



WALKER
CONSULTANTS

BENSON DISTRICT PARKING STUDY

Draft Report Presentation
Benson BID Board Meeting

May 13, 2020



BUILDING ENVELOPE

FORENSIC RESTORATION

PARKING DESIGN

PARKING & MOBILITY

OPERATIONS & TECHNOLOGY



PRESENTATION AGENDA

Introduction

Supply/Demand
Study

Parking and
Mobility
Alternatives

Recommendations

Q&A

ABOUT WALKER CONSULTANTS

- Walker Consultants is a leading professional services firm of engineers, architects, planners and parking-operations and technology specialists with 55 years of industry experience.
- Our team of consultants works across all 50 states delivering customized, knowledge-based services relating to parking and mobility planning, parking operations and technology consulting, and parking facility design.



David Garza
Project Manager
Indianapolis Office

PROJECT OVERVIEW

- Walker Consultants (“Walker”) was engaged by Park Omaha to perform a parking study (“Study”) for the Benson Neighborhood in Omaha, Nebraska.
- The Study, initiated in late January 2020, delivers the following items:
 - Parking Supply/Demand Analysis
 - Parking and Mobility Access Management & Alternatives Analysis
 - Recommendations.



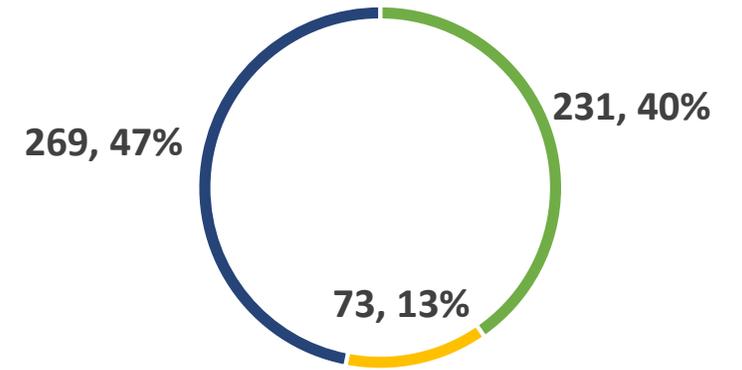
APPROXIMATELY 573 ± SPACES WERE IDENTIFIED IN THE STUDY AREA



On-Street: 231 ± spaces

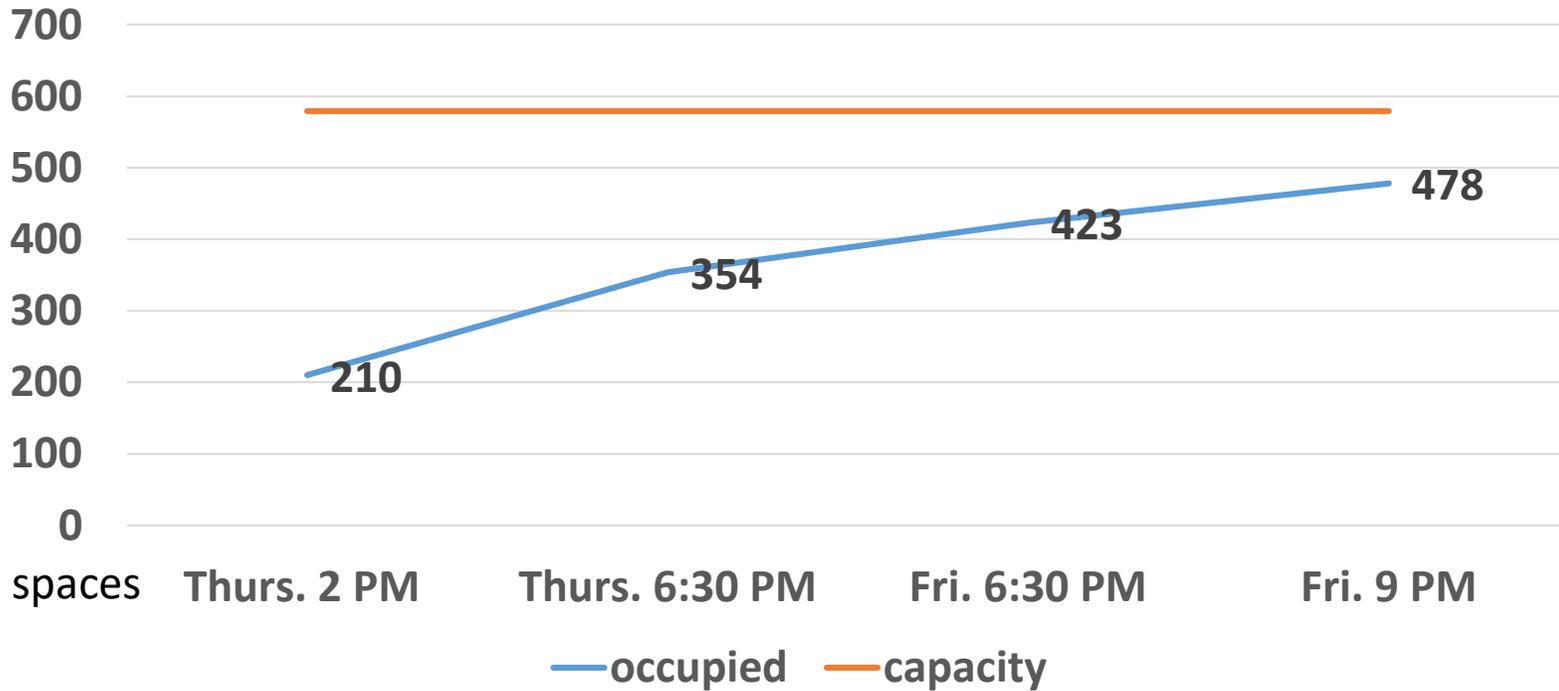


Off-street: 342 ± spaces



■ onstreet ■ public lots ■ private lots

WALKER OBSERVED PARKING OCCUPANCY ACROSS A TYPICAL WEEKDAY AND WEEKEND; PEAK OCCUPANCY OCCURRED ON FRIDAY NIGHT



At Friday 9 p.m., on-street spaces were functionally full, with over-parking observed across select block faces. The single public lot, had no spaces available by 9 p.m.



9 PM “Peak” Occupancy

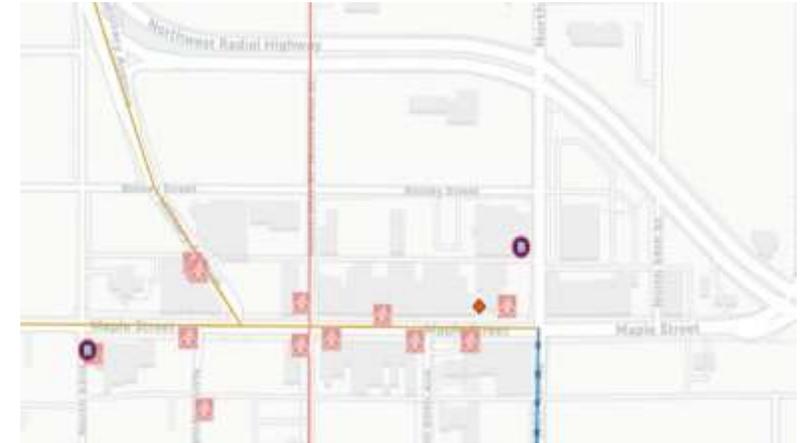
Occupancy Key	
0-49.9 %	Green
50-69.9 %	Yellow
70-84.9 %	Orange
85-100 %	Red

SUPPLY/DEMAND STUDY TAKEAWAYS

- A surplus of public spaces was identified as available for public use across weekday daytime hours as observed.
