

# Parking Strategic Plan

## Final Report

April, 2015

Kimley»Horn

# *Billings* DOWNTOWN

## PARKING STRATEGIC PLAN

the  
**solesbee**  
group

**CIVITAS**  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT





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## 1. Executive Summary

### *Introduction*

The City of Billings engaged Kimley-Horn and Associates (Kimley-Horn) to develop a Parking Strategic Plan for Downtown Billings, MT. The Plan will identify short and long term goals for the parking system and identify industry best practices that can be implemented in Billings to improve the operations, management, facilities and public perceptions of downtown parking.

### **Project Objectives**

The primary goal of this parking strategic plan is to be a guide for decisions makers on topics such as governance, technology improvements, facilities, rates and enforcement. Specific project objectives include providing strategies and tools to:

- Improve public perceptions of downtown parking
- Make downtown parking a contributor to continued downtown redevelopment and economic expansion
- Improve customer relations
- Establish rate structures that recognize and strengthen parking as an integrated system
- Promote parking turnover without unduly penalizing infrequent violators
- Identify technology improvements that emphasize customer convenience, but will control operating costs and generate sufficient revenue to support system operations
- Accommodate a growing residential population without negatively impacting retail and other sectors that need employee and customer parking
- Incorporate parking as part of a balanced transportation system
- Identify governance and management structures that will contribute to the successful implementation of other recommendations.

### **Report Organization**

The organization of this Parking Strategic Plan includes the following key areas:

- Executive Summary
- Planning Context
- Current Conditions Overview
  - Program Organization
  - On-Street Parking System Overview
  - Off-Street Parking System Overview
- Limited Parking Supply/Demand Update
- Community Engagement Summary
- Parking Expert Advisory Panel Report
- Characteristics of Effective Parking Management Programs





- Parking System Organization and Management
- An Overview of On-Street Parking Technologies
- Parking Program Goals and Objectives
- Recommended Parking Program Guiding Principles
- Recommended Parking Program Action Items
  - Primary Action Items
  - Secondary Action Items
- Appendices/Parking Management Tool Kit

## Key Findings

This report highlights the importance and complexity of parking as a critical element in the continued development and revitalization of Downtown Billings. With the recent investments in fine dining establishments, the refurbishment of historic downtown properties such as the Northern Hotel, the continually increasing popularity of downtown events such as Alive After 5, the Strawberry Festival, Harvest Festival, etc. and a growing downtown residential population, activity in Downtown Billings is increasing. To keep pace with increased downtown development, investments in new parking infrastructure have also been made. The new Empire Garage has raised the bar in Billings in terms of parking facility design.

While the amount of parking available is currently sufficient to meet current needs and even to accommodate the several small development projects that are on the immediate horizon, any significant new projects will likely require additional structured parking. Leveraging parking investment as a tool to incentivize development projects that align with the goals of Downtown Framework Plan is seen as an important community and economic development strategy (See Appendix C – Parking as an Economic Development Strategy).

Based on preliminary research and early discussions with community members, it was the consultant team's initial impression that the Billings parking system was in serious trouble and was potentially in need of a major restructuring and systems overhaul. However, having completed the program assessment our view is much different. Based on an extensive community engagement process (See Appendix Y for a summary of the community engagement process and Appendix Z for a summary of the Parking Expert Advisory Panel findings), the consultant team now sees a parking program that has a solid foundation in terms of physical and system assets upon which to build. We were also impressed with the quality of the City and Downtown management staff overall.

What the program currently needs most are six key elements:

1. **A Sense of Purpose and Direction** – this strategic plan should provide that missing element
2. **A Strong and Capable Program Leader** – the recent hiring of a new parking manager (an upgrade from the previous program leader whose title was Parking Supervisor) is seen as a very positive step
3. **An Investment in Staff Training and Development** – We are impressed with the new parking manager and feel she has many of the right qualities and management skills

needed to be successful; however, she lacks specific parking management experience. This is not uncommon in the industry (after all, there are no college degree programs for Parking Management – at least not yet!). There will be a steep learning curve for the new manager. However, with the right investment in professional development, education and the building of an effective network of peers, we are confident that Tracy and her staff can rise to the occasion. Given this situation, this report provides an extensive assortment of tools, sample manuals, white papers on various specialized parking elements and a rich collection of parking management best practices to aid in the staff education and development process.

4. **A Strong Customer Service Orientation** – one of the key leadership elements that need to be infused into the program going forward is a strong customer service focus. This applies to not only to staff training but also to facilities maintenance and investments in new technologies. Parking can play a key role in improving the perception and the experience of downtown. Collaboration and partnerships with the Downtown Billings Association will be an important component of this element.
5. **A Focus on “Mastering the Fundamentals” of Parking Management** – While related to the training and staff development element, this focus area is really about gaining an in-depth understanding of the many complex and challenging aspects that are somewhat unique to parking. Chapter 7 of this report (Characteristics of Effective Parking Management Programs) provides a strong framework built around 20 specific program categories that can form the basis for a comprehensive program development approach. Between this chapter and the wealth of tools provided in the Appendices, there are numerous program elements, both short and long term that can transform the Billings parking program into one of the best municipal programs in the country over time.
6. **Investment in New Technology** – Leveraging new technology will be a critical element in achieving many of the stated goals of this project including:
  - a. Enhanced customer friendly programs and services
  - b. Improved operational efficiency
  - c. Enhanced system financial performance
  - d. Improved system management

### **Primary Action Items**

Beginning on page 98 are the recommended “primary action items. Below is summary listing of these key recommendations:

Primary Action Item #1: Adopt New Program Vision/Mission Statements and Recommended Parking Program Guiding Principles – Implement Parking Management Best Practices

Primary Action Item # 2: Invest in New On-Street and Off-Street Parking Technology



Primary Action Item # 3: Leverage Parking as a Community and Economic Development Strategy and Develop a Comprehensive Parking Planning Function

Primary Action Item # 4: Develop a proactive facility maintenance program including regular facility condition appraisals, prioritized facility rehabilitation plans and the creation of parking facility maintenance reserves

Primary Action Item #5: Develop a new parking program brand and marketing program

Primary Action Item # 6: Develop a “Business Continuity Plan” to address the fact that the City’s primary parking equipment manufacturer (Federal APD) is “Going out of Business”. Define long-term system needs.

Primary Action Item # 7: Invest in training and staff development with a goal of mastering the fundamentals of parking system management and operations

Primary Action Item # 8: Create a more vertically integrated downtown parking system and re-focus and re-energize the Parking Advisory Board

Primary Action Item # 9: Expand the scope of the parking program over time to be more supportive and inclusive of supporting alternative modes transportation and embrace more of an “access management philosophy”

Primary Action Item # 10: Reassess the courtesy ticket program and meter bagging policies

Primary Action Item # 11: Critically assess the current parking enforcement program using the tools provided.

Primary Action Item #12: Address Abuse of Accessible Parking Placards to Improve Parking Availability for Those Who Are Truly Disabled.

## **In Conclusion**

The development of a strategic vision and a strong, well defined action plan was a critical first step in putting the Billings parking program on a trajectory for success and we applaud the community’s recognition of this fact and for making this important investment.

It is exciting to see the progress being made in downtown Billings. Parking can be a significant partner and contributor to advancing the community’s economic development goals as well helping to improve the overall downtown experience. We are confident with the strong team of City leaders, an engaged and supportive Mayor and City Council, a strong downtown organization and new investments in parking program development that the future of downtown is bright indeed. Now the real work on parking program improvement begins!



## 2. Planning Context

As part of our initial project request for information, we requested copies of previous studies and planning projects in order to better understand the planning context in which this analysis effort would be conducted.

We were provided with several relevant documents including the 2014 Billings Urban Area Long Range transportation Plan and two fairly recent parking studies.

### The 2014 Billings Urban Area Long Range Transportation Plan

#### Overview:

The Billings Urban Area Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is a framework to guide the development and implementation of multimodal transportation system projects for the Billings Urban Area. The LRTP is updated every four years, and looks at today's land use and transportation conditions and plans for the future through 2035.



The Billings Urban Area lies at the western edge of the northern High Plains. It serves as a central hub for a large region comprised of Montana, northern Wyoming, and the western Dakota's. Due to its location, Billings has developed as an important economic, cultural, educational, and transportation urban center for the entire region. Billings is located in Yellowstone County between Minneapolis and Seattle (east to west), and Calgary and Denver (north to south) and is one of the largest cities between these major cities, and it is the largest city in Montana.

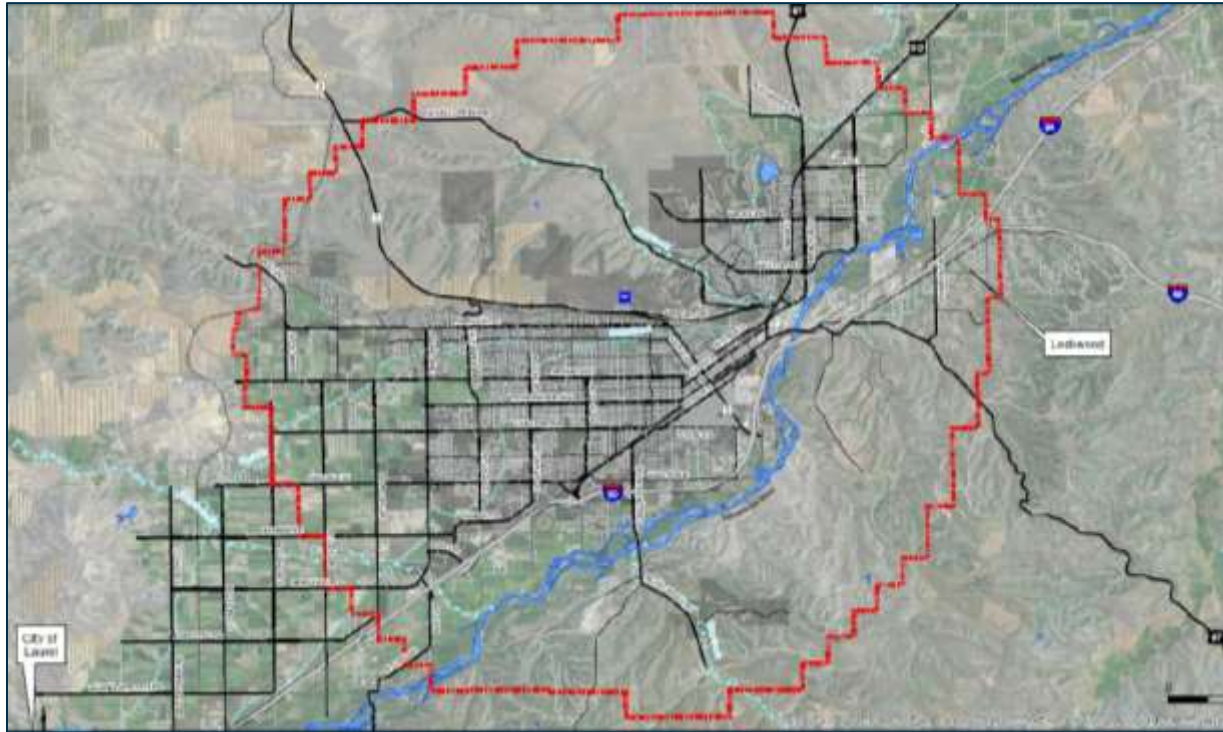
Transportation is a vital element to the residents and businesses of Billings and connects commerce from the Billings Urban Area to other parts of Montana and metropolitan areas via road, rail, and air. The region's transportation infrastructure is robust and includes streets, highways, freeways, rail, transit, sidewalks, bicycle lanes and routes, trails, and an airport. Given the importance of the transportation infrastructure, this document plans for transportation facilities and services to ensure mobility and accessibility throughout the Billings Urban Area.

The Yellowstone County Board of Planning is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and oversees transportation planning for the Billings Urban Area. The area encompasses the City of Billings, as well as the planning area extending approximately 4.5 miles outside the City limits.





## Study Area:



## Background:

The 2009 Billings LRTP listed ten planning goals along with 36 planning principles. The ten planning goals are list below:

These goals were developed based on the following planning principles:

- **Economic Vitality** - Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency
- **Safety** - Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
- **Security** - Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
- **Accessibility/Mobility** - Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight
- **Environment, Community, Economic Development** - Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns
- **Integration/Connectivity** - Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation



system, across and between modes, for people and freight

- **Efficient Operation** - Promote efficient system management and operation

### 2014 LRTP Goals

The 2009 LRTP goals were matched with the related planning principles (noted above) to identify any areas of overlap and/or planning factors that were not clearly covered by a goal.

- Goal 1: Safe, Efficient, Effective - To develop a transportation system that is safe, efficient, and effective
- Goal 2: Functional Integrity - To optimize, preserve, and enhance the existing transportation system
- Goal 3: Prioritized Improvements - To identify and prioritize projects that mitigate deficiencies, maximize the use of existing facilities, and balance anticipated needs with available funding
- Goal 4: Environmental - To develop a transportation system that protects the natural environment and promotes a healthy, sustainable community
- Goal 5: Multimodal - To create a transportation system that supports the practical and efficient use of all modes of transportation
- Goal 6: Economic Vitality - To develop a transportation system that supports the existing local economy and connects Billings to local, regional, and national commerce

### Plan Recommendations:

An extensive list of proposed recommendations was provided in the following major categories:

- Roadway Projects
- Intersection Projects
- Corridor Management Projects
- Public Transportation Projects
- Freight Projects - Truck
- Freight Projects - Rail
- Pedestrian Projects
- Bicycle Projects
- Multi-Use Trail Projects

### Commentary:

It is exciting that there is a recently completed Long Range Transportation Plan that the Parking Strategic Plan can be aligned with. While parking was not specifically addressed in the LRTP, it is envisioned that the parking planning initiatives recommended in this report will create an opportunity for the parking program to begin engaging more actively with City and regional



planning initiatives in general and more specifically begin integrating parking policies and programs into the larger transportation plan.

## 2010 Billings Downtown Parking Plan

### Overview:

This parking study, prepared for the City of Billings by Rich and Associates, examined the existing and projected parking needs within the downtown and also evaluated parking operations to aid in optimizing the City's parking system. The study developed a comprehensive inventory of the on and off-street parking, as well as conducting a land use inventory and parking turnover and occupancy study.

The parking and building inventory data was used in conjunction with survey data and field observations of parking turnover and occupancy to determine current, 5 year and 10 year future parking demand models.

A follow up turnover and occupancy study was conducted in October of 2009 at the request of the City's Parking Advisory Board. The follow-up observations were used as a second data set to verify the accuracy of the original parking observations and to provide supplemental information used as part of the parking analysis.

The key findings of the study confirmed that overall the City has adequate parking with shortages occurring in some pocket areas. The parking shortages can be mitigated by operational enhancement outlined in Section 4 of the report. These operational enhancements include recommendations on parking allocation, durations, pricing, enforcement, signs and marketing.

Future developments largely drive the need to consider additional parking in the downtown area. The key developments that will tentatively create the need for additional parking included the moving of the federal services to a new facility within the downtown. There are also plans to rehabilitate the old federal services facility as leasable commercial space. Other new parking demand generators included the planned Stockman Bank building and the proposed new Convention facility. Other pending changes that would influence downtown parking include the relocation of the Public Library and other redevelopments of existing building space in the downtown.

Several potential new parking locations were identified in the downtown area. These sites were refined to five prime locations based on input from City staff and from the Parking Advisory Board. An effective parking radius or service area zone analysis was prepared for each site to determine which sites demonstrated adequate parking demand for further consideration.



Montana Avenue at 28th Street emerged as a key location to pursue new parking opportunities in conjunction with the development of the proposed convention facility. The new Empire Garage is located on this site.

The second new parking area identified as optimal from a demand perspective was the site located at 27th Street and 4th Avenue. This site presents an opportunity central to several key developments. Developments near the 27th and 4th site are also slated to occur sooner, making this a priority site. A third site located at 1st Avenue and 29th Street was also evaluated.

Following is a summary of the parking operational recommendations from the Rich Associates' 2010 Downtown Billings Parking Plan that are related to this strategic plan:

- Develop an anti-shuffling ordinance.
- Use the full capability of the handhelds to deter overtime parking and shuffling, which may require a software upgrade.
- Parking enforcement personnel should also be parking ambassadors and should not be routinely reassigned to other duties.
- Replace the meters on Montana Avenue, and consider multi-space meters instead of single-space meters.
- Change the color scheme (yellow) of the existing 10-hour meters to another color.
- Upgrade the parking control equipment in the garages and transition to an automated Pay-in-Lane system.
- Convert the 2-hour metered parking west of 30th Avenue to 10-hour metered parking.
- Convert Park 1 to permit parking only.
- Consider selling Park 4 to expedite the development of a new downtown parking structure.
- Increase on-street and off-street parking rates as follows:
  - Increase the 10-hour meter rate from \$0.10 to \$0.20.
  - Increase the 10-hour meter permit rate from \$10 to \$30 (it has since been increased to \$15).
  - Increase the hourly rate in the garages from \$0.25 to \$0.35 for the first two hours.





## City of Billings, Parking Technology Audit

### Overview:

The following is a summary of the scope of services for the Parking Technology Audit conducted by the consulting firm Desman Associates:

#### Analyze Existing Conditions

- Review of Existing Equipment and Systems
- Review of Revenue Collection and Reconciliation Processes
- Review of Parking Enforcement Policies and Procedures
- Identify and Evaluate Appropriate Technologies and Operating Procedures
- Document Current System Pros and Cons



#### Discuss Possible Technology and Operating Methodologies

- Identify Appropriate Options
- Develop Cost Estimates and Evaluate Procurement Options
- Develop an Implementation Plan
- Identify Possible Implementation Outcomes

### Notes:

There are a number of important operational issues raised in the Desman report that warrant re-visitation. We have captured the most relevant of these issues in the current conditions overview section that follows.

A new wrinkle that has just recently come to light in the past few weeks is the fact that the parking access and revenue control system (PARCS) manufacturer that the City current uses in all of its garages (except the new Empire Garage), Federal APD, will no longer be in business after 2015. Federal APD once was a national leader in terms of market share for parking control systems in the US. As part of a wave of industry consolidations in recent years, Federal APD was purchased by 3M Corporation. 3M announced earlier this month that they will be getting out of the parking market and will no longer support the Federal APD equipment beyond current contractual obligations. 3M is working with their distributor networks to develop transition strategies. However, the bottom line for the City of Billings is that a business continuity plan relative to the existing PARCS equipment needs to be developed as replacement parts and service will become problematic before long. This new issue is addressed as a primary recommendation later in this report.



## The Downtown Billings Framework Plan:

### Introduction

The Downtown Billings Framework Plan, developed in 1997, is a comprehensive, community-oriented guide for the development of downtown Billings. The Framework has six elements. Combined, they provide the comprehensive logic for making wise decisions about the future of Downtown, and a planning base within which Downtown can thrive in all its complexities.

### Values

A description of the important values against which all development projects would be measured included:

- Downtown is everyone's neighborhood.
- Downtown Billings should be a safe and inviting place for everyone to live, work and play.
- Our sense of community is friendly, caring and independent.
- Downtown Billings is unique in its natural beauty and surroundings.
- Institutions and activities that are important to the community belong downtown:
  - Civic, educational and medical institutions
  - Arts, culture and recreation
  - Churches and gathering places
  - Civic activities, entertainment, and community celebrations
- Billings' citizens value the opportunity to experience the outdoors in Downtown: sidewalk cafés, events, bicycling, pedestrian environment, etc.
- Ease of access is critical to Downtown's livelihood.
- Downtown draws from its historic past as its leaders shape its future character.
- Downtown Billings believes strongly in its economic future.
- The future of Downtown will be shaped by forward-thinking leadership and public/private collaboration.
- Downtown is entrepreneurial and nurtures specialty retail and home-grown businesses offering personalized services.



### Assets

The following assets are important elements of Downtown that should be preserved and enhanced.

- Unique collection of buildings
- Cultural facilities
- Montana Ave. Historic District



- Specialty retail
- Medical corridor
- Educational campuses
- MetraPark
- 27th St. connection from Downtown to the airport and I-90
- Financial office market
- Government presence
- Nature of people: sense of community, open, friendly
- Proximity to scenic beauty
- Friendly, helpful local service providers
- Multiple generations
- Numerous churches of many faiths

## Key Issues

Issues: Concerns to be addressed in order to reach the Vision and enhance the Assets while being to the Values of the community.

- Reduce gaps and the lack of connection between the core of Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods caused by the discontinuity of land uses.
- Increase the downtown residential population to bring the area alive after office hours.
- The public places – parks, streets, sidewalks – should provide beauty and comfort.
- Work cooperatively with the private sector to encourage potential growth and development
- Organize downtown leadership to manage, promote, maintain, or advocate for the benefit of the greater community of those with a stake in Downtown's future.
- Address existing regulations and requirements which discourage the very type of development that is desirable (housing, building renovations, food and beverage establishments, night spots, etc.)
- Focus on pedestrian as well as vehicular movement throughout Downtown
- Address the psychological factors that make walking a few blocks seem inconvenient and unpleasant
- Provide orientation and landmarks to prevent people from becoming disoriented Downtown
- Develop programs to “level the playing field” and make the economics of Downtown more similar to undeveloped lots away from city center
- Encourage business hours and activities beyond the eight-to-five office hours
- Highlight the Western themes of many of Downtown's land uses, architecture and businesses for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike.
- Develop in Downtown a sense of irresistible magnetism that could draw thousands of





people to enjoy this unique asset.

- Draw on the images of beauty that surround Downtown: the Yellowstone River, the Rims, agricultural lands, and distant mountains.
- Encourage greater efforts toward historic preservation and renovation to create a sense of historic permanence.

## Plan Organization: The Framework Diagram

The plan created a “Framework Diagram”, a map of Downtown’s districts, connections, landmarks and other features. The Framework Diagram formed the underlying structure for the physical elements of the plan and was a geographic representation of the important features of Downtown Billings and their relations to one another.

The Framework Diagram identified a number of downtown districts. These are the sub-areas that combine to make Downtown, that differ in character and use, and that complement each other within the whole structure. The districts included:

- **Central District/City Center:**  
The community’s center and the location of government, business, specialty retail, restaurants, and cultural facilities; the place where the parades are; the place where we gather to celebrate.
  - Goal: To identify the Central District as the community’s center, shape the District to reflect who we are, promote a strong economic climate to nurture our businesses, and provide a comfortable place for the community to live, to work, and to gather.
- **Historic District/Old Town:** The physical remainder of Billings’ birthplace’ the connection to the railroad heritage; the reason that Billings is where it is today.
  - Goal: To preserve and complement this heritage, create an active business, residential, and pedestrian environment, connect the Historic District with the other Downtown districts and the South Side neighborhood, and encourage property development in a manner appropriate to the district’s historic character.
- **West Downtown/Cathedral District:** Connects the Central District with the neighborhoods to the west and south. It is the area of greatest opportunity for development and for becoming a real neighborhood – the location of housing that is denser and larger in scale





that fits in the neighborhood and of businesses smaller than in the Central District.

- Goal: To promote infill development of housing and support businesses, connect the Central District to the neighborhood beyond, and make this zone a “place” rather than a barrier.
- **North Downtown/Uptown/Lincoln District:** connects the Central District with the medical corridor and North Park, and contains a combination of professional and medical businesses, services, and housing that supports these uses.
  - Goal: To reduce the barriers of 4th and 6th, establish the area as both a discrete district and a recognized extension of the Central District, and connect the medical corridor and the universities to the Central District.
- **East Transition Zone/Civic District:** Encompasses a large area that connects the Central District, the Historic District, and MetraPark, with transitional uses that over time will strengthen the connections.
  - Goal: To encourage the western edge of this district to develop so that it connects the Central District to the Depot area, and identify the ideas discussed to date so they can become a starting point for a future effort that concentrates on this zone. The long-term goal is to improve the connection from the pedestrian core to MetraPark.

## Framework Plan Components

The following Framework Plan components set the course for initial actions, mid- and long-term projects, and ongoing monitor-and-review activity. They prescribed the design character and style of public spaces, transportation initiatives, and an implementing organization.

### Organization:

The private sector leadership group that represents the property owners, businesses, retailers, and those committed to Downtown. The Downtown Partnership is inclusive by design and works with public agencies on a common agenda for Downtown growth and development that benefits the community including such activities as business retention, historic preservation, etc.

### Moving About: The street system, parking, and shuttle opportunities

- Increase on-street parking
- Add pedestrian amenities at major intersections
- Consider conversion of some one-way streets to two-way streets
- Widen sidewalks
- Consider alternative traffic routes through downtown
- Consider alternatives to railroad traffic through downtown
- Address large-vehicle parking needs
- Accommodate alternative transportation modes (bicycling, shuttles)



**Kit of Parts:** The streetscape and public space elements (lights, benches, etc.) throughout Downtown

- Provide amenities and streetscape environments that are simple, consistent and comfortable
- Address lighting for improved evening activities
- Provide reference points at gateways, entryways and intersections
- Improve Downtown signage
- Develop a Kit of Parts for Downtown events

**Gathering Spaces:** The system of public spaces Downtown

- Encourage development and use of public parks and plazas
- Encourage development with planned open space

**Housing:** A strategy for providing a range of housing options for Downtown

- Encourage the development of multi-family and loft style housing units





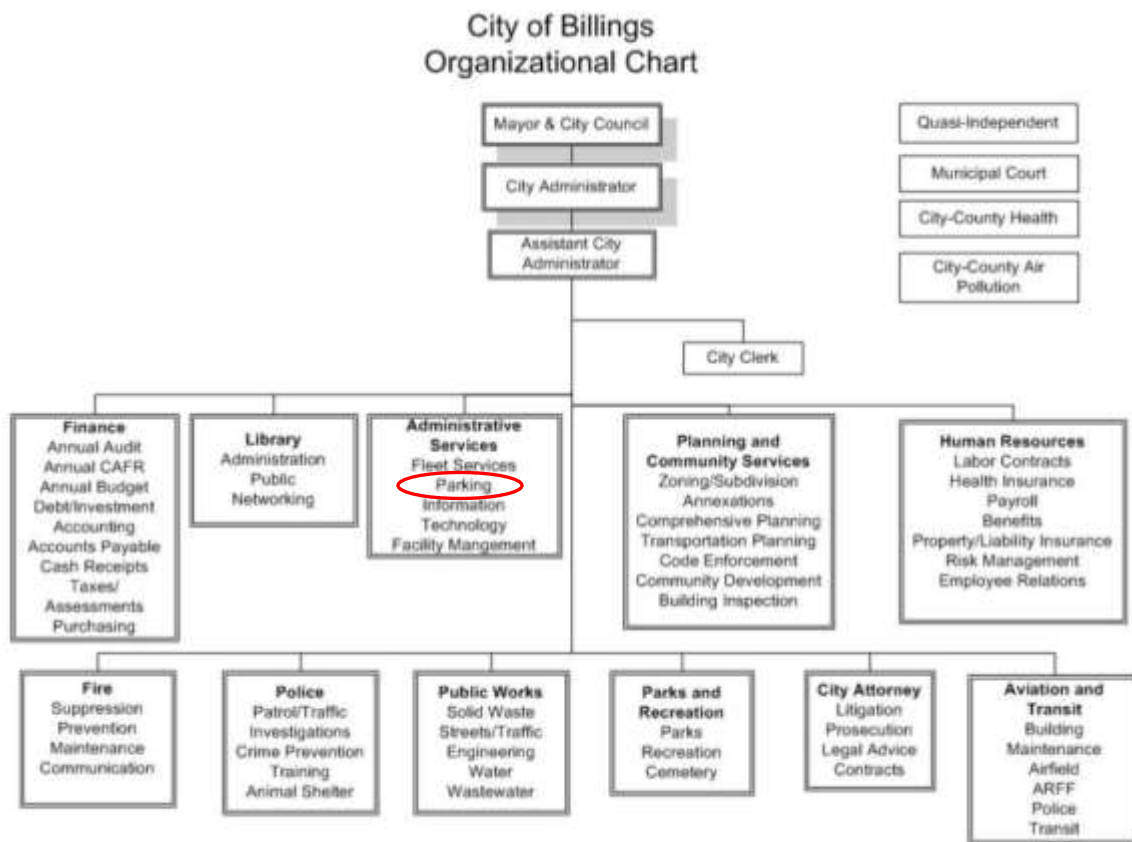
## 3. Current Conditions Overview

The following overview of the current City of Billings parking program was developed from several sources including:

- Documentation provided by the City in response to our initial request for information
- Interviews with City and Parking Department staff
- City parking website information and
- Excerpts from previous studies

## Organization

The City of Billings Parking Department is located organizationally under the Administrative Services Division along with Fleet Services, Information Technology and Facility Management.





