

CITY OF DUBLIN

Office of the City Manager

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Memo

To: Dublin City Council

From: Marsha Grigsby, City Manager

Date: January 24, 2011

Initiated By: Steve Langworthy, Director of Land Use and Long Range Planning

Re: Historic District Parking Demand Study Update

Summary

As has been noted in numerous studies and correspondence, parking in the Historic District has been perceived as a significant issue, particularly by merchants and business owners. The City's 2010 Community Survey included questions related to the Historic District and parking conditions. Of those responding, 26% found that there was "often" sufficient parking available for them; an additional 52% responded that sufficient parking was "sometimes" available. The remaining 22% found that sufficient parking was either "rarely" (20%) or "never" (2%) available. Further, 75% of respondents found that parking was either "often" (25%) or "sometimes" (50%) easy to locate.

As has been noted, parking in the Historic District has been examined several times and a number of improvements made, including the opening of the Darby Street lot, placement of wayfinding signs and informational kiosks, pedestrian crosswalk improvements. But the ever-changing conditions within the District have required this examination of parking conditions, just as periodic updates will likely be needed to build on the comprehensive Parking Demand Study now underway.

In a continuing effort to address parking concerns City Council directed Planning to conduct a comprehensive "Parking Demand Study" to evaluate parking availability, need, operations, and existing facilities. Over the past summer and fall Planning, with the assistance of its consultant Rich & Associates, has been collecting data on parking conditions in the Historic Dublin area. The update includes the tasks completed to date, some preliminary findings, and final steps.

Parking Demand Study Tasks: Current Status

The following tasks related to the Demand Study have been completed:

- Parking supply counts were updated, including all public and private parking areas, including those with time and/or ownership restrictions.

- Land use and business data for the District was updated to reflect current businesses (and some anticipated businesses, such as Bri-High Square).
- Parking calculations were completed for each category of uses in accordance with zoning requirements.
- Several District residents, land and business owners, and business operators were interviewed. Specifically, multiple stakeholders were interviewed in each of the following categories: restaurants, office, retail, residential, property owners.
- “Intercept” surveys were taken from customers in the District. These very quick surveys, designed to minimize inconvenience to participants, asked (or were observed) whether they drove, walked or biked to the District, what their purpose was (shopping or business), where/how far away they parked, how long they planned to stay, and how many businesses they were visiting.
- Two separate parking measures were taken. One was an “occupancy” survey, measuring those spaces that were occupied during half hour time increments. A “turnover” survey was also conducted to measure the length of time individual spaces were occupied throughout the day and into the evening. Significant assistance was provided by City staff in numerous divisions in conducting these surveys.
- A confidential business owner and employee survey has also been conducted through hand delivered surveys and through the use of an online survey, and results are being tabulated.



Overview of Study Observations

This update includes a wealth of information regarding the process and preliminary observations. What follows is a few summary statements from Rich & Associates and observations from surveys, supported by the information in this update. More detailed information is included in the accompanying documentation.

- From stakeholder interviews the frustration was apparent on the part of many business owners on the issue of availability of parking. Several business owners related verbal confrontations with staff or business owners from other businesses regarding the use of parking.
- The 963 privately controlled spaces in the Historic District comprise 73% of the parking supply. Only 27% percent is publicly available in the Dublin Historic District. As a rule of thumb, Rich & Associates generally recommend that 50% of the parking supply be publicly controlled. This allows patrons to park once and visit multiple destinations without having to move their vehicle.
- Rich & Associates has indicated that this information suggests that while the overall parking supply should be sufficient to accommodate parking needs, because the ratio of

public to private parking is so low, the parking cannot be used efficiently, leading to an apparent insufficiency of parking for the district.

- Dublin is unique in that unlike many other communities, Dublin has limited on-street parking supply. Where on-street parking is often the life-blood of many business communities comprising as much as 50 percent of the available parking supply, Dublin's on-street parking supply only comprises about five percent of the Historic District parking supply.
- Between the 5:30 pm and 8:00 pm on the Thursday observations, the Darby Street Lot was nearly 100% occupied. About one-half of the occupied spaces at 8:00 pm had been there longer than two-hours and about one-quarter of all the occupied spaces had been parked longer than three hours. While not all are likely employees, some are almost certainly restaurant staff.
- The consultant has noted that signs directing patrons to the Indian Run lot were not clearly visible. They suggested that while the City is in the process of a signage improvement program, in addition to improving these signs, the City also needs to do more to "get the word out" on the availability of the Indian Run lot, which is severely underutilized.
- The valet attendants who were stationed at the Darby Street Lot were observed retrieving some vehicles from this same lot rather than taking all cars up to the Indian Run Lot which would leave the more convenient spaces in the Darby Street Lot available for other customers.

