CMAP

Wicker Park Bucktown
Innovation in Parking Management
Existing Conditions Report

DRAFT - October 2013

The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) is the region's official comprehensive planning organization. Its GO TO 2040 planning campaign is helping the region's seven counties and 284 communities to implement strategies that address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality-of-life issues.

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See **www.cmap.illinois.gov** for more information.

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Section 1
Introduction

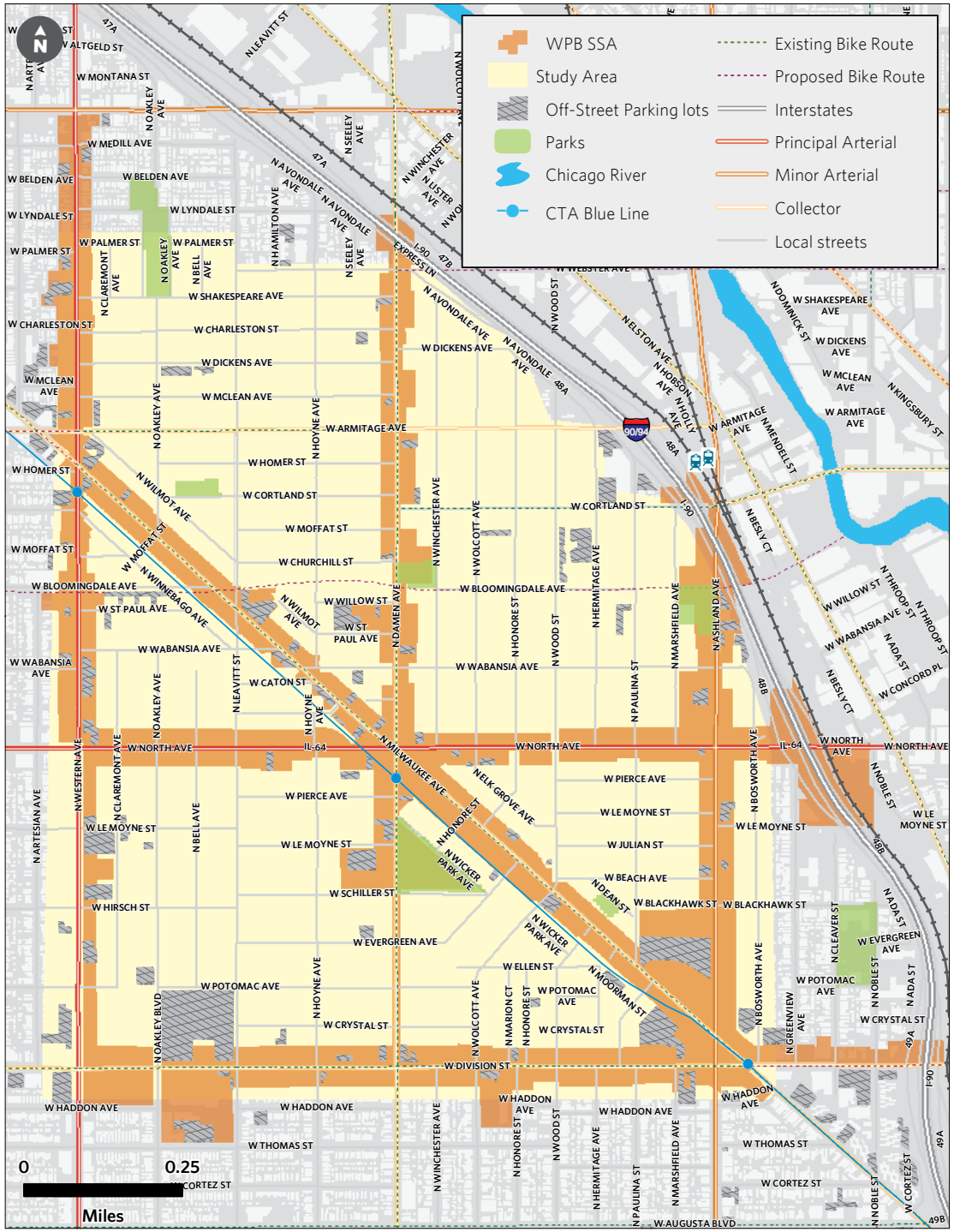
One of the GO TO 2040 plan's central goals is to create livable communities. Livability is primarily created at the local level, through planning and development decisions made by communities, developers, and individuals. While CMAP can help local governments address issues of livability in their communities, development decisions will continue to be made locally.

Purpose of the Existing Conditions Report

The existing conditions report is a critical first step in any planning process – laying the groundwork from which recommendations will ultimately be made. To properly address current parking congestion issues in the Wicker Park and Bucktown (WPB) neighborhoods, it is important to understand how local stakeholders perceive parking. Additionally, having thorough on-the-ground knowledge of the existing supply and parking occupancy rates, as well as general transportation information, will help inform the strategies that are ultimately developed as a result of this research. This report details the findings of the research, data gathered, and interviews conducted over a three-month period. The Existing Conditions Report is organized in the following sections:

- Section 1: Introduction and Project Background
- Section 2: Regional Context
- Section 3: Previous Plans, Studies, and Reports
- Section 4: Community Outreach
- Section 5: Downtown WPB's Transportation Network
- Section 6: Parking in WPB
- Section 7: Planning and Healthy Communities
- Section 8: Looking Forward

Figure 1. WPB Study Area



What is an Innovation in Parking Management Plan?

The Innovation in Parking Management Plan is intended to serve as a guide for aldermen, elected officials, property owners, WPB staff, community residents, business owners, and potential investors. The Plan will assist in making informed administrative and implementation decisions about future efforts to manage parking through a series of recommended policies and actions to target identified parking problems.

Why Does WPB Need a Parking Management Review?

In 2009, the Wicker Park Bucktown Chamber of Commerce/Special Service Area #33 (SSA) adopted a Master Plan with the goal of balancing diverse community needs and supporting local businesses. Many of the recommendations in the plan reference parking and transportation issues in the community.

Building off of the recommendations and goals in the Master Plan, the SSA is partnering with CMAP's Local Technical Assistance (LTA) Program to address parking management. Prioritizing access to the area through multiple transportation options, as well as making parking less complicated and less congested, will serve everyone, including the shopper who wants to park his or her car for a quick errand, the cyclist stopping to meet friends, the visitor out for an exciting evening, or a resident coming home after a long day.

Parking congestion is an indication of a lively neighborhood, but too much congestion can negatively affect businesses and residents alike. To better understand and address the parking challenges in WPB, this plan seeks to identify innovative parking management strategies that would be appropriate for the area and ways to improve overall mobility for residents, workers and visitors.

The WPB SSA is a local taxing district (similar to a Business Improvement District) that works to build and sustain thriving commercial districts, and its coverage only includes parcels along major commercial corridors (Figure 1). The study area for the parking project, however, expands to include the residential streets between the corridors, because parking policies applied in one area of the SSA will impact the neighboring streets. It is important to understand how the entire parking supply works as a system that includes metered streets, free parking spaces, residential permit parking, and loading or standing zones.

How does parking affect a neighborhood?

The supply and management of parking influence the character, form, function and flow of a community. Too little supply can make the area unattractive to potential businesses; mismanaged supply keeps prime spaces full while nearby spaces remain vacant. Too much parking can increase the demand for parking, when more people decide to drive, resulting in increased traffic congestion. An oversupply of surface parking can negatively impact the built environment by creating large gaps between buildings, rendering walking and bicycling unpleasant and unsafe.

WPB, as a neighborhood, has taken a unique stance on neighborhood transportation; through their Master Plan goals and visioning, they decided that they want to prioritize walking, biking, and using transit to get into and around the neighborhood. This is a noble goal, but there are still many people who depend on their cars, and there are some trips that are more difficult to make without a personal automobile. If parking is not managed properly, those who need to drive end up wasting time driving in circles looking for a parking space adding to neighborhood congestion. When parking is properly managed, a good rule of thumb is that one out of every seven parking spaces should be vacant, so that a driver can quickly locate a space when needed.

The WPB neighborhood is densely populated with both homes and businesses. The popularity of the neighborhood's retail and nightlife brings even more cars to the area, and conflicts arise between residents and visitors when neighborhood parking is strained. There are a variety of parking needs on residential streets; there are residents who own cars but do not have garages; there are households with several cars using multiple on-street spaces, and there are households who have garages but park their car on the street while using the garage as storage.

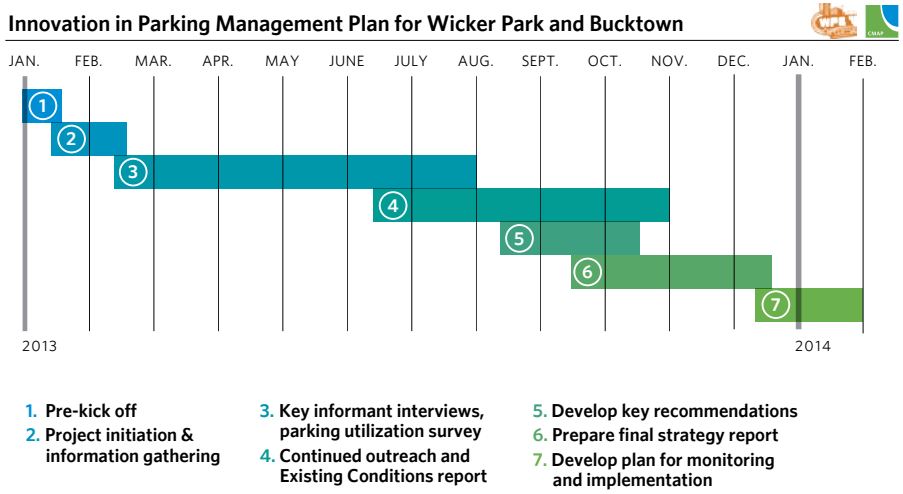
To help local residents park near their house, residential permit programs have emerged as a possible solution. Unfortunately, there is no system in place to keep track of how many spaces are available and how many passes have been sold. Most, though not all, local Aldermen know which streets have permit parking, but don't know the capacity. Annual parking permits are purchased through the Clerk's Office, and there are only six Aldermen in Chicago who sell guest passes at their office. Additionally, guest passes can be used at any time, making it difficult to predict what local events or activities will yield high residential day pass use. When the supply of residential permit parking is at capacity, handing out more permit parking passes does not solve the problem; the passes become merely a "hunting license" allowing cars to circle the block looking for parking.

As communities grow, their parking needs and demands also undergo transformations, requiring different types of parking management. Addressing any parking problems should be part of a comprehensive multi-modal transportation system evaluation. Driving and parking make up just one facet of a community's transportation infrastructure. In an area as well-served by transit as WPB, many people are able to live without cars. The area also has a very active bicycling community; Milwaukee Avenue has seen morning commutes where 40% of the traffic consists of bicycles. Continuing to support the active transportation options helps to reduce the strain on parking while helping residents lead healthier lives.

Planning Process and Next Steps

Steps one through four of the project involve a thorough analysis of the existing conditions within the community using information gathered through one-on-one stakeholder interviews, steering committee meetings, review of previous studies, and collection of maps and data. The results of these steps are presented in this report. Step five will focus on identifying appropriate strategies for WPB's parking management review based on findings from this report and a public workshop, steps six and seven will combine efforts from previous phases to create the parking management plan document containing policies, programs, and action steps recommended to assist WPB in achieving the future vision.

Figure 2. Timeline & Planning Process



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Section 2
Regional Context

This section provides an overview of how WPB fits into the larger Northeastern Illinois region. Having a larger perspective of how the neighborhood has been shaped over time and how it is situated in the region will aid in both the understanding of existing conditions and in identifying potential opportunities or issues that may need to be addressed.

History of Wicker Park and Bucktown

As detailed in the 2009 Master Plan, the Wicker Park Bucktown area has a rich history that largely follows the patterns of immigrant working families, pre-dating the Great Fire of 1871. Rebuilding the area after the fire, many Scandinavians and Germans built large stone and brick mansions, and Polish immigrants established homes and businesses along Division Street. By 1900, the retail area was well-established with goods and services to meet the needs of area residents.

By the 1930s, the Germans and Scandinavians continued their migration northwest and the area became more heavily Polish. Like many parts of Chicago, WPB began to see a decline in the 1950s as families moved further and further from the core of the city, and this decline continued into the 1990s. The thriving and trendy area of Wicker Park Bucktown that we know today was brought back to life by many artists, arts organizations, and gay residents in the 1970s and 1980s, who were attracted to the area's low rents, proximity to transit, underground music and arts scene, and large industrial spaces. These artists and intrepid urban dwellers revitalized the neighborhood, which continues to attract many people because of its walkability, diversity of people and buildings, as well as the rich tradition of arts and culture.

With the increasing number of restaurants, attractions, and shops comes real estate appeal; higher rents and housing costs are making the area less and less affordable for the same residents who brought the area back to life. The influx of wealthier residents has also added to parking woes. While car ownership increased for all households between 1960 and 2000, it increased more significantly for higher income households. Higher income households are more likely to have multiple cars per household. Loss of the economic diversity of the area, with trends shifting upwards, has strained--and will continue to strain--the parking availability in the neighborhood. A recent desire to attract car-free households around transit has resulted in the construction of a 14-story rental condominium building at the corner of Division and Ashland in the southwest corner of WPB, with very limited parking.

Regional Setting

The neighborhood of WPB lies just northwest of downtown Chicago in Cook County (Figure 3). The northeast boundary is formed by Interstate 90/94. The major east-west routes are Division Street, North Avenue, and Armitage Avenue. The major north-south routes are Ashland Avenue, Damen Avenue, and Western Avenue. Milwaukee Avenue runs diagonally through the study area, parallel to the CTA Blue Line. There are seven neighborhood parks, the largest of which is Wicker Park.

The area is well-served by transit, with three CTA "L" stations along the Blue Line, 7 CTA bus lines, as well as the Goose Island Express, which has one stop on the edge of the study area. There is a Metra stations on the edge of the study area along Ashland Avenue between Armitage and Cortland, serving the UP- N line and the UP-NW line. The Bloomingdale Trail, a 2.7 mile elevated abandoned rail line, soon to be improved and converted into "The 606" – a greenway for bikers, runners, and residents, runs east west through the area. There are bike lanes along Damen Avenue and Division Street, and "sharrows" along Milwaukee Avenue.

The total population of the area surveyed in WPB is 31,825 in an area of 1.35 square miles. The thriving business district has restaurants, bars, salons, furniture stores, resale and vintage boutiques, banks, clothing stores, niche stores, flower shops, bookstores, and more. The area is popular for its unique local stores, and has national chains as well.

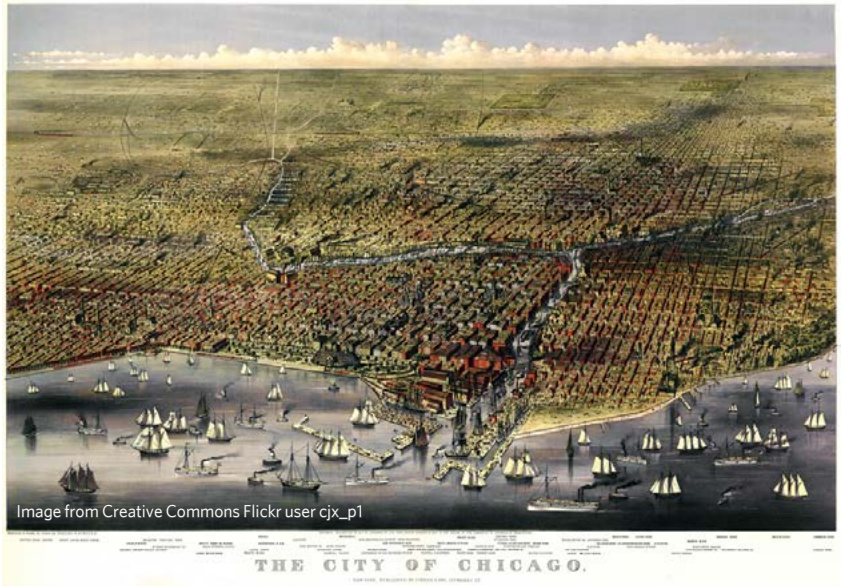
WPB and GO TO 2040

The cumulative choices of local elected officials, residents, and businesses in our region determine quality of life and economic prosperity across our region. With local autonomy over land use comes the responsibility to consider how those decisions shape a community's livability, including how they affect neighboring communities and the region as a whole. The region's long-range comprehensive plan, GO TO 2040, strives to balance the need for local autonomy and regional cooperation. It provides principles that neighborhoods, municipalities, and counties can apply when they decide how and where development should happen or which infrastructure investments to make in their communities. The plan recommends supporting local planning through grant programs, infrastructure investments to implement plans, technical assistance, and collaboration between municipalities on shared priorities.

Of GO TO 2040's four themes – livable communities, human capital, efficient governance, and regional mobility – parking has a direct impact on the livability of our communities and the ability of our region's residents to move around the region. Parking is one of the largest single land uses in our municipalities. Besides encouraging auto use, having a large supply of parking influences the livability of our communities. It can make walking and bicycling unpleasant and unsafe, it adds to flooding and pollution problems, and it makes housing more expensive. At the same time, parking is necessary to support a community's local businesses. By assessing existing parking and finding opportunities to utilize parking more efficiently, WPB is helping the region meet its goals.

One of the central goals of GO TO 2040 is to make our region a better place to live, by directing investment toward policies that strengthen existing communities, and by finding opportunities to encourage new development in livable communities that are walkable and designed for a mix of uses. While CMAP can help communities address the issues of livability in their communities, development decisions will continue to be made locally. The recommendations proposed at the end of this project can only be implemented with the full support of the WPB neighborhoods. The full GO TO 2040 plan, as well as an executive summary, can be found at ***www.cmap.illinois.gov***.

Figure 3. Regional context



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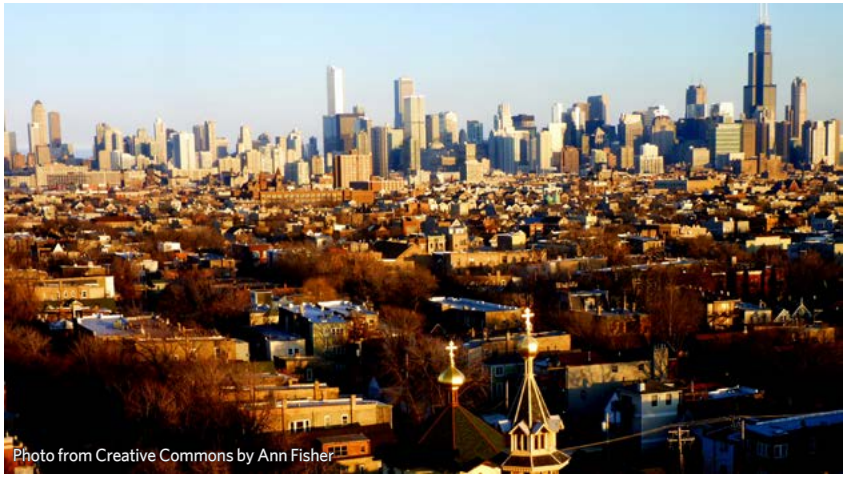


Photo from Creative Commons by Ann Fisher

Photo of Damen Avenue looking north toward North Avenue.

Section 3
Previous Plans, Studies, and Reports

This section provides a summary and analysis of existing plans and the City of Chicago Parking Meter Concession Agreement, which will likely inform and impact the ultimate recommendations of the parking management review. The previous documents have been reviewed to assist in building upon any current or still relevant findings and recommendations.The following plans, studies and reports are reviewed in this section:

- WPB Master Plan for Wicker Park Bucktown SSA (2009)
- City of Chicago Parking Meter Concession Agreement (2008)
- Chicago Pedestrian Plan (2012)
- Chicago Streets for Cycling 2020 (2012)

2009 WPB Master Plan for Wicker Park Bucktown SSA

The WPB Master Plan was an effort to balance the benefits that result from increased prosperity with the desire to preserve local attitude and diversity, while reinforcing local arts, ecology, heritage, affordability, and values. The Master Plan's identified neighborhood values are: "drive less, bike more, buy local, go green, inhabit the sidewalks, indulge in urban eye candy, honor the past, welcome a progressive future, and do so as a unified community." The extensive public outreach process helped to develop a vision of WPB as:

- **Walkable and equally bikeable**. "Where cars take a back seat to those traveling on foot, bicycle, or transit."
- **Fiercely independent in artistic expression**, business ownership, and resident activism. "A distinct and colorful neighborhood...with an emphasis on creativity and locally owned businesses."
- **Experimental and pioneering**. "Look for new solutions to tough urban problems...to achieve an equitable and sustainable future."
- **Diverse and eclectic yet collaborative and committed**. "A true community of neighbors and partners."

The WPB Master Plan is available online: http://wickerparkbucktown.org/master-plan/

Overall plan recommendations were made for the area regarding cleanliness and safety, public awareness and outreach for the SSA, promotion of local arts, and development tactics to promote transit use and allow for flexibility of uses, environmental enhancements, and multi-modal connectivity and circulation. Consistent themes emerge throughout the report: support local businesses and artists, foster a pedestrian-friendly environment, curb private auto use, improve and promote public transit, improve bicycle safety, increase density at transit hubs, and improve eco-friendliness or "greenness" of the area. The traffic- and parking- related recommendations seen frequently include the following:

- Red light cameras for increased safety
- Reclaim parking spaces for other uses: café seating, bicycle parking, or "people spaces"
- Expand parking meter coverage where there is high demand for parking
- Increase the (2008) cost of parking to encourage turnover
- Installation of High-Intensity Activated crossWalK beacon (HAWK) signals to facilitate easier road crossings for pedestrians

Corridor specific recommendations were also made, as the streets each have their own dynamic character.

