

# Los Angeles Downtown Parking Management Ordinance Implementation Project

## Problem Statement



**CRA/LA**

*Building communities with jobs & housing*



ENGINEERS  
PLANNERS  
ECONOMISTS

Wilbur Smith Associates

in association with

Michael R. Kodama Planning Consultants  
Urban Solutions, LLC  
Kumamoto Associates  
Rick Williams Consulting  
Richard Willson Ph.D AICP

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## **BACKGROUND**

The Downtown Parking Management Ordinance Implementation Project is intended to guide the development, adoption, and implementation of new Downtown parking policies and programs. A key objective of the project will be a broad parking policy framework that will supersede the more narrowly focused Peripheral Parking Policy. The Peripheral Parking Policy (PPP) was adopted by the Community Redevelopment Agency in 1981. Its intent was to limit the traffic impacts of new major office building development in the Downtown by limiting the amount of parking which could be provided on-site, and requiring the provision of off-site parking outside or peripheral to a designated Downtown traffic impact zone.

The PPP, which is discussed in more detail in this report, has not been particularly effective. One reason for this is that there has not been a significant economic demand for new major office buildings in the Downtown. Instead, the Downtown is experiencing unprecedented levels of residential development, accompanied by service and entertainment oriented retail commercial development. These development activities are creating parking needs and related parking problems that were never envisioned at the time the PPP was created, when there was clearly a surplus of available parking outside of the office core area of Downtown. Those districts outside of the core office areas in the Financial District, Bunker Hill, and the Civic Center, have emerged as unique subareas of the Downtown with their own special character and economic vitality. Little Tokyo, the Historic Core, the Fashion District and South Park have their own localized parking problems and issues.

The new parking policy framework that will result from this project will help shape key initial implementing ordinances and programs to better manage off- and on-street parking. The parking policy framework is also intended to lend support and help coordinate stakeholder initiatives and demonstration projects that can address special parking needs in specific local areas.

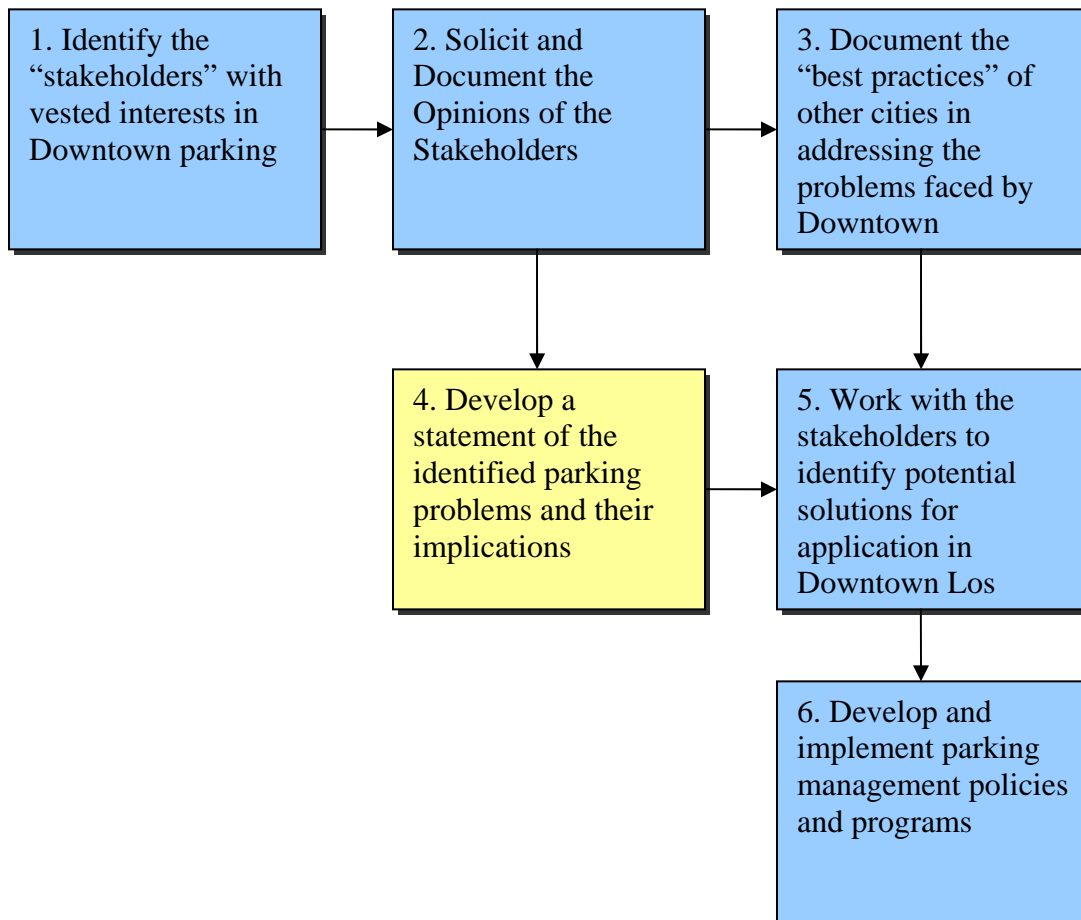
The project will strive for balance, help create a more user-friendly Downtown with enough parking where it is truly needed, and provide increased parking visibility and access, while also making effective use of alternatives to parking and improving Downtown's overall quality of life.

## **PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to document, analyze and synthesize the findings of the project to date in terms of the current and historical characteristics of parking in the Downtown and the issues and problems related to parking that have emerged through the study process. The findings of this report are based on information gathered from interviews with the stakeholders, from the first public meeting and workshop, and from a review of past parking and planning study efforts of the Downtown area.

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This report is a key element in the stakeholder driven study process outlined below. This report summarizes the work identified as step 4 in the process diagram: “Develop a statement of the identified parking problems and their implications.”



