CITY OF ST. CHARLES ILLINOIS • 1834	**AGENDA ITEM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**	**Agenda Item number:** 4a
	Title:	Presentation for DRAFT Downtown Parking Study
	Presenter:	**Derek Conley, Economic Development Director**

Meeting: Planning & Development Committee	**Date:** February 12, 2024	
Proposed Cost:	**Budgeted Amount:** $	**Not Budgeted:** ☐
TIF District*:* None		

Executive Summary (if not budgeted, please explain)**:**

In June, 2023 the City approved an agreement with Desman Inc to conduct a Downtown Parking study in the amount of $43,750. The need for the study comes after years of new development, new businesses, and expanded community events that have attracted more people to the downtown and resulted in more stress on the current downtown parking supply.

The study incorporated public engagement through focus groups, community open houses, a business survey, and an online community survey. In tandem with public involvement, Desman conducted an Existing Conditions Report, encompassing off-street and on-street inventory analyses, as well as an occupancy analysis. The report also includes an analysis of future developments and recommendations for improving the downtown parking experience.

This will be a presentation conducted by Desman to provide the findings of the study.

Attachments (please list)**:**
Draft Downtown Parking Study

Recommendation/Suggested Action (briefly explain):
Presentation Only

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 5, 2024

TO: Derek Conley

Economic Development Director, City of St. Charles, IL

FROM: Gerald Salzman
Maria Berg
George Kandathil

RE: Final Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of St. Charles has commissioned DESMAN to conduct a parking needs and operations assessment for downtown on-street and off-street parking. The study focuses on inventory, occupancy, adequacy, operations, technology, wayfinding, and enforcement. Downtown St. Charles offers a mix of commercial, office, retail, government, and residential space. The city is currently responsible for three parking garages, 20 surface parking lots, and curbside parking located in and around downtown. This report provides existing conditions, future conditions, and recommendations for its parking system. Future parking needs were projected based on planned developments, and recommendations were provided to create a more visitor friendly, financially sustainable, and efficient parking system. These actions will ultimately support the growth and continued vitality of St. Charles, IL.

The parking space inventory accounted for on-street parking spaces and off-street parking facilities (both lots and garages) in the downtown area of St. Charles. Occupancy counts were conducted during August of 2023 on both a typical weekday and weekend. A total of ten counts were taken, four main counts and six supplementary counts. The six supplementary counts were taken on Friday and Saturday evenings to capture parking demand during the busiest time period. While the highest demand from these Friday and Saturday counts are shown in this report, averages of these counts were used as “typical” peak period demand in order to provide a true representation of parking demand. In addition, local stakeholder interviews were conducted to understand the dependence on and perception of the parking system by community patrons, businesses, and government leaders. These first-hand insights on parking issues, challenges, and opportunities helped the analysis when considering the anticipated development plans in St. Charles. The following list is a brief summary of our findings. For additional information with a detailed break-down, please refer to the recommendations section of the report.

- The highest occupancy of on-street parking spaces was 55% west of the river and 76% east of the river.
- For off-street lots and garages, the average scenario occupancy was 80% both west and east of the river. Peak occupancies occurred on Saturday evening.

- Of the three parking garages, only the five-story parking garage (79%) is under practical capacity (85% standard) during the peak period of occupancy. Including this garage, there are 11 total off-street parking facilities that are under practical capacity during the highest occupancy period. This means that overall, there are a significant number (209) of available parking spaces in downtown during the peak period, despite perception.

- Downtown visitors have trouble finding parking spaces, especially when their first parking choice is unavailable. General parking information, signs, and wayfinding is inadequate. This includes information about available spaces in multistory parking garages.

- There are a number of downtown surface lots that are unused outside of business hours. These surface lots are either owned by a private business or a public entity (such as the public library lot). These lots can provide additional parking space after business hours for downtown visitors during the evenings and weekends.

- Future Conditions
    - St. Charles currently has seven downtown development projects planned for the future, one of which (Plaza Project) is nearing completion.
    - The projects are a mix of commercial, residential, and office development. These five developments expected to be completed by 2028. Parking demand has been estimated individually in Table 14.
    - Plaza Expansion project includes the permanent closure of 1st Street to vehicles from Walnut St. to Main St. to accommodate a contiguous public plaza. This project is scheduled to be completed in February of 2024. In comparison to the other uses, public plazas do not generate high parking demand, but indirectly attract more traffic to the downtown or result in visitors staying longer.
    - The Whole Foods will meet parking requirements according to industry parking standards. Furthermore, during peak times for Whole Foods, patrons can utilize one of the adjacent parking lots or on-street parking spaces. Peak demand for the grocery is during the afternoon when there is the most available parking in the downtown.
    - The River East Loft, which is an approved mixed-use building, will include 51 parking spaces and meet the City's parking requirement. This is privately-owned property however the current property owner allows the parking lot to be used by the general public. Once the River East Lofts is completed it will be perceived as a displacing public parking, even though it is privately owned.
    - The Baker Church owns two parking lots which are currently used for public parking except on Sunday's morning. Those lots have a parking inventory of 46 and 36, respectively. The Church has indicated to the City that the two parking lots are available for sale and development. Development of these sites would decrease the parking supply on the east side of the Fox River if developed and public parking isn't replaced or expanded.
    - River 504 (Milestone Row 2) is a proposed mixed-use development on First Street with the parking for the residential units being provided internally. The project would also include the addition of 15 angles public parking spaces on First Street. The proposed number of parking spaces would exceed the estimated parking demand.

  - Lot 4 is a city-owned vacant 0.13-acre grass lot in the downtown. In the past there has been mixed-use developments proposed on the property. Any proposed project could include some internal parking on site or utilize the adjacent five-story parking garage, which is under practical capacity.

- Some of the proposed developments are less solidified, for example the former Police Department site. The unknown of future of projects makes it difficult to determine parking demand. Included in this report is a table of general estimated parking ratios based on development type. As projects evolve or new projects are proposed, the City can utilize parking ratios to determine appropriate amount of parking needed and whether it can be absorbed by currently parking supply.

- Recommendation Summary
  - St. Charles has adequate parking supply for current demand, but future demand may change based on factors such as population growth, commercial development, and residential development.
  - Wayfinding and signage improvements are needed to improve the parking experience, especially for visitors from out-of-town.
  - To make parking in garages more efficient, digital parking space availability signs should be installed in multistory parking garages.
  - Parking time limit categories need to be reduced to provide clarity for both parkers and enforcement.
  - In high-density areas, there should be designated pick-up and drop-off parking stalls that are prioritized for the elderly or those that are physically challenged.
  - Parking time restrictions are not enforced in downtown. To discourage overstaying and to encourage the appropriate amount of turnover, the City can consider enforcing parking violations.,
  - A number of street segments are at or over 100% capacity during the highest peak period. Metering these segments would discourage excess parking and encourage parkers to find off-street lots, but could negatively impact residents living in the adjacent neighborhoods.
  - Electric vehicles and their charging stations are becoming prevalent nationwide. Installing charging stations in parking garages and other surface lots as well as seeking state and federal sources of funding should be investigated.
  - The 1st Street five-story parking garage does not provide good access to neighboring activity sites for walkers after parking. Expanded elevator access, signage and design improvements should be considered.
  - Shared parking is an effective, easy-to-implement method of increasing the parking supply. A number of candidate locations exist in the downtown area, and they should be explored.
  - The city should promote alternative transportation modes such as biking and walking by providing improved facilities, with the goal of encouraging visitors to access downtown without a vehicle.
  - A downtown trolley could serve as a strategic solution during peak parking demand hours, encouraging individuals to park in peripheral downtown areas with available parking.

BACKGROUND

DESMAN

DESMAN is a national specialist in parking planning, design, and restoration. We offer a full range of services including Master Planning, Economic Feasibility Studies, Site/Size Selection Analysis, Cost Estimating, Parking Functional Design, Architectural Design, Structural Engineering, Revenue/Access Control System Design, Condition Survey/Due Diligence Studies, and Restoration Engineering. We have been in existence since 1973 and currently operate on a national basis out of nine principal offices. We have a total staff of over 80 people, comprised mostly of Parking Planners, Architects, and Structural Engineers. We have been involved in the planning, design, and restoration of over 5,000 parking projects throughout the United States and abroad. We have a broad range of municipal parking planning expertise. In addition, our staff has been extensively involved in the development of the ULI Shared Parking methodology.

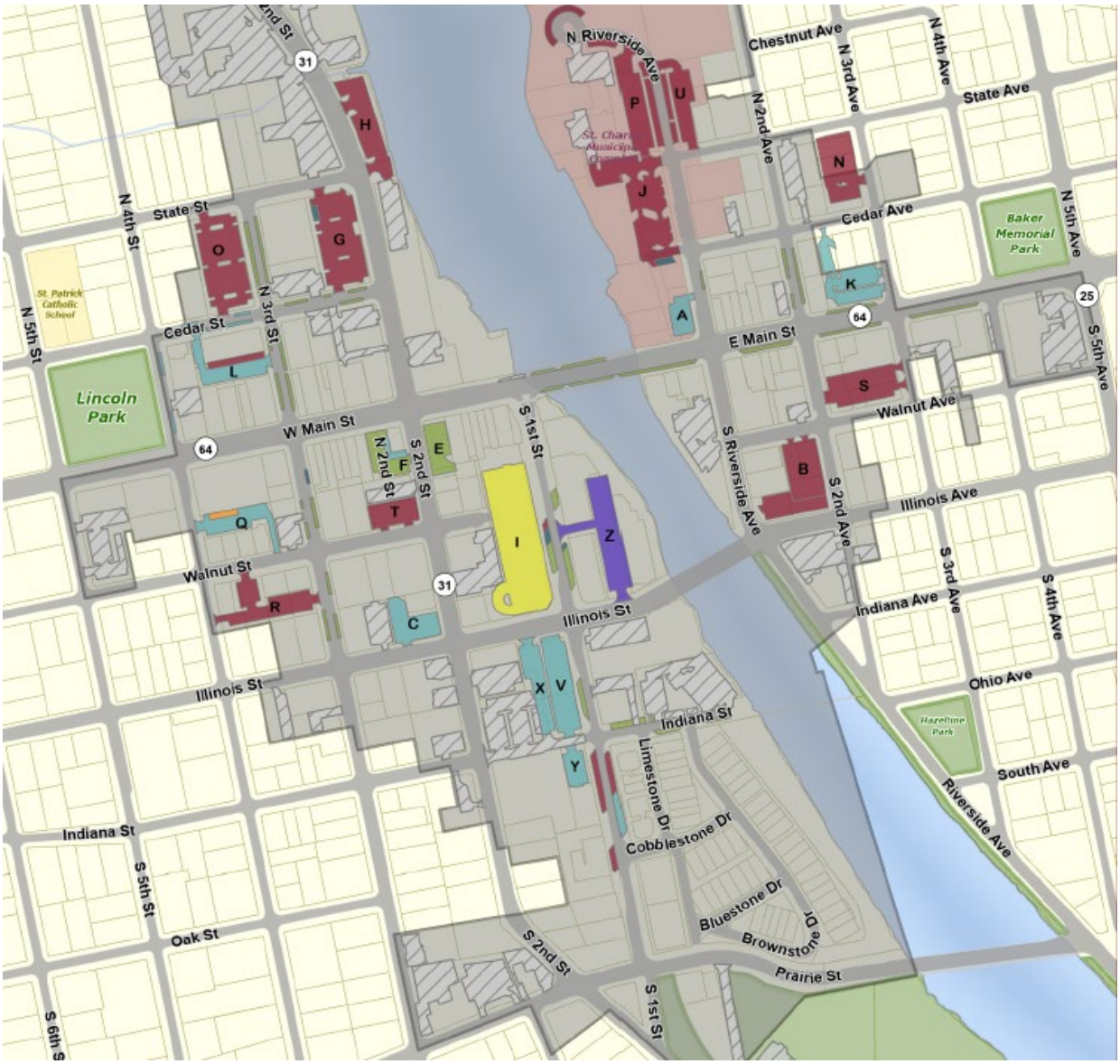
St. Charles, IL

St. Charles, IL is a city that lies approximately 40 miles west of downtown Chicago, IL and within both Kane and DuPage counties. Its downtown is divided by the Fox River which runs north-south through the city. The major roadways traversing St. Charles are: State Routes 31 and 25 running north-south, and State Routes 64 and 38 running east-west. State Routes 31 and 25 follow the contour of Fox River through the downtown, and State Route 64 becomes Main St. as it traverses downtown St. Charles. As of 2020, the population of St. Charles was approximately 33,000 and the city area is about 15 square miles. Major private sector employers include RR Donnelley & Sons, Bison Gear, and Smithfield Foods, LLC.

