
Downtown Parking Plan

City of Larkspur

Prepared by:

**The Downtown Parking
Committee**

WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF

**City of Larkspur
and
RJPLANNING**

September 1998



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CITY OF LARKSPUR

Planning 415/927-5038
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September 14, 1998

Honorable Mayor Arias and
Members of the City Council
City of Larkspur
400 Magnolia Avenue
Larkspur, CA 94939

Dear Mayor Arias and Members of the City Council:

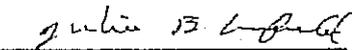
The Downtown Parking Committee is pleased to forward the Downtown Parking Plan. This plan is the culmination of eight months work by the Downtown Parking Committee at the request of the City Council. Our charge was to develop a parking plan adhering to four principles: 1) involve the community, 2) be action oriented, 3) preserve Downtown's small town character and 4) build flexibility into the plan.

The Committee conducted walking tours to inventory Downtown parking issues and opportunities; we reviewed the Downtown Specific Plan; and we analyzed parking surveys to define the parking problem. We determined that today's crowded Downtown parking conditions are not due to new construction - the current parking shortage results from the success of businesses in buildings that were constructed before the automobile. Downtown does not face an imminent parking crisis, but the area can not support continued business expansion unless additional public parking is provided.

The Downtown Parking Committee studied the approaches employed by other California cities to manage and increase parking. We used this information to develop short-, mid- and long-range strategies and programs that recognize Downtown Larkspur's unique needs and character. The Downtown Parking Plan is not a policy document to be adopted immediately and implemented rigorously. Rather it is a catalogue from which to pick and choose programs to apply as needed. We recommend a gradual approach, beginning with a short-range strategy of relatively quick and inexpensive projects that could yield up to 70 public parking spaces. A simple, on-going monitoring program should be used to determine which of the mid- and long-range programs to implement, and when they should be activated. Continuous management and a flexible, proactive approach will be needed to balance parking needs with the preservation of Downtown's character.

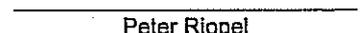
The Downtown Parking Committee thanks the City Council for the opportunity to serve the City of Larkspur; we are each ready to participate in the implementation phases as needed.

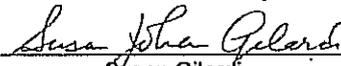
Respectfully submitted,


Julia Bloomfield


Willi Niedzwetzki

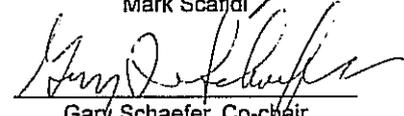

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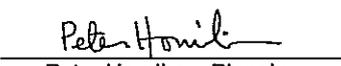

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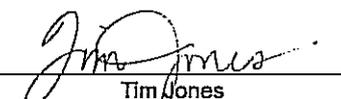

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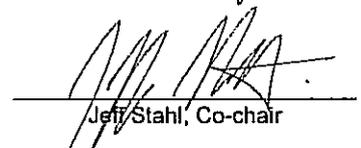

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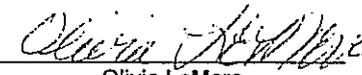

Olivia LeMere

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Downtown Parking Committee is pleased to present this Downtown Parking Plan for the City of Larkspur

The Planning Process

In November 1997 the Larkspur City Council appointed a thirteen member Downtown Parking Committee representing a cross section of Downtown interests to develop a plan. This initiative was in response to a 1996 survey which found that parking demand, especially for public spaces, had increased dramatically over the preceding five years. The Committee met eight times as a group and ten times in various subcommittees. The format for the meetings was a facilitated, consensus based study and decision making process that encouraged audience participation. A facilitator/planning consultant prepared research and position papers which were reviewed and adjusted at the Committee's direction.

The Parking Problem

The Committee studied the Downtown Specific Plan, 1991 and 1996 parking surveys done by Wilbur Smith Associates and the results of a walking tour to define the parking problem. The Committee found that from 1991 to 1996 the weekday noon-time demand for public parking had gone up 22%. With almost 80% of the public parking occupied it would be very difficult for a weekday noon-time visitor unfamiliar with the area to find a place to

park. The change was even more pronounced on weekends. The Saturday demand for public parking during the lunch and dinner hours increased by an average of 35%. Four out of five public spaces were taken at 1:00PM on Saturday, and 90% of all public parking was taken at 8:00PM. The demand for public parking on Saturday evenings increased by 115 vehicles from 1991 to 1996.

The Committee concluded that the parking supply is not adequate to support continued business expansion without an increase in the overall supply of parking and improvements in the pattern of parking utilization.

Parking Strategies

The Committee focused on programs for developing additional *public* parking. The City of Larkspur zoning ordinance sets adequate standards to assure sufficient private parking will be provided for new buildings with the possible exception of restaurants. It is more difficult to provide adequate parking for contemporary uses in older buildings developed before there were automobiles in Downtown Larkspur. The Downtown Parking Committee concluded that additional public parking is the most cost effective way to supplement the parking available to existing buildings.

The Downtown Parking Committee studied approaches used by other California cities to develop new parking for old downtowns. Programs that could be appropriately adapted to Larkspur were organized into three strategies:

Short - Range: Relatively low cost projects that can be done within six months. Projects include:

- Shared parking program
- Post St. parking lot
- Valet parking
- Street restriping
- Restripe the public parking lot at Ward and Magnolia
- Time-structured parking zones
- Feasibility study for future parking lots
- Increased parking requirements for restaurants
- Sign program

Mid - Range: Projects that can be done within two years. These projects are not needed immediately. Rather, they offer long term benefits and should be implemented as opportunities present themselves.

- Arch St. parking lot
- Railroad right-of-way parking lot
- Parking permits
- Enforcement
- Business Improvement District

Long - Range: Projects to be started in two years or later. These projects should be undertaken if the supply of public parking can not be increased significantly with the short- and mid-range strategies or if parking demand increases.

- A publicly funded 50 to 100 space parking lot
- Deficiency fees

What Could Happen?

Full implementation of the parking strategies at left could have the following results:

Short - Range – new spaces: 70

- *Immediate situation improved – drivers would have a somewhat easier time finding parking*

Mid-Range – new spaces: 35

- *On-street parking would turn over more frequently making parking more convenient for customers*
- *Downtown employees would have better parking options*

Long-Range -- new spaces: 100

- *New public parking lot would support business expansion in existing buildings*
- *Downtown would have high level of vitality; parking for customers and employees would be convenient*

Recommendations

The recommended strategies are meant to be a catalogue from which to pick and chose programs as needed. The Downtown Parking Committee recommends that a small advisory group be formed to track parking conditions and programs for two years. As many as possible of the short-range programs should be

implemented immediately. The advisory group should monitor parking conditions, and recommend mid- and long-range programs based on their findings. By monitoring and adjusting parking programs as business trends evolve, it will be possible to balance the need to provide additional parking and to preserve Downtown's historic character.

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

Downtown Larkspur predates the automobile. Most of the buildings fronting on Magnolia Avenue were designed with other forms of transportation in mind – the inter-urban railroad, horse and buggy, and, most important, walking. As a result, most properties can not meet today's parking standards without major redevelopment that would destroy Downtown's architectural character.

Until recently, parking has not been viewed as a significant problem Downtown. A 1991 parking study found that on-street parking and the public lot at Ward and Magnolia made up for the parking deficiencies of the older properties on Magnolia Avenue. By the mid 1990's, however, business had improved, and people began to notice a change in the parking situation. A 1996 update of the 1991 parking study found that parking demand, especially for public parking, had increased significantly.

The Downtown Parking Committee

In November, 1997, the Larkspur City Council appointed a thirteen member Downtown Parking Committee representing a cross section of Downtown stakeholders. The Committee was asked to develop a Downtown parking plan with the following characteristics:

- *community involvement* – the plan would be developed with the active involvement of the community at large and, especially, Downtown

residents, customers, businesses and property owners, and it would have their active support;

- *action oriented* to achieve measurable results quickly;
- *small town character* of Downtown Larkspur would be retained;
- *flexibility* would be built into the plan because parking needs and business trends change.

The entire Committee membership met eight times as a group and ten times in various subcommittees to produce the *Downtown Parking Plan*. Early in the process, the Committee agreed on Meeting Guidelines and a Work Program which were designed to assure an open process and active participation by the public. The Committee began its work with a series of walking tours of Downtown. The Committee reviewed various City policy documents, the 1991 and 1996 parking surveys, consultant studies, walking tour results and public input to arrive at a working definition of the parking problem. The Committee studied a survey of "tools and options" used to manage and increase parking in California downtown areas. The Committee used a consensus-based decision making process to do an initial screening of the various options. Potential programs were tentatively prioritized in three categories:

- short-range – implement within six months of the Plan being completed
- mid-range – implement within six months to two years
- long-range – implement in two years or later, as needed.

Three subcommittees, one for each category, were formed to study the potential programs in depth. In developing program recommendations, the subcommittees carefully adhered to the four principles set out by the City Council – citizen involvement, action orientation, Downtown's small town character and the need for flexibility. The entire Committee evaluated the subcommittees' recommendations and made final

adjustments to arrive at a plan the membership could recommend.

The Organization of This Report

The section that follows, "The Parking Problem," briefly reviews the several studies that have addressed Downtown parking since 1990, focusing on the 1996 parking survey done by Wilbur Smith & Associates. The Downtown Parking Committee evaluated this material to develop a definition of the problem. This is followed by "Parking Strategies" which explains the alternatives the Committee considered and gives a broad overview of the recommended approaches. The final section, "Recommendations," is a detailed analysis of the Committee's proposed strategies and programs.

Chapter 2. THE PARKING PROBLEM

Parking has only recently been perceived as a problem in Downtown Larkspur. In 1990, on-street parking and the public lot at Ward and Magnolia more than made up for parking shortfalls on private property. The 1990 General Plan focused on the threat from shopping centers and the need to preserve Downtown's historic character. The Plan called for preparation of a Downtown Specific Plan to address "appropriate uses, traffic, parking, economic vitality, building preservation and design of new development...."

Overall, it appears that Downtown parking is generally adequate for current uses, except in the case of special events. If however, there is an intensification of use, or if Downtown Larkspur becomes more attractive as a place to shop, thus increasing the demand for parking, the parking supply could become a constraining factor to economic revitalization

Larkspur General Plan, December, 1990

The *Downtown Specific Plan*, prepared in 1991, included an in-depth parking study by Wilbur Smith & Associates. The Specific Plan found parking was generally adequate. However, a 1996 update of the 1991 study found that the parking situation had changed dramatically. Downtown Larkspur had been "discovered," due to the success of area restaurants

and the general upturn of the economy. The 1996 study demonstrated that there were barely enough parking spaces Downtown to service the peak dining times – weekday and Saturday lunch, and Saturday dinner. The 1996 study found that at noon on weekdays the City parking lot at Ward and Magnolia was full, and there were virtually no on-street spaces available. On Saturday evenings, up to 90% of the public spaces were taken, and cars were actually double parked on some streets and in the City lot.