For Milwaukee Avenue, recommendations included pedestrian safety improvements, arts encouragement and artist-supportive live/work spaces, improvement of large surface parking lots, reclaiming space on adjacent streets for outdoor "people spaces," conversion of some parking to café seating and bicycle parking, addition of more metered parking, and an increase the 2008 price of parking (which was $0.25 per hour) to encourage turnover.

Damen Avenue, a more "intimate street," has recommendations to reclaim pedestrian space and slow traffic with bump-outs and striping, extension of the Pedestrian Street designation, conversion of some parking spaces to "people spaces," an increase in the number of metered spaces, and an increase in the (2008) cost of parking to encourage turnover.

Ashland Avenue, an auto-oriented corridor, has recommendations to increase red light cameras for safety, improve the Cylbourn Metra station area, improve pedestrian lighting, reinforce the retail district, improve pedestrian and bicycle conditions under the Kennedy Expressway, improve stormwater management with median plantings, and reduce the number of future auto-centric site designs.

Western Avenue, the western edge of the SSA, is also an auto-oriented street. The recommendations for Western Avenue within the SSA include: red light cameras for safety, pedestrian scale lighting, public art improvements at Division Street and the CTA "L" stop, density around transit and the Bloomingdale Trail entrance, Bus Rapid Transit, improved pedestrian crossings, narrowing road width, planted medians, and bike lanes.

North Avenue is a major east-west corridor that is "urban in spite of itself." The recommendations specific to North Avenue include: red light cameras for safety, encouragement of artists' live/work spaces in vacant commercial spaces, reclaim pedestrian space and slow traffic with bump-outs and striping, extend the Pedestrian Street designation, add signage and new crosswalks, reclaim parking spaces for bicycle parking, create bike boxes at intersections, add more metered parking, increase the (2008) cost of parking to encourage turnover, remove rush hour parking restrictions, and improve the six-point intersection.

Photo of Western Avenue looking north toward North Avenue

And finally, Division Street, with its wide sidewalks and local entrepreneurial district, has recommendations that build on and extend the pedestrian-friendliness of the street. Recommendations include: add pedestrian scale lighting; install red light cameras for safety; install public art improvements at Western Avenue, the Polish Triangle, and under the Kennedy; increase density near the CTA Division Blue Line station; create a "locals-only" retail zone; add bike shelters; more metered parking; increase the (2008) price of parking to encourage turnover; improve the intersection of Division, Honore, and Marion; and improve pedestrian crossings and signals.

While this plan was adopted in February of 2009, many of the recommendations of the Master Plan were made before Chicago's parking meter lease that significantly restricted a neighborhood's control over its parking supply, and the potential for re-imagining those spaces. It also raised the cost of parking (which was a recommendation), and has created more turnover on-street with some streets experiencing much higher vacancy rates.

Photo from Creative Commons by Pam Broviak.

Parking Meter Concession Agreement with Chicago Parking Meters, LLC

Overview: On Tuesday, Dec. 2, 2008, Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley unveiled a $1.156 billion bid that would lease the City's 36,000 parking meter spaces to Chicago Parking Meters LLC, (CPM) a private company owned by a consortium of Morgan Stanley, Allianz SE's Allianz Capital Partners and the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority. The following Thursday, City Council approved the 75-year deal in a 40-5 vote.

In exchange for the up-front payment, CPM won the right to keep all revenue from the parking meters for 75-years. In return, CPM was required to replace the individual coin-based meters with multi space pay and display meters that accept cash, credit and debit cards and maintain and operate the meters throughout the life of the contract. Almost all of the city's parking spaces are concession spaces, however there are some reserved spaces still retained by the city. CPM keeps 15 percent of the revenue generated at those spaces plus a rental fee for equipment and the city retains all remaining revenues.

Rates and hours: The City fully retains control of parking regulations, enforcement, fine collection and associated revenues as well as meter rates and hours of operation, called Reserved Powers. However, the contract required an increase in hourly parking rates each of the first five years, differing by three zones. Hourly rates increased from $0.25 per hour in 2008 to $2.00 per hour in 2013 in most City neighborhoods, $4.00 per hour in some neighborhoods close to the Loop and $6.50 per hour in the Loop. The process for a change in meter rates, additional locations or hours requires a City Council ordinance.

In the 2008 deal, parking remained free from 9 p.m. – 8 a.m., but in a 2013 renegotiation by Mayor Rahm Emanuel, the City agreed to extend meter hours, from 9 p.m. until 10 p.m. and until midnight on the Near North Side [not affecting WPB]. In exchange, the revised deal included free parking on Sundays except for the area north of Roosevelt Road, south of North Avenue, and east of Halsted Street to Lake Michigan. It also requires CPM to allow motorists to pay via a cellphone app, though a "convenience fee" of 35 cents is applied to any purchase less than two hours and accounts must be set up with a minimum initial balance of $20. Pay-by-phone must be in place by May 1, 2014.

Revenue Valuation: All metering devices are purchased and owned by CPM and the number of concession spaces may not exceed 45,000 without the prior written consent of CPM. For any for newly designated space, where no meter exists, CPM will pay for the first 4,000 installations in any year. Once a new meter comes into the system, the City assigns it a revenue value. The City must pay for removal of a meter if it no longer designates a parking space. There is no limit on the amount of reserved spaces the city can install, however it must pay for installation of a metering device. Reserved spaces cannot compete with concession spaces.

Each concession space has a revenue value set forth in the lease based on rates, hours of operation, and expected utility. So, while the city has the power to change metered parking rates and hours of operation, if a change in hours or rates results in a reduction in the aggregate revenue value of the concession spaces, it is factored into the quarterly True-Up calculation and may require the city to make a payment to CPM, called a Quarterly Settlement Amount.

A Required Closure Payment is also due to reimburse CPM any time the City takes a metered spot out of service. For example, if parking spaces on Damen are shut down for a street festival or road work, the City must reimburse CPM the full amount of the projected revenue value for those meters during that time period. The city does receive an allowance of days for which a Required Closure can occur without having to make a payment —eight percent annually in the Loop and four percent annually in neighborhoods. If the annual allowance is exceeded, any concession space closed for more than six hours in a day requires the city to pay CPM for the lost revenue from that space for the entire day. The city does not have to pay for closing any reserved spaces.

Issues surrounding Required Closure Payments were settled in the 2013 lease re-negotiation. For the two year period ending March 31, 2013, the City received a bill of $49 million from CPM because it had closed parking meter spaces for street repairs, police operations and festivals. After analysis by the City on actual closings, it was able to negotiate charges down to $8.9 million. Going forward, the City will complete revenue loss calculations as a result of closings and present them to CPM.

Outstanding CPM charges as a result of overuse of disabled placards were also settled in the renegotiation. Prior to 2014, Illinois state law allowed cars with disabled placards to park at a meter for free for an unlimited period of time. CPM billed the City for overuse of disabled placards, because it reduced the revenue value of the system. An arbitration panel ruled that the City must pay CPM $12 million plus outstanding claims for 2011 and 2012 totaling $42.9 million. Because there has been widespread fraudulent abuse of disabled placards in Chicago, in 2013, the Illinois General Assembly enacted Public Act 097-0845, which narrowed the use of disabled free parking placards. It will take effect January 1, 2014.

Performance pricing option: The lease allows the City to institute performance pricing by neighborhood—rates based on demand by time of day and day of week—to achieve the right number of available parking spots so motorists circling for parking can do so quickly and not clog up the roads, and to create vehicle turnover which brings in more customers to neighborhood businesses. If the City wishes to initiate performance pricing, the lease requires CPM to install software to the multi-space meters that allows for this rate structure. This software (called Time Differential Metering Systems) must allow the City to set rates in increments as small as 15 minutes or as long as 24 hours. The software also must allow customers to purchase multiple hours of parking across varying rate schedules. The lease even includes a provision that requires the software to allow customers to pay a reduced rate during a "non-peak" time, as an incentive to park during low demand times. The meters also must allow the City to either increase or decrease the rate for every subsequent hour that a customer purchases to park.

Chicago Pedestrian Plan (2012)

Many of the goals and strategies identified in the WPB Master Plan align directly with the 2012 Chicago Pedestrian Plan. In September of 2012, the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) released the comprehensive pedestrian plan, which focuses on improving the safety, connectivity, and overall quality of the pedestrian network throughout the city. CDOT worked with a diverse array of community stakeholders and residents who participated in a series of interactive public outreach and engagement activities. These meetings allowed the community to work with city officials to identify issues and opportunities in the pedestrian network, and from this, the plan incorporates many of the concerns and suggestions in its focus on safety, connectivity, and livability.

The plan adresses the public's concerns and CDOT's own analyses in a series of key safety, connectivity, and livability goals. With the goal of eliminating all pedestrian traffic fatalities in ten years (0 in 10 goal), the plan proposes a wide array of safety-enhancing strategies geared towards infrastructure improvements, a more balanced/multimodal street space, as well as targeted and city-wide outreach and education programs.

Strategies focus on creating a more connected and attractive pedestrian network focus on the importance of clear wayfinding systems, connections to transit and other modes, as well as public space amenities such as street furniture and public art. The plan also emphasizes the importance of the pedestrian experience to both encourage more people to walk, and ensure that walkability can be an inclusive characteristic throughout the city to enhance the quality of life, safety, and mobility.

The Chicago Pedestrian Plan is available online: http://chicagopedestrianplan.org/pedestrian-plan/

Chicago Streets for Cycling Plan 2020 (2012)

The Chicago Streets for Cycling Plan was released by the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) in 2012. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of Chicago residents commuting via bicycle nearly tripled. The 2020 plan states that bicycling will play a critical role in the city's economic future by reducing transportation costs, improving physical health, and enhancing the quality of life and attractiveness of the city. It builds on the city's previous bike plans from 2000 and 2015, and lays out a series of recommendations to increase the number of on-street bikeways from 200 miles in 2012 to more than 600 miles in 2020.

In preparing the plan, CDOT conducted extensive public outreach throughout the city, including eight public meetings and the development of nine community advisory groups with representatives from specific geographic areas. The purpose of this process was to engage people of all ages, backgrounds, and place of residence in order to determine specific streets and routes that communities felt were most appropriate and inclusive for new and/or improved bikeways. From this, the consideration and eventual compiling of the proposed 2020 bike route network was guided by the goal of providing a bikeway/bike accommodation within a half mile of every Chicago resident. In order to strategically develop a network of bikeways of this scale, the plan proposes three phases that focus on the targeted development of three distinct types of bikeways between 2012 and 2020. Providing different levels of service and catering to different trip types, the plan's proposed bike routes in WPB are shown in Figure 4.

Neighborhood bike routes (Wood Street, Leavitt Street, Oakley Avenue, Webster Avenue, Lyndale Street and short segments of Wolcott, Ellen, and Wabansia) target quiet residential streets that connect local destinations. Crosstown bike routes (Damen Avenue, Division Street, and Cortland Avenue) are located on the city's collector and arterial roadways, connecting major destinations and city neighborhoods. Spoke routes (Milwaukee Avenue) provide direct routes designed for commuting from all areas of Chicago to the city's central business district.

Milwaukee Avenue as a Spoke Route is a challenge through Wicker Park. It is one of the most bicycled streets in the city, but at just 42' wide, with CTA bus service, it is too narrow to install barrier protected bicycle lanes without removing a significant amount of on-street parking. Many of the local businesses value their storefront parking and with parking meter deal concessions, the metered spaces would have to be replaced on nearby residential streets or in a parking structure. Those two factors would create an uphill battle for the installation of protected bike lanes on Milwaukee Avenue.

Figure 4. CDOT's Streets for Cycling Plan and local bike routes and paths in WPB

The Chicago Streets for Cycling Plan is available online: http://www.chicagobikes.org/pdf/2012 Projects/ChicagoStreets-forCycling2020.pdf

Participants discuss the character of WPB at the public meeting

Section 4
Community Outreach

A primary goal of the Wicker Park-Bucktown Innovation in Parking Management Plan is to encourage community engagement throughout the planning and decision-making process. To engage key stakeholders and populations that have been underrepresented or harder to reach in previous planning initiatives, a public outreach and engagement strategy was developed for the parking management plan. To emphasize broad-based inclusion of the community, CMAP worked with organization's staff and elected officials, interviewed key community leaders, conducted a public meeting, and reached out to the public at-large with an online tool.

Key Findings

- **There is a high demand for parking during evening hours** beginning at 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and weekends; many drivers "cruise" for parking, creating congestion on major streets.
- **There is a limited parking supply**; it is nearly impossible to find parking on Friday and Saturday nights.
- Many business owners want a **parking garage**.
- **The meter time limits are restrictive** and damaging to the economic vitality of WPB.
- **Safety is important to local residents**. The community is open to active and public transportation, but it needs improvement and safer conditions.

Steering Committee

The first Steering Committee meeting was held on April 4, 2013 at the Bucktown-Wicker Park Library to introduce the project to the members and gather feedback regarding issues and concerns they would like to see addressed in the plan.

The Steering Committee is tasked with providing input on existing issues and opportunities and reviewing plan documents. The Steering Committee is comprised of a wide variety of interests and perspectives, ranging from community business owners and organization leaders to elected officials. The Steering Committee members include:

- Beth Barnett, Business Owner, Larkspur
- Rachel Bierma, Real Estate Agent, @Properties
- Rudy De Jesus, Director of Constituent Services, Office of Alderman Moreno
- Susan Fontana, Board Member, Wicker Park Advisory Council
- Steven Jensen, Board Member, Bucktown Community Organization
- Ken Lubinski, Business Owner, Lubinski Furniture
- John Paige, Commissioner, Wicker Park Bucktown Special Service Area
- Ginna Ryan, Board Member, Wicker Park Bucktown Chamber of Commerce
- Paul Sajovec, Chief of Staff, Office of Alderman Waguespack
- Kyle Smith, Economic Development Analyst, Center for Neighborhood Technology
- Dimitri Syrkin-Nikolau, Business Owner, Dimos Pizza
- Steven Vance, Deputy Editor, Streetsblog Chicago

Key Person Interviews

In order to gain further insight into issues and opportunities that exist in WPB, staff conducted interviews with several key stakeholders. These individuals represented a wide variety of interests and perspectives, and ranged from institutional leaders to business owners to elected officials.

Conversations and interviews were conducted with the following organizations and businesses:

- Art and Science Salon
- Chopin Theatre
- CLR Gallery
- David's Findables
- Edward R. Varndell
- Intermix
- Jackson Junge Gallery
- Kokoro Vintage
- Lubinski Furniture
- Office of Alderman Fioretti
- Office of Alderman Moreno
- Office of Alderman Waguespack
- Piece Brewery and Pizzeria
- SmallBar Division
- Subterranean
- The Silver Room
- Virtu Chicago

Collectively, these stakeholders brought up many needs and challenges that they hope the parking management plan will address, ranging from parking availability to loading zones. Interviewees also expressed concern for the lack of parking available in WPB during evening hours and weekends. It is perceived that this poses a challenge to customers and visitors; thus discouraging people from coming to the area. Other issues focused on the need to improve and update the management of residential permits in the neighborhood. Interviewees linked this need to opening these prime residential parking spaces to the public during the day to help manage the existing supply.

Although the issues that emerged from these interviews varied, a common theme raised was the elimination of time limits at metered spaces. Another common theme was the need for safer conditions for cyclists and pedestrians in order to support active and public transportation. The community stakeholders saw an opportunity for shared parking, and a public awareness campaign on available parking locations and strategies in addition to advocacy for active and public transit.

Kick-off public meeting

On June 26, 2013 the project kick-off public meeting was held at the Bucktown-Wicker Park Library to engage the WPB community at large and to discuss the purpose of the plan. During the meeting, participants were asked to identify parking strategies that improve the vitality of the WPB neighborhood, help support local businesses, and support the goals and vision outlined in the 2009 Master Plan. Another goal of the meeting was to better understand the neighborhood as it relates to parking and identify its biggest challenges and priorities. There were approximately 30 participants in attendance.

In order to get a better understanding of who was at the meeting, attendees were asked to answer a few questions about themselves using keypad polling technology. The majority of participants in attendance indicated they shop and live in WPB. Next, a small group activity was conducted to understand the community's thoughts about the neighborhood.

Working as a group, participants were asked to fill out the two collages of pictures—one that described what WPB meant to the group and another that showed pictures that didn't fit with the character of WPB. The group was also asked to complete the following sentence:

"WPB is a _____ neighborhood! I love it because _____, _____, and _____".

The small groups described WPB as a vibrant, complex, vital, destination neighborhood. The group agreed that WPB's best assets are:

- being a little town in a big city;
- the eclectic and diverse character of the neighborhood;
- the walkability, with active and urban feel;
- great shopping, entertainment, and variety;
- historic buildings and mixed uses;
- and its proximity to downtown Chicago.

The group selected pictures of empty parking lots, poor lighting, confusing signage, big box stores, parking garages and aging buildings to depict images that do not fit with the current or ideal future character of WPB.

Next, the group was asked about their travel preferences when traveling in the WPB. The first question asked about what drives participant's decisions to choose a type of transportation. Participants cited that their first priority was travel time, and their second was biking and transit options. When asked what the biggest challenge to parking in WPB, participants stated that traffic congestion from cars looking for parking, and parking availability on residential streets were their top perceived challenges.

Tying the issues and opportunities heard from the group to parking strategies that could help address the parking challenges in the neighborhood, the small groups were then asked to discuss their top two solutions from a list of proposed strategies. Proposed strategies included: valet consolidations, variable pricing, enforcement, permit changes, parking garage, and alternative transportation. Then, each small group completed the following sentence:

"To keep WPB a _____ place, and address _____ (top parking related problem), we'd like to see _____ (strategy 1) and _____ (strategy 2)".

In general, the attendees would like to keep WPB a livable, walkable, and vital destination neighborhood. In order to achieve this vision, attendees said that congestion and lack of parking should be addressed through demand-based pricing, increased shared parking, improved transit options and infrastructure, back-in angle parking, and better management of residential permits.

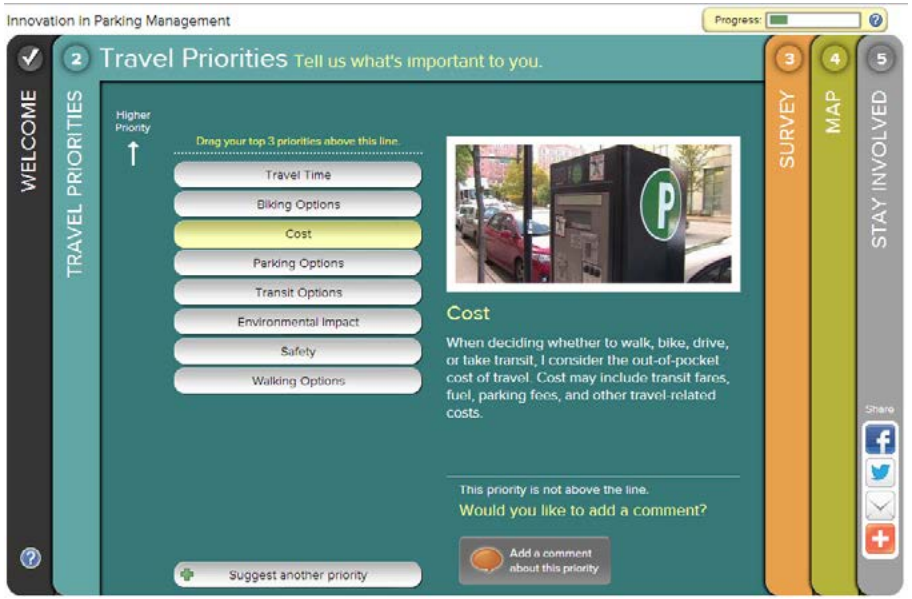
Participants created collages and filled out statements with the agreed-upon community assets. Samples above.

Online engagement

To be as inclusive as possible and reach a broader audience, CMAP also developed an interactive website to engage people who could not attend meetings. This online tool served to educate the community about the purpose of the project and learn about their priorities and preferred choices for addressing parking, as well as public and active transportation in WPB. The website was available from June 25, 2013 to August 25, 2013. During this time, 863 people visited the website and 448 people gave detailed feedback on the challenges, priorities, and opportunities to help address parking management.

To reach the community where they are, the survey was made available on a portable iPad kiosk and was placed at Tuesdays at the Triangle on August 13, 2013 and at the WPB Chamber mixer on August 14, 2013. In addition to these community events, the iPad kiosk was stationed at the Bucktown-Wicker Park Library – a high traffic, highly visible public location—from August 15, 2013 to August 25, 2013.

After learning more about the project on the welcome slide, users were asked to rate their top three priorities when deciding how to travel in and around the WPB neighborhood. This information will help staff to understand what priorities are the most important to the community and help to develop informed recommendations to achieve the best outcomes. Participants were also given the option to suggest additional priorities.