This report is the companion document to two other reports, which have been prepared:

1. ***“SUMMARY REPORT ON STAKEHOLDER CONCERNS AND ATTITUDES ON DOWNTOWN PARKING ISSUES”*** – This report provides a summary of the results of the stakeholder outreach effort as indicated in steps 1 and 2 of the process diagram above.
2. ***“BEST PRACTICES” IN PARKING MANAGEMENT*** – This report provides information regarding the “Best Practices” of other cities and jurisdictions in addressing the types of parking problems that have been identified in Downtown Los Angeles as indicated in step 3 of the process diagram.

These reports are available for viewing on the project website which can be accessed via the CRA-LA website:

<http://www.crala.org>

# DOWNTOWN PARKING MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT

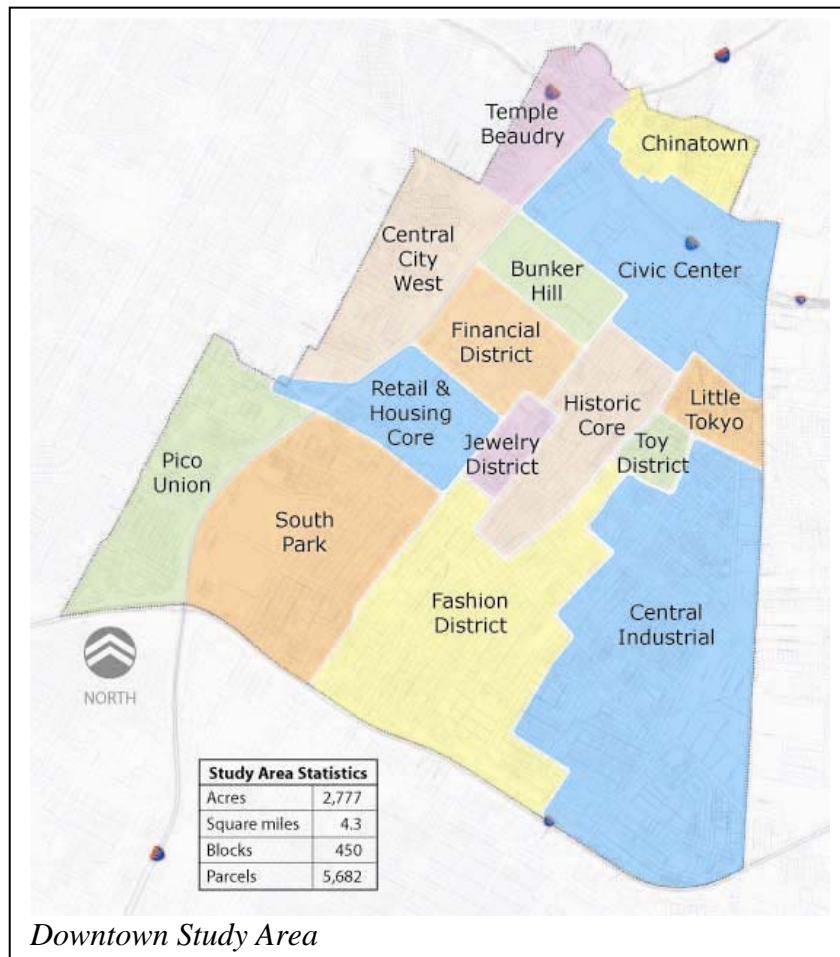
or directly via:

<http://www.wilbursmith.com/westernwsa/CRA-LA/Index.htm>.

## PROJECT STUDY AREA

The study area for this project is shown below. It is the area bounded on the east by Alameda Street, and the south by the Santa Monica Freeway. On the north it extends north of the Santa Ana freeway to include all of the Civic Center and the southern portion of Chinatown. On the west it extends west of Harbor Freeway to include Central City West, and the Temple Beaudry and Pico-Union areas. The study area includes the following districts or subareas:

- Historic Core
- Chinatown
- Little Tokyo
- Financial District
- Pico-Union and Westlake
- South Park
- Jewelry District
- Central Industrial
- Bunker Hill
- Central City West
- Temple-Beaudry
- Civic Center
- Housing and Retail Core
- Fashion District
- Toy District



## PROBLEM STATEMENT

This discussion is based upon the information gathered through the review of existing and previous parking and parking related studies for the Downtown Los Angeles study area, as well as from the stakeholder outreach process that is being conducted as part of the study. This information has been reviewed and assembled to provide a formal problem statement, which will help to guide the development of new parking policies, programs, and projects as this project proceeds.

### Regional Context

From the regional viewpoint there are important Downtown transportation/land use characteristics and trends that are perhaps best viewed distinctly in terms of “issues” and potential “opportunities” in terms of their relationship to parking.

### Transportation

#### A. Issues

1. Congestion on the regional freeway system is growing, placing the Los Angeles area as the most congested in the country according to the SCAG “2004 State of the Region Report.” Being at the center of the regional freeway system also puts Downtown at the center of much of the congestion. A large portion of this congestion is generated by regional through-traffic not destined for Downtown, but threatens to constrict regional access for Downtown commerce and residents.
2. The freeway system is rapidly aging. Some of the oldest parts are Downtown and will need to be replaced and reconstructed in the near future.
3. Urban rail system expansion is hobbled by various imposed sanctions on subway construction and by Federal and State funding availability.
4. The quality of the City’s arterial street system, particularly pavement integrity, has been declining rapidly. There are not sufficient funds to properly maintain the existing system.
5. Downtown’s older streets are often very difficult for modern tractor-trailer trucks to negotiate and the Downtown lacks systematic, logistics-friendly truck loading accommodations in many areas for both commercial and parcel delivery and for industrial commerce.
6. Transit bus operations Downtown increasingly consume a highly disproportionate amount of overall bus route travel times while providing very low service speeds to transit users. Downtown street congestion, a confusing route structure, and a lack of a system of broad transit expediting measures combine to degrade the overall quality of Downtown transit circulation.

