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Greensboro, NC 27402

City of Greensboro
Department of Transportation

Comprehensive Downtown Parking Study

Enhancing Downtown Greensboro Through Improved Parking Opportunities

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Introduction

The City of Greensboro and the merchants in the Central Business District (CBD) have investigated some creative ideas to improve the usage and stature of the downtown area. One of the core services that the city supplies to downtown merchants is the operation and maintenance of public parking facilities. Parking facilities play an important role in sustaining the development and growth of the downtown area, because merchants rely on the city to provide an adequate supply of public parking in close proximity to their businesses.

The City of Greensboro has been the primary provider of parking services in the downtown area since the construction of its first parking deck in 1967. The parking operation has generally operated in a self-sufficient manner, with user fees covering the operational costs of service. Since the initial development of the cities parking facilities, numerous financial and operational assessments have been conducted. Most of these assessments reviewed the current and future parking supply and demand in the downtown area. Counts of total number of parking spaces, occupied spaces, vacant spaces, ticketed cars and cars with expired meters not ticketed were made by parking lot, deck or street. Several studies conducted between 1990 and 1993 consisted of specific operational data relating to parking accounting procedures, staffing levels, after hour collection systems, handicapped accessibility, parking equipment improvements, park and ride shuttle services, and after hour operating procedures. In 1994, a team of City staff conducted the 1994 Greensboro Parking Decks Long Range Financial Needs Study and in 1997 the Budget and Evaluation Department conducted a financial and service assessment that reviewed the financial impacts of the parking bond debt on the General Fund.

Although many of the recommendations made in these studies have been implemented, none of the parking assessments looked for alternatives that the parking operations could be used to encourage citizens and business patrons to frequent the downtown area. To this end the City Manager's Office, with the guidance of City Council, directed that a "Comprehensive Parking Study" be conducted. The purpose of the "Comprehensive Parking Study" is to improve the financial and operational performance of the parking operations in order to encourage downtown development.

The "Comprehensive Parking Study" contains six sections of information including: Current Parking Conditions, Future Developments, a Summary of Parking Sufficiency, a review of Fees and Fines, Parking Enhancements and Recommendations. All sections are directed at meeting the goal of improving downtown Greensboro.

Current Parking Conditions

Through the direction of the City Manager's Office, City Council and Downtown Greensboro Inc., the Department of Transportation contracted with an outside consulting firm to develop a review of current and future parking needs in the CBD. The following summary addresses several areas that directly impact the delivery of parking services.

Parking Capacity

There are 18,845 parking spaces within the study area: 1,101 on-street spaces (6%) and 17,744 off-street spaces in lots and garages. This includes 4 municipal parking garages with 2,821 parking spaces (16% of the off-street parking supply) and 6 municipal parking lots with a total of 600 spaces (3.4% of the total off-street supply). Of the 1,101 on-street spaces 670 are controlled by parking meters.

Parking Occupancy (Peak Vehicle Accumulation)

Field counts of vehicle accumulation were conducted September 19-21, 2000. Four counts were performed on each day. Peak vehicle accumulation occurred during the late morning count, which is typical.

1,101 on-street parking spaces	943 occupied at peak (86%)
17,744 off-street spaces	11,523 occupied at peak (65%)
18,845 total spaces	12,466 occupied at peak (66%)

Parking Space Turnover

A turnover analysis was performed from data collected at 263 on-street parking meters (39% of on-street meter system) designated by the City. The meters were checked at 30 minute intervals between 9:00 A.M. and 4:30 P.M., on Thursday (9/21/00). The survey revealed a significant loss of short-term parking capacity due to meter overstays – parkers who exceeded the posted time limit. On the survey day 348 parkers exceeded the time limit. The time consumed by those overstays represented 37% of the total meter capacity, and the loss of parking availability to a potential 884 additional parkers. The number of parkers could have potentially doubled if those meters on the survey day were available.

Parking Demand & "Effective Parking Demand"

A combination of parking demand ratios from industry sources and previous studies was used to project the impact of future development on parking demand. A demand ratio of 2.0 was applied to office space, the largest segment. Through benchmarking against other communities, ratios in similar downtown areas ranged from 1.5 to 2.5 vehicles per 1,000 sq. ft.

"Effective Parking Demand" is a term used to described the adjustment made to "raw" parking demand to include a certain amount of empty space that is necessary to keep search times to an acceptable level. Actual vehicle accumulation should not exceed 85% - 90% of the total capacity.

Present Parking Sufficiency

Only 12,466 (64.7%) of the 18,845 parking spaces within the study area were occupied during the peak hour of the occupancy survey. Since 85% - 90% represents a "full but functional" occupancy level, the present parking capacity would have to increase an additional 20% (3,552

spaces) before the system is considered functionally "full." That represents a 22% increase in the current demand and is a comfortable margin as long as the excess capacity is evenly distributed throughout the study area.

Parking availability is well-dispersed throughout the study area with some of the largest parking surpluses located near the center of downtown. Some of that excess capacity is located in private facilities that are not accessible to the general public, but is still part of the overall parking supply that is required to meet the demand from nearby buildings.

Overview by Sector

Sector I (northwest quadrant of the study area)

The greatest concentration of both surplus parking space and building square footage is located in the southeast corner of Sector I, at the center of downtown. Two garages in this southeast corner have 700 surplus parking spaces, ample parking space within two blocks of any building near the downtown core. Although half of the blocks in the balance of the sector have less than 50 surplus spaces, those blocks are comprised of smaller buildings with stable parking demand.

Sector II (northeast quadrant of the study area)

Without further major development, Sector II has adequate parking for the current land uses. Despite addition of the new Library, on the site of a former surface parking lot, that block still has a significant daytime surplus of 384 spaces - most located in the Church Street Garage. The balance of the area is occupied primarily by single-use businesses with ample on-site parking.

Sector III (southwest quadrant of the study area)

Most of Sector III is dominated by City, County and Federal facilities. Although periodic activity related to court activity or periodic licensing requirements may produce "spikes" in parking demand, the 700+ empty spaces located within a block of the municipal complex are sufficient at present.

Sector IV (southeast quadrant of the study area)

Sector IV includes mixed retail and upper level offices along Elm Street at its western edge. Light industrial land uses dominates the balance of the sector north of the railroad tracks. To the south of the tracks is a small area of residential at the extreme southeast corner along Murray Street and MacAdoo Avenue.

The only significant concentration of vacant parking capacity is in block #49, which includes a commercial garage. Parking surpluses in the balance of the sector are marginal, but well distributed.

Findings

Although there is a perceived shortage of visible parking in the CBD retail corridors, ample space is available in paved lots behind the stores, at on-street parking meters and in the public parking decks to support the current businesses. Identification of available parking spaces and the safety of parking facilities are the two primary issues in gaining better utilization of parking capacity. In order to improve the transient turnover of the visible parking spaces it is necessary to enhance the enforcement of metered and time limited parking spaces in the public parking decks and at the on-street meters. This enhancement will enable transient visitors to find available and ample parking within two blocks of retail and business establishments.

Future Developments

The City of Greensboro is proactively reviewing the projected projects and developments that may affect the parking demand and supply in downtown Greensboro. The following section explores projected developments, a 5-year projection, and specialized focus areas that are currently undergoing specific studies to determine needs and changes within the focus areas.

Central Core – Specific Developments

Although bond funding for the Millennium Plaza project failed a November 2000 vote, the impact of that development and potential occupancy of the vacant Wachovia Bank Building was reviewed during the study. When parking demand factors are applied to the planned components of the Millennium project, the net result was a 98 vehicle increase in parking demand for the area. This calculation included removal of existing office space and parking. That new demand could be absorbed by a 464-space surplus in the Bellemeade and Davie Street garages with a balance of 366 spaces remaining.