## On-Street Parking System Overview

### Parking Meter Hardware

The manufacturer and supplier of all the parking meters in the City is Duncan Solutions. The meters have electronic meter timing mechanisms that are powered by 9-volt batteries. The meters include an infrared wireless communication port for sending and receiving meter data such as: meter ID, usage data, programmed rates, time, date, and revenue data. Data is transferred wirelessly to and from companion handheld data collection units. The meters are housed in both single and twin zinc alloy housings and coin deposits are collected in either open plastic cups or metal containers.

### Parking Meter Rates

The meter rate for the majority of the 711 two-hour meters is \$0.50 an hour. There are 41 unique two-hour meters that have green painted housings dispersed throughout downtown in high activity areas that have a hourly rate of \$0.50. The city gives fifty percent of the revenue collected from these meters to the Downtown Billings Association (DBA) to partially fund downtown beautification projects. There are 6 4-hour meters with white painted case iron housings that are \$0.50 per hour and 47 10-hour meters with yellow painted housings that are \$0.10 per hour.

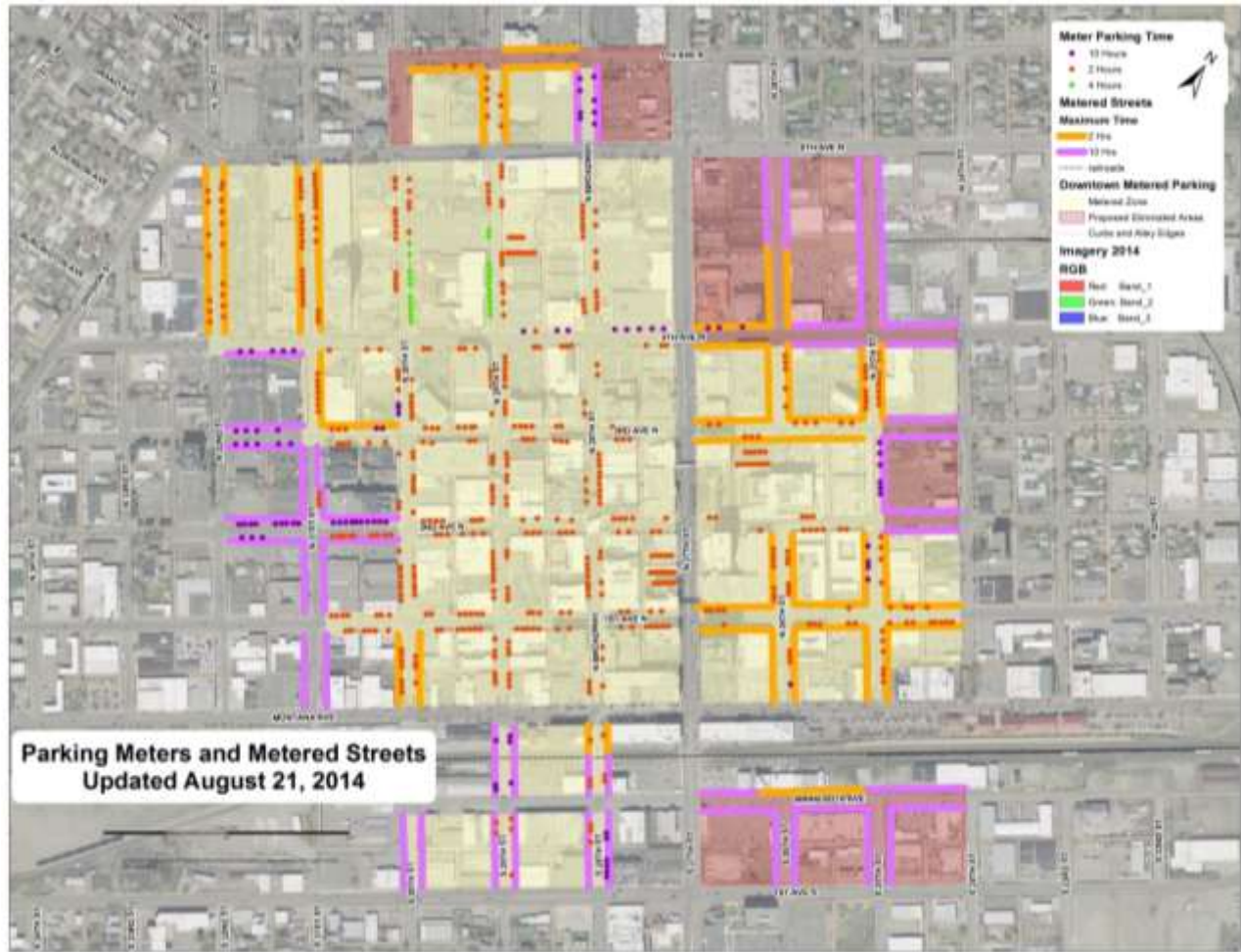


The last meter rate increase occurred in 2012 when the 2-hour meter rate was changed from \$0.35 to \$0.50 per hour.

Downtown employees can also purchase a monthly on-street parking permit for \$15. The usage of these on-street permits is only allowed at 10-hour meters with yellow painted case iron housings.

### Parking Meter Locations

The map on the following page illustrates the locations of downtown parking meters as well as time-limits and areas previously proposed for meter removal by the Rich and Associates study.



## Parking Enforcement

The City of Billings Parking Division is charged with the responsibility of enforcing all metered and non-metered on-street parking regulations, permit parking activity in the four city parking garages, and meter usage and permit parking activity at several off-street surface lots. The City Police Department patrol officers and volunteers from the Crime Prevention Center also enforce on-street parking regulations, but to a lesser extent than the does the Parking Division enforcement staff.

The Parking Division enforcement staff is comprised of three full-time employees that have the job title of Parking Enforcement Officer (PEO). While the PEO's primary job duty is parking enforcement they also can be assigned to serve as stand-in parking garage attendants when needed. The temporary reassignment of at least one or two PEO's to parking attendant duty occurs commonly, which causes







frequent fluctuations to the coverage and consistency of downtown parking enforcement activities.

When the full complement of PEO's are on duty each officer is assigned one of three separate enforcement routes. Three PEOs drive gas-powered single-occupant scooters to enforce the routes.

The single-occupant three wheel enforcement scooters reportedly can be used without problem during the majority of the winter months.



Hours of enforcement begin at 8:00 AM and end at 5:00 PM Monday-Friday. PEO's enforce on-street meter parking and the unmetered parking time limit zones. Each PEO is armed with a Casio IT 3000 digital handheld enforcement device that has a built-in camera and citation printer, tire chalking equipment, and cellular/radio phones for field communications. The tire chalking equipment is used to keep track of the time a vehicle has been parked in the same location within an unmetered time limited parking zone. The meter maintenance staff assists the PEOs with the installation of "Wheel Boots" used to immobilize vehicles with multiple unpaid parking tickets.

According to the Desman report, the PEOs reported that Casio handheld ticket writing units are very reliable, but the camera component of the units produce poor quality black and white images. The Casio units are supported by Cardinal Tracking Inc. software. The Desman report noted that the Parking Division staff had limited training as to the data analysis and retrieval capability of the

Cardinal Tracking system. The staff had to rely on Cardinal Tracking Inc. personnel to generate detailed reports on ticket issuance activity.

These detailed reports are typically relied upon to analyze the productivity of the individual PEO's, identify areas where parking violations most often occur, and to monitor and analyze the volume and type of citations that are most often written.

## Parking Fines

There are seven different fine amounts that apply to 35 different parking regulation infractions in the City Code. The seven fine amounts are \$0, \$10.00, \$15.00, \$20.00, \$25.00 \$40.00 and \$100.00.

The City of Billings parking fine structure includes courtesy tickets for first offenders with no fine and an escalating fine structure for repeat offenders of selected parking infractions. The city has implemented a tiered parking fine system for posted sign (code 21) and expired meter (code 11) violations as follows:

- First citation – No Fine
- Second citation - \$10.00
- Third Citation - \$20.00
- Fourth and subsequent citations - \$40.00





Courtesy citations are also issued to first time offenders for plugging parking meters (code 7A infraction); however, subsequent fines for this infraction do not escalate. At the time of the Desman Associate parking study, the amount of the fine for parking violations is determined by the number of citations received over a 180-day period. If subsequent violations do not occur over the 180 day period, the fine reverts back to the first citation and the 180 day count starts over. It is our understanding that the 180 day period has now been changed to 365 days. Based on the volume of courtesy tickets issued as a percent of total citation, we believe this was wise policy change.

This tiered approach to parking fines is favored by many cities to charge infrequent offenders minimal fines and repeat offenders more expensive fines. The no charge for the first offense and tiered parking fines represent a customer-friendly approach to parking enforcement, which is commendable.

If a parking patron has more than \$50 of unpaid tickets, a sticker notice is placed on the vehicle stating that if the amount is left unpaid the vehicle will be booted and an additional \$100 fine will be assessed.

### **Voided Parking Tickets**

The Parking Division currently does not require PEOs or others to specify the reason for voiding a parking ticket and it is our understanding that there are no written policies or guidelines governing the voiding of parking tickets. Voided parking tickets accounted for 5% and 6% of the total tickets written in 2008 and 2009, respectively. These percentages are slightly higher than the 2% to 3% industry average for voided parking tickets. The adoption of a policy regarding voided tickets will tend to reduce the number of voided tickets. There are usually several legitimate reasons for a PEO to void a ticket such as a writing error, failure to notice a handicapped hangtag, the driver arrives before the ticket is printed, etc.

Per the Desman Associates report, voided tickets also arise as a result of possible negligence on the part of a PEO. Tracking voided ticket volumes of PEO's is one mechanism for correcting this issue. Excessive voided tickets can serve as an indicator of poor performance or a need for additional training.

### **Courtesy Ticket Policy**

The City of Billings has enacted a policy of issuing courtesy tickets to first time offenders of certain parking violations. The three violations for which courtesy tickets are written are for being parked at an expired meter, being parked in violation of posted signs, and for plugging meters to exceed the allowable meter time limit. If the offender does not receive a second ticket within 365 days, the same parking violator will be issued another courtesy ticket. Those ticketed for plugging meters are eligible for only one courtesy ticket over the lifetime registration of their vehicle. Casio handheld ticket writing units used by the PEOs are programmed to maintain accurate records of the license plate number of registered vehicles that are issued these courtesy tickets. Following the removal of the previous parking manager, all tickets have begun to be audited by parking staff.

Kimley-Horn supports this is type of customer-friendly approach to parking enforcement. However, as the Desman report also noted, we are concerned about the volume of the courtesy



tickets. In 2008 and 2009, courtesy tickets accounted for well over half of all the tickets written on an annual basis.

A limited audit of one week's parking citations revealed the following results:

- There were 481 citations issued with a total amount of \$3,755 in fines.
- Of the 481 citations, 414 (86%) were for meter and posted sign citations.
- Of the 414 meter and posted sign citations issued, 276 were courtesy tickets.
- The 276 courtesy tickets represent 67% of the meter and posted sign tickets issued that week.

### **Meter Collections and Maintenance**

The Parking Division has two full-time staff members assigned to the Meter Shop. Their duties include the collection and maintenance of the parking meter system. For security and oversight purposes, the two staff members work side by side to collect meter coinage three times a week on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. There are three collection routes that are walked that take approximately 3 to 5 hours to complete.

A vehicle is used to collect the green meters which are dispersed throughout downtown.

Control of meter keys is a critical element of the security for a parking meter system. Ineffective control over the access to meter keys can make meter revenue vulnerable to possible theft. The City of Billings' meter system is considered a moderate sized system by industry standards. Moderate sized meter systems usually have no more than 500 meters per one meter key. This practice is instituted so that if a key is lost or stolen, the cost to rekey that segment of the system is kept low and the exposure to lost revenues is relatively low. At the time of the Desman Associates report (2010) the entire meter system could be accessed by one key and there were no procedures in place to limit when and which individuals have access to the meter key. Based on recent changes two keys are now in place and the two maintenance staff members are the only staff that have access to the meter keys.

Coinage collected in open cups/containers inside the meters is emptied into a larger locked collection cart that is wheeled around each walking collection route. This system of collections, which allows the collection personnel open access to the coinage, is completely unsecure and susceptible to pilferage. In a "closed" and secure collection system, the open cups and containers inside the meters would be replaced with sealed coin vaults especially designed to be inserted into a large locked collection cart receptacle in order to empty the coins out of the vault, thus eliminating the collector's ability to access the coinage. No matter the technology and equipment selected for on-street metered parking in the future, consideration should be given to a locked vault type system where closed coin canisters can only be emptied directly into a locked collection cart, which would provide the city with a higher level of revenue control.

Duncan AutoCite X3Casio IT3100 handheld devices are used by the collection personnel every two weeks to audit individual meters deposits. Based on a sampling of audited meters it was concluded that the meter ID and coinage deposit data transmitted wirelessly from the meters to the handheld



units is accurate and reliable. However, the revenue collection data totals retrieved directly from the meter system and bagged for deposit at a downtown Bank is never matched with the receipts issued by the Bank several days after the deposit is made. This lack of reconciliation means that coinage could potentially be pilfered from the collection deposit bags prior to them being delivered to the Bank, as the Bank is only counting and acknowledging deposit of the contents of the meter collection bags. Although an audit process that cross checks the electronic meter revenue deposit totals with the Bank deposit total will rarely if ever completely match, the difference between the two totals should never be significant. Periodically conducting such an audit on an impromptu basis would be a reasonable revenue theft deterrent for the Parking Division collection personnel, and it would also expose revenue pilferage that could also potentially occur at the bank.



## Off-Street Parking System Overview

The off-Street parking system is comprised of four parking structures and several surface parking lots. More detail on parking garages and utilization can be found in the Supply/Demand Update section later in this report.

## Parking Garages

The following tables summarize some of the key attributes of the City's parking garages:

### Park 1 Garage -2912 Third Avenue North

- 5 Level, 456 space structure with leasable ground floor retail
- 4 lanes total
  - 2 lanes inbound with ticket dispenser, card reader, barrier gate and full sign
  - 1 lane outbound with card reader and barrier gate
  - 1 lane outbound with cashier booth, fee display, card reader and barrier gate



### Park 2 Garage -2651 First Avenue North

- 6 Level, 760 space structure with portion of the ground level dedicated to automatic teller lanes for adjacent commercial bank
- 7 lanes total
  - 2 lanes inbound with ticket dispensers, card readers, intercoms , barrier gates and full signs
  - 1 lane outbound with cashier booth, fee display, card reader, intercom and barrier gate
  - 3 lanes outbound with card readers, intercoms and barrier gates
  - 1 lane outbound with card reader and barrier gate



### Park 3 Garage -210 North 27<sup>th</sup> Street

- 6 Level, 269 space structure connected to Billings City Hall
- 3 lanes total
  - 1 lane inbound with ticket dispenser, card reader, barrier gate and full sign
  - 1 reversible lane with ticket dispenser, card reader and barrier gate inbound; card reader and barrier gate outbound
  - 1 lane outbound with cashier booth, card reader and barrier gate







## Empire Parking Garage

The Empire Parking Garage is a new multi-level parking garage with first level retail spaces to serve downtown Billings, Montana. The six level parking garage has approximately 542 stalls and approximately 16,000 SF of retail space on the ground level.



The major source of funding was bonding of the Expanded North 27th Street Tax Increment District.

The additional construction/design funding came from Fund 203 (N. 27th TIFD account), as well as the agreed upon sale of about 212 of the structure's parking spaces and the street level retail to Zootist, Inc. and Alley Cat Investments, LLC.

The Empire Garage is managed through an agreement between a property management firm and the Empire Garage Condo association. The parking project is vital to the redevelopment of almost 200,000 sq. ft. of vacant hotel and office building space as well as tenant parking for about 60,000 sq. ft. of fully redeveloped office space.

## Parking Facility Operating Hours

All of the off-street surface lots and Park 1, Park 2 and Park 3 are accessible to the general public on a 24 hour 7 day per week basis.

Park 3 is staffed with one parking attendant from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM Monday through Friday, and Park 2 is staffed with one parking attendant from 7:15 AM to 11:00 PM Monday through Saturday. Before and after the garages are staffed the gates are raised to allow users to exit without paying. The new Empire Garage is currently operating the same as Park 2 until the parking strategic plan is completed and recommended rate and operations changes are evaluated.

Presently, because the in-lane vehicle detection counters are not fully functional, the Parking Division is unable to determine how many vehicles enter and exit the garages during these "free-out" periods. Additionally, the current system allows daily parkers who enter the garage during periods when fees are charged to wait until after the attendant has left the premises and the exit gates are raised to leave without paying the charge they incurred from earlier in the day.

## Monthly & Transient Parking Rates

The City of Billings has sanctioned the Parking Board with the authority to advise the City Council on parking rates and terms for parking validation programs and volume sales discounts. The following parking rates are applicable to all the garages and lots as noted below:

### Monthly Garage Parking

- Assigned space: \$100.00 per month
- Covered interior space: \$50.00 per month
- Rooftop space: \$25.00 per month



- Refundable access card deposit: \$5.00

## Monthly Lot Parking

- Assigned space: \$75.00 per month
- Refundable permit deposit: \$5.00

## Monthly On-Street Permit - Downtown Employees Only

- Yellow meter space permit: \$15.00 per month

## Transient Garage Parking General Public

- First 2 hours in garage: \$0.25 per hour
- Each additional hour: \$1.00 per hour
- Daily maximum: \$5.00

## Garage Parking Rate Discounts

- Park & Shop Validations: Free
- City Departmental Validations: Free to Customer/Charged to Departments
- Crown Plaza Hotel Validations: Value of Discounted Parking Increases as Length of Stay Increases
- Monthly Group Parking: 5% to 15% for single billing groups of 5 to 100
- Parking Coin Tokens: Valued at \$.25 each/Distributed by Downtown Businesses

## Parking Validation Program

The Parking Division has historically offered discounted value validations to transient parking customers at each of the four garages. Three types of validation programs are offered by the Parking Division.

The Downtown Billings Association (DBA) promotes and facilitates the processing of the Park & Shop Validation Program, while separate parking validation programs serve Crown Plaza Hotel patrons and the Lincoln Education Center. The objective of these programs is to promote downtown commerce by reducing the cost of parking.

The Crowne Plaza Hotel has an agreement with the City of Billings that allows the hotel use up to 275 spaces in Park 2 at the prevailing daily rate structure for its guests and/or employees. The hotel pays the city the daily maximum parking rate (i.e. \$5.00) for every overnight guest that parks in Park 2 and does not pass on this charge to its guests. The same agreement also allows the hotel to validate discounted parking charges at Park 2 for its short-term parking customers. The short-term parkers mostly include non-overnight patrons that dine or attend events and meetings at the hotel.



## **Off-Street Parking Access and Revenue Control System (PARCS) Equipment**

Each of the three older downtown parking garages has Federal APD parking access and revenue control equipment. The parking equipment package in each garage is generally comprised of barrier gates, card readers, vehicle detection devices, ticket dispensers, fee display units, and full signs.

The city's public parking lots are not access controlled (un-gated). Contract parking permits are available for 29 of the 40 spaces at the 27th Avenue surface lot and two-hour single space electronic parking meters are used to collect the transient revenue at the remainder of the spaces in the city's surface lots.

Contract parkers in the garages are issued proximity cards to enter and exit. Daily or transient parkers must obtain a machine-issued, time stamped ticket from an in-lane ticket dispenser to open the access gates and enter each of the garages. To exit the garage, daily and transient parkers give the same ticket to a parking attendant who determines the length of stay and calculates the fee to be collected from the parking patron.

The parking equipment hardware was last upgraded in Park 1, Park 2 and Park 3 in 2007. The parking access and revenue control equipment is supported by Scan Net, an integrated central management software program developed by Federal ADP. This central management system has the capacity to monitor and generate historical and real-time information and data reports on all the system hardware devices relative to vehicle counts, access and revenue receipts.

## **Strengths and Weaknesses of Existing Operations and Equipment**

### **On-Street Meters Hardware and Network**

#### **Strengths:**

- Existing electronic meters are well understood and convenient for users (for those who have coins).
- Meters generate significant revenue.
- Meters encourage parking turnover.
- Meters make it easier to enforce parking regulations.
- Color coded meter housing effectively convey parking time limits.
- Meter service and repair program is effective with minimal unit down time.
- Meter revenue greatly exceeds collection and maintenance costs.
- Capable and hard-working collections/maintenance personnel.

#### **Weaknesses:**

- Meters do not accept multiple payment options.
- Meter technology does not maximize revenues.
- Open collection system exposes the city to theft and lost revenues.
- Meters are not effectively audited.
- Meter system database and software program cannot be configured to effectively analyze system performance.



- The 2-hour meters west of 30th Street are significantly underutilized.
- Meters contribute to streetscape clutter.
- Meters may discourage downtown customers and visitors as well as businesses to locate downtown.
- While there is an “anti-shuffling ordinance” for on-street parking, it has been problematic to enforce. Mobile license plate recognition systems are an effective option that should be considered.

## Parking Fines and Enforcement

### Strengths:

- Tiered parking fine program penalizes repeat offenders.
- No charge for first offense is customer friendly.
- Capable and hard-working enforcement personnel.

### Weaknesses:

- No revenue generated from courtesy tickets.
- Courtesy tickets reward non-compliant behavior.
- Fines are relatively low overall.
- Fines do not escalate if unpaid.
- The cost of enforcement exceeds citation revenue.
- Enforcement officer deployment is inconsistent as they serve as backup cashiers.
- Existing enforcement system is not effective in detecting overtime parking and shuffling.
- Tire chalking is slow and often ineffective.
- Handhelds do not provide good quality photographs.
- Parking enforcement officers are not required to explain reasons for voided tickets.
- Insufficient coordination between meter repair personnel and enforcement staff related to meter malfunctions.

## Parking Rates

### Strengths:

- On-street short-term parking (2 hours or less) is more expensive than off-street parking.
- Higher green meter rates fund downtown projects.
- Meters accept tokens.

### Weaknesses:

- Downtown employees are allowed to use Park & Shop validations for daily parking.
- There is no duration of stay limit applied to the Park & Shop validations program.
- The tracking and accounting for Park & Shop validations is cumbersome.





## Off-Street Parking Operations and Equipment

### Strengths:

- Cashiers are customer friendly.
- Cashiers can manually operate equipment in case of a malfunction.
- Revenue control system does now accept credit cards.

### Weaknesses:

- Cashiers are expensive and may not be justified based on low traffic volumes (Note: Currently cashiers are only used in the Park 2 and 3 garages). Consider the use of automated equipment or parking meters as an alternative.
- Park & Shop validation program is not programmed into the cash registers.
- Use of tokens in garages requires manual accounting.
- Mismatched firmware at the four garages inhibits the full functionality of the central management system.
- PARCS reporting functionality has been crippled by the volume of historical transaction records dating back to the initial installation of the equipment, which needs to be archived.
- Parking Division staff has not been adequately trained on the Federal ADP central management system.
- No effective mechanism has been established to audit parking garage revenue. A defined program for providing external revenue control and operational audits is recommended.
- Loss of revenue after hours when garages are not staffed.
- Meters in lots do not accept multiple payment options.
- The present setup of the PARCS and garage attendant oversight does not adequately guard against revenue pilferage.

## Parking Division Management

### Strengths:

- Although new to parking, the Parking Manager is a capable parking professional.
- The Parking Advisory Board provides citizen and business input on all aspects of parking.
- The Parking Advisory Board and Parking Manager are not satisfied with the status quo and want to improve the on- and off-street parking systems.

### Weaknesses:

- Staff needs training on data retrieval and configuring and analyzing system management reports.
- Aspects of the daily, monthly and annual revenue reporting and tracking functions are dispersed among several members of the Parking Division rather than consolidated and assigned to a single in-house staff member with basic accounting skills.
- The parking equipment service and technical advisors to the Parking Division have been effectively challenged to adequately train Division personnel or to insure that the systems technology has been kept up to date.

- No effort has been made to establish a practice and process for auditing revenue generated by the parking system.

## **Summary of Recommendations from the 2010 Rich and Associates Downtown Billings Parking Plan**

Following is a summary of the recommendations from the Rich Associates' 2010 Downtown Billings Parking Plan that are related to this study:

- Develop improved enforcement tools to effectively implement the on-street anti-shuffling ordinance.
- Use the full capability of the handhelds to deter overtime parking and shuffling, which may require a software upgrade.
- Parking enforcement personnel should also be parking ambassadors and should not be routinely reassigned to other duties.
- Replace the meters on Montana Avenue, and consider multi-space meters instead of single-space meters.
- Change the color scheme (yellow) of the existing 10-hour meters to another color.
- Upgrade the parking control equipment in the garages and transition to an automated Pay-in-Lane system.
- Convert the 2-hour metered parking west of 30th Avenue to 10-hour metered parking.
- Convert Park 1 to permit parking only.
- Consider selling Park 4 to expedite the development of a new downtown parking structure.
- Increase on-street and off-street parking rates as follows:
  - Increase the 10-hour meter rate from \$0.10 to \$0.20.
  - Increase the 10-hour meter permit rate from \$10 to \$30 (it has since been increased to \$15).
  - Increase the hourly rate in the garages from \$0.25 to \$0.35 for the first two hours.



