

## City of Watertown Downtown Parking Study Overview

### Background:

SRF completed a parking study update for the Downtown district of the City of Watertown (see Figure 1: Parking Zones). A previous parking study was completed in 2018 with parking utilization surveys of on and public and private off-street parking. This study will serve as an update to those public parking lots and development assumptions. The core project area is generally bounded by Washington Street to the west, Cady Street to the north, Seventh Street to the east, and Milwaukee Street to the south. The defined project area and zones are shown in Figure 1. The main objectives of this study are to review the existing parking utilization within the project area, document any supply issues that exist, and plan for potential future parking opportunities as redevelopment is expected to occur. The following assumptions, analysis, and study conclusions are offered for your consideration.

### Existing Conditions:

The existing conditions were reviewed to establish a baseline to identify any existing supply issues facing this area of downtown for both the parking lots and on-street parking locations shown in Figure 1. The evaluation of existing conditions includes parking utilization surveys collected during different time periods. Public Works Department team members conducted a parking utilization survey during the week of July 15, 2021, and the weekend of June 26, 2021, within public lots in Downtown Watertown.

Results of the parking utilization surveys are detailed within Tables 1, 2, and 3 for the highest peak periods during the observation periods, which were the Saturday afternoon, weekday evening, and weekday afternoon, respectively. The full dataset is included within Appendix A.

As shown in Tables 1 through 3, the **peak parking period** is generally identified as the **Saturday afternoons** with a **peak utilization of approximately 45 percent** for all spaces in the downtown core. There is a peak parking demand of **53% of the public spaces available in Downtown**. This leaves a public parking **surplus of 597 spaces**.

A few other key observations during the peak timeframes:

- On-street parking ranges in all zones from 32 to 45 percent occupied, with the peak occurring on the Saturday afternoon timeframe.
- On-street parking in Zone A, where there are no public lots, is approximately 55 percent occupied during all peak timeframes.
- Public parking lots peaked with a 66 percent utilization on Saturday afternoon, which coincides with the peak recreational and shopping hours of Downtown. During the weekdays, the public parking lots were approximately 35 percent occupied in Downtown.
- During the weekdays, the public lots were higher utilized in Zone D, however, on Saturday, the public lots were similarly utilized in Zone C and D. Note, the public lots in Zone B were always less than 30 percent occupied.
- Private parking lots throughout Downtown were approximately 30 percent occupied during the peak hours, indicating an excess supply of private parking.

### **Future Parking Demand:**

The following key results were determined as part of the parking analysis:

- Zone A is expected to have a deficit of public parking between six (6) and nine (9) spaces during the time periods. Note, all available public parking in this zone is on-street parking.
- If the proposed retail developments in Zone A are able to provide off-street parking for a portion of the customers, the potential deficit could be reduced/eliminated. For purposed of this study to remain conservative, it is assumed that all parking will occur at public facilities.
- In Zone B during the Saturday afternoon peak time there is expected to be a public surplus of only one (1) parking space. This would be expected to become a deficit of approximately 60 spaces if full capacity events occurred at the Town Square Amphitheater during the Saturday afternoon timeframe. During the other timeframes, there is expected to be sufficient public parking supply.
- There are not expected to be any public parking supply issues in Zones C and D during the peak times.
- In addition to the public parking, there is an abundance of private parking spaces available during the peak times in all zones.
- Given the public parking supply issues expected in Zones A and B during the peak timeframes, parking mitigation strategies will be required to minimize impacts on visitors to Downtown.
- Strategies should focus on directing visitors to available parking lots on either side of the river while promoting multimodal opportunities to decrease vehicle circulation.

### **Other Considerations:**

The two public lots located along the west side of S. First Street between Jefferson and Main Streets when developed will have approximately 34 on-street stalls available within approximately one block of these two public lots. Likewise, there will be available capacity between on-street parking and public lot parking to accommodate the development of public lot along Market Street and further south on S. First Street.