Full occupancy of the Wachovia Bank Building would generate an additional 378 vehicles that would consume the remaining 366 garage spaces and result in a deficit of –12 spaces that would have to be satisfied outside of the two garages.

Overall future parking sufficiency was examined under three general scenarios: 1) full lease-up of all vacant office space in the study area; 2) full realization of likely development projects; and, 3) concurrent realization of both.

Presently, 315,400 of the 4,446,700 sq. ft. of downtown office space are vacant. Full occupancy (100%) of that space would generate an additional 631 vehicles, reducing the raw surplus in the study area to 30.5%. Applying a 15% Search Factor, the effective surplus is reduced to 3,437 spaces (18.2%). If the Wachovia Bank Building were fully occupied, that surplus would be further reduced to 2,992 spaces (15.9%), which is still adequate. Using a more reasonable building vacancy rate of 5% adds back 221 spaces and increases the surplus to 17%.

City sources provided information on potential general development activity over the next five years. The impact of this activity on daytime parking demand was computed. The result is an overall increase in raw demand of 931 vehicles that would reduce the surplus to 5,448 spaces (28.9%).

The effect of full occupancy (100%) in all office buildings, coupled with development of the identified list of projects is to reduce the overall surplus in the study area to 26.5% (4,999 spaces). This does not include a 15% Search Factor. Application of that factor would reduce the effective surplus to 11.5% (2,172 spaces). An overall margin of 11.5% is small, but adequate, for proper function of a parking system. However, it is important to examine future sufficiency in the central core blocks to determine whether there is a sufficient surplus within the vital center of the CBD for it to function properly.

Core Areas

A similar analysis was performed for the 8-block central core and a 28-block extended core area. The results are as follows:

	8 - Block Central Core	28 - Block Extended Core	Full Study Area
Present Surplus:	**1,233**	**3,146**	**6,379**

Remaining Surplus Spaces and % of Capacity

All Office Buildings at 100% Occupancy	896 21.0%	2,611 26.3%	5,748 30.5%
All Prospective Development Projects Complete	392 9.2%	2,305 23.2%	5,448 28.9%
Development Projects Complete and Office Buildings at 100% Occupancy	237 5.6%	1,952 19.7%	4,999 26.5%

(Note: Prospective projects include re-occupied Wachovia Building)

Removing redevelopment of the Wachovia Bank Building from the mix has a significant impact on those projections as shown here:

Scenario	8 - Block Core	28 - Block Core	Full Study Area
All Office Buildings at 100% Occupancy	896 21.0%	2,611 26.3%	5,748 30.5%
All Prospective Development Projects Complete	770 18.1%	2,683 27.1%	5,826 30.1%
Development Projects Complete and Office Buildings at 100% Occupancy	615 14.4%	2,330 23.5%	5,377 28.5%

With redevelopment of the Wachovia Bank Building, the margin of available parking is reduced to 5.6% in the 8-block central core. Since a 10% - 15% margin is considered necessary for system operation, a 5.6% margin is considered a "critical shortage." Without redevelopment of the bank building, the margin moves to 14.4%. At that level, the parking supply is considered "full" but marginally adequate.

5-Year Projection

The City provided general assumptions about generic development activity (by type) that is likely to take place during a 5 year period. Based on that information, the raw surplus parking supply within the full study area is projected to fall to 25% within 5 years. That figure drops to 12% when a 15% Search Factor applied.

Core Area

Earlier analysis showed that surplus parking capacity within the 8-block core area was only 50% - 60% of the surplus computed for the full study area. Applying that ratio to the

projection of an overall parking surplus of 12%, results in a projection for the core area of only 6%. That is considered a critical shortage.

Focus Areas

East Market Street Corridor

Currently, overall parking demand in this focus area is low, with a parking surplus in most blocks. The existing businesses satisfy their parking demand with small, on-site lots and on-street spaces.

Development identified in the East Market Street Development Plan includes entertainment/retail, light industrial, service support facilities for North Carolina A & T, neighborhood-oriented retail, and housing. It also includes a possible multi-screen theater, and other non-specific land uses on a large site east of Murrow Boulevard between E. Friendly Avenue and E. Washington Street.

Should a significant portion of the planned development for this area take place, a focused parking study should be conducted to determine whether the present ample parking supply, combined with parking included as part of the new development, would be sufficient to meet the new demand. That study should include the potential for "shared parking" between non-current daytime and nighttime activities.

Baseball Stadium

A 7,500 seat baseball stadium on the block east of S. Church Street between E. Lindsay and E. Friendly would produce a need for 1,500 spaces during normal games (attendance = 60% of seating capacity) and 2,500 spaces for a sold-out game. There are presently nearly 3,000 parking spaces within a reasonable walking distance from the proposed stadium (area bounded by Murrow Boulevard, Washington Street and N. Davie). With 400-425 spaces available in the nearby Church Street Parking Deck, an additional 575 to 800 additional spaces will be needed to accommodate all parking for normal games. The perception of safety and comfort for fans in the scattered parking areas and along pedestrian routes to the stadium will be critical to meeting parking demand.

Church Street Corridor

Renovation of the Rail Depot at the south end of Church Street is expected to include a parking capacity that is more than adequate to satisfy the direct needs of the depot. Some existing parking on the depot site for employees of the Bardoff Building and for the renovated Mikel-Hopkins Building may have to be satisfied within the new development or relocated elsewhere within the area.

Old Greensboro

Within the retail and industrial areas there is adequate parking to satisfy present parking needs. In the residential areas, which currently contain both single-family and multi-family units, parking is sufficient. However, that could change if rezoning facilitates the conversion of single-family homes into multi-family apartments or condominiums and no additional parking provisions are made.

Another potential factor in the future is the close proximity of the Guilford Technical Community College. If expansion of facilities on Guilford Technical Community College

campus either increases parking requirements or reduces existing parking supplies, it could result in an unwanted overflow of student vehicles into the nearby neighborhoods.

Southside Area Plan

There is currently adequate parking in the Southside Area. However, if future residential development includes multi-family units or conversion of single-family homes to multi-family residences, the parking supply and demand can become unbalanced. Likewise, changes in commercial land use that increases the parking demand per square foot will eventually strain parking availability.

The new construction projects described in the Southside Area Plan appear to provide sufficient parking on-site. For projects involving existing older buildings, retention of the existing building fronts is an important part of efforts to preserve the historic character of the area. Plans for increasing parking capacities to support those developments should focus on available space behind the buildings rather than razing old building fronts to create parking. Plans should include measures that would provide a parking environment that is both safe and perceived to be safe by the user in order for this approach to be successful.

Summary of Parking Sufficiency

None of the development areas have a significant parking shortage at this point. As long as adequate parking is provided on-site as part of each new development, the parking supply should remain adequate. The exception is concurrent development of a major project of similar size to the proposed Millennium Plaza and re-entry of the Wachovia Bank Building into the market.

The need for additional focused parking studies would increase under the following general circumstances:

1. If zoning does not require inclusion of adequate parking with new construction and renovation projects - increasing parking demand without increasing the supply.
2. If new projects take away existing parking capacity that is presently being used by nearby businesses - without replacing that lost capacity within the project.
3. If renovation of existing business properties involves changes in their use that increase the need for parking - without creating the additional needed parking as part of the renovation.
4. If resident density in an area is increased by:
   - ✓ Conversion of single-family dwellings to multi-family units.
   - ✓ Subdivision of lots to increase the number of residential units on the same square footage of property.