Study Area

The study area lies primarily within downtown St. Charles, both east and west of the river. It is generally bounded by State St. to the north, Prairie St. to the south, 5th Ave. (Route 25) to the east, and 5th St. to the west. The study area is shown in **Figure 1** below.

Figure 1: Study Area



Source: DESMAN

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Off Street Parking Inventory

The downtown area consists of 20 surface parking lots and three parking garages. These off-street parking lots and garages are open to the public and free of charge, but have time restrictions ranging anywhere from 90 minutes to 24 hours. The lots and garages are shown in **Table 1** below. The tables show that the number of off-street parking spaces on the west side is more than double that of the east side (1,065 to 394). This is largely due to the five-story parking garage at South 1st St. and Illinois St. which contains 429 spaces.

Table 1: Off Street Parking in St. Charles, IL

West Side of River				East Side of River			
Map Letter	Location	Facility Type	Spaces	Map Letter	Location	Facility Type	Spaces
C	2nd St & Illinois St	surface lot	29	A	Riverside Ave & Main St	surface lot	16
E	S 2nd St & W Main St	surface lot	20	B	2nd Ave & Walnut St	surface lot	52
F	S 2nd St & W Main St	surface lot	28	J	N Riverside Ave & Cedar Ave	surface lot	91
G	N 2nd St & State St	surface lot	82	K	E Main St & N 3rd Ave	surface lot	36
H	N 2nd St & State St	surface lot	38	N	State Ave & N 3rd Ave	surface lot	46
L	N 3rd St & Cedar St	surface lot	40	P	N Riverside Ave near cul-de-sac	surface lot	46
O	N 3rd St & State St	surface lot	80	U	N Riverside Ave near cul-de-sac	surface lot	29
Q	Walnut St & S 4th St	surface lot	33	S	Walnut Ave & S 3rd Ave garage	3 story garage	78
R	Walnut St & S 3th St	surface lot	48		**Total**		**394**
T	S 2nd St & Walnut St	surface lot	27				
V	Illinois St & S 1st St	surface lot	52				
X	Illinois St & S 1st St	surface lot	34				
Y	Indiana St & S 1st St	surface lot	19				
I	S 1st St & Illinois St parking garage	5 story garage	429				
Z	Illinois St River West parking deck	2 story deck	106				
	Totals		**1,065**				

Source: DESMAN

On Street Parking Inventory

The on-street parking inventory is shown in **Table 2** below. As the table shows, there is a total of 356 on-street spaces west of the river and a total of 256 spaces east of the river. A significant number of on-street spaces have time restrictions lasting anywhere from 15 minutes to 8 hours. Since a number of street segments contained unstriped parking spaces, the consultant team estimated the availability of parking spaces on these street segments. West of Fox River, 1st, 3rd, and 4th Streets have the greatest number of on street parking spaces. Along with the lots, these parking spaces service the parking for restaurants in the area and the Cedar Fox wedding venue on Cedar St.

Table 2: On Street Parking Inventory in St. Charles, IL

On Street West of Fox River			On Street East of Fox River		
Street	**Segment**	**Inventory**	**Street**	**Segment**	**Inventory**
1st St	Cobblestone Dr to Prairie St	4	Indiana Ave	Riverside Ave to 2nd Ave*	0
1st St	Indiana St to Cobblestone Dr	29	Indiana Ave	2nd Ave to 3rd Ave*	6
1st St	Illinois St to Indiana St	4	Walnut Ave	Riverside Ave to 2nd Ave*	10
1st St	Walnut St to Illinois St	19	Walnut Ave	2nd Ave to 3rd Ave*	4
1st St	Main St to Walnut St	0	Walnut Ave	3rd Ave to 4th Ave*	6
State St	3rd St to 2nd St*	3	Walnut Ave	4th Ave to 5th Ave*	5
3rd St	State St to Cedar St	18	Main St	4th Ave to 5th Ave	0
3rd St	Cedar St to Main St	18	Main St	3rd Ave to 4th Ave	15
3rd St	Main St to Walnut St	9	Main St	2nd Ave to 3rd Ave	13
3rd St	Walnut St to Illinois St	10	Main St	Riverside Ave to 2nd Ave	6
3rd St	Illinois St to Indiana St	8	Main St	Riverside Ave to west bridge end	22
4th St	Illinois St to Indiana St*	8	Riverside Ave	Cedar Ave to Main St	3
4th St	Walnut St to Illinois St*	4	Cedar Ave	2nd Ave to 3rd Ave	1
4th St	Main St to Walnut St*	1	Cedar Ave	3rd Ave to 4th Ave	6
4th St	Cedar St to Main St	18	Cedar Ave	4th Ave to 5th Ave	6
4th St	State St to Cedar St*	8	State Ave	3rd Ave to 4th Ave*	4
State St	5th St to 4th St*	6	State Ave	2nd Ave to 3rd Ave*	2
5th St	Cedar St to Main St	10	Riverside Ave	Great Western Trail to State Ave	57
5th St	Main St to Walnut St*	7	Riverside Ave	Main St to Walnut Ave	15
5th St	Walnut St to Illinois St*	6	Riverside Ave	Walnut Ave to Illinois Ave	10
Indiana St	4th St to 3rd St*	7	2nd Ave	Walnut Ave to Illinois Ave*	8
Indiana St	3rd St to 2nd St*	12	2nd Ave	Main St to Walnut Ave*	12
Illinois St	2nd St to 1st St	0	2nd Ave	Cedar Ave to Main St	12
Illinois St	4th St to 3rd St*	9	Chestnut Ave	2nd Ave to 3rd Ave	5
Walnut St	5th St to 4th St*	16	3rd Ave	Cedar Ave to Main St	6
Walnut St	4th St to 3rd St*	14	3rd Ave	Main St to Walnut Ave*	6
Walnut St	3rd St to 2nd St	16	3rd Ave	Walnut Ave to Illinois Ave*	5
Cedar St	3rd St to 2nd St	11	3rd Ave	South Ave to Riverside Ave*	3
Cedar St	4th St to 3rd St	12	4th Ave	Walnut Ave to Illinois Ave*	1
Cedar St	5th St to 4th St	15	4th Ave	Main St to Walnut Ave*	0
State St	4th St to 3rd St*	9	4th Ave	State Ave to Cedar Ave*	7
Indiana St	1st St to Fox River	8	**East Side Total Inventory**		**256**
Cobblestone Dr	Limestone Dr to Brownstone Dr*	5			
Limestone Dr	Indiana to Cobblestone Dr	2			
Limestone Dr	Cobblestone Dr to Bluestone Dr*	14			
Bluestone Dr	Limestone Dr to Brownstone Dr*	6			
Brownstone Dr	Cobblestone Dr to Bluestone Dr*	4			
Brownstone Dr	Indiana St Cobblestone Dr	6			
Main Street	5th Street to 4th Street	0			
Illinois Street	1st Street to Fox River	0			
Prairie Street	2nd Street to 1st Street	0			
West Side Total Inventory		**356**			

(Note: Some of the streets included in Table 2 were included even though they were not part of the original scope area)
Source: DESMAN

Occupancy Data Collection

On-site data collection was performed to capture off-street parking occupancy. The counts were performed during ten time periods in the summer and fall of 2023: These time periods are shown in **Table 3** below.

Table 3: Data Collection Time Periods and Locations

Day	Time	Scope
Wed, Aug 9, 2023	10am - noon	on- and off-street; all facilities
Thu, Aug 10, 2023	1pm - 3pm	on- and off-street; all facilities
Sat, Aug 12, 2023	1pm - 3pm	on- and off-street; all facilities
Sat, Aug 12, 2023	6pm - 8 pm	on- and off-street; all facilities
Fri, Sep 22, 2023	6:30pm	off-street lots J,K,N,P,U,G,O,V,X,Y,I
Fri, Sep 22, 2023	7pm	off-street lots J,K,N,P,U,G,O,V,X,Y,I
Sat, Sep 23, 2023	6pm	off-street lots N,P,O,V,X,Y,I
Sat, Sep 23, 2023	6:30pm	off-street lots N,P,O,V,X,Y,I
Sat, Sep 23, 2023	7pm	off-street lots N,P,O,V,X,Y,I
Sat, Sep 23, 2023	7:30pm	off-street lots N,P,O,V,X,Y,I

Source: DESMAN

These time periods were purposefully selected to ensure that peak parking was captured on both weekdays and weekends. The data collection helped determine the where, when, and how much of parking demand. Industry standards indicate that occupancy should not exceed 85 to 90% of capacity. This concept, known as *practical capacity*, refers to the operational efficiency of a parking area. Ideally, between 10 and 15% of the parking spaces in a facility would be available to accommodate peak surges of demand. **Tables 4 and 5** below presents parking occupancy for off-street facilities in St. Charles.

Off Street Parking Occupancy

East of the Fox River, six of the eight facilities exceeded the 85% occupancy threshold at some point during the week (highlighted in blue in Table 4). As expected, all of these occurred on Friday and Saturday, when parking demand is greatest. Lots N (30%) and U (83%) were the only two that never exceeded this threshold. Lot N in particular is difficult to find and recognize, is poorly lit, and is uphill from the downtown area. These factors most likely contribute to its underutilization.

West of the Fox River, seven of the 15 facilities exceeded the 85% occupancy threshold (also highlighted in blue in Table 5) at some point during the week. While this mostly happened on Friday and Saturday, off-street facilities E, V, and Z met this threshold on weekdays as well.
While both east and west of the Fox River 13 of the 23 off-street facilities are above the 85% occupancy threshold at some point, it is very important to note that these peaks do not occur simultaneously. Therefore, it is not wise to look at each off-street lot/garage in isolation. Rather, it is more accurate and informative to look at the entire parking supply during one time period. Since weekend (Friday and Saturday) evening parking was sampled multiple times at a number of key locations, averages of these locations were calculated and utilized with the other Saturday, Aug 12th evening values to provide a

"representative" weekend parking sample. A summary of total average weekend parking space vacancies is in **Table 6.** In the worst-case scenario, where maximum values are used regardless of time and day, off-street parking on the east side of the Fox River is at 88% occupancy with 47 vacancies and on the west side of the river is at 85% with 157 vacancies. When average values are used for the peak period, there are 209 off-street vacant spaces on the west side and 80 vacant spaces available on the east side for a total of 289 vacant off-street spaces even during the busiest period of the week.