In addition to that potential development, the City may potentially acquire two (2) private parking lots in Zone C. If these lots become public parking, it is anticipated that up to 40 public parking stalls will be added. These lots are present an opportunity for the City to create additional overflow parking during upcoming Main Street construction during which on-street parking will be reduced during the construction season, potential permit spaces for businesses/landlords, and future redevelopment opportunities. By purchasing these lots, the City will control the function of the lot, which allows flexibility in future years to meet the needs of the community.

### **Mitigation/Implementation Plan:**

#### **Low Cost**

- Shared Parking: Underutilized private parking lots should be considered for shared parking opportunities.
  - o Potential locations to consider shared parking in Zone B include, but are not limited to, the following private parking locations:
    - Lot located in the 300 block of S. Water Street
    - Lot directly north of 104 W. Main Street
    - Lot located at 301 W. Main Street



- Provide Short-Term Parking: Reduce parking time limits in front of certain businesses, as needed to encourage high turnover for visitors and reduce employee parking on-street.
  - o Time limits reduced to 15 – 30 minutes
- New Development Parking Requirements: Require off-street parking to be provided by new development at agreed upon parking rates.

#### Medium Cost

- Communications Plan: Communications can be sent out to both residents and area businesses/chamber of commerce promoting the use of the available parking facilities.
- Parking Surveys: Perform a business owner survey in the future for the entirety of downtown to understand current communications plans, employee parking behaviors, and opinion on the changes in work habits.
- Improved Parking Signing: Installing improved, high visibility signs at entrances to public parking facilities.
- Promoting Walking/Biking Downtown: To encourage higher usage of public parking lots on the fringe of the Downtown core, the City can encourage walking through the core and encourage residents who live within a bikeable distance (typically within 1 – 2 miles) to bike to Downtown to reduce reliance on automobiles.

Ways to encourage walking/biking include:

- Installing bike racks/bike lanes where feasible. Designate a bike route.
- Ensuring sidewalks are a proper width (minimum of 4 feet) and are in good condition (i.e. fixing broken panels and heaved panels).
- Ensure sidewalks are clear of ice/snow during winter months.
- Provide benches and landscape/streetscape enhancements to improve the visual feel and provide opportunities for visitors to rest.
- Ensure areas are well lit and safe. When visitors feel safe, they are encouraged to stay longer and visit more often.
- Install wayfinding signing with estimated walk times/distance. These signs provide helpful notes to visitors to explore the area while understanding the walk times. Public parking lots could be included, or these signs can be installed near public lots.
- Information kiosks, either static or interactive (higher cost) can help visitors find local establishments, find parking locations, and understand distances. Similar to wayfinding signing, these types of installations provide visitors with a greater understanding of the Downtown core. These can be located near key intersections or bridges.
  - o Detailed information such as restaurants, civic destinations, churches, or landmarks can be included.
  - o Interactive displays provide a wealth of information but come with a high cost.
  - o A static display could include a QR code which can help update with real time information.
  - o Kiosks should be placed in a way that they do not impact travel paths along the sidewalk network and still maintain ADA compliance.

#### High Cost

- Acquiring Additional Public Lots: Find private lots that are underutilized or not utilized and purchase the blighted properties.
- Parking Structure: Although not expected to be needed now, a parking structure constructed on the site of an existing public surface lot can increase parking supply.
- Parking Meters: Parking meters have not been specifically requested by users or business owners of Downtown, but they are a potential future option.

- Parking Permits: Both residential or employee parking permit program could be instituted to help reduce circulation and clearly identify who can park where.

### **Implementation Plan:**

Using information provided within the study and the 2018 study, The City is recommended to prioritize the low-cost improvements. As development occurs within Downtown, the medium cost improvement strategies can begin to be implemented, pending funding. Wayfinding signing provides one of the best benefit/cost of the listed strategies, as it can help both long-time residents and new visitors to their destinations. The multi-modal improvements listed can be implemented on a low-cost basis or as roadway reconstruction occurs. These improvements will help facilitate alternative modes of transportation and reduce reliance on parking automobiles right outside the front door of the destination. At this time, the high-cost opportunities of parking structures and parking meters are not expected to be necessary. If development assumptions change and a large influx of public parking is necessary, those strategies should be reviewed. Under the current plans, the low, medium, and remaining high-cost strategies should be sufficient to help accommodate the future parking demand.