Fines and Parking Fees

After reviewing the Parking Section's financial statements since 1997 to the present, it was determined that the parking system has experienced increases in parking usage that has resulted in a 39.4% increase in revenue. These revenues, however, have increased at a slower rate than costs. And even with increased parking use, there still remains an adequate overall supply of parking in downtown Greensboro.

Parking at the curb is the first priority for short-term parkers. The City has 1,100 on-street spaces, of which about 670 are metered. Currently these meters are producing $150,000 per year

in gross revenue or about a dollar a day per meter. The Parking Section also operates six lots, which have both monthly rentals and meters for downtown employees and visitors. These lots generate about $180,000 per year ($300 per space per year, which is about $1.20 per space per day). The lots do not have high turnover rates and generally serve the longer-term, monthly parkers in downtown.

The four City-owned parking decks are nearly to capacity with monthly parkers. Since 1997 monthly usage has increased by over 40% to 2,633 monthly accounts in the four decks. This represents an increase in occupancy from 51% to 72%. In the combined Bellemeade/Church/Greene decks the occupancy has increased form 61% to over 90%. Over the same period parking rates did not increase. The consequences of this action are that revenues from monthly parkers have been flat. On the other hand operating costs have increased by 57.3% eclipsing the increase in revenue by 18.9%.

Based on a survey of several cities in the region, the parking fees and fines charged by the City of Greensboro are similar to other comparable size cities. This being said, Greensboro's fines and fees rank typically in the lower half of most comparable cities.

Fine Analysis

Upon review of the fines for various violations listed, the City of Greensboro is relatively consistent with other cities surveyed. Although the fines are consistent with the surveyed cities the City of Greensboro may want to consider an increase of the meter fines and the time limit parking fines in order to increase turnover and improve utilization. The violations related to health and safety issues for Fire Hydrant and Handicap parking spaces, are properly higher than other fine amounts because they are related to health and safety issues.

Fine Comparison Table

City, State	Meter Violation	Loading Zone	No Parking	Time Limit	Fire Hydrant	Handicap
Greensboro, NC	$5.00	$25.00	$25.00	$5.00	$25.00	$250.00
Durham, NC	NONE	$20.00	$10.00	$10.00	$50.00	$100.00
Richmond, VA	$16.00	$16.00	$16.00		$16.00	$100.00
Raleigh, NC	$6.00		$15.00	$6.00	$15.00	$50.00
Knoxville, TN	$5.00	$10.00	$10.00	$5.00	$25.00	$100.00
Greenville, SC	$5.00	$10.00	$10.00	$5 -$25 *	$10.00	$200.00
Winston-Salem, NC	$5.00	$5.00	$10.00	$5.00	$25.00	$250.00
Charlotte, NC	$25.00	$25.00	$25.00	$25.00	$100.00	$100.00

**Fine amounts vary depending on time zone limits*

Fee Analysis

In addition to the fine analysis, a comparison of the fees for parking in various cities was conducted. Although some of the rates for other cities are higher than in the City of Greensboro, most are fairly consistent. The cities used as a benchmark were: Durham NC, Richmond VA, Raleigh NC, Knoxville TN, Greenville SC, Winston-Salem NC, and Charlotte NC.

Rate Structure Comparison

Cities	Hourly Parking Rates		Meter Rates	Monthly Parking Rates	
	Decks	Surface		Decks	Surface
Greensboro, NC	$.50 per ½ hour $5.50 dly Max	$.50 per ½ hour $5.50 dly Max	$.25 hour	$25 to $75	$30 to $35
Durham, NC	$.50 to $.60 hr.	$.50 hr $5.80 dly Max.	None	None	$25 to $50 General Public/$15 to $30 City Employees
Richmond, VA	$.60 to $2 hr	None		$55 to $85	
Raleigh, NC	$1.00 1st hr $1.00 ea add ½ hour	$1.00 per ½ hour	$1.00per hr.	$50 to $75 $90 Reserved	$20 to $60 depend on location
Knoxville, TN		None	$.50 hr		None
Greenville, SC	$.50 1st 30 min./ $.50 ea addt'l hr./$5.00 Max.	None	$.25 per hour	$40 to $50 mo./ $25 extra for reserved	$25 to $45 mo.
Winston-Salem, NC	$.75 hr/$6 per day	$1.00 hr/$9 all day	$.25 hr	$36 to $76 mo.	$25 mo.
Charlotte, NC	$.50 per 1/2 hr/ $10.00 dly Max.		$.25 per 15 min.	$20.00 mo.	N/A

Parking Enhancements

Through this study the Department of Transportation has identified seven parking enhancements that can be made to help increase the use of the parking facilities and development of the downtown area. The seven enhancement areas include: Camera/Security Improvements, Parking Incentives, Lighting Enhancements, Privatization of Meter Operations & Enforcement, Additional Parking Spaces and Capital Improvement Projects.

Camera / Security Improvements

Since 1974 the City of Greensboro has had a contractual agreement with Guilford County to provide monitoring and surveillance of security / traffic cameras located in the Melvin Municipal Office Building and the four city-owned parking decks. The cost of this service is approximately $200,000.00 per year, which is divided between Support Services' and the Parking Section's funds.

Issue

After numerous performance evaluations, the City has found that the services provided by the County no longer meet the conditions of the contract or the needs of the City. The City currently pays for two of the three full–time security guards that are required to monitor the aforementioned cameras 24-hours a day. If the security guards observe an illegal or suspicious activity in progress, they are responsible for identifying the appropriate camera,

placing a VHS tape in the machine and recording the activity. This is a time consuming process, which easily lends itself to human error and seldom results in the recording of activities.

The City is also concerned with the training of security guards that monitor this system. Support Services conducted several inspections of the County Security Office and found that staff was unfamiliar with operation of the recording equipment and the procedures that they are required to follow. The County has also recognized the deficiency in the current arrangement and supports the City's efforts to improve the system. The County recently issued a letter of cancellation of the contractual agreement and the contract was terminated on June 30, 2001.

Enhancements

The Parking Section in conjunction with Support Services recommends enhancing the security system, so as to provide a safer environment for the citizens of Greensboro that utilize the city-owned facilities in the Central Business District.

The City is in the process of switching the responsibility for monitoring of the current security / traffic camera system from the County to the City, and will establish an equipment center on the lower ground level of the MMOB. The new monitoring system will be an all digital system that will record the camera activity 24-hours a day with a seven day bank of data.

Initially, the cameras in the parking decks were designed to monitor traffic flow and congestion. The City is proposing an installation of 91 hands free call boxes in the 4 City-owned parking decks, adding eight new cameras and repositioning the existing cameras to focus on security rather than traffic concerns. The new system will capture a digital image of the citizen at the call box when activated. These call boxes will be linked to each of the parking deck offices, and parking employees will monitor the camera activity as well as immediately respond to activated screens when a call box is depressed. If the call box is not answered at the deck office in a timely manner (less than 5 seconds), then the citizen will be automatically transferred to the 911 Communications Center for assistance. After parking deck business hours, the activation of the call box will be directed strictly to the 911 Center.

Changes to the system will enable the City to more effectively and efficiently administer to the security needs of the citizens by changing the focus of the program from traffic management to security. The projected cost of the system is estimated at $346,875.00 and will pay for itself in less than two years. In addition to the cost effectiveness of the new system, the citizens will receive a higher quality of service and security throughout these City facilities. Following the formal biding process in August, the project could be operational by December of 2001.

Support Services and the Parking Section feel that this level of security is a much needed enhancement due to the increased volume of nighttime activity in the downtown area. It will improve the perception of safety to the public, and demonstrates that the City is proactively making the downtown area a safe and friendly environment for day and nighttime users.

