CITY OF SAN BUENAVENTURA

Downtown Ventura
Mobility & Parking Plan

Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates
785 Market Street, Suite 1300
San Francisco, CA 94103

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Overview of Project

As part of the current update of the City of Ventura's 1993 *Downtown Specific Plan*, the City Council directed the Community Development Department to:

1. Review the City's existing downtown transportation initiatives and parking requirements, and

2. Recommend mobility and parking management strategies that complement and support the vision of the pending update to the *Downtown Specific Plan*.

To fulfill City Council's direction, the Community Development Department contracted with Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates to work with a project team consisting of city staff and the consultant team completing the update to the *Downtown Specific Plan*.

Planning Approach

Nelson\Nygaard's approach in undertaking this work was as follows:

- Analyzed transportation and parking opportunities and challenges in downtown Ventura, including an extensive review of existing documents, plans, data, and policies, combined with stakeholder interviews and several site visits.

- Completed a comprehensive review of best practices in transportation and parking management, with special emphasis on communities comparable to Ventura. Presented these best practices in the *Parking Management Workbook* (Appendix 1) and *Parking Demand in Main Street Districts* (Appendix 2).

- Conducted an extensive community outreach process in partnership with the Community Development Department (details on the public outreach process and the stakeholders consulted are provided in the next section and in Appendix 3, Summary of Stakeholder Feedback).

- Presented preliminary recommendations to the City Council, Planning Commission, Design Review Commission, the project team, city agency stakeholders, downtown business owners, developers, residents, community leaders, and the general public.

Community Outreach

Throughout the process, the project team sought to hear which transportation and parking management issues were most pressing from the perspective of policymakers and city staff, key downtown stakeholders, and community leaders; and to get feedback on preliminary recommendations. The project team made 10 presentations to a total of 100+ stakeholders and solicited feedback.

Invited stakeholders to the two rounds of community outreach (including "Listening Post Meetings" in July and "Preliminary Recommendation Workshops" in September) included:

- City Council
- Planning Commission
- Design Review Commission
- Developers, architects & urban designers
- Members of the Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Operations Team & Downtown Inc.
- Community Council representatives (Downtown, Westside, Pierpont, Midtown, East Ventura, Harbor)
- City Manager's office, Police, Fire, Planning, Transportation, Engineering, Public Works, and City Attorney's office
- South Coast Area Transit (SCAT) management and staff
- Coastal Commission management and staff

The Parking Management Workbook, preliminary recommendations and stakeholder presentations were also posted on the Community Development Department's "Publications and Resources" website.[1]

Purpose of this Document

The *Ventura Vision*, the newly-adopted *General Plan*, and the draft update to the *Downtown Specific Plan* all establish a clear vision for the future of downtown. This document – the *Downtown Ventura Mobility and Parking Plan* – is the result of the planning process described above and presents Nelson\Nygaard's recommendations for the most cost-effective strategies for meeting downtown Ventura's goals.

The recommendations in this document are established on the premise that parking and transportation is not an end in itself, but a means to achieve broader community goals. These recommendations leverage downtown Ventura's existing assets, respond to its challenges, and will further the overall vision for downtown identified in the Ventura Vision, and the newly adopted Ventura General plan. These recommendations in this plan are designed to be incorporated into the pending update of the *Downtown Specific Plan*, tentatively scheduled for public hearings at the end of this year.

[1] Available at http://www.ci.ventura.ca.us/depts/comm_dev/pub_resources.asp.

Chapter 2. Recommendations

This chapter presents eleven fundamental recommendations for incorporation into the pending update of the *Downtown Specific Plan*. The recommendations are based on a thorough review of existing conditions in downtown Ventura, as well as pending and proposed downtown development projects. In addition, the recommendations were developed after a comprehensive review of transportation and parking management best practices and technology and surveys of cities comparable to Ventura. Finally, all recommendations were tailored to Ventura's unique needs based on extensive stakeholder input and a review of adopted community goals.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the *Ventura Vision*, the newly-adopted *General Plan*, and the draft update to the *Downtown Specific Plan* all establish a clear vision for the future of downtown. Vision statements, overall goals, and policies that are particularly relevant to this *Downtown Mobility and Parking Plan* are listed below, keeping in mind that parking and transportation policies have powerful effects not merely on transportation, but on development feasibility, housing affordability, the shape and form of buildings, the environment, and many other areas of policy.

"Vision Statements" from the *Ventura Vision* (March 2000)

- "We seek to protect and enhance our unique sense of place...instead of new development that looks like everywhere else, our vision is for interesting, unique neighborhoods and districts..."

- A top community priority is to minimize automobile use through a fully integrated multi-modal transportation system.

Goals from the Ventura General Plan: Achieving the Vision (August 2005)

"We the people of Ventura, in order to ensure that our community continues to be a great place for us to live, establish these goals for our community's future..."

- **Natural Community:** Be a model of environmental responsibility for other communities

- **Prosperous Community:** Attract and retain businesses that provide high value and high-wage

- **Well-Planned Community:**

    - Protect hillsides, farmlands, and open spaces

    - Enhance historic resources/reinvest in older areas

    - Make great places by insisting on highest standards (architecture, urban design, etc)

- **Accessible Community:**
  - Provide residents with more transportation choices
  - Strengthen bicycle, pedestrian, & transit access
- **Sustainable Infrastructure/Facilities:**
  - Protect public health, well-being, and prosperity
  - Enable community to live in balance with natural systems
- **Active Community:**
  - Enhance parks and open spaces
  - Provide enriching recreation for entire community

- **Healthy and Safe Community:** Improve social well-being and security of all our citizens
- **Creative Community:**
  - Become a vibrant cultural center
  - Integrate the arts into everyday life
  - Involved Community
  - Work together to achieve the "Ventura Vision"

Policies and Actions from the Ventura General Plan: Achieving the Vision (August 2005)

- **Economic Development**
  - Policy 2B: Make the local economic climate more supportive of business investment
  - Action 2.6: Encourage infill development in commercial and industrial areas including districts, corridors, and neighborhood centers
- **Housing**

- Policy 3A: Sustain and complement cherished community characteristics
- Policy 3B: Integrate uses in building forms that increase choice and encourage community vitality
- Action 3.8 Allow intensification of commercial areas through conversion of surface parking to building area
- Policy 3C: Maximize use of land in the city before considering expansion
- Action 3.11: Adopt new development code provisions that ensure compliance with the Housing Element objectives

- **Transportation/Parking**

  - Policy 4A: Ensure that the transportation system is safe and easily accessible to all travelers
  - Policy 4B: Help reduce dependence on the automobile
  - Action 4.13 & 4.18: Create development incentives/requirements to encourage projects to reduce automobile trips
  - Action 4.19: Develop a transportation demand management program to shift travel behavior toward alternative modes and services
  - Action 4.25: Establish a parking management program to protect the livability of residential neighborhoods
  - Policy 4C: Increase transit efficiency and options
  - Action 4.28: Develop incentives to encourage City employees and local employers to use transit, rideshare, walk, or bike

Goals from the Downtown Ventura Specific Plan (pending approval in 2006)

- Foster alternatives to the automobile
- Preserve and enhance those features that make downtown a place where people prefer to walk rather than drive
- Provide parking that meets demands in an efficient way considering both the importance of parking to economic vitality, as well as costs (including opportunity costs associated with using downtown land for parking).

Recommendation 1: Pursue a "Park Once" Strategy

Goals: Make efficient use of the parking supply by including as many spaces as possible in a common pool of shared, publicly available spaces. Build a small number of cost-effective, strategically located parking structures, rather than many small, inefficient and scattered private lots.

Recommendation: Adopt a "Park Once" strategy for the Downtown Specific Plan area by (a) operating as many parking spaces as possible in a common pool of shared, publicly-available spaces and (b) encouraging existing private commercial parking to be shared among different land uses and available to the public when not serving private commercial use. This strategy should be implemented through the following policies:

1. Prohibit or discourage private parking in new development (except for residential spaces). Instead, make public parking lots available to downtown shoppers and employees, and (when more exclusive parking arrangements are necessary) lease spaces in nearby public lots and garages to private businesses, for the particular hours and days of the week when the reserved parking is actually required.

2. Purchase or lease existing private parking lots from willing sellers, and add this parking to the shared public supply.

3. Facilitate shared and/or valet parking in existing private parking lots wherever feasible:

    a. Allow parking provided in all downtown development to be off-site by right within ¼ mile of project site (about 6 blocks, a comfortable walking distance for most people).

    b. If commercial developments are allowed to provide parking on-site, require as a condition of approval that any such parking be made available to public when not in use by owner/occupant.

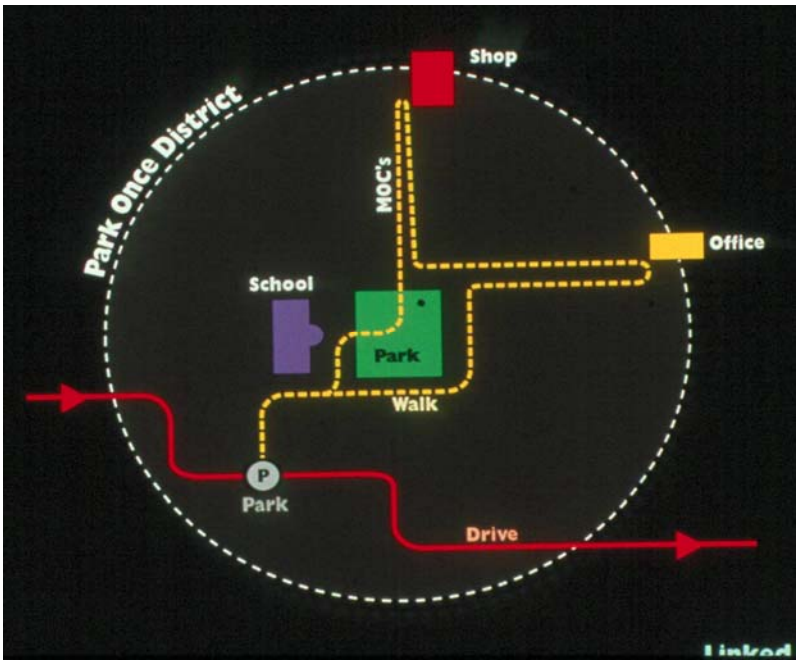
Discussion: Fundamental to the continuing revitalization of downtown Ventura is the creation of a "park once" environment. The typical suburban pattern of isolated, single use buildings, each surrounded by parking lots, requires two vehicular movements and a parking space to be dedicated for each visit to a shop, or office, or civic institution. To accomplish three errands in this type of environment requires six movements in three parking spaces for three tasks. With virtually all parking held in private hands, spaces are not efficiently shared between uses, and each building's private lots are therefore typically sized to handle a worst-case parking lead. Most significantly, when new and renovated buildings in an existing downtown are required to provide such worst-case parking ratios, the result is often stagnation and decline: buildings are not renovated, since no room exists on the site for the required parking; new shops often demand the tear-down of adjacent buildings, generating freestanding retail boxes surrounded by cars, or pedestrian-hostile buildings that hover above parking lots; and the resulting low density fabric generates too few pedestrians to let downtown reach critical mass.

When the suburban practice of building individual private lots for each building is introduced into a traditional downtown, the result is also a lack of welcome for customers: at each parking lot, the visitor is informed that his vehicle will be towed if he or she peruses any place besides the adjacent building. When this occurs, nearby shopping malls gain a distinct advantage over the downtown with fragmented parking. Mall owners understand that they should not divide their mall's parking supply into small fiefdoms: they operate their supply as a single pool for all of the shops, so that customers are welcomed wherever they park.

The compactness and mixed-use nature of downtown Ventura lends itself to this kind of "Park Once" strategy. Operating the downtown parking supply as a single shared pool results in significant savings in daily vehicle trips and required parking spaces, for three reasons:

Park once: Those arriving by car can easily follow a “park once” pattern: they park their car just once and complete multiple daily tasks on foot before returning to their car (see Figure 2-1).

Figure 2-1 “Park once” district



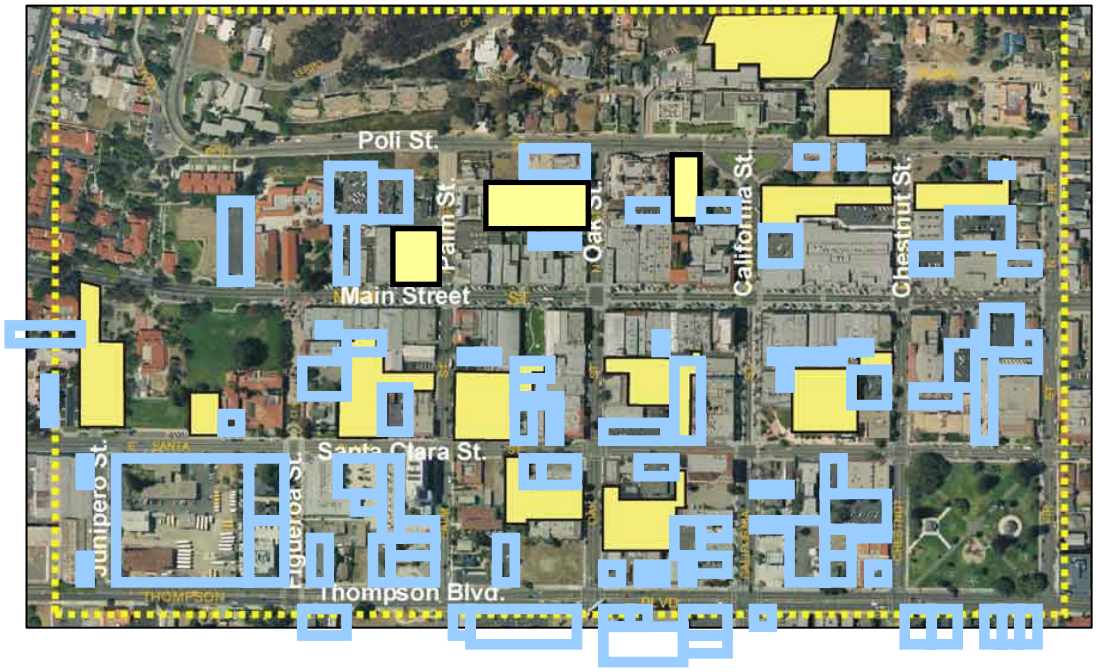
Shared Parking among Uses with Differing Peak Times: Spaces can be efficiently shared between uses with differing peak hours, peak days, and peak seasons of parking demand (such as office, restaurant, retail and entertainment uses).

Shared Parking to Spread Peak Loads: The parking supply can be sized to meet *average* parking loads (instead of the *worst-case* parking ratios needed for isolated suburban buildings), since the common supply allows shops and offices with above-average demand to be balanced by shops and offices that have below-average demand or are temporarily vacant.

Studies indicate that when a "Park Once" strategy is followed, the parking demand for mature mixed-use districts typically ranges from 1.6 to 1.9 spaces occupied per 1000 ft.² of nonresidential built space, or one third to one half that required for conventional suburban development (see Appendix 2, *Parking Demand in Main Street Districts*).

To implement a "Park Once" strategy, parking in downtown Ventura must be managed as a public utility, just like streets and sewers, with public parking provided in a strategically-placed, city-owned and managed lots and garages. New development should be prohibited (or strongly discouraged) from building private parking (except residential spaces): in cases where private developments, such as new offices, require a guarantee of a certain number of spaces at particular hours (e.g., Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.), they should be provided with the opportunity to lease those spaces in a nearby public lot or garage, with the exclusive right to use them during the hours required. Such arrangements leave the parking available during evening and weekend hours for other users (e.g., with the patrons of diners), resulting in an efficient sharing of the parking supply and lower costs for all.

Figure 2-2 Private off-street parking vs. public off-street parking



1,581 *public* off-street parking spaces

1,906 *private* off-street parking spaces (not all 1,906 spaces mapped)

Source of base map: April 2003 Katz, Okitsu and Associates Parking Study

In addition, Ventura should work to make existing private parking lots available to the public when they are not actively serving nearby commercial uses. As Figure 2-2 shows, in downtown Ventura there are more than 1,906 private off-street parking spaces, and many of these private lots have significant surplus capacity in the evening and on weekends. A conservative occupancy analysis of the private parking supply (using the occupancy rates for public parking supply) suggests that there are at least 190 spaces vacant during weekdays and weekend days and 1,525 spaces vacant during the evenings. However, almost all private lots observed had signs forbidding public parking.

With so much parking currently held in private hands, the existing parking supply is not being used as efficiently as it could be. By adding these existing spaces to the public supply, the city will be able to inexpensively add a significant amount of parking capacity to the downtown.

Overall, the benefits of the fully implementing a "park once" strategy for the entire downtown include:

- More welcoming of customers and visitors (fewer "Thou Shalt Not Park Here" signs scattered throughout downtown)
- Allows for fewer, strategically placed lots and garages, resulting in better urban design and greater redevelopment opportunities
- Enables construction of larger, more space-efficient (and therefore more cost-effective) lots and garages

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, by transforming motorists into pedestrians, who walk instead of drive to different downtown destinations, a "park once" strategy is an immediate generator of pedestrian life, creating crowds of people who animate public life on the streets and generate the patrons of street friendly retail businesses.

Recommendation 2: Create a Commercial Parking Benefit District

Goals: 1) Efficiently manage demand for downtown parking while accommodating visitor, commuter, and resident parking needs, and 2) *Put customers first:* create vacancies and turnover of the most convenient "front door" curb parking spaces to ensure availability for customers and visitors.

Recommendation: Install multi-space, pay-by-space parking meters in the core commercial area of downtown. Set parking prices at rates that create a 15% vacancy rate on each block, and eliminate time limits. Dedicate parking revenues to public improvements and public services that benefit the Downtown Specific Plan area. Create a "Parking Benefit District" to implement these recommendations.