Final Tasks

The final step in the Demand Study is to evaluate the collected information, draw conclusions, and present a range of recommendations. The findings of the Parking Demand Study will revolve around 3 major elements, each of which are important in their own right, but need to work together to result in comprehensive solutions:

- *Parking Supply:* Is there an adequate supply of parking to meet the needs of the District, recognizing that there will be peak times when parking supply may be stressed?
- *Parking Operations:* Is the parking available being used in the most efficient manner? Is safety, access, visibility, and appearance of the parking facility addressed? Are the "right parkers" using the lot?
- *Parking Location:* Are there spaces available within a reasonable distance of the desired destination? In pedestrian environments, a 5 minute or less walk is considered the most desirable and the most "walkable."

Recommendation

None. Update only. See following pages for additional details. Planning will be presenting preliminary findings and recommendations at the Council meeting.

Historic District Parking Demand Study Additional Documentation

Initial Stakeholder Meeting

This project began in August of 2010 with a stakeholder meeting held in Historic Dublin. Business owners and operators, property owners, and City officials were invited to attend this kick-off event. After a brief explanation of the Parking Demand Study a series of roundtable discussions were held on four major topics: Area Issues (general topics); Parking Requirements; Parking Lot Use and Enforcement; and Physical Issues. The roundtable format provided each person with the opportunity to discuss every topic with a changing group of participants. Comment cards were also provided.

Among the comments received:

It may be helpful to change the traffic signal at Bridge and High to stop all traffic and let pedestrians move freely across both streets at the same time as is done in some other cities.

More needs to be done to get traffic off of Bridge street. Directions need to be given to move traffic out to other places, there is just too much traffic now.

The figure of 50% utilization does not account for the parking being in the wrong place. People want to be close in and this is a large part of the parking issues.

Variations have hurt the success of business because people complain about not finding spaces.

Employee parking is an issue.

Signs are largely ignored by patrons.

Would you willing to pay to parking in a garage? → no not really, at least not for shopping.

The new parking signs; I like them. Signs provide unity and it helps. Helps identity for the district, but they should be clearly identified as public verse private. The new wayfinding paths; I like them. North and South are not clearly marked.”

If there was a way to encourage employees to move away from the close spots. The idea of employees parking further away is great, but there would be problems trying to enforce it.

You can't walk between the quadrants of the District. During off-hours, areas on the south could be better used to go to the north side, if you could safely cross the street.

Residents already have problem with cars bypassing through neighborhoods to get around congestion.

In all, the initial stakeholder meeting revealed a number of previously unknown issues, and further documented several that were known.

Stakeholder Interviews

Building and business owners, residents, and City officials were interviewed to elicit their thoughts on parking and traffic in the Historic District. From these interviews the frustration was apparent on the part of many business owners on the issue of availability of parking. Several business owners related verbal confrontations with staff or business owners from other businesses regarding the use of parking. Those that were fortunate enough to have spaces associated with their business were extremely protective to try to keep the spaces available for their customers. Some business owners have sought out alternative parking arrangements for themselves and their staff in order to make the spaces available to customers.

Some businesses have tried to be accommodating to their neighbors by directing their employees to other parking locations instead of the most convenient spaces in order to keep some spaces available for customers. There was some frustration with the number of publicly available spaces used by staff of some businesses (that could not then be used by customers) because the business did not have sufficient private parking available.

It was also noted that there is significant hesitation because of the traffic volumes and location of the traffic signal at Bridge and High Streets to park on the opposite side of this street from their work location. Several business owners were not aware of the availability of the Indian Run Lot but because of distance, (perceived remoteness) and Bridge Street barrier, still would not be likely to use it.

Preliminary Observations

Parking Supply

The 963 privately controlled spaces in the Historic District comprise 73% of the parking supply. Only 27% percent is publicly available in the Dublin Historic District. As a rule of thumb, Rich & Associates generally recommend that 50% of the parking supply be publicly controlled. This allows patrons to park once and visit multiple destinations without having to move their vehicle.