The list of priorities included:

- **Safety**—when choosing a transportation mode, I consider safety and how safe I expect to feel when driving, biking, walking or using transit.
- **Cost**—when deciding whether to walk, bike, drive, or take transit, I consider the out-of-pocket cost of travel. Cost may include transit fares, fuel, parking fees, and other travel-related costs.
- **Travel Time**—I consider how long it will take me to reach my destination when I choose my travel mode.
- **Parking Options**—when making my mode choice, I consider the availability and convenience of parking options near my destination.
- **Transit Options**—I consider the quality, availability, and convenience of transit service when I choose my travel mode. This includes bus and rail options, and station or shelter amenities.
- **Biking Options**—I consider the quality and convenience of bicycle facilities when I chose my travel mode. This includes facility types (bike lanes, trails, etc.) as well as amenities at my destination (bike parking, shower, etc.).
- **Walking Options**—I consider the convenience and quality of pedestrian facilities (sidewalks, crosswalks, etc.) when I choose my travel mode.
- **Environmental Impact**—I consider impacts to the environment when I decide whether I will drive, bike, walk or take transit to reach my destination. Impacts may include emissions, use of fossil fuels, congestion costs, etc.

The top ranked priority for users was "biking options" followed by "walking options." The survey also asked participants to indicate their mode of transportation when traveling in the WPB. Participants were asked about their destinations, parking, and their experiences bicycling, walking and taking public transit. Respondents said that when travelling by car in WPB they were most likely to be driving alone, followed by carpooling. When asked about why they were driving in WPB, respondents' top answer was that they lived in the neighborhood, followed by entertainment. Finally, we asked respondents if they had ever abandoned a trip because they couldn't find parking, 45 percent said that yes, they had abandoned a trip because of parking.

The overall priority ranking chosen by participants was:

1. Biking Options
2. Walking Options
3. Parking Options
4. Travel Time
5. Transit Options
6. Safety
7. Environmental Impact
8. Cost

Figure 5 shows how participants felt about parking accessibility and availability when driving around WPB.

Participants were also asked about their active and public transit experiences. In terms of modes of transit, respondents stated that they were most likely to use the CTA Blue Line, followed by walking.

Figure 6 shows how participants felt about active and public transit when getting around WPB.

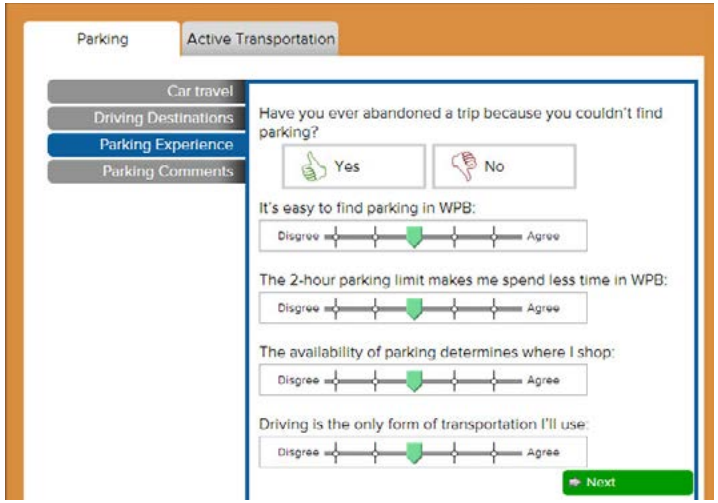


Figure 5. Parking Survey Results

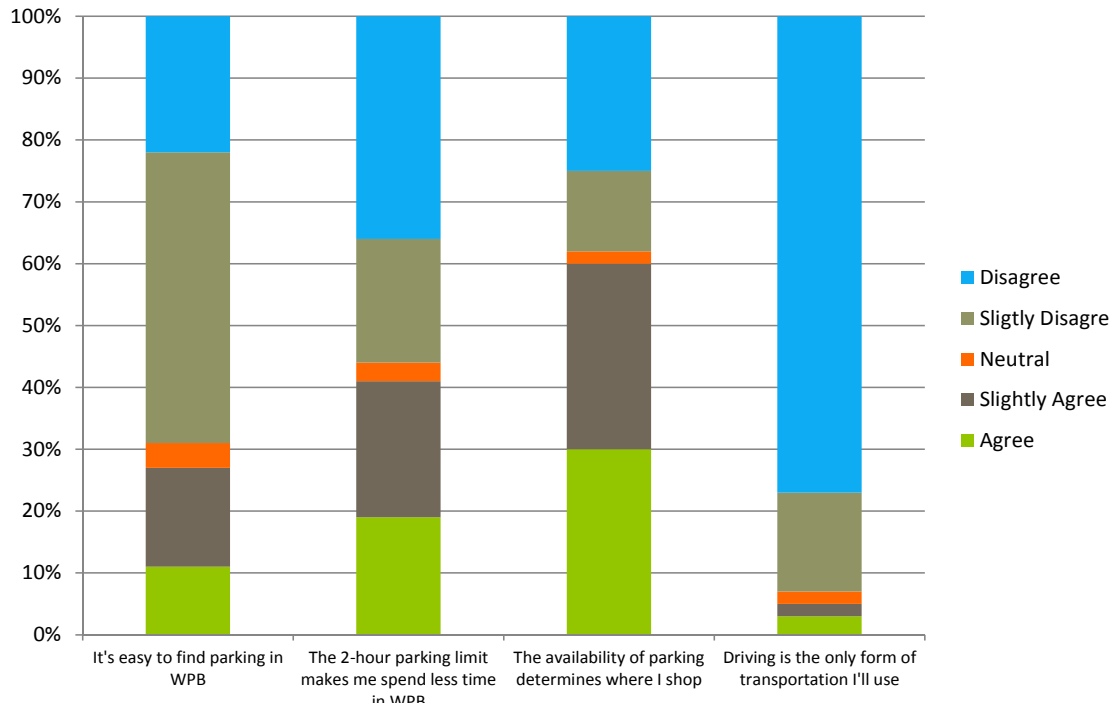
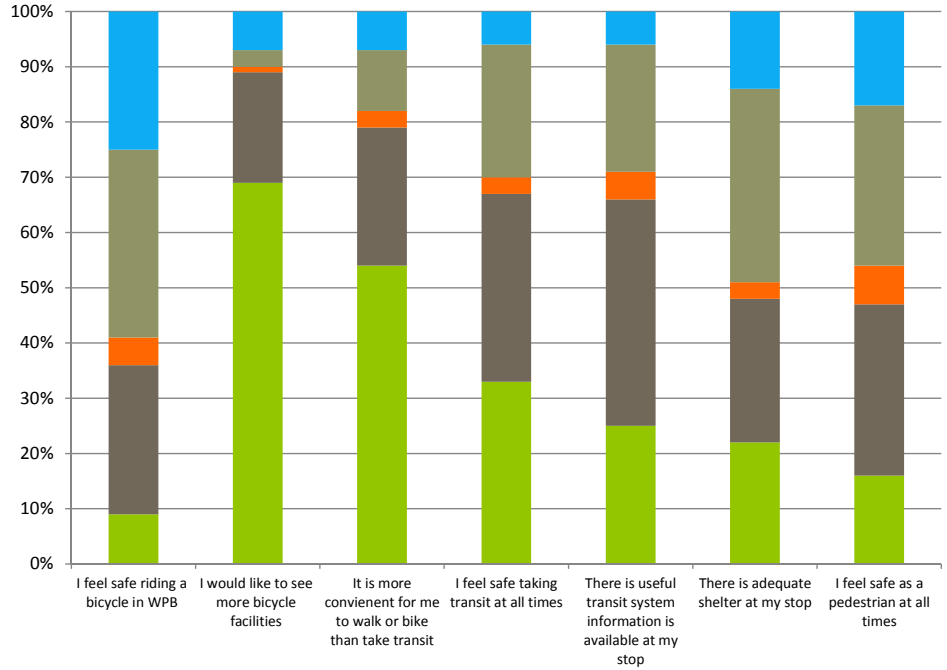
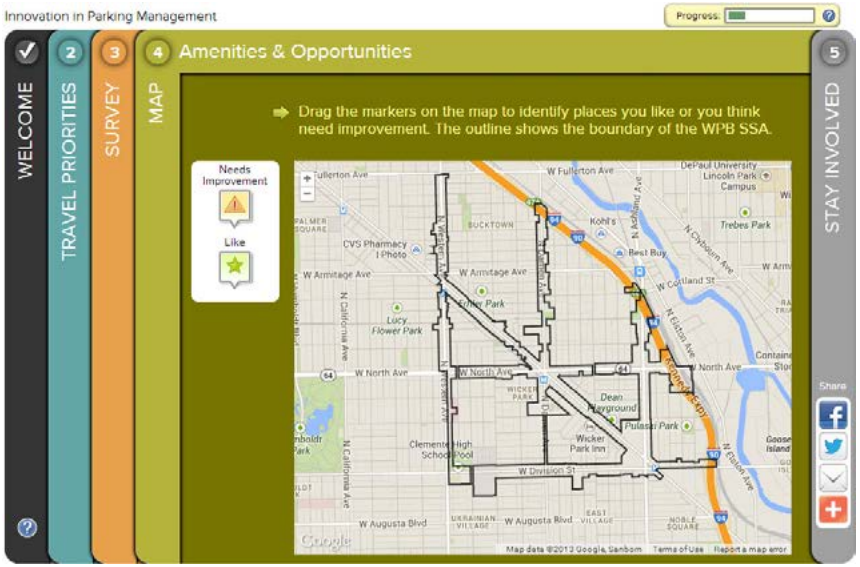


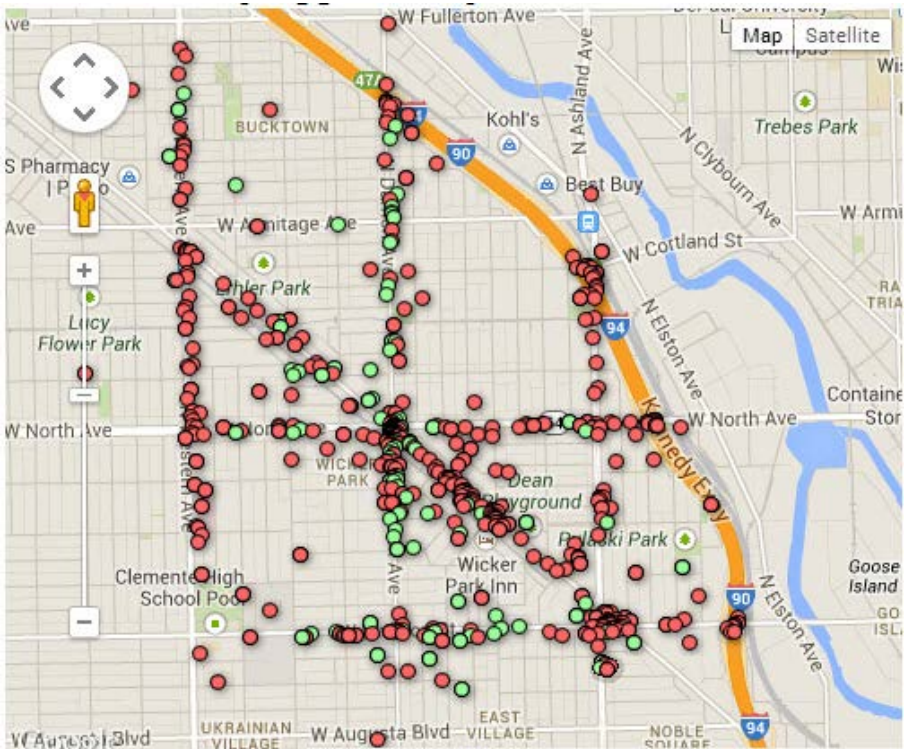
Figure 6. Active Transportation Survey Results

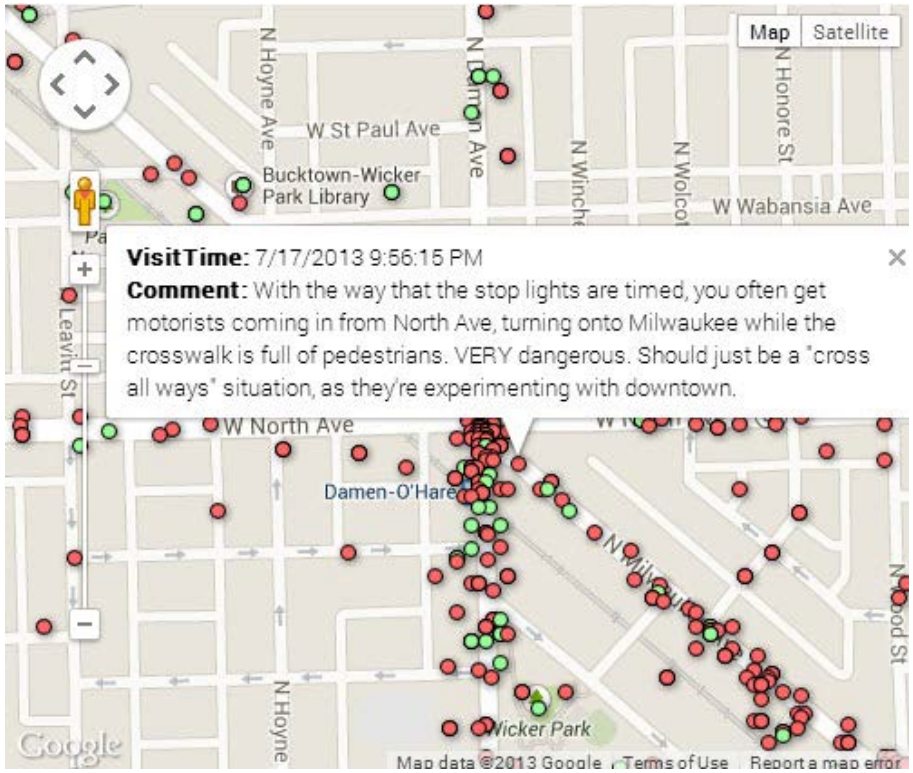


The following slide labeled "Amenities & Opportunities," outlined the boundary of the WPB SSA (see Figure 1) and asked participants to identify the places they like and the places that need improvement. Based on the results, the participants placed 740 markers on areas that need improvement (red dots) and 289 markers on areas that they like (green dots).

The majority of the users indicated that they enjoy the concentration and variety of businesses in the two neighborhoods. The community is constantly developing and expanding to include options for residents and visitors for shopping, dining, other services and entertainment. The interactive map also demonstrated that users like the vibrancy of WPB and the easy accessibility throughout the area via bike lanes and public transportation stations along with clean, safe and wide streets (Division Street in particular).







Survey respondents placed over 1,000 markers on the map about parking, traffic, and safety issues; this is one example. The pointers with comments are available in an interactive format on the project webpage: http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/lta/wpb.

The participants also pinpointed areas that need improvement. The majority of the suggestions noted the need to increase safety for cyclists and pedestrians along major streets and intersections. Users also voiced a need for better signage and lighting at crosswalks along with maintenance and upgrades to roads, sidewalks, and other existing infrastructure. Traffic congestion and lack of parking were also frequently cited.

The final screen asked participants to input information about their role in the community and their access to transportation. The majority of users indicated they were residents and visitors of the WPB. When asked about their access to different modes of transit, the majority of users indicated they have access to public transit and followed by users who said they have access to a car.

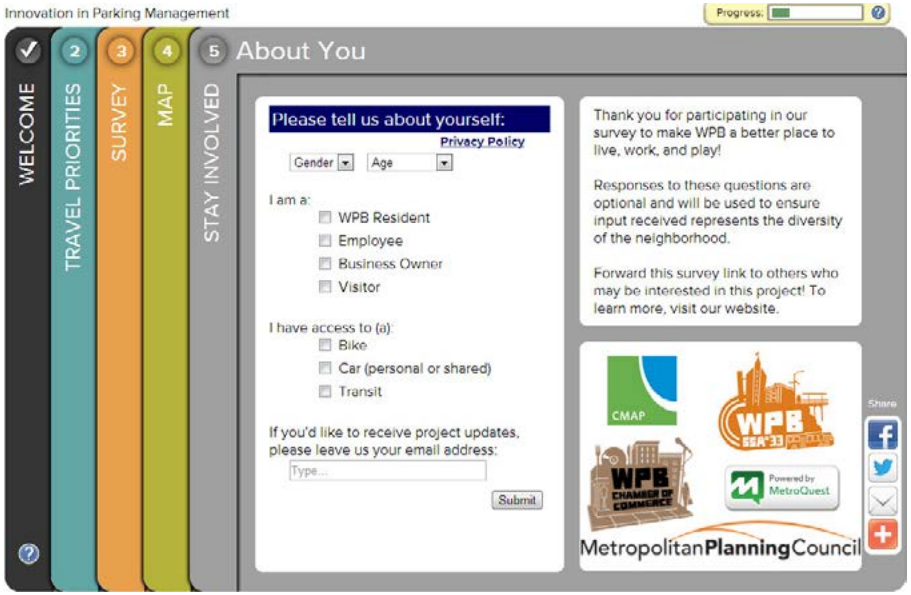


Photo from Creative Commons by Flickr user discosour

Section 5
WPB's Transportation Network

At just three miles northwest of the downtown Loop, WPB's location – with respect to the metropolitan transportation network and relative to regional destinations – is an asset for the area. The local road network provides good connectivity within the neighborhood and to other neighborhoods. Frequent local transit –8 CTA bus routes, the CTA Blue Line, and Metra commuter lines – provides residents and visitors with many travel options, in addition to car-sharing options and the Divvy bike share program. Among other sections, the 2009 Master Plan has a very thorough analysis of traffic, transit, and transportation. While some things have changed since the adoption of the plan four years ago (most notably the metered parking), the challenges and current conditions remain quite similar.

Key Findings

- **There is an opportunity to incent people to walk more**, (and by extension use public transportation more or park further from their destination) if they did not fear for their safety at night.
- **Traffic safety for pedestrians and bicyclists has improved in recent years**, but dangerous conditions along the bike-heavy Milwaukee Avenue remain a barrier to many potential cyclists.
- **The entire study area has good transit access**. However, buses run too slowly to be a strong alternative to a personal automobile.
- **The CTA Blue Line is convenient for traveling downtown and to O'Hare**, but is not seen as convenient for errands or non-work trips.

Transportation Network

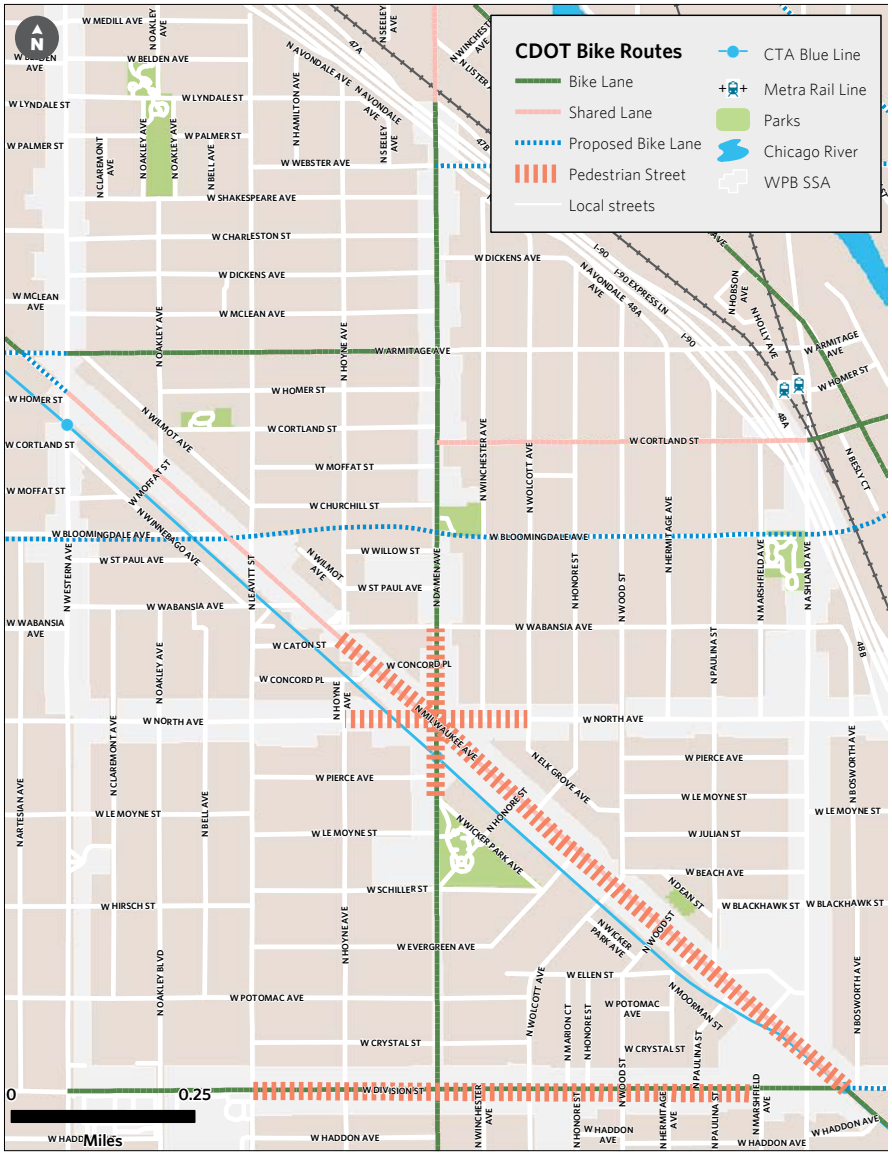
As the introduction to the 2009 Master Plan's transportation section states, "Traffic congestion can only be improved by reducing the number of vehicular trips in the area. There is not one single solution to this problem, but rather a combination of many strategies that will increase transit use, car-pooling, car-sharing, bicycling, and walking. Reducing vehicular trips is not going to be accomplished overnight, but it is necessary to start addressing the problem now." Since the Master Plan was written, car-sharing has greatly expanded, transit ridership has grown, parking prices have risen (on metered streets which represent approximately 8.6 percent of the on-street spaces), and the Divvy bikeshare system has been launched, with 11 stations currently in operation in the WPB study area. CDOT has also recently developed a Chicago Complete Streets web portal* to showcase the many new projects underway and those in early planning stages.