Table 4: Off Street Parking Occupancy in St. Charles, IL East of Fox River

Map Let-ter	Location	Spaces	Wed, Aug 9, 2023		Thu, Aug 10, 2023		Sat, Aug 12, 2023				Fri, Sep 22, 2023				Sat, Sep 23, 2023								Peak Period		
			10am - noon		1pm - 3pm		1pm - 3pm		6pm - 8 pm		6:30pm		7pm		6pm		6:30pm		7pm		7:30pm		Count	%	Vacancies
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%			
A	Riverside Ave & Main	16	3	19%	12	75%	16	100%	16	100%													16	100%	0
B	2nd Ave & Walnut	52	16	31%	39	75%	44	85%	52	100%													52	100%	0
J	N Riverside Ave & Cedar	91	59	65%	65	71%	54	59%	74	81%	89	98%	90	99%									90	99%	1
K	E Main St & N 3rd Ave	36	13	36%	18	50%	22	61%	24	67%	31	86%	33	92%									33	92%	3
N	State Ave & N 3rd Ave	46	6	13%	14	30%	12	26%	9	20%	11	24%	13	28%	6	13%	6	13%	6	13%	6	13%	14	30%	32
P	N riverside Ave near	46	0	0%	1	2%	3	7%	13	28%	16	35%	41	89%	15	33%	15	33%	19	41%	23	50%	41	89%	5
U	N riverside Ave near	29	18	62%	19	66%	24	83%	24	83%	16	55%	22	76%									24	83%	5
S	Walnut Ave & S 3rd Ave	78	36	46%	40	51%	72	92%	77	99%													77	99%	1
	Totals	394	151	38%	208	53%	247	63%	289	73%													347	88%	47

(Note: High occupancy lots are highlighted in light blue.) Source: DESMAN

Table 5: Off Street Parking Occupancy in St. Charles, IL West of Fox River

Map Let-ter	Location	Spaces	Wed, Aug 9, 2023		Thu, Aug 10, 2023		Sat, Aug 12, 2023				Fri, Sep 22, 2023				Sat, Sep 23, 2023								Peak Period		
			10am - noon		1pm - 3pm		1pm - 3pm		6pm - 8 pm		6:30pm		7pm		6pm		6:30pm		7pm		7:30pm		Count	%	Vacancies
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%			
C	2nd St & Illinois St	29	21	72%	15	52%	0	0%	9	31%													21	72%	8
E	S 2nd St & W Main St	20	8	40%	19	95%	18	90%	20	100%													20	100%	0
F	S 2nd St & W Main St	28	21	75%	17	61%	15	54%	22	79%													22	79%	6
G	N 2nd St & State St	82	45	55%	64	78%	63	77%	78	95%	82	100%	81	99%									82	100%	0
H	N 2nd St & State St	38	16	42%	9	24%	18	47%	28	74%													28	74%	10
L	N 3rd St & Cedar St	40	16	40%	15	38%	34	85%	38	95%													38	95%	2
O	N 3rd St & State St	80	9	11%	12	15%	23	29%	64	80%	80	100%	80	100%	78	98%	78	98%	78	98%	78	98%	80	100%	0
Q	Walnut St & S 4th St	33	13	39%	15	45%	3	9%	9	27%													15	45%	18
R	Walnut St & S 3th St	48	11	23%	12	25%	12	25%	18	38%													18	38%	30
T	S 2nd St & Walnut St	27	21	78%	19	70%	15	56%	19	70%													21	78%	6
V	Illinois St & S 1st St	54	48	89%	30	56%	29	54%	34	63%	50	93%	52	96%	54	100%	48	89%	49	91%	49	91%	54	100%	0
X	Illinois St & S 1st St	34	22	65%	14	41%	11	32%	33	97%	34	100%	33	97%	33	97%	30	88%	29	85%	28	82%	34	100%	0
Y	Indiana St & S 1st st	19	6	32%	7	37%	0	0%	8	42%	1	5%	19	100%	14	74%	15	79%	13	68%	9	47%	15	79%	4
I	S 1st St & Illinois St	429	168	39%	156	36%	118	28%	239	56%	254	59%	359	84%	323	75%	361	84%	359	84%	362	84%	362	84%	67
Z	Illinois St west of river	106	102	96%	77	73%	89	84%	100	94%													100	94%	6
	Totals	1,067	527	49%	481	45%	448	42%	719	67%													910	85%	157

(Note: High occupancy lots are highlighted in light blue.) Source: DESMAN

Table 6: Peak Period (Weekend Evening) Off-Street Parking Vacancies

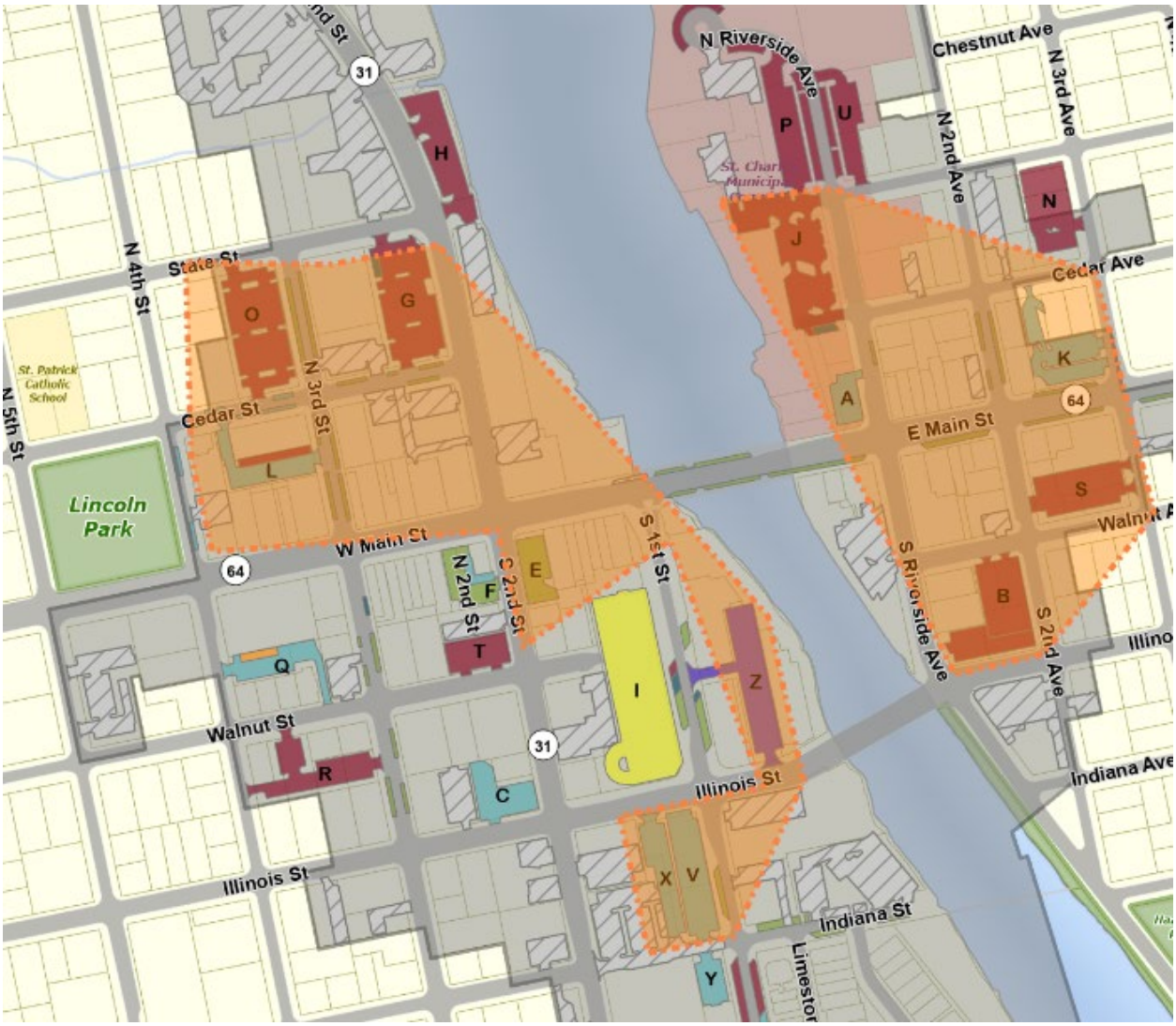
Location	Worst Case Scenario		Average Scenario	
	Occupancy	Vacancies	Occupancy	Vacancies
West of Fox River	85%	157	80%	209
East of Fox River	88%	47	80%	80
Total	**86%**	**204**	**80%**	**289**

Source: DESMAN

Figure 2 below gives a geographical snapshot of parking congestion and shows that parking is most congested in the most central areas of downtown St. Charles where there are the most activity sites. Directly east of the Fox River, Flagship on the Fox and Arcada Theatre which lie along S. Riverside Ave. just south of E. Main St. are two venues that generate substantial weekend traffic and thus a large demand for parking. Patrons use lots A, B, S, and K for these venues, but Lots N, P, and U are also available and undercapacity despite their proximity to these three congested lots. A total of 73 spaces are vacant in these three lots during the Saturday evening time period. This underutilization could be due to their distance from the activity sites both along Main St. and south of Main St. as respondents in an online survey mentioned that distance to their final destination was a significant parking issue.

On the west side of the Fox River, Cedar Fox Weddings and Events (on Cedar St. between N 3rd and 4th streets), Hotel Baker (on Main St. alongside Fox River), along with various other restaurants, bars, and nightlife are major generators of weekend traffic. Parking demand is generated in lots nearby the Fox River starting at State St. going southward to Indiana St. Despite this demand, at its peak during the weekend evening, the five-story parking garage along with other west side surface lots have over 200 parking spaces vacant. During the peak period, the five-story parking garage still has approximately 67 parking spaces available. A majority of the vacant parking spaces of the parking garage are on the fifth level. Reallocating parking demand from more crowded lots to less crowded ones is a strategy that should be pursued. For example, when Lots O, G, X, and V are crowded, visitors would be well-served by using nearby lots C, Q, R, and I which have a total of over 160 available parking spaces during the weekend peak period.

Figure 2: Off Street Public Parking Facilities with at least 85% Occupancy



Source: DESMAN

On Street Parking Occupancy

On-site data collection was also conducted to obtain on-street parking occupancy. As with off street data collection, the counts were performed during four time periods in the summer of 2023: Wednesday, August 9 from 10 am to noon, Thursday, August 10 from 1 pm to 3 pm, Saturday, August 12 from 1 pm to 3 pm, and Saturday, August 12 from 6 pm to 8 pm. The practical capacity rate of 85% was used, and once this rate is exceeded, potential parkers find it difficult to locate open spaces and are more likely to continue to search for an available space, creating traffic flow problems, frustrating drivers, and ultimately leading them to park elsewhere. **Tables 7 and 8** below present on-street parking occupancy in St. Charles. Saturdays have the greatest number of street segments that exceed practical capacity. This is especially true east of the Fox River, which has 22 time-location windows that exceed practical capacity, compared with 14 for west of the Fox River. These time-location windows are highlighted in orange. Despite these high-occupancy street segments on Saturday evenings, Tables 5 and 6 show that there are still a number

of segments that are below practical capacity during the same time frame, particularly west of the Fox River.