Parking Incentives

Throughout the years, the City has changed and improved the operations of the Parking Section. One of the evolving programs has been the use of incentives to improve the attractiveness of the

downtown area and to promote new business opportunities. Currently the City offers several incentives to meet the needs of the CBD patrons.

Existing Incentives

The City of Greensboro currently offers seven downtown parking incentive programs. The total value of these incentives is approximately $294,867.00. The following section is an indication of the types of incentive programs that are currently offered and the value associated with each program.

Rooftop Parking Incentive

The current Rooftop Parking Incentive benefits the patron by offering a reduced parking rate on the rooftop level. For example: the regular rate for the Bellemeade Deck is $50.00 per month, however, with the Rooftop Parking Incentive the rate becomes $35.00 per month. This incentive benefits 69 patrons at a value of $9,540.00 per year. The concern with the Rooftop Parking Incentive is that we have no way to enforce the system and individuals typically pay the lesser fee yet park in the higher fee parking areas. When rooftop parkers engage in this type of activity it reduces the visible transient parking in the decks and reduces the likelihood that a visitor will perceive that low cost and convenient parking is available in the downtown area.

Validation Stamps

The validation stamp program is an incentive offered to downtown businesses in order for them to provide free parking or discounted parking to their customers. The City of Greensboro currently offers a 10% discount if a whole book of stamps is purchased, which is a $100.00 value. The average number of books sold per year is 325, providing $3,250.00 in incentives to downtown businesses and merchants. One problem with this program is that the users affix the stamps to the parking ticket, which causes jams in the printer when validating the ticket at the register. The misuse of the stamps by patrons is only one of the administrative complexities of the program. Another complexity of the program is that it only serves a select few of the downtown businesses and thus doesn't provide a unifying feature to the parking landscape of the CBD. There are two options for solving this problem: 1.) Invest in business stamps that are printed on the ticket and indicate what company is giving the discount; and 2.) Use a specialized token instead of tickets for validation.

30 Minutes Free Parking in the City/County Lot

The 30 minutes free parking at the new parking meters in the City/County lot is a joint venture by the City and County and was approved a number of years ago as an incentive to the public conducting short-term business in the City and County office buildings when the lot was an attended and gated lot. During the recent conversion to a metered lot, great effort was made to maintain this agreement by both governing bodies to provide 30 minutes free parking for the citizens of Greensboro and Guilford County. The drawback to this system is that there is currently no way to monitor the number of times these free parking buttons are depressed. Therefore, there is no way to determine the value of the incentive provided by the City and County to the citizens of Greensboro and Guilford County.

1 Hour Free Parking

The 1-hour free parking was an incentive created originally for the Festival Park merchants, the new Library, and the YWCA. The goal was to provide limited free parking for these businesses to compensate their customers utilizing the Church St. Deck. The City of Greensboro provides a 50 cent per hour discounted rate to these businesses for the 1-hour free parking that they provide their customers. Currently this program has also expanded to the

Greene St. Deck due to the growth of restaurants and businesses in this area. The current value to the City for this program is $27,389.00. The current issue with this system is that this program has to be billed monthly to the participating businesses/merchants. Lead Parking Attendants track the tickets daily by each of the customers and tallies in a spreadsheet format. At the end of each month the spreadsheets and tickets are forwarded to the Parking Manager for review, GDOT's Administration staff will verify and process the tickets for invoicing. Invoices are prepared for each of the 12 participating businesses with a breakdown of quantity of tickets per dollar value collected for the month.

	Participating Businesses
Festival Park Participants	Greensboro Artist League
	Green Hill Center
	United Arts Council
	Greensboro Symphony
	YWCA
	Café Europa
	Library
Greene St. Deck Participants	Quizno's
	Liberty Oaks
	Restaurant Pastiche
	Bouvier Kelly
	Kress Terrace, LLC

Biltmore Hotel Incentive

The original handshake deal from many years ago was to charge the Biltmore Hotel $2.00 per ticket collected from their business per 24-hour stay in the Greene St. Deck. Due to a revised agreement with the owner in September 1998 and May 1999, the City agreed to charge the hotel $175.00 per month regardless of the number of tickets collected for that month. The current cost to the City of Greensboro for the past fiscal year is $1,188.00. Due to the complexities of the accounting system, the process for administering this type of small incentive is inefficient and inequitable.

Guilford County Training Center Incentive

The original agreement established with the City of Greensboro was in 1995 to charge Guilford County a flat rate of $2.00 for any ticket collected at the Greene St. Deck stamped *Guilford County Training*. This parking is typically all day parking for the County's training purposes, which would equate to a parking charge of $5.50. The current cost of this program to the City of Greensboro is $4,753.00. This is another process as the one listed above, where the tickets have to be tracked daily, verified, counted, prepare a letter with a breakdown of tickets collected to the customer, and then forward to Accounting for invoicing.

Free After Hours Parking in the City Decks

Originally after hours parking included a $1.00 to $2.25 charge to each customer exiting the deck during the week. On Fridays at 6:00pm the gates were raised at the 4 decks to offer free parking on the weekends only. Due to the new Central Library being built beside the Church St. Deck, the need for later attended hours arose as well as the raising of the gates at 8:00pm Monday through Thursday to offer a customer-focused environment for this area of downtown. With the growth in and around the Greene St. Deck and Davie St. Deck with

nighttime activity and an agreement with DGI, the City of Greensboro agreed to provide free parking after 6:00pm at the Greene St. Deck, provide an attendant in the office until 9:00pm and raise the gates at 9:00pm Monday through Thursday at the Greene St. and Davie St. Deck. (Davie St. Deck was included in this equation due to the amount of vandalism occurring to the gate arms at night from activity at several nightclubs and bars in the area.) Due to the amount of activity after hours at each of the decks during the week and the weekends, the city is contributing an estimated $242,508.00 to downtown incentives with the gates being raised.

Free 15 Minutes Parking in the Parking Decks
Originally the parking decks were programmed to allow a 7-minute free parking charge for customers that needed to go in and out of the deck to conduct business, drop a passenger off, or realized they were in the wrong location. This time was increased to 15 minutes in the 4 city-owned parking decks in 1997 to provide a more customer friendly environment for those citizens conducting quick transactions in the MMOB building. The current value of this program to the City of Greensboro is $9,360.00.

Current Parking Incentives

Program		Incentives currently in place
Validations Stamps	325 per year at a 10% discount	$3,250.00
Rooftop Parking	Greene- 18 per year Church- 48 per year Bellemeade- 3 per year 69 per year	Greene- $3,240.00 Church- $5,760.00 Bellemeade- $ 540.00 $9,540.00
City/County Lot	Free 30 minute button on parking meters	No current way to monitor usage of free time button with current technology.
1-hour Free Parking	Festival Park Merchants Average use per year- 51,086x$0.50 Greene St. Restaurants Average use per year-3,692x$0.50	Festival Park - $25,543.00 Greene St. Deck - $1,846.00
Biltmore Hotel	Monthly Charge $175.00x12=$2,100.00 Actual Charges for May 2000 through April 2001 = $3,288.00	$1,188.00
Guilford County Training	Agreement to charge $2.00 per ticket for training. Average training stay is all day at a normal $5.50 rate. Actual tickets collected for May 2000 through April 2001 = 1,358x$5.50=$7,469.00 Actual charge for tickets-1,358x$2.00=$2,716.00	$4,753.00
Raise gates after hours at the 4 city-owned decks (annual	Davie – 25,904 exits Greene – 30,948 exits	Davie = $51,808.00 Greene = $61,896.00

average computing average length of stay at 2 hours = $2.00)	Church – 57,551 exits Bellemeade – 6,851 exits 121,254 exits	Church = $115,102.00 Bellemeade = $13,702.00 $242,508.00
Free 15 minutes to every customer at the 4 city parking decks	Davie – 212 avg. per month Greene – 618 avg. per month Church – 376 avg. per month Bellemeade – 363 avg. per month 1,569 avg. per month	Davie= $1,218.00 Greene= $3,708.00 Church= $2,256.00 Bellemeade= $2,178.00 $9,360.00
After Hours Event Policy	Events in the downtown area beginning after 3:00pm with a minimum attendance of 75, will provide $1.00 exit fee for all tickets collected from business.	$129.00
TOTAL Incentives		**$294,867.00**

Proposed Incentives

We are considering changing the structure and makeup of the incentives program to more easily administer the programs. Also, develop a more comprehensive package of incentives that will benefit new downtown development and existing customers.