## 4. Limited Parking Supply/Demand Update

### *Parking Supply/Demand Update*

Maintaining an accurate inventory of parking spaces as well as regularly surveying parking resource utilization are two hallmarks of an effectively managed parking program. As part of this parking strategic plan, we felt it was important to update the parking supply/demand data within the downtown core. The most recent parking supply/demand study was conducted in January 2010 by Rich and Associates. The 2010 study was a comprehensive assessment of parking in the central downtown area including on and off-street parking inventory for both public and private facilities. Beyond having good data on parking system assets and utilization, one of the primary objectives of the study was to identify potential sites for the proposed Empire Garage. The new \$13.5 million Empire Garage located on Montana Avenue between Broadway and N. 27th Street opened in September 2014 and has 542 parking spaces and street level retail. The garage was developed as a public/private partnership.

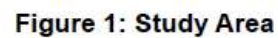


**New Empire Garage – Opened in September 2014**

This limited parking supply/demand update focuses on the following key areas:

- Existing Parking Conditions – Supply/Demand Update
- Potential Downtown Development – Future Parking Demand
- Summary

## Study Area







## Parking Inventory

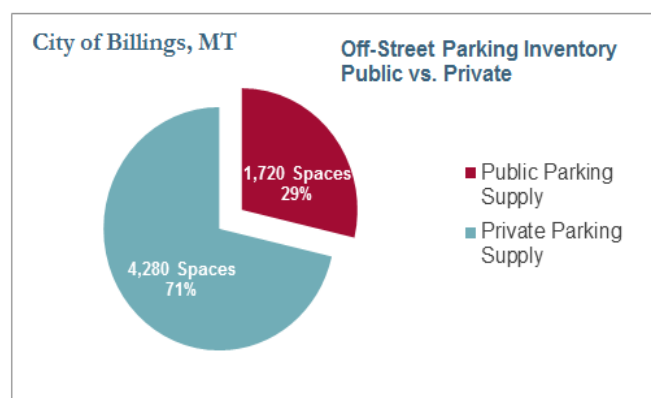
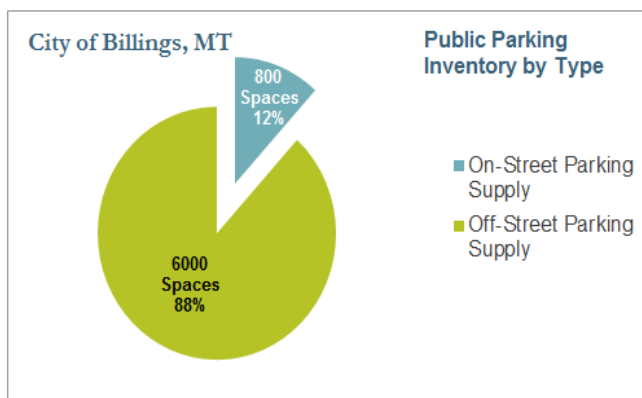
The on-street parking supply within the study area is approximately 814 metered spaces. On-street spaces have a variety of time limits including 2, 4 and 10 hour options. The cost to park on-street at a meter is as low as \$0.10 per hour at the 10-hour meters on the fringe of downtown. The City of Billings also offers a parking permit for a monthly on-street parking at a rate of \$15 per month. This permit is valid at all on-street locations and all hourly rated meters. The on-street system is regularly patrolled by City enforcement staff during weekdays. Meters are free on weekends.



On-Street Parking in Downtown Billings

According to the 2010 Rich and Associates parking study, there are more than 11,000 total parking spaces within the City of Billings downtown area and approximately 6,800 within the 2014 update study area.

Approximately 12% (800 spaces) of the overall parking supply is “on-street” parking and 88% (6,000 spaces) are located in “off-street” parking facilities. The off-street parking is comprised of both surface parking lots and parking garages. The off-street parking supply is a combination of public and private facilities, with the breakdown being 29% public (1,720 spaces) and 71% private (4,280 spaces).





Since the 2010 Rich and Associates parking study, there have been significant reductions in the number of on-street parking spaces being enforced. Over the last 4 years the number of available on-street spaces being actively enforced has contracted by about 15%, from approximately 950 on-street spaces at the peak to 814 spaces today.

The reduction in on-street parking enforcement can be attributed in part due to the lack of demand of these spaces partially due to the availability of additional off-street parking facilities and a desire to reduce enforcement costs. The Empire Garage is the most recent expansion to the off-street parking system and it is the fourth public garage.

## Public Off-Street Parking

Each of the City's parking garages has available monthly parking permits for purchase by individuals and employees. Based on the City's rate structure, shown in **Table 1** below, individual parking spaces can be reserved for use by an individual from 7:00 AM – 6:00 PM Monday – Friday (with the exception of assigned spaces and spaces in the Empire Garage). Three of the City's four garages are open for free overnight public parking downtown. The City parking garage locations, hours of operation and fee structures are documented below.

Location	Hours	Fee Structure
<b>Park 1 Garage</b> (454 spaces) – 2912 Third Avenue N	7:15 am – 5:45 pm (Weekdays) 5:45 pm – 7:15 am (Open) Open on Weekends	Roof: \$25 / month Covered: \$50 / month Assigned: \$100 / month
<b>Park 2 Garage</b> (760 spaces) – 2651 First Avenue N	7:15 am – 10:45 pm (Weekdays) 10:45 pm – 7:15 am (Open) 7:15 am – 10:45 pm (Saturday) 10:45 pm – 7:15 am (Open) Open on Sunday	Roof: \$25 / month Covered: \$50 / month Assigned: \$100 / month Hourly: \$0.25 / hour (1-2 hours) \$1 / hour (each additional hour) Daily max: \$5
<b>Park 3 Garage</b> (269 spaces) – 210 N. 27th Street	10:00 am – 5:45 pm (Weekdays) 5:45 pm – 10:00 am (Open) Open on Weekends	Roof: \$25 / month Covered: \$50 / month Assigned: \$100 / month Hourly: \$0.25 / hour (1-2 hours) \$1 / hour (each additional hour) Daily max: \$5
<b>Empire Garage</b> (542 spaces) – 11 N. Broadway Avenue	10:00 am – 6:00 pm (Weekdays) 6:00 pm – 10:00 am (Open) Open on Weekends	Roof: \$25 / month Covered: \$50 / month Assigned: N/A

**Table 1 – City of Billings Parking Garage Summary**

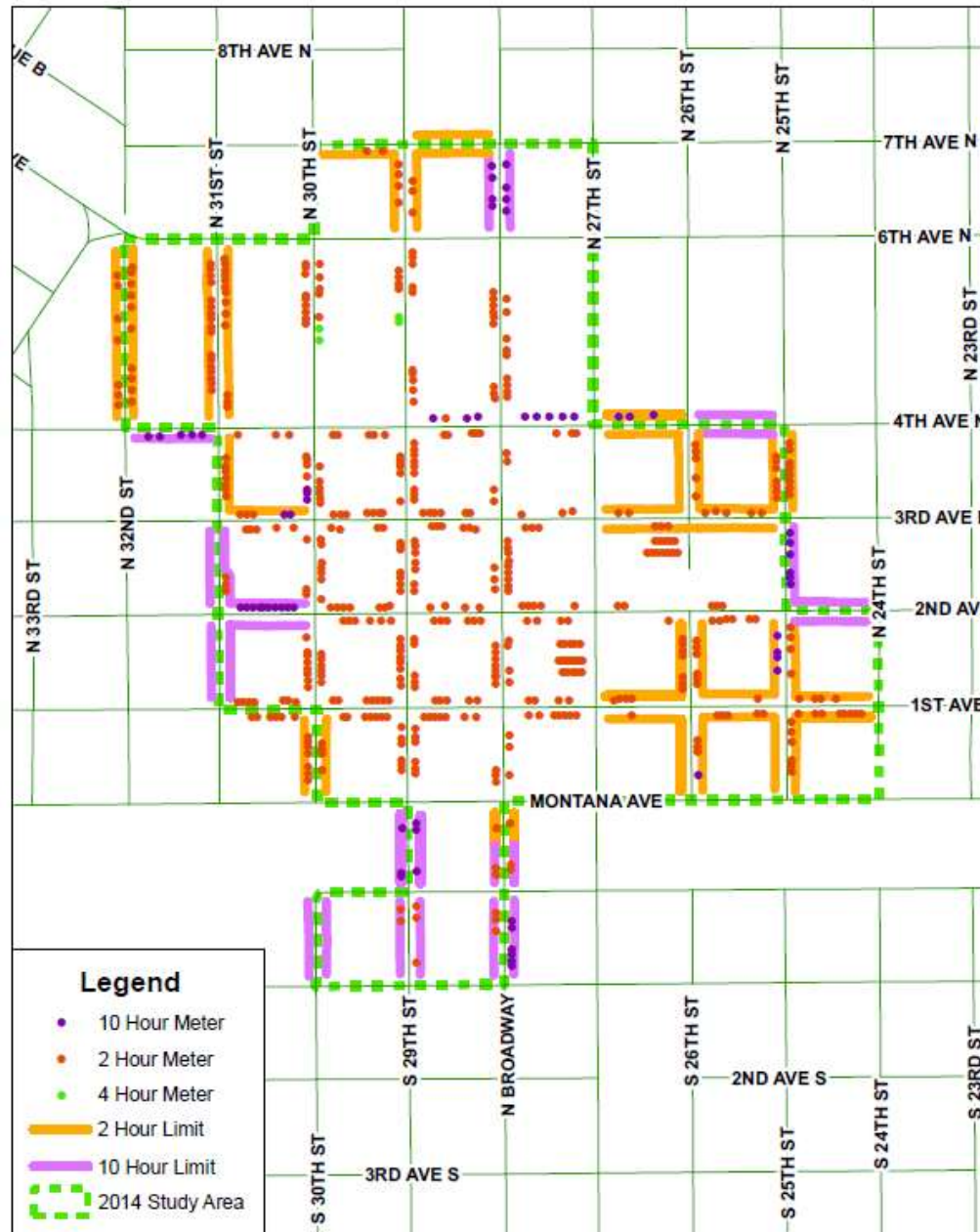
The peak demand period for parking in downtown Billings, according to the 2010 Rich and Associates study, occurred on a Thursday, between 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM. In discussions with City



parking staff, it was confirmed that this time frame continues to be the peak demand period and would be used for our “snap-shot” occupancy counts as part of this limited supply/demand update.

## On-Street Parking Utilization Snapshot

The 800 on-street parking spaces within the study area (see **Figure 2** below) were included in field observation surveys of the occupancy on Thursday, September 11, 2014.







Hourly occupancy counts were conducted during the typical peak periods in the AM (7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.) and the mid-day (11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.). The peak occupancy was observed during the mid-day peak with 681 of the 800 parking spaces being occupied (85% occupancy level).

The downtown “core” area with the highest occupied blocks covers approximately 4 city blocks. This “core” area is bounded on the North and South by 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, and bounded on the East and West by 27<sup>th</sup> Street and 29<sup>th</sup> Street, respectively. The on-street parking average occupancy for these blocks was over 95%. Individual block face occupancy counts during the peak period of observation (11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.) are shown below in **Table 2**.

Street		Supply	Count	Occupancy (%)
North-South	N 32nd Street	90	42	47%
	N 31st Street	128	58	45%
	N 30th Street	96	46	48%
	N 29th Street	125	76	61%
	N Broadway	114	75	66%
	N 25th Street	69	28	41%
	N 26th Street	59	28	47%
East-West	1st Avenue N	85	59	69%
	2nd Avenue N	115	104	90%
	3rd Avenue N	99	72	73%
	4th Avenue N	55	35	64%
	7th Avenue N	24	6	25%

**Table 2 – On-Street Parking Occupancy, Thursday, September 11, 2014**

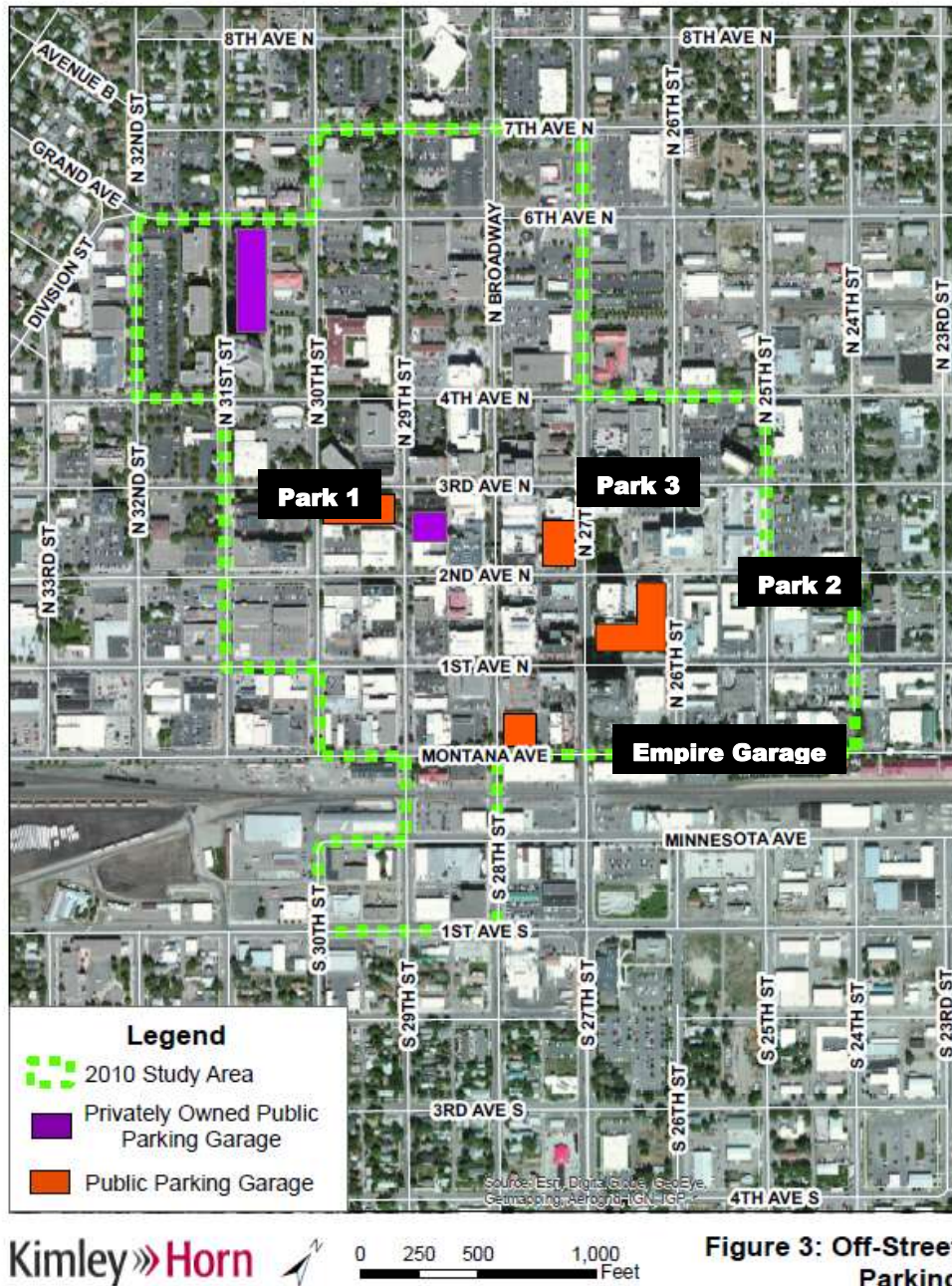






## Off-Street Public Parking Utilization Snapshot

It was anticipated that off-street public garage count data would be available for the same day of data collection. However, due to system complications these counts were not available for September 11<sup>th</sup> at the same time of on-street reporting. To capture the off-street occupancy levels in public garages, City staff conducted a peak hour “snapshot” vehicle count in each of the four City garages, shown in **Figure 3**.





The off-street parking inventory was completed on Wednesday, November 5, 2014. Parking occupancy in most downtown areas peaks between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon, therefore the hour count was conducted during the typical the Mid-day peak period (11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.). The mid-day peak occupancy was observed in the Park 3 Garage with 235 of the 269 parking spaces being occupied (87% occupancy level). The next highest occupancy level in the study area was 64%, observed in the Park 1 Garage with the 291 of 454 spaces occupied, as indicated in **Table 3**.

Location		Capacity	Total Occupied Spaces	Occupancy (%)
Park 1 Garage	Ground	34	16	47%
	Level 2	99	91	92%
	Level 3	106	86	81%
	Level 4	106	41	39%
	Level 5	109	57	52%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>64%</b>
Park 2 Garage	Ground	14	9	64%
	Level 1	46	28	61%
	Level 2	92	85	92%
	Level 3	153	109	39%
	Level 4	148	82	52%
	Level 5	151	66	44%
	Level 6	101	44	44%
	Roof	55	26	47%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>59%</b>
Park 3 Garage	Ground	22	22	100%
	Level 1	21	21	100%
	Level 2	62	52	84%
	Level 3	65	63	97%
	Level 4	65	48	74%
	Level 5	34	29	85%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>87%</b>
Empire Garage	Level 1	30	8	27%
	Level 2	112	60	54%
	Level 3	113	52	46%
	Level 4	113	10	9%
	Level 5	111	19	17%
	Level 6	36	0	0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>29%</b>

Table 3 – Off-Street Parking Occupancy, Wednesday, November 5, 2014

The complete occupancy data collected for on-street and off-street parking counts on September 11<sup>th</sup> and November 5<sup>th</sup> have been provided in **Appendix A**.





## DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The City's downtown is a dynamic place with new businesses coming into the central downtown area every year. With that in mind there is potential for significant impacts on the existing parking capacity when a new development establishes a presence downtown. In discussions with the Downtown Billings Association the following proposed projects were identified with an estimated timetable for construction and the associated parking demand by land use. The proposed/potential developments are listed in below in **Table 4**.

Proposed Development	Location	Land Use	*Spaces
G & W Building	N. 30th from 1st N. to 2nd N.	Movie Theater (4 Screens)	40
The Kono Building	N. 26th from 3rd to 4th.	Office (68 ksf)	260
The Pub	1st N. from N. 26th to N. 25th	Bar/Concert Venue (21 ksf)	210
The Old MSUB Building	N. Broadway from 1st to 2nd N.	Restaurant/ Apartments (14 ksf / 6 units)	160
The Big Dipper	N. Broadway from 2nd Ave N. to 1st N.	Restaurant (10 ksf)	20
Martini Bar	N. Broadway from 2nd Ave N. to 1st N.	Bar/Restaurant (7 ksf)	120

\*Estimated parking demand (spaces) have been rounded up to the nearest 10.

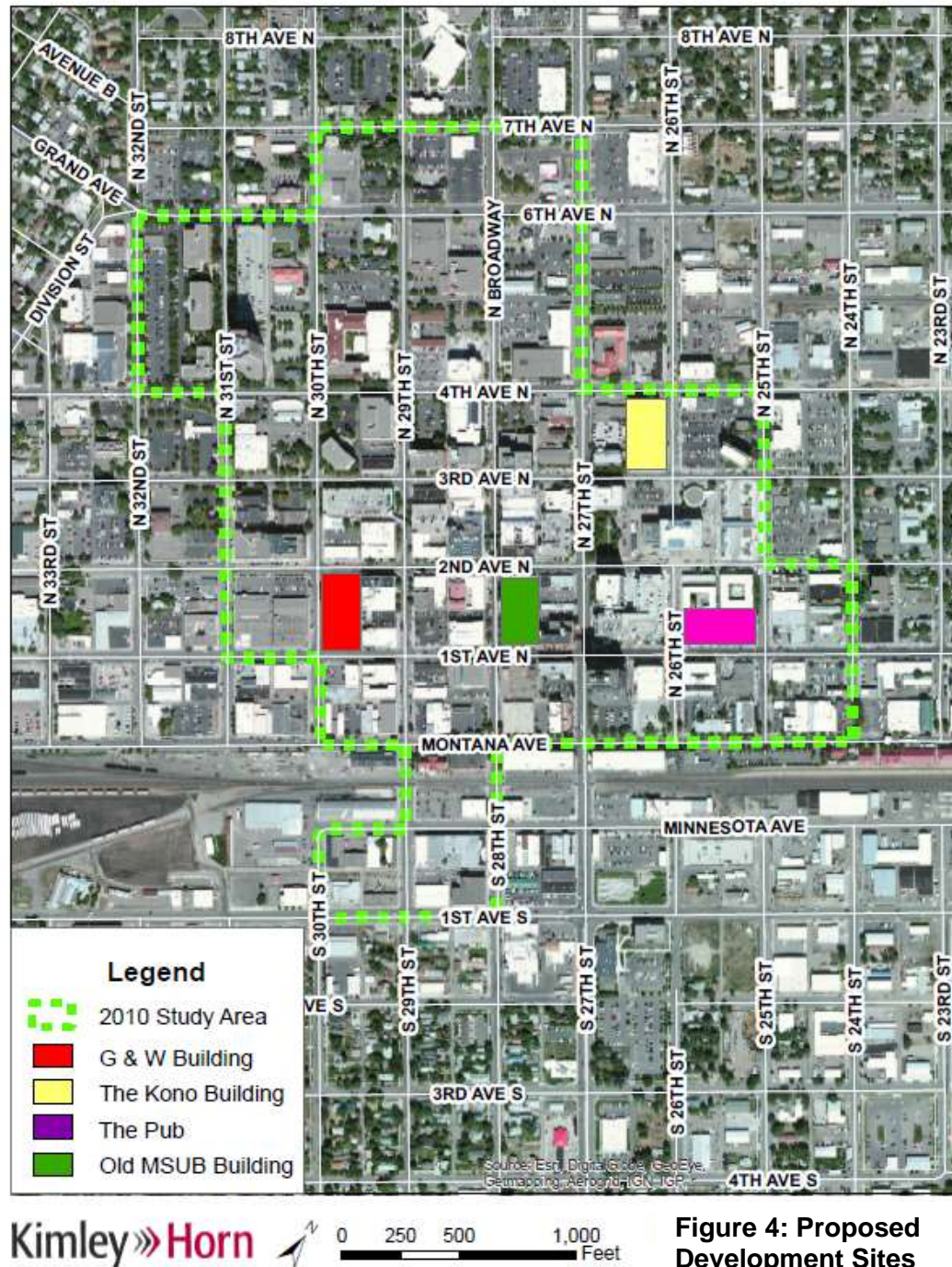
**Table 4 – City of Billings Development**



**Empire Garage under Construction**



The locations of the proposed developments are shown in Figure 4 below.







On January 6th of this year the City of Billings opened a new public library on the southwest corner of N Broadway and 6th Avenue. This facility introduced 66,000 square feet of new space to the central downtown area. In order to meet the demand for parking the old library is being demolished to construct a 100 space surface parking lot adjacent to the new library.

The Billings Clinic located north of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue is outside of the central downtown area and parking update study area. However, the Clinic represents the largest private parking presence in the City with over 2,600 spaces under its management. Under the 2020 master plan for the Clinic an additional 250 – 300 parking spaces will be required in the next 5 years. All of these spaces are anticipated to be construction within the next 12 months according to Billings Clinic sources.

## **SUMMARY**

Based on the proposed development project listed in Table 4, demand for approximately 810 parking spaces will be created if all these developments come to fruition. With the diversity in the land use not all spaces must be accounted for at the same period of the day. A shared-parking approach would benefit each development by reducing the cost of providing parking based on each land-use individually and would benefit the City by not over-building parking supply and saving other potential development sites for better and higher uses.

Based on the currently available parking at the peak demand times in the central downtown Billings area, there appears to be sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the listed potential development projects. However, the actual occupancy numbers must also take into account the fact that certain property owners have leased large blocks of parking within City owned garages in anticipation of increased building occupancy. This fact somewhat skews the parking occupancy picture.

If another large development were to be proposed in the downtown core, the current surplus of available parking in the central downtown would likely not be adequate and opportunities to provide additional parking capacity would need to be explored.

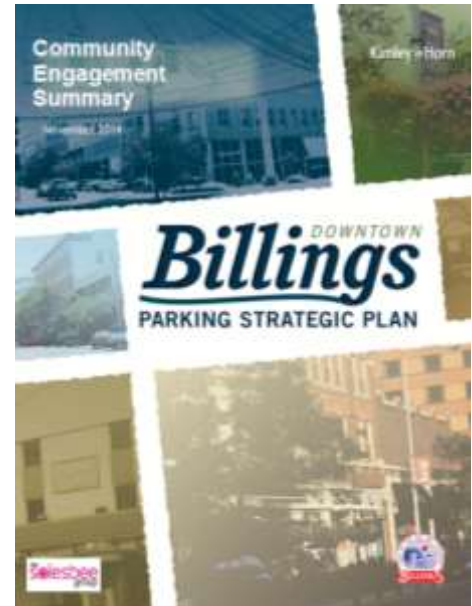
The City should continue to monitor parking supply/demand on an on-going basis. A targeted overall off-street parking occupancy level of 80% - 85% should trigger a more thorough assessment of parking supply/demand. Given the long lead time required for land acquisition, garage design and construction, it is not too early to be identifying potential future parking developments sites.



## 5. Community Engagement Summary

A critical part of developing a parking program that supports a community's larger economic development goals is proactive and authentic stakeholder engagement. Intentional and targeted outreach to community stakeholders helps provide insight into the real and perceived parking challenges that residents, property owners, merchants, tourists and visitors encounter when they visit a downtown, commercial district or city center.

A separate document was prepared summarizing this project's community outreach approach. It also provides a summary and analysis of stakeholder feedback. This document is attached as Appendix Y.

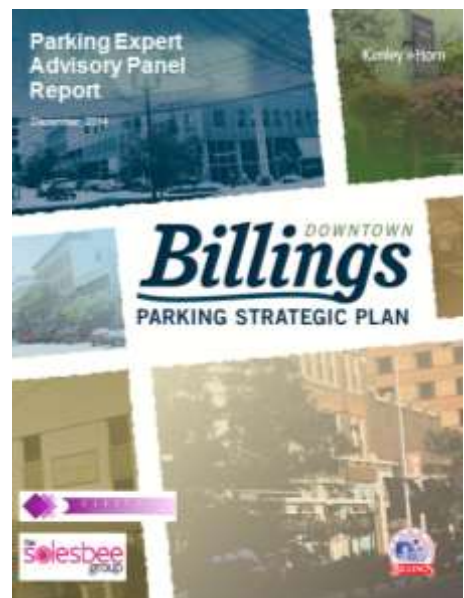


## 6. Parking Expert Advisory Panel Report

Another key component of this project's community engagement strategy was the convening of a "Parking Expert Advisory Panel Process".