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### B. Opportunities and Potentials

1. Regional freeway congestion notwithstanding, Downtown's location offers more unique and valuable opportunities to exploit available freeway capacities and attractive travel times than any other location in the region.
2. At present, Downtown's street system has been able to maintain and operate with relatively high service levels that could accommodate, with careful planning and aggressive demand management, significant additional growth.
3. The May 2002 "Downtown Los Angeles Cordon Count" recorded 26% of the total trips entering or leaving the Downtown as being on transit, as compared with 22% in 1990. This was the highest level of recorded transit use since 1984.
4. Urban rail transit expansion continues to be planned and advocated for, as it is the region's best opportunity to add personal travel capacity. Urban rail system investments will likely continue to center on Downtown in order to achieve the highest incremental gains in productivity and passenger satisfaction.
5. Regional commuter rail (Metrolink) continues to gather support and show considerable potential for expansion, limited primarily by increasingly constrained regional railroad infrastructure capacities. Downtown is the primary beneficiary of the commuter rail system and will likely continue to benefit from expansions and increases in service. Growing interconnections with other commuter rail systems, such as San Diego's, help compensate for reductions in Federal allocations for Amtrak needs and potentials.
6. The long-planned State High Speed Rail network would be centered on Downtown and would give Downtown a large role in sustainable Statewide transportation. State financial and political uncertainties continue to cloud the network's timetable, but the growing evidence of the enormous benefit the system would have to the State makes its eventuality increasingly certain.

### Land Use Context

#### A. Issues

1. Parking lots and areas that could be used for parking to support surrounding properties are in danger of rapidly disappearing into development before these properties can make arrangements for their own long-term needs.
2. The need for additional parking tends to be most acute in areas where land cost and site availability makes it the most expensive to provide, hence, often not the most attractive business opportunity for private sector parking providers. Available parking capacities and site areas are typically not where demand is inclined to take advantage of it.
3. Legacy building stock undergoing adaptive re-use, particularly to residential use, typically needs the assurance of resident parking supply in areas where it can be the most difficult to provide and, unless done with care, disruptive to neighborhood quality.

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4. Present-day Downtown parking prices typically do not support long-term “best solution” structured and sub-surface parking solutions. As a result, both parking accommodations and land development is forced to be less “forward compatible,” conflicting with Downtown’s ultimate long-term potentials.
5. The converging effects of continued adaptive re-use development with emerging new commercial and residential construction would ideally spur the development of a broader range of uses and services to enhance the amenity of living and working Downtown. However, many retail and service uses have challenging parking needs and, coming later in the development process, could find that their accommodation is severely limited.
6. No one particular entity is chartered to oversee the breadth of access and parking needs and empowered to take timely measures to respond to the evolving needs of tenants, property owners and desirable development.
7. Effective stewardship of the broader, overall realm of Downtown land uses and development needs has not yet been fully realized. Redevelopment project area powers, though potentially significant, presently still have significant constraints and contingencies.
8. Downtown has a number of unique social externalities, most particularly a very large homeless population, that seriously impact portions of the Downtown environment. Stakeholders have expressed a real perception of fear for personal safety in public access areas, along pedestrian ways and for other types of land uses—such as parking—where surveillance and control is more difficult.
9. With the development of the stock of existing surface parking lots and the potential removal of the Peripheral Parking Policy there is a need to consider appropriate replacement parking policies. These policies would help to replace lost public parking stock when new residential, commercial, office and industrial uses are developed.

### B. Opportunities and Potentials

1. Downtown retains the greatest concentration of diversified, high-quality commercial office space in the region. Downtown is also host to the largest concentration of government office space in the western United States.
2. Continuing land use regulatory reform is likely to continue to open up new opportunities for higher-density re-use, re-positioning of Downtown property and land assets.
3. Downtown’s context appears to be uniquely receptive to a broad range of emerging higher-density land use types, such as high-rise residential, varieties of mixed-use, live-work, high-end entertainment, and specialty industrial (such as jewelry making, custom furnishings and fixtures). This could enable Downtown to emerge as a leading urban incubator for innovative, synergistic land use development.

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4. Downtown is home to the region's largest inventory of remarkable historic properties and districts, including the largest concentration of historic theaters outside of New York. Many of these properties have been greatly under-used and unappreciated by market trends that now show signs of re-alignment. Successful revitalization of these properties will further aid the expansion of Downtown's place recognition and venue value.
5. Downtown has developed highly effective business advocacy and district improvement organizations that are instrumental in developing consensus around important issues and implementing initiatives.
6. The emergence of a resident population Downtown is providing a potentially powerful market stimulus to realize previously under-valued Downtown potentials, such as:
  - i. Economic re-use of unique historic properties;
  - ii. Evening dining and entertainment;
  - iii. Convenience and specialty retail—including merchandising that combines regional and local market support; and
  - iv. Renewed interest in neglected street-level frontages and other pedestrian-oriented property assets.
7. Downtown's growing resident population has aggressively moved to organize and begin operation of Neighborhood Councils, quickly creating another base of advocacy for the improvement of Downtown. Although not initially allied with business advocacy interests, the prospect that these two bases of advocacy could eventually develop a framework for collaboration on mutually shared objectives could create a uniquely pro-active force for Downtown land use enhancement and neighborhood development.
8. With the swift development now underway in Downtown a unique window now exists prior to full development of the remaining surface parking lots to develop an appropriate replacement parking policy when new development is proposed.