By 1996 many observers felt the General Plan's projection that "parking supply could become a constraining factor to economic revitalization" had been realized.

Parking in the Downtown Specific Plan

The 1991 Downtown Plan concluded that parking conditions did not appear "to limit or constrain land use or productivity." The existing parking supply was judged generally adequate, "although...this may be a reflection of the low levels of usage currently in the area." The Plan found the then existing City of Larkspur parking requirements inappropriately restrictive, probably resulting in unnecessary limitations on land use intensity. The Plan recommended a series of reductions to the parking requirements in the zoning ordinance; the reductions were subsequently adopted by the City Council.

PARKING REQUIREMENTS REDUCED IN 1992

- Requirements for retail, restaurant, office and residential reduced up to 50%;
- Retail and office additions that would not cause the total building Floor Area Ratio to exceed .80 exempted from providing additional parking;
- Restaurant additions that would not raise the building Floor Area Ratio past .80 FAR were required to provide 4.4 spaces per 1000 square feet, an exceptionally low rate;
- Existing buildings allowed to accommodate any use without providing additional parking except for—
 - ✓ Residential -- must supply one parking space per unit;
 - ✓ Hotel/inn uses -- must supply one space per room;
 - ✓ New restaurants -- must supply 7 parking spaces per 1000 square feet of building area.

The Downtown Plan also concluded that “[w]ithout some type of parking management program, it is unlikely that the future supply will meet the future demand in many locations.” The Downtown Plan recommended that parking management occur through an assessment district.

The recommendation in the Downtown Plan to reduce parking requirements, especially for existing buildings, was a sound community development strategy. The increase in parking demand since the Plan was adopted resulted from new customers, not new construction. The parking “problem” is a sign of success.

Downtown Parking Committee

To date there have been few opportunities to apply the parking rules coming out of the Downtown Plan. There has been no new construction since the Plan was written, and little significant business turnover. The new rules did make it easier for several food establishments to fulfill zoning requirements.

Downtown Parking Has Changed Since 1991

In 1996 the City retained Wilbur Smith & Associates to update the 1991 parking study. The update used the methods employed in the earlier study to analyze parking supply and demand. Important points in the 1996 study are discussed below.

How Much Parking is There?

In 1996 there were 683 parking spaces Downtown, 109 on the street and 574 off-street. This was a slight decrease from 1991 when there were 709 spaces. For purposes of both the 1991 and 1996 parking studies, off-street parking was classified as either “public” or “private.” “Public” parking refers to spaces that are accessible to the general public. These include

- ✓ customer parking for Downtown stores
- ✓ unsigned/unrestricted lots
- ✓ publicly owned lots, as well as
- ✓ all on-street spaces.

Based on this definition, there were **367 public spaces (54% of the total)** in 1996 -- virtually no change from the 1991 count of 369 spaces.

PUBLIC PARKING	
Location	Spaces
City Lot (Ward & Magnolia)	28
Donut Alley*	36
Thrift Store*	9
Fabrizio's Restaurant*	13
Lark Creek Inn & Shops	69
On-street	<u>109</u>
Total	367

**lot not open to general public in 1998*

"Private" lots are restricted to a single user group including residential, tenant or employee-only lots and church and school lots. The supply of private spaces was reduced from 340 to **316 private spaces (46% of all parking spaces)** in 1996 largely as a result of changes on the Larkspur Plaza and Nazari properties.

PRIVATE PARKING	
Location	Spaces
Larkspur Plaza	172
St. Patrick's School	47
City Hall	16
Residential	75
miscellaneous	<u>6</u>
Total	316

The 1996 study examined parking occupancy on weekdays and weekends, for (1) on- and off-street parking and for (2) public and total parking. The study compared this data to the same statistics for 1991.

Weekday Parking

1991 and 1996 occupancy rates for public and private parking are compared in the table below and the graph on the following page. What do the numbers show? First, there are simply more vehicles parked Downtown today than

Time	Total % Occupied		Public, % Occupied		Private, % Occupied		Total % Difference	Public % Difference	Private % Difference
	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996			
8:00A	27%	36%	28%	42%	26%	28%	9%	14%	2%
9:00A	34%	40%	39%	49%	29%	30%	6%	10%	1%
10:00A	41%	43%	46%	55%	35%	30%	2%	9%	-5%
11:00A	43%	47%	47%	63%	38%	28%	4%	16%	-10%
NOON	50%	58%	56%	78%	44%	35%	8%	22%	-9%
1:00P	54%	56%	66%	79%	40%	29%	2%	13%	-11%
2:00P	50%	52%	61%	71%	37%	30%	2%	10%	-7%
3:00P	46%	49%	50%	67%	42%	28%	3%	17%	-14%
4:00P	45%	50%	52%	66%	36%	33%	5%	14%	-3%
5:00P	46%	51%	50%	62%	42%	39%	5%	12%	-3%
Average Increase/Decrease							5%	14%	-5%

was the case in 1991. Practical experience and the numbers suggest a good deal of this increase is due to the food trade, especially from Noon to 2:00PM. This healthy increase in demand – the result of good business and good planning – is aggravated by the net decrease in private parking. Further, the decrease in private parking occupancy rates (over and above the decrease in the supply of private parking) suggests that more property owners may be posting their lots with “no parking” signs. These trends will significantly increase the demand for public parking. A driver, unfamiliar with Larkspur, coming to Downtown for lunch, may have a very difficult time finding public parking. Not only will most of the on-street parking be taken, he or she will have a hard time recognizing the privately-owned parking that is open to the public. The casual driver has good reason to feel there is a shortage of public parking at lunch time on weekdays.

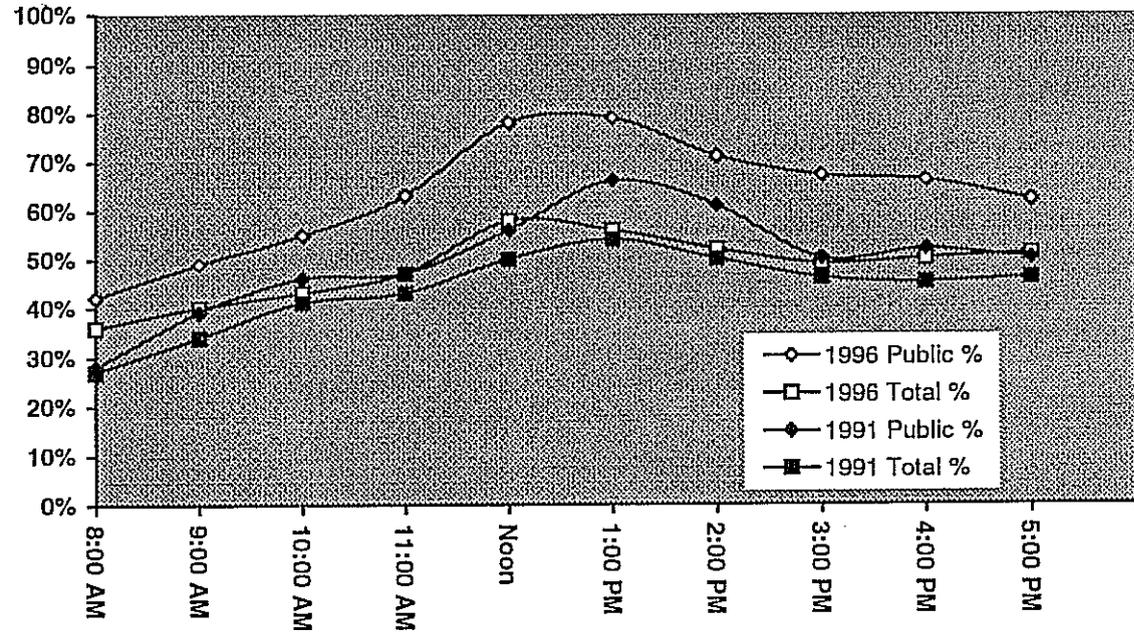


Figure 1: Weekday Parking Occupancy

Weekday Parking Trends

- **Parking demand was up in 1996** in all time slots; overall demand was up by an average of 7%.
- **Almost all of the increased demand was for public parking** which went up by 15%.
- **Noon time parking changed dramatically**, going up 12% overall, and 24% for public parking.
- **On-street parking was 94% occupied** at Noon, with most street segments completely filled, or double-parked. The City lot at Ward and Magnolia was over capacity at Noon.

Weekend Parking

The number of Saturday visitors to Downtown Larkspur went up dramatically from 1991 to 1996. Total parking demand increased by an average of 20% for all time slots, and conditions became much more crowded during the lunch and the dinner hours. Both afternoon and evening diners found the on-street spaces and the lot at Ward and Magnolia completely full and, in some cases, double parked. Table 2 and the graph that follows compare 1991 and 1996 Saturday parking occupancy rates. Clearly, restaurants are driving Downtown's weekend vitality. It is also clear that with the present restrictions on "private" parking, the existing "public" parking supply is being used at very close to full capacity on Saturday evenings. Even this conclusion may be overly optimistic. While the data shows 35 "surplus" public spaces available at the 8:00PM peak, it is

Table 2 COMPARISON - WEEKEND PARKING OCCUPANCY RATES WEEKEND - SATURDAY									
Time	Total % Occupied		Public, % Occupied		Private, % Occupied		Total % Difference	Public % Difference	Private % Difference
	1991	1996	1991	1996	1991	1996			
Noon	34%	60%	38%	70%	29%	47%	26%	34%	16%
1:00P	37%	62%	43%	80%	31%	40%	25%	37%	9%
2:00P	42%	62%	43%	74%	40%	48%	20%	31%	8%
3:00P	44%	62%	48%	68%	39%	55%	18%	20%	16%
4:00P	35%	48%	40%	53%	30%	42%	13%	13%	12%
5:00P	53%	55%	58%	59%	48%	50%	2%	1%	1%
6:00P	54%	55%	56%	72%	52%	35%	1%	16%	-17%
7:00P	52%	63%	67%	80%	36%	45%	11%	13%	9%
8:00P	47%	70%	59%	90%	34%	45%	23%	31%	11%
9:00P	41%	65%	54%	88%	27%	39%	24%	34%	12%
Average Increase/Decrease							16%	23%	9%

not possible to verify from the study where these are located and whether they are really accessible to the public. For example, the 1996 study shows 9 spaces at Donut Alley available to the public at 8:00PM, but a field check indicates that all of the parking on the property is restricted to customers or tenants. It is clear, however, that 115 more public parking spaces were occupied during the 1996 Saturday night peak than in 1991.

