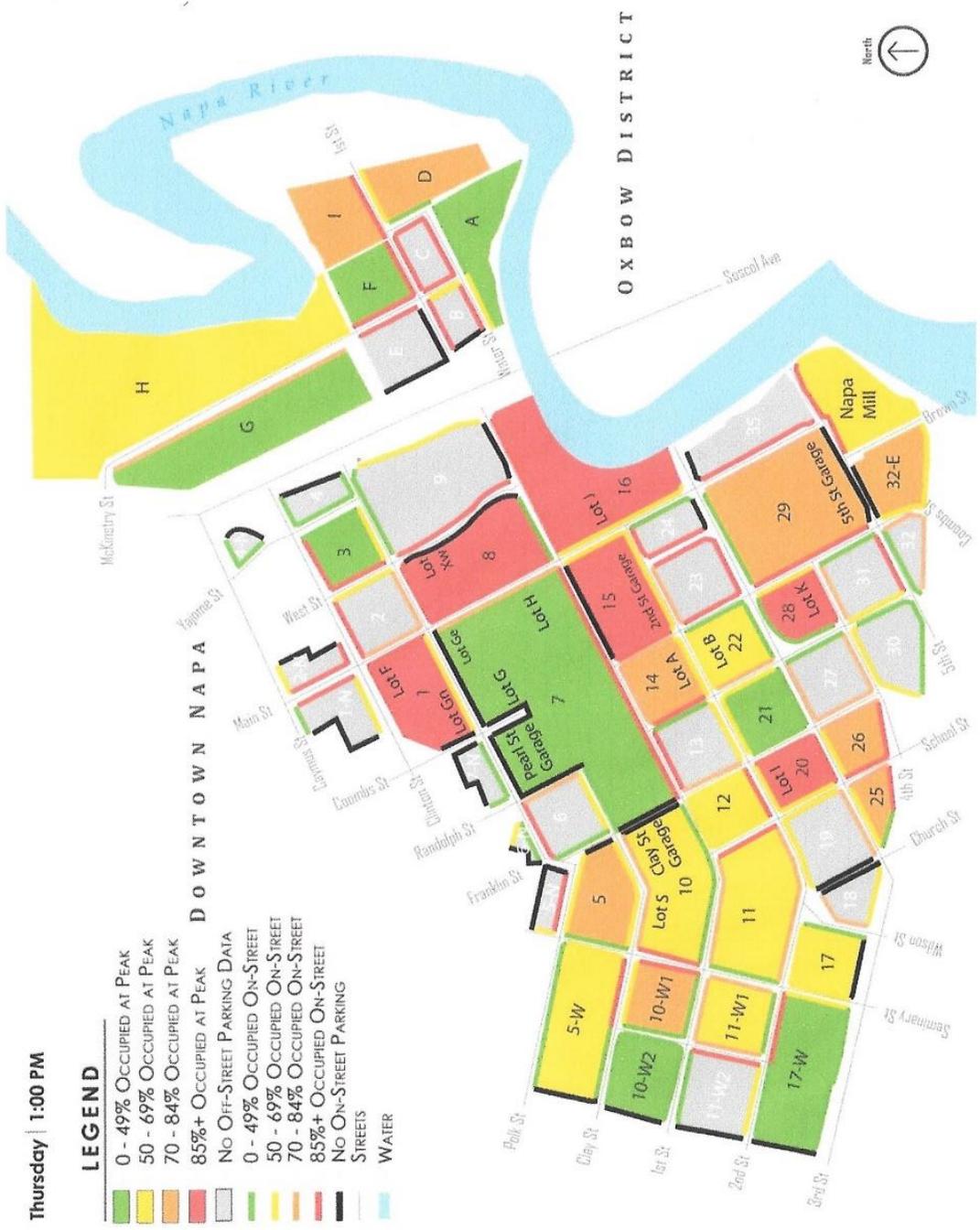
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| • Enhanced parking wayfinding signs            | 2017/18            |
| • Electronic parking signs at garage entrances | 2018*              |
| • Paid parking program feasibility assessment  | Spring/Summer 2017 |
| • Adjust/increase enforcement day/hours/staff  | To be determined   |

##### Policies

- |                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| • Block face enforcement | Policy being developed |
|--------------------------|------------------------|

