PARKING
MATTERS

Technical Report 9.1
DISTRICT-WIDE ASSESSMENT OF SYSTEM-WIDE NEEDS AND MOBILITY OPTIONS

Prepared for the
Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission
and the
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PARKING MATTERS | A Strategic Plan for Parking + Mobility in Savannah

Technical Report 9.1

District-Wide Assessment of System-Wide Needs and Mobility Options

The Parking Matters study was undertaken not only to understand needs and recommended approaches to managing parking in downtown Savannah, but also to identify a broader set of mobility challenges and related strategic directions for making downtown a more unified environment where parking becomes a part of a larger system. The unique and rich built environment of downtown Savannah is arguably the city's greatest asset, and public policy over the last 50 years has focused on protecting this character. This focus implies that continued use of land for parking is neither desirable nor feasible given ongoing infill development and an increasingly limited supply of large sites suitable for parking facilities.

Mixed-use urban environments similar to downtown Savannah commonly feature numerous options for moving around and getting to destinations, allowing residents, workers and visitors to choose a travel mode most appropriate for the nature of their trip. City centers well regarded around the world for their visual appeal, their economic vitality and their overall quality of life and visitor experience have a common feature of rich transportation networks and a reduced reliance on driving for short trips. Savannah is, by many measures, already among these places and should be supported by a downtown mobility and transportation system fitting with its character.

While much of the downtown core is already highly walkable today, the overall Parking Matters study area covers a large geography (over two square miles)

that requires more than walking to get around. There is a broad need—and a broader opportunity—for the transportation system to fill the gaps between walking and driving. This in turn implies an ongoing need for providing parking close to destinations so that driving and parking are not the only feasible and practical ways to cover longer distances.

This report documents the different components of that general need, as well as opportunities for a more integrated mobility system for central Savannah, drawing from findings and observations from earlier technical reports in the Parking Matters study. It is intended to explore the link between parking and other forms of transportation downtown, highlight where present-day parking resources may need different management approaches, and identify how other travel options can supplement parking to maximize downtown's potential for success. Most importantly, this report provides a working list of central themes that will inform the Parking Matters study's recommendations.

As the study has been organized around four central goals that seek to maximize the benefits of improved parking and mobility for overall community well-being—not just transportation—this mobility report likewise organizes needs and opportunities around each of those goals, described as follows:

1. Support both Public and Private Parking Uses.

2. Promote the Safe and Efficient Use of All Legal Parking

3. Provide Reliable Mobility Options and Strategies for Infrastructure Enhancement

4. Balance Business Development, Quality of Life and Appropriate Additions to Community Character

It is important to note that Parking Matters is a fully-integrated plan that makes comprehensive recommendations for the achievement of a mobility and parking plan, based on needs and opportunities identified in this report. Many of these needs and opportunities respond to multiple goals but are organized in this report where most appropriate.

Technical Report 8.1, Strategic Plan Scenarios, presents all of these recommendations and implementation steps in more detail and describes how, when and by whom they may be implemented.

GOAL 1: SUPPORT BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARKING USES

As documented in Technical Reports 3.1 and 4.1, the Parking Matters study area as a whole has an ample parking supply to meet not only current demand, but also demand driven by understood patterns of new development activity. This is not always reflected in user perception of the parking system, as numerous stakeholders and community members have identified highly localized challenges with parking availability in various parts of the study area (especially in the Historic District). However, the available capacity in the system points to an overall opportunity for improved utilization of existing parking prior to adding to the inventory through construction of major new facilities.

Needs Related to this Goal

Greater availability in high-demand areas
Technical Report 3.1 documents parking utilization throughout a typical weekday and Saturday and, in key areas of concentrated destinations, such as Broughton Street and the City Market/Ellis Square area, street parking consistently reflects high degrees of use. This pattern is especially pronounced on Saturdays, when there is currently no pricing on on-street parking.

Public parking supply for longer term stays
Today, on-street parking downtown follows a complex system of regulations, with different times and prices set for parking spaces. Prices are generally consistent in a small set of zones throughout downtown, but time limits are not—time limits change often, sometimes with different locations on a single block allowing different lengths of stay. As these time limits include lengthy periods of stay, with maximum periods of five and ten hours, some parking users opt to park on street for several hours (sometimes the entire length of a business day) in spaces that are priced less than off-street lots or garages.

On-Street Space for Residents
Although visitors and employees are major constituencies for downtown and its parking and mobility priorities, residents and residential land uses constitute the majority of the Parking Matters study area. Downtown Savannah's fine-grain street network, though extensive in its reach and offering a high degree of connectivity and walkability, also allows a high degree of on-street parking within close proximity of many destinations.