**Saturday Parking Trends,
1991 to 1996**

Noon to 3PM: The leisurely lunch

- at any given time there were approximately 150 more vehicles competing for lunch time parking in 1996, a 30% increase
- public parking occupancy increased 35%
- 4 out of 5 public spaces were taken at 1:00PM in the 1996 survey

6 to 9PM: The dinner trade:

- peak demand in 1996 was 70% occupancy at 8PM – a 23% increase
- 90% of all public parking was occupied at 8PM in 1996
- public parking occupancy increased by 115 spaces from 1991 to 1996

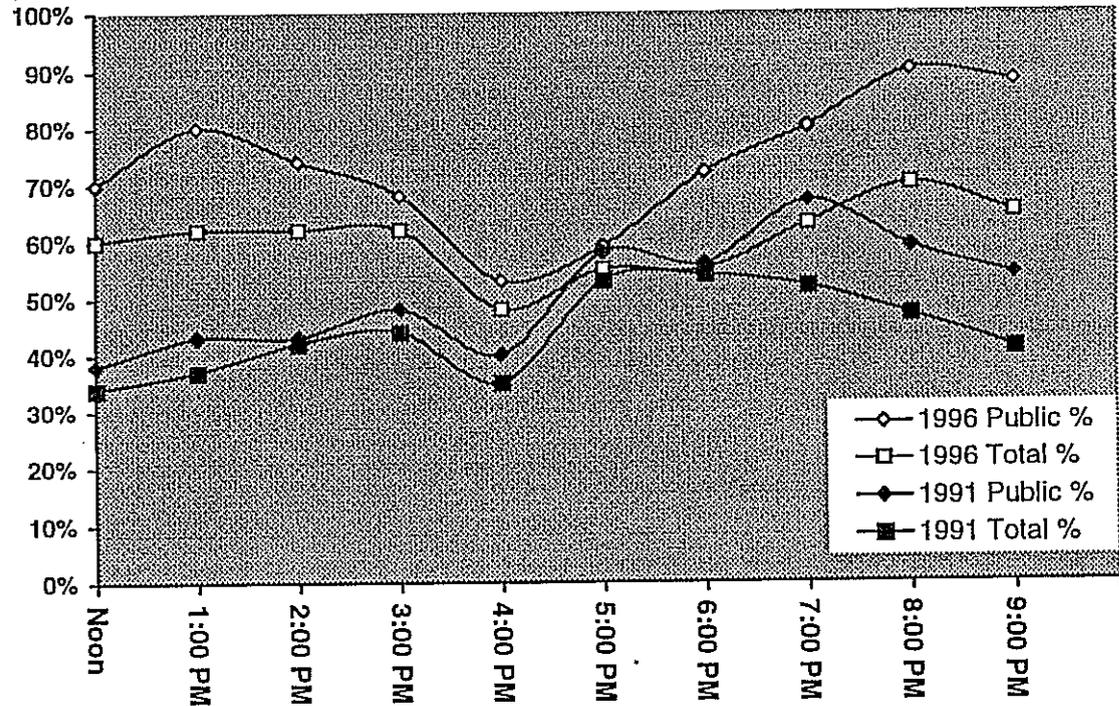


Figure 2: Weekend Parking Occupancy

The Problem Defined

The Downtown Parking Committee drew from the General Plan and the Downtown Specific Plan, the 1991 parking study and the 1996 update and their own experience

to define the parking problem. The Committee debated how much weight to give convenience in defining the parking problem; some drivers feel parking should always be available immediately in front of their Downtown destination. However, providing this level of convenience could require constructing many acres of parking and radically changing the “feel” of

Downtown. The Committee agreed that "convenient" parking is a relative term that should be balanced with the need to preserve Downtown's character.

The following definition was the basis for the Committee's recommendations for parking strategies and programs. The parking problem has two parts: supply and utilization.

Supply

The total supply of parking is barely adequate to meet current needs. Parking studies indicate that

- 1) there is a serious shortage of on-street parking;
- 2) there is a moderate shortfall of public off-street parking;
- 3) the supply of private parking is at least adequate.

The existing parking supply is not adequate to support continued business expansion without an increase in the overall supply of parking and improvements in the pattern of parking utilization.

Utilization

A number of characteristics in the way parking is used reduces the availability and efficiency of the overall

parking supply. Utilization patterns affecting the parking supply include:

- 1) parking locations do not meet the competing needs of commuters, shoppers, employees and residents. All day employee and commuter parking is occurring where parking should be short term;
- 2) under-utilized private parking;
- 3) parking availability is not sequenced to meet the time needs of commuters, shoppers, employees and residents. For example, there is a high vacancy rate in the private parking supply on Saturday nights when there is a high demand from restaurant diners. Diners are restricted from most of the private parking supply;
- 4) on-street spaces are being used for valet parking;
- 5) the public does not know where parking is available;
- 6) a lot of the parking we have is not well located and is inconvenient to use;
- 7) Downtown parking overflows into residential neighborhoods;
- 8) there is a shortage of residential parking in the Downtown area.

Chapter 3. PARKING STRATEGIES

The Parking Committee's first priority was to preserve Downtown's physical and social character – a bustling, comfortable small town center of turn-of-the-century buildings, where people come to shop, do business, meet and dine. The Committee did not define the parking problem as an imminent crisis. Rather the Committee found that at peak times parking is tight and that if this trend continues parking shortages could restrain the business activity and expansion that make Downtown a vital place.

The Committee also recognized that there is no simple or single solution to Downtown Larkspur's parking problem. For example, changing the zoning ordinance to require that new uses in existing buildings come up to current parking standards would "solve" the problem, but it could also encourage demolition and/or squelch business vitality. Stricter enforcement of the 2-hour parking limit could free up spaces on Magnolia Avenue, but it would also push parking into already crowded residential streets.

The Downtown Parking Committee was satisfied that the parking requirements for new development (with the exception of restaurants – see Appendix 2) were adequate. Committee members also recognized that the space limitations on most built-up lots would make it

impractical to require "under parked" existing buildings to provide additional private spaces. Accordingly, the Committee focused on ways to increase the stock of *public* parking. The Committee sought flexible combinations of programs that could be tailored to Downtown's unique characteristics and adjusted to meet changing needs. The Committee developed a gradual approach that would start with small, low cost programs that could be initiated quickly to add spaces and improve the efficiency of existing parking. The Committee also identified more ambitious strategies that could be implemented over the longer term to assure adequate parking for future Downtown business expansion.

Developing Strategies

The Downtown Parking Committee developed parking strategies in a four step process described below.

1. *Alternatives search* – the Committee's consultant prepared a background report on approaches used in California cities to increase and/or manage downtown parking. Committee members studied the report independently and developed questions and points for discussion. The alternatives are summarized on the following page [*continued on page 15*].

The Alternatives

The following list of parking alternatives includes funding mechanisms, legal authorities and specific approaches to providing or managing parking. These alternatives have been used in various combinations to meet specific needs in California downtowns.

New Public Parking Lots Public lots can be the most efficient form of Downtown parking because they are available 24 hours per day to all properties within walking distance. Also, parking rules and public financing techniques can be applied to assure equity among users in terms of availability and expense.

Benefit Districts California law provides a variety of benefit districts for financing, acquiring and constructing public infrastructure, including parking facilities. In these districts assessments are levied against property. Assessments are subject to Proposition 218, the Right to Vote on Taxes Act, adopted by the voters in November 1996. Prop. 218 requires an election for every type of assessment district. Ballots must be weighted based on the proportional financial obligation of each assessed parcel. Majority protest is based on the number of voters actually submitting ballots. Thus a small group of very interested voters can defeat the assessment, even if a majority of property owners favor the proposal, but do not vote.

Parking Districts A variety of parking districts are authorized in California. The Parking Authority of the City of Larkspur was established in 1974 to build the public parking lot at the Magnolia Avenue and Ward Street. The Authority issued revenue bonds pledging the proceeds of a

lease with the City. The bonds were paid off in 1994, and the Authority remains in existence.

Business Improvement Districts Business Improvement Districts (BID's) permit a city council to levy assessments on businesses to pay for various facilities and activities, including managing parking. BID's have been very effective in California downtowns, giving business the means to manage their own neighborhoods and promote programs such as downtown marketing. BID's are not subject to Prop 218, because the assessment is against the business rather than the property.

Parking Deficiency Fees These fees are usually created in the Zoning Ordinance to require payment by properties that do not provide the required parking. The fee proceeds are used to support bonds which may or may not be tied to an assessment district.

Employee Parking Permits The Parking Authority may charge fees for use of public parking using meters, lot fees and/or permits. A variation on this would permit free two-hour parking with permits available to Downtown employees for longer term parking in designated lots.

Valet Parking This approach has many variations including parking offered by a business for its customers (either on- or off-site), parking for the general public from designated sidewalk areas, renting public parking facilities to private valet contract services and amending City codes to allow valet parking to meet zoning requirements.

Enforcement Enforcement can be stepped up to increase parking turnover, and in effect, increase the amount of available public parking.

Shared Parking Allows various businesses that use parking at different times of day to share spaces.

Parking Easements Easements may be leased or purchased to allow public parking.

Signage Coordinated sign design, messages and locations help to make the public more conscious of parking regulations as well as parking locations.

Diagonal Parking This design for on-street parking is coming back into favor on low traffic volume streets and in areas where communities have decided to reduce traffic flow. Almost doubles on-street capacity.

Restripe Private Lots Cities can loan their engineering expertise to private property owners to show how restriping can add spaces.

Structured Time Zones Varying the length of time permitted for public parking can in effect create more parking by improving utilization.

Land Use Regulations The mix or allowed land uses and the parking regulations that are designed for that mix affects the amount of parking provided and the utilization.

Street Restriping "T's" may be painted on the street to mark parking spots. Red, yellow and green zones can be designated to maximize parking utilization.

2. *Preliminary strategies* — Committee members and interested citizens organized into three study groups to conduct a “first pass” evaluation of the alternatives, focusing on basic feasibility and responsiveness to the Committee’s definition of the parking problem. The study groups ranked the approaches in first, second and third priority order, based on criteria developed by each group. The Committee as a whole reviewed the work of the study groups and put the alternatives in three groupings: short-, mid-, and long-range strategies.

3. *Evaluation* – Working groups were formed for each of the three strategies, and programs were studied and evaluated in depth. Detailed studies were done to test the applicability of the various program options against a common set of criteria. Some programs were shifted among the strategies, and a number of approaches were eliminated as infeasible or simply not appropriate to Downtown Larkspur.

4. *Final Strategies and Programs* – The working groups reported their recommendations to the Committee as a whole, which analyzed the proposals in detail and made a series of modifications before coming to final agreement on strategies and programs.

The Strategies

Based on its analysis of how the various approaches could be applied to the parking problem, the Downtown

Evaluation Criteria

- ☞ How many spaces would be added?
- ☞ At what time of the day and week would this program be effective?
- ☞ What part of the parking problem would be solved?
- ☞ What would the program cost?
- ☞ What is the likely funding source?
- ☞ Are there any prerequisites to implementing this program?

Parking Committee developed three strategies –

1. Short - Range – relatively low cost projects that can be done within six months. Projects include:
 - Shared parking program
 - Post St. parking lot
 - Valet parking
 - Street restriping
 - Restripe the public parking lot at Ward and Magnolia
 - Time-structured parking zones
 - Feasibility study for future parking lots
 - Increased parking requirements for restaurants
 - Sign program
2. Mid - Range – Projects that can be done within two years. These projects are not needed immediately. Rather, they offer long-term benefits and should be implemented as opportunities present themselves.