- Weekday evening “hot-spots” were found across select block faces.
- Parking stress is most acute on weekend evenings where **all public spaces were observed functionally full**.
- While all public spaces were functionally full, Walker did observe **space availability in several private lots**. If a portion of this inventory could be open for public parking across weekend evenings, more public spaces could be made available for District event goers and restaurant and bar patrons.
- The data collected confirms anecdotal observations that weekend nighttime space availability is a problem for the District and that parking stresses are occurring across select times of the week.

PARKING AND MOBILITY ALTERNATIVES

- Driving and parking is the predominant transportation mode in the Benson District today.
- Since bus transit service ends before 11 p.m., nightlife ridership is likely low; most bars and establishments remain open until 2 a.m.
- Currently parking rates are not collected from users inside the Benson District discouraging other modes of active transportation.
- **It is currently more expensive for a user to rent a B-cycle bike in Benson than it is to park all day in the District.**



Bike storage areas across the District



B-Cycle at the Public Library Branch

PARKING POLICIES ARE NOT SUFFICIENTLY MEETING EXISTING NEEDS

- The existing parking enforcement paradigm is oriented towards primary daytime activity with parking hours of enforcement occurring Monday through Saturday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- The District receives greater restaurant and entertainment usage, with parking stresses occurring across select weeknights and weekend evening hours, past the posted hours of enforcement.
- **Issue:** Parking turnover and space availability is not occurring across the evening hours when spaces are most needed by food and beverage and entertainment businesses.



