

Additional Solutions and Comments

Of the 34 original solutions proposed by this planning document, 24 (74%) of the solutions represent minor ways to refine the existing conditions in the Business District in an attempt to make the parking conditions better for everyone in the area. These 24 solutions do not represent ways that large quantities of new parking can be created. These solutions include numbers: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, and 28.

The bulk of the new parking spaces are created in 10 (29%) of the proposed solutions. These solutions included numbers: 9, 10, 25, 26, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, and 34. Three basic approaches are used to create new parking: creating parking in existing rear yards or side plazas, selective demolition of buildings for new parking, and building new mixed-use buildings with ground floor retail with a 2nd and 3rd floor for parking spaces. Each approach of creating more parking had some form of resistance in public comments. The surveys and focus groups indicate that there is support from a majority of stakeholders in the area for creating more parking if it is part of a plan that systematically creates more parking throughout the district. This is the goal of the parking solution drawings.

Additional Parking Solutions

35. The residential parking spreadsheet shows large residential off-street parking deficiencies for some blocks in the area. The City should encourage voluntary higher standards of off-street parking for homes (single-family, duplex, and four family) on side streets adjacent to the Business District that greatly exceed the City's minimum parking standards (1F=2, 2F=3 or 4, 4F=4 or 6). Apartment buildings in and adjacent to the Business District should be encouraged to maximize parking on the back of their lot, to serve the parking needs of residents and commercial employees or customers. The provision of adequate parking with buildings as they are rehabilitated can help attract high quality tenants to the District. Without the provision of off-street parking on residential properties that have available back yards space, landlords will have little opportunity to provide the parking for their individual rental properties that can attract high quality tenants.
36. The South Grand Business District should consider funding a low interest loan program as an incentive to creating off-street parking for residential property on side streets adjacent to the Business District. This would help generally increase the overall parking in the area at little or no cost to the business owners, as the property owner would pay the loans back. This policy would work well a funding mechanism for the approach noted above in solution #35.
37. Multiple restaurant owners within the same block should consider a jointly operated valet service that can park customer cars on the remote end of the Commerce Bank lot. This will allow the better use of this lot at the peak demand periods of the dinner time parking crunch. Many restaurants in downtown Clayton provide a valet parking option during dinner hours.

General Design Details and Planning Principles

There are a few general principles utilized in this parking study to attempt to create more parking with as little intrusion or disruption to the existing urban context. There is a conscious strategy to show ways to create more parking while minimizing building demolitions that may be required in the area over the long-term. Some of the general principles employed in this study include:

- A. Urban neighborhoods like these should take advantage of the existing alleys as parking drive aisles when ever possible. The “T” intersecting alleys allow parking along two edges of a parcel. For the creation of smaller scale parking lots new parking uses this technique to access parking behind existing residential buildings on the side streets. For larger parking lots, the alleys can allow for a double stacked row of parking as is shown for the parking lot just north of Jay’s International (City Block 1463, Short-Term Solutions). This technique allowed for nearly doubling the parking on this existing parking lot. Alleys are narrow, and cause traffic to drive slower, yet 2 cars can pass. The typical alley right-of-way is 15 feet wide. Even with this narrow width, cars can pass and cars can park along the edges of the alley. This factor brings into question the fundamental necessity of drive aisle standards that typically require 22 feet widths. A narrower urban standard for parking lot drive aisles may be possible.
- B. Interlink many small parking lots to make finding a parking space easier. For this Business District, looping back out on to Grand Boulevard can be a frustrating experience if the side streets are full at a peak demand period. Creating parking synergy makes small parking lots more customer friendly.
- C. For parking lot layout, always orient the drive aisles along the longest dimension of the parcel to maximize the amount of parking spaces on that parcel. This principle is shown in the St. Pius Church parking lot where a small increase is possible simply by repainting the parking place stripes.
- D. Plan ADA parking spaces in parking lots so that the required 5’ wide loading area overlaps with an area that would otherwise be sidewalk or other non-parking space. This fine-grain detail is visible in the new Commerce Bank parking lot and the new parking lot in City Block 2100.
- E. For trees planted in parking lots, allow the 5’ by 9’ planter box to extend under the bumper of the standard parking space. The planter edge can act as a wheel stop, and valuable parking spaces are not lost for landscape islands. Plant trees that can be limbed up to create a canopy above the pedestrian’s head so customers can pass between parked cars and increase visibility of the lot.
- F. Approach the parking options with open mindedness. This includes property ownership issues and property use issues. Question the premise behind standards or other policies that affect the possible parking solutions that can be implemented. People created the original standards, but there is often no reason that standards cannot be modified. The parking spreadsheets illustrate this principle best in showing the City and Suburban parking standards as the low and high extremes. The parking study suggests that a more appropriate “Town Center” standard for off-street parking may be the most appropriate for this Business District.
- G. Simplify the traffic patterns in the Business District so that visitors unfamiliar with the exact layout of the area can easily adapt and find their way around. Changing all streets to be two ways will make it easier to access the large parking lot behind Commerce Bank. The district should also consider the many “No Left Turns” that exist in the area. This concept speeds traffic through the district, but can often make a visitor take a couple laps around some blocks to get close to their destination. Left turning vehicles will help slow traffic in the Business District. Part of this simplification/standardization approach is suggested for parking lot signage and area street lighting. Surface parking lots should also be required to use the standard lighting.