When the total number of parking spaces within the Historic District is compared to the total square footage within the study area, the City of Dublin has significantly more spaces than several other communities with which the consultant is familiar. The Historic District average overall was 5.02 spaces per 1,000 gross square feet (gsf). Specifically, by area of the District (by quadrant using the intersection of Bridge and High as the center):

- Northwest quadrant: 6.5 spaces per 1,000 gsf.
- Northeast quadrant: 3.81 spaces per 1,000 gsf.
- Southeast quadrant: 4.56 spaces per 1,000 gsf.
- Southwest quadrant: 5.25 spaces per 1,000 gsf.

The average from the six other communities recently studied by Rich and Associates was 3.26 spaces per 1,000 gsf. When just the publicly provided parking is considered, Dublin is below the average from these six other communities. Dublin has 1.37 publicly provided spaces per 1,000

square feet compared to the average of 1.92 publicly provided spaces in the six other communities. (The other communities were: Brunswick GA, Village of Woodstock IL, Village of Libertyville IL, Howell MI, Village of Holly MI, and Brighton MI.)

Rich & Associates has indicated that this information suggests (subject to later verification) that although the overall parking supply should be sufficient to accommodate the Historic District parking needs, because the ratio of public to private parking is so low, , the parking cannot be used efficiently, leading to an apparent insufficiency of parking for the district. This impression was also heard in the initial stakeholder meeting and from employee and manager’s surveys.

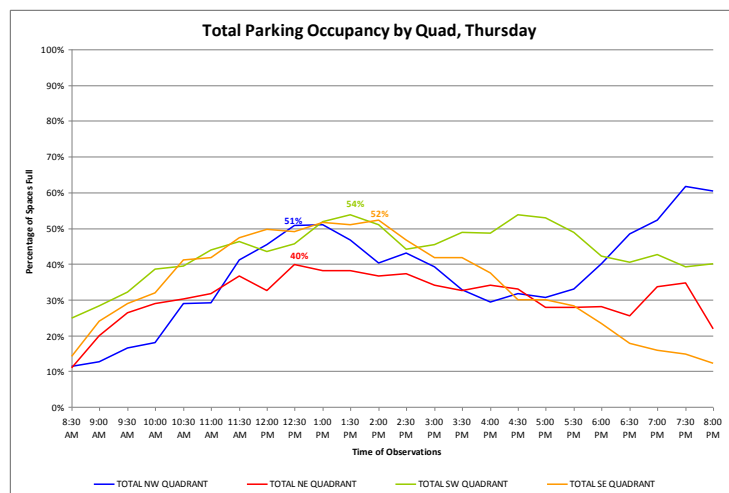
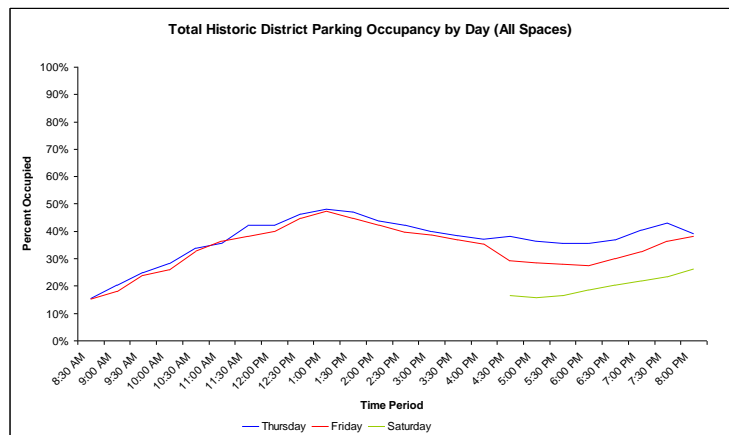
Parking Occupancy

The City conducted a three-day comprehensive survey of parking occupancy throughout the Historic District. Observations were recorded at half-hour intervals from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm on a Thursday and a Friday, and from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm on a Saturday.