Discussion: According to the most recent downtown parking surveys, the peak occupancy rate for the public parking supply in downtown Ventura is just 55% at the busiest hour (which occurred at 8 p.m. on a Saturday night).[2] At the busiest weekday hour, the peak public parking occupancy rate for all of Downtown reached just 53%. However, there are localized shortages on some blocks at certain times of day and days of the week (e.g., on Main Street at many times of day), while many less convenient lots and garages a block or two away remained largely vacant. Figure 2-4 shows the pattern at the busiest hour (8 p.m. on Saturday). Parking areas colored the darkest red indicate areas that are at least 90% full (primarily in the downtown core along Main Street and nearby), while lots and on-street spaces that are colored green are largely vacant, with less than 20% occupancy. The shades of yellow and orange indicate areas with occupancies between these two extremes. Overall, there is no lack of spaces, but the new visitor driving down Main Street might easily perceive a parking shortage, while lots just a block away remain underused.

Several stakeholders' comments describe some of the problems perceived:

- "Parking is a problem for businesses because employees park on Main St. and side streets and prevent customers from parking...We need parking management and enforcement strategies to prevent employees from doing the '2-hour shuffle' downtown."

- "Existing parking lots and garages are perceived to be mismanaged - commuters park all day and take the bus or carpool to Santa Barbara; residents often park long-term in some of the lots as well."

Overall, downtown Ventura does not currently have a parking shortage, so much as a lack of pricing incentives and information to direct motorists to where parking is available. Always available, convenient, on-street customer parking is of primary importance for ground-level retail to succeed. To create vacancies and rapid turnover in the best, most convenient, front door parking spaces, it is crucial to have price incentives to persuade some drivers to park in the less convenient spaces (on upper garage floors or a block or

[2] Downtown Ventura Parking Study, Katz, Okitsu and Associates, April 2003.

two away): higher prices for the best spots, cheap or free for the less convenient, currently underused lots.

Motorists can be thought of as falling into two primary categories: bargain hunters and convenience seekers. Convenience seekers are more willing to pay for an available front door spot. Many shoppers and diners are convenience seekers: they are typically less sensitive to parking charges because they stay for relatively short periods of time, meaning that they will accumulate less of a fee than an employee or other all-day visitor. By contrast, many long-stay parkers, such as employees, find it more worthwhile to walk a block to save on eight hours worth of parking fees. With proper pricing, the bargain hunters will choose currently underutilized lots, leaving the prime spots free for those convenience seekers who are willing to spend a bit more. For downtown merchants, it is important to make prime spots available for these people: those who are willing to pay a small fee to park are also those who are willing to spend money in downtown stores and restaurants.

What are the alternatives to charging for parking?

The primary alternative that cities can use to create vacancies in prime parking spaces is to set time limits, and give tickets to violators. Time limits, however, bring several disadvantages: enforcement of time limits is labor-intensive and difficult, and downtown employees, who quickly become familiar with enforcement patterns, often become adept at the "two hour shuffle", moving their cars regularly or swapping spaces with a coworker several times during the workday. Even with strictly enforced time limits, if there is no price incentive to persuade employees to seek out less convenient, bargain-priced spots, employees will probably still park in prime spaces.

For customers, strict enforcement can bring “ticket anxiety", the fear of getting a ticket if one lingers a minute too long (for example, in order to have dessert after lunch). As Dan Zack, Downtown Development Manager for Redwood City, CA, puts it, “Even if a visitor is quick enough to avoid a ticket, they don't want to spend the evening watching the clock and moving their car around. If a customer is having a good time in a restaurant, and they are happy to pay the market price for their parking spot, do we want them to wrap up their evening early because their time limit wasn't long enough? Do we want them to skip dessert or that last cappuccino in order to avoid a ticket?"

A recent Redwood City staff report summarizes the results found in downtown Burlingame, California:

> *In a recent "intercept" survey, shoppers in downtown Burlingame were asked which factor made their parking experience less pleasant recently... The number one response was "difficulty in finding a space" followed by "chance of getting a ticket." "Need to carry change" was third, and the factor that least concerned the respondents was "cost of parking." It is interesting to note that Burlingame has the most expensive on-street parking on the [San Francisco] Peninsula ($.75 per hour) and yet cost was the least troubling factor for most people.*

This is not an isolated result. Repeatedly, surveys of downtown shoppers have shown that the *availability* of parking, rather than price, is of prime importance.

What is the right price for downtown parking?

If prices are used to create vacancies and turnover in the prime parking spots, then what is the right price? An ideal occupancy rate is approximately 85% at even the busiest hour, a rate which leaves about one out of every seven spaces available, or approximately one empty space on each block face. This provides enough vacancies that visitors can easily find a spot near their destination when they first arrive. For each block and each parking lot in downtown, the right price is the price that will achieve this goal. This means that pricing should not be uniform: the most desirable spaces need higher prices, while less convenient lots are cheap or may even be free. Prices should also vary by time of day and day of week: for example, higher at noon, and lower at midnight.

Ideally, parking occupancy for each block and lot should be monitored carefully, and prices adjusted regularly to keep enough spaces available. In short, prices should be set at market rate, according to demand, so that just enough spaces are always available. Professor Donald Shoup of UCLA advocates setting prices for parking according to the "Goldilocks Principle":

> *The price is too high if many spaces are vacant, and too low if no spaces are vacant. Children learn that porridge shouldn't be too hot or too cold, and that beds shouldn't be too soft or too firm. Likewise, the price of curb parking shouldn't be too high or too low. When about 15 percent of curb spaces are vacant, the price is just right. What alternative price could be better?*

If this principle is followed, then there need be no fear that pricing parking will drive customers away. After all, when the front-door parking spots at the curb are entirely full, under-pricing parking cannot create more curb parking spaces for customers, because it cannot create more spaces. And, if the initial parking meter rate on a block is accidentally set too high, so that there are too many vacancies, then a policy goal of achieving an 85% occupancy rate will result in lowering the parking rate until the parking is once again well used (including making parking free, if need be).

Eliminating Time limits

Once a policy of market rate pricing is adopted, with the goal of achieving an 85% occupancy rate on each block, even at the busiest hours, then time limits can actually be eliminated. With their elimination, much of the worry and "ticket anxiety" for downtown customers disappears. In Redwood City, where this policy was recently adopted, Dan Zack describes the thinking behind the City's decision in this way:

> *Market-rate prices are the only known way to consistently create available parking spaces in popular areas. If we institute market-rate prices, and adequate spaces are made available, then what purpose do time limits serve? None, other than to inconvenience customers. If there is a space or two available on all blocks, then*

who cares how long each individual car is there? The reality is that it doesn't matter.

The recommendations for pricing parking, eliminating time limits, and the creation of a commercial parking benefit district are discussed in greater detail below. These recommendations are summarized in Figure 2-3, which shows the recommended initial rates, hours, and meter technologies for pricing parking in downtown Ventura.

Boundaries of the metered parking in the Commercial Parking Benefit District

Given a primary goal of creating vacancies on the blocks where parking is currently overused, and shifting some parking demand to underused parking lots, meters should be installed on blocks and in parking lots where occupancy routinely reaches 85% or greater during the peak hours of demand. In addition, meters should be installed on immediately adjacent blocks, where demand is likely to shift and parking will become overcrowded if the blocks remain entirely free. Parking meter prices should be set to maintain a 15% vacancy rate, according to the "Goldilocks Rule": if occupancy rates are consistently above 85%, the parking rates are too low and if occupancy rates are consistently below 85%, the parking rates are too high.

The above standard, and a review of best practices in cities comparable to Ventura, suggests that the boundaries of the downtown parking meter zone should initially be established in the area shown in Figure 2-4, or in general, from Ventura to Fir Streets and from Poli to Santa Clara Streets. This recommended meter zone boundary closely mirrors stakeholder input on the appropriate areas for meters and closely corresponds to the current downtown parking enforcement area. In the future, as downtown develops, these initial boundaries should be extended to other adjacent areas where peak hour occupancy reaches 85% or higher, but in predominantly residential areas, Residential Parking Benefit Districts should be implemented (see Recommendation 6 for more information).

Initial meter rates and hours of operations for paid parking in the Commercial Parking Benefit District

Meters should operate on days and hours when parking demand is high and occupancy currently exceeds 85% (with goal of achieving 85% occupancy). Parking meter prices will be set to maintain a 15% vacancy rate, according to the "Goldilocks Rule": if occupancy rates are above 85%, the parking rates are too low and if occupancy rates are below 85%, the parking rates are too high. Our review of the most recent parking occupancy surveys for downtown Ventura suggests that to meet this standard, the *initial* rates and hours of operation for downtown parking meters should be set as described below (and summarized in Figure 2-3). As described later in this section, a review of parking meter rates in similar coastal California cities shows that these rates are also well within the range typically charged in comparable downtowns.

For prime, front door, on-street spaces:

- Weekdays, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.: $0.50/hr for first two hours, $0.75/hr thereafter
- Saturdays, 10 AM to 10 PM: $0.75/hr

For the most convenient public parking lot and garage spaces:

- Weekdays, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.: first 90 minutes free, $0.50/hr thereafter
- Weekdays, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.: first 90 minutes free, $0.25/hr thereafter
- Saturdays, 10 AM to 10 PM: $0.50/hr

For the least convenient public parking lot and garage spaces:

- Weekdays & Saturdays, 10 AM to 10 PM: first 90 minutes free, $0.25/hr thereafter

Sunday rates in all parking spaces: No parking occupancy data exist for Sundays, so no specific recommendations can be made at this time. However, Ventura should implement paid parking on Sundays if occupancy consistently exceeds 85% occupancy.

In conjunction with the adoption of these prices, time limits can and should also be eliminated, since the policy of setting market rate prices will ensure vacancies at even the busiest hours.

Rates for the disabled: Under state law, vehicles with state-issued disabled placards are exempt from parking meters (California Vehicle Code Section 22511.5)

Adjusting meter rates and hours of operation

After an initial trial period, occupancy rates for each block in each parking should be reviewed and then adjusted down or up to achieve the 85% occupancy goal, as described earlier. To ensure that this happens on a regular schedule, promptly, and with clear assurance to policymakers, citizens and the downtown community that the goal of parking prices is to achieve the desired vacancy rate, the following procedure for adjusting parking meter rates and hours is recommended:

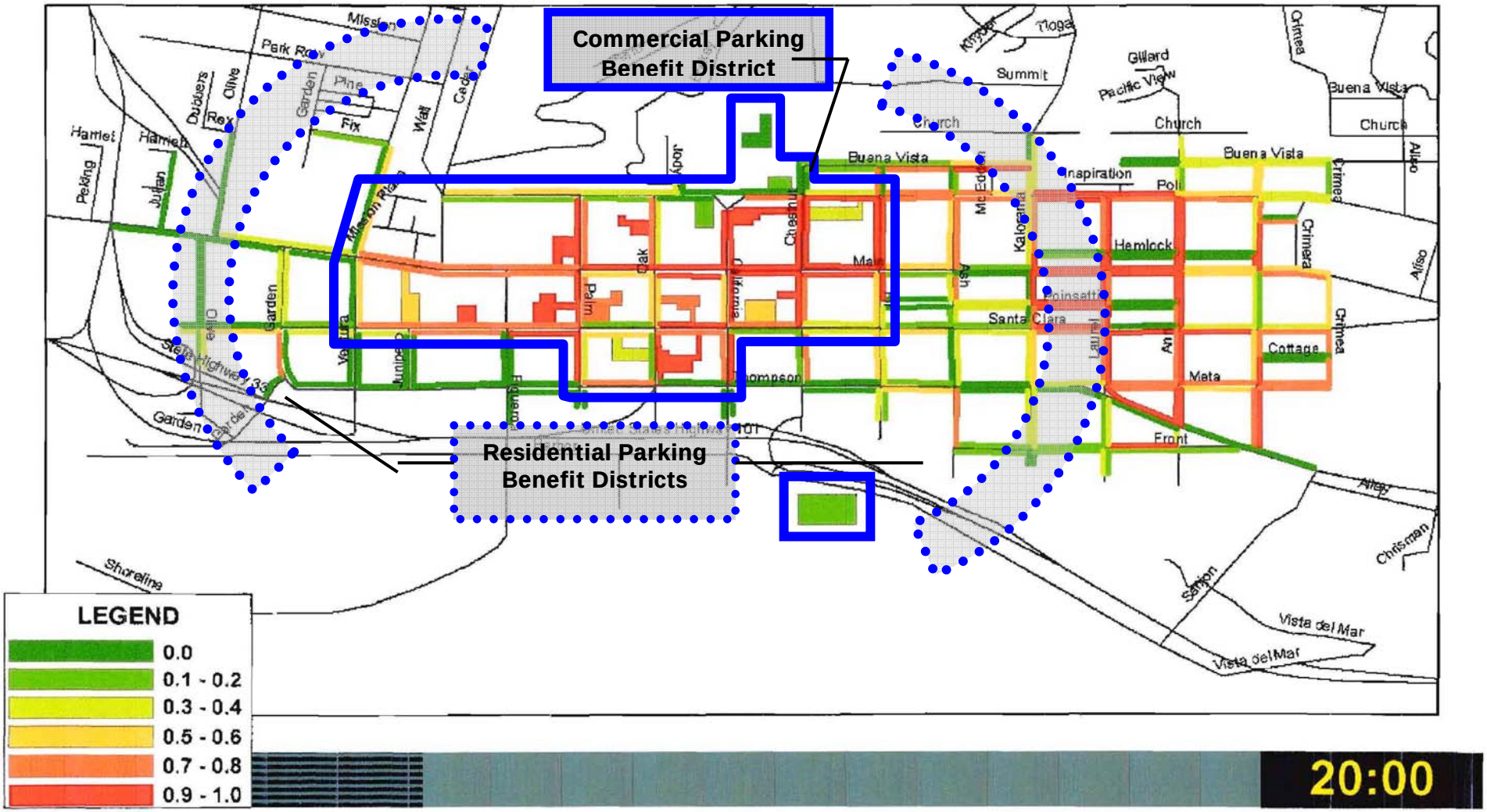
1. *Set Policy:* By ordinance, City Council should establish that the primary goal in setting parking meter rates and hours for each block and each lot is to achieve an 85% occupancy rate. Additionally, the ordinance should both require and authorize city staff to raise or lower parking prices to meet this goal, without requiring further action by the City Council. Appendix 4, the recently adopted Redwood City Downtown Parking Ordinance, provides an example of the recommended approach. As described below, a Downtown Transportation Manager should be hired, and charged with the responsibility of running the district, including monitoring occupancy rates and adjusting rates.

2. *Monitor occupancy:* Modern, wirelessly-networked multi-space parking meters (as described below) are capable of instantly transmitting current information on the number of spaces in use on each block where the meters are installed, giving the Downtown Transportation Manager the ability to constantly monitor parking usage in the system. Reports can also be generated to track occupancy by the hour over the course of a day, weeks, or months.

3. *Adjust rates:* Armed with good information on recent parking occupancy rates, the downtown transportation manager should adjust the rates (and hours of operation) up or down on each block, to achieve the policy goal (an 85% occupancy rate) set by City Council. Typically, rates should be adjusted quarterly (four times per year), but in the case of major changes in downtown, such as the opening of a new development, it may be advisable to adjust rates in response to particular events. To provide additional input to the process, an advisory board (as described below) should review the proposed rate changes and provide feedback to the downtown transportation manager.

Figure 2-3 Recommendations for Initial Parking Prices and Meter Technology

<table>
<tr><th rowspan="2"></th><th colspan="3">*Commercial* Parking Benefit District</th><th>*Residential* Parking Benefit District</th></tr>
<tr><th>Downtown Core On-Street Parking</th><th>Most Convenient Lots & Garages</th><th>Least Convenient Lots & Garages</th><th>On Street Parking at Periphery (adjacent to meter zone)</th></tr>
<tr><td>Prices</td><td colspan="4"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Weekdays</td><td>$0.50/hr 1st 2 hrs
$0.75/hr thereafter</td><td>1st 90 minutes free
$0.50/hr 10 AM to 6 PM
$0.25/hr 6 PM to 10 PM</td><td rowspan="2">1st 90 minutes free
$0.25/hr thereafter</td><td rowspan="2">Free permits for residents
$0.50/hr for non-residents</td></tr>
<tr><td>Saturdays</td><td>$0.75/hr</td><td>1st 90 minute free
$0.50/hr 10 AM to 10 PM</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hours / Days</td><td colspan="4"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Weekdays</td><td rowspan="2">10 AM to 10 PM</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">10 AM to 10 PM</td><td rowspan="2">Varies by area –
set hours as needed to manage spillover parking</td></tr>
<tr><td>Saturdays</td></tr>
<tr><td>Technology</td><td colspan="4"></td></tr>
<tr><td>Non-Residents</td><td rowspan="2">Multi-space meters AND In-vehicle meters</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Entry: Gate & ticket OR Multi-space meters, In-vehicle meters, Scratch-off hangtags</td><td>In-vehicle meters</td></tr>
<tr><td>Residents</td><td>Scratch off hangtags OR Adhesive decals</td></tr>
</table>


Commercial Parking Benefit District
Residential Parking Benefit Districts
LEGEND
0.0
0.1 - 0.2
0.3 - 0.4
0.5 - 0.6
0.7 - 0.8
0.9 - 1.0
20:00
Mission
Park Row
Pine
Fix
Garden
Olive
Dubbers
Rex
Harriet
Peking
Julian
Wall
Cedar
Mission Plaza
Ventura
Junipero
Palm
Oak
California
Chestnut
Main
Thompson
Ash
Kalorama
Santa Clara
Poinsettia
Hemlock
Poli
Inspiration
Buena Vista
Church
Summit
Tioga
Gillard
Pacific View
Crimea
Cottage
Meta
Front
Aliso
Chrisman
Sanjon
Vista del Mar
Shoreline
State Highway 33
Garden

What are best practices in setting parking prices for downtowns?

Pasadena and Redwood City were researched in substantial detail, as these two California cities are widely recognized as implementing best practice parking management strategies.