The sections of this report that follow are ordered according to CDOT's hierarchy of accommodating modes: pedestrians first, then transit users, then bicyclists and then private automobiles.

Pedestrian Environment

Walkability is an important factor in the health and vitality of our communities. Elements of a walkable neighborhood include a central attraction, main street, or public space; buildings close to the street, and complete streets designed for safe travel for all modes – foot, bicycle, transit, and car. Housing density, access to amenities, stores, parks, and places of work are also important. Many planners refer to the "D's" of walkability: density, diversity, design, as well as destination access and distance to transit. Julie Campoli, the author of "Made for Walking," uses the "5 D's and a P." The "P" refers to parking and the need to manage the supply of parking.

Figure 8. Pedestrian Streets in WPB



*The Chicago Complete Streets web portal is: http://chicagocompletestreets.org/

Having the ability to walk to accomplish errands or to reach a variety of amenities is good for personal health, the environment, and for household cost savings. The website WalkScore.com estimates the following:

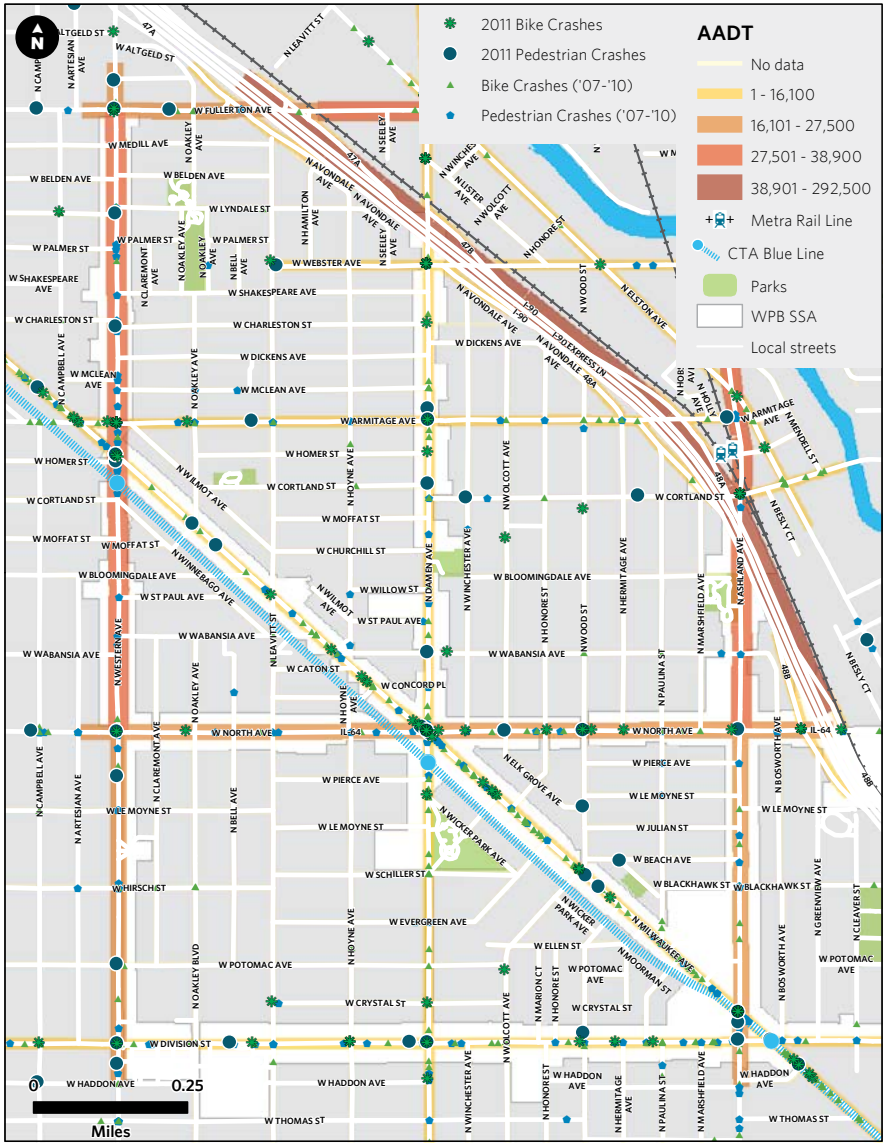
- People in walkable places weigh 6-10 lbs. less than people in auto-oriented communities.
- For every ten minutes a person spends in a daily car commute, time spent in community activities falls by 10 percent.
- One point of Walk Score is worth $3,000 in home value.

According to Walkscore.com, the WPB area is "Very Walkable." The neighborhood of Wicker Park is ranked the 21st most walkable neighborhood in Chicago, with a score of 91 out of 100; Bucktown is the 44th most walkable neighborhood, with a score of 87.

The City of Chicago Zoning Ordinance can specifically designate a street as a "Pedestrian Street" if they have a high concentration of uses along streets with a right-of-way of 80 feet or less, have a continuous pattern of buildings with entrances and storefronts abutting the sidewalk, and have few vacancies. In the WPB SSA, Division Street (from Marshfield to Leavitt) and Milwaukee Avenue (from Division Street to North Avenue) are pedestrian streets (Figure 8). The streets radiating from the six-corner intersection are also pedestrian streets (North Avenue from 1900 to 2100, Damen Avenue from 1500 to 1700, and Milwaukee Avenue from 1500 to 1700). These designations prohibit curb cuts or driveways for vehicle access to buildings, and require parking to be behind the building and accessed from the alley. Also, there is no off-street parking requirement for non-residential uses under 10,000 sq. feet.

The image to the right (Figure 9) shows pedestrian and bicycle crashes with automobiles from 2007 to 2011. The streets are color-coded according to the number of vehicles that travel on them in an average day (AADT). Roads with more traffic won't necessarily have more crashes, since many pedestrians and bicyclists consider them inhospitable and avoid traveling those routes.

Figure 9. Pedestrian and Bicycle Crashes (with Autos)



Quality of the walking environment

Walkable neighborhood design promotes the economic vitality of the area as most residents can meet all their basic needs within a short walking distance from their home, often cited as between one-quarter mile and one-half mile, or between 5-10 minutes walking at a moderate pace. Each of the "D's" plays a role, but they are most successful when they work together.

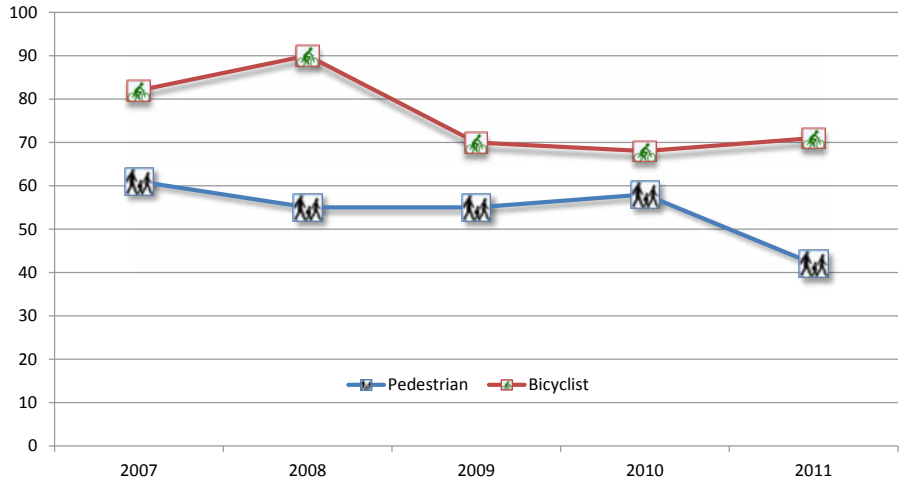
The 5 "D's": Density, Diversity, Design, Destinations and Distance to transit

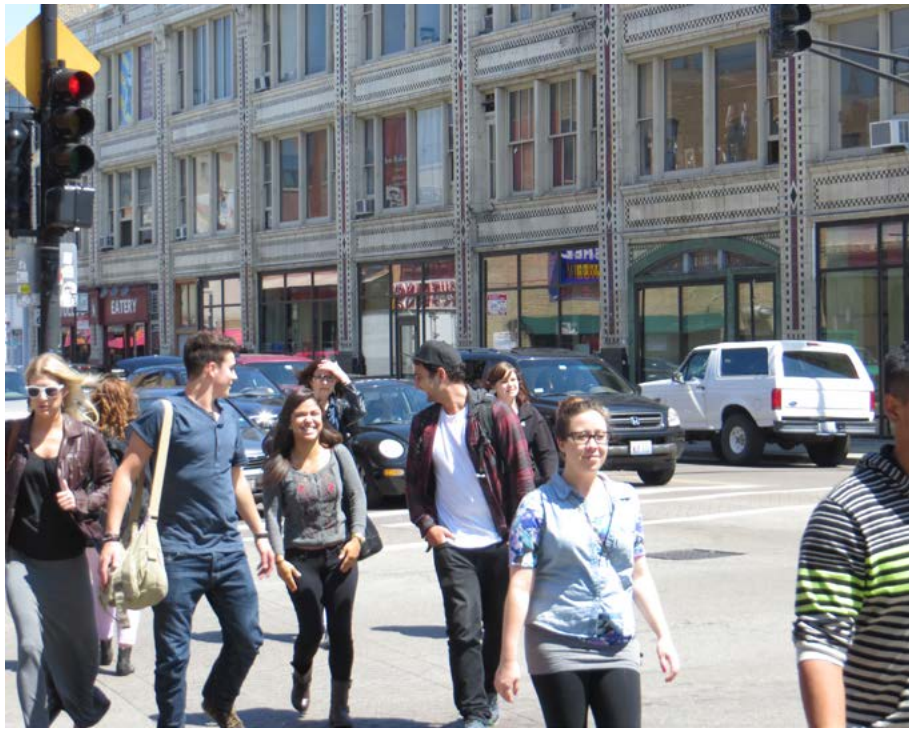
Much of WPB was built out before widespread use of the automobile and fulfills the requisite needs of the "D's." The building scale is oriented to the pedestrian, and the area has not lost much land to surface parking lots (compared to other neighborhoods). Obviously, this is not true of all streets in the study area; certain streets are oriented to the automobile, but as a whole, WPB fares well in **design**. The 2009 Master Plan contains a detailed survey of the pedestrian environment and scored each of the streets in the study area. The survey noted that the high speed and volume of traffic along the corridors divides the street, especially when there are long stretches without highly visible and safe crosswalks.

Diversity refers to how many different uses coexist in a place and how close together they are. If a section of the street is all nightclubs, it will be empty during the day and very crowded at night. Alternatively, if a café, nightclub, hardware store, and a grocer all occupy the same block; the streetscape will be lively throughout the day and into the night. A broad mix of businesses combined with a diverse array of housing options means that many people can work close to where they live, and access many businesses on foot. WPB overall scores very high on walkability, in this sense, but on a block-to-block scale, there are some areas where a particular use is heavily concentrated.

There is relatively high population **density** and plenty of **destinations** to visit. According to the 2010 Census, over 30,000 people live in the study area of about 1.5 square miles (including the residential parcels between the SSA corridors) and over 2,000 businesses are located here (BusinessInfo USA). Diversity in housing stock, however, is falling. The WPB neighborhood is increasingly trendy; developers are converting much of the housing units into high end luxury condos, which are more profitable and attractive to potential buyers. As the housing stock becomes more homogenous, with higher prices, this ends up pricing employees and artists out of the area, meaning that they will have to commute to the area, and may add to the parking congestion.

Figure 10. Pedestrian and Bicycle Crashes (with Autos) 2007-2011





The area is very well-supported by **transit**, covered in more detail in the transit section. The entire study area falls within a quarter mile of a bus stop, and most of it falls within a half-mile of the CTA Blue Line stations. There are 16 functioning Divvy bike share stations, with two more planned stations, and several stations just outside of the study area.

One factor diminishing walkability that came up repeatedly in survey responses was safety. Pedestrians don't always want to walk long distances late at night for valid safety concerns. Besides comments citing impaired or distracted drivers, pedestrians are worried about being struck by cyclists (impaired or otherwise), being mugged or assaulted. In 2011, the number of pedestrians struck by cars went down significantly, while the number of bicyclists hit has remained relatively stable, even though the number of bicyclists has increased.

Transit

As mentioned before, WPB has excellent transit coverage, but opinions vary as to the quality of the service. Most people agree that it is easy to get to the Loop and O'Hare via the CTA Blue Line, but that it is a hassle to go in any other direction. Local bus routes cover the study area and increase access to other neighborhoods, but are slowed by congested roadways. One survey responder said, "If the North Avenue bus weren't stuck in traffic and moving at a snail's pace, I might consider riding it more often." Several similar complaints were made about the speed of buses, and a resulting preference to drive or ride a bike.

When asked to finish the statement, "I would take transit more if...," many people mentioned reliability, speed, cleanliness, and safety. If those aspects of transit could be improved, transit would be a much more attractive option. Several commenters want to see more bus shelters with arrival times.

CTA Rail System

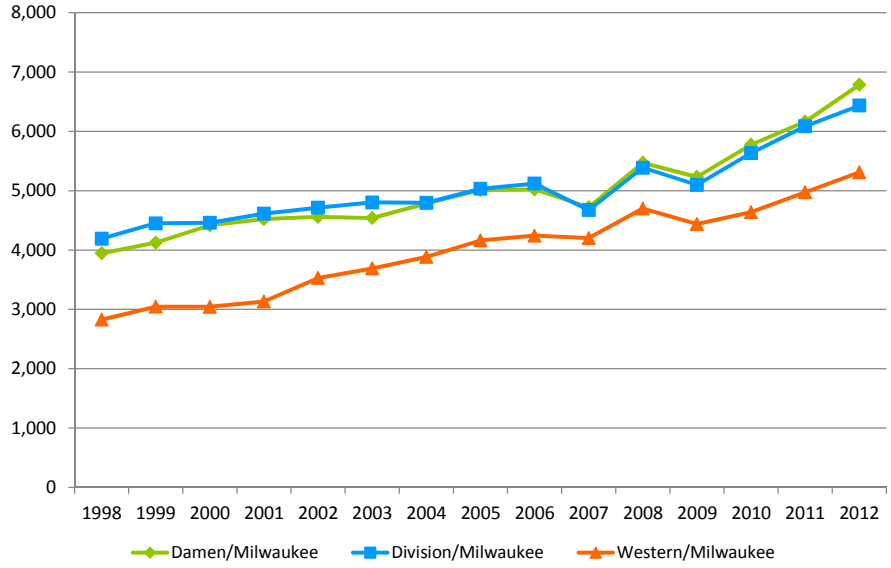
The CTA Blue Line has 24-hour service and runs diagonally through the study area with stops at Division Street, Damen Avenue, and Western Avenue. The station at Division Street is below ground and surfaces between Division Street and Damen Avenue. Of the three stations, Western is the only one with an elevator for wheelchair access. Several survey responders complained about the stairs at the Division and Damen stations; they find it difficult (or impossible) to take strollers or luggage to these stations, making transit an inconvenient travel mode. The Damen and Division stations have sheltered bicycle parking.

Photo from Creative Commons, by Dan X. O'Neil.

The frequency of trains varies with time of day to accommodate rush hour commuters; there is also frequent Saturday service between 10:00 am and 8:00 pm. From 4:50 am to 12:55 am on weekdays, the trains run approximately every 10 minutes, with additional trains running between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m (approximately every 3 to 10 mintues). More detailed Blue Line schedules are found in the appendix.

Ridership at all three stations has been increasing steadily since 2009, with over 5,300 rides taken in an average weekday in October of 2012 at the Western / Milwaukee station; over 6,400 rides from the Division / Milwaukee station; and over 6,700 from the Damen / Milwaukee station (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Average Weekday CTA Blue Line Ridership (Oct 2012)

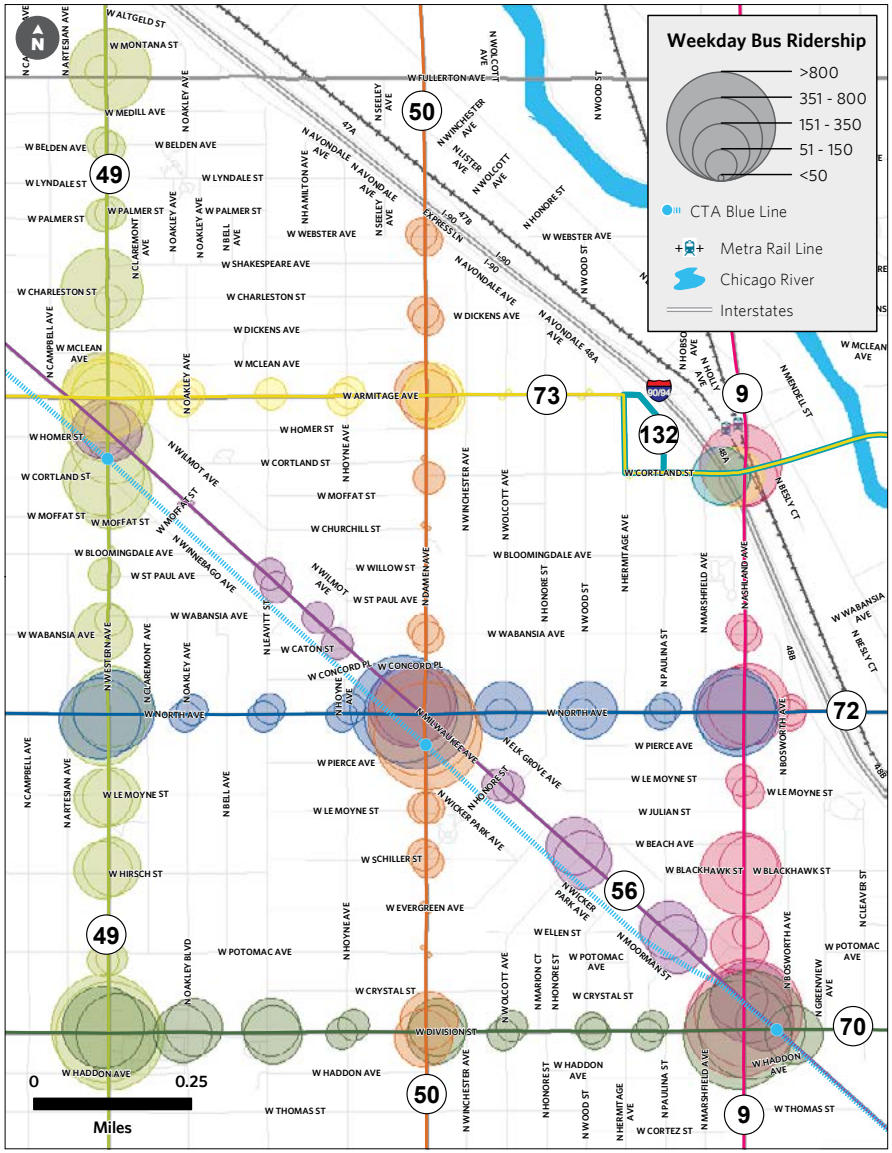


CTA Bus System

The CTA operates eight bus routes through the SSA: #73 Armitage, #9 Ashland, #50 Damen, #70 Division, #132 Goose Island Express, #56 Milwaukee, #72 North, and #49 Western. Of those, Ashland (#N9) and Western (#N49) also operate with "Night Owl" service, between midnight and 5am, seven days a week, with 30-minute headways. The #N9 Ashland turns east on North Avenue past the CTA Red Line, to Clark. Bus Rapid Transit is planned for 16 miles of Ashland Avenue from Irving Park Road to 95th Street, with the first phase planned for Cortland Avenue (in the study area) south to 31st Street.

The ridership data for an average weekday (both boardings and alightings), shown in Figure 12, indicates that the intersections of Milwaukee / Division / Ashland and Milwaukee / Damen / North have very high ridership. Most stops along Western Avenue have high ridership, while several stops along Damen Avenue have very low ridership. The #73 Armitage bus has very low ridership between Damen and the Clybourn Metra station; the #132 Goose Island Express loops through the northeast corner of Bucktown with no stops except for the Clybourn Metra station.

Figure 12. Average CTA bus weekday ridership – from Oct 2012



Metra

The Metra station serving the WPB neighborhood is located on Ashland Avenue just north of Cortland Avenue and south of Armitage Avenue, east of I-90/94. The highway is a barrier that prevents more people from accessing the station on foot, parking is limited, but the station is served by bus routes #9 Ashland, #73 Armitage, and #132 Goose Island Express (which otherwise does not serve the WPB area). Most of the morning riders are traveling between WPB and the suburbs, as opposed to between WPB and downtown Chicago (Figure 13).