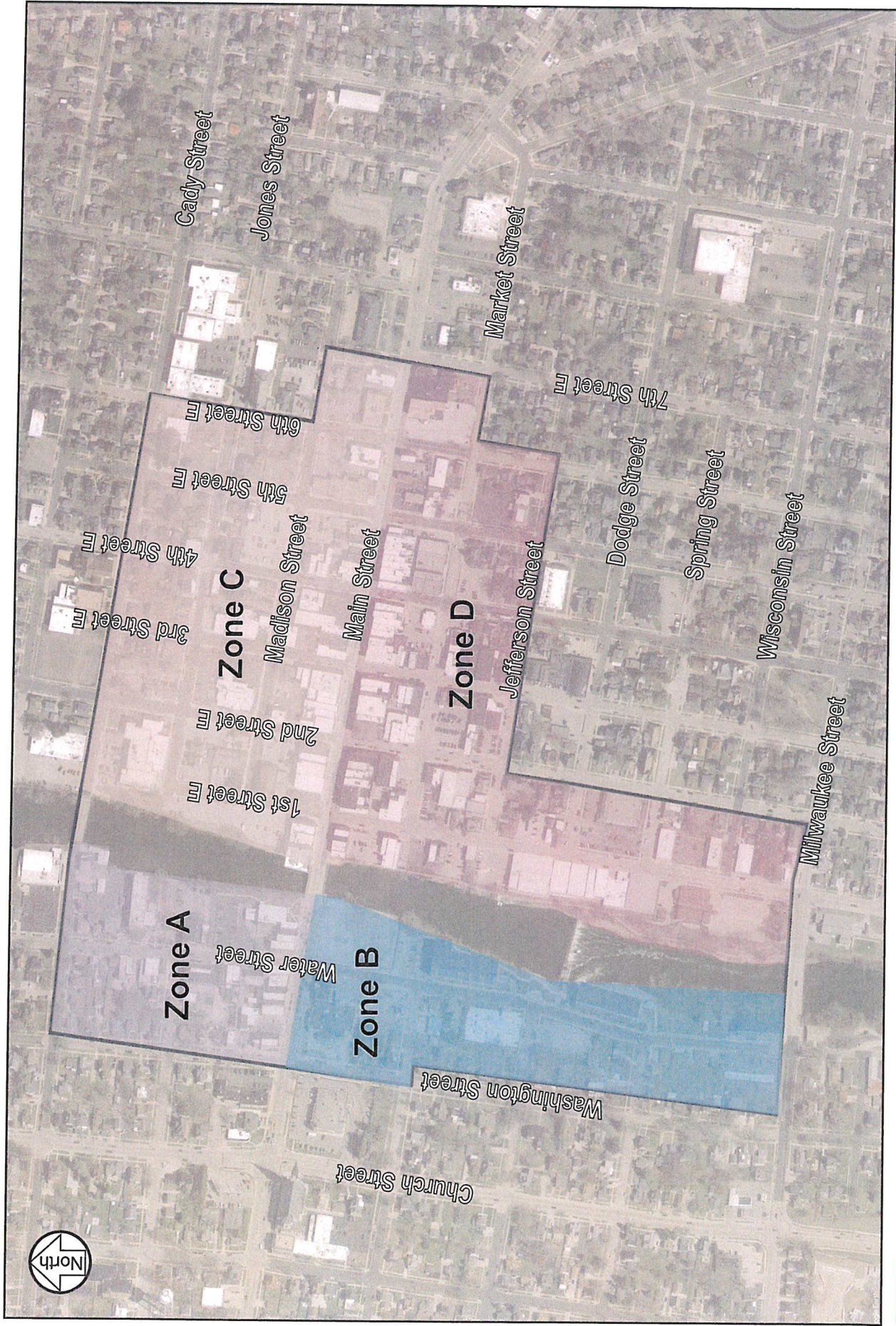




Table 1. Parking Utilization Survey – Saturday Afternoon

	Zone A	Zone B	Zone C	Zone D	Total
<b>Supply</b>					
<b>Total Public Supply</b>	108	198	582	383	1,271
<b>Total Supply (Public + Private)</b>	249	296	740	692	1,977
On-Street	108	80	334	262	784
Off-Street (Public)	0	118	248	121	487
Off-Street (Private)	141	98	158	309	706
<b>Demand</b>					
<b>Public Demand</b>	59	82	301	232	674
<b>Total Demand</b>	119	117	324	326	886
On-Street	59	48	116	131	354
Off-Street (Public)	0	34	185	101	320
Off-Street (Private)	60	35	23	94	212
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>					
<b>Public Surplus</b>	49	116	281	151	597
<b>Total Surplus</b>	130	179	416	366	1,091
On-Street	49	32	218	131	430
Off-Street (Public)	0	84	63	20	167
Off-Street (Private)	81	63	135	215	494
<b>Utilization Percent</b>					
<b>Public Utilization</b>	55%	41%	52%	61%	53%
<b>Total Utilization</b>	48%	40%	44%	47%	45%
On-Street	55%	60%	35%	50%	45%
Off-Street (Public)	N/A	29%	75%	83%	66%
Off-Street (Private)	43%	36%	15%	30%	30%

Table 2. Parking Utilization Survey – Weekday Evening

	Zone A	Zone B	Zone C	Zone D	Total
<b>Supply</b>					
<b>Total Public Supply</b>	108	198	582	383	1,271
<b>Total Supply (Public + Private)</b>	249	296	740	692	1,977
On-Street (Public)	108	80	334	262	784
Off-Street (Public)	0	118	248	121	487
Off-Street (Private)	141	98	158	309	706
<b>Demand</b>					
<b>Public Demand</b>	58	40	219	180	497
<b>Total Demand</b>	122	73	236	286	717
On-Street	58	26	143	101	328
Off-Street (Public)	0	14	76	79	169