The Parking Advisory Panel was facilitated by David Feehan President of Civitas Consultants, assisted by Project Assistant Manager Vanessa Solesbee of the Denver-based The Solesbee Group and Dennis Burns, Kimley-Horn and Associates Regional Vice President and Project Manager, from Phoenix, Arizona. The panelists were Max Clark, Parking & Facilities Director for the Capital City Development Corporation in Boise, Idaho; Anne Guest, Director of the Missoula Parking Commission in Missoula, Montana; and Jeff Petry, Parking Services Manager for the City of Eugene, Oregon. Panelists were selected because each has an extensive background managing parking in cities comparable to Billings and because each is an acknowledged leader in the parking field.

A separate document was prepared summarizing the Advisory Panel process and the panel's observations, conclusions and recommendations. This document is attached as Appendix Z.





## 7. Characteristics of Effective Parking Management Programs

### Introduction

Kimley-Horn has worked extensively with business districts around the country. Based on evaluating numerous parking systems of various sizes and complexity, Kimley-Horn has identified a set of twenty characteristics, that when combined into an integrated programmatic approach can provide the basis for a sound and well managed parking system. The twenty characteristics include:

1. Clear Vision and Mission
2. Parking Philosophy
3. Strong Planning
4. Community Involvement
5. Organization
6. Staff Development
7. Safety, Security and Risk Management
8. Effective Communications
9. Consolidated Parking Programs
10. Strong Financial Planning
11. Creative, Flexible and Accountable Parking Management
12. Operational Efficiency
13. Comprehensive Facilities Maintenance Programs
14. Effective Use of Technology
15. Parking System Marketing and Promotion
16. Positive Customer Service Programs
17. Special Events Parking Programs
18. Effective Enforcement
19. Parking and Transportation Demand Management
20. Awareness of Competitive Environment

A parking system that has all twenty of these characteristics is well on its way to being in a class apart from the majority of parking systems. The ultimate goals are a system that provides professional management, understands the role it plays in contributing to the larger objectives of the downtown or shopping district and is responsive to the community to which it serves.



## Program Evolution

There is a tendency, especially within municipal governments, for parking functions to evolve over time into organizational structures that we have termed “horizontally integrated.” This means that various parking system components are spread among multiple departments or entities. The following example illustrates how many municipal parking programs evolved and also reflects the “fragmentation” that this approach can engender.

- *There was a need to establish a parking function. The initial need was to manage on-street parking assets. Because Public Works already managed the streets, this function was located under the Public Works department.*
- *When the need for an enforcement function achieved critical mass, this was logically assigned to the Police Department.*
- *Over time, off-street lots and parking structures were added. The management of these resources was placed under the Facilities Management Division, because they manage the City’s real estate assets and facilities.*
- *Soon there was enough revenue being generated that an audit/accounting function was established to ensure accountability over the revenues and expenses. This function was placed under the Finance Division.*

Fast forward to today. Your community is embarking on a downtown master planning process. You would expect this process to be focused on issues such as urban design standards, place making and economic development, but all people want to talk about is parking. Stakeholder comments include: “All these issues are important, but nothing works without parking.” “Parking is impacting everything we are trying to achieve as a community!” “If parking is this important, are we sure that the parking system is organized to be as efficient and effective as possible?” “How is our parking system organized anyway?” - Enter the need for a Parking System Organizational Analysis.

## Effective Parking System Organizational Models

There are in fact several very effective parking system organizational models, each with its own strengths and weakness depending on several factors such as your parking system’s size, programs offered, political landscape, etc. The four primary successful organizational models are:

- A Consolidated (“vertically integrated”) City Department model
- The Parking Authority model
- The “Contract” or Downtown Association model
- The Parking District model

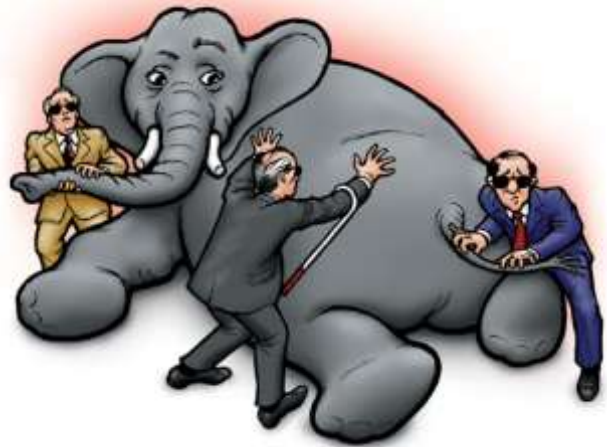
There are of course several variations and hybrids of these models, but these are the four primary alternatives. We don’t have room here to go into depth on the specifics of these models, but they do all have one common factor that contributes to their success: They all address the major problem associated with the “horizontally integrated model” described above – we call this “The Elephant Problem.”





You may remember the old story about a group of blindfolded men being led into a room that contained an elephant. Each man was directed to a different part of the elephant and asked to describe it. One said it seemed most like a tree trunk. Another said it seemed more like a snake. Another said it was more like a fire hose. You get the idea.

In a parking program where each department only manages one aspect of the parking system, such on-street parking, or enforcement or parking structures – often times no one has responsibility, or the perspective to manage all these interrelated components as a system. In one study where different departments each had a small amount of parking to manage (for example a couple decks and surface lots) along with responsibilities for several other areas, the observation was made that “parking was everyone’s part-time job, but no one’s full-time job.”



When Kimley-Horn evaluates which organizational option might work best in a given community, we often use the following technique with various stakeholder groups. First we explain how each model typically works and describe in detail its defining characteristics. We then ask the stakeholders to envision each model as it might develop in their community. Then we have them rank each organizational option by the following criteria –

Which organizational option:

- Best supports economic development
- Is most efficient/cost effective
- Is most customer-friendly
- Is most politically feasible
- Is most focused on the vision
- Is easiest to achieve
- Is most responsive to businesses and stakeholders
- Is most financially viable
- Provides the most effective coordination

The process is very effective in helping communities evaluate the organizational options and begin the process of revolutionizing and reinventing their parking system. An effectively organized parking program can be a significant contributor and partner in helping communities achieve their larger strategic goals and objectives.

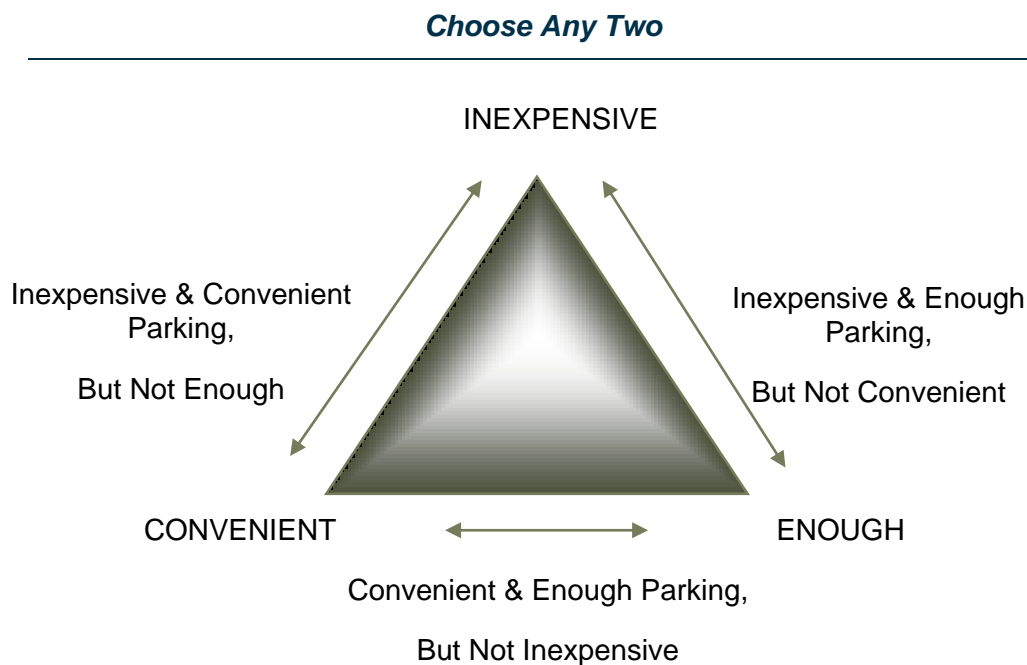


In the case of Billings, the primary issue is consolidating the responsibility and authority for parking in one area. One entity needs to take ownership of parking issues and be the central point for all coordination, complaints and services.

## Parking 101 – Choose Any Two

There is one element common to every study and every downtown - parking is always a source of frustration and contention. It is amazing how emotional an issue parking can be. This is because it affects people so directly. Think about it – how many other areas involve issues of personal safety/security, finance, convenience, wayfinding, accessibility and customer service? Because parking creates the first and last impression of your community, one question we will address is: How can that “parking experience” best be managed? We’ll get back to that question shortly.

An interesting truism about parking is illustrated in the graphic below.



Everyone wants three things when it comes to parking:

- 1.) They want there to be plenty of it
- 2.) They want it to be very convenient and
- 3.) They want it to be inexpensive (and preferably free).

Unfortunately, you can have any two, but not all three. This ushers in the need for a policy decision.



If you choose to have inexpensive and convenient parking you will likely not have enough. This option may be acceptable if you want to use the lack of spaces as part of a demand management strategy to encourage the use of transportation alternatives.

If you choose to have inexpensive and enough parking it will not be very convenient. With this choice you may be adopting a strategy that utilizes less expensive remote parking supported with shuttle operations (at least for employees).

If you choose to have convenient and enough parking, it will not be cheap. This often preferred approach typically means you have chosen to develop structured parking. The national average cost to construct a surface lot parking ranges from \$2,500 to \$3,000 per space. Above grade parking structures average between \$15,000 - \$25,000 per space. (It should be noted that local garage building costs in Montana range from \$22,000/per space to over \$26,000 per space.) Below grade parking can range between 1.5 to 2 times the cost of above grade structures. Another consideration that is often overlooked is that operating, utility, maintenance and security costs are significantly higher with structured parking.

In urban environments the choice is most often made to have “convenient and enough” parking. This strategic decision and the significant capital investment it requires, creates the need to assure that these investments are well managed and responsive to the communities they serve.

The following section takes each of the “20 Characteristics” and discusses the important aspects of each.

### **Characteristic #1 – Clear Vision and Mission**

Truly effective parking systems have a clear vision and well-defined mission for the parking system. The development or periodic reassessment of the parking system vision/mission statements should be undertaken as an open and inclusive process involving a wide range of downtown stakeholders.

Typically, it is recommended that the following groups be included in the public input process:

- City Officials (including elected officials, planning staff, transit agencies, etc.)
- Downtown Development Agencies
- Downtown/District Business Associations
- Downtown/District Property Owners
- Downtown/District Merchants
- Downtown/District Employees
- Downtown/District Customers

The development of a parking system’s vision and mission statements should have one overriding goal; to see that the parking system’s purpose and direction are tied to and supportive of the larger district’s strategic development plan. There are a variety of ways that parking can support the health, vitality and sustainability of a downtown or business district. Having a professionally managed parking program that presents clean, safe, attractive and well-maintained facilities is perhaps the most visible dimension.



Other attributes include providing an adequate supply of parking overall and the appropriate allocation and management of those resources to best support the various businesses that depend on these resources for their success. Successfully meeting these goals promotes downtown business retention and attraction.

The parking system administrator should play a key role in providing educational support to community leaders about the importance of parking and the role(s) parking can play (and cannot play) in meeting community objectives. Staying abreast of the latest technological developments related to parking systems can broaden the options available to improve parking system management effectiveness and efficiency. Common problems for downtowns, such as promoting turnover of short-term on-street spaces without being perceived as “unfriendly or heavy-handed,” or providing more convenient customer payment options are good examples. The use of new technology to support the mission and vision can have a profound impact on the perception of the parking system and how it contributes to achieving the goals of the downtown it serves.

In effective systems, Parking’s financial responsibilities are well defined and understood. This is a critical component of the vision/mission, as it directly impacts the perception of whether the parking system is meeting its financial obligations and expectations. Part of this important discussion relates to whether the parking system is expected to be subsidized by the City’s General Fund, or other revenue sources such as Tax Increment Financing, contributions from Business Improvement Districts, Special Assessment Districts, etc. or whether parking is expected to cover its own operating and maintenance costs, but not debt service. Or, is parking expected to cover all costs and generate additional revenue. Which of these options is feasible for your community depends on a number of variables.

## **Characteristic #2 – Parking Philosophy**

A succinct statement or statements reflecting your philosophical approach to parking can provide valuable tools for communicating to your patrons, stakeholders and staff. Some examples of “parking philosophy” are noted below along with a brief commentary.

### ***1. Parking Isn’t About Cars . . . It’s About People***

This statement reflects an understanding that parking is not simply the act of temporarily storing cars, but it is in fact more about addressing “people” needs at the transition from the vehicular to the pedestrian experience. Under this philosophy, issues such as facility cleanliness, safety, lighting, wayfinding and customer service move to the forefront. Functional design elements that directly impact user comfort such as stall widths, turn radii, walking distances, etc. also take on special importance.

### ***2. People Don’t Come Downtown To Park***

This concept reinforces the reality that parking, while an important support function and critical infrastructure element, is not the reason people visit your downtown. For the downtown to be successful there must be good restaurants, interesting retail and other special attractions. Even the best run parking system with well-designed facilities will not “attract” people to come downtown,





however, poorly run operations or dysfunctional facilities can definitely be excuses for people NOT to come downtown. The fundamental principle behind this philosophy is three-fold: 1.) The role of parking is to support other downtown activities. 2.) Eliminate parking as a “reason not to come downtown” and 3.) Recognize what parking is not, i.e., an attraction.

### *3. Parking Should Be A Positive Experience*

For years a parking consulting firm had a slogan: “Parking should be a non-event.” This notion has undergone a qualitative evolution to make parking not just a “non-event,” but actually a “positive experience.” In their book “The Experience Economy,” Joseph Pine and James Gilmore address the concepts that, especially in America, what customers are actually purchasing are “positive experiences.” One expression of this transition can be seen in the healthcare arena. Have you noticed that the lobbies of newer health care facilities have taken on the feel of grand hotel lobbies? At the hospital where I used to work, we extended the look and feel of the new bed tower lobby (marble, glass, air conditioning, etc.) into the parking structure elevator lobbies to extend that welcoming experience out into the parking environment. Similarly, the more extensive customer service training provided for hospital reception desk staff was also required for parking attendant and valet parking staff.

### *4. Parking Is The First And Last Experience*

Building on the concept above is an appreciation of the fact that most of our customer’s first and last impressions of any venue really begins and ends with their parking experience. You might enjoy the best meal followed by a fabulous evening of entertainment, while downtown, but if you have to circle and circle to find a parking space or are accosted walking from your car to your destination, this will taint your whole experience. Follow this up by an encounter with a surly, gum-chewing attendant upon exiting the parking facility and guess what you will be talking about the next day (It probably won’t be the delicious meal you had at Gino’s.)

### *5. Parking Should Be Friendly, Not Free.*

There is no such thing as “free parking.” One of the ongoing challenges that downtown’s face when it comes to parking is cost. Because of land values, densities and walking distance issues, parking structures are here to stay in the downtown environment and with them is the need to charge for parking in one form or fashion. The perception that parking at the mall is “free” doesn’t help (even though it is not true). Even if you promote “free parking” as a marketing concept, someone is paying for that parking. Either through increased taxes or an increased cost of goods or services, the cost of providing parking is still there. This philosophy recognizes this reality and focuses instead on providing a friendly, well managed parking experience.



#### 6. *Parking Is a Component of the Larger Transportation System.*

It is surprising how often parking gets divorced in people's minds from being a component of the larger transportation system. Structured parking, because of its cost, is often the reason that development projects "don't pencil" to use developer lingo. By considering parking in the larger context of a broad range of transit and transportation alternatives, demand management strategies (including shared parking policies) can be developed that help reduce the amount of parking required, especially in urban areas where good bus transit, light rail, taxi service and increasingly in-town residential developments can be found. Developing programs that integrate complementary parking and transportation strategies is a hallmark of this philosophy.

#### **Characteristic #3 – Strong Planning**

One consistent characteristic of well-managed and forward thinking parking programs is strong planning. The first step in developing a well-managed parking planning function is to have a solid understanding of existing parking resources. Documenting the basics is fundamental. Below are some basic planning tenets that should be considered:

- Parking inventory is complete and up-to-date (includes both public and private parking).
- Parking inventories are sub-divided by type and use of space.
- Parking utilization, by type of spaces is known and trends tracked.
- Changes in supply are documented.
- Changes in utilization are tracked and understood.
- Periodic Parking Supply-Demand Studies are completed.
- Quality parking maps are available and up-to-date.

One of the key planning tools that parking departments often overlook or don't understand is land-use data. Successful parking systems develop relationships with city or regional planning agencies so that valuable land-use data, information on proposed developments, downtown planning maps, etc. can be obtained and used in crafting parking planning strategies. When reviewing a strategic parking plan I look for the following items:

- Is land use data readily available and up-to-date?
- Is historical parking development well documented?
- Is planning for the next parking development "on-the-drawing board"?
- Is Parking represented and participating in other types of community studies e.g., downtown strategic plans, marketing studies, retail studies, economic development studies, transportation studies, traffic studies, etc.?
- Have strategically located potential parking development sites been identified?
- Are future parking development sites being "land banked"?
- Are potential sites assembled to achieve an adequate footprint size to develop efficient parking



structures (300-325 sq. ft. per stall)?

- Have parking lot and structure design guidelines been developed?

## **Characteristic #4 – Community Involvement**

One common problem I often find with struggling parking programs is that they are operated only to satisfy a narrowly defined set of internal objectives (typically focused on revenue generation). Successful parking programs understand that their larger purpose is to support the downtown and the businesses that create and sustain downtown vitality. Parking systems should develop close and cooperative working relationships with other community groups such as economic development agencies and downtown business associations.

This does not mean that the parking system exists simply as a tool to be manipulated by these organizations. The parking operation has its own goals and objectives. For example, if the parking system is operating under a mandate to be self-supporting, it may not be able to subsidize a downtown validation program, even though the local downtown business associations might desire this. However, acting as partners, a mutually beneficial solution can be devised to meet the overall objectives of both organizations whereby costs are shared or alternative funding sources are obtained.

Another significant area of potential partnership is downtown and parking system marketing. In the many successful downtowns, Parking co-sponsors or shares in downtown marketing and promotional initiatives. The Downtown Business Association, the Chamber of Commerce and other groups promoting the downtown should include parking information in their publications and parking publications should promote the current programs of the other agencies. This cooperative relationship creates an impression of a well-managed downtown and positively advances the image of the downtown.

Successful parking operations actively solicit public input from a variety of sources including: promotion of public forums, use of parking task force groups, development of a group of “parking advisors” – people who have demonstrated an interest in parking issues (sometimes characterized as “complainers”) and who are recruited to provide input on an occasional basis. The key to success is to listen to the concerns of your customers, act promptly to resolve the issues (or engage and educate them on the “real issues”) and then follow-up to make sure their issue has been satisfactorily resolved. By doing this, you short-circuit that stream of negativity, which too often circulates among downtown customer groups, and you can begin to build a network of parking system supporters.

## **Characteristic #5 – Organization**

Whether a City department, a quasi-independent parking authority, an arm of an urban renewal agency or the responsibility of a Downtown Business Association, an important question is whether the parking organization is structured and staffed to best achieve its stated goals?

Some basic questions to ask related to the issue of organizational structure include:

- Are all parking operations to be managed through a centralized operation or can other departments or agencies get involved in limited parking operations?
- Is parking to be managed in-house?



- Should certain functions be out-sourced?
- Are there advantages to a hybrid approach?
- Does the current organization / staffing plan provide the right mix of skills, talents, and abilities?
- Is staffing as efficient as possible? Are there tools in place to evaluate staffing adequacy? Efficiency? Program effectiveness?

When evaluating which organizational option is most appropriate for your particular downtown, consider the following criteria to evaluate the relative advantages and disadvantages of each model.

- Best supports economic development
- Is most efficient
- Is the most customer-friendly
- Is most politically feasible
- Is most focused on the vision
- Is easiest to achieve
- Is most responsive to business and stakeholders
- Is most financially viable
- Provides the most effective coordination

Another component of the evaluation process is to identify the program elements for which the parking system will be responsible. The table below provides a list of potential program elements.

### Possible Scope of Operations

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| - Overall Leadership and Management             | - ADA Compliance                                |
| - Program Definition and Development            | - Parking Facility Maintenance Programs         |
| - Parking System Revenue Control & Accounting   | - Consolidated Financial Reporting System       |
| - Parking Facilities Management                 | - Special Events Parking Management             |
| - Contract Management                           | - Parking Resource Allocation                   |
| - Program Branding and Marketing                | - Rate Setting                                  |
| - Parking Planning and Coordination             | - Residential Parking Permit Programs           |
| - Parking Facility Development and Construction | - Special Program Development                   |
| - Community Outreach and Education              | -Central Information Clearinghouse              |
| - Equipment and Technology Specifications       | - Wayfinding and Signage                        |
| - Equipment and Technology Maintenance          | - Customer Service Programs                     |
| - Parking Enforcement and Adjudication          | - Validation Programs                           |
| - On-Street Parking Management                  | - Valet Parking Programs                        |
| - Meter Collections and Maintenance             | - Transportation Demand Management              |
| - Employee Parking                              | - Facility Safety, Security and Risk Management |





## Characteristic # 6 – Staff Development

Another interesting thing about parking is that, unlike property management, public administration, etc., there are no formal educational programs for parking management. You cannot go out and hire someone from the latest crop of college parking graduates. However, this is beginning to change. The International Parking Institute (IPI) has a highly regarded and reputable educational/certification program called the Certified Public Parking Administrator (CAPP) program that is administered by the University of Virginia. The National Parking Association offers the Certified Parking Professional (CPP) certification program. For the most part, parking professionals still are learning as they go and bringing with them numerous skills and perspectives imported from a variety of previous work experiences.

One characteristic of the most successful parking programs is recognition of the unique knowledge, complexity, and broad skill sets required to be successful in parking. These programs invest in the parking specific training and educational opportunities to develop their staff into parking professionals. The following is a list of options to consider to actively promote parking staff development within your parking operation:

- Support participation in the International Parking Institute and National Parking Association's certification programs.
- Support participation in local, state, regional and national parking associations to create networking and peer-to-peer communications. These associations also provide the best access to parking specific training opportunities for various staff levels from front-line to administrative.
- A recommended best practice is to have an "Operational Peer Review" performed on your operation. An "Operational Peer Review" involves having a representative from a similar municipal program visit and critique your downtown parking program with a "fresh set of eyes." Typically this service is reciprocated. This is generally a low cost initiative that can be set up directly or through the national, regional or local parking association and is an effective way to gain and share parking knowledge.
- Build a parking resource library – The following is a basic bibliography of good parking texts that can increase your staff's knowledge of the parking industry:
  - i. Parking 101, A Parking Primer – International Parking Institute Fredericksburg, VA, 2002
  - ii. Parking - Robert A. Weant and Herbert S. Levinson, Copyright - Eno Foundation for Transportation, Washington, DC, 1990
  - iii. Parking Structures, Planning Design, Construction, Maintenance and Repair – Anthony Chrest, Mary S. Smith, Sam Bhuyan, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Third Edition, Boston, MA, 2001
  - iv. The Dimensions of Parking - Various Authors, Copyright – The Urban Land Institute and National Parking Association, Fourth Edition, Washington, DC, 2000
  - v. Parking Generation – Institute of Transportation Engineers, ITE Publ. No. IR-034A, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Washington, DC, 1987
  - vi. Shared Parking – Study coordinated by the ULI in association with Barton-Aschman Assoc.,



Inc., Copyright – The Urban Land

- vii. Institute, Washington, DC, 1983 (Currently being updated)
- viii. Lighting for Parking Facilities – Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA)  
Publ. No. RP-20-98, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, New York, NY, 1998

Note: A more comprehensive “Recommended Reading List for Parking Professionals” is provided in Appendix H.

## **Characteristic #7 – Safety, Security and Risk Management**

The importance of providing a safe environment in your parking facilities cannot be overestimated. The actual and perceived security within your facilities impacts the success, not only of the parking operation, but also the businesses supported by those facilities.

Planning for security in your parking facilities should begin during the design of new facilities. If you are inheriting existing facilities, a security audit of all facilities is highly recommended.

The concept of “Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design” (CPTED) provides useful tenets for architects, facility planners, designers, and law enforcement/security and parking professionals. Utilizing CPTED concepts helps create a climate of safety in a parking facility, on a campus or throughout a downtown, by designing a physical environment that positively influences human behavior. These concepts can also be used to retrofit environments to address specific security issues as they develop or to address emerging concerns as conditions change.

CPTED builds on four key strategies: territoriality, natural surveillance, activity support, and access control.

- Territoriality: People protect territory that they feel is their own and have a certain respect for the territory of others. Fences, pavement treatments, art, signs, good maintenance, and landscaping are some physical ways to express ownership. Identifying intruders is much easier in a well-defined space.
- Natural Surveillance: Criminals don't want to be seen. Placing physical features, activities, and people in ways that maximize the ability to see what's going on discourages crime. Barriers, such as low ceilings, solid walls, or shadows, make it difficult to observe activity. Landscaping and lighting can be planned to promote natural surveillance from inside a building and from the outside by neighbors or people passing by. Maximizing the natural surveillance capability of such "gatekeepers" as parking lot attendants, maintenance personnel, etc. is also important.
- Activity support: Encouraging legitimate activity in public spaces helps discourage crime.
- Access control: Properly located entrances, exits, fencing, landscaping, and lighting can direct both foot and automobile traffic in ways that discourage crime.

These principles can be blended in the planning or remodeling of parking facilities and other public areas. In parking environments, the following specific strategies are recommended:



Incorporate the following features into the design of new parking facilities:

- Higher floor-to-floor heights to improve openness.
- Glass backed elevators and glass enclosed or open elevator lobbies.
- Glass enclosed stairwells, perhaps open to the interior.
- “Blue Light” security phones.
- Security screening on the ground level.
- Limit access at the parking facility perimeter to locations where patrons pass by the office or cashier booths.
- Eliminate potential hiding places (for example under stairs, within storage areas, etc.)
- Maintain low level landscaping.

Insure that all your facilities are well lighted and meet or exceed the recommended minimums for parking facility lighting as established by the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA). Develop facility lighting standards. Provide consistent lighting levels in all facilities.

- Integrate security offices, parking offices, retail shops, etc. into parking facilities to provide increased activity levels.
- Consider CCTV, alarms, motion detectors and security patrols.
- Integrate parking attendants, cleaning and maintenance staff, shuttle drivers, etc. into your parking security program.
- Incorporate safety and risk management issues into a weekly facility walk-through checklist.