Metra Ridership

From 2002 to 2006, Metra boardings at the Clybourn station climbed by 44 percent, following a general upward trend since the 1980s (Figure 14). According to Metra data from 2006, approximately 30 percent of riders walk to the Clybourn Metra station, 23 percent drive alone, 15 percent are dropped off, 14 percent arrive by bus, and six percent arrive by bicycle (Figure 15). There are an average of 1,466 weekday boardings and 32 parking spaces. With more than 300 people potentially driving alone to the station, the streets with free parking close to the station likely absorb many of these commuters. Many survey responders commented on the abysmal pedestrian conditions around the station.

Figure 15. Mode of Access to Clybourn Metra Station (2006)

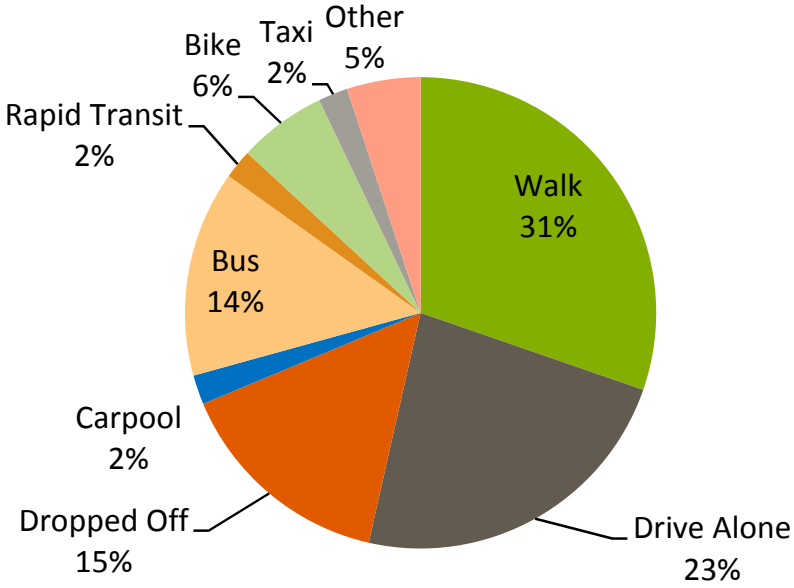
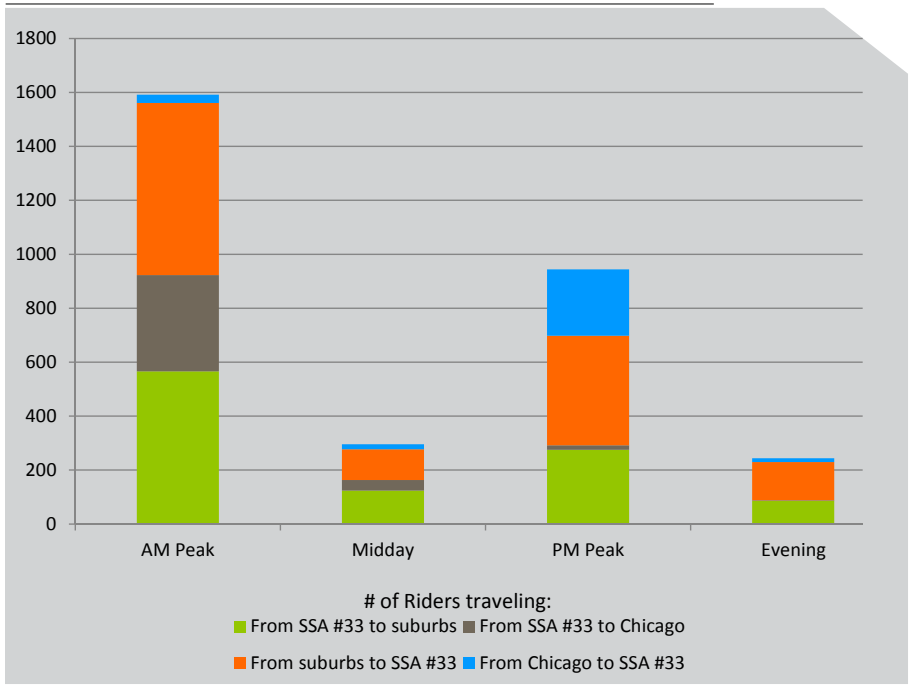
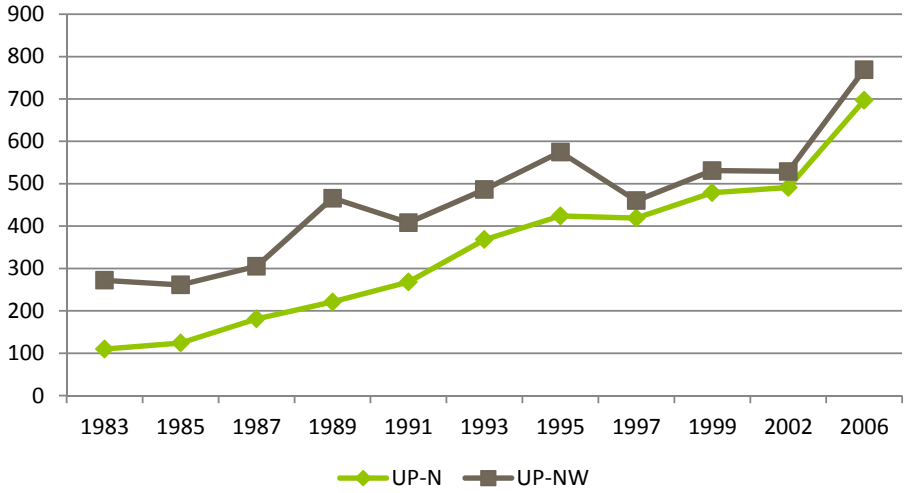


Figure 13. Metra Boardings and Alightings at Clybourn Station, 2006



Source: Metra, 2006.

Figure 14. WPB Metra Boardings at the Clybourn Metra station, 1983 – 2006



Bicycling

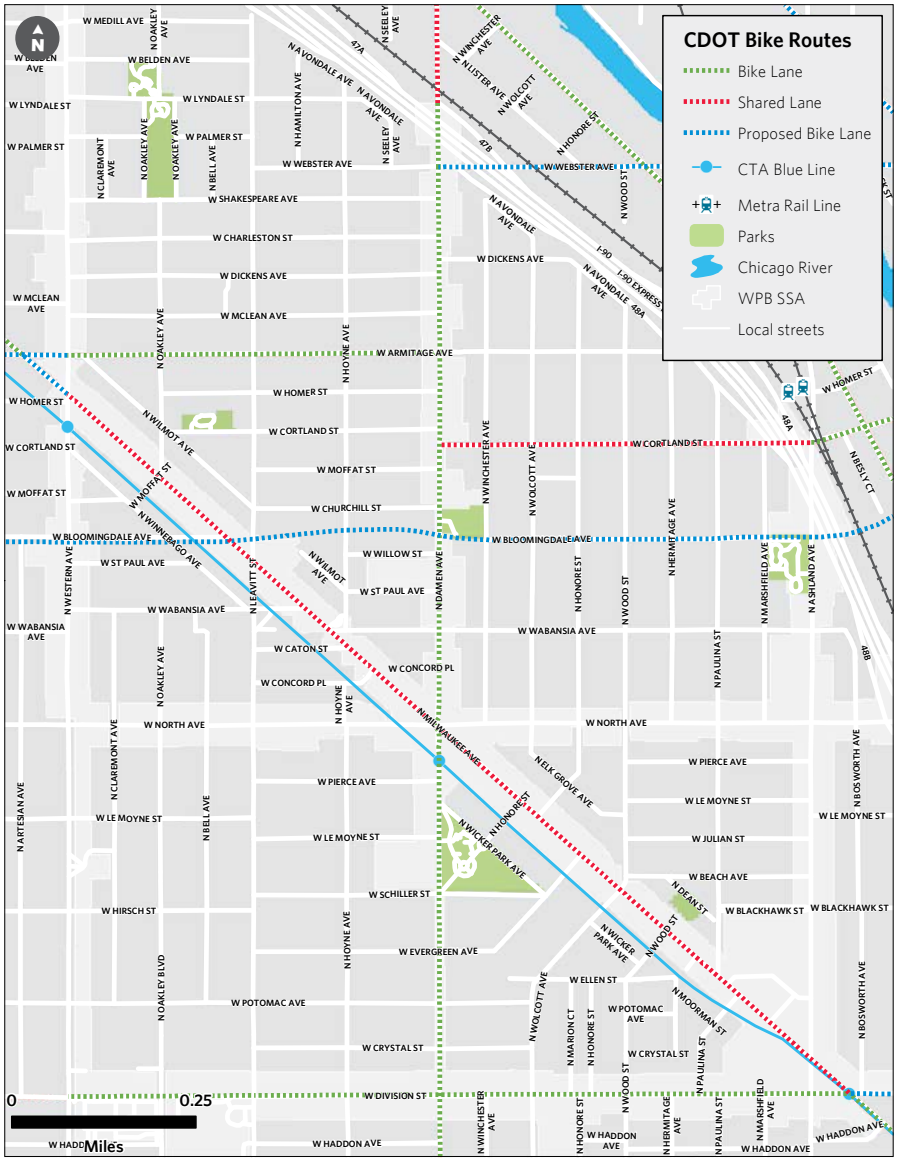
While WPB may not be the most bike-friendly neighborhood, it may be the neighborhood most associated with bicycling. The WPB SSA #33 has long-promoted bicycling in the neighborhood, installing the city's first on-street bicycle parking, along with many bright orange bike racks with the WPB logo. There are many bike-friendly businesses in the area, retailers that serve the needs of bicyclists, and three on-street bike lanes (on Armitage Avenue, Damen Avenue, and Division Street), and a shared bike lane on Milwaukee Avenue (which has an on-street lane north of Western and south of Division, and a protected lane south of Chicago Avenue).

Even though Milwaukee Avenue is one of the most heavily traveled routes by cyclists in the City of Chicago, most survey respondents alluded to the dangers of riding it through Wicker Park. According to 27th Ward Alderman Walter Burnett Jr., more than 14,000 cyclists use Milwaukee Avenue daily[1]. Through Wicker Park, it narrows to 42 feet wide, squeezing cyclists between parked cars and moving traffic, with the occasional delivery truck or parallel parker adding to the chaos. Tension results when vulnerable users feel as though they are fighting for their space. Many survey respondents are frustrated with the lack of compliance with local laws shown by drivers and bicyclists alike.

In 2012, the City of Chicago reported 250 "doorings" (when a driver opens the car door in the path of a cyclist, causing them to crash or swerve dangerously), an increase of nearly 50 percent from 170 in 2011. This number is likely to be lower than the actual count, as many go unreported. A significant number of these "doorings" occur in WPB, along the narrow stretch of Milwaukee, and also along Damen Avenue (Figure 17). Due to the danger of these accidents, including recent fatalities and debilitating injuries, Mayor Emmanuel doubled the fine for motorists who door cyclists in May of 2013, while also increasing fines for bicyclists who break the law.

1. Ford, Quinn. "Protected bike lanes opened on stretch of Milwaukee Ave." DNAinfo Chicago, June 13, 2013. http://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20130613/river-west/protected-bike-lanes-opened-on-stretch-of-milwaukee-avenue

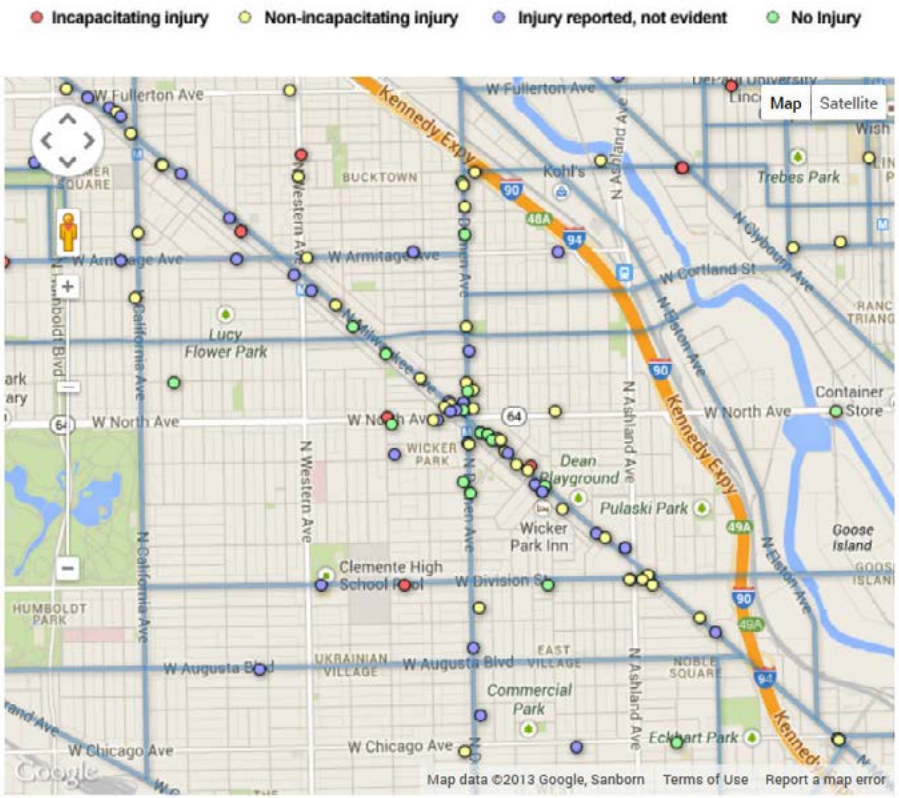
Figure 16. Bike Routes in WPB



Protected Bike Lane on Milwaukee Avenue

One solution to the dangerous riding conditions, offered by many survey respondents, would be to install a protected bike lane on Milwaukee Avenue, as has been done south of Chicago Avenue. While CDOT has expressed support for extending the protected bike lanes along this important "Spoke Route," the challenge lies with the width of the road, as mentioned previously. A protected bike lane, like that built south of Chicago Avenue, would require removal of parking on both sides of the street – an issue that pits business owners against bicyclists. Also, with the 2008 Parking Meter Deal, the metered spaces would need to be replaced on neighborhood side streets – an issue that would pit driving residents, who do not want meters on their residential streets, against bicyclists. A workshop organized by CDOT with the Dutch Cycling Embassy in September of 2013 analyzed the corridor and made innovative suggestions that aimed to improve safety, while working within the constraints of the street, and preserving some parking spaces on both sides of the street.

Figure 17. Bike "Dooring" Crashes in WPB (2009 – 2012)



Source: Dries, Kate. "Map: Where are Chicago's bike dooring accidents happening?" October 5, 2012. WBEZ91.5, http://www.wbez.org/news/map-where-are-chicagos-bike-dooring-accidents-happening-102939

Roadways

The roads in the WPB generally follow a grid pattern, with connections interrupted by the diagonal Milwaukee Avenue and the CTA Blue Line "L" tracks. In the northeast quadrant, north-south blocks are longer than east-west blocks, while the opposite is true in the northwest quadrant. The southeast quadrant has the least through-connectivity. Roadways within the SSA boundaries include arterial and collector streets: Western Avenue, Ashland Avenue, North Avenue, Division Street, Armitage Avenue, Damen Avenue, and Milwaukee Avenue, with average annual daily traffic (AADT) ranging from 10,800 (on Milwaukee Avenue) to 38,900 (on Western Avenue).

Speed Limits

In Chicago, the speed limit is 30 miles per hour (mph) unless otherwise posted, but cars traveling on the major thoroughfares often exceed that limit. In 2007, sample data was collected on principal arterial speed limit compliance, showing that drivers along some segments of North Avenue and Western Avenue were driving closer to 40 mph[2]. A pedestrian struck by a car traveling at a speed of 20 mph has a 95 percent survival rate. This survival rate drops to 15 percent when struck by a car traveling at 40 mph[3]. Often more effective than posted speed limit signs, roadway design gives drivers clues as to how fast they should be traveling. Narrow travel lanes, high pedestrian traffic, high bicycle traffic, and on-street parking all tell a driver to instinctively slow down. Some of the major thoroughfares in WPB give drivers the impression that traveling at 40 mph is safe.

Photo of North Avenue looking west toward Western Avenue

2. "Speed Limit Compliance Maps for Principal Arterials in the Chicago Region as of 2007." CMAP, 2007. Online: http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=b8636d14-1db0-43ac-8f37-eaacdb7f6bfb&groupId=20583

3. Goodridge, Steven. "Effects of Vehicle Speed on Pedestrian Fatalities." NC Bike Ed collection of data sources: http://humantransport.org/sidewalks/SpeedKills.htm

Functional Classification and Road Type

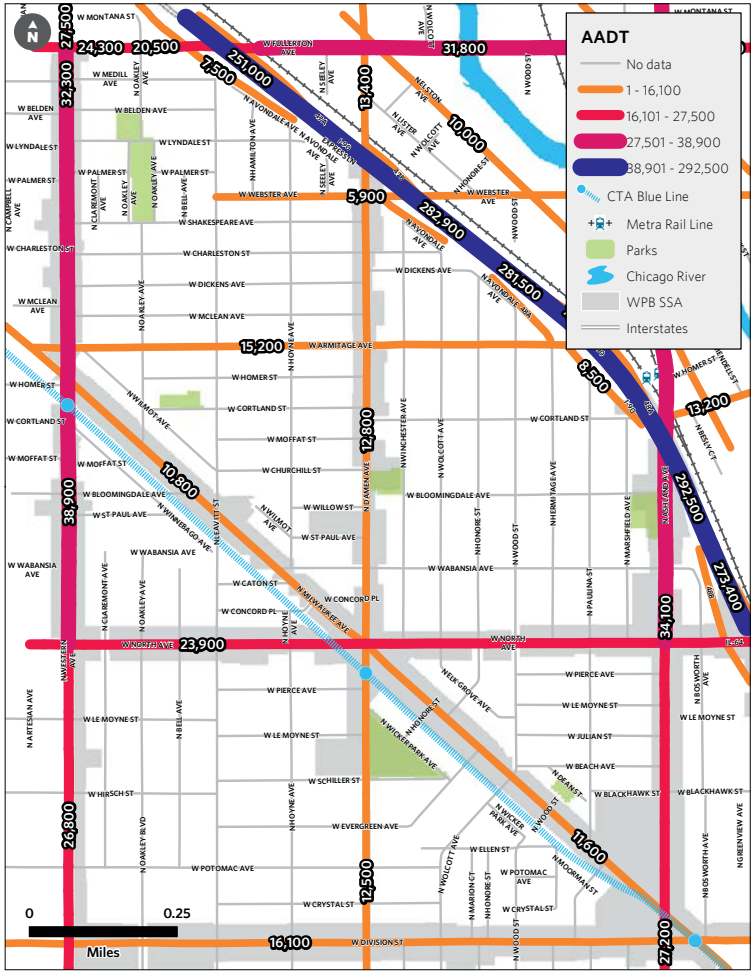
Roads provide space for three vital functions within a community – mobility, commerce and civic life. The functional classification of a road describes the character of the road in terms of vehicular mobility and the level of service they are intended to provide. A breakdown of roadways in the study area based on IDOT's functional classification designations is provided below. Additionally, the average daily traffic (ADT), width, and jurisdiction of each roadway are provided for comparison and to identify the agency responsible for repairs and maintenance.

Excluding local streets and the interstate, all roadways in the table accommodate between two and five lanes of through traffic. Western Avenue is the widest at five lanes (one painted, turning median), with two lanes of parked cars (one on each side). Ashland Avenue has four travel lanes with a raised median turn lane and a lane of parked cars on each side. Of the arterial streets, Western Avenue and North Avenue are designated Class 2 truck routes. Class 2 allows 5-axle tractor-semitrailer vehicles with a width of 8'6" and a height of 13'6"; through IL Local Access Provisions, trucks are allowed to travel off designated routes for food, fuel, rest, repairs, loading or unloading, with restrictions on wide trailers and heavy loads. North Avenue expands from a two-lane roadway to a five-lane roadway west of Western Avenue.

Functional Classification	Study Area Roadways		Average Daily Traffic		Jurisdiction	Approximate Surface Width
			Corridor Low	Corridor High		
Interstate	I-90 / 94	Class 1 LM Truck Route	273,400	292,500	IDOT	120' - 132'
Arterial *Provides the highest level of motor vehicle service at the greatest speed for the longest uninterrupted distance*	Western Avenue	Class 2 LM Truck Route	32,300	38,900	Cook County Highway Dept (but maintained by CDOT)	70' - 72'
	Ashland Avenue		27,200	34,100	Cook County Highway Dept (but maintained by CDOT)	54' - 68'
	North Avenue	Class 2 SM Truck Route	23,100	23,900	IDOT (but maintained by CDOT)	44' (74' west of Western)
Collector *Provides a less highly developed level of motor vehicle service at a lower speed and for shorter distances in order to collect traffic from local roads and connect them with arterials*	Division Street		16,100	16,100	CDOT	48'-60'
	Armitage Avenue		15,200	16,100	CDOT	52' - 60'
	Damen Avenue		12,500	13,400	CDOT	42' - 44'
	Milwaukee Avenue		10,800	12,200	CDOT	42'
Local *Consists of all roads not defined as arterials or collectors; primarily provides access to land with little or no through movement*	All other streets		-		CDOT	-

Milwaukee Avenue is the narrowest of the SSA streets at 42' wide. While the pedestrian activity on Milwaukee Avenue seems to easily connect both sides of the street, this is not the case along Western Avenue and Ashland Avenue, where the widely spaced traffic lights and high travel speeds break them into distinct pedestrian corridors. Interstate 90/94 forms the northern edge of the study area and has much higher AADT and speed limit. Often, drivers exiting highways are desensitized to the high speeds and drive onto the local streets faster than is safe or legal. This may explain the concentration of crashes at Armitage near the highway, when the rest of the street has more evenly spaced crashes, mostly at intersections (Figure 9).