2-Hour time limits found on Maple Street; enforced Monday-Saturday 8 am to 5 pm.

TRUE COSTS OF “FREE” PARKING

- Fundamentally there is no such thing as a “free” parking space.
- Costs are either born directly or indirectly by users, business owners, and/or the community at large.
- In providing parking to the public, the City is administering a scarce resource that has intrinsic value and associated costs.
- Free parking leads to inefficient land use, increased vehicular cruising, congestion and other unintended environmental and fiscal impacts.¹
- Price is a tool to manage scarce parking resources and create better turnover and space availability.



1. UCLA Planning Professor Don Shoup and others have advanced this concept.

1. MANAGE ON STREET PARKING TURNOVER AND SPACE AVAILABILITY THROUGH PARKING METERS AND RATES.

- **Introducing meters on street on commercial blocks** within the district will regulate user behavior by creating greater turnover and space availability, while promoting on-street curb space for greater short-term usage.
- On-street spaces are closer to store fronts and therefore should have a higher premium because of **access and proximity** to user destinations.
- By pricing curb access, users are still left with a choice, they can pay for the convenience of on-street space, or, they can locate less costly or “free” off-street lots at greater walking distances to user destinations.
- Split of net revenue will stay inside the Benson District as a proposed **parking benefits district**.



A single-space smart meter that accepts credit card and coin payments.

2. EXTEND DISTRICT ON-STREET PARKING HOURS OF ENFORCEMENT MONDAY THROUGH SATURDAY, 9 A.M. TO MIDNIGHT TO CREATE PARKING TURNOVER AND SPACE AVAILABILITY.

- **Extended hours of parking enforcement** will address parking space turnover needed across evening and weekend nighttime hours when demand is greatest. While price (via meter rates) will guide user behavior, extended hours of enforcement will ensure desired turnover behavior and compliance.
- We recommend Park Omaha **maintain the existing days of no enforcement** to include New Year's Day, MLK Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.
- Walker recommends rates be consistent with existing Park Omaha hourly meter rates.

3. IDENTIFY OFF-STREET PARKING LOTS IN THE DISTRICT THAT CAN SUPPORT GREATER PUBLIC PARKING USAGE.

- With the introduction of rates on street, some users will pay for the convenience of parking nearby, while other users will seek out free parking.
- Promoting long-term parking at lots across the District will **better distribute parking demand** and **relieve some of the existing on-street stress** in the system today.
- We recommend **shared use parking arrangements** between public and private owners be explored.
 - ✓ Environmental: it is always preferable to make good use of existing parking resources before building additional ones.
 - ✓ Financial: it is a way for an owner to see reduction in maintenance costs, while the public gets greater use of an existing asset, a less costly alternative to building additional parking infrastructure.



An example of shared use already occurring. Immanuel Lutheran Church offers evening public usage.

4. CREATE A PARKING BENEFITS DISTRICT (PBD) THAT CONTRIBUTES TO PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS IN THE DISTRICT

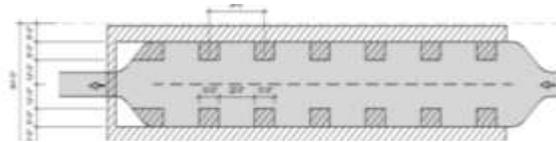
- **Today:** District is not managing its parking demand effectively and is foregoing capturing revenue that can resource facility maintenance and District mobility improvements.
- Introducing parking rates on street will create a **transportation demand management** incentive for users to consider other travel modes, relieving single occupancy vehicle traffic and parking stress, while, creating a fund that can resource:
 - ✓ facility maintenance (e.g. lot maintenance and repairs)
 - ✓ shared parking leases
 - ✓ other transit amenities, such as additional bicycle storage corrals, pedestrian and streetscape enhancements, improved District wayfinding and signage, and other general improvements as directed.

WHAT IS A PARKING BENEFITS DISTRICT (PBD)?