Marketing of Existing Parking Incentives

Although the City has offered our existing incentives for many years, we have never made a concerted effort at advertising or promoting our incentive programs. In order to more vigorously market our existing incentives, we will develop a program brochure that will be distributed to all businesses in the CBD. The brochure will be a "how to manual" that will explain the CBD parking incentives and policies along with encouraging businesses to contact the Parking Section for more information. As another way to market the parking facilities as a "fun place" the Parking Section could produce a quarterly newsletter explaining services and improvements to monthly parkers, employers, and merchants.

Current studies show that there is convenient parking supply to meet existing and projected parking demands. What may be lacking is the way to bring everyone into partnership, so that not only the City's 4,500 public spaces at the curb and off street are properly utilized, but that the remaining PRIVATE supply of 14,000 spaces becomes part of the parking picture. Non-City controlled spaces account for 76% of the parking supply. All parties need to come to the table to be sure that these 18,800 spaces work to serve existing hourly and monthly parkers and that whenever parking supply (or perceived lack thereof) becomes an issue, the structure is there to work out solutions. This is especially true when one considers that parking in downtown Greensboro is available and cheap. The Parking Section will work closely with Downtown Greensboro, Inc., the Greensboro Merchants Association, and Guilford County Government to encourage their members to more fully utilize our services, and to work together to encourage patrons to utilize all available parking downtown.

30 Minutes Free Parking in All City Decks

As explained in the "Existing Incentives" section, the City has advanced the free parking incentive program from 7 minutes to 15 minutes free parking in all City decks. As an added benefit for the businesses and transient customers in the CBD we are proposing to expand the free parking incentive program to 30 minutes free parking. At a minimum, the increase in free time in the decks from 15 minutes to 30 minutes would increase the value of this

incentive by approximately $10,000.00 per year. The total incentive value is estimated at more than $20,000.00 per year.

Replace Validation Stamps and 1-Hour Free Parking Incentives

Due to the administrative complexities of the existing Validation Stamp and 1-Hour Free Parking Incentives we are proposing to implement a Universal Token Incentive Program that would simplify the incentive program for the city and the CBD businesses. The idea behind this program is that merchants could purchase parking tokens that may be used by patrons in the parking meters or in the parking decks. The new Universal Token Program would be offered to participating businesses at a reduced rate of 20% per token, which is an additional 10% rate reduction over the current programs. The new token program would have two main benefits for downtown businesses. First, the system would establish a unifying feature to all downtown merchants. The design on the token could be developed by the businesses and be used as a corporate image for downtown merchants. Second, it would make downtown parking events easier to manage for the customer and make the incentive programs easier to administer for staff. If the Validation Stamp and 1-Hour Free Parking incentives were eliminated and replaced with the Universal Token Program the City could increase the value of the incentive program to $31,819.00 per year, while at the same time simplifying the management of the program.

Develop Downtown Economic Development Parking Incentives

We are investigating the possibility of offering a reduced parking rate to employees of new downtown businesses. The specifics of this incentive have not been completed yet, however the idea is to give a benefit to organizations that choose downtown over other locations. If a business decides to establish a new office complex downtown and needs employee parking for over 50 new people, we could offer a 25% discount per space for 2 years. This would enable the City to entice business downtown using parking incentives as one of the tools, generate additional revenue, and increase the use of the decks.

Implement Residential Parking Card Program

Due to the increased volume of residential properties being developed in the CBD, the city has investigated options for providing parking incentives to residents in the area. The concern for residents living downtown is that they may utilize one parking deck for nighttime parking and another for daytime parking due to the location of their employer. This proposal offers one parking card that can be utilized at all 4 City parking decks. The benefit of this program is that the resident would have a parking deck card that would allow them to park in any deck for a single parking card rate. This premium service would typically cost the resident two to three times the regular deck rate and thus is a substantial savings to residential parkers.

Formalize Special Event Parking Policy

Recently downtown businesses have increased the number and frequency of daytime and evening special events during the workweek and many of the businesses have requested discounted rates in the parking decks for their event patrons. In the past, special event parking discounts were not based on a set policy, but rather, on condition factors and personal preference. Under this system discounts varied due to the size of the event, the requesting organization and the capacity of the deck. The new Special Events Parking Policy would utilize the Universal Token Program to streamline the administration of the program and set a standard that could be used by all downtown businesses. Utilizing the token system, discounts could vary depending on two factors; 1.) The estimated number of patrons expected; and, 2.) the capacity of the requested deck. For example:

Number of Patrons	*Token Discount*
0 – 50 patrons	20% discount
above 50 patrons	32% discount

Another potential way to administer the Special Events Policy would be to utilize specially designed rearview mirror hang tags. These hang tags would be purchased at the same discount rate as the tokens, but would enable the parkers to enter and exit the deck without exchanging currency.

Standardize Rates and Hours in Decks

Standardize Rate Structure

One of the main administrative issues that the Parking Section staff deals with is the inconsistent rules and procedures regarding the uneven parking rates at the decks. Originally the disparity in the pricing structure for the decks was developed as a way to increase the use at the Davie St. and Church St. Decks. Given the current usage rate and the capacity of each deck the pricing disparity is no longer needed and causes more confusion than benefit. Currently the Parking Section of the Schedule of Fees states:

All Parking Decks except Church Street	Free first 15 minutes $ .50/half hour for first two hours $ .50/each additional hour $ 5.50 max. per exit $ 2.25/unattended exit - Greene & Bellemeade $ 1.00/unattended exit - Davie $ 35.00/$50.00/$75.00/Monthly - Bellemeade $ 35.00/$50.00/$75.00/Monthly - Greene $ 50.00 - $65.00/Monthly - Davie
Church Street Deck	Free first 15 minutes $ .25/each 20 minutes up to 1 hr; .50 each additional 30 minutes up to 2 hours $ .50/hour after 2 hours $ 5.25 max. per exit $ 1.00/unattended exit $ 25.00/$35.00/$55.00/Monthly

A solution to this issue is to adjust all parking rates to a standardized level consistent between all decks. This solution would enable the rate schedule to be condensed and the increase in revenue would offset the additional added incentives system wide. One example of the new rate structure could be:

All Parking Decks	Free first 30 minutes $ .50/half hour for first two hours $ .50/each additional hour $ 5.50 max. per exit $ 2.25/unattended exit $ 75.00 per month Reserved Parking $ 50.00 per month General Parking

Eliminate Rooftop Parking Incentive

There are several solutions to the rooftop parking enforcement issues mentioned above. For example: Automated card gates could be installed at the entrance and exits of the rooftop areas to control and monitor patron usage or implement special rooftop parking stickers that

would identify privileged parkers and allow parking section staff to patrol and fine rooftop parking violators. These solutions would cost extensively more than the current value of the incentive itself. Another solution would be to eliminate the incentive all together and use the saved funds to more effectively enhance incentives for all patrons. Given the fact that only 69 patrons utilize this service, the $9,540.00 could be better utilized to offset the additional system wide value of the other new incentives.