Figure 18. Local Average Annual Daily Traffic

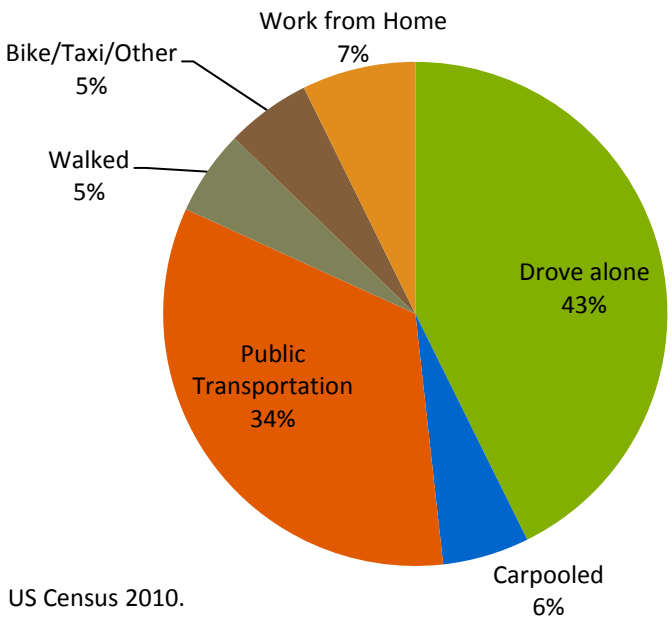


Commuting in WPB

According to data from the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) – a program of the Center for Economic Studies at the U.S. Census Bureau – nearly 9,000 people work in the study area; most of them live within 10 miles (6,091), and about half live within 5 miles (4,300). The highest percentages of workers come from 60647 (Logan Square / West Bucktown) and 60622 (Wicker Park, West Town, Ukrainian Village), with about eight percent living in each zip code. The rest come from other Chicago neighborhoods and a small proportion comes from the suburbs in the region.

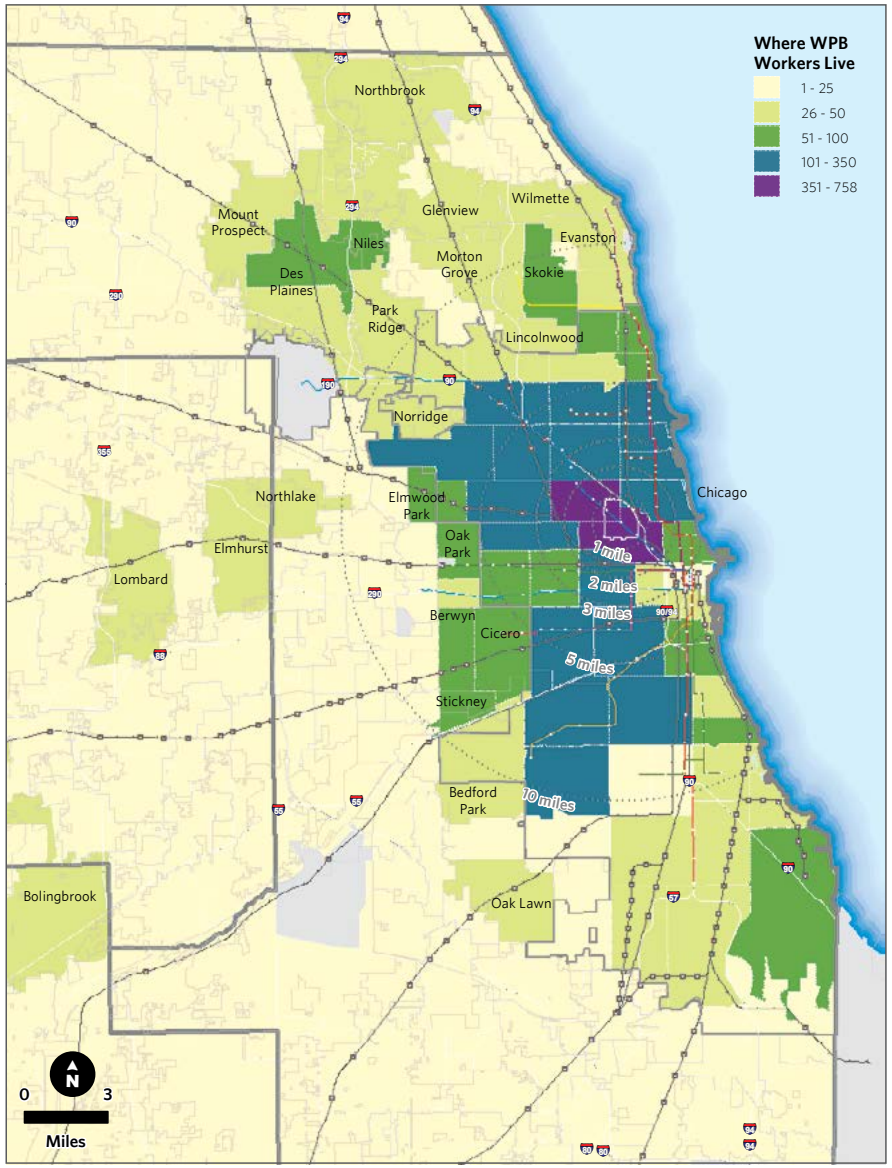
Data on transportation to work is not available at this scale for local employees, but it is available for area residents. Forty-three percent of WPB residents drive to work alone, and about an equal proportion use active transportation for their daily commute, with another seven percent working from home, and six percent carpooling (Figure 19).

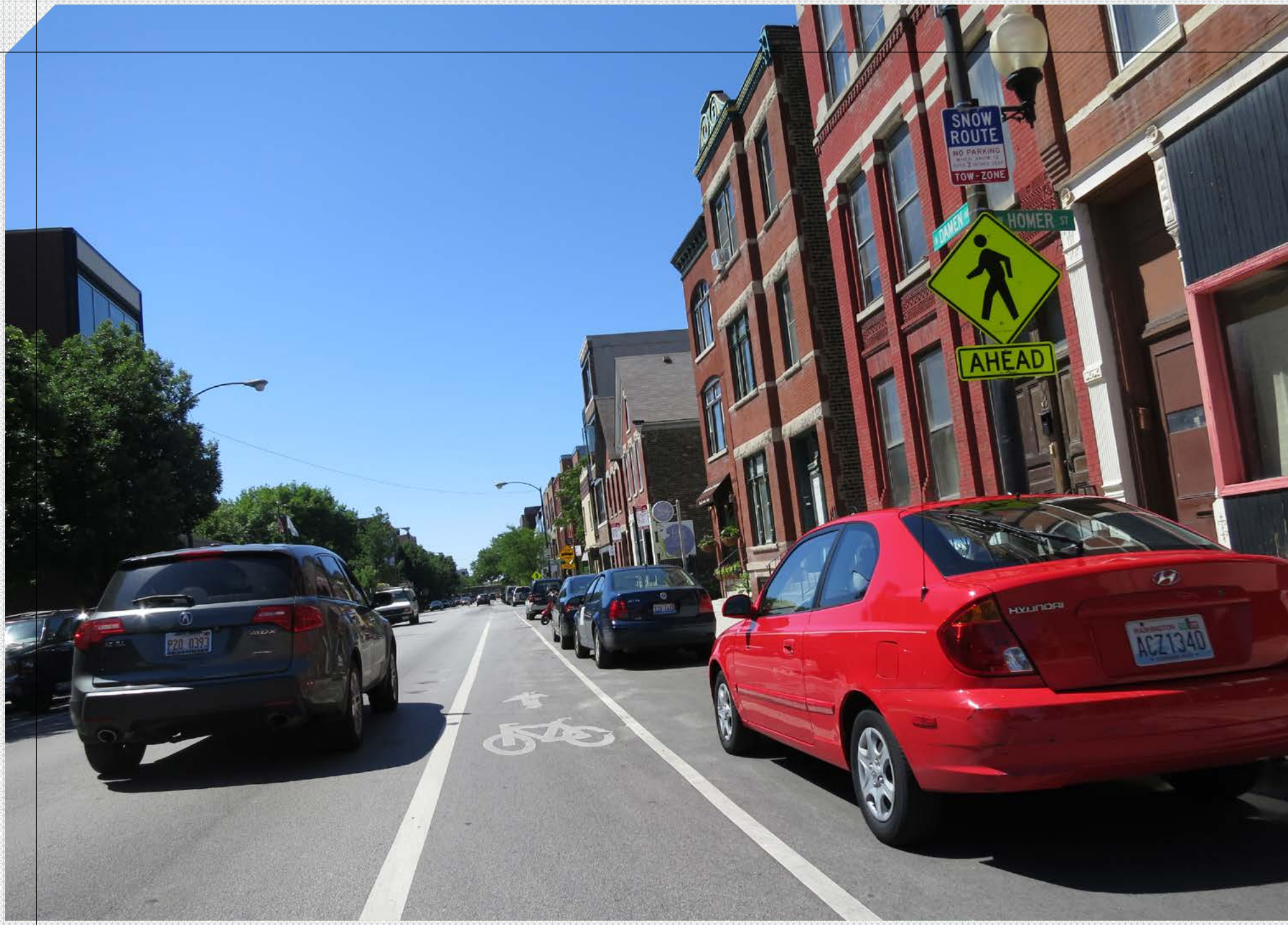
Figure 19. Means of Transportation to Work for WPB Residents, 2010



Source: US Census 2010.

Figure 20. Worker Profile: Where WPB Workers Live




SNOW ROUTE
NO PARKING
TOW-ZONE
N DAMEN
HOMER ST
AHEAD
HYUNDAI
ACZ1340

Section 6
Parking in WPB

WPB is one of the denser neighborhoods within the city of Chicago, providing residents, commuters and visitors with a variety of shops and attractions, as well as schools, churches, and housing options. The existing parking supply serves a diverse set of parking needs, including parking for local residents, businesses receiving deliveries, and evening restaurant and bar patrons. Customer parking demand changes by time of day and time of year, but the parking supply does not, creating congestion during some times and underutilization at others.

Key Findings

- **It is challenging to enforce parking in loading zones**. Although parking enforcement is strict in metered spots, it is more difficult to enforce in loading zones (since individuals purchase the spots through the city), with business owners or employees parking personal vehicles in prime spots for extended periods of time.
- **Demand for parking increases with the density of commercial and retail activity within the study area**, causing some areas to be consistently full while others remain underutilized.
- **Residential parking is underutilized during daytime hours**. Twenty-four hour residential parking permits prohibit daytime drivers, such as employees, from utilizing vacant spots during weekday work hours while many of the residents drive out of the area, leaving many spots vacant. Also, there are free parking spaces outside of the high demand area that are underutilized at all times.
- **Evening parking is the most congested**. One of the biggest draws to the area is the unique nightlife, but the parking meters are only in effect from 8:00 am until 9:00 pm[4] , which encourages visitors to arrive shortly before parking becomes free and remain in prime parking spots for the rest of the evening (particularly on Friday and Saturday evenings). This causes drivers to circle the block looking for parking and adds to the on-street congestion throughout the night. With the parking meter lease negotiation this summer, meter hours were extended until 10:00 pm and Sundays became free, which will allow drivers to leave their cars in a metered space from 10:00 pm on a Saturday night through Monday morning.

[4] The meter hours of enforcement were extended until 10:00 p.m. with the re-negotiation of the parking meter lease in the summer of 2013. All parking counts were conducted before this change.

Parking and Quality of Life

One of the main goals from the WPB Master Plan is to sustain and promote the quality of life of the local commercial district for the benefit of residents, visitors, and businesses. Yet the current parking situation is frustrating to residents who experience the area's regular congestion, confusing to visitors who are unable to easily locate parking spots, and can deter potential customers from visiting local businesses.

Existing Parking Supply

The study area has approximately 11,650 on-street parking spaces. There are also several private parking lots within the study area, which are shown in a gray hatch pattern in each of the maps but were not a part of the survey. The approximate breakdown of the 11,650 parking spaces surveyed within the WPB study area is shown in Table 2. Nearly three quarters of the parking supply is free (73%), the next largest percentage is permitted parking (15%), and then metered (9%) and Loading/15 minute/ 30 minute (3%).

Due to the large size and volume of data collected, the survey area has been divided into four quadrants throughout the study area, with North Avenue serving as the east-west divider and Damen Avenue as the North South divider. Figure 21 identifies each quadrant and its parking characteristics.

Figure 22. Parking Supply by Quadrant

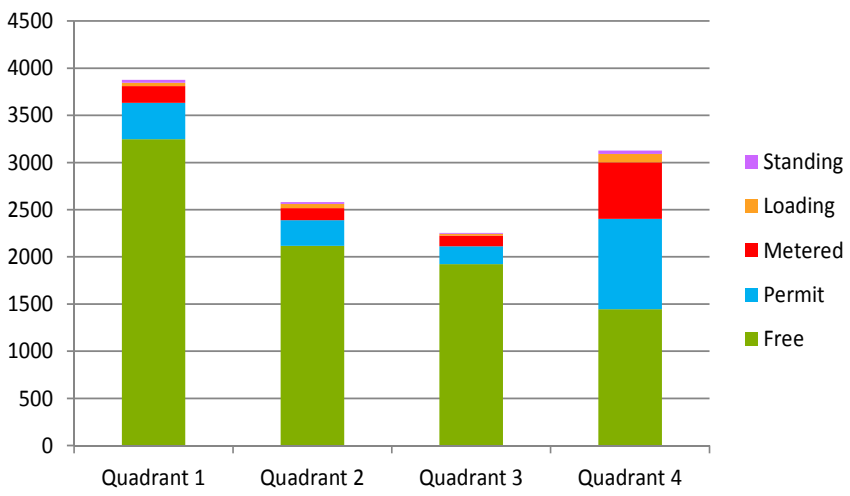
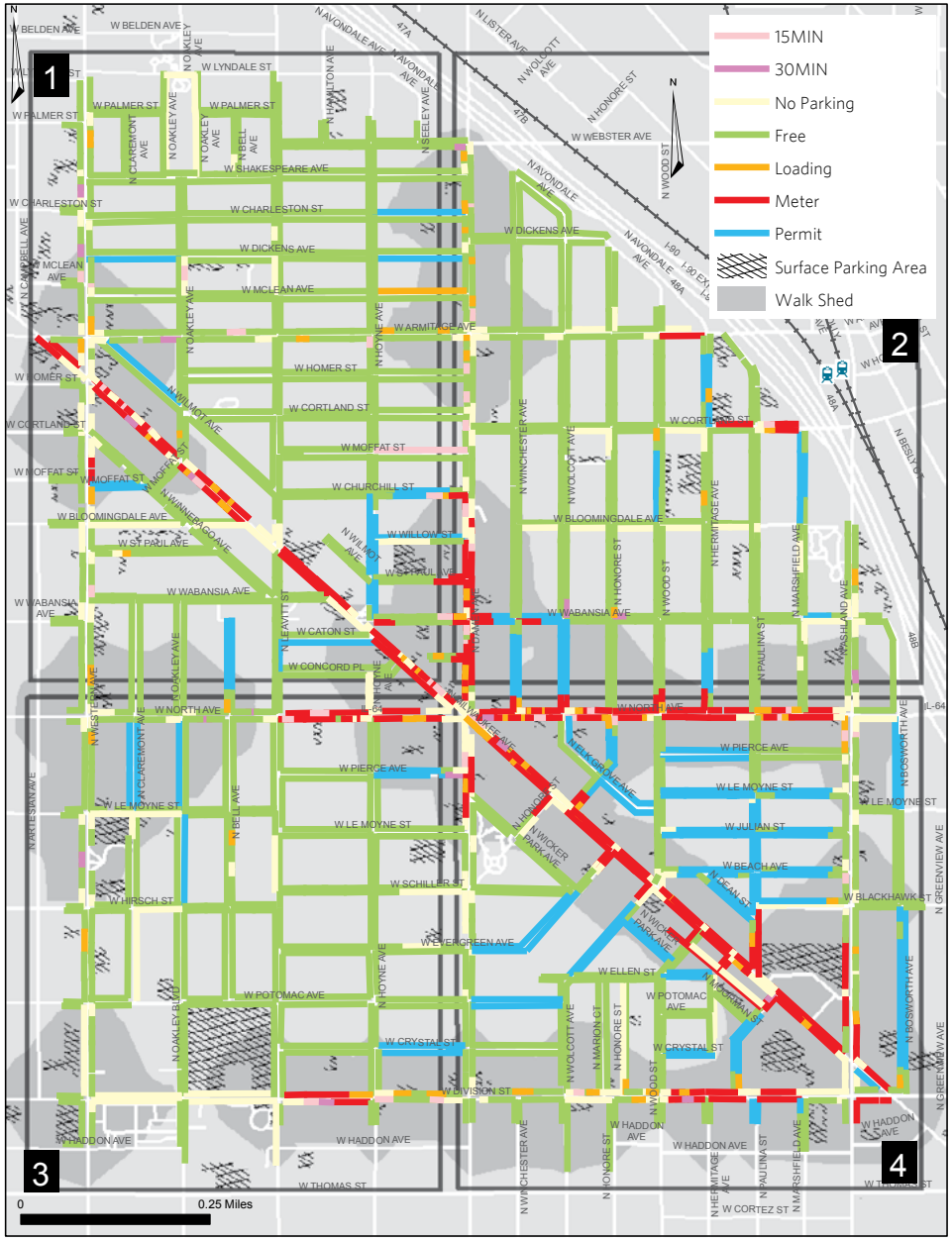


Figure 21. Study Area Parking Supply



Walkshed

In order to better understand parking behavior patterns within the WPB study area, a walk shed was created around agglomerations of "Points Of Interest" (POI's). POI's consist of retail, service, and institutional locations that attract consumers to the area. the points of interest were grouped and mapped with one point representing 10 POI's within the study area (see Graphics Appendix). A walk shed of an eighth of a mile—about a two minute walk—was established around each point. This distance was chosen since it is the average amount of time a driver is willing to walk from their car to their final destination; if the distance is past an eighth of a mile, the driver is more likely to circle the block for a more convenient space before parking. The walk shed appears in all subsequent maps as a darker gray in order to more easily undersand the parking patterns.

Quadrant 1: Northwest

The northwestern quadrant has approximately 3,900 on-street parking spaces. The two commercial streets surveyed in this quadrant are Milwaukee Avenue and Western Avenue, but Quadrant 1 is primarily residential, and most of the parking is free. The main attractions of WPB are concentrated in the southeastern section of the Quadrant, on Milwaukee and Damen Avenues. Many of the streets in this quadrant are one way, which appears to be a deterrent to drivers seeking parking, and contributes to low parking occupancy compared to other quadrants.

Quadrant 2: Northeast

There are approximately 2,650 on-street parking spaces in the northeastern quadrant. It is the most residential of the four quadrants, with Damen Avenue as the main commercial street within its boundaries. There are restaurants and local bars, but the overall pace is slower than Milwaukee Avenue to the south. Quadrant 2 is bordered by the I-90/94 Expressway, which can have high speed traffic or congestion, both of which spill over onto Ashland Avenue. The Metra station is also located in Quadrant 2, just east of the highway.

Figure 22. Percentage of Parking by Type

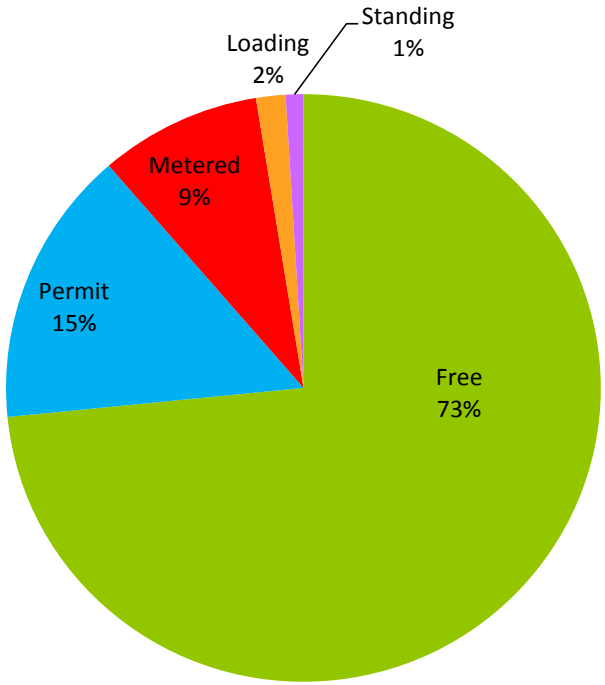


Table 2. Parking Supply by Type

Parking Type	Number of spaces
Free	8,553
Permit	1,775
Metered	1,025
Loading	186
15 Minute Standing	83
30 Minute Standing	28
Total spaces	11,650

Source: CMAP collected data, 2013.

Quadrant 3: Southwest

The southwestern portion of the study area has approximately 2,380 on-street parking spaces. This quadrant has two hospitals, several churches and four schools, and is otherwise mostly residential. The quadrant's boundaries are North Avenue, Division Street, Western Avenue and Damen Avenue. The latter three corridors provide retail and commercial amenities that account for points of interest as indicated by the walk shed that borders the northern and southern portion of the quadrant. Quadrant 3 includes portions of the Roberto Clemente Community Academy, the Presence Saints Mary and Elizabeth Medical Center, St. Elizabeth Hospital, and portions of St. Mary's of Nazareth Hospital. These institutions each have different parking needs and associated parking lots that affect the parking occupancy within this portion of the study area. Similar to Quadrant 1, this quadrant has many one-way streets, potentially explaining lower parking occupancy as cruising for a space requires more turns and is less convenient.