Table 7: On Street Parking Occupancy in St. Charles, IL East of Fox River

Street	Segment	Inven-tory	Wed, Aug 9, 2023, 10am - 12pm		Thu, Aug 10, 2023, 1pm - 3pm		Sat, Aug 12, 2023 1pm - 3pm		Sat, Aug 12, 2023, 6pm - 8 pm)	
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Indiana Ave	Riverside Ave to 2nd Ave*	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	1	-
Indiana Ave	2nd Ave to 3rd Ave*	6	0	0%	0	0%	1	17%	5	83%
Walnut Ave	Riverside Ave to 2nd Ave*	10	1	10%	1	10%	5	50%	9	90%
Walnut Ave	2nd Ave to 3rd Ave*	4	0	0%	0	0%	1	25%	5	125%
Walnut Ave	3rd Ave to 4th Ave*	6	4	67%	4	67%	4	67%	5	83%
Walnut Ave	4th Ave to 5th Ave*	5	3	60%	4	80%	4	80%	4	80%
Main St	4th Ave to 5th Ave	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Main St	3rd Ave to 4th Ave	15	2	13%	1	7%	1	7%	8	53%
Main St	2nd Ave to 3rd Ave	13	3	23%	1	8%	7	54%	9	69%
Main St	Riverside Ave to 2nd Ave	6	4	67%	2	33%	4	67%	5	83%
Main St	Riverside Ave to bridge west end	22	7	32%	11	50%	16	73%	18	82%
Riverside Ave	Cedar Ave to Main St	3	2	67%	6	200%	3	100%	3	100%
Cedar Ave	2nd Ave to 3rd Ave	1	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Cedar Ave	3rd Ave to 4th Ave	6	3	50%	3	50%	1	17%	3	50%
Cedar Ave	4th Ave to 5th Ave	6	1	17%	0	0%	1	17%	0	0%
State Ave	3rd Ave to 4th Ave*	4	1	25%	1	25%	2	50%	4	100%
State Ave	2nd Ave to 3rd Ave*	2	0	0%	0	0%	1	50%	1	50%
Riverside Ave	Great Western Trail to State Ave	57	15	26%	0	0%	17	30%	29	51%
Riverside Ave	Main St to Walnut Ave	15	10	67%	17	113%	15	100%	15	100%
Riverside Ave	Walnut Ave to Illinois Ave	10	2	20%	8	80%	10	100%	10	100%
2nd Ave	Walnut Ave to Illinois Ave*	8	0	0%	1	13%	7	88%	8	100%
2nd Ave	Main St to Walnut Ave*	12	4	33%	3	25%	10	83%	12	100%
2nd Ave	Cedar Ave to Main St	12	8	67%	11	92%	6	50%	13	108%
Chestnut Ave	2nd Ave to 3rd Ave	5	1	20%	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%
3rd Ave	Cedar Ave to Main St	6	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	67%
3rd Ave	Main St to Walnut Ave*	6	2	33%	1	17%	1	17%	8	133%
3rd Ave	Walnut Ave to Illinois Ave*	5	0	0%	0	0%	2	40%	7	140%
3rd Ave	South Ave to Riverside Ave*	3	0	0%	1	33%	0	0%	0	0%
4th Ave	Walnut Ave to Illinois Ave*	1	1	100%	3	300%	0	0%	1	100%
4th Ave	Main St to Walnut Ave*	0	3	-	3	-	1	-	2	-
4th Ave	State Ave to Cedar Ave*	7	6	86%	3	43%	5	71%	6	86%
East Side Total		256	83	32%	87	34%	125	49%	195	76%

(Note: High occupancy segments are highlighted in orange.)
Source: DESMAN

Table 8: On Street Parking Occupancy in St. Charles, IL West of Fox River

Street	Segment	Inven-tory	Wed, Aug 9, 2023, 10am - 12pm		Thu, Aug 10, 2023, 1pm - 3pm		Sat, Aug 12, 2023 1pm - 3pm		Sat, Aug 12, 2023, 6pm - 8 pm)	
			Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
1st St	Cobblestone Dr to Prairie St	4	2	50%	2	50%	2	50%	2	50%
1st St	Indiana St to Cobblestone Dr	29	18	62%	19	66%	9	31%	18	62%
1st St	Illinois St to Indiana St	4	3	75%	3	75%	2	50%	4	100%
1st St	Illinois St to Walnut St	19	17	89%	16	84%	9	47%	18	95%
1st St	Walnut St to Main St	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
State St	3rd St to 2nd St*	3	0	0%	2	67%	0	0%	0	0%
3rd St	State St to Cedar St	18	3	17%	7	39%	4	22%	14	78%
3rd St	Cedar St to Main St	18	6	33%	14	78%	15	83%	17	94%
3rd St	Main St to Walnut St	9	4	44%	5	56%	5	56%	9	100%
3rd St	Walnut St to Illinois St	10	4	40%	2	20%	3	30%	7	70%
3rd St	Illinois St to Indiana St	8	3	38%	2	25%	1	13%	1	13%
4th St	Illinois St to Indiana St*	8	2	25%	3	38%	2	25%	3	38%
4th St	Walnut St to Illinois St*	4	0	0%	1	25%	1	25%	1	25%
4th St	Main St to Walnut St*	1	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
4th St	Cedar St to Main St	18	3	17%	7	39%	9	50%	18	100%
4th St	State St to Cedar St*	8	1	13%	1	13%	6	75%	5	63%
State St	5th St to 4th St*	6	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
5th St	Cedar St to Main St	10	7	70%	7	70%	5	50%	5	50%
5th St	Main St to Walnut St*	7	0	0%	3	43%	0	0%	0	0%
5th St	Walnut St to Illinois St*	6	2	33%	1	17%	3	50%	3	50%
Indiana St	4th St to 3rd St*	7	2	29%	2	29%	2	29%	2	29%
Indiana St	3rd St to 2nd St*	12	7	58%	5	42%	6	50%	6	50%
Illinois St	2nd St to 1st St	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Illinois St	4th St to 3rd St*	9	0	0%	1	11%	0	0%	0	0%
Walnut St	5th St to 4th St*	16	1	6%	2	13%	2	13%	3	19%
Walnut St	4th St to 3rd St*	14	3	21%	1	7%	0	0%	1	7%
Walnut St	3rd St to 2nd St	16	9	56%	11	69%	2	13%	15	94%
Cedar St	3rd St to 2nd St	11	9	82%	9	82%	9	82%	11	100%
Cedar St	4th St to 3rd St	12	5	42%	4	33%	8	67%	11	92%
Cedar St	5th St to 4th St	15	8	53%	3	20%	6	40%	10	67%
State St	4th St to 3rd St*	9	2	22%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Indiana St	1st St to Fox River	8	4	50%	2	25%	7	88%	9	113%
Cobblestone Dr	Limestone Dr to Brownstone Dr*	5	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Limestone Dr	Indiana to Cobblestone Dr	2	1	50%	1	50%	2	100%	2	100%
Limestone Dr	Cobblestone Dr to Bluestone Dr*	14	3	21%	0	0%	1	7%	0	0%
Bluestone Dr	Limestone Dr to Brownstone Dr*	6	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	17%
Brownstone Dr	Cobblestone Dr to Bluestone Dr	4	1	25%	0	0%	1	25%	0	0%
Brownstone Dr	Indiana St Cobblestone Dr	6	1	17%	2	33%	1	17%	0	0%
Main Street	5th Street to 4th Street	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Illinois Street	1st Street to Fox River	0	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-
Prairie Street	2nd Street to 1st Street	0	0	-		-	0	-	0	-
West Side Total Occupancy		**356**	**131**	37%	**138**	39%	**123**	35%	**196**	55%

(Note: High occupancy segments are highlighted in orange.)
Source: DESMAN

On Street and Off-Street Parking Occupancy Summary

In summary, there are total of 2,071 public parking spaces, including on and off-street, in the downtown area and the highest parking occupancy is on Saturday evenings. On a peak Saturday evening, approximately 1,648 of the 2,071 total downtown parking spaces are occupied, or about 80% of the total parking spaces.

On a typical Saturday evening, the east side of the Fox River has an average off-street parking of 80% occupancy (88% in the worst-case scenarios), with a majority of the vacant parking spaces in Lot N. On-street parking on the east side is at 76% occupancy, with a majority of the vacant parking space between State Ave and the Great Western Trail. As depicted in Figure 2, parking occupancy is highest closer to Main Street however there is available parking in lots one or two blocks north of Main Street. The data presented here confirms the observations and comments of city staff, citizens, and the consulting team, namely, parking is most difficult on Saturday evenings on the east side of the Fox River. Parkers on the east side do not experience significant congestion during any of the other three time-intervals for weekday mornings, weekday afternoons, and Saturday afternoons.

The west side of the Fox River, 7 of the 15 off-street parking facilities reached above the practical capacity occupancy threshold at some point. It is important to note that the five-story parking garage never reached above the practical capacity. On-street parking occupancy reached a 55% occupancy at peak, with the highest occupancy on First Street, Cedar Street, and Third Street.

The data shows that even in the worst-case scenario, there is both on- and off-street parking available. Wherever and whenever there is a high-occupancy facility, there is always a lower-occupancy facility nearby. However, this second and third parking option is not always readily apparent to visitors or is inconvenient from a pedestrian standpoint if you have to cross a barrier such as Route 64.

Parking Rates

The City of St. Charles currently does not charge for parking at any of its public surface lots, garages, or on-street spaces. Visitors may park wherever they like so long as space is available.

Parking Equipment

The City of St. Charles currently does not use any equipment for parking purposes. Since parking is not charged, there is no need for meters, gates, mobile apps, or pay stations.

Time Restrictions

Of the 23 off-street parking facilities, 12 provide 24-hour parking. Others provide a mix of parking time limits, ranging from 30 minutes to eight hours. **Figure 3** below gives a snapshot of the off-street parking facilities, colored according to time restrictions. These time restrictions are listed in **Table 9** below. Time restrictions are also an element of on-street parking with time limits ranging from 15 minutes to eight hours. One major drawback is that there are too many categories of these parking time restrictions making it hard for downtown visitors to remember how long they can park and where.

Table 9: Parking Time Restrictions in Downtown St. Charles, IL

Color	Parking Time Limits
Maroon	24 hrs
Yellow	1,3, & 24 hrs
Other colors	30 min to 8 hrs

Source: DESMAN

Figure 3: Off Street Parking in Downtown St. Charles According to Time Restrictions

Source: DESMAN

Signage and Wayfinding

Both on-street and off-street parking and wayfinding signage exists in downtown St. Charles. However, both the quantity and quality of signage and wayfinding is not adequate to clearly direct downtown visitors to designated public parking. This was especially true in the five-story parking garage where drivers are more hesitant to park on the 4th and 5th floors due to the circular ramp and poor maneuverability on the first three levels. Wayfinding after vehicles have been parked is also difficult because the north-end elevator does not access the 2nd and 3rd floors.