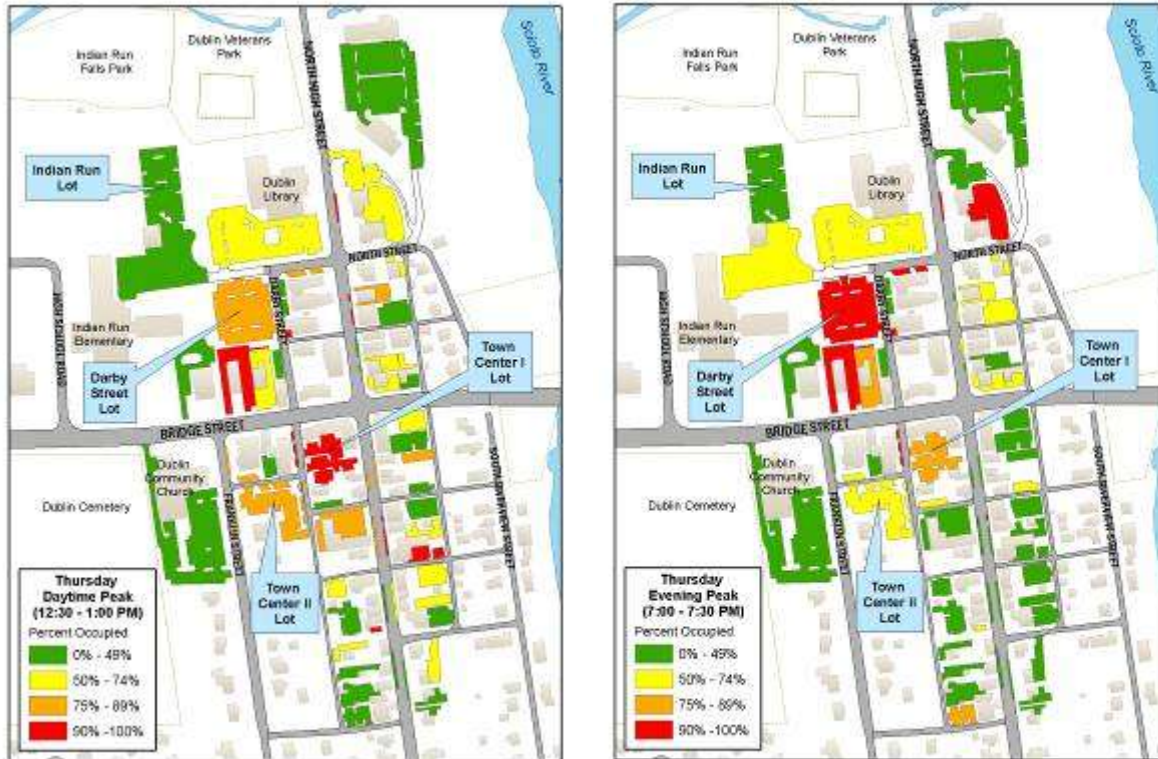
Considered in aggregate, parking occupancy throughout the Historic District does not exceed 50% of the existing parking supply. However, this is somewhat misleading; as noted earlier, 73% of the parking supply is privately controlled, meaning that the “effective parking supply” is constrained, as users compete for the remaining 27% of public spaces throughout the District, or for limited private spaces that are only available to patrons of specific destinations.

Generally, parking saturation (at or above 90% occupancy) occurs in public parking lots during peak periods (lunch time and/or evening), with the exception of the Indian Run lot, which was nearly unoccupied at all times during the survey period. Much of privately controlled parking supply remains at or below 50% occupancy throughout the day, although there are some private lots with consistently high parking demand.

There are observable differences in parking occupancy among the four quadrants of the Historic District, which can be attributed to differences in the amount of public and private supply and to different mix of destinations within each area.



The public parking lots have the same patterns of occupancy within the same quadrant, but with higher overall occupancy rates, with the exception of the Indian Run Lot.