- Arch St. parking lot
- Railroad right-of-way parking lot
- Parking permits
- Enforcement
- Business Improvement District

3. Long - Range – Projects to be started in two years or later. These projects should be undertaken if the supply of public parking can not be increased

significantly with the short- and mid-range strategies or if parking demand increases. Full implementation of the short-, mid-, and long-range strategies would provide adequate parking to serve full build-out of the *Downtown Specific Plan*.

- A publicly funded 50 to 100 space parking lot
- Deficiency fees

The strategies and programs are discussed in detail in the "Recommendations" section which follows.

Chapter 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

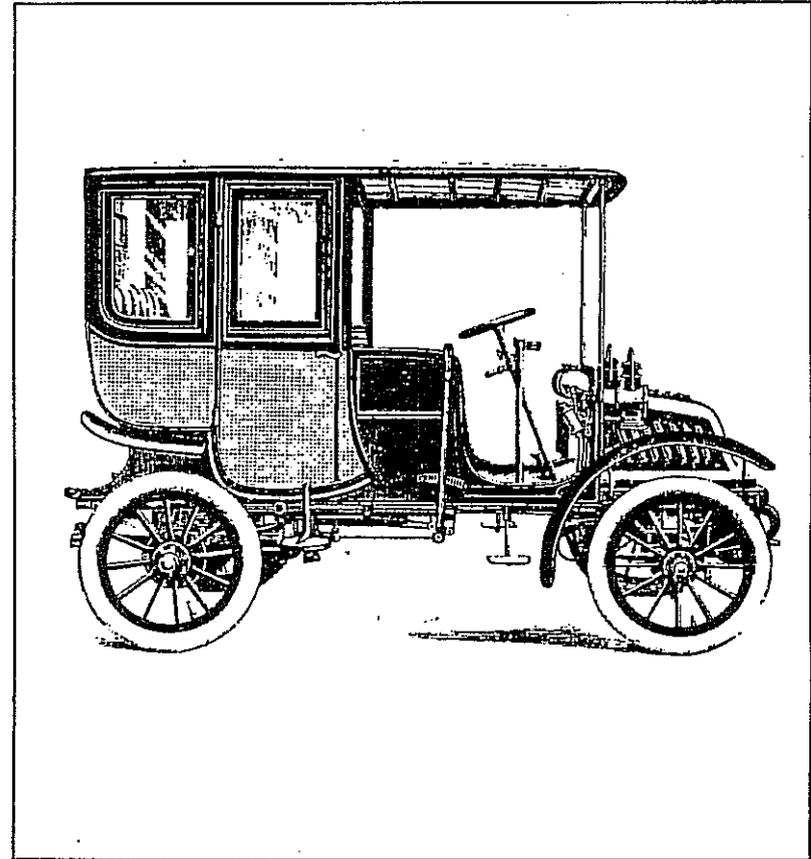
The following section describes the recommended strategies, programs and projects in detail. The evaluation criteria have been applied to measure the feasibility and appropriateness of the various approaches. A proposal for diagonal parking which the Downtown Parking Committee found did not measure well against the evaluation criteria is described in Appendix 1.

Implementing the Strategies

It is important to view the recommendations in this report as *strategies* rather than a final plan. The underlying logic to these strategies is that resources are limited and the City should be prepared to act as needs change and opportunities present themselves. It is more important that the City evaluate, monitor and adjust programs than it is to commit to implementing every suggestion in this report. Flexibility is the key to successfully managing the changing parking situation.

The Downtown Parking Committee recommends that the City Council form an on-going group to advise the Council on managing these strategies for the next two years. The Committee recommends a small advisory group with five members representing Downtown businesses (including one restaurant), property owners and nearby residents, as well as liaison from the City Council and Planning Commission. This should be a working group responsible for actively monitoring parking

conditions and programs. The group should meet quarterly and make semi-annual reports to the City Council on program results and changing parking conditions.



Short-Range Strategy and Recommendations

The Short-Range Strategy is to undertake a series of relatively quick, easy and inexpensive programs that will immediately increase the availability of public parking.

Shared Parking

Recommendations --

- A. The City should enter an agreement with Pacific Bell to allow parking by City employees on Pac Bell's property near the intersection of King St. and Magnolia Ave. this would free 13 spaces at City Hall for public use.
- B. Implement a program to encourage property owners to make their unused parking available to employees of Downtown businesses.

Cost: Approximately \$10,000 at the Pac Bell property

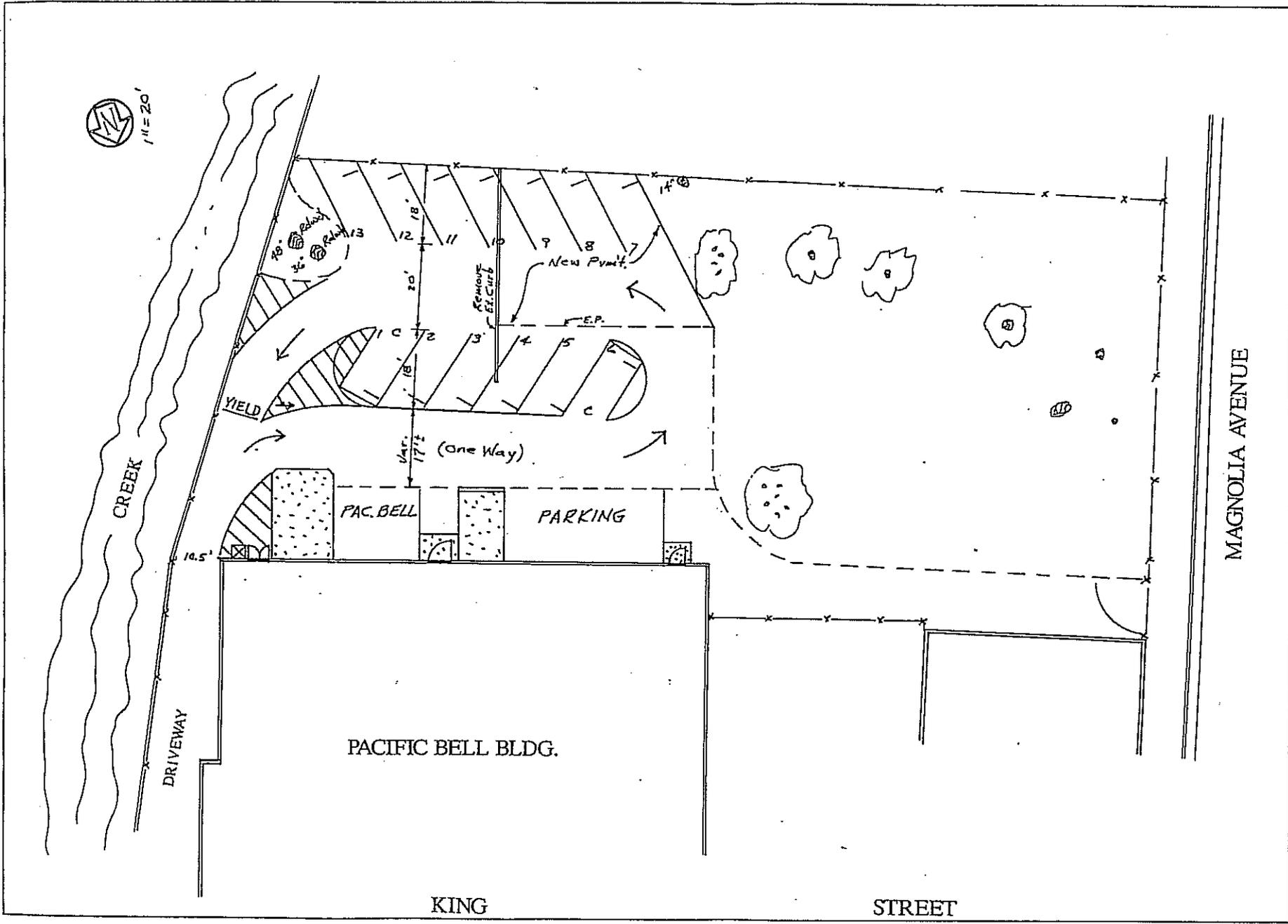
New Spaces: up to 50

A. Pac Bell One of the best sharing opportunities is a potential agreement to allow City employees to park on the Pacific Bell property at King St and Magnolia Ave. Entry to the property is somewhat restricted by a narrow driveway, and Pac Bell has security concerns that could not be satisfied if access were not controlled. Both of these issues can be satisfied if parking is limited to City Hall employees. Up to thirteen spaces could be created if the flat areas of the property are paved and striped. While this new parking would be restricted to employees,

thirteen "employee only" spaces at City Hall could be freed up for public use. The Committee recommends the City complete negotiations that are currently underway with Pacific Bell.

B. Shared Parking Program Peak utilization for most private parking varies with the business. A bank's parking lot tends to be heavily occupied from 9AM to 5PM on weekdays, but close to vacant after 6PM. An adjacent restaurant specializing in the dinner trade would have its peak parking demand after 6PM. The bank and the restaurant could take advantage of these patterns by sharing parking for their mutual benefit. Some California cities have offered incentives to encourage shared parking, particularly in downtown areas.

The Downtown Parking Committee examined the 1996 parking study to identify potential opportunities for shared parking. The number of properties offering good prospects for shared parking was surprisingly small given the relatively high vacancy rates on private parking lots. Factors that tend to limit opportunities for participating in a shared parking program include the following:



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 CSW/STUBER-STROEH
 ENGINEERING GROUP, INC.
 CONSULTING ENGINEERS
 790 DeLong Ave., Novato, CA. 94945-3246
 (415) 892-4763 FAX (415) 892-4502

PARKING STUDY
 Alternate 3
At Rear of Pacific Bell Bldg.
On King Street

CITY LARKSPUR
 MARIN COUNTY
 CALIFORNIA

- Residential parking is not suitable for shared parking. Although residential parking tends to have high vacancy rates during the day time, tenants would object to landlords making their spaces available to other users
- Several of the owners of larger lots with high vacancy rates -- such as Lucky's and St. Patrick's Church -- have sound management reasons for not sharing their parking. St. Patrick's lot doubles as a playground. The Lucky's lot would present control problems for the store management in terms of distinguishing customer vehicles and shared parking tenants from unauthorized use of the lot.
- Many of the lots with high vacancy rates are just too small to justify the effort of managing a sharing program.

Nevertheless, the Committee was able to identify at least 50 spaces that may be appropriate for shared parking. Potential "candidates" for sharing are not listed in this report to avoid complicating future negotiations.

The Committee suggests a shared parking program focused on the following –

- **Employee parking.** A shared program should be aimed at Downtown employees. This would free on-street public spaces for Downtown customers. Employee parking spaces could be assigned to individuals, and property managers would know who was authorized to use the designated

spaces. This would not be the case if the program were aimed at customer parking.

- **Insurance incentives.** The City should consider offering liability coverage to property owners who agree to participate in the shared parking program. This is permitted under the City's current insurance program.
- **Zoning Incentives.** The City should accept participation in the shared/employee parking program as a way for Downtown businesses to comply with parking requirements in the Zoning Ordinance.