Wayfinding and signage in the surface lots are also insufficient. Signs in a number of lots are not placed in easily visible locations, do not contain easy-to-understand information, and are hard to discern whether or not the lot is public or private. A sample of currently used signage and their potential drawbacks are below in **Figures 4 to 7**. Figure 4 is a wayfinding sign, but does not clearly indicate that public parking is available in the lot directly behind the sign. Figure 5 is also a wayfinding sign, but it is not specific enough. There are four public parking surface lots in the direct vicinity of the sign, and the public would be better served if the signs were positioned clearly in each of the lot's entrances. Figures 6 and 7 are examples of signage that is too difficult to see. The sign in Figure 6 is too small and far from the road, and the sign in Figure 7 is emblematic of signs in the parking garage that should be made more visible.

Figure 4: No Clear Indication of Public Parking at Lot Entrance

Source: DESMAN

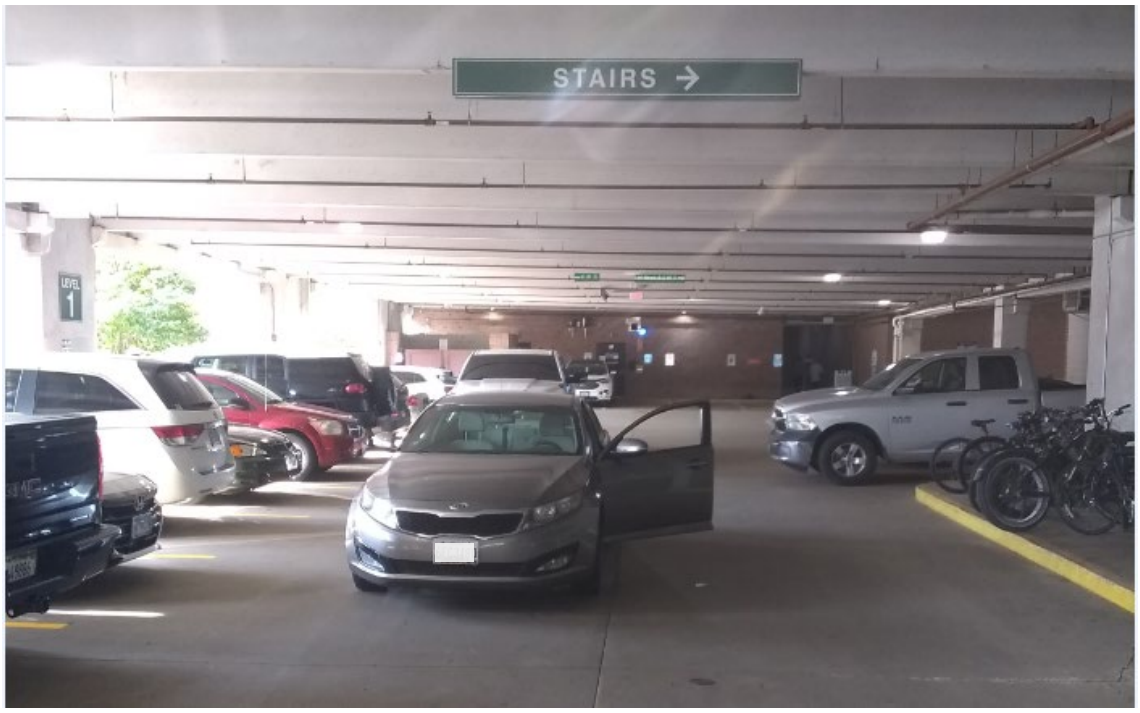
Figure 5: Unclear Wayfinding Signage

Source: DESMAN

Figure 6: Small Sign Size, Suboptimal Location, and Unclear Meaning

Source: DESMAN

Figure 7: Difficult to Find Directional Signage in Parking Garage



Source: DESMAN

Enforcement

Parking ordinances are spelled out in the City of St. Charles Municipal Code Book, Title 10, "Vehicles and Traffic", Section 10.40 – Stopping, Standing, and Parking. These ordinances apply to both the operator and owner of any vehicle in question. Parking enforcement falls under the responsibility of the St. Charles Police Department. Since parking is free of charge in St. Charles, there are no code violations regarding cost. However, code violations can occur due to time restrictions, prohibited parking locations, loading zones, snow conditions, and so on. Citizens, government, and police all agree that there is a lack of enforcement of parking violations.

Parking Facility Misuse

While technically not a violation, vehicles being stored in public parking lots has been noticed. This "warehousing" of vehicles over multiple days is a misuse of public parking lots and can cause problems during periods of high occupancy. **Figure 8** shows two business vehicles parked over multiple days in a public lot.

In addition, due to its high vacancy levels, the 1st St. parking garage has experienced numerous incidents of youth joyriding their vehicles on its top floor. While this is also technically not a parking violation, it defaces the parking garage, discourages parking on the top floor, and is a nuisance to the public. **Figure 9** shows skid marks on the top floor of the 1st St. parking garage.

Figure 8: Multi-Day Continuous Parking in Publicly Owned Lots

Source: DESMAN

Figure 9: Skid Marks Due to Joyriding on Top Floor in Parking Garage

Source: DESMAN

Online Parking Survey - Residents

An online survey was conducted during the study timeframe and over 390 responses were received. The overwhelming majority of respondents were from St. Charles and its western suburbs and most were above the age of 41. Consistent with expectation, visitors found parking during the weekend evenings to be most troublesome, with many finding parking availability and the distance to their final destination as the two biggest problems. Nearly 80% of respondents went downtown for eating or other entertainment and about 7 in 10 parked in an off-street public lot or garage. Finally, visitors responded that they would be very unwilling to pay for parking. Highlights of the survey are shown in **Table 11** below.

Table 11: Online Visitor Parking Survey Highlights

Question	Response Highlight
Where downtown visitors live…	93% were either from zip code 60175 or 60174
Visitor age…	80% were 41 years old or above
How often visitors go downtown…	97% visit downtown at least a few times a month
Days which visitors find parking most challenging…	91% find weekends to be most challenging for parking
Time of day visitors find parking most challenging…	83% find parking most challenging after 5 pm
How visitors go downtown...	91% go by car, 6% walk, and 2% use a bicycle
Reason visitors go downtown…	79% of visitors go downtown for eating or recreation
Where visitors park their cars…	71% park in an off-street public lot or garage, 13% park on-street alongside a curb
How easy visitors can find a parking space in downtown…	Visitors scored this only about 3.5 out of 10
How safe visitors feel parking downtown…	Visitors scored this about 5.7 out of 10
How willing visitors would be to pay a small fee for parking dowtown…	Visitors scored this only about 1.5 out of 10
Problems visitors have when parking downtown…	72% of visitors find parking availability and distance to their destination as the biggest problems

Source: DESMAN

Online Parking Survey - Businesses

An online survey was also conducted for business owners in downtown St. Charles. Close to 30 businesses responded, and responses mirrored those of the residents. Highlights of the business survey are in **Table 12** below.

Table 12: Online Business Parking Survey Highlights

Question	Response Highlight
How easy it is for their customers to find a parking space…	Businesses scored this at about 5 out of 10
How easy it is for their employees to find a parking space…	Businesses scored this at about 6 out of 10
Biggest problem their patrons have with parking…	Many businesses wrote that patrons' biggest problems were inconvenient distances from destinations and the time needed to park
Days which patrons find parking most challenging…	89% of business owners selected weekends as the most challenging for their patrons…
Time of day patrons find parking most challenging…	93% responded that aftenoons and evenings are most challenging for patrons

Source: DESMAN

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS AND PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

A series of stakeholder interviews on August 9 and 10, 2023 as well as two public open houses on August 14 and September 6, 2023 were conducted. The interviews as well as the open houses provided community input and first-hand experience of parking-related issues in downtown St. Charles. Open house visitors came from a broad cross section of St. Charles with a total of over 30 visitors at the August and September open houses. The following is a list of stakeholders and their respective organizations.

Stakeholders

- Laura Purdy – St. Charles Business Alliance
- Amy Curione – St. Charles Business Alliance
- Mike Kies – St. Charles Park District
- Sue McDowell – Arts Council
- Debbie Gurley – St. Charles Area Chamber of Commence
- John Rabchuk – River Corridor Foundation of St. Charles
- Tom Anderson – Developer/Property Owner
- Amber Grove– Developer/Property Owner
- Nick Smith– Developer/Property Owner
- Megan Curren - The Graceful Ordinary (restaurant)
- Mike Carney – The Office/Whiskey Bend (restaurant)
- Dino Sisto – La Zaza's (restaurant)
- Jayme Muenz – Ward 2 Alderperson
- Bryan Wirball – Ward 4 Alderperson
- Billy Metzer – The Diamondaire (business)
- Lance Ramella – Cedar Fox (business)
- Bob Gehm – Ward 3 Alderperson
- Ed Bessner – Ward 5 Alderperson
- David Pietryla – Ward 4 Alderperson

Among major employers, minor employers, developers, and public works, the stakeholders gave varying feedback on the public parking system. The following describes common issues brought about during the interviews.

General Comments

- *St. Charles has a lot of popular dining places so evenings are especially bad for parking.*
- *Weekend and event traffic is the problem, especially in the Lincoln Park neighborhood. I've found that people will accept festival-related traffic and parking, but not typical weekend traffic and parking.*
- *The lot alongside N 2nd St. between State St. and Cedar St. could fill a few garbage cans after a weekend night. Cleaning it more frequently should be considered.*
- *The city needs to provide numbers about the costs of solutions such as parking garages and enforcement.*
- *Parking decks are good, but if they are built north of Main St. on the east of the river, I wonder if people will be willing to cross to the south side of Main St. to access Arcada Theatre and other businesses. Main St. is not easy to cross for either pedestrians or cars.*
- *One issue is the problem of perception. Parking needs to be presented as an increase in spaces for the public, not as a revenue generator for the government.*
- *In the northeast quadrant of downtown, parking is challenging on the weeknights and weekends when the Arcada is in use.*
- *Recommendations should take into consideration the quality of life issues of current residents.*
- *Please! We are the "Pride of the Fox". Stop giving the parking lots the river view!*
- *I am amazed at how many people park at the old police station and city hall during evenings to come in town for dining, etc. It's actually very cool and we can capitalize on that space somehow.*
- *Maintain the current parking characteristics of the neighborhoods even if new developments go in.*
- *There should be free shuttles/trolleys on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays around town.*
- *Why do we have a parking issue when there is so much vacancy on 1st and Main?*
- *The city should be cognizant of river quality and runoff.*
- *Perceived safety is an issue.*
- *The SE quadrant is always full!*
- *A circulating shuttle would be better than valet service.*

Signage & Wayfinding

- *During events, if lots near my business are filled, customers don't know where to park even though I tell them beforehand where they can park. Signage is important.*
- *Wayfinding is a big issue. It's inconsistent throughout the downtown area, and perhaps a parking app would help.*
- *Parkers need real-time information about parking space availability.*
- *Downtown needs better signs and wayfinding.*

- *There definitely needs to be wayfinding that directs people from more crowded lots to less crowded lots.*
- *There needs to be signage in the deck that indicates how full each floor is.*
- *There needs to be electronic signage and an app that indicates the number of spaces available.*
- *There is a general lack of information about parking. People who visit downtown don't know who to ask or where to look to find information about parking.*
- *Better signage in parking deck!*
- *There should be electronic signage showing open parking spots in garages. Especially on 1st St, people should be encouraged to drive into where parking spots are available.*
- *Please add more and better signage to direct drivers to major parking sites!*
- *Top levels of decks are sometimes empty.*
- *Traffic on Main St. gets blocked by delivery trucks; better signage would help.*
- *Large, lighted parking signs are needed. Some lots are barely marked.*

