

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The previous sections of this report have provided a description of current conditions related to parking supply and demand as outlined in Conclusions. Strategies for addressing these problems have been suggested. This section provides a summary of recommended actions for the implementation of the plan. The recommended actions have been divided into two phases:

Short Term - which is defined as from 0-2 years beginning immediately with inexpensive easy-to-do projects; and

Medium Term - projects which will require additional study, negotiation, financing and the cooperation of public agencies.

Short Term Actions

The steps listed below are not necessarily in priority order and many can be done concurrently with other actions.

New Management for the City- LaPorte Avenue Lot

This lot is an obvious choice for relieving the employee parking problem and the removal of long-term parkers from on-street spaces. Clean-up of this lot will require the cooperative support of downtown stakeholders to convince the alderman and the City that this is a top priority need. The 128 spaces should be leased at minimal rates to employees for all-day parking. Guard rails should be removed, the attendant house torn down, the lot repaved and remarked and fencing with a control gate and proper signing installed (see Figure 10). Management should be done by a non-profit organization such as Greater Northwest Development Corporation (GNWDC) or the Chamber to assure a quality environment.

Begin Time Limit Enforcement

Currently, one can park on-street as long as one “feeds the meter.” With the provision of long-term off-street parking, there is no reason why employees should not be required to park off-street. This will relieve the on-street shortage and will provide adequately for customer parking. The two-hour time limit should be enforced using unsworn officers (meter maids) on a daily and continuing basis. The GNWDC and the Chamber should petition the City to provide this required level of enforcement. If the City cannot or is unwilling to provide an adequate level of enforcement, a local organization (GNWDC, Six Corners Main Street or the Portage Park Chamber of Commerce) should request they be allowed to take over enforcement.

Promote What You Have

A parking map (see Figure 10) should be prepared and distributed to all merchants and business owners for farther distribution to their employees and customers. Sufficient quantities of the map should be printed to allow several distribution cycles over the next two years.

Articles on parking in the Six Corners District should be prepared and inserted in newsletters and given to the local media to inform the public of available parking and the parking enforcement program that is being initiated. See sample articles in the Appendix.

Develop a “Parking Bank”

Several privately owned parking areas have unused parking. There is a limited potential for the use of these areas if private owners can be convinced that there is a surplus. Conduct occupancy surveys to show how much parking is used in each lot and meet with private owners to present this information. Negotiate with the owners for the lease of unused spaces. Based upon the success of this effort, develop a “parking bank” which lists the location, number of spaces, lease rate and contact person for these potential spaces. Consider management of the parking bank by GNWDC or Six Corners Main Street.

As a part of this effort, review the design of existing parking areas to determine if additional parking can be provided. If additional spaces result from the redesign, promote reconstruction of the lot to achieve the additional spaces.

Evaluate Additional Parking Sites

After all of the previous steps have been taken, begin the evaluation of the feasibility of new sites. See the Appendix for a summary of the considerations for eight candidate sites.

Mid Term Actions

Mid term actions involve planning design and construction as well as the continuing management function initiated in the first phase.

Parking Management Plan

While an ad hoc management organization was recommended in Phase One, a comprehensive parking management plan is recommended for Phase Two. This plan should build upon the successes of Phase One and should provide additional guidance for a longer range effort toward the continued development of parking in the district. Issues that should be addressed are:

- enforcement by non-sworn officers under a local management structure;
- plans for additional off-street parking sites;
- promotion of existing and the development of new parking; and
- organizational responsibilities for parking within the district.

Conduct Feasibility Studies

Sites that involve reconstruction (Sites 3, 4, 6, and 8) will need construction plans, cost estimates and will require negotiation with the owner and/or public hearings. While Site 3 is on public land, it may be controversial and may require considerable negotiation to achieve. Sites 4 and 8 are already cleared and require no building demolition but are privately owned. Site 6 will require demolition of a drive-in facility.

Site 5 is a special case requiring the demolition of an apartment building for the provision of parking for the Portage Theater and Klee Building renovation. This site can provide 120 spaces on the surface with potential for deck parking if the Theater project materializes. A more detailed study of how this facility can be related to the redevelopment projects and existing retail is needed.

Site 7 is a proposed deck over an existing employee parking lot. This site could provide an additional 50 - 80 spaces depending on how much additional land can be put into the project. It would serve currently unmet parking needs for Bally's and the retail users in this sector.

Developing Financing Packages

The issue with all of the additional sites is financing. For lots that are simply redesigned, additional costs are likely to be minimal and lease fees will cover them. For sites involving demolition and construction of decks, substantial financing will be needed. Part of the costs can be assigned to the development project that will be served, for instance, the Portage

Theater or the Klee Building, but the remainder must be covered through user fees. Other sources of funding through TIF and/or assessment districts are possible, although these sources may be more difficult to acquire. The feasibility studies suggested in the previous sections of this chapter must address the financing issue in each individual case.