Post Street Parking Lot

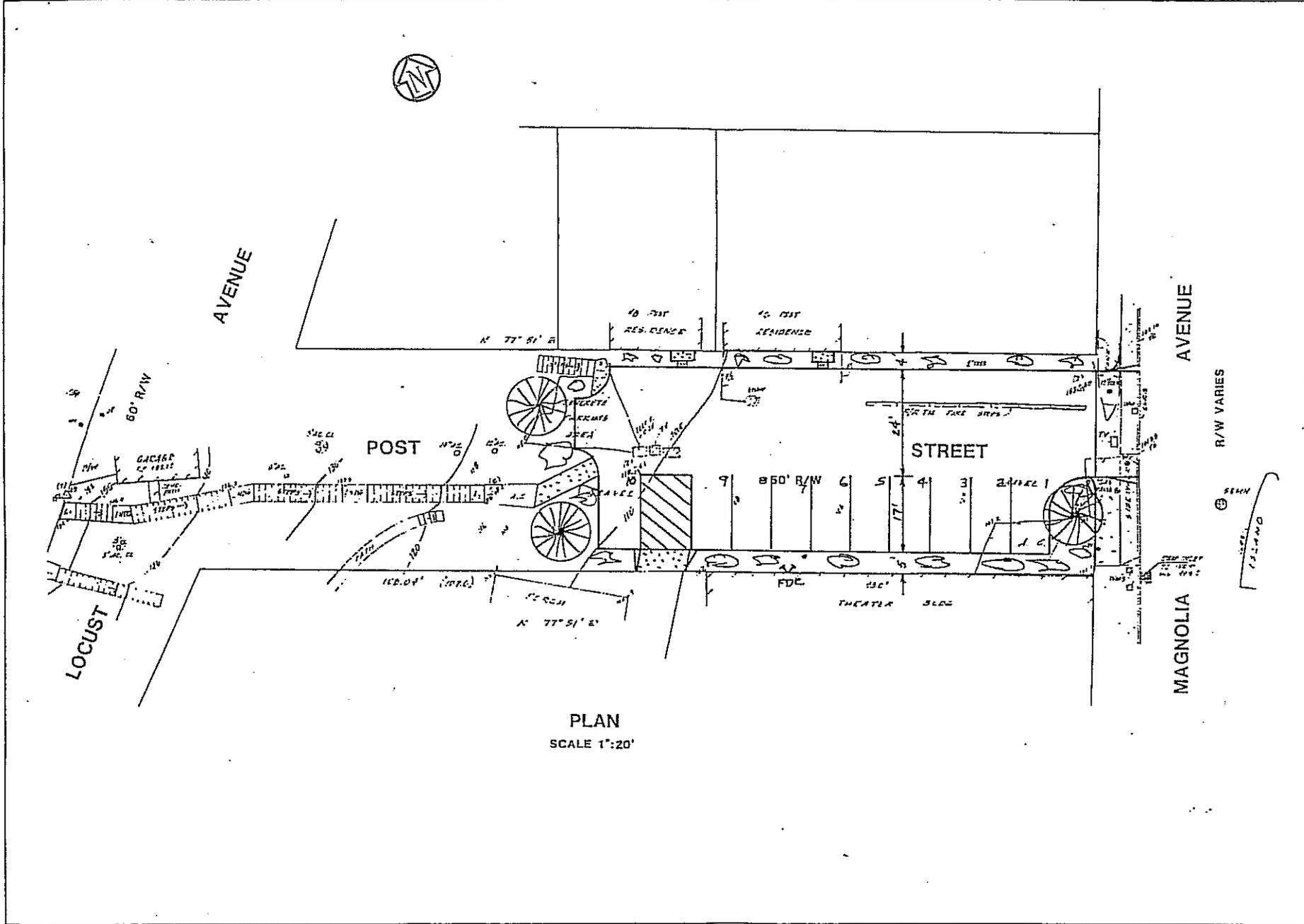
Recommendation:

- Fund the construction of a 10-space parking lot on Post Street.
- If feasible, lease space for four additional spaces on the vacant portion of #8 Post Street.

Cost: \$25,000

New Spaces: 10

The Downtown Specific Plan recommends Post St. be explored for a public parking lot. Post Street is a 200 foot long, unpaved, City-owned "paper" street that connects Magnolia and Locust Streets. Post Street is almost level



PARKING STUDY
 Alternate 2
Magnolia Avenue @ Post Street

CITY OF ARKSPUR
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for the first 120 feet from Magnolia, where a public stair begins for the steeper portion that rises up to Locust. The Committee reviewed four alternative designs – two using only the City-owned Post St, and two others that used the privately-owned lot at #8 Post St. as well.

Alternative 2, shown here, was chosen as the most cost-effective and the most compatible with neighboring properties, especially the adjacent multi family homes. The design is for 10 spaces with the vehicles parking at right angles to the Lark Theater building, which avoids headlight glare to nearby homes. Landscaping is shown on all four sides of the parking lot and a handicapped parking stall is provided. Cars leaving this lot would have to turn right due to the traffic divider on this portion of Magnolia. This design is very cost effective at an estimated price tag of \$25,000. The design and cost estimates were provided by CSW/Stuber-Stroeh Engineering Group, Inc.

It is possible to add four more spaces to this project if a reasonable lease can be negotiated for approximately 1000 square feet of vacant land on the parcel at #8 Post Street. The Committee recommends that this option be explored before the City Council authorizes the project to proceed.

Valet Parking

Recommendation: Encourage valet parking as a way to comply with parking requirements in the Zoning Ordinance.

Cost: No public expenditure required

New Spaces: Undetermined

As the downtown renaissance has blossomed, California cities have encouraged valet parking to reduce congestion and get the most out of existing asphalt. For many years cities with older downtowns have allowed merchants, especially restaurateurs, to meet parking ordinance requirements with valet parking. More recently, cities have begun to allow "Automobile Parking Services" companies to have, in effect, a franchise for an entire block by granting encroachment permits to operate drop off and loading zones in the public right of way.

Valet parking has been used successfully in Downtown Larkspur for customer convenience and, in one case, to satisfy parking requirements in the Zoning Ordinance. One successful example of valet parking is the Lark Creek Inn which was able to increase its parking capacity by 40% with a valet program. The Planning Commission accepted valet parking as a way to satisfy zoning ordinance requirements when the Left Bank restaurant was required to add parking spaces to accommodate outdoor dining in 1992. The Left Bank management arranged to use the play ground at St. Patrick's School in the 500 block of Magnolia for valet parking on Saturday evenings. Slack compliance by the valet company has

contributed to the parking problem on Saturday evenings.

The Committee recommends that the Planning Commission encourage valet arrangements to satisfy parking requirements in the zoning ordinance, especially for restaurants. The 1996 parking survey shows high evening vacancy rates in several private lots, but it is more difficult to find opportunities for off-site valet parking during the day time. The Committee recommends that conditions should be attached to any approval for valet parking including –

- require an encroachment permit for drop-off and loading areas in the public right-of-way;
- specify routes used by the valet drivers;
- assure that valet parking does not displace other parking usage;
- document the operators'/employees' qualifications; and,
- provide for monitoring and enforcement.

Finally, in the event the Parking Authority develops additional public parking, it should consider leasing parking space to valet operators.

Street Restriping

Recommendation: Paint "T's" on Magnolia St. to mark parking spaces on a trial basis after consultation with merchants; evaluate their effectiveness.

Cost: Nominal

Impact: May reduce congestion that results from drivers trying to squeeze into too-small spaces between vehicles on unmarked pavement.

This recommendation refers to the "T" shaped markers that are painted on streets to designate parking spaces. "T's" are intended to maximize the number of vehicles that can safely park on a given section of street. They also reduce congestion from parking maneuvers that happen when drivers attempt to park in an area that is too small for the vehicle. "T's" have been in place for several years on portions of Magnolia Ave. and King St. The Public Works Department proposes to install "T's" on the full length of Magnolia throughout Downtown.

Committee members differed as to whether "T's" really result in parking the maximum number of vehicles. Some members felt that if the street is not marked, drivers will tend to park as closely as possible to other vehicles. Other members expect the opposite – drivers will leave large gaps between vehicles with the result that fewer cars can be parked.

In the course of its work, the Committee found that a section of the west side of Magnolia Ave. north of Doherty Drive, where parking is currently prohibited, could safely accommodate two or three parking spaces.

The Downtown Parking Committee recommends:

- "T's" should be installed on a trial basis;
- merchants should be surveyed before the trial begins to be sure they support the project;
- before and after surveys should be done to measure the impact of "T's" on the number of vehicles parked;
- "T's" should be installed on the west side of Magnolia Ave., north of Doherty Drive.

Public Parking Lot at Ward and Magnolia

Recommendation: Restripe the Parking Lot at Ward and Magnolia

Cost: less than \$10,000

New Spaces: 8 to 12

The Downtown Specific Plan suggests that the City consider selling the 28 space public parking lot at Ward and Magnolia to a future developer of the adjacent Nazari property. The purpose of selling the parking lot would be to improve the quality of the development project and increase the amount of public parking. There is, however, no way to predict when or whether a development plan that links the Nazari property and the City lot will be approved.

The Committee reviewed a feasibility study Wagstaff and Mays Architects for an interim plan to restripe the City's lot to add 8 to 12 parking spaces. Adding 12 spaces depended in part on access through the Nazari property

which may not be possible. Nevertheless, the study shows that a better striping plan is possible for the City's public parking lot.

The Committee recommends that a restriping plan be developed and implemented for the public lot at Ward and Magnolia.

Time-Structured Parking Zones

Recommendation: Install 20-minute parking spaces on Ward St.

Cost: Nominal

Impact: Expands the availability of public spaces by raising the turnover rate in areas where retail activity is most intense. Decreases congestion caused by drivers circling to find short-term spaces. May also decrease congestion by locating high turnover spaces out of the main traffic stream.

Time restrictions on parking are intended to maximize the turnover of the most convenient and, therefore, the most valuable spaces. The underlying intent is to reserve the most convenient spaces for customers. The principle Downtown streets – Magnolia Ave., King, Cane and Ward Streets – and the public lot at Ward and Magnolia are designated for two hour parking. 20-minute spaces are marked – two each – in front of City Hall, St. Patrick's Church and the Post Office. At the suggestion of Twin Cities Police representatives, the Downtown

Parking Committee considered other areas with a pattern of intense business activity and a demand for rapid parking turnover. The Committee explored a number of alternatives before deciding to recommend installing 20-minute, "green zones" in two locations:

- one space on the south side of Ward St. at the Magnolia Ave. intersection, next to the Bank of the West. This space should reduce drivers circling to find a space to park while they use the ATM machine at the bank or park illegally in the red zone on Magnolia Ave.
- extend the 20-minute zone on the north side of Ward St. in front of the post office for a total five short-term spaces. The spaces should be marked with "T's" to assure maximum efficiency. The Committee recommends that the City consult with nearby property owners before making the final decision to extend this 20-minute zone

Feasibility Study for Future Parking Lots

Recommendation: Conduct a study on the feasibility of acquiring land and constructing a 50 to 100 space parking lot.