Enforcement

- *I think enforcement is an issue. I see that 24-hour lots are being taken advantage of. I've seen some commercial trucks that park continuously in some lots.*
- *I also see that 24 hour lots are being taken advantage of. I've seen some vehicles left in these lots for over one month!*
- *Enforcement of time limits is low-hanging fruit – that's something that could be done pretty easily.*
- *I've heard of car break-ins in the parking garage. The police need to be involved.*
- *Hiring enforcement officers is better than spending $10 to $20 million on a parking deck.*
- *Because time restrictions need to be enforced, I wonder if parking tickets are a good way to enforce this.*
- *Nowadays, with delivery services less reliable, delivery trucks are blocking traffic. This needs to be managed better.*
- *People who park in our lots don't always patronize our businesses. I see some parking in our lot who use Pottawatomie Park trails, which go across the river.*
- *Please enforce current parking regulations and limit parking on residential streets.*
- *Parking enforcement does not need to be increased unless it becomes a serious issue. It's a waste of resources.*

Physical Parking Infrastructure Supply, Equipment

- *The city needs to install more speed bumps in the parking deck to prevent bad driving.*
- *Rideshare spots for Uber and Lyft are a waste of space – get rid of them!*
- *Combine the two parking lots between State St. and Cedar St. into one.*
- *There is not enough striping to indicate parking stalls.*
- *Parking in the Arcada area is underserved for parking patrons.*
- *Our customers use the lot alongside N 3rd St. between State St. and Cedar St. During our events it's filled to capacity and our employees and subcontractors have to park on the street sometimes blocks away from our venue.*

- *For aesthetic reasons, I am opposed to any parking garage being built riverside. I prefer something further away from the river.*
- *I don't think we need new parking garages, and if we do build them, I want them pushed to the outskirts. The city needs to think more about micro-mobility, trolleys, and the like.*
- *Arcada Theatre and breweries bring in younger crowds. This brings a lot of youth to the big parking garage, and there needs to be a gate system to regulate the flow of traffic in and out of the parking garage.*
- *There is room for putting a parking garage in a number of candidate locations. In particular, I think the lot west of Baker Memorial Church across 3rd Ave is a good location.*
- *I think there is more land to convert into parking than the city is willing consider.*
- *Bicycle parking is needed. Bicyclists shouldn't have to lock their bicycles to lampposts.*
- *It seems to make sense to utilize the parking lots between 2nd and 3rd Avenue better. And remove the old houses because they look awful!*
- *There needs to be handicap accessibility on 2nd Ave and in the Main area.*
- *I hate the thought of giving up the parking lot directly north of the government office for a multistory parking deck. Try to be more creative!*
- *The lot on N 3rd Ave between Cedar Ave and E Main St. could have underground parking.*
- *No tall parking garages! I do not like the 1st St. five-decker!*
- *Residential parking for homeowners (or renters) on streets near town is needed.*
- *I like the idea of the parking lot on N 3rd Ave between Cedar Ave and E Main St. becoming some kind of garage.*
- *A gate system in the parking garage is needed.*
- *Add an east side parking garage on 2nd Avenue.*
- *There should be more drop-off locations in downtown.*
- *Obtain more federal money to build EV stations.*
- *More multi-level, off-river parking is needed in the southeast quadrant of downtown.*
- *Parking is needed on the east side because of the Arcada and new restaurants.*
- *More parking is needed for the Baker Community Center. Some events fill its capacity and parking spills into the streets.*
- *Do not save the old police station!*
- *Bicycle trail parking is needed near the bridge to Pottawatomie Park.*
- *Expand the downtown northeast quadrant parking deck to incorporate the neighboring housing property!*
- *Parking on the Main St. bridge should be eliminated!*
- *QR codes can be used instead of or in addition to a parking app. This can be used to direct parkers to lots with vacancies.*
- *Another parking garage is possibly needed in the SE quadrant near Pollyanna Brewing.*

Parking Pricing, Time-Restrictions, Permits, Ordinances

- *On-street metered parking is needed. If we use this, we can push free parking into the garages. More parking turnover means more profit.*

- *Charging a parking fee is not a bad idea, but businesses and their employees will feel punished. Therefore, if parking in some places in downtown is charged, I would like to see different fees for employees and customers.*
- *I moved my business here from a neighboring city because the parking there was horrendous! Here parking isn't as bad, but my customers don't know where to park. Channeling them to available parking locations would help. Parkers spend about 45 minutes in my store, and Thursdays and weekends get busy. With some parking only available for only 30 minutes, it's hard to do anything.*
- *The city needs to create permit parking according to neighborhood.*
- *I think there will be resistance to paid parking because people aren't accustomed to it.*
- *There needs to be parking spaces dedicated to employees of businesses, so they don't need to walk far to get to work. Also, spaces with time restrictions are tough for employees because they may have to move their cars mid-shift.*
- *Customers of small stores should be able to park in front of the store using short-term parking.*
- *At our restaurant, we don't do lunch business because of 90-minute parking nearby. This is too short for lunch-goers and people don't want to park in the parking deck for lunch.*
- *Increase the cost of on-street parking to force cars into the city's parking garages.*
- *Change zoning so that all new buildings downtown accommodate all needed parking.*
- *No on-street parking facing the river!*
- *Maintain liberal green space between the municipal building and Pottawatomie Park.*
- *When the riverfront is closed for the art fair, businesses struggle.*
- *The 90-minute parking restriction is unnecessary.*
- *Pick-up and drop-off zones need to be established on the west side.*
- *Either all parking should be 24 hours or overnight parking should be allowed. Otherwise, people will try to drive while intoxicated.*

Shared Parking

- *Shared parking is low-hanging fruit and a great idea, but it's a cultural shift. I think it could work at some banks as well as the public library.*
- *Ultimately, lower cost options need to be explored first. Start with shared parking and enforcement before considering expensive parking decks.*
- *Shared parking at the library or at other businesses when they're not open is needed. 362*
- *Allow the public library as well as St. Mark's Church parking lots to be used by private valet services.*
- *Protect current library parking for patrons during library hours. Open it to be utilized after hours only.*
- *On Friday and Saturday evenings, use church parking and provide shuttle service.*
- *The city should try to arrange to have private parking lots used during their non-business hours.*
- *Support utilizing existing capacity during late hours (Ex: public library with shuttles). Oppose building a new parking structure.*

SHARED PARKING POTENTIAL

Shared parking can be one efficient solution to the parking problems currently faced by St. Charles. Shared parking is when parking spaces can be used to serve two or more individual land uses or purposes without conflict or encroachment. Shared parking can happen when there are variations in the peak accumulation of parked vehicles as the result of different activity patterns of adjacent or nearby land uses (by hour, by day, by season), or when there are relationships among land use activities that result in people visiting two or more land uses on a single auto trip to a given area or development. In the case of St. Charles, some candidate businesses would be banks, funeral homes, daytime shops, and public facilities. These businesses attract visitors at different hours than bars and restaurants. The physical infrastructure (lots) is already available, and there are a number of potential locations throughout the study area. **Table 13** and **Figure 10** below shows candidate shared parking locations in the downtown area of St. Charles. These locations would be used outside of conventional business hours (8 am to 5 pm) and would help to serve the abundance of visitors that frequent the restaurants and bars during the evenings and weekends. The location with the largest potential is the St. Charles Public Library. This is due to is large lot size (125 spaces) and its location near the southeast quadrant which is the area that is experiencing the most parking congestion. Other locations are scattered throughout the area and contain around 10 to 60 parking spaces. In order to utilize these spaces, contractual arrangements must be made with the property owners.

Table 13: Candidate Shared Parking Locations

West of Fox River			
	Business/Organization Name	**Location**	**Estimated Parking Spaces**
1	St. Patrick's Catholic Preschool	State St & N 4th St	58
2	St. Charles Bank & Trust	W Main St & S 5th S	45
3	Shelby School	Indiana St & S 5th St	38
4	Dick Pond Athletics St. Charles	State St & N 2nd St	54
5	Moss-Norris Funeral Home	Illinois St & S 3rd St	20
6	Doc Morgan Inc.	Walnut St & S 2nd St	30
7	Law Offices of Jotham S. Stein P.C.	Indiana St & S 3rd St	8
East of Fox River			
8	Directions in Clothing	State Ave & N 2nd Ave	20
9	Joseph M. Wiedemann & Sons Inc	E Main St & 3rd Ave	15
10	Yurs Funeral Homes Inc.	E Main St & 4th Ave	44
11	Public Library & St. Mark's Lutheran Church Shared Parking	E Main St & 5th Ave	125

Source: DESMAN

Figure 10: Candidate Shared Parking Locations

Source: DESMAN

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

A number of future developments are planned in St. Charles within the next five years, most of which will be the redevelopment of previously or currently used properties. St. Charles provided information on proposed developments in the downtown area. This included information about the development type, location, size, land use elements. Based on this information, projected parking need was estimated as shown in **Table 14**. Developments for which specific numerical information about size were provided, parking estimates were generated using industry standard calculation methodology. For other developments which specific numerical information was not available, parking ratios are provided in **Table 15** below as a general estimate of parking demand needs. These recommended ratios are based on industry standards. Descriptions for each proposed project are below:

- Plaza Expansion project includes the permanent closure of 1st Street to vehicles from Walnut St. to Main St. to accommodate a contiguous public plaza which will essentially triple the existing plaza space. The project will feature a meandering walkway to allow for unobstructed pedestrian passage through the site. This project is scheduled to be completed in February of 2024. In comparison to the other uses, public plazas do not generate high parking demand, but indirectly attract more traffic to the downtown or result in visitors staying longer.

- Whole Food Market has been approved and the developer is working with City staff to obtain building permits. Whole Foods is forecasted to need 132 spaces, there will be a total of 144 parking spaces dedicated to the grocery store. The methodology used to calculate the Whole Foods parking need is based on the methodology developed by the Urban Land Institute which calculates parking demand based on factors such as development square footage, seasonality, and captive customer ratios. Whole Foods peaks during the afternoon, and if there aren't any available dedicated parking spaces then customers can park in one of the surrounding public parking spaces. There will still be a total of 30 public parking spaces in Lot V and Lot X. Per the Whole Foods site plan, the developer will also be converting parallel parking on First Street to angled parking, which will result in a net gain of five public parking spaces. It is important to note that that parking occupancy is at its lowest during the day, below 50% occupancy. The five-story parking garage on the west side of the river is only 28% occupied during the afternoon timeframe.

- Former Police Department Site, spanning approximately two acres and owned by the City, has been the subject of development considerations in recent years. The City has yet to approve a project however proposals have included multi-family housing and hotels to restaurants, all incorporating a public space component. The absence of a specified development type makes it challenging to estimate parking demand accurately. In planning for the site's development, the City should consult Table 15, which outlines the recommended parking spaces needed per development type. This reference will be crucial in determining the appropriate parking infrastructure when a specific proposal takes shape. Additionally, the City can leverage this development opportunity to bolster downtown parking availability by strategically increasing the overall parking supply.

- The River East Lofts project is a planned mixed-use building at the southeast corner of Illinois & Riverside Ave and consists of a 4-story building, with retail space and parking on the first floor and 42 total residential units on the upper floor. This property is privately-owned and currently consists of one building and 48 parking spaces (11 public parking stalls). The completed development will include 51 parking spaces (2 public parking stalls). This property is included in both downtown SSAs, per City code the developer needs to replace the existing parking. This is a typical practice for downtowns as meeting the industry standards is difficult given the limited available land. In many cases, meeting the industry standards would result in fewer buildings, more surface lots, and thus a less vibrant urban environment. The developer is increasing the total parking supply of the property from 48 to 51, thereby meeting the City's requirement. This is a privately-owned lot; however, the current property owner allows it to be used by the general public. Once the River East Lofts is completed it will be perceived as a displacing public parking, even though it is privately owned.