Opportunities Related to this Goal

Balance reserved parking so that public transient users have greater access
Parking facilities located farther from the core of the downtown historic district generally have a lower level of utilization than those more centrally located, and this is for multiple reasons other than geographic

convenience. Two of downtown's garages (Whitaker Street and Bryan Street) dedicate space to private users through contract arrangements—in the case of the Whitaker garage these are primarily hotels using space for parking their guests, and in the Bryan Street garage these are a combination of hotels and downtown businesses. These spaces are reserved entirely for these users and cannot be released to the general public even when they are not being used.

Expand regulated areas, whether priced or not, so that residents of those areas may be eligible for exemption through a permit program

Downtown's permit program is currently only available to residents with some degree of pricing or regulation on their streets, and permit holders must live within a zone for which a permit is issued. By expanding regulated areas, residents of those areas may also become eligible for on-street residential permits exempting them from regulations or pricing.

This is important not only to preserve parking for residents, but also to allow a permit program to be established in parts of central Savannah expected to see new development activity that would increase parking demand and potentially limit supply. By taking proactive steps to establish a residential permit program and allow residents access to street spaces, the City may avoid the controversy of development perceived to be competing with residents for limited on-street space.

Adjust or remove time limits in locations where nature of parking is for longer-term stays

The Parking Matters study's user survey documented in Technical Report 1.1 identified that a plurality of downtown visitors—persons who do not live in downtown or work downtown on a regular basis, but visit to dine, shop, or as part of a temporary stay in Savannah—typically wish to stay in their locations for two to three hours, and an overall majority wish
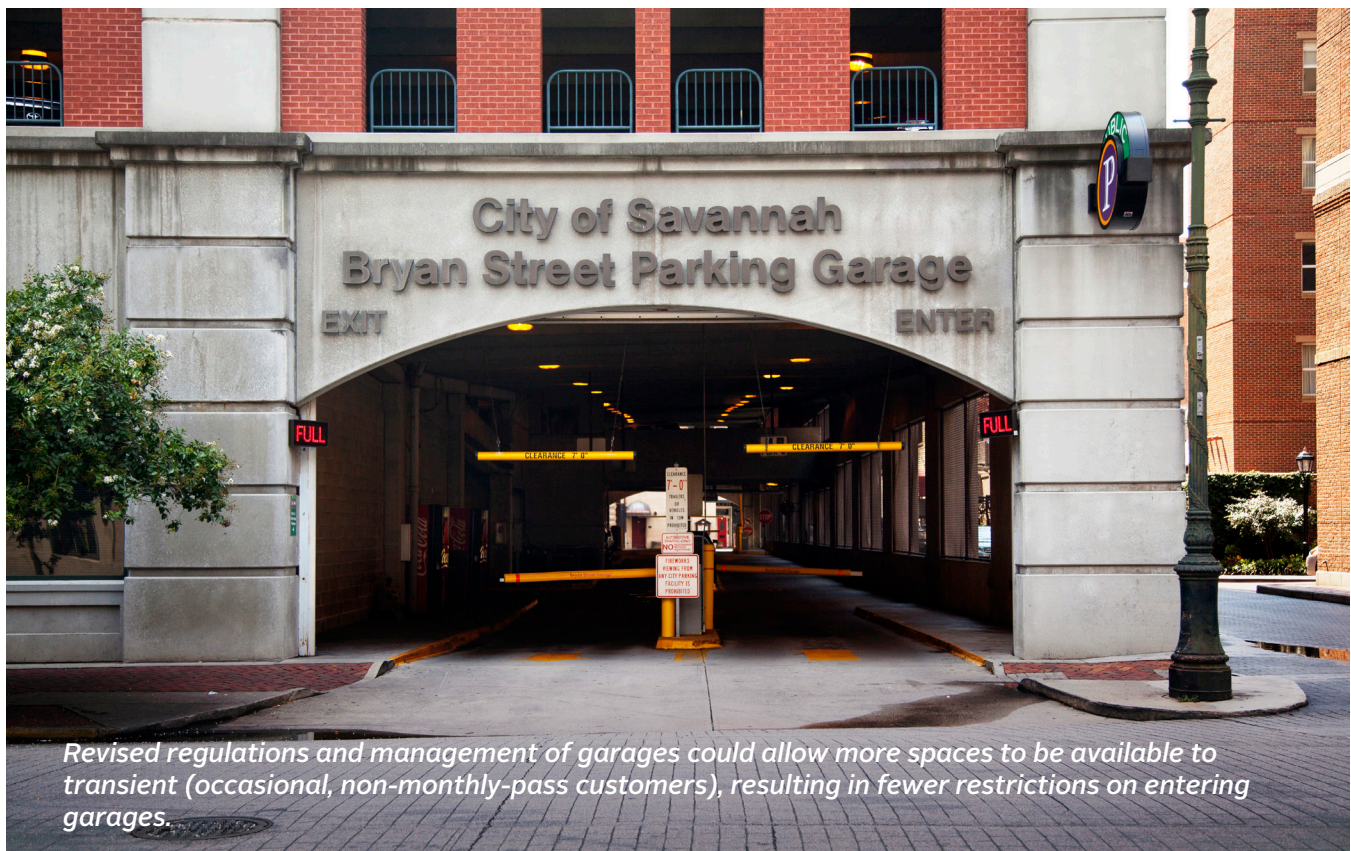
Revised regulations and management of garages could allow more spaces to be available to transient (occasional, non-monthly-pass customers), resulting in fewer restrictions on entering garages.