Cost: \$5,000 to \$15,000

The Long Range Strategy includes a recommendation to build a new public parking lot with 50 to 100 spaces. The first phase of a major public improvement project is a

feasibility study. The Downtown Parking Committee recommends that a feasibility study be undertaken as soon as possible to avoid losing one or more potential parking lot locations to private development. The Committee is particularly concerned about the Nazari property on Magnolia Ave. next to the parking lot at Ward and Magnolia, and the Niven Nursery property. Both properties are being marketed for development as the Downtown Parking Plan is being written. At a minimum, the feasibility study should determine the appropriateness of properties studied, land value, physical development constraints, conceptual design and the means and timing of acquisition.

Restaurant Parking

Recommendation: Amend the Zoning Ordinance to increase parking standards for restaurants.

Cost: Nominal

Impact: Requiring more parking for new restaurants should avoid increasing pressure on public parking. Increasing the parking standard could make it more difficult to start new restaurants.

The Downtown Parking Committee considered whether parking requirements in the Zoning Ordinance are adequate. The Committee reviewed analyses in Tables A.4 and A.5 (Appendix 2, pg. 35) which indicate that parking demand in Downtown Larkspur is below projections by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) for office,

retail, restaurant and residential land uses. However, a close comparison of Downtown Larkspur parking standards to the ULI rates suggests that the City's parking standard for restaurants may be too low. In the following table the city's parking standards are compared to the ULI demand rate. The highest rates corresponding to the Larkspur peak periods are used for this comparison, i.e., 1:00PM weekdays for retail and office, and 8:00PM weekends for restaurant and residential.

Table 3
Parking Standards

Land Use	ULI Rate	Larkspur Zoning
Office	2.7 spaces/1000 sf	2.5 spaces/1000 sf
Retail	3.8 spaces/1000 sf	2.6 spaces/1000 sf
Restaurant	20 spaces/1000 sf	4.4-7 spaces/1000 sf
Residential	.92 spaces/unit	1 space/unit

The City's standard for Downtown restaurants is 4.4 and 7.0 spaces respectively for existing and new buildings, well below the rate ULI uses to project parking demand.

The Downtown Parking Committee noted a strong correlation between Downtown restaurant success and the increase in parking demand since 1991. The Committee concluded that the City should conduct a study to determine a more appropriate parking standard for Downtown restaurants and amend the Zoning Ordinance accordingly.

Sign Program

Recommendation: Develop a sign program

Cost: Less than \$5,000

The projects recommended in this report will result in new parking opportunities scattered throughout Downtown. The Committee recommends that a sign program be developed to direct drivers to public parking. The sign program should provide other parking information as well including

- ✓ hours when parking is available;
- ✓ parking time limits;
- ✓ special information for employee and shared parking; and,
- ✓ acknowledgments for businesses and property owners who cooperate in shared or employee parking efforts.

A consistent sign program will do more than provide useful information to drivers. It can also help to raise everyone's awareness of the need to keep the public, two-hour spaces available for Downtown customers.

Other approaches to distributing parking information should be explored as well, such as maps and brochures which could be distributed by merchants.

Mid-Range Strategy and Recommendations

The Mid-range strategy is to implement a series of projects in *anticipation* of increased parking demand. These projects and programs offer long-term benefits and should be implemented as opportunities present themselves. Some or all of these projects may be initiated within the next two years

Arch Street Parking Lot

Recommendation –

- Consider a design that would place a new City parking lot immediately behind the Magnolia Avenue sidewalk.

Cost: Undetermined

Impact: 6 to 8 parking spaces

The City of Larkspur owns a 3,000 square foot lot and the vacant Arch Street right-of-way at the foot of the Arch St. stairs on Magnolia Avenue. A privately owned lot is immediately adjacent on the north side of the right-of-way. The Downtown Specific Plan recommends that the City property and the vacant right-of-way be developed as a public parking lot.

While the Downtown Parking Plan was being prepared, the owners of the adjacent private lot prepared several concept plans for building an office on their property. The

proposed access to the office building was across the Arch St. right-of-way. This approach could facilitate building parking on all three properties – the city's 3000 foot lot, the vacant right-of-way and the office property -- that could be shared. The Committee found that the designs presented were not cost effective and may not be compatible with the Arch Street stairs. The Committee concluded that the designs presented did not offer significant public benefits.

The Downtown Parking Committee recommends that a design concept be explored that would put a row of parking parallel to Magnolia Ave. across the 3,000 square foot City lot and the Arch St. right-of-way.

The Railroad Right-of-Way

Recommendation: Build a public parking lot on the railroad right-of-way property between Ward St and the Lucky's driveway

Cost: Construction costs expected to be less than \$100,000; acquisition cost unknown

New Spaces: At least 25 new spaces could be added.

The abandoned Northwest Pacific Railroad right-of-way between Larkspur Plaza and Ward St. could be developed as a public parking lot. This 70' by 450' strip is part of the privately owned Nazari property at the corner of Ward St. and Magnolia Ave. The General Plan shows a Class 1 bikeway and pedestrian path crossing the property as it follows the old railroad right-of-way from William Ave. northward through the Downtown area to Doherty Drive. The *Downtown Specific Plan* suggests that the railroad right-of-way on the Nazari property could be developed with a single-loaded lane of parking and a landscape corridor to accommodate the bike and pedestrian path. The Downtown Parking Committee reviewed the more detailed study at right that further demonstrates the feasibility of the Downtown Plan's suggestion.

The Downtown Parking Committee recommends the following considerations for design of the parking lot:

- the railroad buildings should be retained in their present location;
- to avoid through traffic circulation on the railroad right-of-way, traffic should access parking via two separate driveways accessed from Ward St. and the Lucky's driveway.

Designing and engineering a parking lot on this flat property is straight forward and would not present any serious difficulties. Given the high value of land in Downtown Larkspur, purchase of the property would likely be very expensive. Costs to the public could be minimized by negotiating acquisition when the Nazari property is proposed for development. Concessions could be granted during the development review process in return for the developer giving the property to the City or selling it on favorable terms. For example, the developer could be allowed to count the parking lot and the pathway for calculating the floor area ratio (FAR) and/or residential density allowed on the remainder of the property.

Parking Permits

Recommendation: Require parking permits as part of an employee parking and/or deficiency fee program

Cost: Nominal

Impact: Implements employee parking and deficiency fee programs

Both the employee parking and deficiency fee programs (see Long-Range Strategies for a discussion of the proposed deficiency fee program) provide extended parking to individuals and/or businesses that pay to use public spaces for more than the usual two hours. The Downtown Parking Committee recommends that the most cost effective way to protect this exclusive right is with parking permits allowing parking in designated areas of public parking lots for more than two hours. The Committee recommends that a parking permit program be implemented to support employee parking. Parking permit fees should not be implemented unless

- the overall parking supply has been increased with implementation of the Short- and Mid-Range Strategies; and,
- an appropriate study demonstrates that an employee parking program has good potential for success.

Enforcement

Recommendations: Parking enforcement should be increased after the supply and availability of public parking has increased significantly.

Cost: Varies, depending on level of enforcement

Impact: Will increase the turn over, and the availability, of public spaces. Stricter enforcement may change the friendly "feeling" of Downtown for some drivers.

Parking in Downtown Larkspur is enforced by Twin Cities Police Community Service Officers (CSO's). CSO's enforce for one two-hour cycle per day, three or four times per week, issuing five or six tickets per cycle. Due to staff shortages and competing service demands, enforcement is often sporadic. Occasionally, at the request of the City or merchants, parking is enforced more closely, i.e. two cycles per day; within a week there are almost no violations. Police staff believe the most frequent parking violators are people who work Downtown. Many Committee members share this opinion based on their own experience working and living in the neighborhood. Twin Cities police advise that unless additional parking – preferably public parking – is available,

stricter enforcement will tend to force Downtown parking into residential neighborhoods.

The Police Department also suggested adding more 20-minute spaces on Ward St. in the vicinity of the Post Office as a way to free up spaces in a high turn over area.

The Downtown Parking Committee concluded that

- there is no evidence that increased enforcement under current conditions will improve the overall parking problem;
- increasing enforcement would require hiring additional staff;
- enforcement should not be stepped up until both public parking and employee parking are significantly increased as recommended in this report.

Business Improvement District

Recommendation: Explore the formation of a Business Improvement District.

Cost: Approximately \$7,000 for a preliminary study; additional costs can be recovered after formation of the BID.

Impact: Creates an organization to help manage parking issues and promote Downtown business interests.

The Parking and Business Improvement Area Law of 1989 authorizes cities to levy assessments on businesses within a Business Improvement District to pay for various kinds of facilities and activities benefiting local businesses. Typical projects are retail promotional programs, parking improvement projects, beautification and Christmas decorations. An Advisory Board is appointed to recommend on expenditures and the method and basis for levying assessments.

The City Council may initiate a BID by conducting a public hearing on a resolution of intention specifying the area, proposed improvements and activities, and the method and basis of assessment. If written protests are received from owners of businesses in the proposed area which will pay 50% or more of the assessments to be levied, further proceedings are blocked for a year. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Council may establish the BID by ordinance. The City Council sets the assessment and approves the BID budget at an annual public hearing. The assessments levied on the businesses "shall be levied on the basis of the estimated benefit to the businesses and properties within the parking and business improvement area."

The Downtown Parking Committee recommends that a BID could be the ideal vehicle for coordinating and implementing many of the programs in this report. The success of each of these programs will depend on the input and support of Downtown businesses and property owners. The BID board could provide leadership, be a consensus building forum for businesses and serve as Downtown's "voice" to the City Council. The BID could

operate some aspects of a comprehensive parking program such as publicity and coordinating shared parking arrangements among businesses.

The Larkspur Community Association already serves much of this function, and could be the basis for developing a more formal effort. The BID approach has the advantage of providing a funding source backed by the City.

Long-Range Strategy and Recommendations

The long-range strategy is to build a major new public parking lot when needed to support increased demand. It is anticipated that this project would be initiated two years or later from the time the Downtown Parking Plan is accepted.

New Public Parking Lot

Recommendation:

- 1) The existing Parking Authority should be retained as a management and finance tool for the future.
- 2) The Parking Authority should consider financing a new or expanded 50- to 100-space public parking lot consistent with the design character of Downtown.

Cost: Undetermined; land acquisition costs could be significant.

New Spaces: 50 to 100

In 1974 the Larkspur City Council used the California Parking District Act of 1949 to establish itself as the Parking Authority. The Authority issued \$175,000 in 20-year revenue bonds in December, 1974, to build the parking lot at Magnolia and Ward. The lease agreement provided that the City would pay rent through 1994, and would then own the lot. The Parking Authority was not disbanded after the revenue bonds were paid off.

The Authority has broad power, including the ability to acquire property by contract, condemnation or lease; to dispose of property by sale, lease or exchange; to make rules regarding its functions; to layout and improve parking facilities and rights of way; and to borrow money and issue revenue bonds subject to certain restrictions. Revenue bonds may be paid from fees or rentals from the use of projects financed by the bonds or from other Authority revenues.