Standardize Gate Raising Hours
Currently all four decks have different times of day in which the parking gates are lowered and raised. The current deck operating hours are:

Deck	Business Hours	
Church St	5 am to 8 pm	M-Th
	5 am to 6 pm	F
	Free	Sat – Sun
Bellemeade St.	24 hours per day	M -Th
	Gates raise at 6 pm	F
	Free	Sat-Sun
Greene St	7:30 am to 9 pm	M-Th
	7:30 am to 6 pm	F
	Free	Sat-Sun
Davie St.	5 am to 9 pm	M-Th
	5 am to 6 pm	F
	Free	Sat-Sun

The variable business hours are confusing for patrons, businesses and staff alike. It is our proposal to standardize the business hours of all decks to the following schedule:

All Decks	5 am to 6 pm	M- F
	Free	Sat-Sun

This new schedule would allow us to focus on providing services during the peak demand hours and increase the number of hours the decks are free to the public. This incentive would help attract nighttime activity since paying for parking would no longer be a concern after 6 pm.

Renegotiate Arrangements with Biltmore Hotel and Guilford County
Although both the Biltmore Hotel and the Guilford County Training Center are valuable clients for the Greene Street Parking Deck the current rates charged are no longer mutually beneficial to the City and the client. It is for this reason that the City will begin to renegotiate the incentive arrangements with both organizations in order to better accommodate our customers.

Lighting Analysis

One important feature of the operation of our parking decks is the lighting on all levels of the facilities. Lighting levels in the decks play an important role in the citizen's sense of safety, security, and the overall perception of these facilities. If the goal of the City is to revitalize the downtown area and encourage more people to frequent the businesses at off peak times, then improvements in the perception of our parking facilities is essential.

General Lighting Conditions for All Decks

This section covers a survey of the light level for all city-owned parking decks. The surveys were conducted during the early evening hours between March 26 and May 8, 2001. The light levels were measured with a hand held light meter at waist level. The width of the parking bays in all decks is between 59 and 62 feet with light fixtures located over the parking bays from 9 to 15 feet from the interior/exterior walls. The location of the fixture within this area has a significant impact on the average foot-candle readings from the light fixtures.

The majority of the decks have a light fixture configuration in the parking areas that form a square or rectangle. If all four lights in this square are connected with lines, it forms a square with an "X" in the middle. Readings were taken at three basic locations, which are identified as "A," "B," and "C." The "A" reading is where the two lines cross-forming the "X" and is located in the travel lane so it reads the light level from all four fixtures. The "B" reading was taken halfway between two fixtures located over the parking bay. The "C" reading was taken in the travel lane that is halfway between the fixture of the parking bay over one side of the travel lane and the fixture over the parking bay on the other side of the travel lane.

Basically the type of fixtures are repeated in all decks to some degree. The type and abbreviations are as follows:

- High-pressure sodium, shoebox fixture -HPS SB
- High-pressure sodium, drop lens fixture -HPS DL
- High-pressure sodium, pedestal mounted fixture-HPS PM
- High-pressure sodium, wall mounted fixture-HPS WM
- Metal halide, walpak fixture -MH WP
- Incandescent, spotlight fixture-SL
- Fluorescent tubes-FL

The evaluation of the light level is indicated by good, fair and poor. For this report, good means adequate, fair means acceptable, and poor is unacceptable. The following describes the general conditions and recommended changes for each deck.

Bellemeade Street Parking Deck

This deck was opened in August 1990 with 150w HPS shoebox fixtures on the ramps and in the parking bays. The fixtures are located about 15 feet in from the interior/exterior walls with 30 feet between the fixtures. Longitudinally their spacing is about 39 feet between fixtures on centers. The light level for all areas in this deck is considered adequate and no changes are recommended at this time.

Church Street Parking Deck

This deck was opened in February 1990 with 150w HPS shoebox fixtures on the ramps and in the parking bays. The fixtures are located about 15 feet in from the interior/exterior walls with 32 feet between the fixtures. Longitudinally their spacing is about 42 feet between fixtures. The light level for all areas in this deck is considered adequate and no changes are recommended at this time.

Davie Street Parking Deck

This deck was opened in November 1967 with fluorescent fixtures. The fluorescent fixtures in the parking bays have been replaced with 150w HPS drop lens fixtures. These replacement fixtures are located 9 feet in from the interior/exterior walls with 44 feet between fixtures.

Due to this configuration, the reading of 13 foot-candles at the interior walls is 4 times as high as the readings at the exterior walls.

Longitudinally their spacing is about 21 feet between fixtures. The average foot-candle readings would have been more uniform if these fixtures had been installed 16 feet from the interior/exterior walls with 30 feet between the fixtures. All of the fixtures in the stairways and elevator landings have been retrofitted with HPS fixtures. The light level in this deck is considered to be adequate at this time except for around the towers and at the entrance and exit points. In order to correct the lighting problems in those areas additional HPS fixtures will be added to brighten the space.

Greene Street Parking Deck

This deck was opened in November 1972 with fluorescent fixtures through out the structure. The fluorescent fixtures in the parking bays have been replaced with 150watt HPS drop lens fixtures on some levels and 250w MH walpak fixtures on other levels. The drop lens replacement fixtures are located 8 feet in from the interior/exterior walls with 45 feet between fixtures. Longitudinally their spacing is about 45 feet between fixtures. On levels where the 250w MH walpak fixtures are mounted on the walls, the fixtures are staggered on 60-foot centers and 59 feet between the fixtures mounted on the interior/exterior walls. For some reason, the readings for 250w walpaks are not much below the readings for the 150w drop lens fixtures. However, the comfort level for our customers in the areas with walpak fixtures is way below their comfort level in the areas with the drop lens fixtures. Most of the wall-mounted fixtures for the exterior access doors to the Greene Street elevator/stairway tower has the original 100w MV fixtures while the same fixtures for the Washington Street tower have been replaced with a 70w HPS fixture. The Washington Street entrance has MH walpaks. The Greene Street entrance has incandescent "spotlight" fixtures. The Greene Street exits have some of the original fluorescent fixtures supplemented with two HPS fixtures. Also, on the upper levels the existing fixtures for the crossovers at each end are inconsistent and unacceptable in many cases. Both the elevator/stairway towers are served with the original fluorescent fixtures that provide an adequate light level.

In general, a 175w MH fixture gives 80% of a 150w HPS fixture. Also, the annual operating cost of a 250w MH fixture is estimated at $197.10 while the same cost for a 150w HPS fixture is estimated at $120.45. The HPS fixture operates for approximately $76.65 less per year. Therefore it would take 1.5 years to pay for a new HPS fixture at an installed cost of $111.50 as opposed to relocating the existing MH fixtures. Based on this savings and the fact that the majority of our fixtures are HPS, it is recommend that no attempt be made at this time to reuse the MH fixtures that will be removed.

The inadequate lighting arrangement in the Greene Street Deck will be corrected by removing all 40 walpak units from the deck and replacing them with 150w HPS drop lens fixtures. An additional 119 new 150w HPS fixtures will be strategically located at the pedestrian access and egress doors, in the elevator/stairway towers, reserved parking area, the deck entrance and the rooftop level. These improvements should dramatically enhance the security and comfort of the Greene Street Deck.