## **Characteristic #8 – Effective Communications**

Best in Class parking operations actively engage other community groups to help define how the parking system can best support the objectives of the businesses and the community at large that depend on a “parking system that works.” As an outside consultant coming into a downtown to evaluate some aspect of a downtown parking program, it is not uncommon to find the parking system at odds with the downtown association. Although there may be as many reasons for this “disconnect” as there are personalities involved, there appears to be at least two primary underlying reasons:

Downtown associations are driven by efforts to revitalize downtown areas and see parking costs as one element that places them at a competitive disadvantage (compared to the perception of “free parking” at the malls/suburbs). At the same time parking system managers are being pushed, usually by municipal governments, to generate revenues. The bottom line is they lack a shared vision and therefore are pulling in opposite directions.

The second major issue typically has to do with service level expectations. Downtown associations tend to have higher expectations in the areas of customer service, facility cleanliness, security, etc. It is not that the parking system administrators do not value these same qualities, but there is a cost associated with providing these programs and limited budgets to support them. The irony is that revenues are often reduced by not providing these higher levels of service.



The first step towards resolving this problem is improved communications and the definition of a shared vision/mission. A clear understanding of the issues and potential solutions is the kick-off point for developing the needed mutually beneficial approach. Developing a set of “Guiding Principles” for the parking system is good starting point for crafting a successful collaborative relationship.

Successful programs also have well-defined relationships between various departments, especially other support departments such as: Maintenance, Enforcement, Security/Police, Communications, Facilities Management, Planning, etc.

Finally, successful parking programs are in touch with their customers and actively solicit input through meetings with major downtown employers, customer surveys, websites, parking “hot-lines” and public forums.

### **Characteristic #9 – Consolidated Parking Programs**

Taking a systems approach to parking is an important dimension to creating a comprehensive and effective parking program. Having control of all or most aspects of parking can contribute to a more effective operation, because of the interactive nature of parking as a system.

For example – having control of off-street, but not on-street parking can lead to problems if the rates for the various types of parking are not kept in the proper balance or relationship. Or, not having control over parking enforcement practices can hamper efforts to promote or improve turnover to support downtown retail or to support special downtown events.

Ideally, the parking system should control off-street, on-street and parking enforcement operations. All parking related revenues should first go to fund parking programs, including preventative maintenance, maintenance reserves, parking system/downtown marketing, planning and new parking resource development. If additional revenues, in excess of operational needs are available, they should be banked as reserve funds for future parking development projects or returned to the general fund for discretionary spending.

### **Characteristic #10 – Strong Financial Planning**

The Parking System’s financial expectations should be well-defined and understood. For example, is the parking system expected to be?

- A self-supporting entity?
- A profit/revenue center?
- A support service sustained by other primary revenue sources?

With the exception of airports, some university systems and some very large municipalities, parking programs are rarely capable of being totally self-supporting. Many factors including market rates for parking, parking mix (percentage of transient vs. monthly parkers), availability of on-street parking revenues, availability of parking enforcement revenues, politics, economic development policies, etc. have an impact on whether parking can be self-supporting. For systems that cannot achieve true financial self-sufficiency, a common goal is for the parking system to cover all operational costs, but not debt service





costs. Debt service costs are typically subsidized by the general fund, tax increment financing revenues, in-lieu parking fees, or other sources.

An important principal in developing a successful parking program is that parking system revenues should be tied to the larger vision and mission of the downtown it is intended to serve. Development of a downtown strategic plan which incorporates not only market and land-use strategies, but also critical support infrastructure such as parking, transit, pedestrian access, freight mobility, loading and unloading, etc. is an excellent means for defining the relationships of all these components and establishing clear goals and direction. Once the vision and mission have been set, investigation of other possible sources of parking revenues may be desired. Alternative parking revenue sources might include:

- On-street pay parking (if that does not already exist)
- Parking Enforcement
- Tax Increment Financing Districts
- In-lieu Parking fees
- Special Parking Assessment Districts

Other important financial planning elements that are recommended for all parking systems include:

- Having a consolidated parking financial statement that tracks all sources of parking revenues and expenses.
- Parking's revenues and expenses are well managed and its books are regularly audited.
- Annual operating statements are published in an annual report and available for public review. (For an excellent example of this, check out the annual parking report posted on-line by the Calgary Parking Authority. A simple Internet search for Calgary Parking Authority should get you to the annual report link.)
- If a private parking operator is contracted to manage day-to-day operations, an annual parking operations and financial audit is recommended.

### **Characteristic #11 – Creative, Flexible and Accountable Parking Management**

This section encompasses so many potential topics it could easily be a whole book in itself. Therefore, we will only attempt to touch on some key issues and principles.

One key principle is that different land uses, environments and user-groups require different parking management approaches. A one-size-fits-all approach does not work. A variety of parking management strategies should be employed to address different needs, such as:

- Visitor Parking
- Employee Parking
- On-Street Parking
- Reserved Parking



- Residential Parking
- Special Use Permits
- Event Parking
- Accessible Parking (ADA)
- Shared Parking
- Parking Allocation Plans
- Loading/Unloading Zone Parking

Another key management principal is the need for strong and accountable parking revenue control systems. This begins with the purchase and installation of a parking access and revenue control system specified to meet your system's needs.

It is important to understand all the components of the parking access and revenue control system and utilize them to their full potential. Many parking systems purchase expensive systems and use less than 10% of the system's capabilities. Using standard parking access and revenue control system reports and creating customized reports can provide enhanced management information, improved understanding of operational dynamics and ultimately increased system utilization and efficiency.

Another characteristic of effective parking programs is that they have mapped out audit trails and developed processes to provide acceptable levels of control and accountability. Because of the large revenues generated, revenue control and accountability are key parking management issues.

Developing policies and procedures for anticipating and managing losses of parking supply (both temporary and long term) is another basic parking management responsibility. Some key elements in this area include:

- Planning for and communicating losses of parking supply
- Insuring adequate capacity to handle short-term parking supply losses
- Having effective plans to manage routine maintenance projects, including customer communications and contingency plans
- Having a full understanding of the financial impacts of these projects on revenue streams
- Having defined parking replacement cost policies is another recommended best practice.

Development of an "Annual Parking Report" can have a number of positive impacts for a parking system. It identifies key departmental issues and challenges, promotes departmental achievements, documents the "state of parking" to the stakeholders, creates a record of "system history," and builds credibility and confidence in the department.

- Other parking management elements include:
- Well defined parking policies and procedures
- Development and maintenance of parking facility operations manuals



- Well defined and implemented facility maintenance programs
- Parking system marketing programs
- Effective parking and wayfinding signage programs.

## **Characteristic #12 – Operational Efficiency**

Another area that is important to investigate when assessing a parking program is the overall efficiency of the parking operation. Parking system efficiency has several dimensions, depending on how the system is managed. The first area to be scrutinized is the management responsibilities of the system, i.e., what programs is the department or organization responsible for implementing. Once this has been defined, organizational structure and staffing plans are analyzed.

Development of some form of benchmarking or comparative analysis to measure costs and performance to similar operations is highly recommended. Understanding that benchmarking can be a tricky business – making sure you are comparing apples to apples, there are some basic benchmarks that make sense for downtown parking operations. For illustrative purposes, a few basic benchmarks include:

- Parking revenue per space
- Total operating cost per space
- Administrative cost per space
- Maintenance cost per space
- Citations issued per enforcement staff (FTE)
- Parking citation collection ratio

Other operational areas can also yield significant savings in terms of reducing costs. Take, for example, facility lighting. Utility costs are integral budget elements in managing a parking structure, but by placing the exterior bay and roof top lights on separate circuits with photo-cells, 25 – 35% of the facility's lights can be turned off during the day, saving significant amounts of electricity.

Another area worthy of investigation is staffing costs in the late evening hours when the income generated is less than the staffing costs incurred. In these situations, the use of "automated payment devices" can be an effective alternative.

A longer and more detailed list of recommended parking management benchmarks is included in the Appendices.

## **Characteristic #13 – Comprehensive Facilities Maintenance Programs**

Few things make a greater impression on first time visitors than the cleanliness and maintenance of your parking facilities. Beyond first impressions, however, few areas provide a greater potential return on investment than a comprehensive parking system maintenance program.

A few best practices related to parking facility appearance and maintenance are noted below.

Paint interior surfaces white to enhance the perception of cleanliness and safety and improve lighting levels.



Develop a comprehensive preventative maintenance program for all essential systems.

- Parking Access and Revenue Control System
- Elevators
- Lighting and Energy Management Systems

Organize and track parking facility warranties in a binder. Schedule warranty inspections six months prior to warranty expiration. Document inspections with digital photos (ideally with time/date stamps) and written reports.

Regularly schedule facility condition appraisals by an experienced parking consultant and develop a prioritized program of facility maintenance repairs.

Set aside adequate maintenance reserve funds based on a prioritized facility maintenance action plan.

There are four general categories of parking facility maintenance:

- Housekeeping – This work is typically conducted by in-house staff and consists of basic cleaning, sweeping, slab wash downs, etc. “Housekeeping” includes items such as:
  - Sweeping of the stairs, elevator lobbies and floors on a regular basis.
  - Trash collection on a periodic basis.
  - Slab wash downs on a semi-annual basis.
  - Floor drain cleanout (including sediment basket cleanout)
  - Cleaning of stair enclosures (stair, elevator, and storefront glass)
  - Cleaning of doors, doorframes and glass on a periodic basis.
  - Cleaning of signage, light fixture lenses, elevator floors, doors, walls, parking equipment, etc. on a periodic basis.
  - Cleaning of restrooms, cashiers booths, offices, etc. on a regular basis.
  - Daily walkthrough of the facilities by operator to confirm that housekeeping is being performed.
- System Maintenance – This includes tasks necessary to ensure proper operations of systems and components. “System Maintenance” includes items such as:
- Landscaping
  - Maintenance – leaves, lawn, trees.
  - Plantings (annual)
  - Fencing – posts, chains, etc.
  - Planters
  - Irrigation Systems
- Painting – spot or seasonal painting.
- Parking Equipment Maintenance





- Ticket Issuing machines, card readers, computers, booths, gates, etc.
- Annual maintenance contract with equipment supplier.
- It is anticipated that parking equipment will be replaced every 7 to 10 years.
- Fire Protection
  - Maintenance Contract is anticipated
  - Drain periodically
  - Testing (twice per year)
- Lighting – It is anticipated that the lamps should be replaced every 2 to 3 years.
  - Fixture repair and isolated replacement included in operations
  - Fixture replacement every 20 years (included in Capital Expenditures)
  - Lens Replacement every 6 years (with lamps, included in operations)
  - Lamp replacement on an as need basis – Operator should schedule lamp replacement by level to maximize light effectiveness, and to maintain economy (Note: Lamp intensity depreciates significantly, well before burnout)
- Elevators – Elevator service contract and maintenance / repairs are generally provided by an outside maintenance firm.
  - Periodic cleaning of equipment will be reviewed.
  - Important to provide maintenance to reduce breakdowns.
  - Electrical / Mechanical / Plumbing Maintenance
    - Offices / Restrooms / Cashiers Booths
    - HVAC
    - Exhaust Fans
    - Plumbing fixtures
    - Hot water heaters
    - Lighting
- Electrical Equipment – General and emergency cleaning / maintenance
- HVAC Equipment – General and emergency cleaning / maintenance
  - Mechanical ventilation
  - Elevator tower ventilation system
- Emergency Power / Lighting Testing and Maintenance Contract
  - Generator: Maintenance contract.
  - UPS System: Maintenance Contract
- Plumbing – General cleanout
- Domestic Water Maintenance
  - Drain wash down lines annually
  - Sump pump inspection
- Doors and Hardware – Periodic inspection and lubrication (Malfunction, sticking, etc.).
- Signage
  - Illuminated Signs – Replace lamps



- Replace damaged signage periodically as required.
- Snow Removal / Deicing
- Annual General Maintenance and Repairs – Annual general maintenance would usually be performed by outside contractors, although in some cases the operator's staff may perform the work. This work is not typically included in a capital cost budget, and may be combined with the System Maintenance category. "General Maintenance" would include items such as:
  - Concrete Repairs - Isolated concrete slab, beam, joist, tee, topping, etc. repairs. In some cases, periodic concrete repairs (every 5 years) are included; however, isolated repairs between this interval should be anticipated.
  - Masonry Repair – Isolated masonry repair should be anticipated (spot tuck pointing, damaged masonry unit replacement, resetting cap stone, etc.).
  - Sealants/Expansion Joint – Repair/replacement of isolated sealant (floor and façade) or expansion joint failure (not included under 5 year warranty). Leaking at slab cracks may also require sealant installation. Leaking joints should be repaired as soon as possible after discovery, and evidence of leaking should be removed.
  - Deck Coating - Isolated deck coating repairs (not included under the 5 year warranty). Wear of the topcoat should be repaired prior to damage to the underlying base membrane.
  - Painting – Painting touchup (spot / seasonal painting) should generally be performed as damage is observed. It is anticipated that repainting of exposed steel and concrete surfaces would be performed every 10 to 15 years, and parking stripes reapplied every 2 to 3 years.
  - Graffiti Removal – Graffiti removal should be completed as soon as possible after the application.
  - General Electrical Repairs and Maintenance - Isolated corrosion damage, switchgear maintenance, panel maintenance.
  - Light Fixture Repair / Replacement – Individual light fixture repair or replacement will require immediate attention.
  - HVAC – Office, Restroom and Elevator HVAC repairs.
  - Plumbing – Isolated replacement of drain lines and floor drain grates; isolated cleanout of drains / lines; Periodic sump pump repairs.
  - Periodic Repairs, Protection, and Improvements (Capital Expenditures) This work is generally performed by outside contractors under the direction of parking consultants experienced in restoration and will consist of replacing/repairing damage to waterproofing or structural elements.

#### **Annual Maintenance Costs by Category**

- Housekeeping, Operations, and Operator Maintenance will vary based on specific operations requirements, but will approximate \$350 to \$450 per space per year.
- Annual General Maintenance and Repairs costs will approximate \$0.10 to \$.15/sf per year (\$35 to \$50 per space per year), depending on condition and type of structural system.
- Periodic Repairs, Protection, and Improvements (Capital Expenditures) - The maintenance reserve fund can likely be lower during the first 10 years of life, and increased to accommodate improvement planning budgets. For a new structure, this item may range from \$75 to \$100 per



space per year for the first 10 years.

## **Characteristic #14 – Effective Use of Technology**

Best in Class parking operations almost always have a comprehensive and integrated parking access and revenue control system that offers the following benefits:

- Consistent operations and features for customers
- Simplified/consistent training for staff and auditors
- Similar equipment and models provides for simplified maintenance and less costly parts stocking
- Consolidated system-wide reporting and management information

Staying informed of new technologies can help provide the parking department with the best tools available to achieve its goals. New technologies can help you, and your staff, work smarter, not harder. Customer service levels can be enhanced through the use of Automatic Vehicle Identification (AVI) systems, web-based permit renewal programs, pay-on-foot payment stations, etc.

Other benefits of incorporating new technologies are improved overall efficiency and effectiveness, reductions in operating expenses, improved management controls and the ability to implement seamless, customer friendly payment system options such as Internet payment options.

## **Characteristic #15 – Parking System Marketing and Promotion**

This is one of the most over looked aspects of parking system management. An effective parking system marketing and promotions program is one way to quickly set your parking operation apart from the ordinary. The following is a list of action items that can help launch a new or enhance an existing program.

- Develop a consistent Parking System Brand
  - The brand should promote the image you want people to have of the system
  - It should reinforce the positive aspects of the system – “Easy Parking,” “Visit Downtown and Parking Is On Us,” etc.
- Use consistent signage to “tie the system together”
- Have a parking tie-in to all downtown promotional materials.
- Expand and improve parking system website
- Develop new employee/tenant parking brochures or info packets
- Develop parking “E-Bulletins”
- Designate a parking spokesperson
- Regular personal contact with customers
- Develop parking deck floor identification (Themed graphics, music, etc. could be considered an extension of a local public arts program)
- Develop cooperative relationships between public and private parking operations to promote efficient use of resources for large public events.



- Develop a parking information database
- Use billing system to distribute system info and promotional materials
- Utilize “Guerilla Marketing” (creative/low cost concepts) techniques.

## **Characteristic #16 – Positive Customer Service Programs**

Downtown businesses depend on a parking system that works and contributes to a positive experience of the downtown. Because parking is the first and last impression customers visiting the downtown will have, providing a high level of customer service is critical. When weighing the importance of customer service, consider these statistics:

- An average business never hears from 96% of its unsatisfied customers.
- On average, for every complaint received there are 26 customers with problems.
- The average unsatisfied customer tells 9-10 people about their problem.
- Customers who have had the problems solved tell, on average, 5 people.
- A strong customer service program can provide the following benefits:
- Helps create a more “friendly” atmosphere
- Improves the image of the Parking Department and the Downtown
- Contributes to increased facility utilization (and therefore revenue)
- Contributes to increased acceptance of, and adherence to, parking regulations
- What are some characteristics of bad customer service?
  - Indifference
  - Unfriendliness
  - Runaround
  - “Joe Rule-Book”
  - Not listening
  - Getting the Brush-off
  - Just going through the motions
  - No follow-up
- What are characteristics of good customer service?
  - Always be friendly and respectful
  - Allow customers to fully explain their situation, without interruption (let them vent)
  - “Actively listen” to what your customers say
  - Ask questions seeking clarification
  - Maintain eye contact
- If the customer is making a complaint, always apologize for the situation (and mean it!)
  - Explain what you can do for the customer, not what you can’t
  - Always remember that tone of voice and physical movements convey meaning
  - Walk through the service process with the customer, explain the options





- Help the customer understand the options and achieve a level of buy-in
- Make sure they know you are there to help
- Always conclude a service opportunity with a thank you
- If possible, follow-up with the customer to see if the solution worked and if they are satisfied

Other recommended strategies to improve customer service include:

- Focus on employee training and good hiring practices
  - Hire friendly, attentive, outgoing knowledgeable attendants
- Increase personal contact between the parking system manager, stake holders and customers
- Institute performance measurements and utilize for company and employee incentives
- Create and implement a parking services program (battery jumps, lock-outs, flat-tires, escorts, audio book check-out, etc.)
- Implement a “Parking Hot Line” – (immediate response, centralized, easy to remember [555-PARK], follow-up)
- Improve website and links (use as a customer service tool, pay fines, order info, such as downloadable maps, rate schedules, special event info, etc.)
- Measure program effectiveness (customer surveys, etc.)
- Implement a secret shopper program to evaluate customer service
- Implement customer friendly systems such as AVI (automatic vehicle identification or “hands free access”)
- Develop a “New Employee Parking Brochure/Information Packet” to make it easier for larger organizations to get their employees into the system.

### **Characteristic #17 – Special Events Parking Programs**

Coordinating parking for special events, almost more than any other parking management activity, requires a coordinated and cooperative effort with the larger community. Some of the keys to success in this area include the development of a well-defined special events policy and detailed system for coordination of special events.

Another important dimension is the development of strong relationships with the key stakeholder groups that are active in the downtown. Providing practical incentives for other groups to communicate with and include the Parking Department in their planning processes early on is critical. Examples of the incentives parking can provide includes special services such as: coordination services, parking validations, waiving of parking enforcement, etc. for those who participate in the special event planning process.

Finally, be consistent in providing those that work with the parking system a high level of service. Conversely, provide disincentives for those that ignore the special events parking policy or chose to not include parking in their planning.



### **Characteristic #18 – Effective Enforcement**

Having an effective parking management program requires that the rules and regulations be enforced. The key to an effective parking enforcement program is attitude, consistency and fairness. Best in Class operations have adopted the philosophy of being customer focused not revenue or violator focused.

The following are enforcement program elements that help assure that your program avoids some common pitfalls.

- Define who is responsible for day-to-day parking enforcement. Have a central number that everyone knows to call for info regarding parking enforcement (eliminate the run around).
- Assure that parking rules, regulations and consequences are clearly posted.
- Assure that if towing or booting is a possibility, that the number to call for towed/booted vehicles is clearly posted.
- Define how enforcement revenues are to be collected and used.
- Define who sets enforcement policies.
- Have a clearly stated process for adjudicating parking citations.
- Define who has the authority for towing, booting or other enforcement practices.
- Make paying for parking citations as easy as possible.
- Provide incentives for early citation payment and disincentives for late or non-payment.

### **Characteristic #19 – Parking and Transportation Demand Management**

Because the cost of providing parking can be so high, strategies to manage parking demand is an important consideration in parking system planning. Incorporating parking and transportation demand management also ties into environmental goals and objectives such as the desire to reduce pollution, decrease traffic congestion, reduce reliance on single occupant vehicles, etc.

When evaluating options to reduce parking demand, integrating transportation demand management (TDM) strategies into your parking program philosophy is a recommended strategy. A few best practices include:

- Use parking pricing and rates as tools to promote desired behaviors
- Take advantage of employer-paid and employee-paid pre-tax benefit options
- Promote carpool/vanpool programs
- Provide preferred parking for carpools/vanpools
- Subsidize transit passes for downtown employees
- Provide a “Guaranteed Ride Home” program for those who participate in transportation alternative programs.
- Integrate bicycle racks and storage lockers in parking facilities.
- Show transit stops on parking maps
- Provide remote parking options and promote park and ride options on the parking web site



### **Characteristic #20 – Awareness of Competitive Environment**

Another characteristic of effective parking programs is that they are keenly aware of their competitive environment. They actively monitor private sector parking operators for changes in rates, new services offered, new technologies being used, etc. One of the most fundamental practices that all parking programs should engage in is a formalized process for evaluating parking market rates. It is recommended that parking market rate surveys be conducted bi-annually to help maintain an awareness of the competitive climate. This information can also be valuable during annual budget planning.

Another dimension to staying competitive is being aware of what parking systems in other municipalities are doing. What has been tried? What has worked? What hasn't? Participating in national, regional and state parking associations, sending key staff to parking conferences and implementing the peer-review process discussed under the Staff Development section earlier are good ways of developing a network of contacts to help you stay up-to-date on the latest technologies and management practices.

### **Summary**

The importance of Parking as one of the most visible and often controversial elements of a downtown's infrastructure is often underestimated. Parking, when well-managed, can be a key component in attracting and supporting new development and is essential to sustaining healthy and vibrant downtowns.



## 8. Parking System Organization and Management

As the parking profession has evolved, several very effective parking system organizational models have emerged. Each of these models has its own strengths and weakness depending on several factors including the parking system's size, degree of development, programs offered, political landscape, community goals, etc. The four most successful and commonly utilized organizational models are:

- A Consolidated ("vertically integrated") City/District Department model
- The Parking Authority model
- The "Contract" or Business District model
- The Parking District model

There are of course several variations and hybrids of these models, but these are the four primary alternatives commonly seen across the country. Each of these models will be detailed in more depth in the following sections, but they all have one common factor that contributes to their success: They all address the major problem associated with the "horizontally integrated model" previously described.

When evaluating which organizational option will work best in a specific community, it is important to ask community stakeholders to create a prioritized set of evaluation criteria. A typical list of criteria would include determining which organizational option:

- best supports economic development
- best reflects the image and personality of the community
- is most efficient/cost effective
- is most customer-friendly
- is most politically feasible
- is most focused on the vision
- is easiest to achieve
- is most responsive to businesses and stakeholders
- is most financially viable
- provides the most effective coordination

The following is a brief description of parking system organizational models that have shown demonstrated success in recent years. Each description is illustrated by an example of a specific program based on that model.





## Consolidated (“Vertically Integrated”) City/District Department Model

A Consolidated “Vertically Integrated” City/District Department Model is essentially a typical department – lead by a department head and consisting of a varying assortment of support staff. The defining characteristic of this model is that the department director has complete responsibility for the management of all parking related program elements. The primary elements of these being:

- Off-street parking facilities
- On-street parking resources
- Overall program financial performance
- Parking system planning
- Parking enforcement

There are numerous other related areas that can be included:

- Transportation demand management (Trip Reduction Programs, Preferential Parking for Car/Van Pools, transit programs, etc.)
- Parking system branding, marketing, and community outreach.
- Implementation of new technologies.
- Parking system planning (e.g., zoning, financial planning).
- Residential permit parking programs.
- Interface with downtown development and economic development

The City of Fort Collins, Colorado has a consolidated parking management program that incorporates off-street parking (parking structures and surface lots), on-street parking (time limited on-street spaces), and parking enforcement. The city’s Parking Manager also has developed a program to promote effective coordination and collaboration with the owners of private parking to better support evening restaurant parking demands and for special events. Another feature arising from this integrated approach is that the city is currently embarking on a parking technology assessment.



A key feature of this assessment is to identify technology options that could link on-street/enforcement systems (Auto-Vu LPR enforcement technology/T-2 systems software) with the next generation of off-street parking equipment and potentially new on-street multi-space meters.) This type of creative and integrated thinking is more common in systems with a vertically integrated organizational structure.



## The Parking Authority Model

Parking authorities typically operate with a small staff and engage a private parking operator to manage day-to-day operations. One advantage of the Parking Authority model, especially in a municipal setting, is that it puts all the major parties at the same table. This helps stakeholders gain a deeper appreciation for the competing agendas between various constituents.

The defining characteristics of a Parking Authority Model include:

- It has a defined mission and vision
- It is governed by a detailed management agreement
- Often has bonding capability
- Most often has responsibility for all aspects of parking operations (off-street, on-street, and enforcement)
- It is typically headed by a President or Executive Director
  - Because of this they tend to attract the highest caliber parking management personnel
  - The President or Executive Director reports to a board (Typically 7 – 15 members)
  - The board is comprised of influential and invested downtown stakeholders.
  - Board composition typically includes:
    - High level city staff.
    - Mayor or City Manager (or appointee).
    - Director of Finance.
    - Director of Public Works.
    - Property owners/developers.
    - Downtown association members.
    - Chamber of Commerce representative.
    - Large downtown employers.

Although the authority may not control all of the parking in a downtown area, that does not mean they cannot affect the entire downtown. In Toledo, Ohio, the Downtown Toledo Parking Authority (DTPA) so dramatically transformed the operations in its three facilities that all the other private parking operations were forced to follow suit. Now virtually all downtown parking facilities have attendants in new uniforms, customer service training for front-line staff, parking structure interiors are painted white, new customer friendly parking technologies and programs are being installed/instituted – all following the DTPA's lead.





## The “Contract” or Business District Model

In a surprising number of communities across the United States, downtown business improvement districts or downtown associations are taking operational responsibility for parking. Similar to the Parking Authority Model, the Contract or Business District Model is governed by a well-defined operating agreement that sets specific expectations and limits on the use of parking assets. These contracts or agreements must typically be reauthorized every 3 – 5 years based on whether the defined contract goals were met. If reauthorized, it is not uncommon for new goals and program objectives to be set for the next contract period.