### **Downtown Study Area**

There are a number of problems and issues in the Downtown study area that were identified by the stakeholders. The problems and issues have been grouped into these major topic areas. These topic areas are consistent with those identified in the "Best Practices" report, making it possible to essentially match the problems identified here with the types of solutions which have been tested elsewhere. The topics are:

- On-Street Parking
- Off-Street Parking
- Downtown Parking Environment
- Parking Management Organizational Structure

## On-Street Parking

The on-street parking supply is generally very heavily used. There are a number of problems observed by members of the Wilbur Smith Associates (WSA) project team and reported by the stakeholders:

- **Inappropriate time limits** – Based on reports by business owners and interests, there are many areas where the posted legal parking time limit is not well coordinated with the current types of uses and activities along the street front.
- **Pricing** – Parking meter rates have remained unchanged for many years. As a result the cost of parking on-street is considerably less than the cost of the nearby off-street parking. As a result the on-street spaces are nearly always full and subject to abuse by employees and other long-term parkers who are willing to move their cars or feed the meters to avoid tickets. The relative value of the revenue collected from the meters to the City has declined over time, making it less and less important for the City to devote effort to maintain the meters. The meters are also subject to practical limits of coin capacity in terms of how high the parking fees can be increased.
- **Increased perception of fear for personal safety** - Numerous stakeholders complained of confrontations by panhandlers as they try to park or put money in a parking meter Downtown. They report that meter tampering is common.
- **Limited truck loading/delivery space** – Many Downtown blocks do not have any curb areas designated for loading and deliveries. Older buildings often lack any sort of off-street loading. Many new buildings, particularly residential buildings lack loading areas for use by tenants and delivery vehicles. Double-parking of trucks is common and contributes to traffic congestion on Downtown streets.
- **Limited Taxi Zones** – There are a limited number of taxi zones in the Downtown and taxis are not allowed to pick up hailing customers outside of formal taxi zones. The CCA is in discussions with the taxi operators to increase the number of taxi zones and legislation is being considered to allow customers to hail taxicabs Downtown. Many taxi drivers are not interested in accepting short fares within the Downtown.
- **Building Security** – The 9/11 incident has prompted the owners of many larger “signature” high rise buildings such as Arco Plaza, Library Tower to limit curb access for loading, taxis, etc on the curb areas around these buildings to eliminate opportunity for an uncontrolled vehicle to park close to the building.
- **Abuse and monopolizing of parking spaces by vendors** – Particularly in the Fashion District, vendors will occupy metered parking stalls with their carts or trailers for the entire day. On one block of the Fashion District a survey showed that vendors occupied 40 out of 70 curb parking spaces.
- **Limited on-street parking** – the presence of tow-away zones, red zones, bus stops, and other special curb designations results in some areas where there is little or no-curb parking.

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- **Enforcement** – There is the perception by business owners that the enforcement of on-street parking is too aggressive and not customer friendly.
- **Broken parking meters** – Parking meters are often in a poor state of repair, as observed in many areas, apparently due to a combination of vandalism and aged equipment. They attract a criminal element; either in intimidating would be parkers to turn over their change or in pilfering coins from the meters. New on-street technologies such as pay-and-display machines can help address this problem but require a substantial up-front investment.
- **ADA parking violations** – Many on-street parking spaces are occupied all day by vehicles displaying handicapped parking placards. Abuse and misuse of these placards is a problem throughout the state.
- **Construction Parking** – Inappropriate use of on-street parking by construction workers and equipment is an inconvenience. The City is not vigilant in regulating this activity.
- **Distribution of Revenue** – All parking meter revenue goes into a citywide fund, the Special Parking Revenue Fund. Historically the Downtown has generated much more revenue than that which has been returned through the fund to make parking improvements, while other areas of the city have benefited from this source of revenue. There is little incentive to increase parking rates in Downtown, if those revenues will flow to other areas of the City.

### Off-Street Parking

Most of the off-street parking, parking lots and parking structures, which is open for public use in the Downtown study area is privately owned and operated. Nevertheless, there are a few publicly owned parking facilities that are open to the public, such as Pershing Square, the Broadway-Spring, 6<sup>th</sup> and Main, and Bamboo Plaza. There is also a significant supply of parking owned and managed by City, County, State and Federal agencies. However, this parking is not open for public use in that it is restricted to use by the employees and visitors of these agencies, as well as for the storage and maintenance of their vehicle fleets. The types of off-street parking problems that have been identified include:

- **Signing/Information for Off-Street Parking** – There were many reports from the stakeholders that the current signing at parking lots and structures is confusing and there is no wayfinding or parking information available. It is not clear to motorists how much they will pay or even whether they can park in many facilities. Many of the signs appear to be purposely misleading with regard to pricing. The existing ordinance that governs the types of information and the size of the lettering on parking signs is not actively enforced by the City. The Central City Association is in the process of implementing a wayfinding signage project that should help to address the problem. The Los Angeles City Center Business Improvement District (BID) has an interactive Downtown map on its website that shows the location of major parking facilities. Staples Center has an internet based parking map and offers pre-paid parking in specific facilities for events as well as a guide to other parking in the area. There is no one-stop source for parking information. The BIDs could play a significant role in this area.