- River 504 (Milestone Row 2) is a four-story building incorporates 3,330 square feet of commercial space fronting S. 1st St. and 41 internal parking spaces on the first floor, with up to 20 residential condominium units on floors 2-4, and a partial 5th-floor penthouse. The project is would also include the addition of 15 angled public parking spaces on First Street. The proposed number of

parking spaces would exceed the estimated parking demand.

- Lot 4 is a city-owned vacant grass lot at the northeast corner of Illinois St. and IL Route 31 (2nd St.). The lot is approximately 0.13 acres and, in the past, has been considered for a mixed-use with first floor commercial and second and third floor office or residential. Ideally, this development would include internal parking however given the size of the property that may not be possible. As this property is in the downtown Special Services Areas it would not be required to provide parking. The adjacent five-story parking garage could accommodate a development here as the garage is not currently at practical capacity. If in the future, the garage parking occupancy exceeds the practical capacity threshold then the City could consider a development that generates less parking demand during peak parking times.

- The Baker Church is located four blocks east of the Fox River on Main Street. The Church owns two parking lots which are currently used for public parking except on Sunday mornings. The two lots are identified as Lots N and Lot K on Figure 1. Those lots have a parking inventory of 46 and 36, respectively. Lot N never reached an occupancy count above 30%. This is likely due to it being difficult to find and recognize, and is poorly lit. Lot K is considered to be above practical capacity during peak hours during weekend nights. The Baker Church has indicated to the City that the two parking lots are available for sale and development. It has been suggested by the Church that either lot could accommodate a private mixed-use development and/or a public parking garage. In the event the lots are both developed without a public parking component it would result in a loss of 82 parking spaces. Both lots are partially included in the downtown SSAs, meaning any of the parking spaces in the SSA would need to be replaced in the event a development occurs. The replaced parking spaces would not be required to be public spaces.

Table 14: Planned Developments and Parking Need in St. Charles, IL

Development	Location	Development Type	Development Scale (sq ft, units)			Development Timeframe	Parking Demand	Parking Spaces Proposed
			Residential	Commercial	Other			
Plaza Project	Main St & South 1st St	public plaza			≈30,000 sqft	by 2028	0	0
Whole Foods Market	Indiana St & Geneva Rd	supermarket		35000 sqft		by 2025	132	144[(1)]
Former PD Site	Riverside Ave & State St	TBD	TBD	TBD		after 2028	TBD	TBD
River East	Riverside Ave & South 2nd Ave	multifamily residential, commercial	42 units	6500 sqft		by 2028	68	50
River 504 (Milestone Row 2)	Limestond Dr & Prairie St	multifamily residential, commercial, garage parking	24 units	4000 sqft		by 2028	40	provided internally
Lot 4	Illinois St & South 2nd St	potentially commercial, residential, office		3500 sqft	7000 sqft[(2)]	by 2028	40	TBD
Baker Church Properties	North 3rd Ave b/t East Main St & State Ave	potentially commercial, residential	TBD	TBD		TBD	TBD	TBD
						Total:	280	

Notes: (1) Includes 12 employee spaces. (2) Assumed to be office space.

Source: DESMAN

Table 15: General Parking Ratios

Development Type	Recommended Parking Spaces Needed
public plaza	0.13/1000 sq ft
supermarket	4.75/1000 sq ft
multi-family development (one bedroom units)	1.05/unit
multi-family development (two bedroom units)	1.8/unit
hotel (50-175 rooms)	1.15/room
conference center	5.5/1000 sq ft
restaurant	17.4/1000 sq ft
retail	4/1000 sq ft
park	5.5/acre
concert bandshell	0.4/seat
office	3.93/1000 sq ft
bar/nightclub	19/1000 sq ft

Source: DESMAN

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were developed by DESMAN, in consultation with the City of St. Charles, to address the issues identified throughout the course of this study. Recommended changes to the supply, management, operations, and technology of the parking system are intended to address both current and anticipated needs of the downtown area. No recommendation alone will alleviate all existing or future parking issues. However, incremental improvements that delay or eliminate the need for additional physical parking structures will be cost-effective, improve the user experience, and address concerns raised by the stakeholders and citizens alike. City staff should consider conducting annual parking counts using the same methodology as this study. The annual counts would be beneficial in determining the actual impacts of both future developments and the parking solutions that are implemented.

While the impacts of the recommendations are predictable to an extent, parking system changes have the potential to impact parking in unknown ways. Due to this uncertainty, the implementation of parking system changes should have leeway for the impact to take effect before additional changes follow. Based on experience, this approach is successful in avoiding unintended consequences in a piecemeal way. This will allow a methodical approach that conserves resources for St. Charles. Simple, low-cost solutions can be implemented in the immediate/short-term. Complex, expensive solutions are assumed to be implemented over the course of several years.

Cost estimates that are provided below are for high-level planning purposes only. Actual costs can vary significantly depending on the circumstances. Despite this, it is hoped that these cost estimates will provide guidance for decision-making into the future.

Peak Period Off-Street Parking Availability

The study has shown that, despite perception, there is parking available in the downtown area even during times of heavy usage. Of the 394 available off-street spaces east of the Fox River and the 748 spaces west of the Fox River, an average of 80% are occupied on both sides during the peak weekend time period. This gives a total of 289 unoccupied spaces during peak parking space usage – 209 on the west side and 80 on the east side. On the east side, Lot P, near city hall, and Lot N, near Baker Church, have 25 and 28 available spaces during the peak period, respectively. On the west side, Lot C, Q, R, and I have a total of 160 parking spaces available during the peak. The city would be well served by making better use of existing parking facilities. How to do this is discussed subsequently.

Wayfinding and Signage Improvements

A lack of large, clear, and understandable signage was a concern for many citizens. Citizens and business-owners alike expressed concern about knowing where to park and what to do if their first parking choice was unavailable. New wayfinding and parking facility ID signage should be created for all City-owned parking facilities. Wayfinding signage is needed to direct drivers to off-street parking facilities in St. Charles. Signs could be as simple as the universal "P" symbol with an arrow pointing toward the route to a parking facility, or include the name of the facility on it too. New signage should also be unique in design or color as to not blend in with the other downtown signage. In most cases, these directional signs can be located on existing light poles to minimize costs. In addition to external signage, informational and instructional signage posted inside St. Charles parking facilities should conform to an easily recognizable design scheme, the messaging should be clear and direct, and sign placement should be in an optimal location. Signs within the facility should only include vital information and be legible for drivers. The style should be consistent across all city facilities. In the event that parkers cannot find space in an off-street lot, wayfinding signage that directs parkers to nearby lots should exist.

Estimated Cost to Implement:	*$7,000-$15,000 per lot location*
Estimated Timeframe	*6 months*
Action Steps:	*Evaluate existing signage, identify locations for additional or improved signage, create design for new signage that is consistent with the city's existing signage, solicit bid proposals from service providers, execute contract.*

Parking Space Availability Signs in Parking Garages

St. Charles currently has three multi-story parking garages, none of which have digital signs showing real-time parking availability. While the five-story parking garage is under capacity during its peak parking period on Saturday evenings, the remaining two parking garages are both near capacity during the same peak parking period. We recommend St. Charles install digital parking signs showing real-time parking availability at the entrance of each multi-story garage. Since these digital signs give information about parking availability on each floor, this would significantly reduce the time drivers waste looking for parking on floors where it doesn't exist. At the five-story garage in particular, parkers can waste a lot of time

ascending and descending the ramps as well as driving around each floor looking for vacant spaces. Out of frustration, parkers may exit the garage midway through their search and look for parking and entertainment opportunities elsewhere. Installing these digital signs can greatly reduce driver frustration as well as wasted time, especially in the five-story garage. These digital signs can either be those that indicate the number of spaces vacant on each floor of the garage, or those that simply show the words "full" or "available" on each floor. A similar system can also be installed in surface lots where a sensor detects the number of cars in the lot and provides that information to a parking app used by downtown visitors. An example of a digital sign that indicates the number of vacancies is shown below.

Estimated Cost to Implement:	*$80,000 - $120,000 (five story garage)*
Estimated Timeframe:	*3 months (five story garage)*
Action Steps:	*Develop and approve scope and program for services, solicit bid proposals from service providers, execute contract.*

Parking Time Restriction Improvements

As mentioned in a previous section of this report, St. Charles currently has a wide range of parking time restrictions for both their on- and off-street facilities. Some of these time restrictions are: 30 minutes, one hour, three hours, eight hours, and 24 hours. These time restrictions are too numerous and difficult to follow. To provide more clarity to downtown visitors, these time restrictions can be reduced to three different categories based on location. For locations where high turnover is needed, one-hour time limits are appropriate. For visitors staying for longer periods of time, i.e., events, shopping, employment, etc., three-hour or 12-hour time restrictions are more appropriate. The City may consider keeping 24-hour time restrictions in areas that are heavily utilized by residents in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Estimated Cost to Implement:	*$50 per sign*
Estimated Timeframe:	*1 month*
Action Steps:	*Remove, reallocate, and/or replace existing parking time limit signs. Utilize standard design templates.*

Establish Pick-up/Drop-off Locations in Core Restaurant/Shop Areas

Downtown restaurant owners voiced concerns that some of their older and physically challenged customers had difficulty visiting their restaurants due to the challenge of walking from their parked vehicle to the restaurant. Official pickup/drop-off zones in downtown core locations should be established to ensure safety for the elderly and physically challenged. These zones should also be accessible to transportation network companies (TNCs) such as Uber and Lyft. The pickup/drop-off zone should be clearly identifiable and protected from on-going traffic. The signage should also notify drivers of the maximum duration of stay to prevent excessive vehicle "standing". When the Plaza Project is complete, locations alongside South 1st St. and the west side of the plaza with easy access to the restaurants and shops would be very advantageous. A number of curbside parking spots along Riverside Ave. and Main St. can also be re-designated as pick-up/drop-off locations.

Estimated Cost to Implement:	*$100/sign*
Estimated Timeframe:	*6 – 8 weeks*
Action Steps:	*Establish location, signage, and striping necessary for pick up/drop off areas, solicit bid proposals from service providers for sign design and manufacture, execute contract.*

Enforcement of Existing Parking Code Violations

St. Charles does not strictly enforce parking violations. Parkers that overstay their time in a parking spot are not ticketed, giving little to no incentive to follow the city code. Since continuous multi-day parking in public lots has also been spotted, it is imperative that the city enforce its code for parking violations. Parking violations that can be issued to a vehicle for failure to comply with city legal requirements should be clearly stipulated through city code, administered through the finance department, and enforced through the traffic section of the police department. In order to enforce time restrictions, one possibility is for St. Charles to implement Automatic License Plate Recognition (ALPR) technology, which is widely used today. Communities that have transitioned from manual enforcement to ALPR enforcement have significantly increased the productivity and efficiency of their parking systems. It is recommended that if on-street parking meters are introduced, at least one city vehicle be outfitted with LPR hardware and software for use by the City's parking enforcement officers. In lieu of installing ALPR technology, the City deploy staff from the Police Department to enforce parking violations manually, however this is often less effective and more time consuming.