In Boise, Idaho the off-street parking program is professionally managed by the Capital City Development Corporation – the city’s urban renewal agency. Through the aggressive use of tax increment financing combined with a strategy of leading other desired development with parking infrastructure investment, downtown Boise has become a national model of downtown resurgence.



Another example of this model can be found in Tempe, Arizona. The City of Tempe does not own any significant parking facilities and only a few small surface parking lots. In Tempe, the need for a coordinated parking system solution to provide a more user friendly experience for visitors drove the downtown organization – the Downtown Tempe Community, Inc. (DTC) – to create what amounts to a “parking management overlay” program. Working with the owners of the off-street parking assets, they created a parking system management plan. Through creative signage, a common parking validation program, and extensive marketing, they branded the parking system to such an extent that it appears that Tempe has a well-managed and comprehensive parking program, although they do not own all of the individual assets. DTC acts, in essence, as a private parking management firm. They manage all parking staff and programs themselves, and return all

profits to the facility owners (keeping a modest management fee). The DTC also manages the city’s on-street parking resources and reinvests on-street parking revenues back into the downtown.





## The Parking District Model

The Parking District Model is slightly different than the previously defined model, but as mentioned earlier, the one common element of all of these successful models is the goal of a creating a “comprehensive parking management function” under the control of one leader (“vertical integration”).

The characteristics of a parking district include:

- They typically have a defined area with set boundaries.
- They may have a special assessment that applies to all properties within the district.
  - This revenue generally goes toward defined district improvements, but could be restricted to parking or transportation related projects.
- They are generally run by an Executive Director or President (although some are run by city department heads).
- All revenues are collected and managed by the district for reinvestment in the district.
  - In some cases, if revenues exceed operational or capital program needs, the additional funds are returned to the city’s general fund.
  - In other cases, the city assesses the district a fee based on a percentage of net revenues in-lieu of not assessing property taxes on the parking facilities. This money goes to the city’s general fund.
- Revenue sources typically include:
  - Special assessment revenue (if applicable).
  - Off-street parking revenue.
    - Could include miscellaneous revenue sources such as: advertising (in parking structures), vending machines or retail space rental (mixed-use parking facilities).
    - Could also include special event parking revenue.
  - On-street parking revenue.
  - Parking enforcement revenue.



Parking Districts have made some significant contributions to the communities they serve. For example, in Boulder, Colorado, the Downtown and University Hill Management District/Parking Services can boast the following list of accomplishments (all paid for with parking district revenues):

- Funding of the Eco-Pass Program - \$700,000 for 2006.
  - This program gives all downtown employees a free bus pass and contributes to a 62% modal split among downtown employees (reducing parking demand).





- Repayment of a \$3.4 million Mall Improvement Bond - \$500,000/yr.
  - This is a good example of the parking program contributing to community economic development.
- Payment of Parking Structure Debt Service Obligations.
  - Parking district revenues fund the development costs of downtown public parking structures as well as all parking operating and maintenance costs.
  - One of the more impressive parts of this program has been the leadership in defining appropriate design guidelines for parking structures.
    - Only mixed-used structures are permitted.
    - They must incorporate street level retail and be architecturally consistent with the downtown fabric. Some have been multi-modal in nature – integrating transit functions with parking.



## The Professional Services Model

A more recently developed organizational model is the “Professional Services” model. In this model, a smaller more professional level parking services group is developed in conjunction with the outsourcing of day-to-day operations. While there are many potential variations under this category, the most successful variation involves a group that is primarily administrative in nature.

The management group is responsible for program elements such as: creating the vision and mission of the program, community outreach and program development (including assessment of new technologies, etc.), parking system planning, interface with economic development programs, interface with transportation system functions (including alternative transportation programs), contract administration, parking facility long-term maintenance program development, system financial administration/audit functions, and special projects management.

Parking operations are outsourced to a qualified parking management firm. Their responsibilities would typically include: off-street parking facility operations (cashiering services, pay-on-foot operations, etc.), daily facilities maintenance, security, etc. Some communities have





extended these contract services to include the operation of on-street parking and parking enforcement programs including citation collections and management. For on-street and enforcement operations meter maintenance and collections, citation issuance, collections and adjudication can all be outsourced as well.

Another feature often used in conjunction with the Professional Services Model is the development of “on-call services agreements” for various types of consulting and professional services such as: engineering facility condition appraisals, technology assessments, revenue control system assessment and audits, etc.

The primary advantages of this model are that parking is managed by a lean group of management staff focused on key areas such as:

- Program Administration and Finance
- Audit/Revenue Control
- Contract Administration
- Special Projects
- Marketing/Branding/Communications
- Economic Development/Customer Satisfaction/Business Community Interface

Day-to-day operations are outsourced. This can have the effect of keeping a better focus on the strategic goals of the parking program without getting mired in the myriad operational issues that make up day-to-day management.

Communities beginning to implement this approach include the City of Beverly Hills and the City of Lincoln, NE.

## **The Parking Management Collaborative Approach**

As mentioned earlier, this approach was developed specifically to address the set of conditions that exist in communities that have chosen not to develop a significant off-street public parking system and therefore do not have much ability to influence the off-street parking market in traditional ways.

The Parking Management Collaborative approach is comprised of the following basic tenets:

- There is a demonstrated need to improve the ease of use and access to parking in the downtown, especially for occasional visitors.
- There is recognition that a comprehensive approach that will coordinate and integrate both on-street parking and off-street parking assets is needed to make the downtown more visitor-friendly.
- On-street parking assets will be better managed as a short-term parking resource with the primary management goal being to promote a high degree of turnover for the benefit the merchants and businesses that depend on an effectively managed supply of convenient short-term parking resources. A goal of maintaining an average on-street occupancy level of approximately 85% shall be key program goal/benchmark.



- Because the majority of off-street parking in the downtown is privately owned and operated, a collaborative approach to developing a downtown parking management strategy is needed. The primary objective of this approach is to develop what is essentially a “parking management program overlay” that will create a well-coordinated and marketed user-friendly parking system that will appear to the casual user as a public parking program.
  - The key functional elements of this parking management overlay include:
    - Program Branding and Marketing
    - A comprehensive updated downtown parking and wayfinding program
    - A central parking and transportation information clearinghouse function
    - A special event coordination function
    - A significant parking and transportation planning function
    - Coordination with community and economic development activities
    - Management of City owned parking assets
    - Coordination with The Downtown Alliance in support of downtown business needs
- The Parking Management Collaborative will strive to promote superior, customer oriented parking programs and parking facility standards.
- Parking planning and coordination will be important functions related to understanding and responding to both the current and future parking needs of uptown users.
- The diverse needs of various user groups will be considered, including visitors, employees, employers, property owners and parking management firms, through active planning, coordination and communications.
- The Parking Management Collaborative shall be considered an integral component of the community’s economic development strategies and programs.

The following nine elements will be the primary strategies to be implemented by the Parking Management Collaborative:

1. Develop a parking system brand and marketing program.
2. Create a web-based parking and transportation information clearinghouse. Become the central point for coordination of information related to parking and access options for the community.
3. Promote the principles of balanced access for all travel modes, including vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle and transit, to meet community-wide goals
4. Focus on creating an excellent customer service orientation for all







- parking user groups - visitors, employees, employers, property owners, etc.
5. Develop an effective interface between public and private parking providers.
  6. Work with parking management collaborative members to create high standards for safe, attractive and well-maintained facilities
  7. Take an aggressive and proactive approach to community education related to parking and transportation issues and new program development. Be responsiveness to the needs of the diverse customer/citizen base.
  8. Actively coordinate with economic vitality initiatives, retail support strategies and other community and economic development programs.
  9. Develop a strong parking and transportation planning function and promote good urban design, shared parking, walkability and transit oriented development approaches to create a superior, people oriented urban center.

This approach needs only a small, but highly effective staff to be successful. The recruitment of an executive caliber program director with strong vision and excellent communication skills is essential for this strategy to succeed. The other key ingredient is to get buy-in from the major parking property owners. This is typically accomplished by recruiting them to be on the program's Board of Directors. In some cases where all the right individuals are already on the board of an existing downtown organization (especially if creating "yet another board" would be seen as an issue) this function could become an initiative of that organization.

One of the key values of have the major parking property owners engaged at this level is that this will lead to them directing the parking management firms they manage or hire to "get on-board" with this program. Engaging the parking management firms on another level can also be very valuable because of their detailed knowledge of conditions "on the street" and their knowledge parking management principles in general.

The first major city to employ this model is Charlotte, NC, where the collaborative was located, organizationally, in the business improvement district known as the Charlotte City Center Partners

## **The Eco-District Model**

EcoDistrict Initiatives are a comprehensive strategy to accelerate sustainable neighborhood development. The purpose of this overview is to clarify the value proposition, define performance areas, and outline an implementation strategy as it relates to adapting this approach to a parking and transportation program organizational framework.

At its heart an EcoDistrict is a neighborhood or district with a broad commitment to accelerate neighborhood-scale sustainability. Eco-Districts commit to achieving ambitious sustainability performance goals, guiding district investments and community action, and tracking the results over time.

A parking and transportation Eco District approach would recognize technologies and strategies for enhancing district sustainability, such as energy and water management systems within parking developments, support for green streets, the promotion of resource conservation, etc.





In this case, since parking can be a significant revenue source, we envision parking revenues being dedicated first to supporting parking program operations, maintenance reserves, and technology upgrades, but once the parking program is well established and generating excess revenues that these resources would be invested in a variety of sustainability initiatives. Examples might include programs such as:

- Community bike programs – to support an overall “Parking Once Strategy”
- Car sharing programs – to support downtown residential development
- Pervious pavement installation and bio-swales as demonstration projects in city surface parking lots

It should be noted that the widespread deployment of these strategies has been slow to develop due to lack of comprehensive assessment tools, scalable project capital, and public policy support. The Eco-Districts Initiative focuses on removing these implementation barriers and creating an enabling strategy to accelerate neighborhood-scale sustainability.

The Eco-Districts Initiative is distinct from most green development strategies that focus on brownfield or greenfield development that are primarily led by master developers or public agencies. Instead, the Eco-Districts Initiative targets districts - at the intersection of buildings, infrastructure and people. This initiative would be “working upstream” of rating systems like LEED-ND to develop tools and strategies for engagement and project implementation.

Generally, the Eco-Districts approach brings together community stakeholders, property developers, utilities, and the City of Salt Lake City to solidify a shared sense of purpose and partnership through the following actions:

- Create an engagement and governance strategy to build community support, set priorities and act
- Develop an assessment and management toolkit to guide project development and track ongoing performance
- Implement sustainability projects through technical and economic feasibility analysis, assembly of project financing, and establishment of public-private partnerships
- Identify commercialization opportunities for companies to test promising products and practices
- Establish municipal policy and regulatory structures to support EcoDistrict development

In this specific application, the general goals above still apply, however because of our focus on parking and transportation functions there will be some variation and more specific applications. However, the broad-based nature of parking and transportation, the need for on-going stakeholder engagement and the larger economic development focus makes this application very appealing. Overall, transportation accounts for about 30% of the nation’s carbon footprint. Organizing your parking program to have an explicit “eco-district” orientation would send a strong signal of the City’s commitment to environmental progress.



## PARKING SYSTEM OPERATING METHODOLOGIES

Once a management structure has been determined, operating methodologies are another organizational/management consideration. There are three primary methodologies for operating parking programs. These are:

1. **Self-Operation** – The managing entity or owner operates the parking program itself. For example, a downtown parking authority could hire the necessary staff to operate the parking system internally.
2. **Outsourced – Management Contract** – The facility owner or managing organization contracts a private parking management firm to handle day-to-day operations and maintenance through a management contract. Through the management contract, the private parking management firm is either paid a fixed management fee and/or a percentage of gross revenues and is reimbursed by the owner for all costs incurred in the operation.
3. **Outsourced – Concession Agreement** - The facility owner or managing organization contracts a parking management firm to assume full responsibility for all aspects of the operation, including expenses, and the parking management firm pays the owner a guaranteed amount and/or a percentage of gross revenues (or a combination).

A variation on these basic methodologies that is just being introduced in the US parking market is that of parking system “monetization”. A more detailed description of each option is provided in the following sub-sections.

### Self-Operation

Self-operation of the parking system requires that the owning entity provide all the necessary employees (e.g., full or part-time staff and/or temporary employees), equipment, supplies, etc. With this method of operation, the owning entity receives all gross parking revenues and pays for all operating expenses. Self-operation requires internal administrative and managerial staff at a higher level than the management contract or concession style agreements.

Self-operation allows the owning entity to have complete control over the parking facilities and the level of service provided to its patrons. This requires a well-trained and experienced staff to effectively manage a large parking operation with significant daily revenues. Parking has become a highly specialized field and also requires good general and facility management skills. Without proper training and professional development, self-operation can result in a lower than desired level of service and revenue controls. This, in conjunction with the requirements for a high level of customer service and the specialized nature of parking, makes the idea of using a professional parking management firm a logical and attractive alternative for initial downtown parking operations.

Potential advantages of self-operation include:

- Complete control over day-to-day parking operations, including customer service.
- Internal parking knowledge to assist with future planning.
- Uniform look and feel with other city services.



- Better control over staff and staff training.
- Eliminates paying a management fee to a vendor.

Disadvantages to this approach would include:

- Typically higher expenses than contracting with a private parking provider due to:
  - Higher pay rates than private operators especially in a unionized environment
  - More restrictive benefit requirements
  - Higher staff training and development costs
  - Private operators have a greater economy of scale relative to supplies
  - Higher insurance costs/requirements.
- More operational duties for the city.
- Smaller staff pool to draw from for covering sick days and vacations.
- Without adequate training, customer service could suffer.
- The city would need to find and hire experienced parking staff.
- The city would have higher administrative and back office costs than an experienced private operator.
- The city would deal directly with customer complaints.
- The city would assume all of the financial risks related with the parking system.
- Can be more difficult to terminate the employment of staff when needed.

## Management Agreement Operations

In this form of operation the owning entity retains complete control over staffing levels, validation policies, parking rates, and customer service policies. With a management agreement, the parking operator provides the necessary labor and services for the operation of the parking facilities in accordance with an agreed upon policies and annual operating expense budgets established by the owner. The parking operator then receives a monthly payment, either a lump sum amount or a percentage of the gross or net revenue. This monthly payment represents the fee to manage the facilities.

The parking operator should provide the owning entity with a detailed monthly report package including: operating statistics, revenue summaries, expenses summaries, budget variance reports, etc. The management agreement still requires some additional personnel time for the owning entity's staff, since it is necessary to audit the gross parking revenues, as well as the monthly operating expenses. The preferred arrangement is that all reporting guidelines and accounting practices are determined up-front so that each party understands their responsibilities.

The owning entity's stakeholders and staff should have significant input into establishing the "level of service" for the parking system by deciding on the type of parking access and revenue control systems to be employed, the quantity of cashiers/customer service ambassadors, acceptable traffic queuing upon exit, lost ticket/insufficient funds policies, parking related services offered (lost vehicle assistance, dead battery assistance, vehicle lock-out assistance), etc.



The following outlines the potential advantages of outsourced day-to-day operations via management agreement (in conjunction with a small in-house contract management function):

- Reasonable control over day-to-day parking operations.
- An internal parking manager could be hired by the city with sufficient parking knowledge to assist with future planning.
- A well-structured management agreement would provide:
  - Reasonable control over staff and staff training.
  - High customer service expectations.
  - A high level of staff appearance.
  - Strong auditing capabilities
  - Operator accountability.
- Parking services from an experienced service provider.
- Typically, operations are less expensive due to:
  - Lower staffing costs.
  - Lower supply costs.
  - Lower training costs.
  - Lower administrative costs.
  - Lower insurance costs.
- The use of a private parking operator, at least for a short time, would provide valuable parking experience to the city.
- Potentially, a large pool of private operator staff to draw from for sick day and employee vacations.
- The contracted parking operator would deal with most customer complaints.
- Relatively predictable parking system expenses.

Disadvantages to this approach include:

- The city would have to compensate a private operator with a management fee or a percentage of gross revenues.
- Somewhat less control over day-to-day operations.
- Somewhat less control over staffing and training issues.
- The city would need to find and hire an experienced parking manager.
- The city would have some administrative and back office staffing costs.
- The city would assume most of the financial risks related with the parking system.

## **Concession Agreement Operations**

With a concession agreement, the concessionaire will provide all necessary labor and services for the complete operation of parking facilities in return for a percentage of the gross parking revenues. The actual percentage varies from operation to operation based on the size, complexity, revenue potential, and perceived risk to the operator. There may be a guaranteed minimum annual payment to the owning entity. Sometimes a revenue split is negotiated for revenues above a certain level.





In general, concession agreements work best in situations where the owning entity wishes to divest itself from the day-to-day parking operational concerns in order to better focus on its core business (these types of arrangements are more common in airports for example). With this type of agreement, a minimal amount of time is required by the owning entity's staff in the day-to-day operations of the parking program. The owning entity also gives up some level of control as it relates to defining day-to-day operations, as the concessionaire is responsible for all expenses and most liabilities. Typically, the owning entity receives a deposit from monthly parking revenues within two weeks after the end of the each calendar month. Periodic conversations with the parking operator are necessary to discuss operational issues that affect the quality of service to owning entity's patrons.

The concession agreement is the simplest type of agreement for administrative purposes, in that only the gross parking revenue need be audited. All operational expenses are the responsibility of the concessionaire, thereby resulting in minimal control of this function by owning entity staff. Also, as with the management agreement, the parking operator serves as a buffer to the owning entity's management with respect to parking complaints and potential wrongdoing by those employed within the parking system.

Potential advantages of concession style leasing of parking facilities include:

- No real parking operations or management required by the city.
- No substantial daily auditing required by the city.
- Facilities would be leased to an experienced parking services provider.
- Requires no internal parking experience on the part of the city.
- Relatively predictable revenue stream.
- Less operations related financial risk.
- Parking operator takes all significant parking customer complaints.

Disadvantages to this approach would include:

- Little to no control over day-to-day parking operations.
- No control over staffing and training issues.
- Less customer service accountability.
- Difficult to measure parking system expenses, if the parking operator is required to share them at all.
- The parking operator may be encouraged to reduce facility expenses to a minimum level (negatively impacting customer service), to increase profits.

## **Parking System Monetization (or Privatization)**

This option, which is also sometimes referred to as "Public-Private Partnerships" or "PPPs"(there are other types of public private partnerships that do not involve monetizing public assets and so I will focus on the term "monetization ) is very similar to the concession agreement approach described above with the



exception that the term is much longer and the owning entity receives a large cash infusion at the front end of the deal which is then paid back (with significant finance and other fees) over the term of the lease.

In the last few years, this concept has attracted more interest as many cities, counties and states face deep budget deficits. As a result, there has been an extensive amount of study and commentary on this trend. The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), the Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) and state legislatures have issued comprehensive reports on the subject. The Texas State Legislature recently released an extensive report on PPPs in toll road projects, and the Federal Highway Administration examined PPPs in other countries. The various reports and studies illuminate some basics of best practices for asset monetization.

In my opinion some of the most insightful analysis of these event and issues has come from Stephen Goldsmith. Mr. Goldsmith, a former mayor of Indianapolis, is director of the Innovations in American Government Program at the Harvard Kennedy School. He is author of the forthcoming book *The Power of Social Innovation: How Civic Entrepreneurs Ignite Community Networks for Good*. Many of his insights are included in the summary of “good asset monetization goals and key issues” below.

#### Examples of Good Privatization Goals & Key Issues to Consider

1. Identifying non-core functions and areas that are not core competencies
  - a. If parking management is not a core competency of the City then it is a candidate for privatization; however, if you are lucky enough to have a high functioning parking system that is providing excellent service and is contributing to community growth and development, think twice about what you may be giving up.
2. Establishing a long-term reserve fund to:
  - a. Enhance City credit rating and thus lower interest rates
    - i. Chicago did this and enjoyed its highest credit rating since 1978
  - b. Retire Debt
  - c. Eliminate interest payments and thereby create more money for community reinvestment
    - i. Chicago retired \$925 million in debt
  - d. Community Reinvestment
    - i. Identify and fund a well-defined set of community desired or essential infrastructure projects
    - ii. Programs that serve the public good
      1. Example: Neighborhood parks and programs
        - a. Chicago invested more than \$325 million in this area
    - iii. Infrastructure investments that will stimulate additional private sector investments
      1. Example: Parking structures as part of a public/private partnership.
3. Shifting Risk
  - a. Consider the potential risks of managing on-street metered parking for the next 75 years (imagine bidding on the City’s horseshoeing concession in 1890, or the public pay phone concession in 1975)
    - i. Changing technologies
    - ii. Utilization



- iii. Costs
  - 1. Rising labor costs
  - 2. Rising fuel costs
  - 3. Equipment replacement
    - a. In Chicago, the cost of replacing the multi-space meters every 7 years is estimated at \$40 - \$50 million dollars.
- 4. Carefully analyze the term of any potential concession
  - a. Both the Chicago Inspector General's analysis and financial experts who have analyzed the deal indicate that Chicago should have negotiated a shorter lease period.
    - i. Under their analysis, Chicago left significant future earnings on the table when it agreed to a 75 year concession term (estimated at \$1.3 to \$2.1 billion).
- 5. Look at Alternative Solutions to Budget Problems
  - a. Chicago is the poster child for using the proceeds of PPP asset leases to plug a budget operating deficit and selling its residents' future.
  - b. In 2006 the city sold the Chicago Skyway for \$1.83 billion, of which \$460 million was used to pay off debt, \$375 million was used to close the 2006 operating budget gap and \$500 million was placed in a rainy day fund. The \$500 million rainy day fund was exhausted to close operating budget gaps in years 2007 and 2008.
- 6. Key elements of a PPP deal are transparency, expertise and setting controls over rates and "windfall profits."
  - a. Allow Elected Officials to Approve the Terms of Any Proposed Agreement Before It Is Put Out to Bid
  - b. Don't let the market/bidders solely dictate the terms of the PPP through a request for proposal process. Elected officials should have the power to alter the terms of the proposed deal as they see fit and drive the process through negotiation rather than have a fait accompli handed to them.
  - c. The Texas State Legislature's recent report on PPPs advocated revenue sharing over single, upfront payments as a better way to protect the public interest. The report also noted that key elements of a PPP deal are transparency, expertise and setting controls over rates and "windfall profits."
- 7. Do Not Include Lease Proceeds in a Government Budget before the Leases Are Finalized
  - a. Having a budget balanced on the back of lease proceeds makes it extremely difficult for officials to reject an asset lease or concession deal. Consider adopting an ordinance prohibiting a city's budget from including revenue from PPP proceeds before commissioners have approved the deal.
- 8. Consider the Creation of a Concession Management Review Board
  - a. The impact of these deals will affect a broad array of citizens, civic and cultural organizations, religious and educational institutions and corporations. These are individuals and businesses that are invested in their communities and deserve a voice as well as an open and transparent process.
- 9. Consider the Creation of a Downtown Parking Management Commission
  - a. The Parking Management Commission could be made up of City, Parking Authority and Downtown Stakeholders and should require the concessioner to be engaged with Parking



- Commission. The Parking Commission would provide an annual program assessment to City Council.
10. Term of the Agreement
    - a. Limit to 30 – 50 years
    - b. Build in a mechanism to address changes in annual expectations
    - c. Establish a defined monitoring process
    - d. Create a process to generate an Annual Stakeholder Report Card
      - i. If the deal were to “go sour” have a plan for “How to get out?” - Who pays what to whom?
      - ii. Consider alternatives to a one-time only payment
      - iii. Consider a lesser up-front payment with annual incremental payments to a dedicated parking reinvestment fund.
      - iv. For cities with a parking tax, could the parking tax constitute the annual incremental payment?
  11. Maintaining and Improving Service Levels to Users of the Parking System
    - a. From the perspective of parking customer’s and those invested in the downtown a strong, well-managed parking system is critical to their success. The concessioner should ideally be a “partner for the success of the downtown” and implement programs and policies to effectively address the following:
      - i. Greater availability of parking spaces
      - ii. More convenient, start of the art equipment
      - iii. Multiple payment options
      - iv. Quicker service of broken equipment
        1. In Chicago meters are now repaired within a couple of hours on average compared to 2.5 days under the City run system
      - v. Retail parking, employee parking, event parking, etc.
      - vi. Special programs to meet the needs of cultural, religious and civic institutions as well as customized neighborhood programs.
  12. Building on the “Partnership for Downtown Success” concept requires an understanding of the needs of the business community, downtown residents and religious and cultural institutions. Once these needs are understood, implementation of parking program enhancements should be introduced. This is where the special expertise of a parking profession is needed. Programs to meet identified community needs might include:
    - a. Extended time limits near theaters, concert halls, schools and churches where parker need more than 2 hours
    - b. Free or reduced rate parking for churches on Sunday mornings
    - c. Automatic ticket dismissal for inoperable meters, based on meter malfunction reports generated by the system.
    - d. Ability to pay citations on-line or even at a meter
    - e. Improved parking access and convenient parking for hourly parkers to support downtown retail
    - f. Discounted monthly parking in certain lots
    - g. Donated single space meters to protect bicycle parking or as vehicles for charitable donations





13. Promote sustainable and innovative parking technologies & interior parking facility environment enhancements
  - a. Improved customer service features
  - b. Adopt “retail friendly” parking management best practices
  - c. Create safe, clean and friendly parking environments
  - d. Invest in sustainable design & management practices
14. Other Issues to Consider...
  - a. Who will develop and manage new parking facilities?
  - b. Will the concessioner be allowed to manage of competing facilities?
  - c. Where will rate setting authority reside?

## RECOMMENDED ORGANIZATIONAL OPTION

Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. strongly recommends that the City of Billings work to create a more vertically integrated downtown parking system. Billings already has a more vertically integrated parking program than many cities. The following model is the recommended option for the City’s consideration: A Hybrid of “The Vertically Integrated City Department Model” and the “Parking Commission Model”.

While this option is among the most the conservative and traditional of the organizational options, it is recommended because we have been impressed with the quality and competence of the City staff that we have dealt with in the course of this study. The current City parking program is better integrated in terms of the basic parking program services already (with primary responsibility for managing on-street, off-street and parking enforcement functions). To achieve a more fully integrated parking program, it is envisioned that additional functions will be added over about a five year period. These additional functions should include:

- A more robust parking planning function (working with City Planning on parking and related transportation issues). There are a number of parking specific planning tools that will be recommended. Parking should also be at the table when issues related to zoning code changes and parking requirements are debated and amended.
- Better integration and collaboration with downtown management and economic development programs. One of the lessons learned from the parking advisory panelist’s programs is the extent to which parking can become a true community partner in terms of downtown revitalization and development efforts. Collaborative program initiatives and participation on boards and committees and generally closer working relationships can generate significant community wide benefits to all parties.
- A specific focus on developing programs related to transportation demand management, transportation alternatives and other sustainable transportation program options

The current City parking program has recently hired a new parking manager (an upgrade from the former department leader whose title was parking supervisor). As the department evolves into a more robust, mature program with an expanded scope of services, it is recommended that the parking manager position be reviewed with an eye toward the development of a “Parking Director” or “Parking Administrator” level position. An extensive document has been provided in the report appendices which



provides an overview of parking administrator positions from around the country including salary information, examples of program scopes and several example position descriptions.