Off-Street (Private)	64	33	17	106	220
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>					
<b>Public Surplus</b>	50	158	363	203	774
<b>Total Surplus</b>	127	223	504	406	1,260
On-Street	50	54	191	161	456
Off-Street (Public)	0	104	172	42	318
Off-Street (Private)	77	65	141	203	486
<b>Utilization Percent</b>					
<b>Public Utilization</b>	54%	20%	38%	47%	39%
<b>Total Utilization</b>	49%	25%	32%	41%	36%
On-Street	54%	33%	43%	39%	42%
Off-Street (Public)	N/A	12%	31%	65%	35%
Off-Street (Private)	45%	34%	11%	34%	31%

Table 3. Parking Utilization Survey – Weekday Afternoon

	Zone A	Zone B	Zone C	Zone D	Total
<b>Supply</b>					
<b>Total Public Supply</b>	108	198	582	383	1,271
<b>Total Supply (Public + Private)</b>	249	296	740	692	1,977
On-Street (Public)	108	80	334	262	784
Off-Street (Public)	0	118	248	121	487
Off-Street (Private)	141	98	158	309	706
<b>Demand</b>					
<b>Public Demand</b>	60	52	177	127	416
<b>Total Demand</b>	124	76	217	209	626
On-Street	60	24	102	63	249
Off-Street (Public)	0	28	75	64	167
Off-Street (Private)	64	24	40	82	210
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>					
<b>Public Surplus</b>	48	146	405	256	855
<b>Total Surplus</b>	125	220	523	483	1,351
On-Street	48	56	232	199	535
Off-Street (Public)	0	90	173	57	320
Off-Street (Private)	77	74	118	227	496
<b>Utilization Percent</b>					
<b>Public Utilization</b>	56%	26%	30%	33%	33%
<b>Total Utilization</b>	50%	26%	29%	30%	32%
On-Street	56%	30%	31%	24%	32%
Off-Street (Public)	N/A	24%	30%	53%	34%
Off-Street (Private)	45%	24%	25%	27%	30%