Pasadena (1993)

- Prior to 1993, all curb parking was free with 2-hour time limits
- Employees and commuters took curb spaces leaving none for customers
- City wanted to install meters to free up curb spaces and increase turnover
- Merchants opposed until city agreed to use all revenue for downtown improvements
- $1/hr for meters in Old Pasadena core (other meter areas: $0.50/hr to $1/hr)
- Meters also run evenings and Sundays
- Results: This Commercial Parking Benefit District generates $5.4 million annually and parking occupancy rates are consistently near the 85% ideal

Redwood City (2005)

- New development downtown and new downtown planning initiative prompted review of parking management strategies
- Some existing meters ($0.25 for 1-2 hours, but many streets with high demand not metered)
- Ordinance: Downtown transportation staff tasked with setting meter rates to achieve 85% occupancy goal and authorized to adjust rates administratively as needed to reach this goal
- Initial rates estimated to achieve 85% occupancy:
    - Increased meter rates in highest demand area: $0.50/hr during weekdays
    - Expanded meter zone to moderate demand areas: $0.25/hr during weekdays
    - Charged between $0.25/hr and $0.75/hr on nights and weekends, depending on demand
- Parking Benefit District established: initial revenues to be used for maintenance and operation of the downtown parking system; revenues beyond this (estimated at 1.4 to $1.8 billion annually) will be devoted to downtown blocks where the revenues collected of entry
- Eliminated all time limits

What do other comparable cities charge at their parking meters?

A survey of hourly meter prices in other Southern California coastal communities done by City of Ventura in 2000 found that the hourly prices for metered parking ranged from $0.25/hour to $1.50/hour:

- Huntington Beach: $0.25 to $0.50
- Manhattan Beach, Newport Beach: $0.25 to $1
- Hermosa Beach, Oceanside, Santa Monica, Seal Beach: $0.50
- Long Beach: $0.50 to $1
- Redondo Beach: $0.75
- Laguna Beach, San Clemente: $1
- Del Mar, Isla Vista: $1.50

Legal basis for setting fair market parking rates

The California Vehicle Code (CVC Sec. 200258) allows local jurisdictions to set parking meter prices at fair market rates necessary to achieve 85% occupancy (see Appendix 4 Redwood City Ordinance). California case law authorizes local jurisdictions to enact parking meter ordinances with fair market rates that "may…justify a fee system intended and calculated to hasten the departure of parked vehicles in congested areas, as well as to defray the cost of installation and supervision."[3] California case law also recognizes that parking meters ordinances are for the purpose of regulating and mitigating traffic and parking congestion in public streets, and not a tax for revenue purposes.[4]

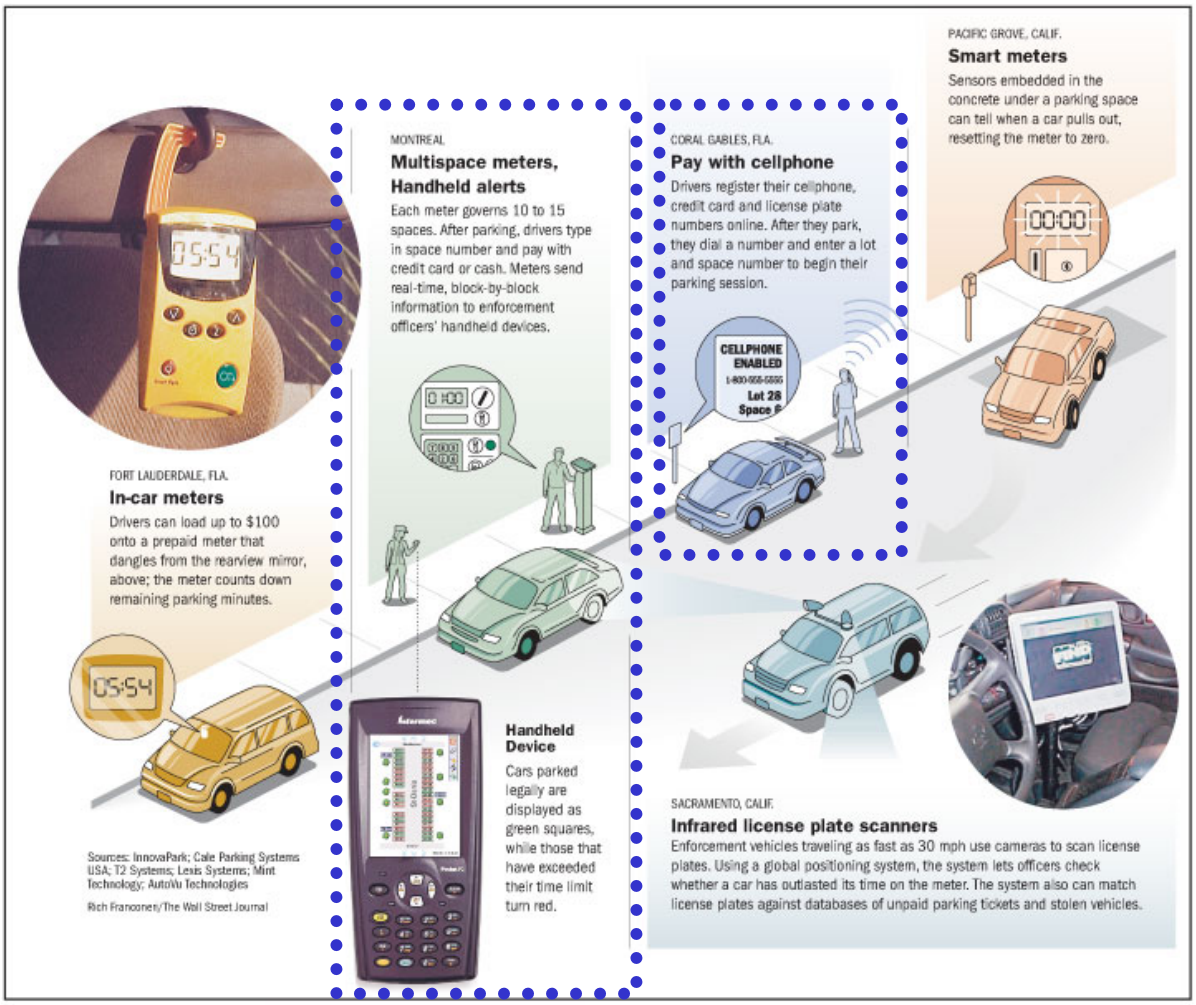
Recommended Payment System and Metering Technology

There are several meter technologies and payment systems that Ventura could use, but a review of best practices in cities comparable to Ventura and a review of the capabilities of existing metering technologies found that the preferred approach would balance the following goals:

- Maximize ease of use in order to increase customer convenience and reduce uncertainty and anxiety
- Minimize capital and operations costs (administration, maintenance, and enforcement)
- Promote turnover of curb parking spaces (so that visitors can always find a space)
- Achieve other downtown revitalization goals (good urban design, cleanliness, etc.)

[3] DeAryan v. City of San Diego, 75 CA2d pp292, 296, 1946.
[4] Ibid., p293. For more information, on California Vehicle Code statutes and case law that provide the legal basis for charging market rate parking prices and creating Parking Benefit Districts see Appendix 5, Redwood City Ordinance.

Figure 2-5 Example of multi-space meters with pay-by space system



Source: The Wall Street Journal Online.

These goals and a review of available technology suggest that Ventura should:

- Install multi-space meters (not single-space meters) that:
  - Can control 10-20 parking spaces, resulting in just one or two meters per block face
  - Accept multiple forms of payment (coins, credit cards) and allow the user to extend time from any other meter, or by cell phone, to provide ease of use
  - Are solar powered and centrally networked with wireless technology, to reduce operations costs and improve parking management and pricing decisions

- Implement a "pay-by-space" payment system which allows motorists to park, pay, and go (not pay-and-display, which requires customer to return to vehicle to display a receipt and can contribute to litter problems)

These recommendations are summarized in Figure 2-3, and examples of multi-space space meters with pay-by-space systems are illustrated in Figure 2-5. Benefits of implementing multi-space meters using a pay-by-space payment system (along with pricing parking at fair market rate and eliminating time limits):

- Maximizes ease of use and customer convenience

- Allows multiple payment options: Pay with cash, debit/credit cards, cell phone, so no need to carry exact meter change

- Park, pay, and go: No need to return to car after paying, add additional time added from any meter or cell phone

- No "ticket anxiety": Eliminating time limits reduces or eliminates "ticket anxiety." Users who pay with a debit or credit card can select "pay maximum," get a refund for unused time. In addition, a grace period can be pre-programmed into the meters to provide a better customer experience.[5] The City of Ventura's Police Department website notes that the "majority of parking violations, almost 33%, are for overtime parking - parking longer than the one or two hours allowed for that area." [6] Since the City's civilian Parking Enforcement Officers issued over 9,000 parking citations in 2004, nearly 3,000 visitor and residents to downtown Ventura received a $20 parking ticket for overstaying time limits in just one year. Many of those ticketed – if not all – would likely be happy to have the option to purchase as much time as they need at fair market rates rather than receive an expensive parking ticket.

- Better user interface: Large, interactive display screens can convey more info (instructions, etc)

- Only pay for the time you use: Purchase as much time as needed, get a refund for unused time

- Minimizes operations costs (administration, maintenance, and enforcement), as detailed below

- Reduced capital costs: One meter controls several spaces, so initial capital and replacement costs are reduced

- Reduced operating costs: Solar-powered with battery back-up; no need for electrical hook-ups or electricity costs

[5] Neither motorists nor enforcement personnel need know about the grace period , so that motorists don't take advantage of the grace period and enforcement personnel don't reduce their enforcement vigilance.
6 City of Ventura Police Operations website. Accessed at http://www.ci.ventura.ca.us/depts/police/operations/traffic.asp.

- Automated audit trail, reduced revenue loss: Fully automated audit trail of all service actions, cash transactions, and parking purchases helps reduce operations costs and revenue loss

- Enhanced data collection, better planning decisions: Real time data on parking occupancy and revenue collections transmitted wirelessly and available anytime from any internet connection for monitoring and auditing; allows city to make future changes to parking rates and hours of operations based on actual parking demand data

- Ease of enforcement: Officers check one meter instead of multiple meters/vehicles, or violation alerts automatically sent to officer's handheld or in-vehicle terminal; auto-filling of repetitive input fields on citations (up to 10 citations at once)

- Reduced downtime: Harder to vandalize; if failure occurs, service alerts sent wirelessly by e-mail, cell phone, or text message to multiple responsible parties (maintenance worker, parking enforcement dispatcher, etc) to reduce downtime and help resolve customer service issues

- Demand-responsive pricing: Prices can be easily adjusted from a central terminal, using the wireless network features, to promote turnover and 85% occupancy; higher rates can be charged in areas and times when demand is higher, so *downtown visitors can always find a parking space*

- Tiered pricing: allows "tiered" prices (e.g., $.50 for the first two hours, $1 per hour thereafter) in various combinations, allowing rate structures that encourage long-term parkers to use off-street lots and garages while leaving more convenient "front door" curb spaces available for short-term parkers

- Achieve downtown revitalization goals (improve urban design, cleanliness, etc)

    - Better urban design: 1 or 2 meters per block instead of 10 or 20, so doesn't obstruct sidewalks with a "picket fence" of meters

    - Reduced litter: Does not require printing & display of receipts which can contribute to litter (although receipts can be issued for those that want them)

Establish Parking Benefit District: Dedicate parking revenues to public improvements and services that benefit the Downtown Specific Plan area.

Revenues from paid parking in the Commercial Parking Benefit District should fund public improvements that benefit the Downtown Specific Plan area. ("Revenues" means total parking revenues from the area, less revenue collection costs, such as purchase and operation of the meters, enforcement and the administration of the district.) If downtown parking revenues seem to disappear into the General Fund, where they may appear to produce no direct benefit for downtown, there will be little support for installing parking meters, or for raising rates when needed to maintain decent vacancy rates. But when downtown merchants and property owners can clearly see that the monies collected are being spent for the benefit of their downtown blocks, on projects that they have chosen,

they become willing to support market rate pricing -- and if experience from other cities is any guide, many will become active advocates for the concept.

To ensure such continuing support for a Downtown Parking Benefit District, and for continuing to charge fair market rates for parking, it is crucial to give downtown stakeholders a strong voice in setting policies for the district, deciding how downtown parking revenues should be spent, and overseeing the operation of district to ensure that the monies collected from their customers are spent wisely.

To accomplish this, the City Council should establish an advisory board, similar to the City of Pasadena's Parking Meter Revenue Advisory Board, which advises the city on policies, rates and expenditures of meter revenue in the Old Pasadena Parking Meter Zone. City Council would appoint the members of the advisory Board, with the recommended composition including downtown business and property owners and other downtown leaders). In particular, the Advisory Board should advise City Council how the community would like the meter revenue spent in downtown. City Council should retain final approval over all expenditures. Bonding against future revenue (i.e. issuing revenue bonds) will enable to fund larger capital projects (including the cost of the meters) in the early stages of implementing the Parking Benefit District.

Preliminary estimate of meter revenue from Parking Benefit District

At this time, given the limited information available, it was not possible to make precise estimates of the potential revenue from the Parking Benefit District. To accomplish this would require more current information on parking occupancy rates; the timing, location and quantity of future downtown development; estimates of responsiveness to price changes; and information on various other factors. However, our preliminary estimate, based upon the proposed initial prices for the Parking Benefit District, and the number of cars parked at various hours (as shown in the 2003 Katz, Okitsu & Associates Downtown Parking Study), suggests that it would be reasonable to expect gross revenues of approximately $1.8 to $3.7 million annually.

Potential uses of meter revenue from Parking Benefit District

Potential uses for Parking Benefit District revenues in Downtown Ventura include:

- Landscaping and streetscape greening
- Increased frequency of trash collection
- Additional street cleaning, power-washing of sidewalks, and graffiti removal
- Pedestrian-scaled lighting
- Transit, pedestrian, and bicycle infrastructure and amenities
- Additional oversight and management of downtown infrastructure and amenities

- Additional police patrols or "Downtown Ambassadors" to provide additional security
- Additional parking enforcement
- Marketing and promotion of downtown
- Purchase and installation costs of meters (e.g., through revenue bonds or a "build-operate-transfer" financing agreement with a vendor)
- Additional programs and projects as recommended by community via a Parking Committee and approved by City Council

Organizational structure for the Parking Benefit District

A number of different organizational structures can be used to establish a Parking Benefit District in downtown Ventura. The district can be a quasi-public entity, similar to a Business Improvement District. Alternatively, the district can be established as simply a financial entity (somewhat like an assessment district), which would require by ordinance that meter revenues raised within the district be spent to benefit the district. In this latter case, establishing the district would serve primarily to reassure the downtown community that it would benefit downtown. Under this arrangement, the district would be managed and housed within an existing City agency such as the Community Development Department or Public Works Department.

Regardless of the ultimate organizational structure implemented, a focused effort, with dedicated and well-trained staff, will be needed to refine and implement the recommendations made within this report, and to then manage the ongoing operation of the system. The most important recommendations would likely include:

- Establishing the Parking Benefit District, and managing it thereafter. This would include responsibility for installing and operating the parking meter system, monitoring parking occupancy and proposing rate adjustments, overseeing collection and expenditure parking revenues, and in general, operating the downtown parking system in a customer-friendly way.
- Establishing and managing the "Park once" strategy for downtown parking, working to ensure that both new and existing parking in the downtown is managed and operated as a common pool. This would be likely to include both everyday operations, and negotiating purchase and/or lease of existing private parking, as well as the leasing of public spaces to new development when necessary.
- Establishing and managing alternative transportation programs for the downtown, (as detailed in Recommendation 3) to ensure that the downtown invests in the most cost-effective mix of parking, transit, rideshare, bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

- Explain and assist in enforcing the transportation demand management requirements (such as "unbundling" parking costs from office leases and residential rents) recommended elsewhere in plan.

Additional recommendations for implementing Commercial Parking Benefit District

The City of Ventura should pursue the following additional strategies when implementing the commercial parking benefit district:

- Conduct extensive community outreach & education prior to launch of meters
- Install user-friendly signage to explain meter operation, rates, and hours/days of operation
- Use "Mobility Ambassadors" to assist with meters during first few weeks/months of implementation & during peak visitor demand periods
- Create mechanisms (such as regular advisory board meetings, surveys, etc.) for soliciting ongoing input from downtown businesses, visitors, and other key stakeholders and for resolving customer service issues and stakeholder concerns

Summary of benefits from all Parking Benefit District recommendations

The recommendations for metered parking and the creation of a Commercial Parking Benefit District will result in the following benefits:

- Ensure that there is always a short-term parking space available in high demand areas (such as Main St.) – approximately 1 in 7 spaces will always be available for customers and visitors
- Eliminate "cruising" for parking, thereby reducing traffic congestion
- Encourage long-term parkers and daily commuters to park in currently underused off-street garages and lots
- Eliminate the "2-hour shuffle" of downtown employees moving cars from one curb parking space to another every few hours
- Be more convenient to use than single-space meters (refunds for unused time, no need for a pocketful of quarters)
- Eliminate "ticket anxiety" of short-term parkers worried about overstaying time limits
- Reduce capital, operations, maintenance, and enforcement costs compared to single-space meters
- Be easier to enforce and audit compared to single-space meters or time limits
- Reduce downtime and revenue loss compared to single-space meters

- Prevent rows of single-space meters from cluttering downtown streetscape (no parking meter "picket fences")

- Generate significant revenue to help pay for downtown improvements (for cleaning, security, pedestrian /bicycle infrastructure, lighting, etc.)

Recommendation 3: Invest Meter Revenues in Transportation Demand Management Programs

Goal: Invest in the most cost-effective mix of transportation modes for access to downtown, including both parking and transportation demand management strategies.

Recommendation: Invest meter revenues in a full spectrum of transportation demand management strategies for downtown employees and residents, including transit, carpool, vanpool, bicycle and pedestrian programs.

Discussion: The cost to construct new parking garages in downtown Ventura can be expected to be approximately $31,000 per space gained, resulting in a total cost to build, operate and maintain new spaces of approximately $188 per month per space, every month for the expected 40 year lifetime of the typical garage. These dismal economics for parking garages lead to a simple principle: it can often be cheaper to reduce parking demand than to construct new parking. Therefore, Ventura should invest in the most cost-effective mix of transportation modes for access to downtown, including both parking and transportation demand management strategies.