to stay for two hours or longer. However, among regulated on-street spaces downtown, a plurality allow parking for a maximum of two hours. Although downtown visitors have access to spaces allowing longer stays, either on or off-street, many seeking the convenience of parking near their destination and willing to pay established prices continue to face the risk of citation due to exceeding time limits. In these areas, the City may relax time limits or, by introducing different pricing levels or structures, remove time limits altogether.

Simplify regulations

As implied previously, downtown's variety of price and time-limit combinations presents a complex set of regulations that may be confusing to customers not familiar with central Savannah. Simplified, streamlined regulations can help to encourage downtown parking customers by making regulations more direct and intuitive.

Use City's broad authority, as well as that of parallel organizations such as SaMMI, to consolidate services and reduce overall downtown parking need

The City's Department of Mobility and Parking Services (MPS) administers the City-owned parking facilities that are open to the public and partially leased out to private businesses; it also manages on-street parking by setting prices, collecting payments, and enforcing regulations. However, the Department also funds the Liberty Street garage shuttle service, a connecting shuttle between the City's main parking facilities, and participates in the funding of Savannah Mobility Management, Inc. (SaMMI), a standalone non-profit organization co-led by the City and representative organizations of the visitor and tourist industry. Together, these different agencies and the services they offer cover many downtown access and mobility needs.

With these services in place, there is an opportunity to simplify the way that they are managed and funded and consolidate funding programs so that the City is better equipped to respond to immediate needs, shift its balance of priorities, and ensure that overall downtown mobility options keep up with emerging

technologies, management practices and peer cities. Consolidating transportation and mobility services under the auspices of MPS and establishing a general mobility fund would allow the City a more extensive, responsive control over transportation priorities.

GOAL 2: PROMOTE THE SAFE AND EFFICIENT USE OF ALL LEGAL PARKING

A major theme of the Parking Matters study's findings from its inventory and utilization studies is that many parking spaces downtown are underutilized throughout the day, where other spaces in the same small area of downtown may be highly utilized. This points to opportunities for new management approaches to help promote the use of parking more evenly.

Needs Related to this Goal

Regulatory framework that minimizes 'leapfrog' parking use

Current downtown on-street parking regulations vary considerably from block to block, and in some cases the same block may have multiple prices and time limits set among different spaces. This tends to encourage more vehicle circulation as customers try to find pricing and time limits that are advantageous to the purpose of their trip, and ultimately leads to some parking spaces not being heavily used. Shorter-term parking spaces that are farther away from major business destinations such as Broughton Street retail establishments, banks and government facilities generally are used at lower levels throughout the day, where longer-limit parking spaces with lower prices are used at higher levels, presumably because they offer a lower-priced substitute to garage parking or use of other long-term facilities.

The regulation system for downtown parking should treat all downtown spaces as valuable and regulate in a way that creates availability throughout all areas,

not just in the spaces that fall between 'convenient' (or those spaces located in close proximity to major attractions and destinations) and 'practical' (or those spaces allowing long-term parking customers to stay in a single place throughout much of the regulated day). This suggests that adopting a more even regulatory framework is important, and treating pricing and time limits as tools for managing availability in places where parking is most desired.

Pricing and regulation that guide rational decisions and encourage users to choose parking appropriate to their stay

Today, on-street parking downtown is subject to a complex system of regulations, with different times and prices set for parking spaces. As discussed in the previous need, Prices are generally consistent in a small set of zones throughout downtown, but time limits are not—time limits change often, sometimes with different locations on a single block allowing different lengths of stay. These time limits include lengthy periods of stay, with maximum periods of five and ten hours, and some parking users opt accordingly to use these street spaces for an entire day's worth of stay.