As the department expands its scope and matures, new potential areas of focus might include “accounting and auditing”, “planning and community education” and “special projects”. If recommendations to upgrade parking technologies (both on and off-street) are implemented, the special projects area might become especially important.

This option also envisions some form of parking counsel or board to provide a mechanism for ensuring community engagement and input. We are aware of the current legal restrictions in the City Charter related to “commissions” and the unsuccessful attempt to pass new legislation, however, some senior City officials expressed the opinion that there may be other options that might be considered. The major concern here is that while the current Parking Advisory Board has many community leaders who are both invested in downtown Billings and have strong business backgrounds to provide sound direction and guidance, the lack of authority to affect policy decisions is negatively impacting their desire to stay engaged.

A framework should be developed whereby certain “policy –level decisions” are defined as the responsibility of the City Council and more operational level decisions are ceded to Parking Counsel of Board”. The Parking Board should also be encouraged to draft policy level proposals for the City Council to review and vote on.

It is also recommended that the City’s Parking Manager get involved in other related agencies either on the board or committee levels to stay better connected to and be more engaged in downtown development and revitalization efforts.

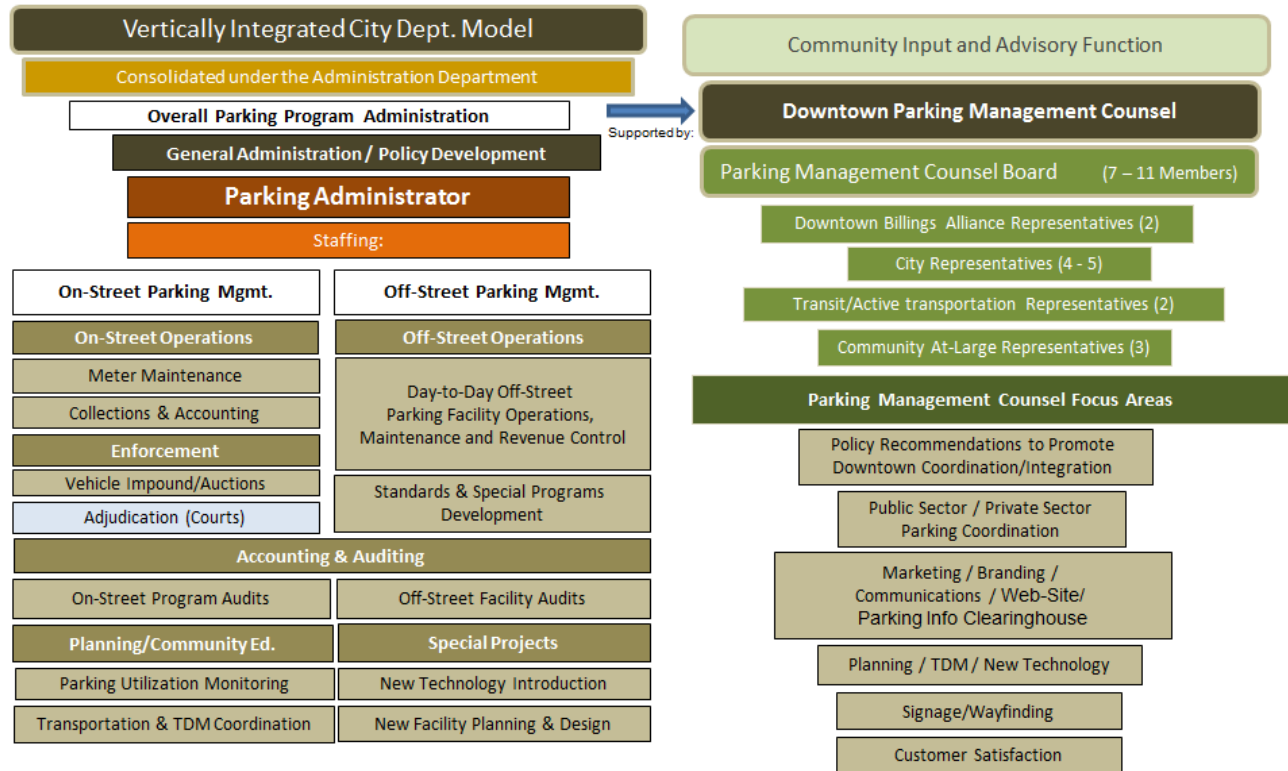
A recommended organizational structure diagram is included on the following page.



### Recommended Organization of Parking Management Functions

#### HYBRID OF THE VERTICALLY INTEGRATED CITY DEPARTMENT MODEL & PARKING COMMISSION MODEL

**Description:** A Vertically Integrated City department located organizationally under the City's Administration Department - This option is supported by a Downtown Parking Management Counsel which advises City administration and City Council on parking management policy decisions.

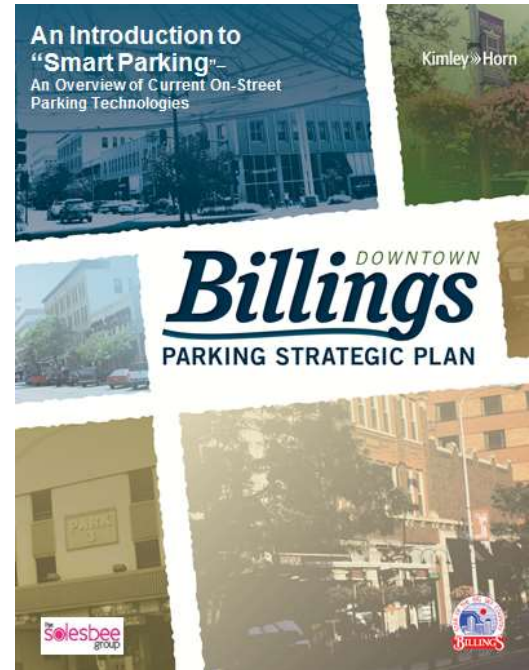




## 9. An Introduction to “Smart Parking”– An Overview of On-Street Parking Technologies

Another important area for strategic assessment is leveraging new parking technologies. For the City of Billings there are two significant areas. The first is a new development, mentioned earlier in this report – regarding the fact that the manufacturer of the most of the City’s parking garage access and revenue control systems is going out of business. This situation is still developing, but City needs to be thinking proactively about how to transition to a new system before the lack of parts and service becomes problematic. The other major area, from a technology assessment perspective is on-street parking.

Specific recommendations are made later in this report regarding upgrading on-street technologies, however, as a means of providing more background information in this fast evolving area, we have provided a detailed whitepaper entitled: An Introduction to “Smart Parking”– An Overview of Current On-Street Parking Technologies. This document is attached as Appendix X.







## 10. Parking Program Goals and Objectives

### “Charting the Right Course”

Based on feedback from project meetings and community engagement focus groups, the Kimley-Horn project team drafted a preliminary set of program goals and guiding principles.

The purpose of these program goals and guiding principles is to establish a strategic framework upon which to build a new parking management plan for the City of Billings. Included in this section are the following elements:

- A draft vision statement
- A draft mission statement
- Draft Guiding Principles

The overall parking program recommendations were developed to support this draft program vision / mission and guiding principles.

#### **Draft Vision Statement:**

*“The Billings parking program will strive to develop a superior, customer-oriented parking system, responding to the current and future needs of parkers, including visitors, employees, employers, and property owners through active planning, management, coordination, and communications.”*

*“The Billings parking program shall be considered an integral component of the community’s economic development strategies and programs.”*

#### **Draft Mission Statement:**

*“The Billings parking program is committed to enhancing the parking experience for the City’s customers and stakeholders. Parking policies, planning, and programs will effectively support the community’s strategic goals and objectives.”*



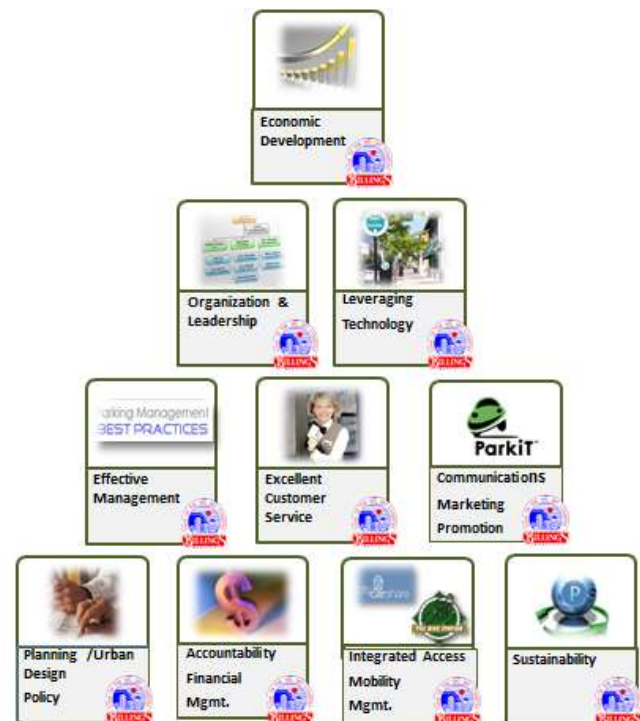
## 11. Recommended Parking Program Guiding Principles

The goal in crafting these program guiding principles is to develop a comprehensive approach to parking management for the City of Billings that will provide an integrated, action-oriented, and accountable system of parking and access management strategies that supports, facilitates and contributes to a sustainable and vibrant community. These principles are strategic in nature, responsive to the needs of the community and aligned with the larger community's strategic and economic development goals.

These Parking program Guiding Principles will encourage the use of parking and other transportation resources to support and facilitate priority economic development goals and serve prioritized user groups. They will also serve as a foundation for near and long-term decision-making relating to parking management and development in the downtown.

### Draft Guiding Principle Categories:

1. Organization/Leadership
2. Community and Economic Development
3. Leveraging Technology
4. Planning /Urban Design
5. Effective Management/Accountability
6. Customer Service Orientation
7. Communications/Branding /Community Education
8. Accountability/Financial Management
9. Integrated Mobility Management
10. Sustainability



A statement better defining each the ten draft guiding principles is provided below.



## Guiding Principle #1

### COMMUNITY and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- The Billings parking management system will be guided by community and economic development goals and City Council adopted policy directives that are the result of collaborative processes between Parking program staff, other agencies and involved stakeholders.

The Billings parking program will use its resources to promote mixed-use and shared-use parking strategies as well as promoting alternative transportation modes through the creation of incentives, partnerships and programs to attract private investment; this will include reviewing and updating existing city parking requirements, as appropriate.



The Billings parking management program will assume a leadership role in developing public policies that support parking and access management as a key element of the downtown economic development strategy.

It is envisioned that the Billings parking management program will work in partnership with economic development agencies, Downtown Billings and other entities actively engaged in community and economic development work in the downtown. The addition of City's new parking management focus in economic development projects will encourage the leveraging of strategic parking development as a significant tool to promote targeted and prioritized development projects in downtown.

## Guiding Principle #2

### ORGANIZATION/LEADERSHIP

- The parking management program will be “vertically-integrated” with responsibility for:
  - Managing on-street parking
  - Managing City owned off-street parking
  - Coordination with privately owned off-street parking
  - Parking enforcement/citation management and adjudication
  - Parking planning and development
  - Parking demand management

Consolidating the various parking functions under a single entity will establish a consolidated system that is action-oriented, responsive, and accountable with improved coordination and operating



efficiencies.

Recruiting a strong leader is a key element for success. The organization leader must have strong vision and communications skills, specialized parking and planning expertise, and be capable of educating other community leaders, stakeholders and private sector partners on the importance and relevance of a strong parking management organization. Strong general management and financial program development skills are also required.

## Guiding Principle #3

### LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY

- **The Billings parking management system will be an adopter of technology solutions to enhance customer service and parking information options.**
- **A key goal is to make parking less of an impediment to visiting the City and more of an amenity.**

Technology will be leveraged to streamline and simplify access to parking and will be a key parking management strategy. Another key technology related goal is to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of parking management staff and programs.

## Guiding Principle #4

### PLANNING / VISIONING/ POLICY/ URBAN DESIGN

- **The Billings parking management system shall have an active and comprehensive planning function.**

The Billings parking management system will be included in all strategic and transportation planning efforts. The parking management system will work with City staff to review and evaluate parking zoning requirements, the development of parking design standards that promote good urban design principles related to parking structures and mixed-use projects, and the creation of transit oriented development parking standards.

Effective parking planning will mean an improved understanding of parking supply/demand conditions on an on-going basis, and ultimately the development of parking infrastructure that will enhance and better support the community strategic goals and urban design.

- **The vision of an enhanced planning and policy development function will be pursued on multiple levels.**

Parking management strategies and programs should support and compliment other access modes as a means to better facilitate the accessibility and user-friendliness of downtown Billings as a preferred regional destination. Resources shall be effectively planned and managed to promote and support





multiple access modes into and around the downtown. Primary access modes include automobile, transit, bike/motorcycle and pedestrian users.

Well defined parking facility design criteria, parking related streetscape enhancements and effective integration of signage and wayfinding elements are all areas that this principle will promote. Parking management will work toward developing a parking system that continues to be self-supporting and sets aside funds for maintenance reserves and future capital asset funding.

## Guiding Principle #5

### EFFECTIVE PARKING MANAGEMENT/ACCOUNTABILITY

- **The Billings parking management system will be a forward thinking, “Best-In-Class” parking program.**

The Billings parking management system should anticipate future patron needs in the context of community economic development and other planning initiatives and seek to integrate supportive parking and multi-modal access strategies as appropriate.

Evaluation of other parking management best practices and new technologies should occur on an on-going basis. Effective facility maintenance, infrastructure reinvestment and other system management fundamentals will be routinely addressed. Emphasis will be placed on enhancing parking facility appearance, maintenance, safety and security, regardless of facility ownership. The parking management system will promote standards to encourage comprehensive and pro-active facility maintenance and security plans.

Facility maintenance reserves and other maintenance best practices will be encouraged in the City-owned facilities. Publicly available parking facilities marketed through the Billings parking management system will agree to a community developed set of parking facility standards. Participating facilities will be routinely monitored.

Parking facilities will incorporate public art and creative level identification/theming to enhance the parking experience for their patrons and make parking facilities more navigable and inviting.



## Guiding Principle #6

### CUSTOMER SERVICE ORIENTATION

- **Parking will promote the City of Billings as a desirable destination for workers, businesses, shopping, dining, and recreation by making parking a positive element of the overall community experience.**

The Billings parking management system will strive to develop and coordinate private and publically owned parking facilities that are clean, convenient and safe.

Parking enforcement staff will present a friendly and professional appearance and receive on-going customer service and community ambassador training.

Ongoing goals of the parking management organization will include: Responsiveness to community needs, openness to fresh ideas and active participation in community planning and events.

One major goal of the Billings parking management system is to create a parking program that will be easy for the visitor to understand and to access. This will be accomplished through the use of common branding and marketing, an integrated signage plan, validation programs, a web-based information clearing house, special events programs, etc.

Management of the on-street parking system will be enhanced over time through investments in new technology and more customer friendly parking enforcement policies.

The Billings parking management system should aim high and strive to achieve a “Best-In-Class” parking program. All aspects of the City parking should reflect an understanding of what the customer desires in terms of a positive and memorable experience.

Special programs to address retail enhancement initiatives, shared-use parking, employee parking, special/large events parking, etc. will be developed. These programs will be developed in a collaborative manner and designed to support larger community goals and objectives.

## Guiding Principle #7

### COMMUNICATION/BRANDING/MARKETING and COMMUNITY EDUCATION

- **Parking management programs and facilities will be developed to function as a positive, marketable asset for the City of Billings.**

Parking management strategies and programs will be cross-marketed to promote the City as a unique and visitor-friendly regional destination. Parking availability shall be well publicized to enhance the



perception of parking as a positive element of the community experience. Reinvestment of parking resources back into the downtown will be promoted. The Billings parking management system will develop an effective branding program.

In addition to web-based information, the Billings parking management system will develop educational materials on topics such as: parking development trends, parking safety tips, etc. The organization will also promote discussion with parking facility owners/operators on topics such as facility condition assessments, maintenance program development, parking management best practices, etc.

City parking programs and information shall be well promoted and marketed. The Billings parking management system will work closely with the Downtown Billings Alliance, the Redevelopment Agency, the City Economic Development department and other community agencies/stakeholders to promote, educate and market parking programs.

## Guiding Principle #8

### ACCOUNTABILITY / FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- **The parking system will strive, over time, to be financially self-supporting and accountable to stakeholders.**

Parking management will work toward developing a parking system that is self-supporting and sets aside funds for maintenance reserves and future capital asset funding.

By aligning approved parking revenue streams from on-street, off-street, enforcement, (and potentially special assessment fees and fee-in-lieu programs), it is possible to develop a parking system that self-funds all operating and maintenance expenses, facility maintenance reserves, planning studies and future capital program allocations. A consolidated parking revenue and expense statement should be developed to document all parking related income streams and expenditures to give a true accounting of parking finances.



## Guiding Principle #9

### INTEGRATED MOBILITY MANAGEMENT

- The Billings parking management system will support a “Park Once” philosophy and a balance of travel modes, including bus, vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian, to meet community-wide access goals. Parking strategies and initiatives will be coordinated and aligned with the 2014 Billings Urban Area Long Range Transportation Plan.

The parking management plan will promote a “park once” strategy that uses parking supply efficiently and emphasizes “linkages” to other forms of transportation.

The parking program will be a supporter and potentially a funding partner for a variety of transportation demand management programs and transportation alternatives that promote improved community access and a more sustainable parking and transportation program.

## Guiding Principle #10

### SUSTAINABILITY

- Initiatives to promote more sustainable and efficient operations will be actively pursued.

“Green” strategies that can result in more efficient use of parking facilities and provide other benefits, including reduced congestion and pollution, improved transportation choices, more efficient land-use, and improved streetscape aesthetics. Sustainability will be an integral part of the day-to-day operations of the Billings parking management system.





## 12. Recommended Parking Program Action Items

Using the parking program “Guiding Principles” outlined above as the basis for a new parking management plan, this section will outline specific recommended action items to begin laying the framework for a more strategic parking management program and strengthening the fundamentals of parking operations for the City of Billings. The primary action items are seen as the most critical for establishing the new program framework, setting a new direction and implementing needed system improvements. The secondary action items are program “best practices” that can be implemented as funding is available or as needed to address specific community issues or opportunities.

### Primary Action Items

#### Introduction

The following actions are necessary first steps toward developing an enhanced parking program for Downtown Billings. These initial steps are needed to establish the new management structure and to begin to upgrade the systems and staff capabilities needed to achieve the goals of providing a more customer focused, sustainable and self-supported parking program for the community. This required investment is needed to provide the parking program with the tools needed to effectively manage the system. These initial steps will also support the primary goals of enhancing customer services and economic development by making downtown more appealing to businesses wishing to relocate to or remain downtown. All the stakeholder feedback to date agrees that an effective public parking system is an important element in the revitalization of Downtown Billings.

Many of the recommendations and concepts presented in the Parking Strategic Plan may be unfamiliar to some readers and may require more detail to be completely understood. In an attempt to keep the main report document as concise as possible, we have provided a series of Appendices to provide more background on some topics, including tools to aid in program implementation such as sample agreements, sample manuals, supporting articles and whitepapers, policy recommendations, process checklists, etc. At relevant points within the strategic plan, notes are provided to refer the reader to a specific appendix item.

A discussion of each set of primary action items follows:



## Primary Action Item #1: Adopt New Program Vision and Mission Statements and Recommended Parking Program Guiding Principles – Implement Parking Management Best Practices

- This report identified the lack of well-defined vision and mission statements and related program “guiding principles” relative to parking as a weakness and provides recommended vision and mission statements as well as a comprehensive set of program guiding principles as the basis of program strategic framework.
- It is recommended that the new Parking Manager in collaboration with the City’s Assistant City Manager and the Parking Advisory Board review and refine these draft documents and adopt them as the basis of new parking program strategic plan.
- A public review process including City management, the Downtown Billings Alliance and other key stakeholder groups is recommended to obtain additional input and feedback and to increase public buy-in to the new strategic direction.
- Ultimately formal adoption by the Parking Advisory Board and City Council is recommended.
- To further promote program development, a document containing an extensive collection of Parking Management Best Practices has been provided to the City as part of this study. It is recommended that this document be reviewed to identify additional program enhancements going forward.

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### Primary Responsibility:

City Administrative Services and Parking Management

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### Key Partners:

Related City Departments, Parking Advisory Board and the Downtown Billings Alliance

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### Timeframe:

Complete by March 2015

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### Supportive Documents/Tools Provided:

Appendix B - Parking Management Best Practices  
Appendix J - New Parking Manager Integration-Action Plan  
Appendix O - Recommended Parking Program Benchmarks  
Appendix Y - Community Engagement Summary  
Appendix Z - Parking Expert Advisory Panel Report

## PRIMARY ACTION ITEM # 1:

### Adopt New Program Vision and Mission Statements and Recommended Parking Program Guiding Principles

Conduct a public review process including City management, the Downtown Billings Alliance and other key stakeholder groups is recommended to obtain additional input and feedback and to increase public buy-in to the new strategic direction.

Review the Parking Management Best Practices document (Appendix B) and other tools provided to identify additional program enhancements going forward.



## Primary Action Item # 2: Invest in New On-Street and Off-Street Parking Technology

- One of the primary strategies to make downtown parking more visitor friendly, improve operational efficiencies and enhance parking revenues is to upgrade the parking system's technologies.
- On-street parking meter upgrades have the greatest potential for achieving the stated goals above. It has been documented in many cities across the country that implementing new "smart parking meters" (either multi-space or single-space credit card enabled meters) is accompanied by a 15% – 30% revenue increase. This is largely due to credit card acceptance and customers paying for the maximum allowed time to avoid the potential of getting a citation.
- Pay-by Cell Phone/Mobile Apps are additional payment options that the City should consider due to the very tangible customer benefits that this option provides.
- The Parking program should develop an RFP process for meter replacement as a first step to get a range of options and associated pricing. This should be followed by a thorough analysis of what the City can afford in terms of its initial investment and based on the projected revenue increases, lay out a defined plan to continue system upgrades going forward. Consideration should also be given to alternative purchasing strategies such as equipment leasing or other special offers such as lease-to-own or partnerships where by equipment is provided at no or reduced cost based on a sharing of system revenues.
- On-street technology upgrades will lead to improved efficiencies by reducing the need for daily meter collections (just-in-time-collections), reduced number of meters (if multi-space meter are chosen), enforcement route optimization based on improved management data from the meters, etc.
- The introduction of this new technology will also come with some increased costs related to communications fees, credit card and cell phone transaction charges, etc. To help defray these new system costs, increasing on-street parking rates to \$1.00/hour is recommended. This move will also help keep on-street and off-street rates in proper alignment (on-street, short-term parking rates should be higher than off-street rates).

### PRIMARY ACTION ITEM # 2:

#### Invest in New On-Street and Off-Street Parking Technology

Upgrading the parking system's technologies is a key strategy to make downtown parking more visitor friendly, improve operational efficiencies and enhance parking revenues.

On-street parking meter upgrades have the greatest potential for achieving the stated goals above.

Pay-by Cell Phone/Mobile APPs are another payment option that provides very tangible customer benefits.

The introduction of new technology will also come with some increased costs. Increasing on-street parking rates in conjunction with the technology upgrades is recommended.



## Primary Action Item # 2 (Continued)

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**Primary Responsibility:**

City Administrative Services and Parking Management

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**Key Partners:**

City Finance and Purchasing Departments, Parking Advisory Board, City Administrator, City Council

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**Timeframe:**

Parking Technology RFP issued by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr. 2015,  
New Technology Implementation Strategy Completed by the 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr. 2015  
Implementation 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2016

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**Supportive Documents/Tools Provided:**

Appendix X - On-Street Parking Technology Overview





## Primary Action Item # 3: Leverage Parking as a Community and Economic Development Strategy and Develop a Comprehensive Parking Planning Function

- Link parking planning to larger community and economic development initiatives.
  - Review appendix C - a Kimley-Horn white paper on the topic of “Parking as an Economic Development Strategy” for more specifics.
  - Review appendix D for example guidelines for using parking as an economic development strategy.
- Recommended parking planning activities include: on-going monitoring of parking supply/demand and land use data on a facility/lot specific basis. Documentation of lot/facility utilization on a regular periodic basis will allow the Parking program to better manage existing resources as well as plan for future parking needs. Consider investing in a GIS-Based Parking Demand modeling software.
- New on-street parking meters will also provide the Parking program with improved management and system utilization data. However, simply having the data is not enough. It must be collected, tracked and analyzed for it to be of value from a planning perspective.
- Beyond parking data collection and analysis, the on-going assessment of potential long-term parking development sites, the creation of a parking lot and structure design guidelines and the development of a parking specific capital projects list are all parking specific planning efforts that are expected from an effective parking program.
- Parking and transportation are important support systems that are most effective when specific programs, policies and philosophies are aligned with a larger downtown master plan. The Downtown Billings Framework Plan was developed in 1997. It is recommended that the Framework Plan be updated or a new downtown master plan be undertaken to provide an updated downtown development strategy with which to align other elements, such as the Parking Strategic Plan.

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### Primary Responsibility:

City Administrative Services and Parking Management

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### Key Partners:

City Planning Department, Downtown Billings Association

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### Timeframe:

Develop a list of prioritized parking planning action items by July 2015.

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### PRIMARY ACTION ITEM # 3:

#### Leverage Parking as a Community and Economic Development Strategy

#### Develop a Comprehensive Parking Planning Function

On-going monitoring of parking supply/demand on a facility/lot specific basis is encouraged.

Documentation of lot/facility utilization on a regular periodic basis will allow the Parking Authority to better manage existing resources as well as plan for future parking needs.

Update the 1997 Downtown Framework Plan

Consider investing in a GIS-Based Parking Demand modeling software.