Estimated Cost to Implement:	*Mobile Unit: $40,000 to $60,000 (excluding the lease or purchase cost of a vehicle)* *Handheld Unit: $5,000 per unit plus system software platform*
Estimated Timeframe:	*Program should be implemented if and when a pay-to-park on-street program is enacted.*
Action Items:	*Create a specific document to be bid on by potential vendors ensuring that the enforcement system works in conjunction with the on- and off-street revenue collection equipment, solicit bids and choose preferred technology.*

Metered Parking on Major Streets

Saturdays have the greatest number of street segments that exceed practical capacity (85%), with the majority of these being east of the Fox River. All of these street segments are located alongside major activity sites such as restaurants, bars, and the Arcada Theatre. Parking on Saturday evenings even exceeds capacity (over 100%) on some of these segments. On-street parking during times of congestion can be a safety issue and it also interrupts traffic flow. To discourage parking over capacity and encourage parking in off-street lots and garages, metering is the best method. Metering also creates more turnover which is better for businesses, and encourages longer-term parkers such as employees to park in off-street facilities. A number of street segments are candidates for parking meters. Some of these include Main St. from the west end of the bridge to 5th Ave. as well as the streets east of the Fox River running north-south between Cedar Ave. and Walnut Ave. There are over 100 parking spaces in this area that could be metered.

St. Charles can accomplish this by installing credit-card payment enabled single-space meters and/or multi-space pay stations at selected on-street parking spaces. It is also possible to establish a pay by cell phone app that would also allow visitors to know about on-street parking vacancies in real time. In total, downtown St. Charles has over 600 on-street parking spaces, none of which are metered and hence they receive no income. By installing single-space meters, multi-space pay stations, and/or a pay-by-cell app for the highest demand areas, the city could generate parking revenue and reroute longer term parkers to off-street facilities thereby optimizing use of the city's parking assets.

Estimated Cost to Implement:	*$550 per single space meter, $6,500 per multi-space kiosk*
Estimated Timeframe:	*3-6 months*
Action Steps:	*Develop and approve scope and program for services, solicit bid proposals from service providers, execute contract, implement a public relations campaign, adapt internal operations and management practices and policies as warranted.*

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Electric vehicles are growing substantially in popularity throughout the country and will continue to do so for years to come. This growth in popularity has led to many cities in the U.S. adding more electric vehicle charging stations within their parking facilities, and St. Charles has the opportunity to be one of them. The benefits of electric vehicles and charging stations include reduced CO_2 emissions, new revenue and branding opportunities, and reduced fuel costs. With that in mind, some drawbacks include maintenance and installation costs, longer fueling times, often times higher costs to purchase, and displaces non-electric charging vehicle spaces. However, the benefits outweigh the drawbacks in that the environmental impact benefits everyone and the additional revenue opportunities can be a source of funding for the city.

Electric vehicle charging stations normally consist of payment mechanisms, monitors, and charging power cords. Having charging stations that are connected to the same network, allow owners to track payments and utilization, and are easy to navigate for users are essential to their success. They can be placed on streets, in parking lots, and in garages. We recommend that St. Charles place charging stations in lots and garages rather than on streets because when they are placed on streets, they are more vulnerable to damage and can be more expensive to maintain. When choosing the locations of these stations there are important factors to consider. These include proximity to power sources and building entrances, lighting and security, visibility and signage, and accessibility. The City did install an electric charger station on the fourth-level of the parking garage on First Street a few years ago. The City purchased the equipment, funded the installation, and eats the cost of the usage. The equipment has also been damaged in the past and required repairs. The City should continue to pursue additional electric vehicle charging stations based on these recommendations and experience of the one station previously installed.

In addition to investing in this initiative with their own funds, we recommend that the city also investigate funding opportunities at both the state and federal levels. For example, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) offers grants to public agencies to install and maintain publicly available Level 2 and direct current fast charging (DCFC) stations. Funding may cover up to 80% of the project costs.

Estimated Cost to Implement:	*$11,795 per station (charges two vehicles)*
Estimated Timeframe:	*3 – 6 months*
Action Steps:	*Develop and approve scope and program for services, solicit bid proposals from service providers, execute contract, adapt internal operations and management practices and policies as warranted.*

1st Street Parking Garage Access

The five-story parking garage at the intersection of 1st St. and Illinois St., is the city's major parking facility with over 400 spaces, and is centrally located near many shops, restaurants, and bars. However, walking

access to restaurants after parking is an issue. The parking deck has elevators on both its north and south sides, but the elevator on the north side does not access Floors 2 and 3 and the south side elevator is a further walk from shops and restaurants. This makes it somewhat confusing and difficult, especially for the elderly and physically challenged as well as out-of-towners that may have to walk longer distances as well as up and down stairwells to access their destination. We recommend that the parking garage north side elevator be improved to provide access to all floors. For Floor 2, a door can be provided for access to the corridor to the elevator. Providing Floor 3 access to the elevator would cause more disruption, and would be significantly more expensive, because a corridor would need to be built. Negotiations with the owners of the 2nd and 3rd floor offices would have to be conducted prior to this operation.

Estimated Cost to Implement:	*$40,000 for each Floor*
Estimated Timeframe:	*3 – 6 months*
Action Steps:	*Develop and approve scope and program for services, solicit bid proposals from service providers, execute contract, adapt internal operations and management practices and policies as warranted.*

Shared Parking Potential

Shared parking is one fast, cost-effective solution to the parking problems currently faced by St. Charles. The existing conditions section found that there are potentially 11 locations in the downtown area at which shared parking is possible. Shared parking is possible only if parking spaces can be used to serve multiple land uses without conflict. The candidate parking lots (for the most part) operate during normal business hours and would not conflict with bar and restaurant visitors on the weekends and in the evenings. The 11 potential locations have a combined total of approximately 457 parking spaces which is more spaces than the five-story parking garage (429 spaces). The location with the largest potential is the St. Charles Public Library. This is due to is large lot size (125 spaces) and its location near the southeast quadrant which is the area that is experiencing the most parking congestion. For this to happen, St. Charles would have to enter into shared parking agreements with property owners that explicitly state conditions for using the parking space. These would include: designated parking area, approved usage, maintenance of the facility including snow, garbage, and debris removal, utility costs, taxes, signage, and parking enforcement.

Estimated Cost to Implement:	*Minimal – will depend on individual contracts*
Estimated Timeframe:	*Minimal*
Action Steps:	*Contact property owner, develop proposal for property use, create and execute contractual agreement, adopt operations to be implemented and monitored.*

Improve Alternative Transportation Options

The City should promote alternative transportation modes such as biking and walking. This can be achieved through measures such as installing additional bike racks, enhancing pedestrian infrastructure, improving overall accessibility, and promoting these options to the public. Addressing sidewalk gaps and expanding bike lanes, especially in the downtown area, should be prioritized to create a more pedestrian and bike-friendly environment.

The City has taken significant steps in this direction by finalizing a comprehensive Pedestrian/Bike plan and adopting a Complete Street Policy in 2023. The plan and policy outline potential infrastructure projects aimed at encouraging biking and walking to and in the downtown area. By successfully encouraging more alternative transportation modes the City would reduce the total number of parked cars and improve the downtown parking experience. Additionally, the proposed improvements would facilitate safer pedestrian crossings and could encourage people to park further away from their final destinations. These improves should be considered and addressed as the Public Works Department implements the annual road improvement plan or as funding is made available during the budgeting process or grants.

Estimated Cost to Implement:	*Minimal to Expensive – depending on particular project*
Estimated Timeframe:	*Dependent of individual projects*
Action Steps:	*Follow the recommendations of the Bike/Pedestrian Plan. The City can tackle low hanging fruit projects first such as adding more bike racks to the downtown or restriping streets to include bike lanes. Others projects will take years to design, engineer, and potentially give IDOT approval.*

Downtown Trolley Service

A downtown trolley could serve as a strategic solution during peak parking demand hours, encouraging individuals to park in peripheral downtown areas with available parking. This approach effectively expands the effective parking supply by encouraging visitors to park in underutilized lots. For instance, the St. Charles Library parking lot is an approximately 15-minute walk from downtown, including a crossing at Route 25 that may dissuade some visitors. By offering a faster and safer alternative, the trolley not only addresses safety concerns but also enhances accessibility. Additionally, the trolley becomes an attractive feature in itself, potentially drawing more attention and visitors to the downtown area.

Estimated Cost to Implement:	*$2,000 - $2,500 for 3-hours per night – including advertising of service*
Estimated Timeframe:	*Minimal*
Action Steps:	*The City could simply test the trolley service for a matter of one summer month and determine if usage of the service is worth the costs.*

Increase Parking Supply – considerations for reference only and not a recommendation

The study has shown that there is parking available in the downtown area even during times of heavy usage. Implementing the recommendations outlined in this study could substantially enhance the current parking experience. In the event that future demand rises to the point where practical capacity is reached and other suggested measures are applied, and the City contemplates the construction of an additional parking structure, the following factors should be taken into account:

- Location of garage - If a multistory parking garage is considered, a key location would be in the direct vicinity of the St. Charles City Hall building. This parking lot is nearby popular destinations which include The Arcada Theater and other popular restaurants which attract significant nighttime traffic on the weekends. The east side of the river also has 773 fewer parking public parking spaces than the west side river. When determining locations, consideration should be given to walking distance tolerances, with typical ranges of 200 to 300 feet for shoppers, visitors, and restaurant patrons, 500 to 800 feet for downtown employees, and 1,500 to 2,000 feet for special event patrons from parking to their primary destination.

- Typical Site Requirements - Optimal parking structures are characterized by large, rectangular sites. While flat terrains are usually more cost-effective for development, sloped areas present design possibilities, such as multi-level access without the need for ramps. Considering the downtown St. Charles topography and the scarcity of available land parcels, constructing a multi-level access garage appears to be the most practical choice for the city.

- Capacity and dimensions of garage – The size of a proposed parking garage is largely dependent on available land. At a minimum, a garage should be three stories with about 50 spaces per level, giving a total of 150 spaces. Although parking garages can be custom designed to fit most sites of adequate size, in general, the minimum footprint dimensions for an “efficient parking garage” is approximately 125 ft x 300 ft. Given that there are often available land constraints in downtowns, parking garages can still be designed smaller however are typically at least 90 ft x 160 ft. The approximate dimensions of the existing parking garages are below for comparison:
    - Five-Story Parking Garage on South First Street (Lot I) – 122 ft x 400 ft - 429 parking spaces
    - Three-Story Parking Garage on South Second Ave (Lot S) – 85 ft x 185 ft - 78 parking spaces
    - Two-Story Parking Garage on First Street and Illinois Street (Lot Z) – 60 ft x 280 ft – 106 parking spaces)

- Garage costs – The cost to build a parking garage can vary widely depending on various factors such as location, size, design, construction materials, and current labor costs. A rough estimate for a parking garage is about $25,000 to $35,000 per parking stall. However, this is a general range, and costs can be higher or lower based on specific project details. When evaluating the need and type of parking garage, the City should also consider the annual maintenance costs. Generally, maintenance costs can range from $1,500 to $3,000 per parking space per year depending on factors such as the size of the garage, its age, design complexity, location, and the level of wear and tear. This estimate includes routine maintenance tasks such as cleaning, lighting, signage, security, and repairs to structural or mechanical components.