In addition to this, the regulated time span of the day extends only nine hours, 8 am to 5 pm, and is in effect only on weekends. Parking garages and lots always carry a price during hours in which they are open. Under this system, a customer arriving downtown at 3 pm pays for two hours of parking on street (until the regulated span ends), and then may remain in that parking space without any enforcement of price or time until the next day's regulation period begins.

The City should strive to manage availability of parking between street spaces and garages by shifting this balance and setting on-street parking rates at least at parity with nearby garages. This eliminates the price advantage of parking on street and allows parking customers to choose their location with more rational factors in mind—garages for long-term stays and street spaces for shorter-term stays. Setting pricing of street spaces near garages at higher levels than those in the garages would further incentivize this decision-making and treat the City's

on-street spaces as its most valuable.

Supporting system of access for more remote parking locations

Although the street network of downtown Savannah is well connected and highly walkable, it covers a large area, well beyond the comfortable half-mile walking distance that transportation planners use as a rule of thumb for general public willingness to walk to destinations. This is supported by community input, as many stakeholders and members of the public have pointed out that Savannahians and visitors have a limited desire to walk more than a very short distance. This is most likely (and understandably) influenced by Savannah's humid subtropical climate, and other options to connect parking throughout the study area to core destinations are necessary to support this. However, other environmental factors—which include a notable public perception of crime, supported by publicized actions and statistics—also appear to discourage residents and visitors from walking.

Downtown's system of transit options, detailed in Technical Report 3.2, is oriented to either a regional scale, such as CAT's fare-based fixed routes, which connect at the Rivers Intermodal Center on Oglethorpe Street west of the historic core, or to visitors connecting to downtown's many destinations, such as the Dot shuttle that forms an extensive one-way loop through the entire Historic District. There is not a streamlined, simplified form of transit internal to the study area focused on broader connections through the study area. The Liberty shuttle connecting downtown's parking structures operates only around conventional commuting hours, and CAT fixed routes have a more regional orientation and as such do not provide an extensive transit network through the core of downtown. The Savannah College of Art and Design's extensive bus network is not open to the general public.

Opportunities Related to this Goal
Take advantage of underutilized supply
Parking facilities located farther from the core of the downtown historic district generally have a

lower level of utilization than those more centrally located, and this is for multiple reasons other than geographic convenience. Two of downtown's garages (Whitaker Street and Bryan Street) reserve spaces for private use, mostly for parking for nearby hotels but also for residential and commercial business use. This approach allows these specific users to occupy land and buildings without needing to reserve space for independent parking on their same properties. However, when not balanced in a way that maintains parking availability for downtown's visitors and other occasional parking users, these garages are not efficiently used.
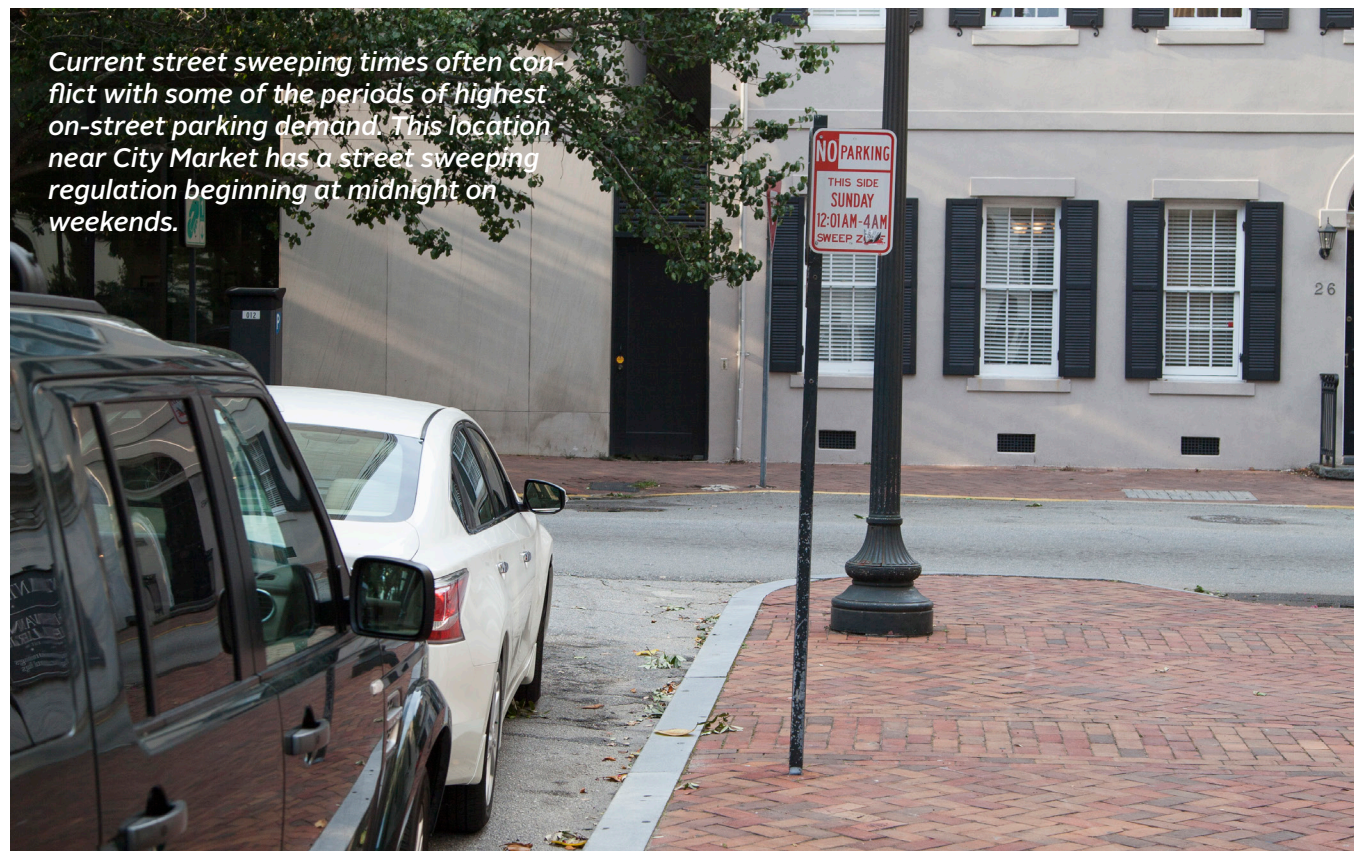
Adjust street sweeping schedule