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- **Parking for Public Agencies/Buildings** – The City, County, State, and Federal agencies all have various buildings Downtown, many of which have their own on-site parking or they control other off-site parking (leased or owned). It is typical that these buildings do not have enough parking to meet all their parking demands; in particular they do not have enough parking for their employees. There is also little coordination between agencies as to potentials for sharing parking facilities and other arrangements that would foster more efficient operations. This is a complex problem because there are serious building security and safety issues involved. There are agreements with the employee organizations and groups as to parking availability and price that must be honored, and there are vehicle fleets and pools which must be maintained and operated.
- **Public Off-Street Parking** – Of the few publicly owned public parking facilities in the Downtown there is a perception of underutilization and other management concerns. For example, several stakeholders thought that the Pershing Square Garage should be operated to be a more attractive place for Downtown customers and visitors to park. It was also noted that several of the public owned garages experienced negative cash flow in their early years, which resulted in reducing parking fees to attract more demand. This in turn undercut the operations of nearby private parking facilities.
- **Hours and Days of Operation** – Many parking facilities are closed on evenings and weekends. Thus, while there appears to be an ample supply of parking available, the evening or weekend user is actually confronted with a limited choice of options. As the Downtown continues its “paradigm shift” from a day time commuter oriented environment to a true 24 hour/7 day a week activity center, the need for more evening and weekend parking will increase. During this period of transition, the demand for this type of parking in many areas is not sufficient to justify the cost of keeping the parking open. Many buildings with parking were not designed to allow access to the parking during times when the building is closed, posing security problems.
- **Residential Parking** - Many of the new residential projects Downtown do not have adequate on-site parking. Residents must seek parking off-site. Parking operators are confronted with the problem that the parking needs of residents do not mesh well with those of their current commuter, visitor and evening entertainment clientele. Most residents are not willing to pay the market rate price that private operators would want to charge for the parking. As a result, resident stakeholders report that they are finding it difficult to secure suitable parking close to their homes.
- **Employee Parking** – Employee parking from the Civic Center, the Historic Core, Bunker Hill, and the Financial District spills into the surrounding areas such as Little Tokyo, the Toy District and the Fashion District, as employees seek out low cost parking. Some stakeholders also reported that employee parking spills into the adjacent areas of Chinatown, Central City West and Pico Union. These external employee parking demands conflict with the internal parking needs of these areas. For example, parking operators will often find it more lucrative to establish relatively high flat rate prices to attract employees from outside their area, than to try to survive off the local short-term customer parking activity. This limits the parking available for local businesses.

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- **Filming** – Downtown Los Angeles is a valuable filming location resource to the Film Industry. Nearly every weekday one or more filming sessions is staged in the Downtown. The logistics of the filming process require that significant areas be reserved for the film crew vehicles, equipment and staff. Typically this requires the temporary use of off-street parking and/or on-street curb parking. These activities temporarily displace those individuals who would normally use this parking. The film industry is a vital part of the local economy, a key element of the image and identity of Downtown, and a major source of income to both the parking operators and the City. As surface lots are displaced by development and as more and more areas become fully developed, the logistics of filming become more complex and disruptive.
- **Theatre Parking** – A unique feature of Downtown is the burgeoning performing arts theatre district, which is focused on the revitalization of the historic movie theatres and playhouses lining Broadway. These theatres were constructed in a day when parking was not a concern, and they have no dedicated parking of their own. As such, they must rely on nearby off-street parking, most of which is several blocks away. Many off-street facilities in the area are not open evenings and weekends, as they cater to the employee population.
- **Retail Parking/Validation** - Retailers in the Historic Core, the Jewelry District, Chinatown, Little Tokyo and the Fashion District complain that there is a lack of customer oriented parking in these areas. These are unique retail destinations in the region, but they are not able to present the image of convenient parking availability the most other such competing destinations can claim. Many of the off-street facilities are priced with very high hourly rates and are oriented towards the employees and business customers of the area. Many other downtowns address this issue with a parking validation program where the merchants can arrange for discounted parking for their customers. Downtown Los Angeles does not have such a program. Those retail-parking operations that do validate such as Figueroa Mall and Macy's Plaza do not advertise the availability of this parking for fear of abuse.
- **Small Parking Lot Owners** – The majority of the private off-street parking facilities in Downtown are operated by a few firms specializing in the parking industry. However, there are also a number of parking lots that are owned/operated by smaller companies. In some cases an owner/operator may have only one lot Downtown. The large numbers of owners and operators makes oversight of parking operations very difficult, and complex regulations and requirements can pose a burden on the small operator.

### Downtown Parking Environment

The way in which parking is provided has a major impact on the urban environment and streetscape. Downtown Los Angeles is typified by many surface parking lots and older above-grade and subterranean parking structures. The stakeholders have noted that security is a critical concern for them particularly during evening hours and on weekends. Comments have included a need for more and better lighting and for more active streetscapes with less dead space. Major issues include:

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- **Security** - While the streets in many parts of the Downtown are now busy with pedestrian activity late into the evenings, there are still many areas of the Downtown where it is not comfortable to walk at night. These areas are often where the large supplies of surface parking and older parking structures exist. Downtown residents report that transients use some surface lots as evening gathering places.
- **Parking Amenities** – The stakeholders reported that the quality of the lighting, the visual appearance, and other user-friendly amenities are lacking in many off-street facilities. These complaints include both the older parking lots/structures and in some cases facilities which have been recently constructed. The primary complaints relate to confusing parking layouts, a perceived lack of security, and difficulty in maneuvering through the structures and in and out of the parking stalls.
- **Security** – The Downtown’s large homeless and transient population that has become interspersed with a growing criminal element poses a major security challenge that discourages many from spending time on Downtown streets. Creative solutions are needed.
- **Transit Services** – The DASH shuttles and other Downtown transit services do not operate late into the evenings and have reduced weekend schedules that limit their convenience for Downtown users. The shuttle routes are limited in nature and do not cover the entire Downtown area. The LADOT is committed to a comprehensive study of the DASH system over the next year, and the MTA is also conducting a regional bus operations study, which will include a new routing, and circulation pattern for the bus routes in Downtown.
- **Walkable Streets** – Many blocks of the Downtown lack active evening uses and are typified by vacant or closed office and commercial spaces or space devoted to surface parking or parking structures. These blocks are not supportive of a walkable Downtown and discourage evening and weekend visits to the Downtown. Sidewalks are a vital part of the transportation network, but currently there is little funding available to address the need to improve sidewalks and streetscapes. Walkability programs, such as the one implemented in Old Town Pasadena, need to be considered.
- **Neighborhood Garages** – Many of the older areas of the downtown lack conveniently located parking that is priced for short-term customers and residents. Walkability could be encouraged by developing existing parking facilities or creating new parking that is designed to serve as a local resource for residential and commercial parking. Other cities such as Santa Monica have used a public/private partnership approach to successfully develop this type of parking.
- **One-Way Streets** – While the grid of one-way streets helps to maximize the vehicular capacity of Downtown streets, many motorists find one-way streets confusing. As noted earlier, the MTA is currently developing a revised bus service plan for the Downtown, and is working with the LADOT to explore the notion of eliminating some of the one-way street pairs Downtown and converting them to two-way streets.
- **Downtown Diversity** – This study defines 13 districts that make up the Downtown study area. In reality these districts can be broken into an even finer scale of local communities