Quadrant 4: Southeast

The fourth quadrant, located in the southeastern portion of the study area, has just under 3,200 on-street parking spaces. This quadrant has the highest number of commercial streets, with Milwaukee, North, and Damen Avenue converging at the northwestern point of this quadrant (sometimes referred to as the "Six Corners"), as well as Milwaukee, Division, and Ashland in the southeaster corner. The presence of these major retail streets in proximity to one another and the high number of retail and commercial businesses within the area give this area the largest POI walkshed in the study area. This quadrant also has the highest amount of permit parking (31percent) the most metered parking (20 percent), and the least amount of free parking (48 percent) within the study area as a whole. This quadrant has the highest retail, commercial and housing density of the quadrants, further contributing to its higher parking demand. It also is the only quadrant with a public metered parking lot (on Bosworth Avenue , north of Division Street).

Other factors affecting parking

There are many factors that impact a neighborhood's parking demand. Some warrant further research and investigation. The following maps show some potential factors that would have an impact on parking occupancy levels: Land Use (Figure 23), Housing Density (Figure 24), and whether the streets are one-way or two-way (Figure 25).

Figure 23. Land Use in WPB

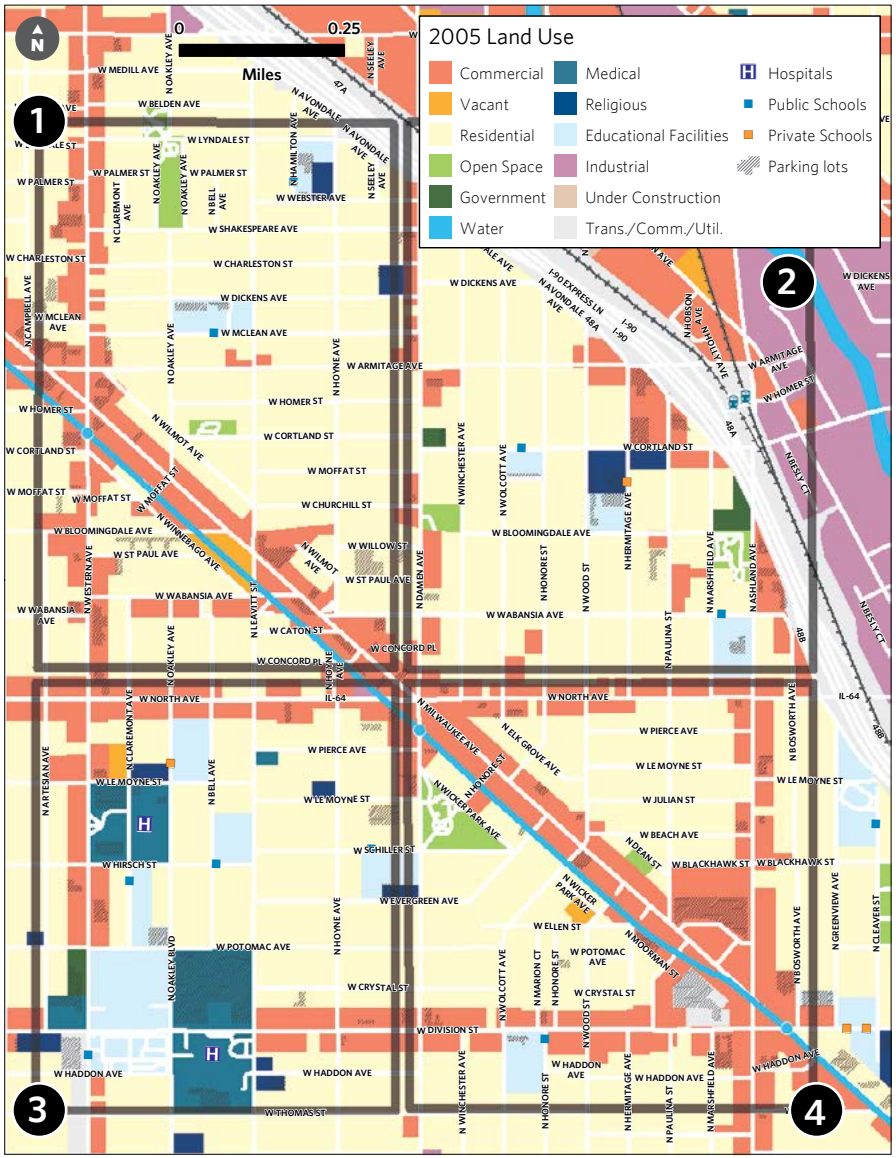


Figure 24. Housing Density in WPB

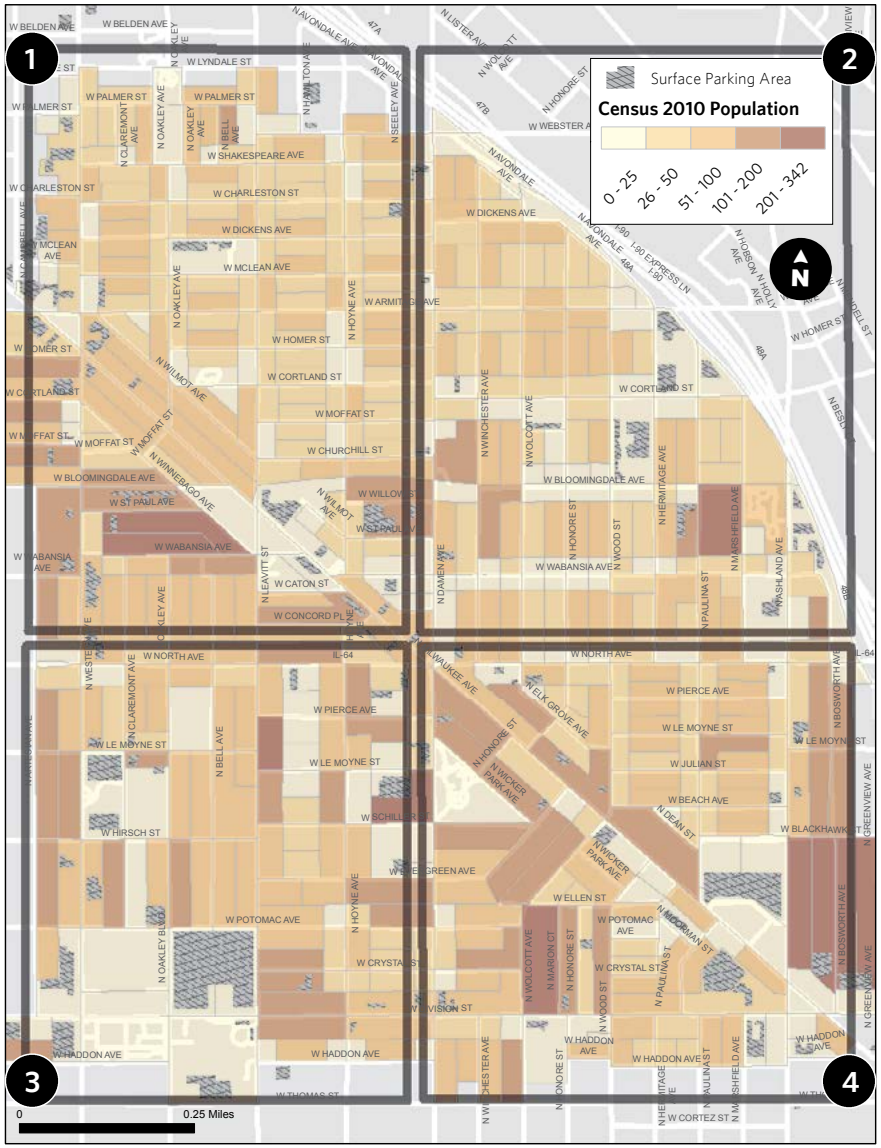
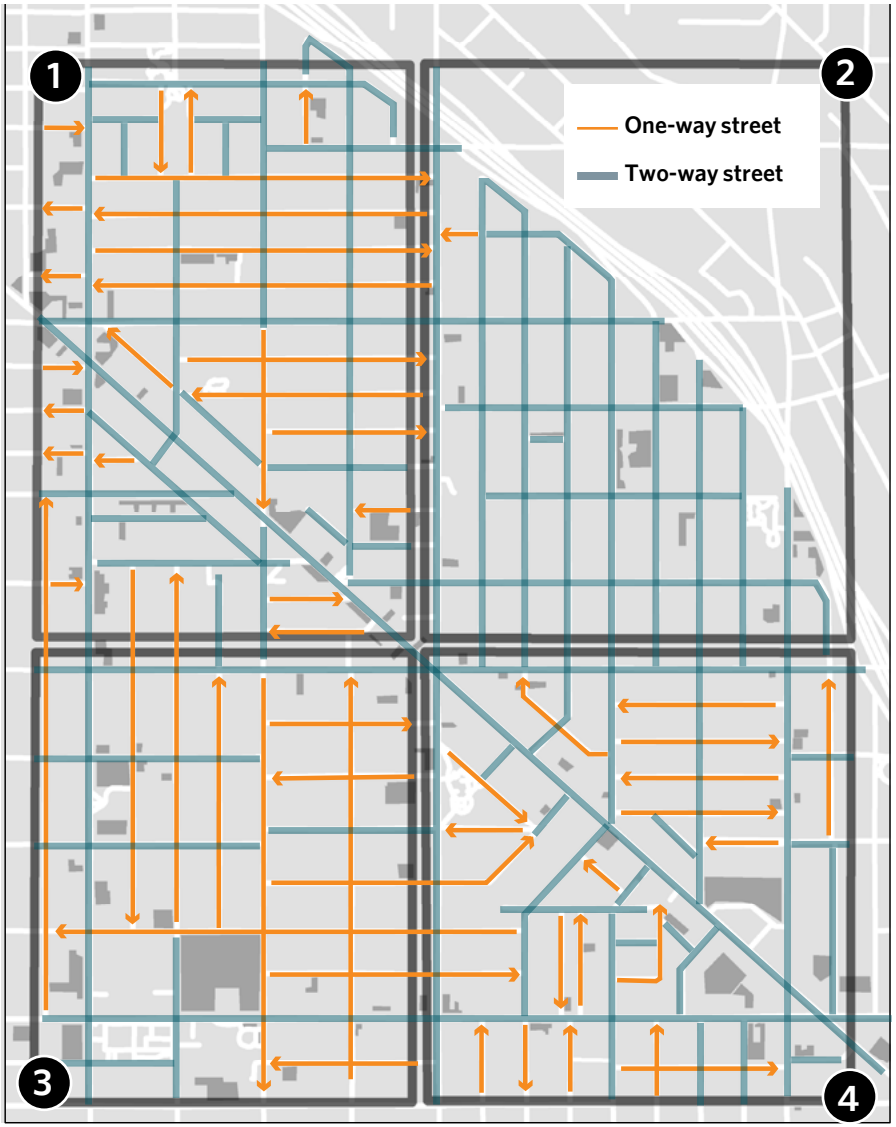


Figure 25. One-way and two-way streets in WPB



Observed Parking Occupancy Rates

To understand where people park in the WPB study area, staff counted the number of parked cars on street segments at various times of day, on various days of the week. The subsequent maps display line segments color-coded by the percentage of parked cars observed during the studied times of day.

Car counts were conducted at 10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m., and 9:00 pm. For the 10:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. time slots, only the commercial corridors of the WPB were counted. Counts were conducted on weekdays (Monday – Thursday), weekends (Friday and Saturday), and Sundays. While parking occupancy varies from day to day, month to month, or seasonally, these counts help to give a better general understanding of where over- and under-utilized parking patterns are within the study area. Times were chosen to reflect the differences between various user group demand levels. This may include delivery times, as well as arrival and departure times of residents, commuters, employees, and shoppers within the study area. Friday was grouped with Saturday because parking habits have more similarity to Saturdays than to other days of the week. Many of the Friday / Saturday 1:00 p.m. parking counts were conducted on Fridays and it should be noted that the actual parking habits may differ from the findings at midday on Saturdays.

Weekday parking counts were kept separate from Friday/Saturday counts to reflect the habits of weekday shoppers, residents, and employees; Sunday was also separated since the behavior of patrons on Friday and Saturday differ from that of Sunday; Sunday attracts more families, restaurant patrons, and churchgoers. The recent City Council parking meter re-negotiation making metered parking free on Sundays was not in effect during the parking counts. Private parking lots were not included in the survey.

Maps of average occupancy show overall parking patterns (Figures 26-28).

Table 3. Parking Count Times

	Commercial Streets		All Streets	
Weekday	10:00 AM	9:00 PM	1:00 PM	6:00 PM
Friday / Saturday	10:00 AM	9:00 PM	1:00 PM	6:00 PM
Sunday			1:00 PM	

Figure 26. Average Parking Occupancy

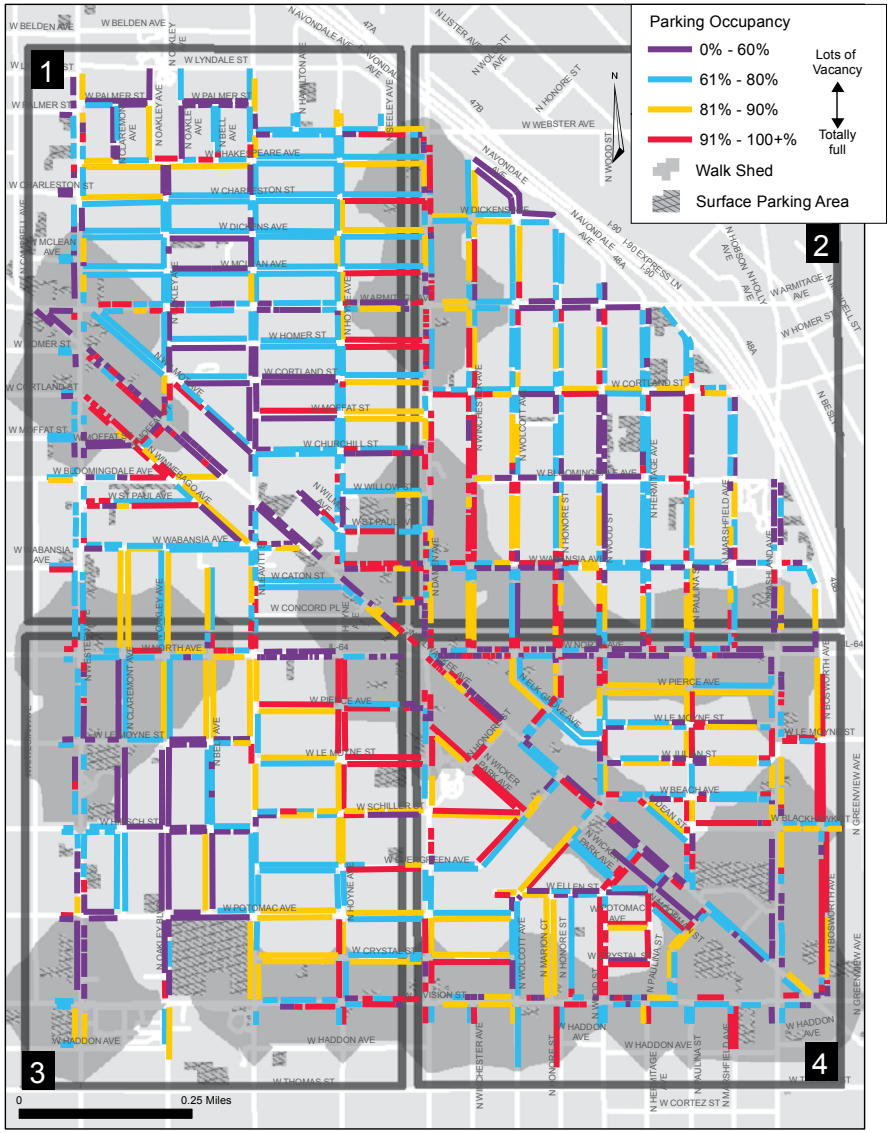
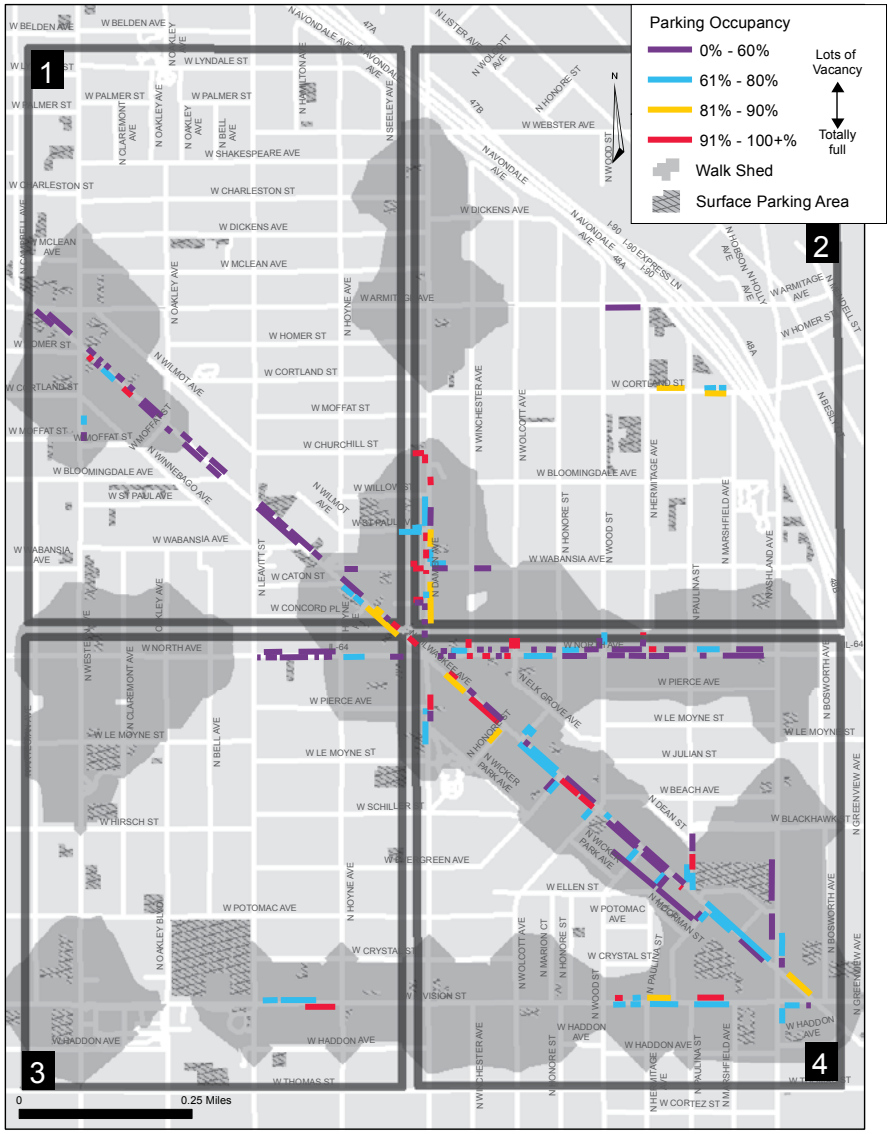


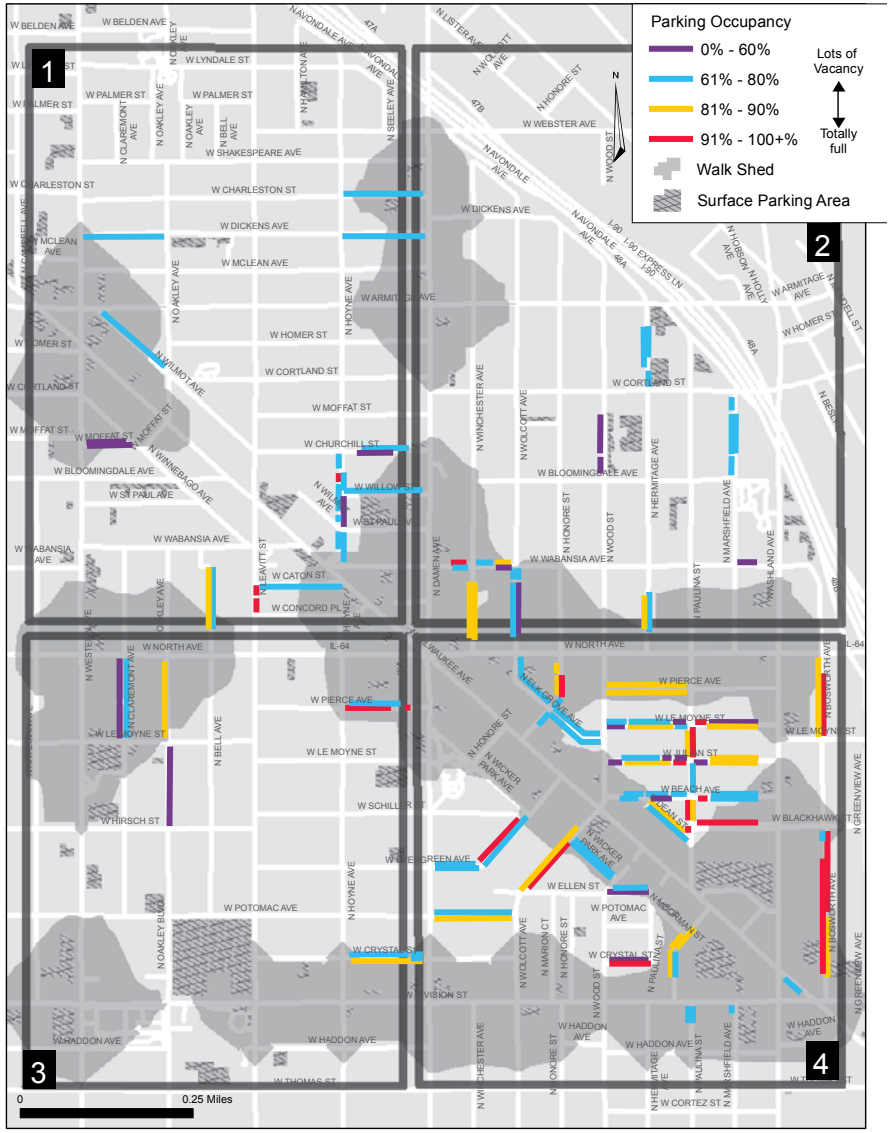
Figure 27. Average Parking Occupancy for Metered Spaces (includes free times)



The percentage breakdowns used in the maps were selected to reflect the target occupancy rate of 85 percent. When parking is 85 percent full, there are many cars parked, but there are still one or two spaces available per block. When occupancy levels exceed 90 percent, the area would be considered to have "parking congestion," in which drivers circle the block in search of parking, or queue up to take available spots. Occupancy below 80 percent could indicate that shoppers are abandoning the area for other locations. Ideally, all streets in the study area would be in the range of 81-90 percent occupied, indicating a high level of street activity without complete parking congestion. Purple indicates that there is 60 percent occupancy or less; light blue is 61 -80 percent occupied; and red is above 90 percent - sometimes exceeding 100 percent in blocks where cars were illegally parked.