By investing in the following package of demand-reduction strategies, Ventura can expect to cost-effectively reduce parking demand in downtown (and the resulting traffic loads) by one quarter to one third. The Parking Benefit District should invest a portion of parking revenues (and other fees, grants, and/or transportation funds, when available) to establish a full menu of transportation programs for the benefit of all downtown residents and employers. These programs should include:

- Universal Transit Passes. As described more fully in Recommendation 4, a universal transit pass program would provide free transit passes for every employee and resident of the Downtown Specific Plan area. The annual passes would be purchased at a deeply-discounted bulk rate by the Parking benefit District from the transit operators. For South Coast Area Transit (SCAT) and other regional transit operators such as VISTA, universal transit passes can provide a stable source of income, while helping them meet their ridership goals.

- Carpool & Vanpool Incentives. Provide ride-sharing services, such as a carpool and vanpool incentives, customized ride-matching services, a Guaranteed Ride Home program (offering a limited number of emergency taxi rides home per employee), and an active marketing program to advertise the services to employees and residents.

- Bike/Ped Facilities. Centralized provision of bicycle facilities, such as clothes lockers, secure bike parking, and shower facilities.

- Transportation Resource Center. A storefront office that provides personalized information on transit routes and schedules, carpool and vanpool programs, bicycle routes and facilities and other transportation options. The center would also house the Transportation Improvement District's staff, and would take responsibility for administering and actively marketing all demand management programs. Parking operations and administration could be housed here as well.

As shown in Figure 2-6, employees commuting to downtown already have lower drive alone rates than employees who work elsewhere in Ventura (60% compared to 66%) and commute by transit, bike, and on foot at twice the rate of employees commuting to other areas of Ventura. With a focused effort, and genuine financial incentives, the share can be increased still further.

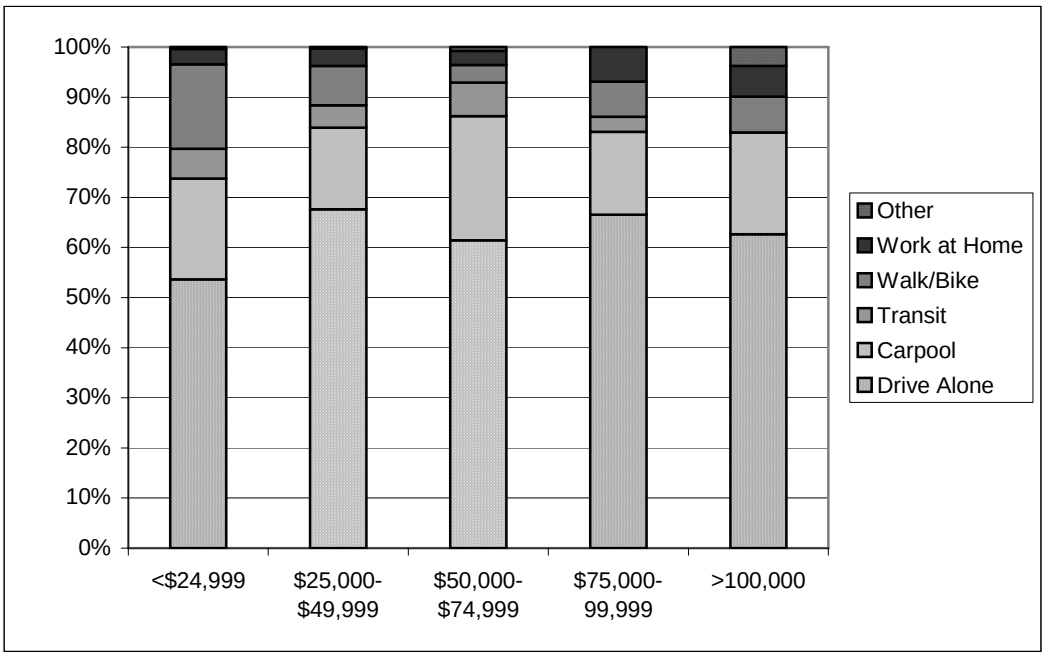
Figure 2-6 Commute mode for downtown employees

Commute Mode	Downtown	Ventura
Drive Alone	60%	66%
Carpool	10%	11%
Transit	2%	1%
Bike / Walk	6%	3%
Total Non-Drive Alone	21%	19%

Source: 2000 US Census Transportation Planning Package

As Figure 2-7 shows, this commute patterns also holds true for downtown residents at all income levels. Depending on household income, between 32% and 46% of downtown residents have a "non-drive alone commute" mode.

Figure 2-7 Downtown residents' commute mode by income



Source: 2000 US Census Transportation Planning Package

Case Study: Boulder, Colorado

An excellent example of a Parking Benefit District that funds transportation alternatives is the City of Boulder (Colorado) Downtown Management Commission & Central Area General Improvement District (CAGID). The responsibilities of Boulder's Central Area General Improvement District (CAGID) include:

- Analyzing most cost-effective mix of new parking or transportation alternatives
- Management and construction of all public parking downtown
- Provide a broad array of transportation demand management programs and incentives including the following commuter benefits:
    - Free universal transit pass (Eco-Pass);
    - Guaranteed Ride Home
    - Ride-matching services
    - Bicycle parking rentals

In addition to the above transportation demand management programs and incentives, CAGID also funds the operation of a "Transportation Resource Center" in a downtown storefront. The responsibilities of the resource center include the following:

- Provide personalized advice and information on transit, bike, and pedestrian travel to downtown
- Provide personalized ride-matching services for employees
- Oversee regular marketing of transportation programs and incentives
- Coordinate events to highlight transportation choices (Bike-to-work Day, etc.)
- Manage rentals of bike lockers throughout downtown
- Outreach to individual businesses to identify transportation needs of their employees and customers

All of these programs are funded by a $325,000/year budget, funded by $1million in meter revenue that is transferred to CAGID via a Parking Benefit District mechanism. There are no parking requirements for any non-residential development in the District. New public parking garages are developed as needed and funded by parking fees (84%) and general fund taxes (16%).

Boulder's efforts are achieving results: carpooling increased from 35% in 1993 to 47% in 1997 and the Eco-Pass program (the free universal transit pass program) has reduced

commuter parking demand by 850 spaces. Overall, Boulder has found that in many cases, it is cheaper to provide free transit and strong ridesharing programs to all downtown employees, than to provide them parking.

Appendix 1, the Parking Management Workbook, provides additional detail on Boulder's programs.

Recommendation 4: Provide Universal Transit Passes

Goal: Increase transit ridership and provide incentives for existing and new downtown residents to reduce vehicle ownership by providing free transit passes to all downtown residents and employees.

Recommendation: Use Parking Benefit District revenues to provide free transit passes to all downtown employees and the existing residents. For all new multifamily residential developments, require that universal transit passes be provided to residents under a residential transit pass program.

Discussion: In recent years, growing numbers of transit agencies have teamed with universities, employers, or residential neighborhoods to provide universal transit passes. These passes typically provide unlimited rides on local or regional transit providers for low monthly fees, often absorbed entirely by the employer, school, or developers. A typical example of a universal transit pass is the Eco-Pass program in downtown Boulder, which provides free transit on Denver's Regional Transportation District (RTD) light rail and buses to more than 7500 employees, employed by 700 different businesses in downtown Boulder. To fund this program, Boulder's downtown parking benefit district pays a flat fee for each employee who is enrolled in the program, regardless of whether the employee actually rides transit. Because every single employee in the downtown is enrolled in the program, the Regional Transportation District in turn provides the transit passes at a deep bulk discount.

A review of existing universal transit pass programs found that the annual per employee fees are between 1% and 17% of the retail price for an equivalent annual transit pass. The principle of employee or residential transit passes is similar to that of group insurance plans – transit agencies can offer deep bulk discounts when selling passes to a large group, with universal enrollment, on the basis that not all those offered the pass will actually use them regularly.

Benefits from universal transit pass program

Universal transit passes provide multiple benefits, as discussed below.

For transit riders

- Free access to transit (e.g., eliminating the current $1.25 per ride or $41 per month South Coast area transit pass price)
- Rewards existing riders, attracts new ones

- For employees who drive, making existing transit free can effectively create convenient park-and-ride shuttles to existing underused remote parking areas (e.g., potentially to the Fairgrounds lot)

For transit operators

- Provides a stable source of income
- Increases transit ridership, helping to meet agency ridership goals
- Can help improve cost recovery, reduce agency subsidy, and/or fund service improvements

For downtown districts

- Reduces traffic congestion and increases transit ridership
- Reduces *existing* parking demand: Santa Clara County's (CA) ECO Pass program resulted in a 19% reduction in parking demand
- Reduces *unmet* parking demand: UCLA's BruinGo! program resulted in 1,300 fewer vehicle trips which resulted 1,331 fewer students on the wait list for parking permits (a 36% reduction)
- Reduces *future* growth in parking demand: University of Washington's U-Pass program helped avoid construction of 3,600 new spaces, saving $100 million (since 1983 the university population increased by 8,000 but actually reduced the number of parking spaces)

For developers

- Universal transit pass programs can benefit developers if implemented concurrently with reduced parking requirements, which consequently lower construction costs
- Providing free cost transit passes for large developments provides an amenity that can help attract renters or home buyers as part of lifestyle marketing campaign appealing to those seeking a "downtown lifestyle"

For employees/employers

- Reduces demand for parking on-site
- Provides a tax-advantaged transportation benefit that can help recruit and retain employees

As Figure 2-8 illustrates, free transit passes are usually extremely effective means to reduce the number of car trips in an area; reductions in car mode share of 4% to 22% have been documented, with an average reduction of 11%. By removing any cost barrier to using transit, including the need to search for spare change for each trip, people become much more likely to take transit to work or for non-work trips.

Figure 2-8 Mode shifts achieved with free transit passes

Location	Drive to work		Transit to work	
Municipalities	Before	After	Before	After
Santa Clara (VTA)[7]	76%	60%	11%	27%
Bellevue, Washington[8]	81%	57%	13%	18%
Ann Arbor, Michigan[9]	N/A	(4%)	20%	25%
Universities				
UCLA[10] (faculty and staff)	46%	42%	8%	13%
Univ. of Washington, Seattle[11]	33%	24%	21%	36%
Univ. of British Colombia[12]	68%	57%	26%	38%
Univ. of Wisconsin, Milwaukee[13]	54%	41%	12%	26%
Colorado Univ. Boulder (students)[14]	43%	33%	4%	7%

Case Studies

General universal transit pass programs

King County (WA): A King County Metro FlexPass costs $65 per year per employee for employers compared to the normal annual cost of $396-1584. The King County Metro, WA, notes that in downtown Bellevue, FlexPass is responsible in part for a 24 percent drop in drive alone commutes from 1990 to 2000 (81 percent to 57 percent).[15]

Silicon Valley (CA): Silicon Valley's Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) EcoPass program charges employers between $7.50 and $120 per year per employee, instead of the usual $990 per year for a transit pass. The result has been a 19 percent decrease in parking demand at employers participating in the program. Neighborhood EcoPass programs apply the same principle to residential developments.[16]

Boulder (CO): In Boulder the Eco Pass is an annual bus pass purchased by employers for all full-time employees. The annual cost for a normal pass varies between $540 and $1,620 whereas the annual per employee fee for the Eco Pass ranges from $31 to $279. Six years after the program implementation the Eco Pass has reduced the drive to work

[7] Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, 1997.
[8] 1990 to 2000; http://www.commuterchallenge.org/cc/newsmar01_flexpass.html.
[9] White et. al. "Impacts of an Employer-Based Transit Pass Program: The Go Pass in Ann Arbor, Michigan."
[10] Jeffrey Brown, et. al. "Fare-Free Public Transit at Universities." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 23: 69-82, 2003.
[11] 1989 to 2002, weighted average of students, faculty, and staff; From Will Toor, et. al. *Transportation and Sustainable Campus Communities*, 2004.
[12] 2002 to 2003, the effect one year after U-Pass implementation; From Wu et. al, "Transportation Demand Management: UBC's U-P ass – a Case Study", April 2004.
[13] Mode shift one year after implementation in 1994; James Meyer et. al., "An Analysis of the Usage, Impacts and Benefits of an Innovative Transit Pass Program", January 14, 1998.
[14] Six years after program implementation; Francois Poinsatte et. al. "Finding a New Way: Campus Transportation for the 21st Century", April, 1999.
[15] Accessed at http://www.commuterchallenge.org/cc/newsmar01_flexpass.html.
[16] VTA EcoPass website. Accessed at http://www.vta.org/ecopass/ecopass_corp/index.html.

mode share by 10 percent. The Eco Pass program alone has also reduced commuter parking demand by 850 spaces, according to Boulder's Downtown Management Commission.[17]

Residential transit pass programs

Transit subsidies can also be used for a wide range of residential developments. In Santa Clara County, CA and Portland, OR, property managers can bulk-purchase transit passes for their residents at deeply discounted rates. In Portland, transit use among residents increased by between 79 percent and 250 percent in two different developments after transit passes were offered there.[18] This is the model recommended for new residential developments in downtown Ventura: once an agreement has been reached with the transit operators on the cost of the residential transit pass programs, new developments should be required to provide them to all residents. To provide ongoing funding for this expense, a portion of condominium association dues, or rents (for rental units) can be used.

As another example, in the City of Boulder, both residential building managers and entire neighborhoods (even typical single-family areas) can purchase Eco-Passes for their residents. In the latter, neighborhood volunteers collect contributions on an annual basis, and once the minimum financial threshold is met, everyone living in the neighborhood is eligible for the transit pass. Alternatively, a neighborhood can elect to increase property taxes to purchase neighborhood-wide Eco-Passes.

A cost-effective transportation investment

Many cities and institutions have found that trying to provide additional parking spaces costs much more than reducing parking demand by simply providing everyone with a free transit pass. For example, a study of UCLA's universal transit pass program found that a new parking space costs more than 3 times as much as a free transit pass ($223/month versus $71/month).[19]

In addition, on-street parking spaces formerly taken by resident's autos free up more spaces for short-term parkers. This can provide additional parking revenue to pay for improvements in the Commercial Parking Benefit District. For example, the same study of UCLA's universal transit pass program mentioned above found that an hourly space on-campus generates 30% more revenue than a monthly space if used 50% of the time and 149% more revenue than a monthly space if used 100% of the time.[20]

Implementation Details

Purchase of a universal transit pass program for all downtown employees and existing residents should be managed by the Parking Benefit District (as described elsewhere in this plan).

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[17] Interviews and e-mail correspondence with local developers, planners, and CAGID staff.
[18] Caltrans. "Parking and TOD: Challenges and Opportunities," 2002.
[19] Jeffrey Brown, et. al. "Fare-Free Public Transit at Universities: An Evaluation." Journal of Planning and Education Research, 2003: Vol 28, No. 1, pp 69-82.
[20] Ibid.

Funding sources

The transit pass program could be paid for through some combination of the following funding sources:

- Parking meter revenue and other parking fees or fines
- Grants from environmental, public health, traffic mitigation sources (grants usually funds pilot projects)

Implementation priorities

In implementing a universal transit pass program, Ventura's Transportation Improvement District Manager should emphasize:

- Universal coverage for all residents, which allows lower per rider costs and a deeper discount to be offered
- Automatic opt-in, which lowers sign-up barriers and encourages greater participation and ridership gains
- Plan for targeted service improvements to further encourage usage of the universal transit pass and/or to respond to increased ridership after the program is launched

Recommendation 5. Require Parking Cash Out

Goal: Subsidize all employee commute modes equally and create incentives for commuters to carpool, take transit, and bike or walk to work.

Recommendation: Require all new and existing employers that provide subsidized employee parking to offer their employees the option to "cash out" their parking subsidy.

Discussion: Many employers in downtown Ventura (including the City itself) provide free or reduced price parking for their employees as a fringe benefit. Under a parking cash out requirement, employers will be able to continue this practice *on the condition that they offer the cash value of the parking subsidy to any employee who does not drive to work*.

The cash value of the parking subsidy should be offered in one of two forms:

- A transit/vanpool subsidy equal to the value of the parking subsidy (of which up to $105 is tax-free for both employer and employee)[21]
- A taxable carpool/walk/bike subsidy equal to the value of the parking subsidy

Employees who opt to cash out their parking subsidies would not be eligible to receive free parking from the employer, and would be responsible for their parking charges on days when they drive to work.

[21] Under the federal "Commuter Choice" law. More info at the Federal Transit Administrations' Commuter Choice website http://www.fta.dot.gov/initiatives_tech_assistance/customer_service/2172_ENG_HTML.htm.

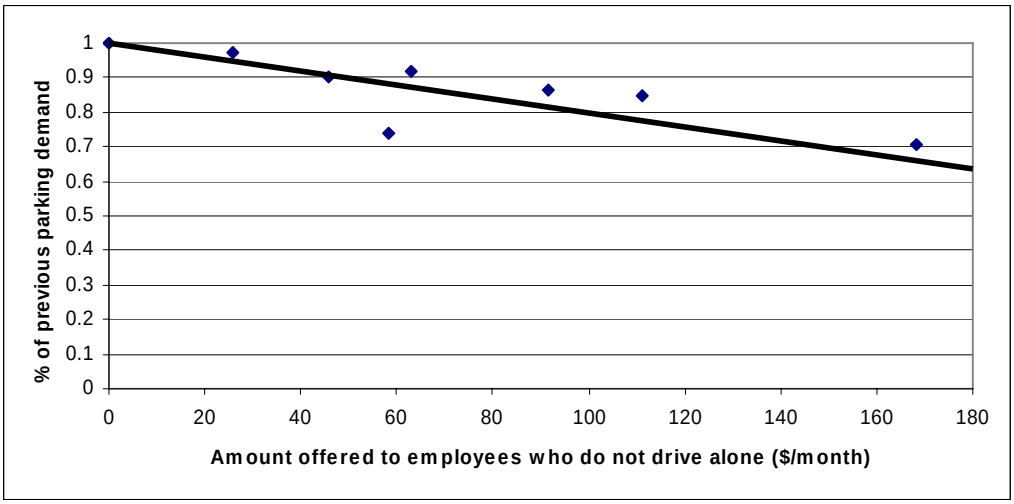
Benefits of Parking Cash Out

The benefits of parking cash out are numerous, and include:

- Provides an equal transportation subsidy to employees who ride transit, carpool, vanpool, walk or bicycle to work. The benefit is particularly valuable to low-income employees, who are less likely to drive to work alone.
- Provides a low-cost fringe benefit that can help individual businesses recruit and retain employees.
- Employers report that parking cash-out requirements are simple to administer and enforce, typically requiring just one to two minutes per employee per month to administer.