and neighborhoods, each of which has its unique characteristics. It is difficult for any one agency or organization to comprehend the special needs of these districts. As a result many customers, business owners, residents, employees, and property owners feel that there is no where to turn to get effective resolution of their parking concerns. Currently the best resource for them are the BIDs, however, the BIDs do not have the resources or in some cases the authority to take on these problems themselves.

### Existing Parking Management Organizational Structure

Currently the management of parking in the Downtown is fragmented amongst a variety of public and private entities. There is not a clear single source of authority and direction in terms of the overall goals and policies for the management of parking in the Downtown. Some of the primary issues relative to the organizational structure of parking management are as follows:

- **Peripheral Parking** - The Peripheral Parking Policy (PPP), which was developed in 1981, was intended to address concerns that Downtown commercial development would create significant congestion on the circulation system in the Downtown. At that time numerous very large office buildings were being proposed for development Downtown, and there was an expectation that extreme traffic congestion might result. It requires that developers of new office buildings of over 1.5 million square feet within the designated “traffic impact zone” to provide at least 40 percent of their code required parking at a remote off-site location where new shuttle services or existing transit lines could provide a linkage to the Downtown destination. No more than 60 percent of the code required parking could be provided on-site, and all the remainder would have to be provided off-site. The traffic impact zone was the area bounded by the Hollywood Freeway, Main Street, Olympic Boulevard, and the Harbor Freeway. Only a few projects were actually developed under the provisions of the PPP. One of the most notable was the Gas Company Tower Building. This project involved a remote parking structure that was constructed at 17th Street and Grand Avenue. This structure was never heavily utilized and the shuttle services have proved very expensive to operate. Other projects that entered into Owner Participation Agreements under the PPP include the R & T, and Home Savings Tower buildings.

The anticipated major influx of new Downtown office and commercial projects that precipitated the implementation of the PPP did not occur. Now, over 20 years later, there is a general consensus that the policy is obsolete. In reality the PPP was never truly tested, as economic forces halted the development of major new commercial office development shortly after the PPP was adopted; a condition that continues today. The PPP does not address the fact that most of the new development Downtown has been residential and entertainment oriented.

- **Travel Demand Management (TDM)** - While the PPP clearly did not work, the Travel Demand Management (TDM) programs that were made part of the PPP were very successful. In many cases, such as the 801 South Figueroa Building, the on-site parking component of 0.6 spaces per 1,000 square feet proved to be enough to support the needs of the building with the help of ridesharing and transit incentives. Incentives to encourage developers to pursue TDM programs should be considered as part of any new

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ordinance to replace the PPP. The demise of the Downtown Transportation Management Organization (TMO) had resulted in reduced ridesharing.

- **Adaptive Reuse** - The Adaptive Reuse Ordinance allows existing buildings constructed prior to 1974 to be renovated and converted or adapted to new uses without being subject to the normal parking code requirements. This ordinance has been successful in stimulating reuse of a number of older commercial buildings in the Downtown. Office buildings have been converted to new residential units. In one case an old parking structure was converted into a residential project. Under the ordinance, an adaptive reuse of an existing building is only required to provide as many parking spaces as existed on the site as of June 3, 1999, which for many buildings is a zero parking requirement. Because many of the older buildings do not have any on-site parking (or just a limited supply), they are not self sustaining in terms of parking. This creates an off-site demand for residential parking, which must be met through use of the existing parking supply. During the process of interviewing the stakeholders, Downtown residents reported difficulty in finding available and affordable parking to address this need. Despite this issue, the development of housing in the Downtown has very positive impacts on overall transportation. Many Downtown residents also work Downtown or work at a location served by public transit. However, those residents that own cars, which must be parked off-site, are creating a new dynamic in the Downtown-parking problem. They are competing with employees, customers, and visitors for a supply of parking that is declining as new development occurs. Developers of adaptive reuse and in-fill projects must also deal with the need to secure financing for their projects, with the stipulation that they provide or secure enough parking to satisfy the lenders that their project is viable. To this end to ability to secure parking off-site is important and should be supported by the parking zoning ordinances.
- **Replacement Parking** – Many of the new developments Downtown are occurring on parcels currently devoted to private surface parking lots. These lots serve the parking needs of other existing land uses in the area, many of which have no parking of their own. Currently there is no provision in the zoning codes or other development requirements for projects in Downtown to address the issue of replacement parking in the case where the project displaces existing on-site parking. The result is that the new development has the effect of reducing the overall parking supply and reducing the availability of parking for the existing land uses, potentially impacting their economic viability. In some cases the CRA-LA or other city agencies have intervened and required the developer to provide replacement parking or they have used public funds to replace the parking in cooperation with the developer. These are unusual cases and do not represent the normal practice, where no replacement parking is provided. Requiring developers to provide the replacement parking would pose a significant financial burden in most cases as the surface parking would have to be replaced by much more costly structured parking. There also may not be a legally sound basis to support the imposition of a replacement-parking requirement on new development. The added cost of replacement parking could prove to be a major disincentive to new development. However, this is a window of opportunity within which government agencies have a chance to create a replacement parking policy before the existing surface parking stock is

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largely displaced. One way to overcome the resistance of developers to provide replacement parking would be to provide incentives in terms of development densities which would help to offset the increased project costs. It is important to note that from a long-term land use planning perspective, surface parking is viewed as an interim use. However, the transition from an environment of ample low cost surface parking to one of limited, higher price structured parking can be difficult for existing property owners, businesses, costumers, and residents. From a land use and economic development standpoint the conversion of surface parking to new development is a very positive sign, and in the long run will result in a more vital, active Downtown.