The Downtown Parking Committee recommends that the Parking Authority be retained. While various changes in State law have limited the Authority's ability to levy assessments or issue bonds without a 2/3's voter approval (the same rules affect the City Council's fund raising ability), the Parking Authority is still a useful budgeting and management tool. For example, the Parking Authority and the City Council may form a Joint Powers Agreement that can issue Mark-Roos revenue bonds without a city-wide ballot measure.

Why is public parking – on-street and in parking lots – an efficient way to deal with vehicles generated by existing buildings in the Downtown area?

- Public parking is more easily shared than private parking. The same spaces can be used by day-time retail shoppers and evening restaurant patrons, thereby reducing the amount of Downtown that has to be paved.
- Public parking can be centrally located to best serve customers. The most centrally located parking in Downtown Larkspur is Magnolia Avenue on-street parking, which is frequently taken up by employees. New public parking for people who work in Downtown (along with enforcement) would free-up on-street spaces.
- The cost to landlords and businesses for public spaces can be cheaper than building private parking. If the City chooses to recover all or some of the cost of new public parking from businesses that can not provide parking on their own, the City can set the fee formula based on actual hours of use. This would allow spaces to be shared, and reduce the cost to individual businesses.

The Downtown Parking Committee recommends that the Parking Authority consider funding 50 to 100 additional public parking spaces. Two properties that might be considered for a new parking lot are the Nazari property and the Niven nursery site. Issues to consider include:

- eight tenths of an acre parking lot will accommodate 100 spaces and generous landscaping;

- the Nazari property is convenient to most of Downtown;
- the slope of the Nazari property would make it easy to build a deck over a surface-level parking lot, reducing the visual impact of the parking lot and freeing up the property for further development;
- the Nazari property is be a good location for municipal, commercial and/or residential uses. These could be built on a deck over parking;
- the Niven property, while not as convenient as the Nazari property to much of Downtown, would be attractive for people patronizing businesses on the north end of Downtown;
- with an effective enforcement program Niven could be a good location for employee parking;
- land for a 50 or 100 space parking lot might be acquired from the Niven property owners in return for development concessions as part of an overall specific plan strategy.

A cost analysis to acquire the land and build a hypothetical 100 space parking lot is shown in the box below. Based on this analysis, annual debt service for a 100 space lot would be \$67,200

Table 4
Financing a Parking Lot

Project: Acquire a .8 acre and build a public parking lot.

Cost: \$800,000

Financing Method: Mark-Roos revenue bond

Finance Costs:

Reserve fund		\$100,000
Issuance costs		\$70,000
Terms	25 years @ 5.75%	
Total Issue		\$970,000
Reserve invested @ 5%		
Annual cost		\$68,000

Deficiency Fees

Recommendation: Implement a deficiency fee program.

Cost: Requires up-front investment by the City to build public parking; a portion of the costs can be recovered with the deficiency fee.

Impact: Can result in the reuse of buildings that can not provide adequate on-site parking; partially defrays cost of public parking.

The Larkspur zoning ordinance requires that new businesses provide adequate parking, whether in new or existing buildings. New buildings can meet the parking standard for any of the uses allowed Downtown.

However, this is usually not the case for older buildings which make up the bulk of Downtown and were not designed for the automobile. Most of the older buildings can not provide more than a handful of spaces without major reconstruction that would be economically prohibitive and would detract from the area's architectural charm. The zoning ordinance does "grandfather" on-going uses, allowing them to continue despite parking deficiencies, but any change in use to a more traffic intensive business (for example from a clothing shop to a delicatessen) requires that parking be provided to contemporary standards. This necessary rule is a disincentive to private reinvestment.

The Downtown Parking Committee recommends the City develop a program to allow payment of fees in-lieu of required off-street parking. The payments should be based on a percentage of the cost to provide parking Downtown. The fees would be used to finance the construction of public parking that would be available to the customers and employees of those businesses that have contributed funds.

Several considerations would have to be addressed to make a parking deficiency fee program effective in our community –

- Parking in-lieu fees are unlikely to pay the entire cost to finance a parking lot. In the sample fee calculation at left, the annual cost for a single space is \$708. This would add \$7080 to the annual rent for a 4,000 square foot office requiring

ten parking spaces, a big increase even in the strong office market of the late 1990's.

- It would be appropriate to charge for actual hours used as shown in the sample calculation.
- The public parking should be available *before* the fee program goes into effect. It would be difficult to convince developers and the financial community that payment of fees-in-lieu of providing parking will in fact result in new parking facilities in Larkspur's slow growth economy.

Table 5
DEFICIENCY FEE
Calculations

Assumptions:

.8 acre public parking lot
100 parking spaces
\$68,000 annual debt service

Cost per space

$\$68,000/100 = \680 per space
Hourly rate = \$.08

Example: Office

Hours: 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM

Days: 260 per year

In-Lieu Fee –

$2600 \text{ hrs} \times .08 = \$208/\text{per year, per}$
space

Appendix 1: Diagonal Parking

Recommendation: On-street diagonal parking is not recommended at this time.

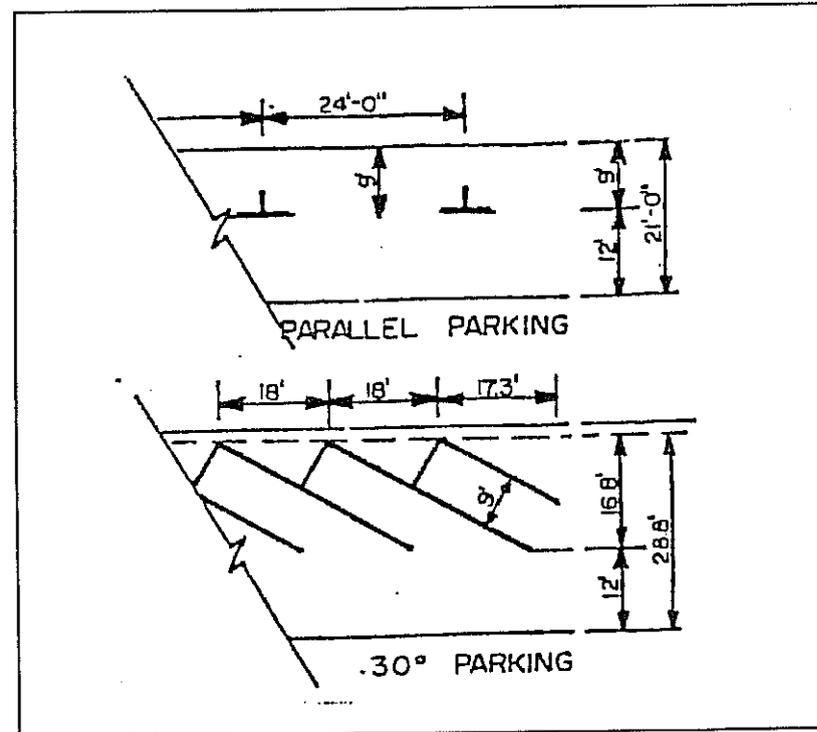
Cost: Undetermined

New Spaces: Up to 11 spaces on Locust St.

The Downtown Parking Committee studied diagonal parking as an approach to increasing the number of on-street spaces.

Diagonal parking has the advantage of requiring less curb length per space than parallel parking. For example, two standard size parallel parking spaces take up 48' of curb space, while two diagonal spaces set 30° off the curb use 35'3". On the other hand, diagonal parking has the disadvantage of requiring wider street widths than parallel parking. The parallel parking scheme requires 21'0" from the edge of the curb to the center of the street to allow for the parked vehicle and a traffic lane. 30° angled parking needs 28'8" from the curb to the center line. Angled parking has a significantly higher accident rate than parallel parking, and is only recommended for low volume/low speed streets.

The Parking Committee felt that the only street that was convenient to Downtown and could meet the "low volume/low speed" criteria was Locust St. The most



fundamental problem with angled parking on Locust is that the street is only 40' wide. If 30° angled parking were installed on the east side of the street and parallel parking were kept on the west side, the street would have to be widened by more than 9' to continue to allow two lanes of traffic. The Committee judged this to be infeasible and a potential safety problem given the proximity of St. Patrick's School..

Appendix 2: Parking Projections

Parking congestion in Downtown Larkspur is not due to new growth but rather results from the increasing numbers of customers and clients at existing business properties. This trend is consistent with patterns in the national economy and seems likely to continue, especially given the charm and vitality of Downtown Larkspur. What is the potential ultimate parking demand that could result from the continuing success of existing Downtown businesses? What is the potential parking shortfall?

The Urban Land Institute has developed a "shared parking model" for projecting parking demand in mixed-use areas like Downtown Larkspur. The model is particularly valuable because it recognizes that the same parking space can be used to two or more individual land uses without conflict or encroachment. For example, Downtown office workers will probably leave their cars in the employer's parking lot if they go to a nearby restaurant for lunch. The following analysis for Downtown Larkspur incorporates the basic factors and procedures from the Urban Land Institute (ULI) report on shared parking.¹ The ULI report studied mixed-use developments across the country and established parking accumulation ratios by land use, by hour of the day, by weekday versus weekend day, and by month of the year.

¹ Urban Land Institute, *Shared Parking*, 1983.

The weekday and weekend hourly parking demand fault ratio values from the ULI report are shown in the tables that follow.

Table A.1
Hourly Parking Demand Ratios – Default Values
Weekday

Spaces per:	<u>Office</u> 1,000 sf	<u>Retail</u> 1,000 sf	<u>Restaurant</u> 1,000 sf	<u>Residential</u> Dwelling Unit
<u>Hour of Day</u>				
8:00 a.m.	1.9	0.7	1.0	0.79
9:00 a.m.	2.8	1.6	2.0	0.73
10:00 a.m.	3.0	2.6	4.0	0.68
11:00 a.m.	3.0	3.3	6.0	0.59
12 Noon	2.7	3.7	10.0	0.60
1:00 p.m.	2.7	3.8	14.0	0.59
2:00 p.m.	2.9	3.7	12.0	0.60
3:00 p.m.	2.8	3.3	12.0	0.61
4:00 p.m.	2.3	3.5	10.0	0.66
5:00 p.m.	1.4	3.0	14.0	0.77

Table A.2
Hourly Parking Demand Ratios – Default Values
Weekends

Spaces per:	<u>Office</u> 1,000 sf	<u>Retail</u> 1,000 sf	<u>Restaurant</u> 1,000 sf	<u>Residential</u> Dwelling Unit	<u>Cinema</u> Seat
<u>Hour of Day</u>					
Noon	0.5	3.4	6.0	.71	0.10
1:00 p.m.	0.4	3.8	9.0	.70	0.20
2:00 p.m.	0.3	4.0	9.0	.71	0.20
3:00 p.m.	0.2	4.0	9.0	.73	0.20
4:00 p.m.	0.2	3.6	9.0	.75	0.20
5:00 p.m.	0.1	3.0	12.0	0.81	0.20
6:00p.m.	0.1	2.6	18.0	0.85	0.25
7:00 p.m.	0.1	2.4	20.0	0.87	0.25
8:00 p.m.	0.1	2.2	20.0	0.92	0.30
9:00 p.m.	--	1.6	20.0	0.95	0.30

"Cinema" is not listed in Table A.1 because Downtown's theater, the *Lark*, does not operate during the weekday peak parking hour. However, the *Lark* is open during the Saturday evening peak period.