In addition to these benefits, the primary benefit of parking cash out programs is their proven effect on reducing auto congestion and parking demand. Figure 2-9 illustrates the effect of parking cash-out at seven different employers located in and around Los Angeles. It should be noted most of the case study employers are located in areas that do not have good access to transit service, so that a large part of the reduced parking demand that occurred with these parking cash out programs resulted when former solo drivers began carpooling.

Figure 2-9 Effects of parking cash-out on parking demand



Source: Derived from Donald Shoup, "Evaluating the Effects of Parking Cash-Out: Eight Case Studies," 1997. Based on the cost in 2005 dollars.

Figure 2-10 outlines key research on commuter responsiveness to financial incentive programs implemented throughout the United States. The studies illustrate programs implemented in cities, colleges, and by individual employers, covering tens of thousands of employees and hundreds of firms. The findings show that, even in suburban locations with little or no transit, financial incentives can substantially reduce parking demand. On average, a financial incentive of $70 per month reduced parking demand by over one-quarter. At the University of Washington, a financial incentive of just $18 per month reduced parking demand by 24 percent.

Implementation Details

Additional details on implementing a parking cash out program – including how this could be implemented for different types of employers and how the program could be enforced – are discussed below.

Firms that lease employee parking

If the City requires the unbundling of parking costs from commercial lease costs for all new commercial development (as recommended elsewhere in this plan), parking cash out will already be required under state law for those employers with 50 or more employees who lease their parking under California's existing "Parking Cash Out" law.[22]

Figure 2-10 Effect of financial incentives on parking demand

Location	Scope of Study	Financial Incentive per Month (1995 $)	Decrease in Parking Demand
Group A: Areas with little public transportation			
Century City, CA[1]	3500 employees at 100+ firms	$81	15%
Cornell University, NY[2]	9000 faculty and staff	$34	26%
San Fernando Valley, CA[1]	1 large employer (850 employees)	$37	30%
Bellevue, WA[3]	1 medium-size firm (430 empl)	$54	39%
Costa Mesa, CA[4]	State Farm Insurance employees	$37	22%
Average		$49	26%
Group B: Areas with fair public transportation			
Los Angeles Civic Center[1]	10,000+ employees, several firms	$125	36%
Mid-Wilshire Blvd, LA[1]	1 mid-sized firm	$89	38%
Washington DC suburbs[5]	5500 employees at 3 worksites	$68	26%
Downtown Los Angeles[6]	5000 employees at 118 firms	$126	25%
Average		$102	31%
Group C: Areas with good public transportation			
University of Washington[7]	50,000 faculty, staff and students	$18	24%
Downtown Ottawa[1]	3500+ government staff	$72	18%
Average		$102	31%
Overall Average		$67	27%

Sources:
[1] Willson, Richard W. and Donald C. Shoup. "Parking Subsidies and Travel Choices: Assessing the Evidence." *Transportation*, 1990, Vol. 17b, 141-157 (p145).
[2] Cornell University Office of Transportation Services. "Summary of Transportation Demand Management Program." Unpublished, 1992.
[3] United States Department of Transportation. "Proceedings of the Commuter Parking Symposium," USDOT Report No. DOT-T-91-14, 1990.
[4] *Employers Manage Transportation*. State Farm Insurance Company and Surface Transportation Policy Project, 1994.

[22] "California's Parking Cash Out Law: An Informational Guide for Employers." California Air Resource Board, 2002. Accessed at http://www.arb.ca.gov/planning/tsaq/cashout/cashout_0502.pdf.

[5] Miller, Gerald K. "The Impacts of Parking Prices on Commuter Travel," Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, 1991.
[6] Shoup, Donald and Richard W. Wilson. "Employer-paid Parking: The Problem and Proposed Solutions," *Transportation Quarterly*, 1992, Vol. 46, No. 2, pp169-192 (p189).
[7] Williams, Michael E. and Kathleen L Petrait. "U-PASS: A Model Transportation Management Program That Works," *Transportation Research Record*, 1994, No.1404, p73-81.

To achieve the full potential of parking cash-out, Ventura should adopt local legislation that extends parking cash out requirements to all employers in the Downtown Specific Plan area who provide free/reduced price parking to their employees, including both those who own or lease their parking. Such an ordinance would simply require that any downtown employers that provide subsidized parking to one or more of their employees must provide all their employees with the option to "cash out" their employee parking by taking the cash value of the parking subsidy. To establish the value of parking, the ordinance should define the market value of parking downtown using the most recent estimate of the cost to add additional parking spaces to downtown, including both the opportunity costs of land, and the cost to build operate and maintain parking itself. As described earlier, for downtown Ventura, this figure currently stands at approximately $188 per month.

Local enforcement measures to ensure compliance

Several local jurisdictions have developed enforcement mechanisms to enforce parking cash out requirements. For example, Santa Monica requires proof of compliance with the State's parking cash out law before issuing occupancy permits for new commercial development. Another enforcement mechanism that has been considered in San Francisco is to require employers to provide proof of compliance (via an affidavit signed by a company officer) at the same time that they receive/renew their business license or pay their annual business taxes. This method ensures that all employers are in compliance with parking cash out requirements on an ongoing basis, rather than limiting proof of compliance to a one-time enforcement for employers occupying new or renovated commercial buildings.

Recommendation 6: Create a Residential Parking Benefit District

Goal: Prevent "spillover" parking in downtown adjacent neighborhoods.

Recommendation: At the same time that parking meters are implemented for curb parking in the downtown core, implement Residential Parking Benefit Districts in adjacent residential areas. Residential Parking Benefit Districts are similar to residential parking permit districts, but allow a limited number of commuters to pay to use surplus on-street parking spaces in residential areas, and return the resulting revenues to the neighborhood to fund public improvements.

Discussion: In order to prevent spillover parking in residential neighborhoods, many cities implement *residential permit districts* (also known as preferential parking districts) by issuing a certain number of parking permits to residents usually for free or a nominal fee. These permits allow the residents to park within the district while all others are prohibited from parking there for more than a few hours, if at all. Ventura currently has such a

residential parking permit program in effect in several areas, as do at least 132 other cities and counties in the US and Canada.[23]

Residential parking permit districts are typically implemented in residential districts near large traffic generators such as central business districts, educational, medical, and recreational facilities but have several limitations.

Most notably, conventional residential permit districts often issue an unlimited number of permits to residents without regard to the actual number of curb parking spaces available in the district. This leads to a situation in which on-street parking is seriously congested, and the permit functions solely as a "hunting license", simply giving residents the right to hunt for a parking space with no guarantee that they will actually find one. (An example of this Boston's Beacon Hill neighborhood, where the City's Department of Transportation has issued residents 3,933 permits for the 983 available curb spaces in Beacon Hill's residential parking permit district, a 4-to-1 ratio.)[24]

An opposite problem occurs with conventional residential permit districts in situations where there actually are surplus parking spaces (especially during the day, when many residents are away), but the permit district prevents any commuters from parking in these spaces even if demand is high and many motorists would be willing to pay to park in one of the surplus spaces.

In both cases, conventional residential parking permit districts prevent curb parking spaces from being efficiently used (promoting overuse in the former example and underuse in the latter).

To avoid these problems, Ventura should implement *residential parking benefit district*s in downtown adjacent residential areas at the same time that parking meters are implemented for curb parking in the downtown core. This will prevent excessive spillover parking from commuters trying to avoid parking charges downtown and further Ventura's community revitalization goals.

Implementation details

Implementation of residential parking benefit districts in Ventura will differ from conventional parking permit districts in four key ways:

1) Limit the number of permits issued to residents to a number that results in a peak hour occupancy of 85% or less, as determined by an initial city survey supplemented by periodic surveys thereafter (at least biannual). Residents should be issued free permits.

2) Rather than entirely prohibit nonresident parking as with many conventional residential parking permit districts, the City should sell permits for any surplus parking capacity to non-resident commuters at fair market rates, up to 90% of available parking supply.

[23] "Residential Permit Parking: Informational Report." Institute of Transportation Engineers, 2000, p1.
[24] Shoup, Donald. The High Cost of Free Parking. APA Planners Press, 2005, p516.

3) Use in-vehicle meters for non-resident parkers (who will primarily be downtown commuters) rather than adhesive permits or rearview hangtags. These in-vehicle meters allow user and geographic transferability, multiple payment methods, variable pricing options, and networking capabilities. (For more information on in-vehicle meters, see Appendix 5: In-Vehicle Parking Meters Memorandum).

4) Finally, the rates for non-residents' parking permits should be set at fair market rates as determined by periodic city surveys, and all net revenues above and beyond the cost of administering the program should be dedicated to pay for public improvements in the neighborhood where the revenue was generated.

Additional Implementation Recommendations for Non-Resident Permits

- Pricing structure: hourly with no time limits.
- Rate: initially be set at $0.50/hr (slightly less than downtown meters).
- Enforcement policies: Parking Enforcement Officers should follow the same enforcement policies as in Ventura's existing downtown meter zone and should issue citations for "expired meter" or "no valid permit/meter."

Community Participation & Local Control

Residential parking benefit districts should only be implemented on blocks where the occupancy rates exceed 75% overall. In addition, residential parking benefit districts should only be implemented if a simple majority (50% +1) of property owners on a block supports formation of the district.

Once implemented, residents, property owners, and business owners in the district will continue to have a voice in advising City Council how they want new parking revenue spent in their neighborhood. This could occur via existing Community Councils, mail-in surveys mailed, or public workshops and hearings. Another option is to appoint advisory committees in each parking benefit district, tasked with advising City Council on how the surplus revenue should be spent in their neighborhood.

Benefits of Residential Parking Benefit Districts

Residential parking benefit districts have been described as "a compromise between free curb parking that leads to overcrowding and [conventional residential] permit districts that lead to underuse…[parking] benefit districts are better for both residents and non-residents: residents get public services paid for by non-residents, and non-residents get to park at a fair-market price rather than not at all."[25]

Benefits of implementation of residential parking benefit districts in the City of Ventura include the following:

[25] Ibid., p435.

- Excessive parking spillover into downtown adjacent neighborhoods will be prevented.
- Scarce curb parking spaces are used as efficiently as possible.
- Need for additional costly downtown parking structure construction is reduced
- Residents will be guaranteed to find a parking space at the curb.

Examples of Residential Parking Benefit Districts

Residential Parking Benefit Districts are being implemented in various forms in the following jurisdictions:

- Aspen, CO (non-resident permits: $5/day)
- Boulder, CO (resident permits $12/year; non-resident permits $312/year)
- Santa Cruz, CA (resident permits $20/year; non-resident permits $240/year)
- Tucson, AZ (resident permits $2.50/year; non-resident permits $200-$400/year, declining with increased distance from University of Arizona campus)
- West Hollywood, CA (resident permits $9/year; non-resident permits $360/year)
- Isla Vista, CA (in progress)
- San Francisco, CA (in progress)

Recommendation 7: "Unbundle" Parking Costs

Goal: Increase housing affordability and housing choice.

Recommendation: Require all new residential development to "unbundle" the full cost of parking from the cost of the housing itself, by creating a separate parking charge.

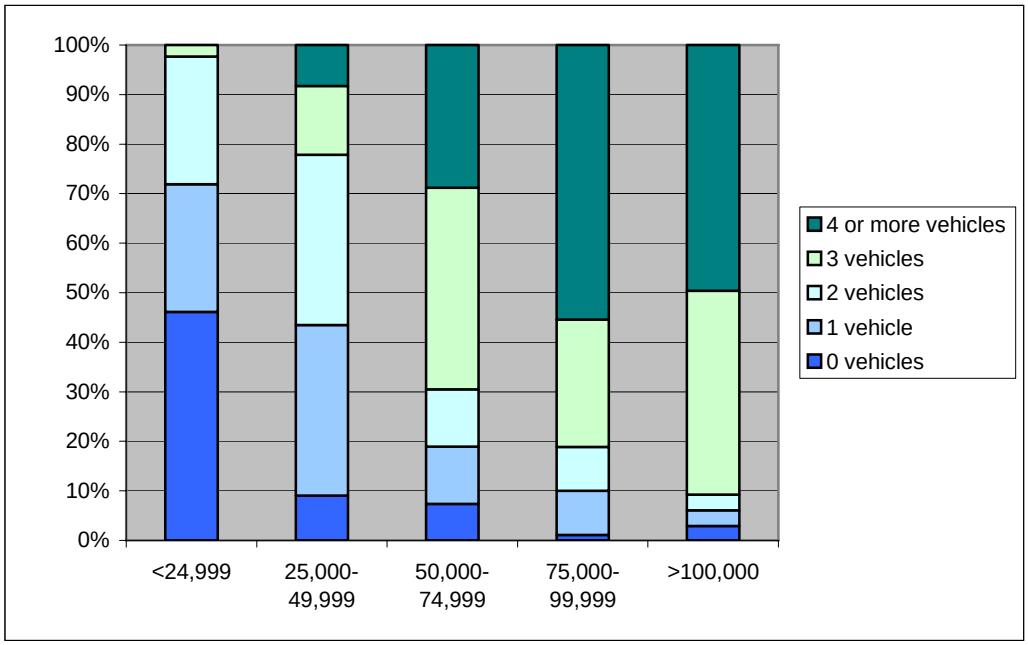
Discussion: Parking costs are generally subsumed into the sale or rental price of housing for the sake of simplicity, and because that is the more traditional practice in real estate. But although the cost of parking is often hidden in this way, parking is never free. Each space in a parking structure can cost upwards of $30,000, while in downtown Ventura, given land values, surface spaces can be similarly costly.

Looking at parking as a tool to achieve downtown revitalization goals requires some changes to status quo practices, since providing anything for free or at highly subsidized rates encourages use and means that more parking spaces have to be provided to achieve the same rate of availability.

For both rental and for sale housing, the full cost of parking should be unbundled from the cost of the housing itself, by creating a separate parking charge. This provides a financial reward to households who decide to dispense with one of their cars, and helps attract that

niche market of households, who wish to live in a transit-oriented neighborhood where it is possible to live well with only one car, or even no car, per household. Unbundling parking costs changes parking from a required purchase to an optional amenity, so that households can freely choose how many spaces they wish to lease. Among households with below average vehicle ownership rates (e.g., low income people, singles and single parents, seniors on fixed incomes, and college students), allowing this choice can provide a substantial financial benefit. For example, as shown in Figure 2-11, among downtown Ventura households earning less than $25,000 per year, more than 40% have no car, and more than 70% have one car or fewer. Unbundling parking costs means that these households no longer have to pay for parking spaces that they may not be able to use or afford.

Figure 2-11 Vehicle ownership for downtown households by income



Source: 2000 US Census Transportation Planning Package

It is important to note that construction costs for residential parking spaces can substantially increase the sale/rental price of housing. This is because the space needs of residential parking spaces can restrict how many housing units can be built within allowable zoning and building envelope. For example, a study of Oakland's 1961 decision to require one parking space per apartment (where none had been required before) found that construction cost increased 18% per unit, units per acre decreased by 30% and land values fell 33%.[26]

As a result, bundled residential parking can significantly increase "per-unit housing costs" for individual renters or buyers. Two studies of San Francisco housing found that units with off-street parking bundled with the unit sell for 11% to 12% more than comparable

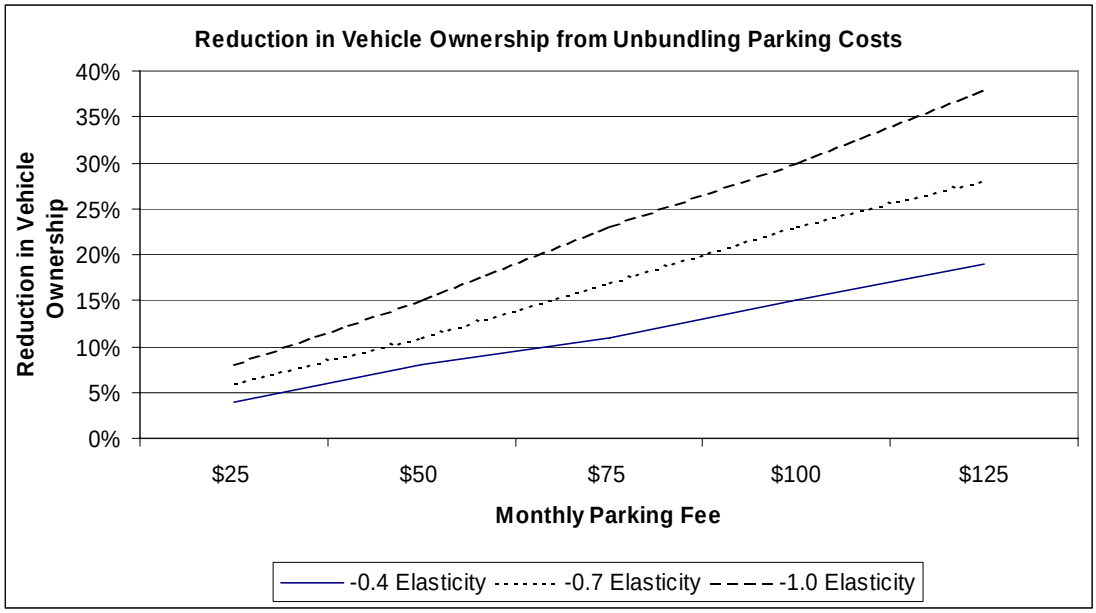
[26] Bertha, Brian. "Appendix A" in *The Low-Rise Speculative Apartment* by Wallace Smith UC Berkeley Center for Real Estate and Urban Economics, Institute of Urban and Regional Development, 1964.

units without included parking.[27] One study of San Francisco housing found the increased affordability of units without off-street parking on-site can increase their absorption rate and make home ownership a reality for more people.[28] In that study, units without off-street parking:

- Sold on average 41 days faster than comparable units with off-street parking
- Allowed 20% more San Francisco households to afford a condominium (compared to units with bundled off-street parking)
- Allowed 24 more San Francisco households to afford a single-family house (compared to units with bundled off-street parking)

Charging separately for parking is also the single most effective strategy to encourage households to own fewer cars, and rely more on walking, cycling and transit. According to one study, unbundling residential parking can significantly reduce household vehicle ownership and parking demand.[29]. These effects are presented in Figure 2-12.