**Supportive Documents/Tools Provided:**

Appendix C – Parking as an Economic Development Strategy  
Appendix D - Guidelines for Parking as an Economic Development Strategies  
Appendix H - Recommended Reading List for Parking Professionals  
Appendix L - Tax Increment Financing Whitepaper  
Appendix M - Parking In-Lieu Fees Whitepaper  
Appendix S - Parking Management Strategies - MAPC



## Primary Action Item # 4: Develop a Proactive Facility Maintenance Program

Including Regular Facility Condition Appraisals, Prioritized Facility Rehabilitation Plans and the Creation of Parking Facility Maintenance Reserves

- Maintaining clean, safe and attractive facilities is a core function of any parking program and has a significant impact on the perception of the program and the community it serves. Many of negative stakeholder comments received during the community engagement process related to facility maintenance.
- A strategy of addressing the “First 30 Feet” of each parking facility is a recommended first step in showing some immediate progress. Key elements of the “First 30 Feet” approach include:
  - Cleaning and painting
  - Signage review/consolidation
  - Adding “Welcome” and “Thank You” messaging
  - Lighting
  - Etc.
- An important and largely missing aspect of the City of Billings program is a well-defined and effective long-term parking facility maintenance strategy. The development of an on-going and proactive facility condition appraisal process and prioritized facility rehabilitation program should be a high priority.
- Review past records and determine the last time a structural condition appraisal has been conducted on City-owned parking structures. Begin with the older structures and work forward as the newer facilities should have less structural issues. For facilities that have not had a condition appraisal in the past 10 years, schedule an appraisal in 2015. Use these formal engineering appraisals to identify and prioritize a maintenance and facility rehabilitation plan.
- Another important dimension of a parking facilities maintenance program is to create a specific “maintenance reserve fund” program. Parking facilities are made of concrete and concrete deteriorates over time requiring significant investments in on-going maintenance and periodic restoration. Deferring maintenance will only cost the system more over time and without an effective program of routine maintenance and the setting aside of dedicated maintenance reserve funds; the likelihood of serious deferred maintenance leading to even higher maintenance and facility restoration costs is much more likely. Typical parking facility maintenance reserves are in the \$50.00 - \$75.00 per space per year range.

### PRIMARY ACTION ITEM # 4:

#### Develop a Proactive Facility Maintenance Program

Enhance the facility maintenance program. Make clean, safe and attractive facilities a signature element of the parking program

Adopting the “First 30 Feet” strategy for each parking facility is a recommended first step to show some early progress.

Development of an on-going and proactive facility condition appraisal process and prioritized facility rehabilitation program should be a high priority.

Create a specific “parking maintenance reserve fund” program.



- The maintenance plan should be in conformance with National Parking Association guidelines. A recommended parking facility maintenance scope and schedule are provided as Appendices AA and BB.

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**Primary Responsibility:**

City Administrative Services and Parking Management

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**Key Partners:**

City Engineering and Public Works Departments, City Finance Department

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**Timeframe:**

Develop a comprehensive facility maintenance plan by July 2015.

Conduct facility condition appraisals as noted above.

Develop a policy regarding maintenance reserves by 3rd Qtr. 2015

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**Supportive Documents/Tools Provided:**

Appendix AA – Parking Facility Maintenance Manual

Appendix BB – Parking Facility Maintenance Schedule





## Primary Action Item #5: Develop a New Parking Program Brand and Marketing Program

- Develop a strong and consistent parking program identity and brand, which includes visual identity, program mission, vision, core values, investment in new communication pieces, collateral, etc.
- Develop a strategic communication plan designed to improve overall parking program communications with its wide range of community stakeholders. To this end, community outreach cannot be a one-time investment. Stakeholders and citizens should be continually engaged and asked for their feedback on major policy and programmatic decisions to help rebuild trust and "show" that the City is taking citizen feedback into account.
- Partner with existing organizations, like the Downtown Billings Alliance, on marketing campaigns to help combat the perception that downtown is vacant, unsafe and underutilized.
- Develop consistent standards for parking program branded facility signage to help guide customers to parking options.
- Train staff and parking program spokespeople on customer-focused internal and external communications procedures.
- Develop an enhanced parking program website. Keep parking information current.
- Leverage social media to improve community feedback and information dissemination.
- Consider the development of Annual or Bi-Annual Parking Report. An example of parking program annual report is provided in appendix CC and an annual report template is provided in appendix R.
- A wide range of potential program marketing and branding strategies from around the country is included in Appendix DD.

### PRIMARY ACTION ITEM # 5:

#### Develop a New Parking Program Brand and Marketing Program

Specific goals of this recommendation include:

Improving the parking programs image

Providing easier access to parking information

Providing enhanced overall communications with key stakeholder groups and the public at large and

To promote parking facility utilization

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#### Primary Responsibility:

City Administrative Services and Parking Management

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#### Key Partners:

City Communication Department, City IT Department, Downtown Billings Association

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#### Timeframe:

Develop a parking brand and marketing program by the end of 2015.

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**Supportive Documents/Tools Provided:**

Appendix M – Parking Annual Report from the Missoula Parking Commission

Appendix N – Parking Marketing and Branding Strategies Presentation

Appendix Y - Community Engagement Summary

Appendix Z - Parking Expert Advisory Panel Report

**Note:** Some specifics thoughts related to implementation are provided at the end of this report in a section entitled “Implementation Strategy Recommendations”.



## **Primary Action Item # 6:** Develop a “Business Continuity Plan” to address the fact that the City’s primary parking Equipment Manufacturer (Federal APD) is “Going out of Business”. Define long-term system needs.

- This new development will take some time to shake out and the manufacturer is likely to offer some solutions, however, the City should be proactive in assessing its options before the lack of system parts and service creates operational issues that could impact customers and potentially impact system revenues.
- A short-term option might be to contact the current system supplier/maintenance vendor(s) and try to secure a stock of key replacement parts until a longer term strategy can be fully developed to prevent any potential system failures due to parts unavailability.
- Transitioning to the Amano-McGann system which was recently installed in the Empire Garage is one option; however, this would be a sizable expenditure and would need to be carefully planned.
- Also think long-term. The best long-term approach would be to define the ultimate fully integrated, web-based parking access and revenue control system that will meet the needs of the City for the next decade.
- Develop a system specification and RFP for a fully integrated new system. It is recommended that reputable parking consultant be hired to assist with this task.

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### **Primary Responsibility:**

City Administrative Services and Parking Management

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### **Key Partners:**

City Engineering and Public Works Departments, City Finance Department

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### **Timeframe:**

Develop short-term plan by March 2015

Develop long-term strategy by July 2015.

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## **PRIMARY ACTION ITEM # 6:**

### **Develop a “Business Continuity Plan” to address the fact that the City’s primary parking Equipment Manufacturer “Going Out of Business”**

Be proactive in assessing its options before the lack of system parts and service creates operational issues that could impact customers and potentially impact system revenues.

Develop a short and long transition plan.

Define the ultimate fully integrated, web-based parking access and revenue control system that will meet the needs of the City for the next decade.

Develop a system specification and RFP for a fully integrated new system.



## Primary Action Item # 7: Invest in Training and Staff Development with a Goal of Mastering the Fundamentals of Parking System Management and Operations

- The Billings Parking System has a strong base and “good bones” upon which to build. The staff is committed and caring. However, with a new parking manager with little parking experience, there will be a steep learning curve and a need for investment in staff training and personnel development.
- There were a number of substantive operational recommendations made in the 2010 Desman report that need to be addressed. At the heart of many of these recommendations was a lack of staff knowledge and training of the current parking system’s capabilities and features. A significant investment in staff training is recommended.
- It is highly recommended that the new parking manager join the International Parking Institute (IPI) and attend the annual IPI conference. Next year’s conference will be in Las Vegas, NV. It is also recommended that the new parking manager join the Pacific Intermountain Parking and Transportation Association (PIPTA). PIPTA is the regional parking and transportation association and would provide a good opportunity for developing relationships with her local peers. Involvement in the International Downtown Association (IDA) is also recommended. Downtown Billings is an IDA member and can provide more information on this resource.
- Another cost effective and highly valuable training opportunity would be to schedule a series of visits with the parking advisory panelists that participated in this parking strategic plan. Each of them has offered to give Tracy a personal tour of their systems and communities and it would build a strong peer group for Tracy to call upon for years to come.
- Strategically invest in the use of consultants for technical expertise especially in the areas of new technology specification and more complex issues such as zoning and parking requirements, new facility development, etc.

### Primary Responsibility:

City Administrative Services and Parking Management

### Key Partners:

Downtown Billings Association

## PRIMARY ACTION ITEM # 7:

### Invest in Training and Staff Development

With a new parking manager with little parking experience, there will be a steep learning curve and a need for investment in staff training and personnel development.

A significant number of educational paper and tools has been provided in the appendices to help with this process

Address the substantive operational recommendations made in the 2010 Desman report.

Address the lack of staff knowledge and training of the current parking system’s capabilities and features

Join the International Parking Institute and the regional parking and transportation association - PIPTA

Invest in Peer City Program visits with the participants of the advisory Panel process.





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**Timeframe:**

On-Going. Recommend attendance to the 2015 IPI Conference & Expo - June 29 - July 2, Las Vegas, Nevada

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**Supportive Documents/Tools Provided:**

Appendix B - Parking Management Best Practices Toolbox  
Appendix E - Parking Enforcement Program Audit Checklist  
Appendix F - Sample Parking Enforcement Office Handbook  
Appendix H - Recommended Reading List for Parking Professionals – 2014  
Appendix J - New Parking Manager Integration-Action Plan  
Appendix K - Developing a Retail Parking Support Strategy  
Appendix L - Tax Increment Financing Whitepaper  
Appendix M - Parking In-Lieu Fees Whitepaper  
Appendix N - Parking Garage Security Whitepaper  
Appendix O - Recommended Parking Program Benchmarks  
Appendix P - Generic Parking Facility Rules and Regulations  
Appendix Q - Sample Parking Garage Operations Manual  
Appendix S - Parking Management Strategies – MAPC  
Appendix V - Valet Parking Program Development  
Appendix W - Parking Rate Assessment Strategies  
Also See Chapter 7 of this report “Characteristics of Effective Parking Management Programs”.



## Primary Action Item # 8: Create a More Vertically Integrated Downtown Parking System and Re-Focus and Re-Energize the Parking Advisory Board

- Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. strongly recommends that the City of Billings work to create a more vertically integrated downtown parking system. The recommended organizational option for the City is a hybrid of "The Vertically Integrated City Department Model" and the "Parking Commission Model".
- We are aware of the legal issues related to "commissions" in Billings, including the recent failed ballot initiative; however, several groups encouraged the consultant team to further explore the concept.
- Both the consultant team and the Expert Panelists heard from several members of the Parking Advisory Board (PAB) that they are frustrated by what they perceive as inconsistent direction on their purpose as an advisory group.
- This option also envisions some form of "parking counsel or board" to provide a mechanism for ensuring community engagement and input. The major concern here is that while the current Parking Advisory Board has many community leaders who are both invested in downtown Billings and have strong business backgrounds to provide sound direction and guidance, the lack of authority to affect policy decisions is negatively impacting their desire to stay engaged.
- A framework should be developed whereby certain "policy -level decisions" are defined as the responsibility of the City Council and more operational level decisions are ceded to "Parking Counsel of Board". The Parking Board should also be encouraged to draft policy level proposals for the City Council to review and vote on.
- To achieve a more fully integrated parking program, it is envisioned that additional functions will be added over about a five year period. These additional functions should include:
  - Create a more robust parking planning function (working with City Planning on parking and related transportation issues).
  - Improve integration and collaboration with downtown management and economic development programs.
  - As the department expands its scope and matures, new potential areas of focus might include "accounting and auditing", "planning and community education" and "special projects". If recommendations to upgrade parking technologies (both on and off-street) are implemented, the special projects area might become

### PRIMARY ACTION ITEM # 8:

#### Create a More Vertically Integrated Downtown Parking System and Re-Focus and Re-Energize the Parking Advisory Board

Create a more vertically integrated parking management structure.

The recommended organizational option for the City is a hybrid of "The Vertically Integrated City Department Model" and the "Parking Commission Model"

Develop a framework whereby certain "policy -level decisions" are defined as the responsibility of the City Council and more operational level decisions are ceded to "Parking Counsel of Board"

The Parking Board should also be encouraged to draft policy level proposals for the City Council to review and consider.



especially important.

- It is also recommended that the City's Parking Manager get involved in other related agencies either on the board or committee levels to stay better connected to and be more engaged in downtown development and revitalization efforts.

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**Primary Responsibility:**

City Administrative Services and Parking Management

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**Key Partners:**

Mayor, City Administrator, City Council

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**Timeframe:**

Parking Technology RFP issued by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr. 2014, New Technology Implementation Strategy Completed by the 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr. 2014 Implementation 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2015

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**Supportive Documents/Tools Provided:**

See Chapter 8 of this report "Parking System Organization and Management" for more options and strategies.



## **Primary Action Item # 9:** Expand the Scope of the Parking Program over Time to be More Supportive and Inclusive of Supporting Alternative Modes Transportation and Embrace More of an “Access Management Philosophy”

- Several stakeholders – both during the public meeting and in individual focus groups – suggested that downtown would benefit from increased investment in alternative modes of transportation.
- The trend in the industry is to embrace a more holistic and integrated approach to parking and transportation – an “Integrated Access Management Strategy”.
- Another important dimension to this recommendation is to be aware of the need to balance both the supply and demand sides of the parking and access equation. Building public parking is extremely expensive and leveraging alternative transportation and transportation demand management (TDM) strategies can reduce the need for additional parking over time.
- TDM program elements support the Guiding Principle for Sustainability and a more balanced parking and transportation program.
- Other strategies in this area that are being supported by parking systems around the country include: community bike share programs, car sharing programs such as Zip-Car, bike racks and lockers, and traditional TDM strategies such as park and rides, preferential parking for car and vanpools, telecommuting, etc.
- It is recognized that this is not the top priority for the City of Billings, but it is an important element and should be incorporated into the long-term program development strategy.

### **Primary Responsibility:**

City Administrative Services and Parking Management

### **Key Partners:**

Transit Agency, Bike Advocate Programs, Regional Transportation Association, City Planning

### **Timeframe:**

Longer-Term Strategy

### **Supportive Documents/Tools Provided:**

Appendix S - Parking Management Strategies – MAPC  
 Appendix T - TDM Strategies  
 Appendix U - TDM Handbooks, Manuals and Other Resources

## **PRIMARY ACTION ITEM # 9:**

**Expand the Scope of the Parking Program over Time to be More Supportive and Inclusive of Supporting Alternative Modes Transportation and Embrace More of an “Access Management Philosophy”**

Embrace a more holistic and integrated approach to parking and transportation – an “Integrated Access Management Strategy”.

Leverage alternative transportation and transportation demand management (TDM) strategies to reduce the need for additional parking over time.

TDM program elements support the Guiding Principle for Sustainability and a more balanced parking and transportation program.





## Primary Action Item # 10: Reassess the Courtesy Ticket Program and Meter Bagging Policies

- The City of Billings has enacted a policy of issuing courtesy tickets to first time offenders of certain parking violations. The three violations for which courtesy tickets are written include: parking at an expired meter, parking in violation of posted signs, and for plugging meters to exceed the allowable meter time limit.
- Kimley-Horn has seen and promoted this policy in a number of other communities. However, we feel that some of the details of how this policy has been implemented in Billings have been misunderstood or incorrectly applied resulting in greatly reduced parking citation revenue (the volume of courtesy tickets issued annually accounted for well over half of all the tickets written in both 2008 and 2009).
- If the offender does not receive a second ticket within 180 days, the same parking violator will issued another courtesy ticket. This is not how the rolling 180 day policy is applied in other communities. The Desman and Associates in their 2010 report suggested that a more balanced policy would be to extend the courtesy to 365 days instead of the current 180 days. Such a change should lead to a substantial reduction in the issuance of courtesy tickets and some portion of the habitual violators to more quickly graduate to the higher fine categories for these parking violations.
- Kimley-Horn will provide the City with an example of how this policy was applied in Fort Collins, CO as a model to consider for modifying the current policy.
- We heard from several stakeholder s and staff that the meter bagging policy may be being abused. We recommend that the City reassess the meter bagging policy. To aid in this reassessment, examples of meter bagging polices from several municipalities have been provided in Appendix G.

### PRIMARY ACTION ITEM # 10:

#### Reassess the Courtesy Ticket Program and Meter Bagging Policies

While we are strongly supportive of the City's courtesy ticket policy in concept; however, we believe it has been misapplied in some respects and recommend a reevaluation of the policy.

We recommend that the City reassess the meter bagging policy.

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#### Primary Responsibility:

City Administrative Services and Parking Management

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#### Key Partners:

City Finance Department

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#### Timeframe:

Conduct reviews by March 2015

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#### Supportive Documents/Tools Provided:

Appendix G - Sample Meter Bagging Policies

Sample policy from Fort Collins, CO



## Primary Action Item # 11: Critically Assess the Current Parking Enforcement Program Using the Tools Provided

- The 2010 Desman and Associates technology report included several significant recommendations related to the current parking enforcement program. This report was issued shortly before the previous parking supervisor was terminated and many of the recommendations may have been overlooked. It is recommended that the Desman Associates report be reviewed and the specific areas of concern be reviewed.
- To assist in a more thorough review and evaluation of the parking enforcement program, Kimley-Horn has provide the City with two significant tools to aid in this process:
  - The first is a sample parking enforcement officer handbook (Appendix F)
  - The second is a parking enforcement program audit checklist (Appendix E)
- These tools should be reviewed and customized to better define and enhance the current parking enforcement program.

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### Primary Responsibility:

City Administrative Services and Parking Management

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### Key Partners:

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### Timeframe:

Conduct reviews by May 2015

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### Supportive Documents/Tools Provided:

Appendix E - Parking Enforcement Program Audit Checklist

Appendix F - Sample Parking Enforcement Officer Handbook

## PRIMARY ACTION ITEM # 11:

### Critically Assess the Current Parking Enforcement Program Using the Tools Provided

Review the recommendations related to the parking enforcement program from the 2010 Desman Parking Technology Report.

Use the provided parking enforcement officer handbook and parking enforcement program audit checklist to better define and enhance the current parking enforcement program.



## Primary Action Item # 12: Address Abuse of Accessible Parking Placards to Improve Parking Availability for Those Who Are Truly Disabled.

- Abuse of accessible parking placards is reaching epidemic proportions in most states across the country. Many states are attempting to introduce new regulations aimed at eliminating or minimizing the abuse to improve access for the disabled population that has the greatest need. It is recommended that the City of Billings adopt accessible parking reforms to improve access for those with the greatest needs.
- These policy changes can be controversial, and should be customized based on local concerns and stakeholder feedback. Key principles from reform efforts in other communities are noted in the text box to the right.
- Resources from other Communities
  - The State of Michigan, and the Cities of Portland, OR and Raleigh, NC among others, have recently implemented changes in law, allowing only those individuals in a wheelchair or unable to operate on-street parking meters to qualify for free metered parking.
  - Several reference documents from these communities are provided in Appendix FF
- To assist in a more thorough review and evaluation of the parking enforcement program, Kimley-Horn has provide the City with two significant tools to aid in this process:
  - The first is a sample parking enforcement officer handbook (Appendix F)
  - The second is a parking enforcement program audit checklist (Appendix E)
- These tools should be reviewed and customized to better define and enhance the current parking enforcement program.

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### Primary Responsibility:

City Administrative Services and Parking Management

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### Key Partners:

Local ADA advocacy groups  
City Legal Department

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### Timeframe:

Submit proposed legislative changes by December 2015

## PRIMARY ACTION ITEM # 11:

### Principles for Addressing Abuse of Accessible Parking Placards

- People with basic placards still get a deal on metered parking. In a one-hour, 90-minute or two-hour spot, for instance, you can pay the maximum but stay for up to three hours.
- Have a hard time walking to the meter? The city will start offering "handy scratch-off permits" that allow you to pay from your vehicle, so you don't have to visit the meter and return to your vehicle to place a meter receipt.
- For those who live or work in a metered district but can't reasonably use public transit or an existing garage, you'll be able to purchase a monthly parking permit at a discount. The permit allows users to park within three blocks in all directions.



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**Supportive Documents/Tools Provided:**

An endorsement of Michigan's new two tiered approach to ADA Parking Reform by Donald Shoup

Example of Michigan's Disability Parking Program Reform brochure

Example of Michigan's Disability Parking application form for disabled placards

Example of Portland's Disability Parking Program Reform brochure

Two Articles related to Raleigh, NC's Accessible Parking Reform Efforts plus a copy of their State Ordinance





## 13. Secondary Action Items

### Action Item #S-1 – Stakeholder “Report Cards”

The Billings Parking Program should develop Parking Action Plan “Report Cards” or updates to keep the Parking Advisory Board and community stakeholders informed and educated. These report cards or updates could involve the development of a concise set of parking program benchmarks that would be tracked over time.

#### Intended Results:

Progress reporting could also take the form of a simplified “Action Plan Report Card” for specific stakeholder groups. This format could also be combined with a feedback mechanism to create an ongoing mechanism for community input and program development/refinement.

### Action Item #S-2 – Develop Specific Overflow and Event Management Parking Strategies

Overflow parking plans describe the management strategies that will be applied when parking facilities fill, for example, during special events, peak shopping periods, or temporary reductions in parking supply. Below are some possible components of an overflow parking plan:

- Provide signs with directions to alternative nearby parking facilities.
- Provide adequate traffic and parking management staff during peak periods. Additional staff may be hired for special events.
- Provide information on parking and travel options for special event participants, highlighting those that can be used to avoid parking problems. For example –
  - Brochures that show both parking facility locations and transit options for major sports or cultural events.
- Encourage travelers to shift mode or use remote parking during peak periods. Example – retail employees can be required to use remote parking facilities or alternative commute modes during holiday shopping seasons.

### Action Item #S-3 – Parking/Access System Benchmarking

Identify a basic set of parking and access system benchmarks relevant to downtown Billings and begin tracking. Document results/progress in an annual parking report.

Examples of recommended parking program benchmarks might include:

1. Total Operating Cost per Space
2. Total Revenue per Space
3. Total Operating Costs per Parking Department FTE
4. Total Revenue per Parking Department FTE



5. Surface Parking Spaces as a Percent of Total Spaces
6. Structured Surface Parking Spaces as a Percent of Total Spaces
7. On-Street Parking Spaces as a Percent of Total Spaces
8. Administrative Cost Per Space
9. Administrative Costs as a Percent of Total Costs
10. Security Costs per space
11. Security Costs as a Percent of Total Costs
12. Enforcement costs per metered space
13. Enforcement costs per Citation Issued
14. Percent of Citations Collected vs. Citations Issued
15. Citation Revenue per Citation Issued
16. Total Maintenance Cost per Space
17. Total Maintenance Costs as a Percent of Total Costs

Intended Results:

Develop a baseline of parking operations measurements. Compare to peer cities. Track progress against baseline results and peer organizations. See Appendix O: Recommended Parking Program Benchmarks

**Action Item #S-4 – Parking Facility Warranty Management**

Collect all parking facility warranties into a three ring binder. Note all warranty expiration dates for items such as elastomeric coatings, expansion joints, etc. Place these dates in Outlook or other calendar programs used by the agency as a "tickler" to conduct a walkthrough inspection six months prior to warranty expiration. Schedule a representative of the contractor or manufacturer responsible to honor the warranty to participate in the inspection. Document inspection results with time and date stamped digital photos. Schedule repairs to warranty covered items prior to warranty expiration.

Intended Results:

Assure that warranty covered items are taken care of while still under manufacturer's warranty. Average cost savings per facility \$10,000 - \$20,000.

**Action Item #S-5 – Energy Saving Options in Parking Facilities**

We are aware of and applaud the fact that the City has invested in some new parking facility lighting systems for enhanced illumination and energy savings. We encourage the City to also evaluate options such as placing roof top and outer bay parking facility lighting on separate circuits so that these lights can be placed on photocells to reduce energy consumption during daylight hours.



Intended Results:

Utility expenses are a major parking operating expense. Evaluate options to minimize on-going expenses in this category.

**Action Item #S-6 – Develop an Internal Parking Program Operations Manual**

As a primary staff training tool, develop a parking operations manual. Many systems have a separate manual for each facility or one common manual with individual facilities each given a chapter. Note: Sample parking operations manuals are provided in Appendices P and Q.

Intended Results:

Document specific equipment and policies per facility for staff training as well as to document operating policies/procedures.

**Action Item #S-7 – Develop a Parking System Information Database/Become the Central Clearinghouse for Parking/Access Information**

Monitor and track parking rates, availability, owners, operators, contact info, etc. for all parking resources in the downtown (both public and private). Coordinate and provide information relative to other transportation options. Consider providing this data on an updated Downtown Association website.

Intended Results:

Become a one-stop information clearinghouse for all downtown parking and access information (both public and private).

**Action Item #S-8 – Marketing Tie-ins for Parking to Special Events**

Work closely with the Downtown Billings Association to promote parking tie-ins in conjunction with downtown special event promotions, downtown attractions/venues, etc.

Intended Results:

This strategy leverages the shared benefits of joint marketing opportunities and promotes new parking/access system branding and marketing campaigns.



## *Appendices*

- [Appendix A](#) – Billings Parking S-D Update Occupancy Counts 2014
- [Appendix B](#) – Parking Management Best Practices Toolkit
- [Appendix C](#) – Parking as an Economic Development Strategy White Paper
- [Appendix D](#) – Guidelines for Using Parking as an Economic Development Strategy
- [Appendix E](#) – Parking Enforcement Program Audit Checklist
- [Appendix F](#) – Sample Parking Enforcement Office Handbook
- [Appendix G](#) – Sample Meter Bagging Policies
- [Appendix H](#) – Recommended Reading List for Parking Professionals – 2014
- [Appendix I](#) – Sample Parking Administrator Position Descriptions
- [Appendix J](#) – New Parking Manager Integration-Action Plan
- [Appendix K](#) – Developing a Retail Parking Support Strategy
- [Appendix L](#) – Tax Increment Financing Whitepaper
- [Appendix M](#) – Parking In-Lieu Fees Whitepaper
- [Appendix N](#) – Parking Garage Security Whitepaper
- [Appendix O](#) – Recommended Parking Program Benchmarks
- [Appendix P](#) – Generic Parking Facility Rules and Regulations
- [Appendix Q](#) – Sample Parking Garage Operations Manual
- [Appendix R](#) – Annual Parking Report Template
- [Appendix S](#) – Parking Management Strategies - MAPC
- [Appendix T](#) – TDM Strategies
- [Appendix U](#) – TDM Handbooks, Manuals and Other Resources
- [Appendix V](#) – Valet Parking Program Development
- [Appendix W](#) – Parking Rate Assessment Strategies
- [Appendix X](#) - On-Street Technology Overview





[Appendix Y - Community Engagement Summary](#)

[Appendix Z - Parking Expert Advisory Panel Report](#)

[Appendix AA - Parking Facility Maintenance Manual](#)

[Appendix BB - Parking Facility Maintenance Schedule](#)

[Appendix CC - Missoula Parking Commission Annual Report 2012](#)

[Appendix DD - Parking Branding and Marketing Best Practices](#)

[Appendix EE – Consolidated Parking System Financial Statement](#)

[Appendix FF – ADA Parking Reform Reference Files](#)