- **Parking benefit district** is a defined geographic area where parking revenues that are raised are then reinvested back into the district for a wide range of transportation-related improvements.
 - Promotes smart transportation management while addressing wider quality of life and place making factors.
 - The City of Omaha currently has a PBD ordinance in draft.

5. CREATE A TRANSPORTATION NETWORK COMPANY (TNC) DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP DESIGNATED AREA

- Today: **Increased usage of ride hailing** services i.e. Uber/Lyft, is occurring inside the District. While Uber/Lyft is a mobility alternative that minimizes single occupancy vehicle traffic and parking, space is still needed to drop-off and pick-up passengers in order to minimize vehicular congestion and safely load ride hailing passengers.
- Walker recommends a parallel curb drop-off and pick-up configuration. Evaluate TNC usage data to determine location(s).
- We recommend one (1) of these spaces in each zone be signed between the hours of 7 p.m. to midnight as a 15-minute only flex loading zone space.



Deep Ellum, a popular nightlife district in Dallas, TX has implemented designated TNC drop-off and pick-up areas to mitigate traffic congestion and improve pedestrian safety.

6. EVALUATE THE POTENTIAL TO CONSTRUCT AN ADDITIONAL PUBLIC PARKING LOT AT 63RD STREET AND BINNEY.

- Today: Weekend public parking space availability is in short supply.
- Additionally, there are limited sites available and feasible to support additional parking infrastructure inside the District.
- Walker assessed the site feasibility of building a parking structure on the existing BID public lot. A parking garage at this site would be **inefficient** and **costly**.
- We recommend additional site evaluation be performed for a potential parking lot at 63rd and Binney Streets. New lots should be considered once existing assets near capacity.

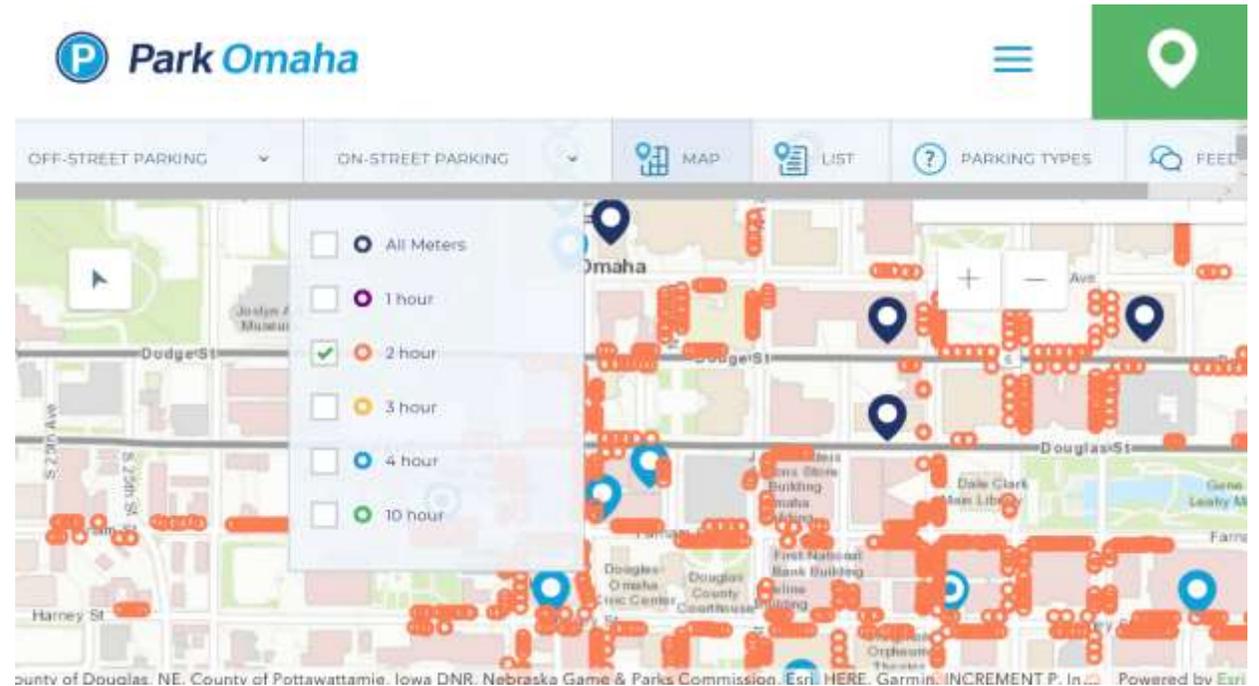


Option 1 presents a surface lot option on the existing vacant parcel. A space count of approximately **35 spaces** is yielded assuming the given site dimensions.