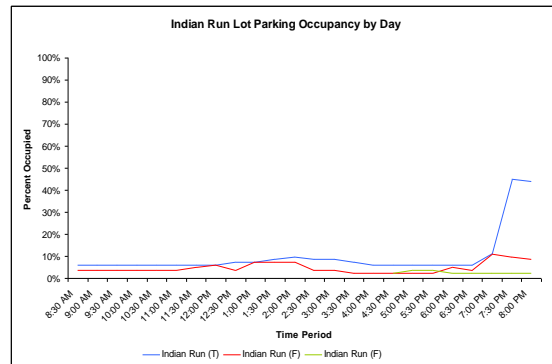
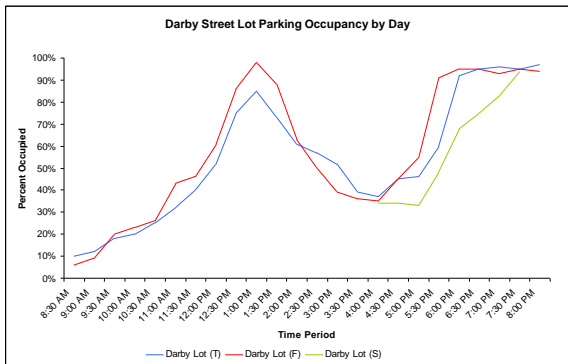
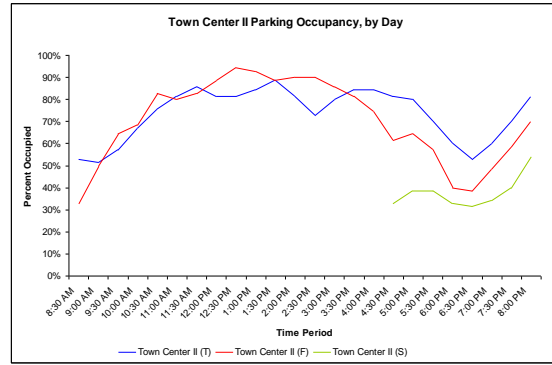
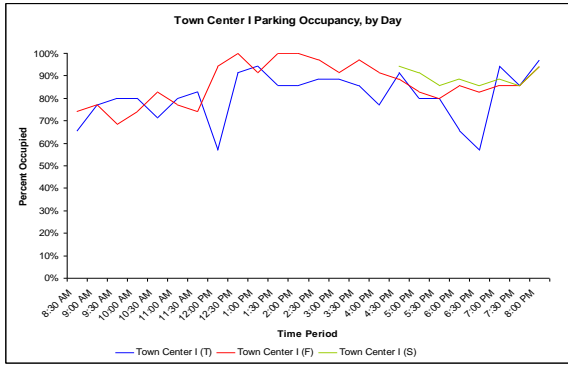


The Southwest Quadrant has generally higher occupancy rates during the day and remains relatively constant compared to the other quadrants. This reflects the greater mix of office, retail, personal service and restaurant uses in this quadrant.

The Southeast Quadrant experiences moderate occupancy rates throughout much of day, but has the lowest rates in the evening compared to other quadrants. This reflects the earlier closing hours of mostly retail, office and personal service uses, relatively few restaurants, and the lack of public parking spaces (excepting on-street spaces).

The Northeast Quadrant contains two office buildings with many under-used parking spaces, resulting in lower overall occupancy rates as compared to the other quadrants. Restaurant uses contribute to the lunch-hour peak, and create a moderate increase in evening demand.

The Northwest Quadrant has observable lunchtime and evening peaks, with low occupancy during the afternoon. This effect is more pronounced for the Darby Street lot in particular. The observed peaks correspond to restaurant activity as well as use by others served by the Darby Street Lot outside the quadrant. (For instance, Pedestrian Intercept Surveys indicated regular use of the Darby Street lot by patrons of restaurants in the Northeast Quadrant).



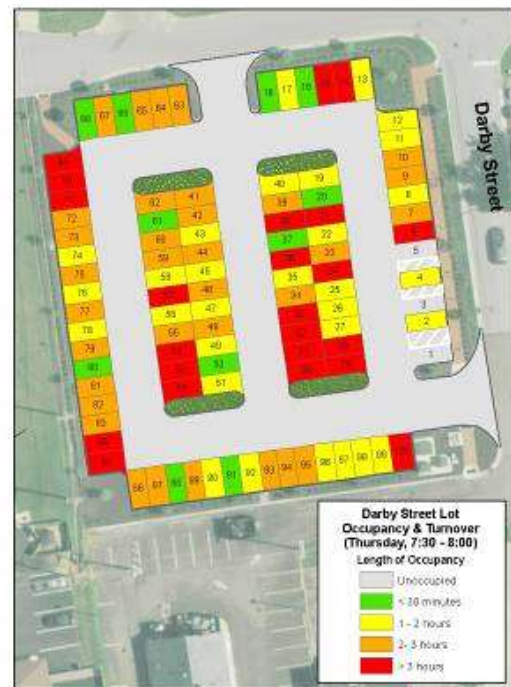
Parking Turnover

During the occupancy survey, a portion of the vehicle license plate number in each occupied space (this data was only recorded for public spaces) was recorded. This data will be used to show vehicle turnover patterns throughout the day in order to better understand the types of parking demand on public lots. As a rule of thumb, Rich & Associates considers a parking space occupied by the same vehicle greater than three hours as likely being used by a business employee rather than by a patron.