Downtown's schedule for street sweeping requires vacation of some street lengths during overall times of greatest demand. This not only reduces availability, but it also adds to user perception that the overall parking system is not responsive to local or visitor needs. Although this will require discussion and

coordination with the City's Department of Streets and Sanitation, there is opportunity to address these user perception challenges simply by finding alternative times for street sweeping and adjusting schedules.

Consolidate specialized uses of curbside to free up space and potentially increase on-street parking supply

Due in part to the growth of Savannah's visitor industry and the variety of special passenger services (such as taxis, shuttle vans and horse-drawn carriages) that has accompanied it, downtown features numerous dedications of curbside space for a single specialized purposes, sometimes exclusively and without any defined time periods. The high number of restaurants, retail businesses, offices and other non-residential uses downtown points to an increased need for freight loading. Although these specialty uses do not use a major share of downtown's curbside, they are often located in areas

Current street sweeping times often conflict with some of the periods of highest on-street parking demand. This location near City Market has a street sweeping regulation beginning at midnight on weekends.

of high demand and as such restrict some of the most valuable space for general customer parking.

The City may have opportunities to consolidate spaces and share spaces between multiple uses by defining specific operating hours and conditions for each. This could also lead to an overall simplification of the loading zone definitions and an immediately identifiable, user-friendly system of signage and marking (such as color-coding of curb colors with posted signs).

GOAL 3: PROVIDE RELIABLE MOBILITY OPTIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR INFRASTRUCTURE ENHANCEMENT

As mentioned previously, the downtown parking and transportation system can be better integrated to effectively reduce driving need, especially for short trips within downtown, and allow existing parking resources further from the downtown core to be better utilized and contribute to a park-once district.

Needs Related to this Goal

Make transit a more effective mobility option

At present, downtown is rich with both public and private transit services, documented in detail in Technical Report 3.2. However, these services do not fully coalesce as a system that seems to appeal to downtown's different constituencies. Chatham Area Transit (CAT) estimates that only around 1,500 riders per day begin or end trips in the Parking Matters study area, although the area has over 28,000 jobs and the primary concentration of hotels and lodging in the overall region. Likewise, ridership data for parallel transit services (such as the Dot shuttle, the Liberty shuttle and the River Street streetcar reflect

that these services are not meeting their ridership potential.

Expand travel alternatives for low-car and no-car households

Although the study area includes the vibrant and active downtown core and surrounding historic district, it also includes many residential neighborhoods less focused on visitor amenities, and with a mix of student population, lower-income households and senior citizens, many residents in the study area do not have access to automobiles (nearly 25 percent, according to Census data).