Privatization of Meter Operations & Enforcement

Currently the City of Greensboro is reviewing the option of privatizing the on-street and off-street parking meter operations. Many cities in North Carolina, throughout the country and in Europe have found that privatizing the parking meter operations is an efficient and effective way of

promoting their downtown. The results of the public/private partnerships have been very positive, but in each of the municipalities, the benefits derived depend largely on the program objectives and how the program was structured.

Issue

On-street parking spaces are the most critical spaces to the health and growth of downtown business and retailers. During a survey conducted in September 2000, results showed a consistent pattern of overstays at time-restricted meters. For example:

At the 30 minute, 1 hour and 2 hour meters combined, where the statistical analysis is most valid with 30 minute check times:

- 348 (36%) of the total 962 parkers surveyed in these three meter categories overstayed the posted time limit.
- These violators consumed 37% of the meter time in those three meter groups (754 hours out of a total meter time capacity of 2,024 hours).
- Violation time represented the potential for an additional 885 legitimate parkers who remained within the posted time limits (at 30 minute, 1 hour and 2 hour meters only).

This lack of parker compliance with posted time limits is <u>significant</u> and <u>higher</u> than expected in a typical downtown of this size. It indicates a low level of enforcement. Effective utilization of metered parking is dependent upon active enforcement that achieves the intended level of turnover. The level of turnover reflects how effectively those spaces are being utilized. Since on-street metered parking is considered to be the most convenient parking within the system, effective utilization of those spaces is important to the health of downtown businesses that depend upon customer and visitor convenience.

In order to achieve the proper level of enforcement more attention should be paid to space utilization and overstays at time-restricted meters. A higher level of enforcement activity will reduce average stays and increase the number of downtown visitors and shoppers who are able to find convenient on-street parking. If privatization is to be a viable option in Greensboro the objective of the program must be centered on the concept of reducing average stays and increasing turnover. This objective will enable customers to more easily find on-street parking close by the establishment that they are visiting.

Program Benefits

Typical private parking systems offer a wide range of services as part of privatization of parking management. Given the fact that each city has different parking management needs the services provided by the private company can be tailored to the community's needs. Examples of these services include:

- New Meters—Purchase and install new electronic parking meters. Most companies can finance meters as part of the project so it is not included in the City's indebtedness. They know the best equipment and, due to their nationwide volume purchases, they typically can get better prices than the public sector.
- Downtown Study—Private operators work with City staff to identify any additional parking opportunities. They do an initial in-depth study of the city's parking demands and opportunities, and regularly update the study, at no fee to the municipality.

- Maintain meters—Private companies will maintain all parking meters and can repair malfunctioning meters within one hour.
- Citations—Issue citations for violations of the meters and other parking infractions, at a level of enforcement determined by City management and staff.
- Collections—Collect, count, and deposit the coinage from the meters, with high security, and accompanied by a weekly electronic audit of the meters to check correctness of deposits.
- Citation Processing—Receive payment for citations, and collect any overdue citations.
- Customer Service—Provide a high level of customer service, including handling complaints, thus relieving City staff and elected officials of day-to-day operational issues. "Ambassadors to the Community."
- Marketing—Develop a marketing plan to promote the City's downtown and parking opportunities.
- Adjudication—Organize and manage a non-judicial hearings process. This relieves the courts and staff, and is well liked by the citizens.
- Reporting—Provide City staff with program reports as needed.

Revenue

In almost every city, net revenue has significantly increased. This is not necessarily a result of issuing more citations, but of improving collection of late payments, lowering operational costs to the city, and improved, more secure cash handling. Below are examples of how the revenue stream has improved in three cities that privatized their parking operations over the past 2-3 years:

City	Year of Privatization	Before Privatization	2000
Charlotte	1997	$300,000.00	$2,000,000.00
Richmond	1998	$1,174,000.00	$2,500,000.00
Fort Myers	1998	$140,000.00	$700,000.00

Additional revenue that may be gained from a privatized approach to parking management could be used to fund other capital improvement projects: such as, way-finding signage, lighting improvements, or accelerated parking deck improvements.

Economic Development and Impact on Merchants

The impact of privatization of on-street parking on economic development and on the merchants themselves is anecdotal, but you can be sure that if the downtown merchants in these cities perceived that privatization were harming them, the political pressure would be too great, and privatization would be a thing of the past. On the contrary, merchants tend to believe that managed parking permits their customers to perceive that low-cost, secure parking is readily available.

Downtown Promotion

The promotion of the downtown area is not only an important issue for the merchants located downtown, but it is also important for the positive image of the city. To this end the privatization of the parking meter operations would greatly enhance the collective image and customer service ability of the downtown community in two ways. First, most private

parking operations utilize a system of tokens, which merchants, customers, and bus patrons can use to validate their services. The token system allows the community to present a positive, unifying image to the public while creating an administratively simple way of providing parking incentives. Second, private parking enforcement agents are trained to be "Ambassadors for the Community." The "Ambassadors" are responsible for helping citizens find their way around the downtown area, identify commercial establishments, hand out maps, and enforce parking turnover. These individuals become the friendly faces of the community while performing a vital service for parking enforcement.

Staff Productivity

Another benefit of privatization is the ability to increase staff productivity. Currently three separate departments (Transportation, Finance and Police) manage the parking meter operations. The Transportation Parking Section manages the maintenance of the meters and the collection and delivery of the revenue. The Finance Collections Division manages the billing of fines, penalties, and payment delinquencies, and the Police Department's Parking Enforcement Section enforces the time and meter restricted parking.

Downtown parking enforcement has traditionally been the responsibility of the Police Department as a logical extension of traffic enforcement responsibilities throughout the city. However, this assignment approach separates parking enforcement from the parking services operation, which relies greatly upon parking enforcement as part of overall downtown parking activity.

Placing downtown parking enforcement responsibility within Parking Operations in the form of contract management with a private company would "complete the circle," putting downtown parking service provision, maintenance and enforcement under a single operation. Parking services would have the ability to direct and deploy enforcement efforts, and would be responsible for citizen complaints and inquiries about downtown enforcement. While placing downtown parking enforcement in the Parking Section would entrust Transportation Parking with a responsibility it deems as high priority, it would also relieve the Police Department of a duty that will likely never hold a position of high priority in comparison with the other many service issues faced by the Police Department.

If these operations were privatized the existing staff who perform these functions could be utilized in more productive ways. For example: Meter Maintenance Staff could be redirected to enhance the maintenance of the 4 City-owned parking decks or the Police Department's Parking Enforcement Officers could concentrate more effort on traffic and congestion issues, thus allowing the City to better utilize our limited resources.

Additional Parking Improvements

In order to continue to provide inexpensive transient parking in close proximity to retail and commercial merchants the Department of Transportation's Engineering Division has conducted a traffic and parking review of the street network in the CBD. One of the objectives of the review was to determine if select traffic lanes could be converted into metered parking spaces without adversely impacting traffic management. Three areas of downtown were chosen for this review:

- Sector II – Area bounded by N. Church St, N. Eugene St, Smith St., and E. Friendly Ave.
- Sector III – Area bounded by S. Eugene St., S. Mendenhall St., W. Washington St., and Spring Garden St.

- Sector IV – Area bounded by S. Church St., S. Eugene St., E. Friendly Ave. and Gorrell St.

