

Transition or Mid-Scaled Physical Parking Solutions

22. Implement 45 degree angled parking along Arsenal fronting Tower Grove Park. By removing the center turning lane, angle parking may be possible on both sides of the street. Removing the center turn lane will decrease the apparent overly wide lane width of this street, and will thus slow traffic speed on Arsenal. This will enhance pedestrian safety while it increases parking for the Business District and park uses ranging from regular softball leagues to special events.

The Steering Committee agreed with this solution with the following comments:

This got mixed reviews. Some residents of the 3600 block of Arsenal loved it. Others hated it. The main business objection is that currently, the center “no-driving” lane (which is West of the left-turn lane) is used for unloading products at Mokabe’s (or any subsequent business at that location, which has no alley access). With the suggested change, trucks would block eastbound Arsenal traffic until unloading was completed. Vehicles backing into the westbound lane to leave the angled parking will obstruct westbound traffic.

Steering Committee would like to see a visual representation of this. Additionally to solve the above problem, they suggested a “no parking zone” right in front of Mokabe’s between the hours of 9 am – 10 pm (where the meters are currently located) to allow for product delivery.

The parking solution drawings show the implementation of this concept along Arsenal fronting Tower Grove Park. The solution shows the angled parking being situated for the right rear wheel of the vehicle located back against the existing curb. Backing in to the spaces will slow traffic as an individual searched this area for a parking space, stopping to block traffic, and then back in to a parking space. When departing, the driver will be facing oncoming traffic and will be able to pull forward out into the direction of travel with no stopping. Similar angled parking is allowed along Skinker across from Forest Park on Sundays. Loading for businesses on the corner of Arsenal should be done in the alley. Trucks can park in this block in such a way that the alley remains open via the connection to Hartford.

(According to business owners, the northern portion of the building facing Arsenal Avenue does not have alley access. Thus, a one-space loading zone should be included on Arsenal Avenue west of Grand Avenue in front of MoKabe’s Coffee House) (Steering Committee member)

23. Implement angled parking on side streets. The ideal situation is creating 90 degree parking fronting one curb, with a two-way drive aisle along the opposite curb. This would require a curb-to-curb dimension of between 41 feet and 38.5 feet. For a 136 feet long section of street, it would allow 16 parking spaces instead of the 12 parallel parking spaces (a 33% increase). Several versions of the angled parking solution could be implemented with the only restriction being street width. Narrow streets may need to be changed to be one-way to implement this solution. A good local example of angled parking is in University City on Balson Street between the High School and Midland Boulevard.

The Steering Committee disagreed with this solution, stating:

Steering Committee thought this was generally unpractical because of safety issues, emergency vehicle access and would not allow residents an alternative on street cleaning day. Also, it seems that a street would have to be one-way to make this work and then some residents will have to park on the opposite side of the street and cross – with children, groceries, etc.

This solution was not included in the drawings. The typical 36 foot wide curb-to-curb dimension for side streets in the area would require angled parking and/or one-way streets, with all parking on one side of the street. Note that residents expect to park in front of their home, yet expect customers to park on the Commerce Bank lot several blocks from their destination. Residents have their rear alley parking as an option; so residential street parking is a secondary option for most residential parking.

24. The St. Pius Church lot is large enough to consider a shared use parking lot. One possible “shared” use would be for the high concentration of apartments (with no parking) on the end of City block 1489 (between Humphrey and Utah). Residential parking on the lot could be regulated by the purchase of a parking sticker to be placed in the window of the resident’s car. Shared parking for ground floor commercial properties is more difficult. The best manner to control daytime commercial public parking would be with the use of parking meters (owned and operated by the church). About 25 parking spaces could be fenced off fronting Grand, with access to both Grand and McKean. Since this parking lot is part of a school playground, any shared use should be very carefully reviewed, and a fence should separate public shared use from the children’s play area on the eastern end of this property.

The Steering Committee disagreed with this solution, stating:

This is an impractical solution. St. Pius’ lot is generally always in use. School and church faculty and staff park there. Parents drop off children in morning and afternoon. And children use the eastern end of the lot for recess and after school. It’s unsafe to allow parking as a use while kids use so much of the lot. Additionally, there are many meetings held at St. Pius’ facilities (both church and school), which require parking.

This solution is not shown on the drawings. St. Pius Church should decide how to best use their large parking lot. The existing safety issue concerning separation of the play yard and parking lot remain. Future use as any shared or other public parking should fence and separate public parking from church and school parking, and all parking should be separated from play yard. The solution drawings do show how re-striping the parking lot to arrange the drive aisles along the long dimension of the parking lot can increase the total parking spaces without an increase in lot size. The layout of parking lots is always most efficient where drive aisles are oriented along the length of the lot.

25. Support per the Redevelopment Plan for the eventual removal of the Amoco and Phillips Food Mart as inappropriate business uses in this commercial district. Such auto-oriented businesses are considered to be legal, continuing non-conforming uses in the “H” Area Commercial District. Redevelopment of the corner sites for higher density commercial or mixed-use development is desirable. Parking for such developments may not only serve employees, customers and residents on site, but may also solve part of the district’s overall parking need.

The Steering Committee agreed with this solution with the following comments:

The Steering Committee would like to keep the Amoco Station because the building is historic and because they provide vehicle services (inspection, repair, etc.). They agree that the Phillips Food Mart space could be made better use of in the future, but do not want to put them out of business. If they close, we should pursue the site for parking or redevelopment more in sync with the District.

A word of caution: At the intersection of Kingshighway, Vandeventer and Shenandoah in the Southwest Garden neighborhood there is a vacant lot. This used to be a gas station. It was acquired by eminent domain for redevelopment and remediated. It still sits vacant and for sale because it is so expensive that no one is willing to purchase it for redevelopment. We don’t want this to happen on South Grand!