Option 2 presents a surface lot option on the existing vacant parcel, plus, part of the existing adjacent lot (site of Daisy Jones' Locker). A space count of approximately **50 spaces** is yielded assuming the site layout dimensions.

7. BRAND AND MARKET PUBLIC PARKING UNDER PARK OMAHA

- Physical signage and uniform branding will help motorists identify public parking inside the District.
- Online tools and apps can help users plan their visit to the District in advance and identify available public parking areas.
- Leverage the existing public parking branding identity of the Park Omaha system.



Park Omaha offers an interactive layer map as a resource to help users locate public parking Downtown. We recommend this tool be extended to Benson District users.

8. INTEGRATE THE BENSON DISTRICT PARKING METERS INTO THE PARK OMAHA MOBILE PARKING APP PLATFORM.

- **Today:** The Park Omaha app is available as a user convenience free to download for smart phone users.
- **Benefit:** Users have the ability to pay for parking without having to interface with a parking meter, receive text messages and updates on parking sessions, and extend parking time via the app. This is successfully offered in Downtown Omaha.
- We recommend that this user amenity be extended to the Benson District.



Park Omaha mobile parking app.

9. CONDUCT A PUBLIC OUTREACH CAMPAIGN EXPLAINING THE BENEFIT OF CHANGES TO THE EXISTING DISTRICT PARKING MODEL

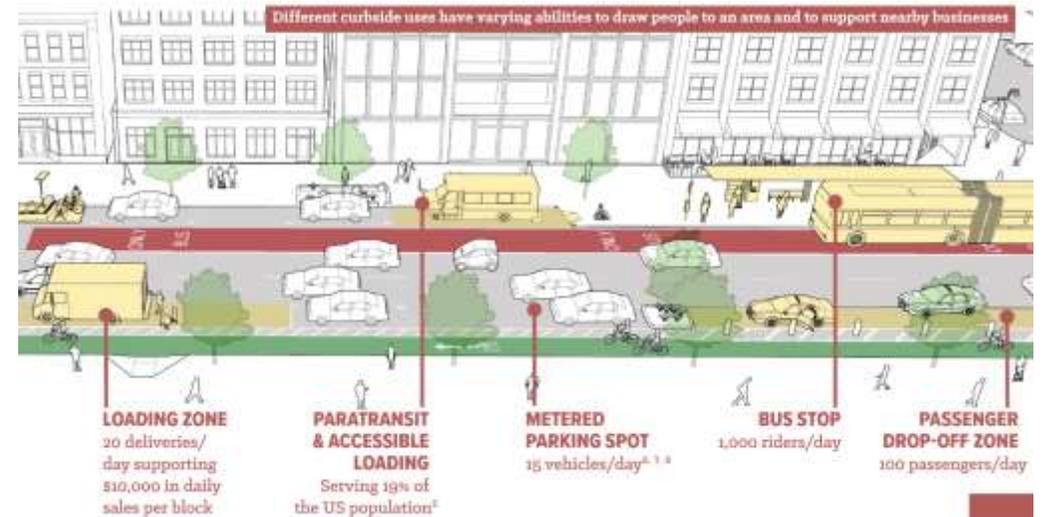
- To successfully realize change and improve the performance of the existing system, **stakeholder and public outreach needs to occur.**
- The benefits of the new program need to be shared and communicated widely across all platforms. Outreach methods include:
 - ✓ public meetings and open houses;
 - ✓ online tutorial videos and social media;
 - ✓ meetings with key public and private sector leadership within the District to ascertain critical input and feedback with any proposed changes and implementation strategies.



Courtesy: Groundworks USA

BENSON IS AT A CRUCIAL JUNCTURE IN ITS INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

- **Today:** The single-occupancy vehicle has been given predominance in terms of access and accommodation *via* free parking.
- **Issue:** Space is not limitless, existing parking resources are being stressed, and users' needs are ultimately not being met with unsatisfactory parking space availability.
- **By more assertively managing the curb, introducing parking meter rates on street, and transitioning away from “free parking,” the City can make a powerful step to reprioritize key transit access, safe bikeways, commercial loading, and public space.**



Source: National Association of City Transportation Officials

Q&A