Following the review it was determined that 177 new parking spaces could be added to these areas without impacting the traffic flow downtown. In Sector II, 10 parking spaces could be removed in order to allow two-way traffic on Summit Ave, E. Lindsay St. and Bellemeade St. In Sector III, and additional 56 parking spaces can be created on Spring Garden St. along with 14 spaces on W. Washington St. Sector IV can accommodate the most additional parking spaces at 76. The additional parking spaces in Sector IV are proposed for E. Washington St., S. Greene St., S. Davie St. and Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. Of these 13 angled parking spaces will be added in front of the Carolina Theater on S. Greene St and another that section of Greene St. will be converted into a two way street with a roundabout positioned at the intersection of Greene St. and McGee St. This change will enable more two-way traffic flow downtown and produce a traffic calming function around the theater. It is anticipated that much of the 150 spaces will be used by theater patrons, and may free up additional transient parking in the S. Elm / McGee St. surface lot.

Downtown Greensboro Incorporated Partnership

DGI currently has a Parking and Transportation Committee that consists of downtown business employees, merchant owners, City officials, etc. This committee concentrates on parking and transportation related issues that need to be critiqued and/or changed. Currently the committee's main focus is enhancements to the Greene St. Parking Deck. The emphasis on this deck is due to the amount of nighttime business that has increased in this block of downtown. The main focus for this deck is as follows:

- Add neon lighting or eye-catching lighting to the exterior fascia of the deck to emphasize the entrance and exit areas of the deck for traffic and pedestrian flow. Currently Perper Designs is preparing a design to make recommendations to this committee and the City for this proposal.
- Upgrade of interior lighting on each level to reflect a safer perception from the public. The current lighting levels on each floor vary in foot candles and the perception to the public is that the deck is too dark in some areas. As stated above the city has prepared a lighting analysis to make recommendations and changes to the lighting layout in this deck. There is also a focus in adding additional lighting at the stairwell/elevator lobby areas to draw the public's attention to locate these areas easily.
- Entrances to the deck. Several designs are being researched to provide some eye-catching design to allow users of the deck to know where to enter with out any question. One suggestion thus far has been using canopy coverings to highlight the entrance locations to the deck.
- Trailblazing signage. This would entail signage in the CBD parameters to assist the public and visitors in locating the 4 City-owned parking decks as well as surface lots.

The City of Greensboro welcomes the help and interest of DGI in developing a comprehensive parking strategy to enhance the downtown experience. We look forward to working in conjunction on these and many more projects.

Capital Improvement Projects

The following are the capital improvement projects planned for the next 6 fiscal years for the Parking Section:

Davie Street Parking Deck Rehabilitation

The Davie St. Parking Deck is in need of an engineering analysis of the structural conditions of the facility. The last engineering analysis was prepared by Sutton-Kennerly & Associates in 1991. There was approximately $85,000.00 worth of expansion joint repairs that were completed in 1993 as a result of this assessment. However, at that time the needed repairs were in excess of $1.5 million dollars. This parking deck has been neglected for some time due to the continual debate of "to sell or not to sell." The time has come to proceed with the engineering analysis and begin phased structural repairs to this parking facility if the City is going to continue to own and operate this asset.

The current budget process is to allocate funds for the fiscal year 2001-2002 to have a structural analysis conducted of this property and the structural repair work broken down into 4 to 5 phases as needed over the next 4 to 5 fiscal years.

Other Capital Improvements

Parking facilities, whether parking decks or surface lots, require consistent and constant maintenance in order to maintain their appearance as well as structural soundness for daily usage. These projects range from painting, signage, parking stall markings, etc. The following is a list of proposed future needs for the Parking Section.

Painting of Handrails in Decks

All 4 of the City-owned decks need to have the handrails painted in the deck area and stairwell towers. Some of these areas are exposed to the outdoor elements and therefore take a great deal of abuse. This could be handled as a single capital project to include all of the parking decks in the scope of services. This currently has been planned as a capital improvement project for fiscal year 2003-2004.

New/Additional Signage in Decks

Due to the age of the Davie St. (34 years) and Greene St. Deck (29 years) new signage would be in order for these locations. The majority of the signage in these 2 facilities has been there since they were built. The signs are constructed of out-dated material and have become somewhat faded. This would help enhance the image of the deck and create a user-friendly environment for the patrons. Additional signage that is being considered is speed limit signs, directional signage, informational signage, etc. to better assist the customer with where the stairs, elevators, exits, etc. are located in the deck. This project has also been planned as part of our overall capital improvement projects and is slated for fiscal year 2002-2003.

Enhancement of Stairwell/Elevator Lobby Areas

In order to enhance the overall appearance of the parking decks, especially since the 2 newest decks are 11 years old, we recommend painting or staining the stairwell/elevator lobby areas to brighten these areas and draw attention to these points of interest to the patron. When a citizen parks their car, they will first look for the elevators or stairwell areas in the decks in order to make their exit, and conduct whatever business had brought them downtown. This would be a well-served enhancement for all of the decks.

Another possibility would be to theme code several of the decks and relate each level to a piece of Greensboro's history. One item that has been presented to city staff is the possibility of partnering with the United Arts Council in having art work displayed in the Church St. Deck and having different themes accent the elevator/stairwell lobby areas. This is being recommended as a grant program and would mutually be reviewed and assessed by the City of Greensboro and the United Arts Council. Several questions remain with this project,

however. Who would be responsible for the continual maintenance of the art work, what themes would be selected for each level, what benefit does this provide to the users in order to establish grant availability, etc. This request is currently being reviewed by City staff and the United Arts Council as to the feasibility of the project. These recommendations are still being investigated and have not been included in the capital improvement project list for the next 5 years.

Remark Parking Deck Stalls

Each of the decks and surface lots are in need of new markings on the surface to indicate the individual parking stalls. Due to changes over the years in the 2 oldest decks, markings have been painted over and scratched off and in this process have caused confusion to the user as to which lines they actually should be parking between. Again this project has not been added to the capital improvement project list but could possibly be covered by funds in maintenance and operations for any given fiscal year.

Recommendations

In conclusion, the Parking Section believes that the implementation of all or part of the above referenced changes could help improve the climate and stature of the downtown area while at the same time making the Parking Section more efficient and effective in providing parking services. Through this study the Parking Section has determined that the current parking conditions in the Central Business District are adequate for the current parking demand and supply. These conditions should continue to provide for adequate public parking for the next 5 years, however, yearly reviews of the parking supply and demand calculations are recommended so that the Parking Section can continue to meet the needs of new CBD developments.

Although the current parking sufficiency is good, improvements in the enforcement of meter and time based spaces, in conjunction with new additional parking spaces, is important for the future management of transient parking arrangements. Without the proper level of enforcement the current visitor perception of inadequate parking will continue, making it more difficult to attract and retain businesses downtown. The recommendation to privatize the Parking Meter Operations is the cornerstone of a bold new plan to encourage businesses to locate downtown and to make it more possible for existing businesses to thrive.

Utmost and foremost, the City of Greensboro needs to market the services that are currently being provided in the Parking Section. There are valuable incentives that have been available to the public, merchants, and downtown businesses for a number of years that have not been marketed and only when inquired about. An informational brochure or pamphlet distributed to downtown businesses would tremendously impact what services the City does provide as it relates to downtown parking.

A token system to replace validation stamps and 1-hour free parking incentives is another user and administrative friendly service that could be implemented and marketed to enhance the Parking Services for the CBD. This system would be offered at a discounted rate to the users as well as marketing signs, window decals, stickers, etc. used to advertise what businesses in the CBD offer free parking to their customers. As this system spreads throughout to downtown businesses, the more customers would frequent various establishments due to the free hour or free parking being offered.

If the parking enhancements in this report are implemented the visitors, employees, customers, and businesses will perceive the downtown to be a safe, secure, and economically viable place to live, work, and play.