Figure 2-12 Reduced vehicle ownership with unbundled residential parking



Source: Litman, Todd. "Parking Requirement Impacts on Housing Affordability." Victoria Transport Policy Institute, 2004.

It is critical that residents and tenants are made aware that rents, sale prices and lease fees are reduced because parking is charged for separately. Rather than paying "extra" for parking, the cost is simply separated out – allowing residents and businesses to choose

[27] Wenyu Jia and Martin Wachs. "Parking Requirements and Housing Affordability: A Case Study of San Francisco." University of California Transportation Center Paper No. 380,1998 and Amy Herman, "Study Findings Regarding Condominium Parking Ratios," Sedway Group, 2001.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Litman, Todd. "Parking Requirement Impacts on Housing Affordability." Victoria Transport Policy Institute, 2004.

how much they wish to purchase. No tenant, resident, employer or employee should be required to lease any minimum amount of parking.

Recommendation 8: Establish a Carsharing Program

Goal: 1) Enable downtown commuters to carpool, take transit, bike, or walk to work by ensuring that a shared car will be available for work trips when needed, and 2) Enable existing and new downtown residents to reduce the number of private vehicles they own by ensuring that a shared car will be available for household trips when needed.

Recommendation: The City of Ventura should encourage the establishment of a car sharing service in Ventura with one or more shared vehicle "pods" strategically located in the Downtown Specific Plan area. In order to help establish a car sharing service in Ventura, the City should begin negotiations with an existing car sharing provider and consider the following strategies:

1) Replace some existing city-owned fleet vehicles with car sharing cars.

2) Partially or fully subsidize operation costs for a specified term.

3) Require developers pay into a car-share start-up fund.

4) Provide other incentives as appropriate, such as:

    a. Offering convenient and visible spaces in downtown parking facilities to car sharing providers for locating car sharing "pods".

    b. Requiring developers of large downtown projects to offer car sharing operators the right of first refusal for a limited number of parking spaces

    c. Offering city employees discounted annual car sharing memberships.[30]

Discussion: National car sharing operators such as Flexcar and ZipCar, using telephone and Internet-based reservation systems, allow their members a hassle-free way to rent cars by the hour, with members receiving a single bill at the end of the month for all their usage. The shared cars are located at convenient neighborhood "pods".

This strategy has proven successful in reducing both household vehicle ownership and the percentage of employees who drive alone because of the need to have a car for errands during the workday. As a result, car sharing can be an important tool to reduce parking demand.

For residents, car sharing reduces the need to own a vehicle, particularly a second or third car. Recent surveys have shown that more than half of car-share users have sold at least

[30] For example, the City currently has an "auto allowance" of $250/month for managers (with executives receiving an even higher allowance); this is in essence a fringe benefit to defray commuting costs, but employees can't use this for non-vehicle commuting costs such as transit passes. Converting this "auto allowance" into a "General Transportation Benefit" for these employees would create a strong incentive to take transit, bike and/or walk to work. If a car-sharing service were also established, City employees could be allowed to use their "Transportation Benefit to pay for car sharing trips as well.

one vehicle since joining the program in the San Francisco Bay Area.[31] For employees, car sharing allows them to take transit to work, since they will have a vehicle available for errands during the day.

With the pending and proposed development of several new mixed use housing units in downtown Ventura and the implementation of other strategies recommended in this plan (such as requiring that parking costs be unbundled from housing costs and that employers offer the option to employees to cash-out parking at work), car sharing much more viable. If parking costs remain bundled into housing costs, or employee parking remains free with no cash-out program, then the prospects for successful car sharing program will be considerably diminished.

Several cities, including the City of Berkeley and Portland (OR), have helped establish a car sharing program in their communities and reduced their own fleet costs by contracting out some portion of their vehicle fleet to a car sharing provider. In this arrangement, the City serves as an "anchor subscriber", which increases the feasibility of the car sharing operator and allows more vehicles to be made available to the public, especially on evening and weekend hours when usage by city employees is low.

The City should explore this model of contracting out its existing fleet operation. The City of Ventura currently has seven pool cars in their fleet (formerly there were 10 but the size was reduced due to recent budget cuts).

The City's existing fleet costs appear to be significant, costing $20,000 per year per city department subscribed. Departments are also charged $4.25/hour for their employees' use. When no cars are available in the City fleet, City employees rent cars from Enterprise at $30/day, even if the employee only need a vehicle for 1 or 2 hours. Because city fleet cars are expensive for departments on a per usage basis, department heads often encourage (or even require) employees to use their own cars and reimburse employees at the federally-established per mile rate.

Implementation of a universal transit pass (free transit pass for all downtown residents and employees) may also spur increased fleet usage for city employees (who begin taking transit but occasionally need a car for work trips). This in turn may increases the City's overall fleet costs even further. This plan recommends therefore that the City immediately begin negotiations with an existing car sharing operator in order to be able to implement establish a car sharing program concurrent with the launch of the recommended transit pass program.

Recommendation 9: Reduce and then Remove Minimum Parking Requirements

Goal: Remove barriers to new development downtown; encourage efficiently shared public parking rather than many small, inefficient private lots; and create a healthy market for downtown parking, where parking spaces are bought, sold, rented and least like any normal commodity.

[31] April 2002 survey by Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates for City CarShare.

Communities that have eliminated parking requirements

Examples of communities that have partially (in particular neighborhoods and districts) or entirely eliminated minimum parking requirements include:

- Coral Gables, FL
- Eugene, OR
- Fort Myers, FL
- Fort Pierce, FL
- Great Britain (entire nation)
- Los Angeles, CA
- Milwaukee, WI
- Olympia, WA
- Portland, OR
- San Francisco, CA
- Stuart, FL
- Seattle, WA
- Spokane, WA

Recommendation: Reform minimum parking requirements, in two steps. (a) Reduce minimum parking requirements in the Downtown Specific Plan area to levels that reflect typical actual demand for a successful mixed-use downtown. (b) After market-rate pricing has been instituted for downtown's on-street parking, and residential parking benefit districts established to protect neighborhoods from unwanted spill over parking, remove all minimum parking requirements in the Downtown Specific Plan area.

Discussion: In order for Ventura to realize its goals for the ongoing revitalization of downtown, the City's parking policies must support those goals.

Minimum parking requirements, however, have emerged as one of the biggest obstacles to many cities' efforts to encourage new residential and commercial development in their revitalizing downtown areas. Moreover, minimum parking requirements work at cross purposes to virtually all of Ventura's other adopted goals for its downtown. As UCLA professor Don Shoup describes it, "Parking requirements cause great harm: they subsidize cars, distort transportation choices, warp urban form, increase housing costs, burden low-income households, debase urban design, damage the economy, and degrade the environment… [O]ff-street parking requirements also cost a lot of money, although this cost is hidden in higher prices for everything except parking itself."

The one useful purpose that minimum parking requirements do currently serve is to prevent spill-over parking, the phenomenon of commuters filling up all of the parking spaces on a downtown's streets, and then spilling over into adjacent residential areas. However, once the recommendations of this plan are in place, market rate prices for the on-street parking in the downtown core will ensure that ample vacancies exist on the street. In the adjacent residential neighborhoods, the mechanism of residential parking benefit districts will ensure that unwanted spill over parking is prevented there as well. Once these two key policies have been implemented, imposing minimum parking requirements becomes superfluous.

Once on street parking is properly managed, so that spillover problems are solved, it will become possible for Ventura to join the many communities and places (see list, next page), such as the entire nation of Great Britain, that have removed minimum parking requirements. Doing so will provide numerous rewards, allowing Ventura to achieve its

goals of a more walkable and transit oriented downtown, a healthier economy and environment, lower housing costs and better urban design.

For the reasons described under Recommendation 1 (Pursue a Park Once Strategy), conventional minimum parking requirements are particularly inappropriate for traditional downtowns. Minimum parking requirements are typically based on parking demand observed in auto-oriented suburban areas with no transit service, where all parking is free, and walking and biking is uncommon.

For example, average peak parking demand rates for downtown land uses cited in the

Institute for Transportation Engineers' Parking Generation Manual (the most common basis for parking requirements) are well above 3 spaces per 1,000 s.f., with restaurants cited as needing more than 15 spaces per 1,000 s.f.[32]

However, our review of parking demand of the "Main Street districts" in cities comparable to Ventura (see Appendix 2, *Parking Demand in Main Street Districts*), found that parking occupancy rates for the successful mixed-use downtowns investigated ranged from just 1.6 to 1.9 spaces per 1,000 s.f. of non-residential built area (see Figure 2-13). The current parking requirements in downtown Ventura mandate 3.3 parking spaces per 1,000 s.f. for offices and retail and 5 spaces per 1,000 s.f. for restaurants.

Given the differences in parking demand between mixed-use Main Street districts and conventional suburban developments, conventional suburban parking requirements should not be applied to downtowns.

Figure 2-13 Summary of parking occupancy in four Main Street districts

	City Population	Mode Split[1]							Occupied Parking Spaces per 1,000 Sq.Ft.[3]
		Drove Alone	2 or More Person Carpool	Transit	Bicycle	Walked	Other Means	Worked at Home	
Chico	59,900	61%	12%	1%	11%	13%	1%	1%	1.7
Palo Alto	58,600	80%	9%	4%	3%	3%	1%	0%	1.9
Santa Monica	84,100	74%	11%	11%	1%	2%	1%	0%	1.8
Kirkland, WA[2]	45,600	77%	12%	4%	0%	2%	1%	4%	1.6

[1] Source: Census Transportation Planning Package (CTPP) 2000.
[2] Commuter mode split for Kirkland, Washington is not limited to the main street district, but covers commuting to the entire city, due to lack in data from CTPP 2000.
[3] Sq. Ft. refers to occupied non-residential built area in Chico and Palo Alto and both vacant and occupied non-residential built area in Santa Monica and Kirkland.

Instead, minimum parking requirements for downtowns and main-street districts should be removed, and spillover parking problems resolved with residential parking permit districts or parking benefit districts. As an interim step to implement while the necessary strategies to prevent spillover parking are being established in, minimum parking requirements for

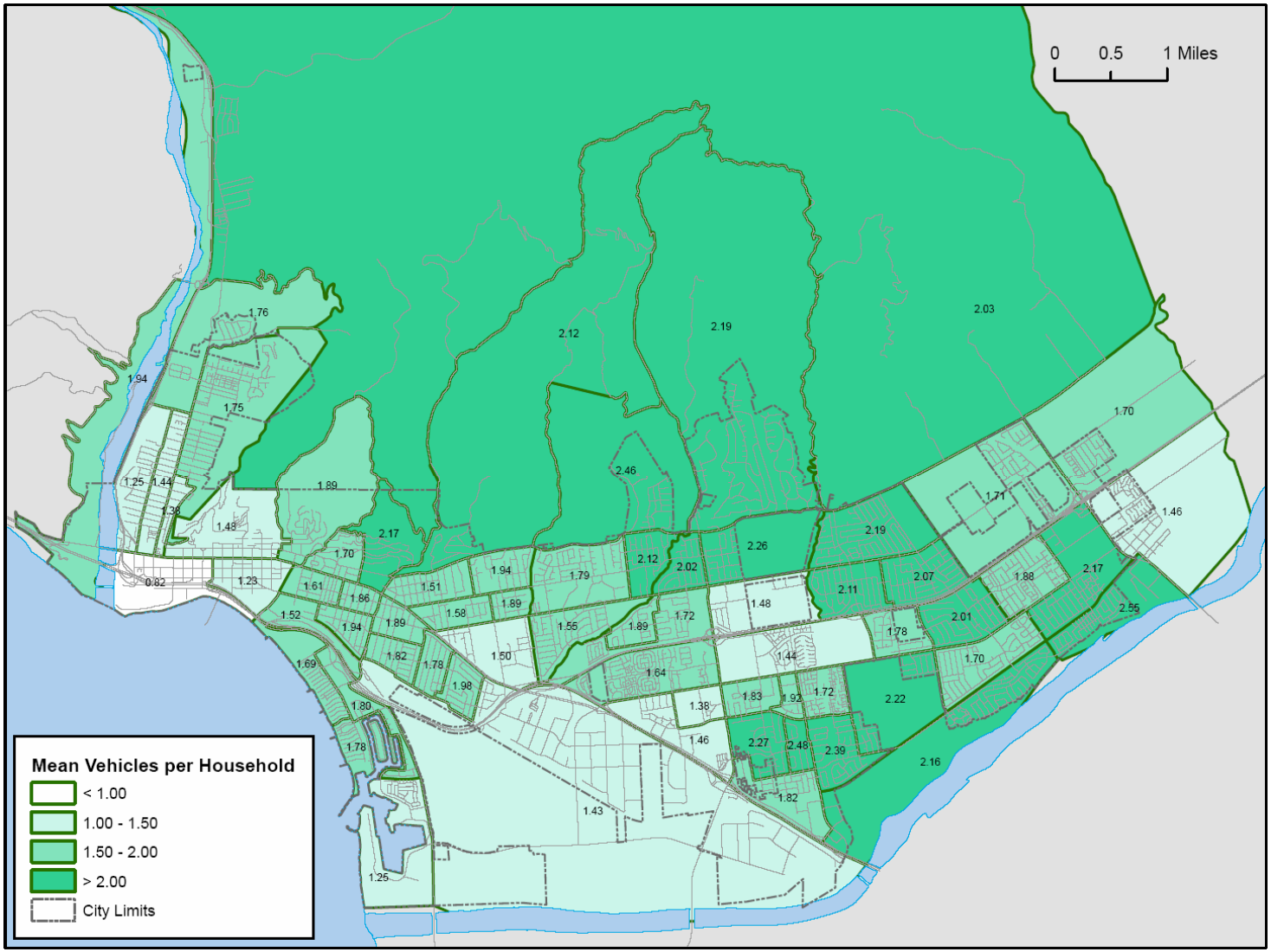
[32] *Parking Generation*, 2nd ed., Institute of Transportation Engineers, 1987.

downtown Ventura should be reduced to rates that reflect the actual demand observed in similar mixed-use downtowns.

Reduced car ownership by downtown residents

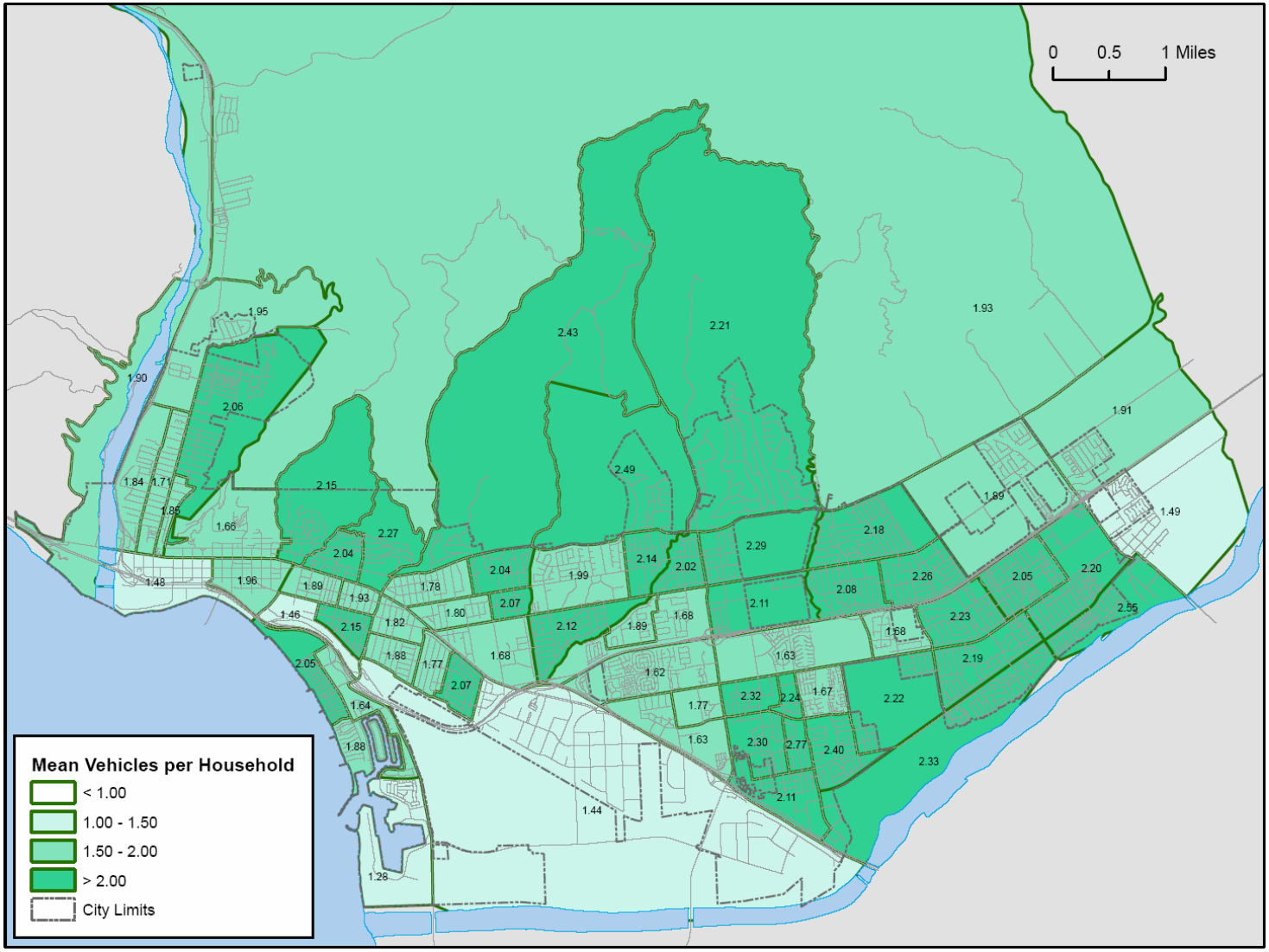
Residents of downtown Ventura also own substantially fewer vehicles per household than both the national average and the Ventura average. As Figure 2-14, Figure 2-15, and Figure 2-16 show, this pattern holds true for both rental units and ownership units. Among homeowners in the downtown (i.e., in the Census block group whose boundaries correspond closely to the downtown specific plan area), the average household owns 1.48 vehicles, while among renters, the average household has just 0.72 vehicles. Minimum parking requirements for the downtown should reflect this difference in vehicle ownership rates.