Preliminary results indicate that at peak periods, significant portions of the public parking supply are occupied by the same vehicles for three or more hours. In some cases, the 2-hour time restrictions are exceeded.

Darby Street Lot Roughly 15% of spaces in the Darby Street Lot were occupied for more than three hours during the daytime peak (12:30-1:00 pm), and over 20% were occupied for over three hours during the evening peak (7:30-8:00 pm). After 11:00 am, at least 10% of spaces remained occupied by “extended parkers,” reaching a maximum of about 25% during the afternoon.

Town Center II Lot Over 25% of spaces in the Town Center II Lot were occupied by the same vehicles for



greater than three hours for much of the day (11:00 am – 6:00 pm).

Town Center I Lot The proportion of extended parkers was consistently lower in the Town Center I Lot, with roughly 10% to 15% of spaces occupied by the same vehicle throughout much of the day (11:00 am – 7:00 pm). This can be attributed to the consistently high demand for parking throughout the day (often above 80% occupancy) for the smallest of the public lots.

Indian Run Lot As noted previously, the Indian Run Lot is significantly underutilized, and could absorb some of the observed extended parking demand, particularly from the Darby Street Lot.

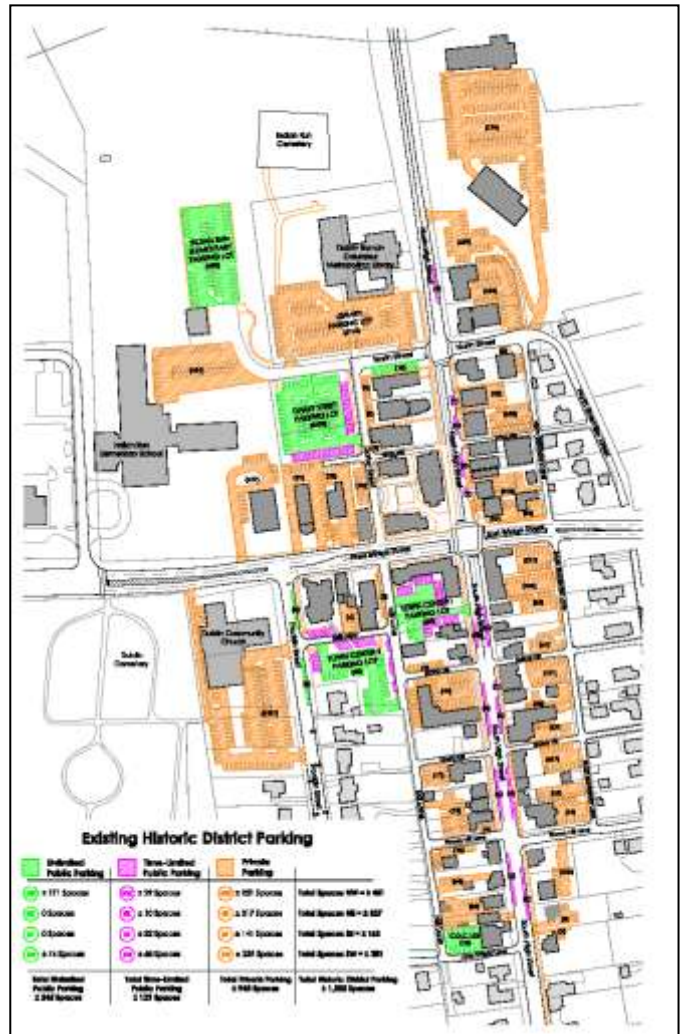
Parking Operations

Operational aspects of parking refer to how parking resources are used. Since the largest portion of parking is in private hands, their operation is left to individual owners. In public parking areas operations are governed by the ability of patrons to find parking, and the efficiency of use.

The wayfinding program instituted in 2010 has added to the measures available to help drivers find public parking spaces. As the program is further evaluated more improvements may be needed. By way of example, the consultant found that several business owners were not aware of the availability of the Indian Run Lot. (On the other hand, because of distance [perceived remoteness] and the difficulty of crossing Bridge Street, they noted that it still would not likely be used.)

Currently, Dublin’s only operational control is through the two-hour restrictions in certain lots. The District Parking map shows the various types of parking spaces, including in purple those that are time restricted.