There are seasonal variations in parking demand; the ULI shared parking model provides monthly adjustment factors for this phenomenon. The variation in peak parking demand ratios for September – when the Wilbur Smith parking surveys were taken – are shown in Table A.3 below.

Table A.3
September Variation in Peak Parking Demand Ratios

Office	Retail	Restaurant	Residential	Cinema
100	75	80	100	80

The hourly parking demand ratios, with seasonal adjustment for September, are used to project peak hour parking demand in tables A.4 and A.5 below

Table A.4
Thursday Peak Hour Demand Projections
1:00PM

Land Use	Office	Retail	Restaurant	Residential	Cinema
Existing	33,150	78,220	18,200	88	n/a
Demand Rate	2.7	2.85	11.2	.59	n/a
Projected Demand	89	223	204	52	n/a
Projected Demand	568				
Existing Demand	397				
Projected Increased	171				

Table A.5
Saturday Peak Hour Demand Projections
8:00PM

Land Use	Office	Retail	Restaurant	Residential	Cinema
Existing	33,150	78,220	18,200	88 units	325 seats
Demand Rate	.1	1.65	16	.92	.24
Projected Demand	3	129	291	81	78
Projected Demand	582				
Existing Demand	475				
Projected Increased	107				

Two conclusions can be drawn from these projections.

First, parking availability may need to increase from 107 to 171 spaces in the future to accommodate business activity in existing Downtown buildings. This does not necessarily mean that the City should create 170+ new spaces. For example, some of the need could be met by providing incentives for property owners to share their parking. Nevertheless, as long as significant blocks of private parking are restricted, such as the 172 spaces at Larkspur Plaza, there will be a need to increase the public parking supply to accommodate continued Downtown business success. The continually evolving rate of parking demand, the great difficulty of projecting with certainty, and the high cost of new public parking all suggest that an incremental approach should be taken to increasing parking availability.

Second, the parking standards in the City of Larkspur zoning ordinance are very close to the parking demand

rates in the ULI model, suggesting that the City's ordinance is reasonable, and will deal effectively with new construction in Downtown. The one exception is the parking requirement for restaurants which is 4.4 parking

spaces per 1000 square feet of floor area for restaurants in existing buildings and 7 spaces in new buildings. This standard is well below the ULI standard and could contribute to additional pressure on public parking which is already strained.

Appendix 3. Parking Statistics

Data and analyses from the 1996 parking survey prepared by Wilbur Smith and Associates are presented in this appendix.

WEEKDAY PARKING OCCUPANCY RATES: - THURSDAY									
TOTAL PARKING INVENTORY									
TIME	ON - STREET 124 SPACES			OFF - STREET 536 SPACES			TOTAL 660 SPACES		
	Spaces Occupied	Percent Occupied	Surplus/ (Shortfall)	Spaces Occupied	Percent Occupied	Surplus/ (Shortfall)	Spaces Occupied	Percent Occupied	Surplus/ (Shortfall)
8:00 AM	67	54%	57	182	34%	354	249	38%	411
9:00 AM	77	62%	47	199	37%	337	276	42%	384
10:00 AM	88	71%	36	216	40%	320	304	46%	356
11:00 AM	96	77%	28	233	43%	303	329	50%	331
12:00 PM	114	92%	10	295	55%	241	409	62%	251
1:00 PM	109	88%	15	285	53%	251	394	60%	266
2:00 PM	100	81%	24	260	49%	276	360	55%	300
3:00 PM	98	79%	26	242	45%	294	340	52%	320
4:00 PM	94	76%	30	259	48%	277	353	53%	307
5:00 PM	98	79%	26	258	48%	278	356	54%	304

Source: Larkspur Downtown Parking Survey Update
Wilbur Smith Associates

WEEKDAY PARKING OCCUPANCY RATES: - THURSDAY									
TOTAL PARKING INVENTORY - (not including Larkspur Plaza, tenant and church parking)									
TIME	ON - STREET 124 SPACES			OFF - STREET 240 SPACES			TOTAL 364 SPACES		
	Spaces Occupied	Percent Occupied	Surplus/ (Shortfall)	Spaces Occupied	Percent Occupied	Surplus/ (Shortfall)	Spaces Occupied	Percent Occupied	Surplus/ (Shortfall)
8:00 AM	67	54%	57	88	37%	152	155	43%	209
9:00 AM	77	62%	47	101	42%	139	178	49%	186
10:00 AM	88	71%	36	118	49%	122	206	57%	158
11:00 AM	96	77%	28	137	57%	103	233	64%	131
12:00 PM	114	92%	10	178	74%	62	292	80%	72
1:00 PM	109	88%	15	185	77%	55	294	81%	70
2:00 PM	100	81%	24	160	67%	80	260	71%	104
3:00 PM	98	79%	26	150	63%	90	248	68%	116
4:00 PM	94	76%	30	147	61%	93	241	66%	123
5:00 PM	98	79%	26	130	54%	110	228	63%	136

Source: Larkspur Downtown Parking Survey Update
Wilbur Smith Associates

WEEKDAY PARKING OCCUPANCY RATES: Weekday - Thursday						
Time	Total percent Occupied - 1991	Total percent Occupied - Exist.	Public only % Occupied - 1991	Public only % Occupied - Exist.	Total % Difference	Public only % Diff.
8:00 AM	27%	38%	28%	43%	11%	15%
9:00 AM	34%	42%	39%	49%	8%	10%
10:00 AM	41%	46%	46%	57%	5%	11%
11:00 AM	49%	50%	47%	64%	7%	17%
12:00 PM	50%	62%	56%	80%	12%	24%
1:00 PM	54%	60%	66%	81%	6%	15%
2:00 PM	50%	65%	61%	71%	5%	10%
3:00 PM	46%	52%	50%	68%	5%	18%
4:00 PM	49%	63%	52%	66%	8%	14%
5:00 PM	46%	54%	50%	63%	8%	13%
				Ave. Increase	7%	15%

Source: Larkspur Downtown Parking Survey Update
Wilbur Smith Associates

WEEKEND PARKING OCCUPANCY RATES: Weekend - Saturday						
Time	Total percent Occupied - 1991	Total percent Occupied - Exist.	Public only % Occupied - 1991	Public only % Occupied - Exist.	Total % Difference	Public only % Diff.
12:00 PM	34%	64%	38%	74%	30%	36%
1:00 PM	37%	65%	43%	80%	28%	37%
2:00 PM	42%	65%	43%	75%	29%	32%
3:00 PM	44%	65%	48%	70%	21%	22%
4:00 PM	36%	60%	40%	53%	15%	13%
5:00 PM	53%	58%	58%	60%	5%	2%
6:00 PM	64%	68%	56%	73%	4%	17%
7:00 PM	52%	68%	67%	83%	16%	16%
8:00 PM	47%	74%	59%	92%	27%	33%
9:00 PM	41%	70%	54%	90%	29%	36%
				Ave. Increase	20%	24%

Source: Larkspur Downtown Parking Survey Update
 Wilbur Smith Associates

CITY OF LARKSPUR PARKING OCCUPANCY												
WEEKDAY - THURSDAY												
BLOCK NUMBER OR LOT NAME	TOTAL SPACES	PERCENTAGE OCCUPIED BY HOUR										
		8:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	
1	43	40%	33%	28%	26%	33%	33%	30%	33%	44%	51%	
2	212	29%	38%	38%	43%	54%	45%	42%	42%	48%	50%	
3	104	21%	23%	31%	36%	53%	48%	45%	41%	36%	35%	
4	30	57%	63%	60%	53%	60%	60%	57%	57%	63%	63%	
6	69	62%	58%	59%	43%	39%	54%	59%	52%	54%	55%	
7	78	28%	28%	41%	62%	85%	90%	69%	55%	58%	46%	
OVERALL TOTAL BY HOUR	536	34%	37%	40%	43%	55%	53%	49%	45%	48%	48%	
SELECTED FACILITIES												
Larkspur Plaza	165	32%	35%	37%	39%	53%	43%	41%	42%	49%	53%	
City Lot	28	29%	71%	61%	89%	96%	86%	64%	64%	61%	57%	
Donut Alley	36	56%	61%	67%	81%	89%	86%	89%	92%	83%	75%	
Fabrizo -North	9	11%	0%	44%	22%	44%	56%	56%	56%	44%	56%	
St. Patricks Church	47	2%	4%	6%	11%	6%	4%	4%	2%	4%	2%	
City Hall	16	88%	81%	75%	75%	56%	81%	75%	81%	81%	75%	
Lark Creek Shoppes	65	20%	25%	37%	52%	78%	83%	63%	46%	55%	46%	
TOTAL BY HOUR	366	30%	36%	40%	47%	58%	55%	49%	46%	50%	49%	

Bold indicates occupancy equals or exceeds capacity of 95%.

Source: Larkspur Downtown Parking Survey Update
Wilbur Smith Associates

CITY OF LARKSPUR PARKING OCCUPANCY												
WEEKEND - SATURDAY												
BLOCK NUMBER OR LOT NAME	TOTAL SPACES	PERCENTAGE OCCUPIED BY HOUR										
		12:00 PM	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	8:00 PM	9:00 PM	
1	43	49%	58%	60%	47%	51%	58%	56%	58%	72%	67%	
2	212	59%	53%	58%	58%	56%	48%	55%	69%	68%	60%	
3	104	42%	47%	59%	67%	34%	73%	33%	39%	47%	47%	
4	30	63%	60%	50%	67%	67%	67%	53%	67%	53%	53%	
6	69	46%	41%	42%	49%	36%	33%	29%	35%	42%	39%	
7	78	103%	106%	99%	68%	41%	49%	88%	97%	117%	115%	
OVERALL TOTAL BY HOUR	536	60%	59%	62%	60%	47%	53%	52%	62%	67%	63%	
SELECTED FACILITIES												
Larkspur Plaza	165	59%	49%	54%	57%	52%	43%	42%	61%	58%	47%	
City Lot	28	82%	96%	100%	89%	104%	100%	111%	114%	114%	107%	
Donut Alley	36	75%	75%	78%	75%	78%	67%	58%	61%	75%	72%	
Fabrizo -North	9	22%	56%	44%	44%	11%	22%	56%	89%	89%	100%	
St. Patricks Church	47	15%	15%	47%	70%	11%	104%	0%	2%	2%	0%	
City Hall	16	31%	25%	31%	38%	25%	13%	13%	13%	19%	19%	
Lark Creek Shoppes	65	103%	106%	97%	60%	32%	42%	94%	103%	123%	126%	
TOTAL BY HOUR	366	62%	60%	65%	62%	47%	55%	52%	64%	67%	62%	

Bold indicates occupancy equals or exceeds capacity of 95%.

Source: Larkspur Downtown Parking Survey Update
Wilbur Smith Associates