Figure 2-14 Vehicle ownership – all residential units



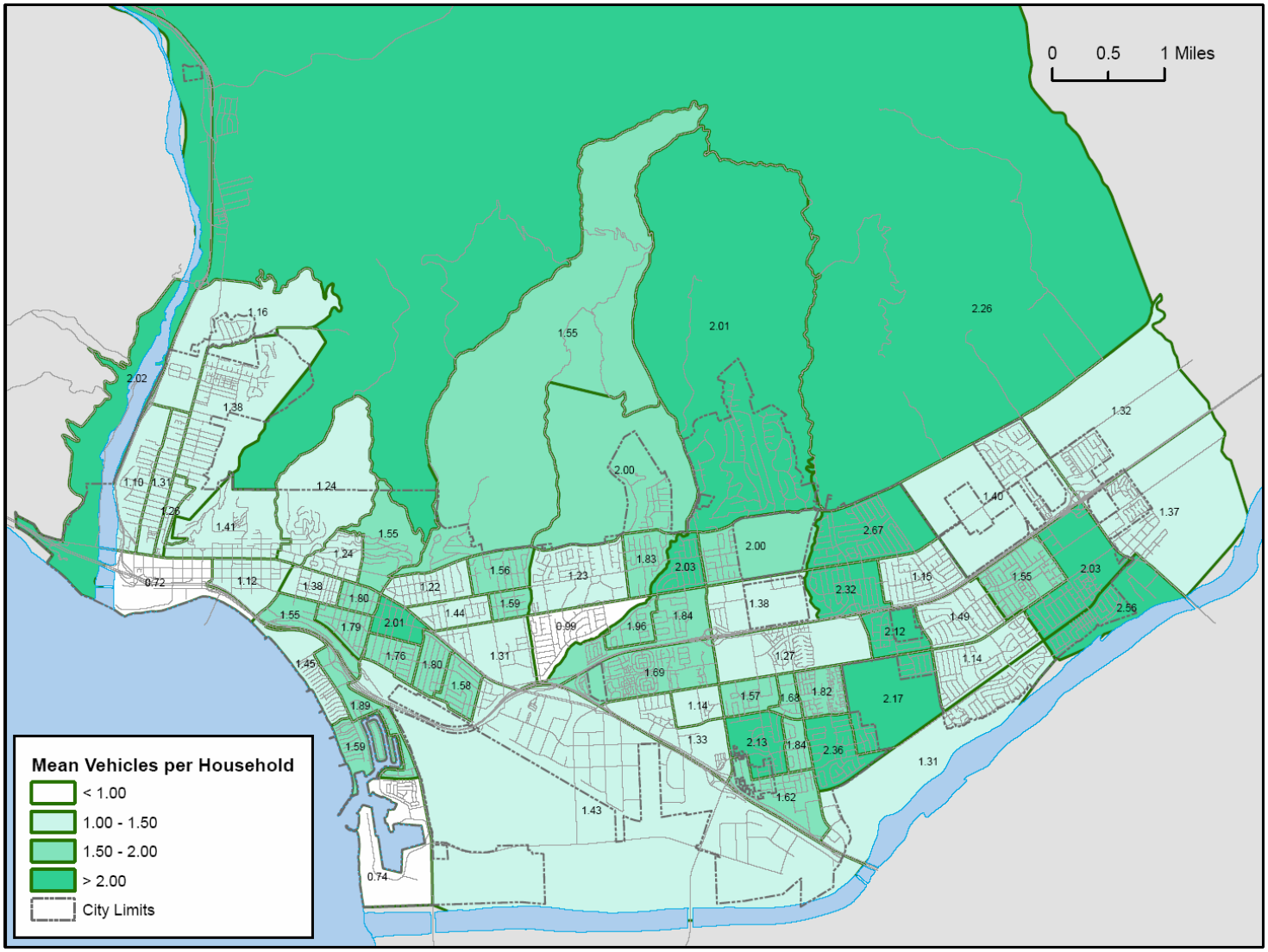
Source: 2000 US Census Community Transportation Planning Package

Figure 2-15 Vehicle ownership – owner-occupied units



Source: 2000 US Census Community Transportation Planning Package

Figure 2-16 Vehicle ownership – rental units

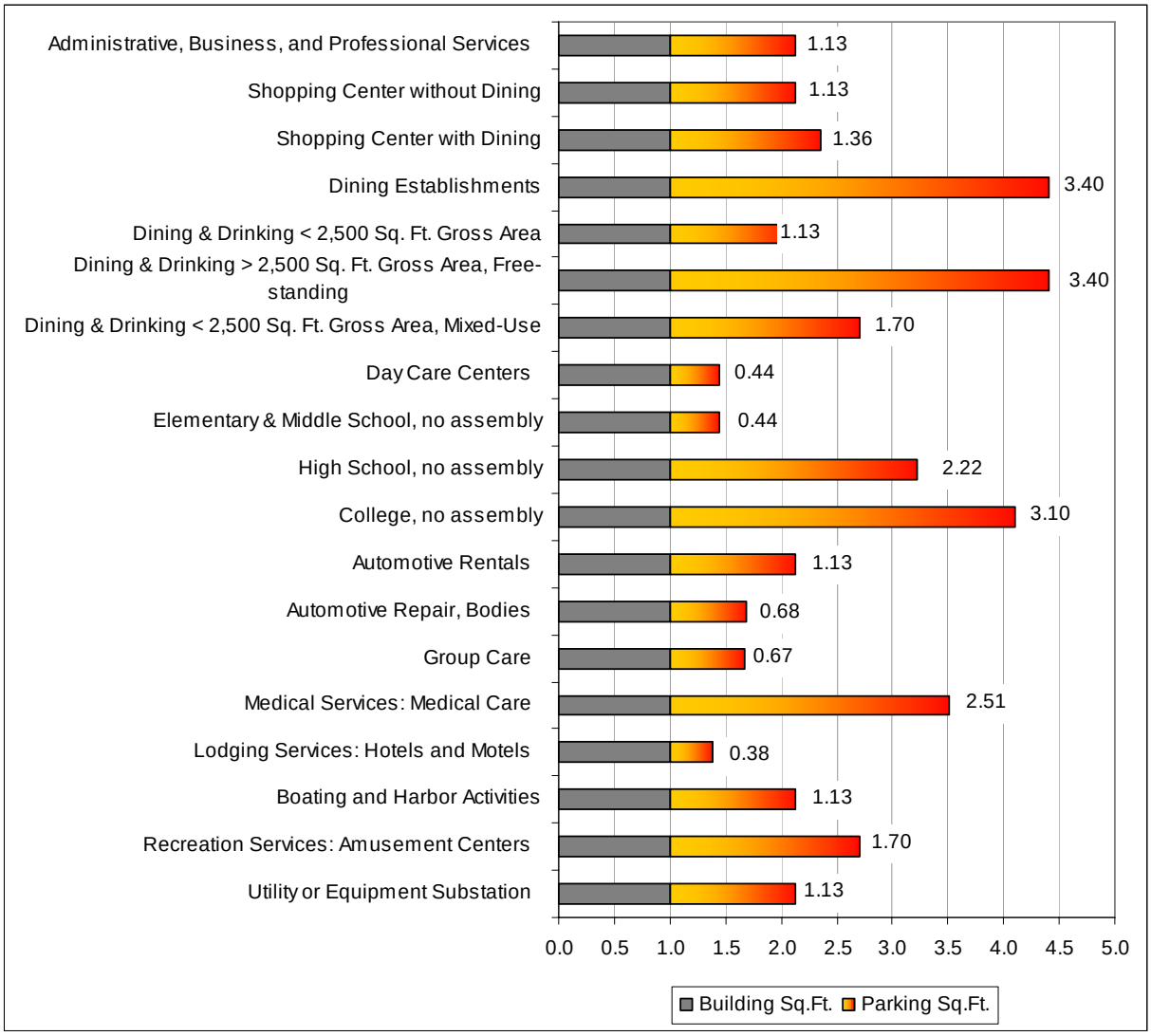


Source: 2000 US Census Community Transportation Planning Package

Existing minimum parking requirements

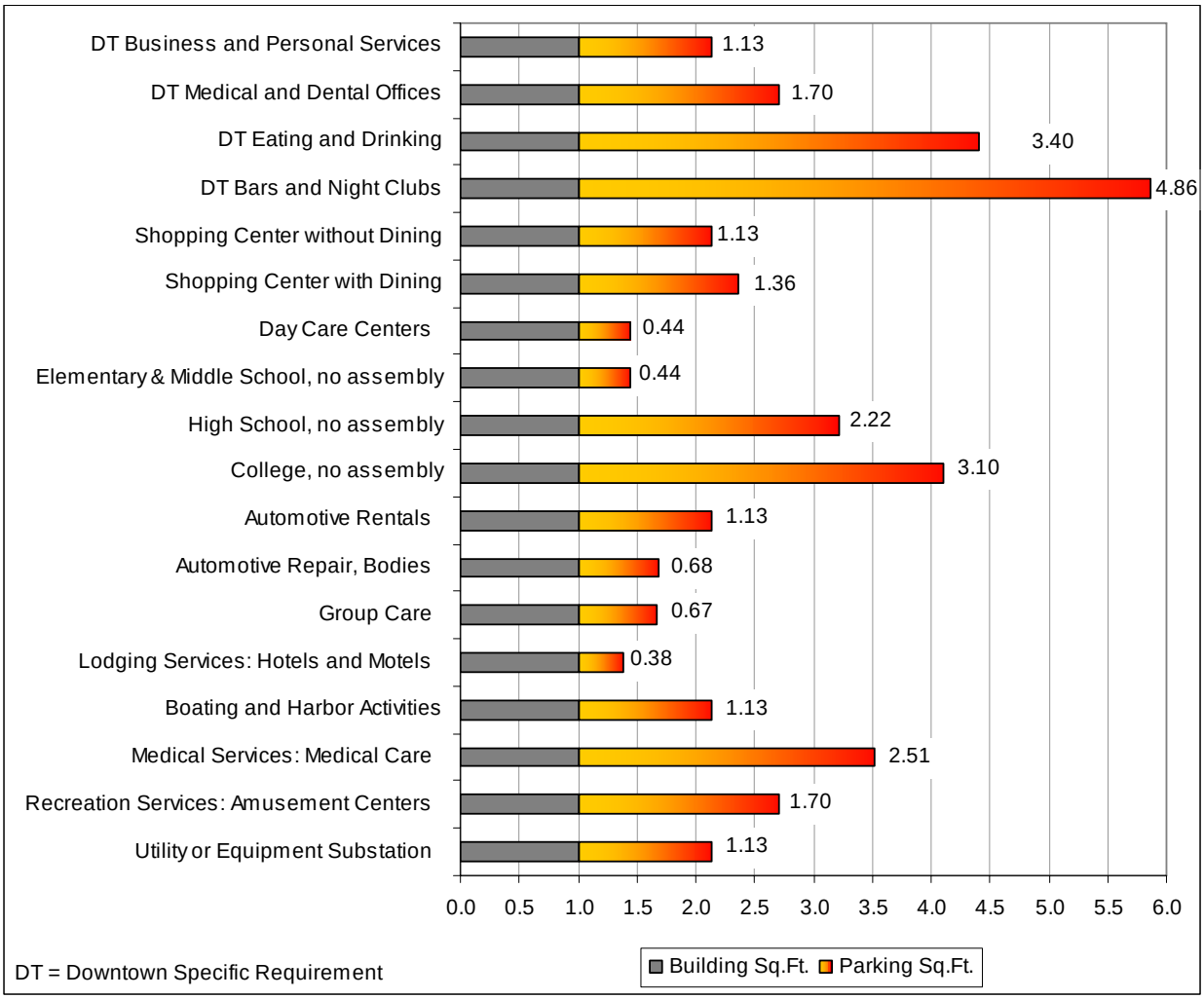
As illustrated Figure 2-17, Ventura's minimum parking requirements often require more than one square foot of parking area for every square foot of building. And as Figure 2-18 shows, even the minimum parking requirements for downtown often require more parking than building, and this is especially true for uses that help create vibrancy and life downtown (restaurants, night clubs, etc). Removing these requirements, and the interim step of reducing them to levels appropriate to a traditional downtown, can greatly improve urban design, while making it possible to build many projects that were previously financially infeasible.

Figure 2-17 Ventura's existing minimum parking requirements



Source: City of San Buenaventura Zoning Code

Figure 2-18 Downtown Ventura's existing minimum parking requirements



Source: City of San Buenaventura Zoning Code

Phased implementation

This plan recommends that minimum parking requirements first be reduced for all new development in the Downtown Specific Plan area. These reduced parking requirements have been developed based on the transportation profile of downtown Ventura, and our review of comparable mixed-use downtowns (as discussed above).

After minimum parking requirements have been reduced – and after the recommendations in this plan to prevent spillover parking have been successfully implemented– this plan recommends that minimum parking requirements for all new development in the Downtown Plan Specific area be removed. In any event, a sunset date for all minimum parking requirements in downtown should be established, with a target sunset date of

three years from the date of adoption of the Downtown Specific Plan, to ensure that minimum parking requirements are not allowed to linger indefinitely.

These recommendations are phased to ensure that implementation proceeds in a successful and orderly way. The recommended phasing is discussed below.

Near-Term Implementation (2006-2008)

Revise the zoning code for minimum parking requirements for all new development in the Downtown Specific Plan area, in the following manner:

Parking requirements for all nonresidential land uses:

- 2 parking spaces per 1,000 s.f.

Establishing such a single, "blended" ratio for all nonresidential land uses serves two purposes: it reflects the typical average demand for observed for downtown uses incomparable downtowns, as described above. Additionally, establishing a single ratio makes it possible for land uses to change freely over time within a building, as property owner's needs and economic demands change.

Residential parking requirements:

- 1 parking space per 1,500 square feet[33]
- No parking spaces required for housing units dedicated as follows:
  - Affordable housing units (below-market rate)
  - Senior housing units
  - Single-resident occupancy (SRO) units
  - Properties fronting Main Street (maintaining the existing policy, established in the Freedman Tung & Bottomley Downtown Specific Plan

Additional recommended parking ordinance provisions:

- Except for designated disabled parking spaces, no parking spaces for any use in the Downtown Specific Plan area should be required to be individually-accessible (e.g., tandem, stacking, and valet parking should be permitted by right to satisfy the interim minimum parking requirements).
- Shared on-site parking between land uses with different periods of peak parking demand should be allowed for all uses in the Downtown Specific Plan area. Shared

[33] This plan recommends "rebasing" the minimum parking requirement for residential development from a "per unit" basis to a "per square foot" basis in order to remove financial disincentives for the construction of smaller residential units in downtown Ventura (studios, 1 bedrooms, and small loft-type units are product types that has proven successful in finding a niche in traditional downtowns). As Donald Shoup notes: "Requiring a fixed number of parking space per dwelling unit disproportionately increases the cost of small apartments and make them uneconomical. [...] Merely changing the base of the parking requirement from dwelling units to square feet can dramatically reduce the cost of small apartments." From *The High Cost of Free Parking*, Planners Press, 2005, p152.

on-site parking should be allowed to satisfy 100% of the interim minimum parking requirement for each use, so long as documentation can be provided that the existing or anticipated land use(s) will have different periods of peak parking demand and the shared parking can accommodate the parking demand for both uses.

- Off-site parking within 1,250 feet should be allowed for all uses in the Downtown Specific Plan area. Off-site parking located further than 1,250 feet should be allowed at the discretion of the review authority so long as there is documentation that a shuttle bus service or valet parking service will be provided. Off-site parking should be allowed to satisfy 100% of the interim minimum parking requirement for each use, so long as documentation can be provided that the off-site parking can accommodate the parking demand for the proposed land use.

- Payment of in-lieu parking fees: the current in-lieu parking fee should remain at $1,000 space, but the program be expanded to apply to all development types and entire Downtown Specific Plan area. In addition, the in-lieu revenue generated by the program should be used to fund parking and transportation management strategies recommended in this plan. Payment of the in-lieu parking fee for each required space should be allowed to satisfy 100% of the interim minimum parking requirement.

In order to encourage new development downtown and increase housing affordability and housing choice, Ventura should also incorporate additional flexibility into minimum parking requirements. These "flex requirements" will allow development projects that incorporate transportation and parking demand management strategies recommended throughout this plan to provide a reduced amount of parking, as follows:

- The review authority may reduce or completely waive the number of parking spaces required based on quantitative information provided by the project applicant that documents the need for fewer parking spaces, such as:

- A market profile of existing or anticipated project users documenting below average vehicle ownership rates (for residential development) or below average vehicle trip generation rates (for commercial development).

- Documentation of the expected reduction of vehicle trips and/or car ownership rates associated with the project due to the incorporation of transportation and parking demand management strategies into the project.

- Documentation that the proposed land use will operate exclusively when the existing public parking supply within 1,250 feet is adequate to accommodate the parking for the proposed use (e.g. a restaurant or club that operates only during evening hours).

- Documentation of the experience of other cities comparable to Ventura that have a lower parking requirement for the proposed land use.