\**Estimated time frame*





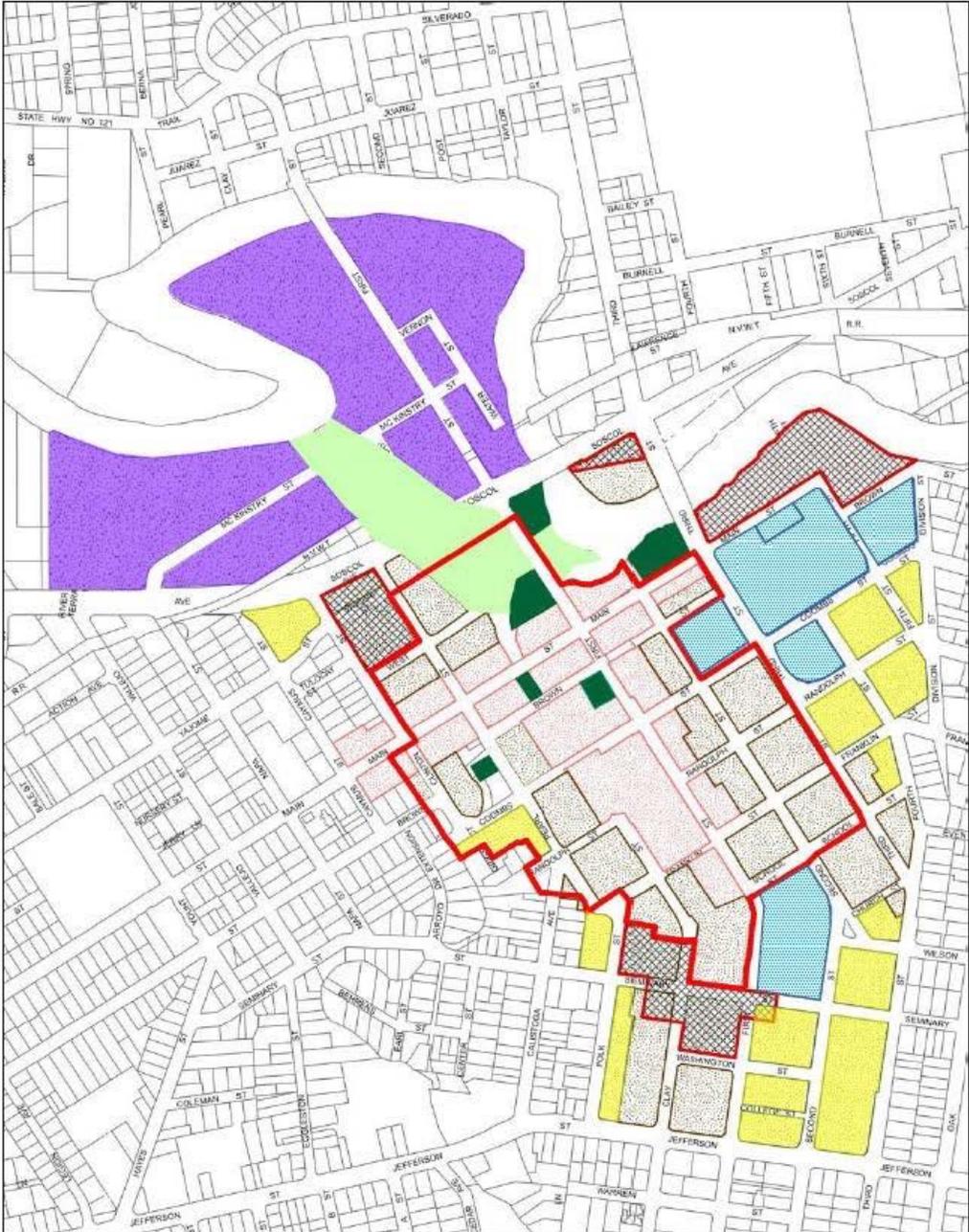
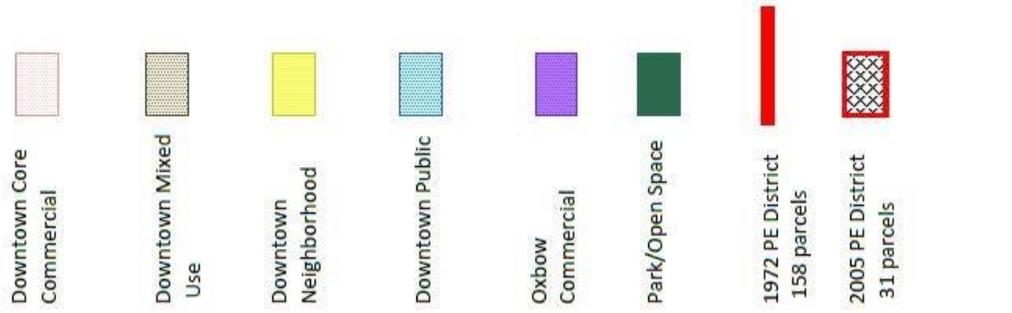
**Appendix 3**  
**Downtown and Oxbow Parking Occupancy**

Source: Walker Parking Consultants, 2014

**Appendix 4**  
**On-street and Off-street Parking Supply Breakdown**

<b>Supply Type</b>	<b>Downtown 2014</b>	<b>Oxbow 2014</b>	<b>Total 2014</b>
On-Street	1,209	184	1,393
Off-street-Public	1,747	0	1,747
<b>Subtotal Public</b>	<b>2,956</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>3,140</b>
Off-street-Private	1,287	819	2,106
Off-street-publicly owned	390	103	493
<b>Subtotal Other</b>	<b>1,677</b>	<b>922</b>	<b>2,599</b>
<b>Total Supply</b>	<b>4,633</b>	<b>1,106</b>	<b>5,739</b>

*Source: Walker Parking Consultants, 2014*



**Appendix 5  
Parking Exempt District**