- **Land Prices/Parking Economics** – Historically the value of land in Downtown Los Angeles was very low, particularly given the vast size of the metropolitan area. These low land values are one reason that so much land was devoted to parking. In recent years, however, the demand for housing and entertainment oriented uses Downtown has spawned an increase in land values. The parking lot operators and owners report that land values in most areas of the Downtown study area have increased to the point where the development of new surface parking lots can no longer be economically justified. Almost all new parking construction is in the form of structured parking, typically costing between \$15,000 and \$30,000 per space to build. Land costs can add \$5,000 to \$15,000 per space. At these prices parking operators must earn \$250 to \$450 per space per month just to cover the costs of the parking investment. These costs are well above the current market rates for parking in most areas of the Downtown. The result is that for the most part private interests are not willing to develop new parking as a business venture in itself. The new parking that is built is part of a planned development and is funded as part of the total financial package for the project, meaning that the parking is subsidized. A solution to this problem is for the public sector to intervene and construct the new parking. However, this approach requires that the public sector absorb several years of operating losses to subsidize the parking until market conditions catch up with the economic costs of the parking.
- **Parking Information/Customer Relations** – Cities with successful parking management programs invest the funds and resources to create and maintain a database of parking information. The trend is for these systems to be developed as interactive internet based tools which provide information for parking users, support decisions about where and when to provide new parking, support efforts to manage the parking supply in terms of time restrictions and parking rates, monitor and guide enforcement activities, and manage maintenance programs. There is no single, up to date, reliable source of parking information for Downtown Los Angeles.

A comprehensive parking information system can also be the foundation for a interactive parking information internet based system which can provide customers with parking information, access to reservations, permit purchases, and other activities. Such “Smart Parking Programs” have been implemented successfully in San Jose and Minneapolis.

- **Special Parking Revenue Fund (SPRF)** - Many cities such as San Francisco, Sacramento, San Jose, and Portland have a mechanism to return all or some of their parking system revenues back to the parking program to fund parking improvements and

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related programs. In Los Angeles the parking meter revenues go into the Special Parking Revenue Fund (SPRF). Revenues from the off-street facilities constructed through the SPRF also go into the fund. The SPRF is a citywide program used to construct and develop new off-street parking facilities and to maintain and operate the parking meter system. Because of the citywide nature of the program, its benefits for the Downtown area have been limited. The ultimate decision as to where the money is invested is made at the City Council level, which, because of the district orientation of the council results in the use of the funds being dispersed over the districts, often without full consideration of where the funds were originally generated. Thus, while the Downtown area generates considerable funds for the SPRF, it has not benefited substantially in terms of new parking construction. The SPRF can only be used to develop new parking or to maintain/improve the existing metered parking system.

- **Parking Requirements for New Development** – The current process for review and approval of new development projects is relatively simple for those projects which are able to satisfy the code requirements using on-site parking and/or parking covenants. The process is more onerous for those projects that involve a request for a parking variance. To help expedite the process, each Council District offers assistance in guiding the project through the review system.
- **Overall Authority** – When an individual or entity has a problem or concern about parking it is often not clear where they should go to best voice their complaint or request. The result is that the Council District offices end up handling many of these requests. The Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) also end up serving as a sounding board for many parking issues, but they have no authority over the parking in their boundaries.
- **Overlapping Responsibilities** – The current structure for the management of parking involves numerous agencies many with a realm of authority that overlaps with those of other agencies. The result is a confusing myriad of bureaucracy. Redefining the roles of these existing agencies to eliminate overlaps and create a sense of purpose would go a long way towards addressing the current organizational problems.
- **Publicly Owned Parking** – Various agencies of City, County, State, and Federal government all own and operate parking in the Downtown area. Much of this parking is part of the parking supply for individual public buildings, accommodating employees, visitors, and government owned vehicles. Little of this parking is actually open to the public. Of those parking facilities, which are intended for use by the public, there are also a number of owners. For example the City Parks and Recreation Department owns the Pershing Square Garage. The interest of the Parks and Recreation Department is parks, and not the management of a Downtown parking resource. As a result there is little coordination in the use and management of these significant Downtown-parking resources.
- **Program Goals and Objectives/Access to Parking** – The overall goals and objectives for parking management in the Downtown are not well defined. It is not clear where the authority for establishing and implementing these goals lies. Various agencies such as the MTA, LADOT, CRA-LA, and the Department of City Planning have specific responsibilities in the area of parking, but the extent of their overall authority is unclear.

Transit is established as a vital element of the Downtown transportation network, particularly for employees. The cost of new parking is making it more difficult to accommodate the needs of employees, while trying to provide sufficient parking for customers and visitors as well as for the growing residential population. Other major cities have had the ability to implement policies that encourage transit use and create appropriate priorities for parking access. For example, San Francisco has a “Transit First” policy which is supported through mandated parking management programs which limit the amount of employee parking and encourage the available parking to be available for short-term visitors and customers.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT SUMMARY**

The parking problems of the Downtown Los Angeles study area are numerous and complex in scope. The following is an attempt to summarize the problems in four broad categories and then to take an initial look at the implications of the problems and the desired results that would be needed to address the issues.