Longer-term Implementation

At the same time as the above recommendations are being implemented – and before removing minimum parking requirements– the City should implement the following recommendations presented elsewhere in this plan:

- In the downtown core: Establish paid parking to manage demand for on-street parking and set parking meter prices to maintain a 15% vacancy rate, according to the "Goldilocks Rule": if occupancy rates are above 85% parking rates are too low and if occupancy rates are below 85%, the parking rates are too high (see Recommendation 2).

- In downtown-adjacent residential neighborhoods: Reduce spillover parking by implementing Residential Parking Benefit Districts (see Recommendation 6).

Once the above recommendations have been implemented, minimum parking requirements for all development in the Downtown Specific Plan area can successfully be removed.

Recommendation 10: Reroute Bus Service from Main St. to Santa Clara St.

Goal: Reduce transit delays on Main St. and increase supply of most convenient short-term curb parking spaces on Main St. for shoppers and visitors.

Recommendation: The City of Ventura should, after confirmation by additional field testing and outreach, reroute South Coast Area Transit (SCAT) lines 6A, 6B, 12, and 16 from Main St. to Santa Clara St. between Fir and Ventura Streets.

Discussion: Observations of traffic conditions downtown and conversations with SCAT management and City transportation planners indicated that SCAT transit lines on Main Street are frequently delayed by peak hour auto congestion. Conversely, Santa Clara St. just one block to the south consistently experiences less vehicle traffic.

Some of the auto congestion on Main St. is due to the phenomenon of visitors "cruising" for a scarce free curb parking space directly on Main St., and most if not all of this cruising will be eliminated if downtown parking is priced as recommended by this plan. However, some of the auto congestion is simply due to the greater "activity density" on Main St. relative to Santa Clara St., and it is certain that Main St. will continue to function as the major east-west vehicle corridor through downtown even when parking is priced.

As a result, this plan therefore recommends that SCAT transit service (lines 6A, 6B, 12, and 16) be re-routed from Main St. to Santa Clara St. The existing routes of these lines are show in Figure 2-19.

Figure 2-19 Existing SCAT transit routes

Source: South Coast Area Transit

Since Santa Clara St. is just one block away from Main St., rerouting service will still preserve good transit access to the downtown core without inconveniencing transit riders. In addition, rerouting transit service from Main St. to Santa Clara St. is expected to produce the following benefits:

- Facilitate faster bus runs, reduced travel time, and increased schedule reliability due to less traffic congestion on Santa Clara St. Both SCAT drivers and riders would likely prefer to have service rerouted to Santa Clara St., as conversations with SCAT management suggested that drivers often cite challenges of operating on Main St. and past rider surveys indicate frequency, travel time, and reliability are high-priority issues.

- Allow SCAT to either a) increase service frequency ("do more with less"), or b) reduce operating costs ("do same with less")

- Eliminating bus loading zones on Main St. would also create more curb frontage that could either be used for additional on-street parking or for traffic-calming

treatments (like corner bulb-outs, widened sidewalks, and landscaping) to further the revitalization goals of the Downtown specific Plan.

A test run of this proposal using an out-of-service SCAT bus driven by a licensed SCAT operator was conducted by the project team in July of 2005 in order to identify potential benefits and concerns. This test run, along with conversations with SCAT management and City transportation planners, resulted in the following preliminary findings:

- The right-of-way on Santa Clara is wide enough to operate buses even while preserving the existing bike lanes.
- Existing VISTA bus stops on Santa Clara St. should be shared with re-routed SCAT service, and the appropriate locations and spacing of future shared bus stops should be coordinated with that agency.
- A limited amount of curb parking spaces at the corners of Santa Clara and side streets will need to be removed to provide adequate turning radii for buses (approximately 6 spaces total).

An additional implementation priority that was raised by SCAT and city agency stakeholders, as well as members of the public during the outreach process, was that the City should concurrently provide bus shelters, street furniture, and other pedestrian/passenger amenities at the same time that transit service is rerouted. Specifically, a consensus emerged that the City should prioritize installation of pedestrian infrastructure and amenities in two areas:

- Along Santa Clara St. to accommodate waiting bus passengers, as well as increased pedestrian traffic along Santa Clara from arriving/departing bus passengers
- Along north-south side streets connecting to Santa Clara to ensure that walking to/from Santa Clara is safe and enjoyable

This plan recommends that additional field testing of this proposal be conducted including doing several timed runs of each route so that any effect on scheduling can be refined. All test runs should simulate stopping at the proposed bus stop locations in order to account for passenger boarding time, and at least some of the test runs should be conducted at peak travel periods.

In addition, this plan recommends that the City conduct additional outreach to SCAT, VISTA, and other partner agencies to before implementing this recommendation, and well as solicit feedback from transit riders, downtown residents, and the general public.

Recommendation 11: New Parking Garage when Needed

Goal: Pursue implementation of all cost-effective strategies to reduce parking demand, while preparing for the future need to provide one or more new downtown parking garages.

Recommendation: Ventura should:

1) Identify one or more placeholder sites for locating new garages when needed.

2) Prioritize and aggressively implement all feasible strategies for reducing parking demand, that are more cost-effective than increasing parking supply.

3) Monitor the effectiveness of strategies to reduce parking demand and initiate pre-development process for new parking garage when downtown peak parking occupancy regularly and consistently exceeds 80%.

Discussion: While costly, new public parking structures will likely be necessary to meet demand once substantial new development has taken place, many existing surface lots have been redeveloped, and all of the lower-cost transportation demand management measures and shared parking strategies have been exhausted. Placeholder sites for one or more new public parking garages were identified in previous urban design efforts for the Downtown Specific Plan. These sites are illustrated in Figure 2-22.

How much does it cost to add a new parking space in downtown Ventura?

An analysis of the annualized costs of building parking was conducted in order to provide a reference point for the cost-effectiveness of many of the transportation and parking management strategies recommended in this plan.

The assumptions were as follows:

- A 5-story parking garage with 6 parking levels (parking on roof level)
- A structured garage displaces a 100-space surface parking lot on a 34,000 s.f. (0.78 acre) site
- 80 spaces on each parking level for a total of 480 spaces
    - Parking space size 340 s.f. per space (or 128.1 spaces per acre)
    - "Capacity loss" factor: 20% loss of spaces per level due to additional vehicle circulation, columns, stairwells/elevators needed for structures
- 5% interest (tax-free municipal bonds)
- 35-year useful life
- All costs are in 2005 dollars for the Los Angeles metropolitan region

The analysis considered two scenarios:

- Land costs nothing (has no value)
- Land costs $100 per s.f. (current average assessed value of land in downtown)

Under this scenario, the total project costs if land costs $100 per square foot are $11.6M or $30,564 per space gained (in 2005 $), as illustrated in Figure 2-20. This is in line with the cost per space added for several recent downtown public parking garages:

- Mountain View (2000): $26,000
- Walnut Creek (1994): $32,400
- Palo Alto (2002): $50,994
- San Jose (2002): $77,000

On an annualized basis, this results in a cost of $188 per space per month or $2,255 per space per year, as illustrated in Figure 2-21. It should be noted that this is a conservative estimate. Several costs are excluded, such as externalized public costs, which have been estimated at $117/space for traffic congestion and air pollution costs.

The bottom line is that the costs of building new structured parking spaces can be significant, and it is often cheaper to reduce demand rather than increase supply. Considering the significant cost per new vehicle trip accommodated in a new parking space, it is important to exhaust all other cost-effective strategies to reduce parking demand. Additional structured parking is eventually likely to be needed in downtown Ventura, but given current occupancy rates for downtown parking (55% occupancy at the peak hour), and the availability of untapped transportation demand management strategies, parking pricing and shared parking opportunities, it is important to think carefully, and manage existing parking resources effectively, before simply building more.

Figure 2-20 Capital costs for a new downtown parking garage

Capital Costs

	Structured Spaces Built	Surface Spaces Displaced	Net Spaces Gained	Land Cost / Value Current $	Direct Cost Current $	Project Cost (Land + Soft) Current $
New downtown garage ($0/sf land costs)	480	100	380	$0	$6,467,979	$8,214,333
New downtown garage ($100/sf land costs)	480	100	380	$3,400,000	$6,467,979	$11,614,333

Capital Costs

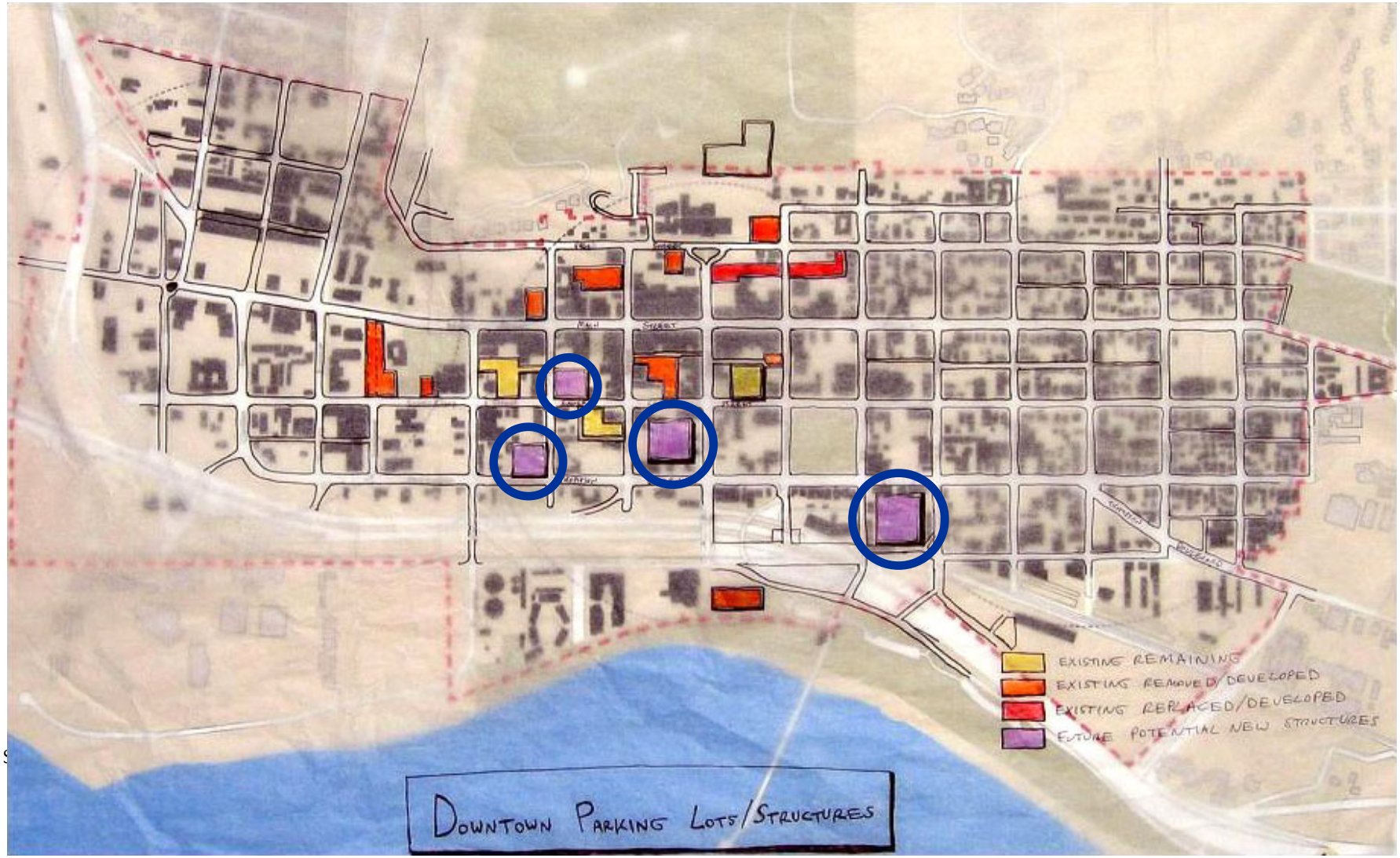
	Gross Cost Per Space Current $		Cost Per Space Gained Current $	
	Direct	Project	Direct	Project
New downtown garage ($0/sf land costs)	$13,475	$17,113	**$17,021**	**$21,617**
New downtown garage ($100/sf land costs)	$13,475	$24,197	**$17,021**	**$30,564**

Figure 2-21 Annualized costs for a new downtown parking garage

Resulting Costs Per Space Per Year

	Project Cost Per Space Gained	ANNUAL COSTS PER SPACE GAINED				TOTAL COST PER SPACE GAINED		
		Debt Service	Operation & Maintenance	Insurance	Enforcement	Per Year	Per Month	Per Workday
New downtown garage ($0/sf land costs)	$21,617	$1,320	$273	$43	$54	**$1,690**	**$141**	**$6.29**
New downtown garage ($100/sf land cost	$30,564	$1,867	$273	$61	$54	**$2,255**	**$188**	**$8.39**

Figure 2-22 Potential sites for new public parking garage downtown



Chapter 3. Implementation Plan

In order to implement the transportation and parking management recommendations presented in this *Downtown Transportation and Parking Plan* in a strategic and cost-effective way, the following implementation steps should be taken. Following an implementation schedule according to the phased plan below is important because the success of many of the recommendations this plan will be leveraged if implemented concurrently, while the success of others depends on earlier recommendations being implemented and well-established. See Figure 3-1 for an overview.

Implementation and Monitoring

Near-Term Implementation (2006)

- Incorporate transportation and parking strategies recommended in this plan in the update to the *Downtown Specific Plan*
- Adopt *New Downtown Specific Plan*

Mid-Term Implementation (2006-2010)

- Form a Parking Benefit District in the Downtown Specific Plan area to coordinate implementation of the recommendations in this plan, in three steps:
    - Refine and approve operating principles for the transportation and parking management strategies recommended in this plan
    - Expand and refine the implementation and monitoring plan presented here
    - Hire new staff responsible for managing the Parking Benefit District and implementing the major recommendations of this plan.
- Establish commercial and residential parking benefit districts to manage parking demand in the downtown core and prevent unwanted spillover parking in downtown-adjacent residential neighborhoods
- Revise zoning code and parking regulations for all new development in the Downtown Specific Plan area to:
    - Reduce current minimum parking requirements
    - Expand applicability of in-lieu parking fee program to all new development throughout the Downtown Specific Plan area
    - Permit additional reductions and flexibility with minimum parking requirements for projects that incorporate transportation and parking demand management strategies recommended in this plan

  - Require residential and commercial parking costs to be "unbundled" from leases for residences

- Require all employers in the Downtown Specific Plan area to offer employees the option to "cash out" the parking subsidy as a Transportation Fringe Benefit

- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation

Long-term Implementation (beyond 2010)

- Use parking revenue from commercial and residential parking benefit districts to fund transportation and parking demand management programs, incentives, and improvements in the blocks where the revenues are collected, including:
  - Universal transit passes for all residents and employees in the Downtown Specific Plan area
  - Carsharing program with one or more convenient and highly-visible "pods" located in Downtown Specific Plan area
- Remove minimum parking requirements for all development in the Downtown Specific Plan area
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation
- Construct additional parking when needed

Figure 3-1 Implementation & Monitoring Strategy

		Near-Term (2006)	Mid-Term (2006-2010)			Long-term (2010 +)
			07	08	09	
1	Incorporate transportation and parking strategies recommended in this plan in the update to the *Downtown Specific Plan*	X				
2	Adopt *New Downtown Specific Plan*	X				
3	Form a Parking Benefit District in the Downtown Specific Plan area to coordinate implementation of the recommendations in this plan, in three steps:		X			
3.1	Refine and approve operating principles for the transportation and parking management strategies recommended in this plan		X			
3.2	Expand and refine the implementation and monitoring plan presented here		X			
3.3	Hire new staff responsible for managing the Parking Benefit District and implementing the major recommendations of this plan.		X			
4	Establish commercial and residential parking benefit districts to manage parking demand in the downtown core and prevent unwanted spillover parking in downtown-adjacent residential neighborhoods			X		
5	Revise zoning code & parking regulations for all new development in the Downtown Specific Plan area to:			X		
5.1	Reduce current minimum parking requirements			X		
5.2	Expand applicability of in-lieu parking fee program to all new development throughout the DSP area			X		
5.32	Permit additional reductions and flexibility with minimum parking requirements for projects that incorporate transportation and parking demand management strategies recommended in this plan			X		
5.4	Require residential and commercial parking costs to be “unbundled” from leases for residences				X	
6	Require all employers in the Downtown Specific Plan area to offer employees the option to “cash out” the parking subsidy as a Transportation Fringe Benefit				X	
7	Ongoing monitoring and evaluation				X	
8	Use parking revenue from commercial and residential parking benefit districts to fund transportation and parking demand management programs, incentives, and improvements in blocks where the revenues are collected, including:					X
8.1	Universal transit passes for all residents and employees in the Downtown Specific Plan area					X
8.2	Car-sharing program with one or more convenient and highly-visible “pods” located in Downtown Specific Plan area				X	
8.3	Remove minimum parking requirements for all development in the Downtown Specific Plan area					X
9	Construct additional parking when needed					X
10	Ongoing monitoring and evaluation			X	X	X

Chapter 4. Summary and Next Steps

The *Downtown Ventura Mobility and Parking Plan* represents Nelson\Nygaard's recommendations for the most cost-effective transportation and parking management strategies for downtown Ventura while furthering the goals expressed in the *Ventura Vision*, the *Downtown Specific Plan*, and the City's *General Plan*. Throughout the planning process, the project team conducted an extensive public outreach process, making 10 presentations to over 100 stakeholders in order to solicit feedback from the perspective of policymakers and city staff, key downtown stakeholders, and community leaders. The recommendations were then developed using a balanced and comprehensive analytical approach in an attempt to leverage downtown Ventura's existing assets and respond to downtown's existing challenges.

These recommendations, when introduced according to the phased implementation and monitoring plan, will support downtown's ongoing revitalization, while also furthering the community of Ventura's values and vision for its historic downtown heart.

Next Steps

These recommendations contained in this plan are designed for incorporation into the pending update of the *Downtown Specific Plan*. Public hearings before the Planning Commission and the City Council are tentatively scheduled for Spring of 2006 with final adoption of the new *Downtown Specific Plan* tentatively scheduled for Summer of 2006.