The City and MPC have been working jointly to implement the MPC's Community Bicycle Plan, and this has included a series of shared street designations and the installation of bicycle lanes on Price and Lincoln Streets in the eastern half of the study area. In addition, the Dot shuttle service and seven CAT fixed routes serve the study area, but only along two primary corridors (Martin Luther King and Abercorn). Both bicycle and transit options for the study area should be expanded to increase overall mobility, especially for the southern sections of the Parking Matters study area where households without access to vehicles are most concentrated.

Invest in supporting facilities for bicycle travel

Downtown generally has a large supply of bicycle parking and storage, and the City of Savannah has taken advantage of its parking facilities to increase this supply and provide parking in covered, safe locations. However, a majority of downtown's bicycle parking is associated with SCAD facilities and, while not exclusive to SCAD community members, does not provide the same level of benefit to the general public. Along with expanding its bicycle network, the City and its partner agencies will also need to increase investment in end-of-trip facilities such as bicycle parking, storage, and even showers and other supporting facilities in public buildings.

Opportunities Related to this Goal

Repurpose existing transportation resources

The City of Savannah, CAT and SaMMI currently fund different transportation services all intended to better connect downtown and increase overall mobility for a broad set of downtown constituents. However, no single service appears to reach across a spectrum of user priorities and needs, and as a result downtown's collective offering of transportation services appears to some users to be disconnected and not coordinated. By using the same amount of resources but reorganizing how they are allocated, these agencies may realize greater efficiency in service delivery and be able to implement services in a manner perceived as more cohesive.

This would follow a similar approach to that proposed in the discussion of Goal 1, using the City's broad authority to consolidate transportation services. Repurposing not only resources but also the overall mandate of MPS to function more as a mobility authority would consolidate this set of responsibilities and decision-making and allow more efficient use of funds to provide the same services. This should also include a repurposing of key decision-making bodies to ensure that the full range of downtown user needs is met:

- SaMMI's governance board should continue to have a role in decision-making, potentially restructured as an appointed Downtown Mobility Committee with an advisory role to the City Council.

- CAT fixed-route services should remain under CAT's jurisdiction, due primarily to the concentration of operating expertise within that agency and its existing relationships with Federal partners for funding and technical assistance, although other programs currently administered by CAT, such as the Dot shuttle and CAT Bike bicycle sharing program, could be transferred to MPS along with funding and oversight responsibility.

- The City's Parking Enterprise Fund is expanded to allow use of funds for a range of mobility services, to include transit operations, infrastructure investment and demand management programs.

Brand transit in a unified manner

Today's primary transit services downtown, not counting private trolley and tour companies, consist of five principal brands or service families: CAT's fixed route services and paratransit, The free Dot shuttle, the City-operated Liberty shuttle, SCAD's transit service, and the Savannah Belles Ferry services. While these all operate in close proximity to one another, there is no single identity or immediately apparent relationship between the services, especially from a visitor's perspective.

Build on Savannah's pilot bicycle sharing program

CAT Bike, the bikeshare program currently administered by CAT, has strong potential as a mobility option in downtown Savannah due to a highly concentrated visitor base, a large number of visitor destinations within a comfortable bicycling distance, and an excellent set of connecting routes based on downtown's dense network of streets. Although CAT Bike is currently implementing its first expansion since its two-station pilot program, continued expansion of the program throughout the Historic District and other parts of the Parking Matters study area should be based on locations with high visitor demand and constraints on parking.

The City, CAT and its partners should also seek other means of expanding the program than purely through public funds. Although the Savannah region's major employers are not concentrated in its downtown business district, the Parking Matters study area nonetheless features major hotels, a large base of educational institutions in the Savannah College of Art and Design, and corporations with a downtown presence (especially banks). The City should develop a sponsorship program allowing potential users to help fund program expansion and making participation cost-effective.

Expand the application and implementation of downtown's Wayfinding Plan

The City has implemented parts of its 2007 Wayfinding Plan, with all City-owned parking facilities now featuring the Plan's logo and branding style. Implementation was ongoing at the time of the Parking Matters study. Continued implementation of the plan, and even expansion beyond what the plan originally recommended, can contribute not only to a unified downtown identity, but also help to organize user information for different downtown transportation services such that the relationship among them is easily understood. This could involve extending the wayfinding system into the CAT Bike system, transit services, and other mobility-related amenities.