The parking solution drawings show the implementation of this over the long-term redevelopment of the district. The existing property/business owner will determine the exact timing of the change, with no eminent domain used to force the redevelopment.

26. At a limited number of sites identified in the final Parking Study, and following a process of either amending the redevelopment plan and/or rezoning to a Transitional Zone, allow business owners to purchase residential buildings directly adjacent to the business district and lease the building for use as a residence, small offices (architect, attorney, insurance sales), artist studio, or other transitional uses. Restaurants, bars, liquor and tobacco sales should be forbidden from property fronting side streets in the district. The business owner would be allowed to pave more back yard to create a large parking lot (with implementation of landscape and fence standards). A narrow residential lot could provide 9 or 10 parking spaces. Three or four residential lots could be combined to form a larger parking lot of 30 to 35 cars keeping all of the buildings in tact. This solution would likely require 1) amendment of the Redevelopment Plan for the Commercial District and/or 2) rezoning to an appropriate Transitional Zoning District between the “H” Area Commercial District along Grand Avenue and the surrounding “B” Two Family Dwelling District. The presence of small businesses on the street can enhance daytime security for residential properties in that there will be law-abiding citizens in the residential district during the day. This is a defensible space strategy espoused by both Oscar Newman and Jane Jacobs. Support for this strategy is suggested in the Residential Surveys completed in August.

The Steering Committee agreed with this solution with the following comments:

The Steering Committee agrees with converting residential buildings to businesses directly adjacent to the District. Parking behind building must abide by the same standards as other lots in the district (attractively landscaped, striped, and fenced). As stated in above comments/conditions, Steering Committee prefers to stick with the City’s conditional use or Board of Adjustment process rather than the Transitional Zoning District suggested. Also, keep in mind that the conversion of these residents into businesses must be ADA compliant and that could be expensive for a potential business.

The parking solution drawings show the implementation of this solution along the perimeter of the Business District in several locations (reference solution #9 for additional information on this topic, where business owners would lease parking spaces from residential property owners). Flexibility of building use is critical, as some of the property owners main business is apartment management, so they may not be as adept to lease office space in addition to their residential apartment units. The mixed-use nature of sharing a parking lot between residential uses and some businesses is better in that they would have different peak demands, and therefore better able to share a parking lot. If a business owner purchases a house behind their business they should be able to use it as offices for their business, their own residence, or as a residence for an employee's family.

27. Encourage use of or amending the Redevelopment Plan and/or Transitional Zoning process detailed in #26 to create synergy with the existing land uses. A good example of this principle is the assembly of the addresses 3618, 3620, and 3622 Connecticut. The assembly of these three properties will allow for a large parking lot to be created adjacent to the very large apartment block at the corner of Connecticut and Grand, while it also backs up to the existing Church parking lot entered from Wyoming. A shared parking agreement could be created that would be beneficial to the Church, the three residential properties assembled, and the large apartment building. Additionally, the adjacent businesses could also be party to the shared parking arrangement for their employees or customer to use as well. A 74-car parking lot could be created here that includes the 24 existing spaces for the apartments, 27 from the existing Church lot, and 23 new spaces created in the back yards of the residential property.

The Steering Committee agreed with this solution with the following comments:

As long as the City's conditional use or Board of Adjustment process is used (rather than the suggested Transitional Zoning process) and the residential buildings with rear parking lots are converted to businesses, the Steering Committee agrees with this idea.

The parking solution drawings show the importance of creating the synergy that will make finding a parking space in the district more customer friendly. The drawings show a redevelopment pattern that interconnects many small parking lots located to the rear of the buildings (both businesses and side street buildings). The small, interconnected lots will make access much easier for a customer to go from lot to lot without having to go back out onto Grand Avenue. A series of smaller parking lots will avoid the suburban feel of massive parking lots. Smaller parking lots better distribute the total parking available throughout the Business District (unlike the existing oversized Commerce Bank lot). Redevelopment proposals for creating new parking lots should be required to increase the interconnection as shown in the solution drawings. Many of the existing alley configurations already achieve this access, and new development must reinforce this pattern. Cross access easements should be required to assure this end result (see the new parking lot proposed on City Block 2100, behind all of the small buildings adjacent to Babylon International). The following photos are from the Dickman Building looking south.



View from the Dickman Building showing the old Post Office Building & the alley system.

The solution drawings show how the demolition of the vacant old post office building shown in the photos above will create space for 20 parking places that, when combined with other minor improvements, will interlink a series of small parking lots that total 54 parking places in City Block 2101. The photo above illustrates that this City block pattern exists all the way to the Church on Wyoming, visible at the top of this photo. Business District planning should interlink a series of smaller parking lots along this existing alley system.



The long-term solution drawings proposed the acquisition of this existing house at 3615 Juniata with the abrupt adjacency to an existing bar (and massive satellite dish) to complete the interlinking of the small parking lots in the blocks west of Grand. The long-term solution drawings also show the implementation of solution #34, which is the implementation of Monument Entry Gates and fences (per the existing Redevelopment Plan Guidelines). When major changes to the edges of the district are proposed (house demolition being a defining change), the Business District should be responsible for defining and enhancing this juncture with the residential community, and Monument Entry Gates would be an attractive addition to the transition space between residential side street and the start of the Business District.

Aesthetic controls for both the Business District and residential neighborhood should include the regulation of satellite dish or any utilities to be positioned on the back half of the building so as not to be visible from public streets. Note in this photo that the residence also has a smaller dish on the roof in front. Both of these satellite dishes could have been mounted toward the back half of these buildings and not be so visible from the street.