Land Use and Long Range Planning is responsible for enforcing the time restricted spaces. Planning’s Code Enforcement Officers randomly check these areas for violations. In 2009 there were 2,781 inspections resulting in 126 tickets issued, for a violation rate of about 4.5%. Planning also conducted comprehensive enforcement for up to a week at a time. During those full time enforcement periods the violation rate was only slightly higher, at about 5%.



Employee Parking

As noted earlier in the parking occupancy and turnover information, employees park in a combination of public spaces, and in private spaces dedicated to them. In the observed lots, Town Center 1 had very little employee use with only two percent of all counted vehicles staying longer than four hours. Town Center II had about 15 percent of the cars staying longer than four hours while in the Darby Street lot the ratio was about 14 percent of the counted cars stayed longer than four hours. The Thursday observations at times had a ratio of about 20 percent of vehicles staying three hours or longer. Approximately one-third of the cars parked in the Darby Street Lot at the period around 1:30 pm were noted as probably being employees.

Between the 5:30 pm and 8:00 pm on the Thursday observations, the Darby Street Lot was 100% occupied. About one-half of the occupied spaces at 8:00 pm had been there longer than two-hours and about one-quarter of all the occupied spaces had been parked longer than three hours. While not all are likely employees, the consultant noted that some are almost certainly restaurant staff.

Online survey results, while not scientific, may indicate a trend. Note the following from the Managers' Surveys.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I encourage my employees to park farther away in order to provide more parking for customers and visitors.	6.3%	12.5%	18.8%	25.0%	37.5%
If available I would encourage my employees to park farther away and use a shuttle.	21.4%	21.4%	35.7%	21.4%	0.0%

Of the employees responding to the online survey nearly three quarters parked in a City lot. Only 6 percent thought that there was adequate parking for employees, but almost 80 percent said that their parking was reasonably close to their place of employment.

This subject was also commented on frequently in the stakeholder interviews and from the employee/manager online survey comments. Some online survey comments included:

- Before further develop in Historic Dublin, the parking problem must be solved. Employees have to run out every two hours to move their cars. This is absurd! It can take up to 20 minutes just to find a place to park. I don't want to have to walk far to get a parking space, but I will if that is what needs to get a parking spot.
- There is not adequate parking so it seems extremely unreasonable for parkers to be ticketed for exceeding the 2 hr limit on 2 hr spaces. I have not exceeded the 2 hr limit or been ticketed, but I find it very frustrating that these limitations are in place. It's

good for the city to have flourishing businesses operating downtown, so the it only seems fair that employees are provided with ample parking.

- I feel that parking is not adequate for those of us that work in downtown Dublin - especially those of us that choose to leave during our lunch break and try to park upon return. There is simply not enough parking.
- I would be willing to park across the street in the public lot if there was a safe way to cross the street without going all the way to the light. An overhead bridge/walkway at the corner of Franklin and High street would help.
- Our employees and customers are very frustrated with the parking situation. I dont feel it is appropriate to fine someone for parking in a space for longer than 2 hours. If that is the only spot available, do not penalize that person for working all day or shopping longer than 2 hours. Also, the week between Christmas and New years, the office above La Chatelaine is closed and we have PLENTY of parking!!! I think the problem is not enough employee parking!!!!!!
- Dublin appears to have contributed to the problem by permitting buildings without including sufficient parking
- This is a very frustrating problem that will eventually cause me to move the business. Already looking.

Valet Services

The valet attendants who were stationed at the Darby Street Lot were observed by the consultant retrieving some vehicles from this same lot rather than taking all cars up to the Indian Run Lot which would leave the more convenient spaces in the Darby Street Lot available for other customers. (In all fairness, some valet vehicles were parked at Indian Run but, in their opinion, none should have been in the Darby Street Lot). Rich and Associates generally recommend that any valet operation be required to register with the City and the location where the vehicles will be parked be specified in their registration. If a public lot is being used, it should not be the most convenient spaces as these should be left for non-valet customers.

Final Tasks

The final step in the Demand Study is to evaluate the collected information, draw conclusions, and present a range of recommendations. Recommendations will be related to:

- Parking needs and supply;
- Parking operations;
- Parking facility improvements; and
- Parking locations.

It is critical that all be addressed since any solutions must be based in all four areas. Simply building more parking lots, for example, may not be of significant help if they are in the wrong location, or they are taken over by users that might be better parked elsewhere.