GOAL 4: BALANCE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, QUALITY OF LIFE AND APPROPRIATE ADDITIONS TO COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Savannah is a regional business and commercial center for coastal Georgia and as such has a relatively small but important downtown employment base. However, its downtown is also the center of a vibrant and growing tourism industry based on the historic character of its buildings, streets and squares. Both of these support a vibrant city center with a variety of service and entertainment businesses, including numerous large hotels. Finding the right balance of mobility and parking options is a key pillar of the continued appeal and economic success of the district.

The CAT Bike system is currently being expanded through downtown Savannah. Further integration with the City's Department and Mobility Services can help to guide future expansion to complement parking and transit facilities and maximize the program's utility.

Needs Related to this Goal

Ensure parking availability for business customers

The Parking Matters user survey and public outreach activities highlighted a concern among business owners that customers needing parking could not readily access it, with long-term implications that this limited parking availability would be harmful to business in the long run. Some participants in public discussions identified themselves as business owners and noted that employees (and even business owners themselves) may sometimes occupy the most convenient parking locations; others pointed to overly-restrictive time limits as a reason for concern.

Businesses' need for providing customer access has led to different approaches being taken, with some businesses offering garage validation and others reserving spaces altogether in City garages. Others claim to offer to pay fines on behalf of any customers receiving citations, claiming that nearby spaces do not allow customers to spend enough time in a single space (for instance, spaces near restaurants with limits of one hour or less) or that signage and regulations are unclear.

Regardless of the approach, it is clear that downtown's customer-based businesses make up a key pillar of its overall economic base and that access for driving customers, especially local customers during less active portions of the tourism calendar, remains a critical business need.

Ensure parking availability for downtown employees without guaranteeing that it will be in the most convenient locations

Even though access for businesses is important, it is downtown's employees that power its economy, and this employment base includes a mix of office employees working a typical business day; service workers, especially in the hospitality industry; and retail workers. The overall Parking Matters study area includes approximately 28,000 jobs, with around 9,000 of these in the central business district bounded by Bay, Abercorn, Montgomery and Oglethorpe Streets. This same area includes

6,500 parking spaces, and although many downtown workers use parking outside of the immediate area, the balance of supply and demand at these spaces suggests that many of downtown's facilities are used by employees.

Balance regulations, especially time limits, with the nature of parking demand

As discussed previously, the plurality of metered, regulated downtown on-street parking spaces allow stays of two hours or less, and a plurality of visitors responding to the Parking Matters survey indicated a desire to stay downtown for more than two hours. It is reasonable to assume—and the Parking Matters survey confirms—that employees for whom parking is not provided in a fixed location also wish to stay for longer time periods than what many of these regulations allow. Although the study has not followed user-specific activity throughout the day, stakeholders and members of the general public commonly identified that their own method of addressing this imbalance was to move vehicles throughout the day or periodically replenish payment ('feed meters').

This points to a need for regulation that is more permissive on time limits, or that at least allows users wishing to stay in one place for longer durations to be able to do so without worry of citation, booting or towing.

Provide a safe environment in garages and city-owned facilities, and promote safety more broadly

General patterns of utilization suggest—and discussions with stakeholders and members of the public confirm—that there is a general preference for downtown Savannah's parking users to park on street rather than off-street—especially in garages. While there are multiple factors that may explain this, such as the relative convenience of not having to circulate through a garage to find available space and of front-door proximity, one that was expressed through public and stakeholder discussions was public safety. The most common concern articulated was that the open entry to garages and limited visibility within parts of the structures constitute an environment where crime may occur and that as a result, garage

customers are less safe than those in the more open public space of the street.

MPS has a strong record of safety in its facilities, with non-deputized security staff on patrol, camera surveillance throughout structures, and uniformed police generally nearby to respond to concerns. However, ongoing maintenance and care of facilities can help to build customer confidence and add to the appearance that downtown's parking resources are fully safe to use.

While not within the purview of MPS, ongoing public concern over general downtown safety extends beyond the parking structures and to the overall downtown environment. It will be important to address this as MPS continues to provide transportation and parking services for downtown, especially as it responds to needs to provide a more integrated, multimodal system of transportation services where people are connected to destinations through a combination of vehicle parking, walking, cycling and public transit use and in which they expect an evenly safe and comfortable experience.

Respect the historic character of downtown Savannah's built environment

It is universally acknowledged that Savannah's historic character is one of its greatest assets, and though it is intangible, it has clearly contributed to a vibrant and growing tourism and visitor economy, considerable appreciation in downtown real estate value, and a national and international profile for Savannah that reaches beyond its immediate economic region. It is critical for any new additions to downtown to enrich this character and not compromise it, and this likely means a limitation on further construction of off-street parking facilities within most of the Parking Matters study area.