### **1. Optimize the Performance of Street Space**

Downtown needs to significantly upgrade the performance and utility of on-street parking assets, both for a growing range of users and as valuable public and economic space.

- On-street parking, owing to its unique locations, has potential benefits to users, businesses and property owners out of proportion to the relatively small number of spaces in the total parking inventory.
- Because of the low cost of parking on-street it is almost always full, and often abused by employees in-lieu of paying for higher priced off-street parking
- On-street parking is an important resource for delivery of goods and services to buildings. Adequate provisions for commercial vehicle loading and deliveries should be a high priority. Taxi stands, passenger drop-off zones, and valet parking zones are also an effective and efficient use of on-street space.
- On-street parking is the source of almost all of the City’s parking revenue collected in Downtown.
- As such, it is an important and vital economic asset. Other cities use these resources to enrich and support existing and new downtown parking and streetscape initiatives. On-street parking is under-priced almost everywhere--sometimes severely so—owing to parking meter limitations and other factors.
- It is a misconception to think of under-pricing of on-street parking as a user benefit. Under-pricing encourages misuse of the parking resource.
- Under-pricing also deprives the City of critically needed revenues.

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- Downtown stakeholders, already contributing a disproportionate amount of the City’s parking meter revenue might be reluctant to raise rates even higher—unless there is some reasonable and equitable benefit to the areas contributing the revenue.
- New technologies can now promise to make on-street parking more user-friendly, improve parking revenue collections, and significantly enhance the effectiveness of parking enforcement. But these improvements must be supported by strong management and information systems and by significant up front investments.

### **2. Reach Out and Serve Customers and Clients. Assure and Deliver on Quality and Convenience**

Downtown is a unique and highly intense urban environment that needs to do much more in order to be truly “user friendly” in providing, presenting and conveying parking and access options to individual users, businesses and residents.

- The DCBID has made great strides in developing an Internet information interface on parking for visitors.
- The ultimate ideal will be to broker and package parking and access arrangements across modes for the full range of trip makers and Downtown users.
- So many destinations are extraordinarily unique, suggesting customized responses. Examples are the theatres on Broadway, the Civic Center government offices, the Central Library and each of the unique commercial districts such as Little Tokyo, the Toy District, the Jewelry District, and the Fashion District.
- To make the best use of parking resources, it would be desirable to craft shared parking regimes among different facilities in some locations, as well as other creative strategies.
- More convenient parking reservation systems, along with pre-payment options and individualized access account management regimes are examples of CRM that could become business opportunities in themselves—but only if they are broadly shared and quality managed across the breadth of Downtown.
- Access and parking queries should also be looked at as an opportunity to foster broader client/customer relationship management with Downtown’s constituencies.

### **3. Use Parking Management to Support the Economic Growth and Vitality of Downtown**

Downtown needs to substantially improve the forward compatibility of parking and accessibility provisions in new development. Parking and access provisions need to promote an area’s future vitality and opportunities, not limit them to just what is being done today. To avoid compromising Downtown’s potentials, there has to be a commitment to quality planning of facilities and programs today.

- Retrofitting large stand-alone parking structures into urban areas is going to increasingly be a less-than-satisfactory solution. These structures tend to create an area of urban blight all along their footprint.

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- Parking and access facilities can be relatively expensive, long-lived infrastructure. Good planning and design can significantly assist economic growth and quality of life of a local area. The current trend is toward the development of smaller parking integrated into mixed use development rather than the large free-standing parking structures that were commonly developed in the 60s, 70s and the 80s.
- Conventional parking code requirements on a building-by-building basis in old, urban areas can prove too rigid and unworkable. But the need to continually respond and provide for parking and access is still very present and it is essential to find timely, equitable means to address these needs.
- In an increasingly dense, complex urban area, it seems more and more important to look for collective, shared parking solutions among clusters or networks of buildings.
- Waiting until access and parking deficiencies are overwhelmingly apparent and unavoidable often leaves stakeholders with only the most costly and disruptive options.
- Innovations in financing, adaptive facility design or multiple-use strategies can improve the range of feasible options.
- Solutions are needed to accommodate filming and media production, personal/business storage, and freight and parcel logistics in the Downtown.
- Devising a “business plan” to support farsighted, future-oriented actions on accessibility will require both an investment in resources and in careful planning.
- One approach would be to consider crafting a well-managed public/private entity that could be vigilant in monitoring Downtown’s access and parking needs—and then be empowered to work with developers and property owners to take the best available measures for facilities, operations and programs. A second approach would be to better define the roles and responsibilities of the existing agencies to eliminate overlaps and clarify purpose. A third approach would be to empower the individual subareas and districts with the ability to manage and monitor their internal parking resources.

#### **4. Understand, Collaborate and Support Infill, Adaptive Re-Use and Existing Users**

The Downtown needs to considerably expand the options, its responsiveness and the tools available for providing adequate parking and accessibility for legacy properties, adaptive re-use and infill development. These options could include:

- Processes and programs to facilitate collaboration between private property owners on small-scale parking and access concerns.
- Area planning, programming and expert management support to identify and coordinate engagement of broader parking and accessibility deficiencies, as well as respond to the complex needs of special destinations, such as theaters, restaurants and other nighttime entertainment.

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- Financing instruments, incentives to help make the “best practice” solutions possible at all levels.
- Benchmarking to insure consumer trust, high quality presentation, and optimum economic performance.
- Frameworks for public-private partnerships and for public enterprise initiatives where deemed most effective in supporting accessibility and parking needs.

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*Disclaimer – The views and findings presented in this report are those of the consultants and not of the LACMTA, City or CRA.*