Preservation of downtown Savannah's unique character must be a key objective in any parking expansion, just as it is with other planning objectives.

Be prepared to meet the parking needs of future development

As discussed in Technical Report 7.1, there is not currently a district-wide need for additional parking resources due to a systematic, ongoing shortage of supply. Most non-residential uses within the Parking Matters study area have already provided off-street parking to meet the requirements of the City of Savannah zoning ordinance, and the availability of on-street parking in most residential areas of the study area accounts for a general understanding of parking demand.

However, land use intensity is increasing in and around the study area, and it is reasonable to expect that additional parking will be needed in the future. In much of the Downtown Historic District, current zoning regulations do not require any parking to be added, and even in peripheral areas where current zoning does have minimum parking requirements, smaller, constrained sites often make the addition of parking financially difficult for development projects to absorb. The City and downtown stakeholders have explored site development opportunities that might be able to meet future parking demand, and these partners will need to formalize an approach to long-term parking and development management to allow private development to contribute positively to the character of central Savannah.

Opportunities Related to this Goal

Rebalance parking regulations to allow longer-term stays for visitors that wish to use them

Parking regulations on downtown's on-street spaces have evolved over time, with often piecemeal approaches to changing small groups of spaces to respond to needs of the immediate area. As part of implementing Parking Matters, the City has an unprecedented opportunity to revisit how these spaces allow users to stay, recognizing that the needs of downtown have evolved (and continue to evolve) since the original regulations being set.

Set price in high-demand areas to motivate turnover and ensure availability, with pricing gradually decreasing away from areas of highest demand

One potential approach to allowing users to stay for desired durations is to eliminate time limits altogether and adjust pricing to manage demand and create availability where it is most needed. This may raise prices beyond current levels in some areas, but it may also lower them—or eliminate prices—in others. Generally, areas with highest utilization, such as Broughton Street and the City Market area, would feature the highest prices, with areas of lower demand featuring lower prices or no price at all.

Currently, parking prices are set in the City's parking ordinance, and though a given price level may be extended to other spaces at the City's administrative discretion, prices are set at three levels: $1.00 per hour, $0.50 per hour and $0.30 per hour. The City will likely apply different price levels until it identifies which is most effective at creating availability, but will need a level of administrative permission to do so not established in current City ordinance.

Approach parking as a public-private resource and a development tool allowing the City to shape and guide development based on parking supply that it provides

The limitations of space for new parking discussed previously point to parking on the edges of downtown, most likely in spaces outside of the Parking Matters study area boundary, as locations for any new major parking facilities. However, not all of these locations are currently under control of private entities who may seek to redevelop the properties, and Savannah's current approach of requiring parking as part of the development review and entitlement process relies on development to furnish its own on-site parking. There are opportunities to expand how parking requirements are met, such as:

- Giving broader permission for development sites to share parking between uses and use off-site parking within a given distance to meet on-site requirements;

- Using on-street parking as a credit toward off-street parking in key locations; and

- Allowing developers to make payments in lieu of providing parking, with the understanding that publicly-provided parking resources would be made available for their use.

This last potential strategy would require a public sector agency, presumably the City, to provide parking resources that private development would use. The City used this approach with development of the Whitaker Street Garage, and today that facility remains the most broadly-shared of the City's public garages. The City should use this approach for further development and treat its parking resources as a means of guiding and shaping development, allowing appropriate intensities for the character of the study area through a centrally-managed parking supply. Applicants wishing to provide parking beyond what is available in this publicly-administered supply may be able to do so, but would also be subject to requirements of zoning and design controls related to downtown's historic districts.

Update zoning and development regulations to standardize this approach, taking advantage of community appetite for lower parking levels

The City zoning ordinance is likely to remain the central regulatory tool for managing this balance between public facilities and private parking, and as the City and MPC continue public discussion of updating its ordinance, these permissions should be included to make sure that parking contributes to community character and does not threaten it.

Potential addition of parking outside of the Historic District core

As mentioned previously, the scarcity of sites in the Historic District large enough to support parking facilities and the potential impacts to historic character of additional large parking facilities both point to locations outside of this area. These are the only remaining places in central Savannah may add parking without negative impacts to the build

environment of the Historic District. However, these may serve as remote parking for the Historic District, especially when combined with an integrated set of mobility strategies, and should be positioned as a development tool intended to support private land development. In other words, public agencies such as MPS should investigate proactive opportunities to add parking, and at greater levels than may be immediately necessary, so that it can support both public and private needs for all of central Savannah.