Photo from Creative Commons, by Flickr user eddielo.

Figure 28. Average Parking Occupancy for Permit Parking Spaces



Weekdays, 1:00 PM

At midday, on weekdays, many WPB residents are working and have their cars with them. Most people driving to the area during this time are employees, short term customers, and lunch goers. WPB experiences the lowest rates of parking occupancy at this time. The streets with free parking within the POI walking shed, or those just outside of it, seem to have higher parking occupancy, such as Bloomingdale Avenue and St. Paul Avenue in Quadrant 1; Winchester and Honore Street in Quadrant 2; and Le Moyne and Pierce in Quadrant 3.

Parking in the central residential areas within each quadrant is less desirable to motorists who would prefer not to walk at length before they reach their destination. These streets include Cortland, Homer, and Armitage in Quadrant 1; and Hirsch, Potomac, and Oakley in Quadrant 3. This time period also has the lowest percentage of occupied metered parking spaces, the majority of which are between 0-60 percent occupied. The areas in which spaces are 90-100+ percent full are primarily in loading/standing parking zones, indicating that commercial streets during this time period may be used more for deliveries and loading, or shoppers simply avoid the metered spaces by seeking out the free and standing zone spaces.

Figure 30. Free / Metered Parking Occupancy Comparison, Weekday 1:00 PM

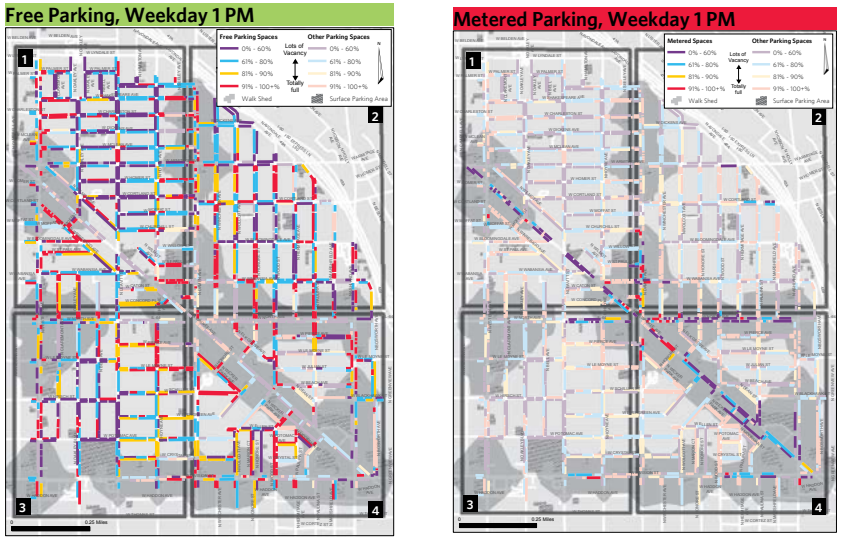
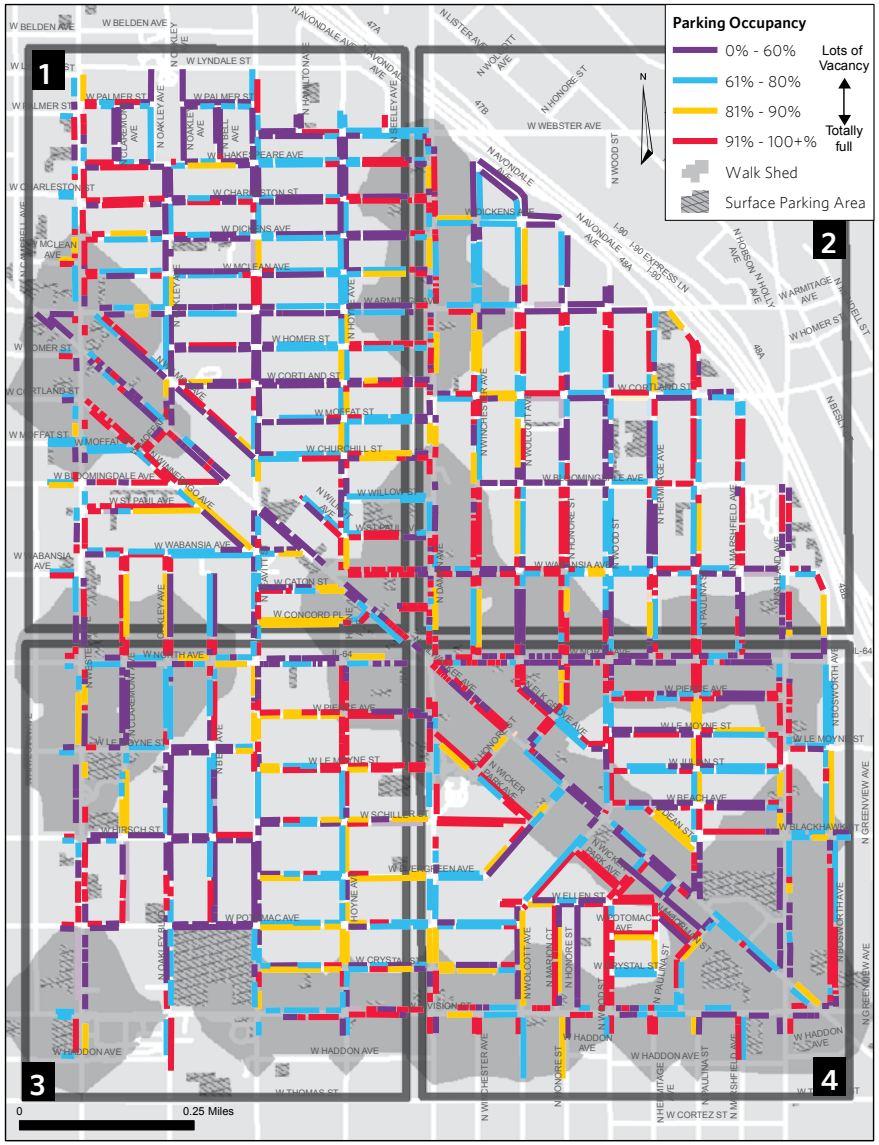


Figure 29. Parking Occupancy, Weekday 1:00 PM



Weekdays, 6:00 PM

By 6:00pm, the typical work day has ended and many residents are out running errands or returning home from their jobs, while others are out for dinner or shopping along commercial streets. Due to heightened activity, the overall parking occupancy within WPB's POI walking shed also increases. Residential streets in Quadrant 1 located between Hoyne and Damen, such as Armitage, Homer, Moffat, and McClean are often over 90 percent occupied.

As residents return home from work, the free and permitted spaces in residential areas begin to fill up. Free spaces in the residential portion of Quadrant 3 (Wood, Hermitage, Paulina, Dickens, and Winchester) along with permitted spaces in the residential portion of Quadrant 4 (Pierce, Le Moyne, Julian, and Beach) have increased parking occupancy, generally between 80-100 percent full.

Despite these increases, many of the residential streets located in the central portion of Quadrant 1 remain unaffected, with only 0-60 percent occupancy. As mentioned before, this quadrant has many one-way streets, potentially deterring drivers from parking and explaining this pattern (see Figure 28).

Figure 32. Free / Metered Parking Occupancy Comparison, Weekday 6:00 PM

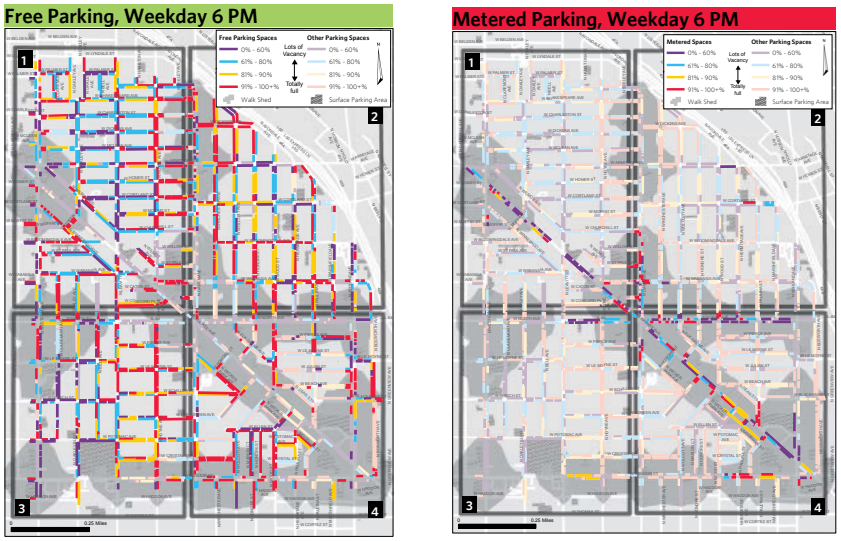
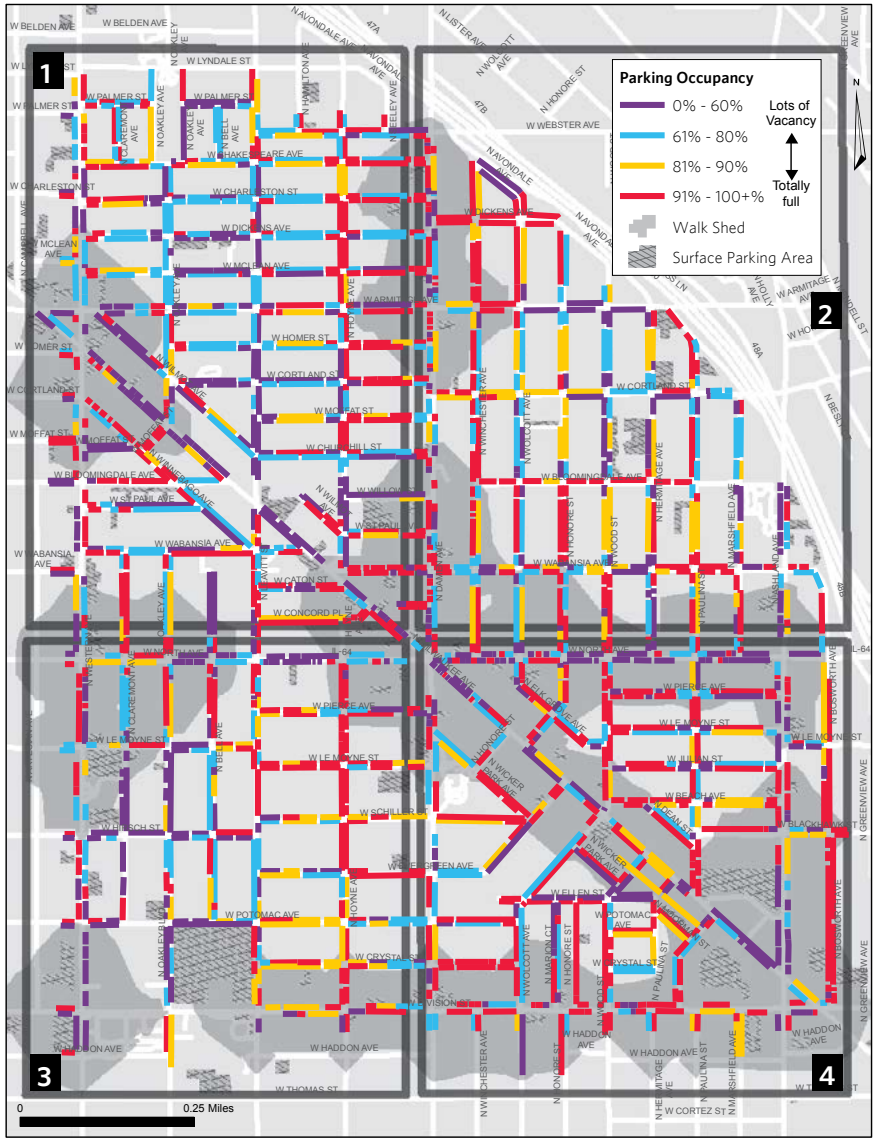


Figure 31. Parking Occupancy, Weekday 6:00 PM



Friday / Saturday, 1:00 PM

On Fridays and Saturdays, residents and visitors display similar parking behavior as a weekday at 1:00 pm, with lunch goers, shoppers, and residents filling up restaurants and boutiques along WPB's commercial streets. Accordingly, the free parking spots within proximity to a larger POI walkshed have higher parking occupancy. This can be seen in Quadrants 3 and 4 at the intersection of Division and Damen, spilling over to the surrounding free residential streets including Crystal, Marion, and Wood. This pattern of increased parking occupancy can also be seen in Quadrant 3 along the western portion of North Avenue and the surrounding residential streets in Quadrants 1 and 3 such as Bell, Oakley, and Claremont.

The least occupied spaces during this time period are located in the residential areas with free spaces in the central sections of Quadrants 1, 2, and 3. Also similar to the Weekday 1:00 p.m. survey period, metered parking along commercial streets is primarily between 0-60 percent occupied, with an increase at the intersection of Milwaukee, North, and Damen Avenue. Many of these spaces are loading zones, often used by business owners or employees, and some loading. Overall, the Friday/Saturday 1:00 p.m. survey period confirms the tendency that drivers are attracted to the commercial streets, and will park within reasonable proximity of their ultimate destination in order to avoid paying the meters.

Figure 34. Free / Metered Parking Occupancy Comparison, Friday / Saturday 1:00 PM

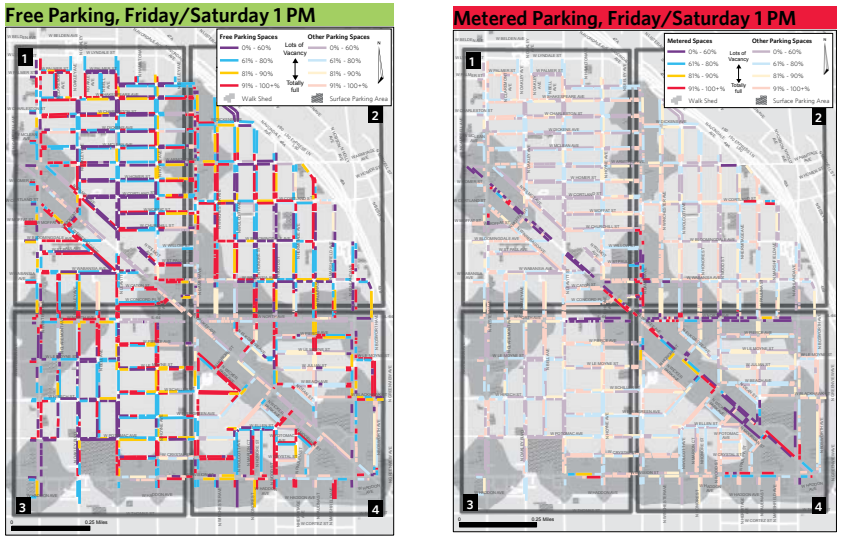
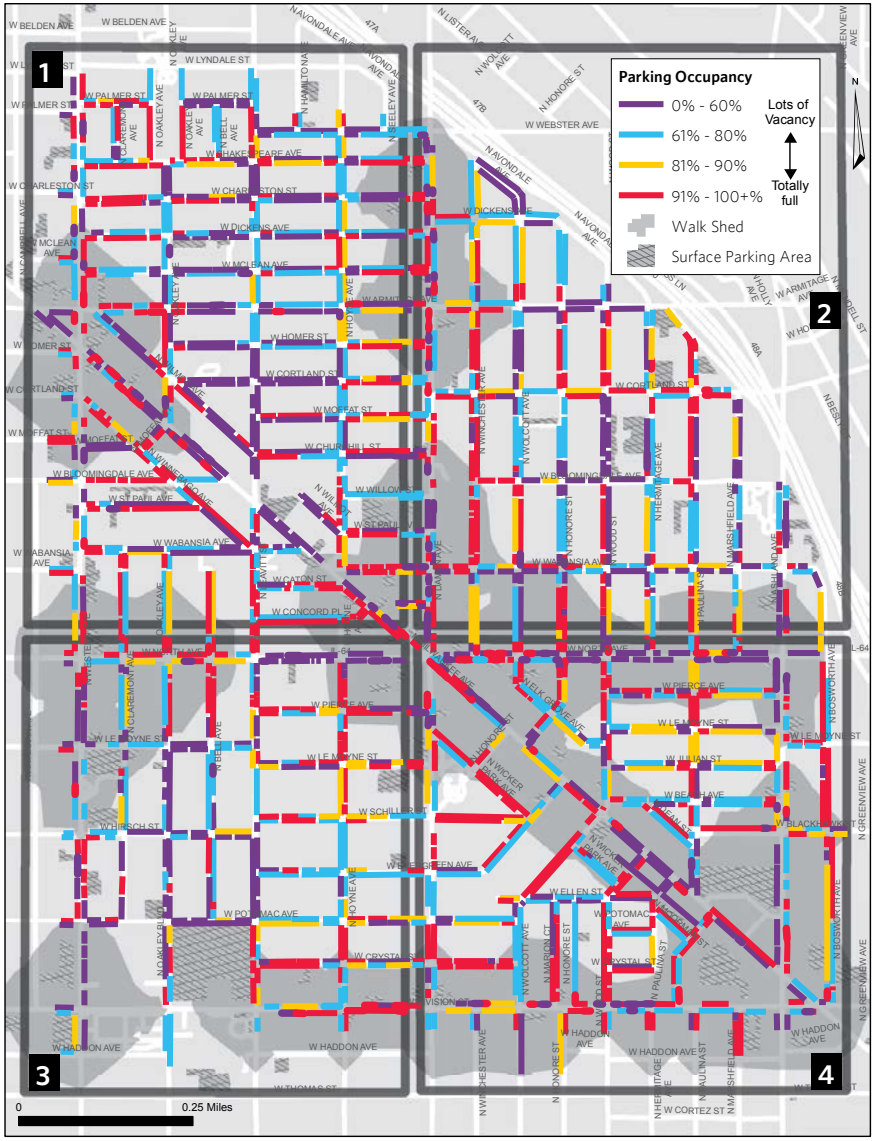


Figure 33. Parking Occupancy, Friday / Saturday, 1:00 PM



Friday / Saturday, 6:00 PM

During the Friday / Saturday 6:00 p.m. time slot, the typical work week is over and many people visit the variety of restaurants, bars, and other nightlife activities WPB has to offer.

With many residents home at this hour and additional visitors, shoppers, and diners in the area, WPB's overall parking occupancy was the highest during this survey period and at 9:00 p.m. Much of the permitted parking—particularly in Quadrant 4—has over 90 percent occupancy. Similar to weekdays at 6:00 p.m., free residential parking within the POI walkshed in proximity to commercial streets experiences high occupancy. This can be seen in Quadrant 2, along Winchester, Wolcott, Honore, and Wood, which have over 90 percent occupancy.

There is also a significant increase in occupancy of free residential parking spaces in Quadrant 3 between Leavitt and Damen, including Pierce, Le Moyne, Schiller, Potomac and Crystal. High occupancy on free streets results in more drivers using the metered parking along WPB commercial streets. Occupancy rates of 90-100+ percent are found along North and Milwaukee Avenues in Quadrant 4, where despite having to pay, more drivers are parking in the metered spaces.

The streets with the lowest occupancy rates are the free residential streets in the western portion of Quadrant 3, including Oakley, Hirsch, and Potomac. This quadrant houses several large institutional buildings primarily used during working weekday hours, such as the Roberto Clemente Community Academy and Saints Mary and Elizabeth Medical Center. Visitors—along with residents—would be required to walk at length before arriving to commercial activities or their residential streets. And less street activity makes people feel unsafe.

Figure 35. Parking Occupancy, Friday / Saturday, 6:00 PM

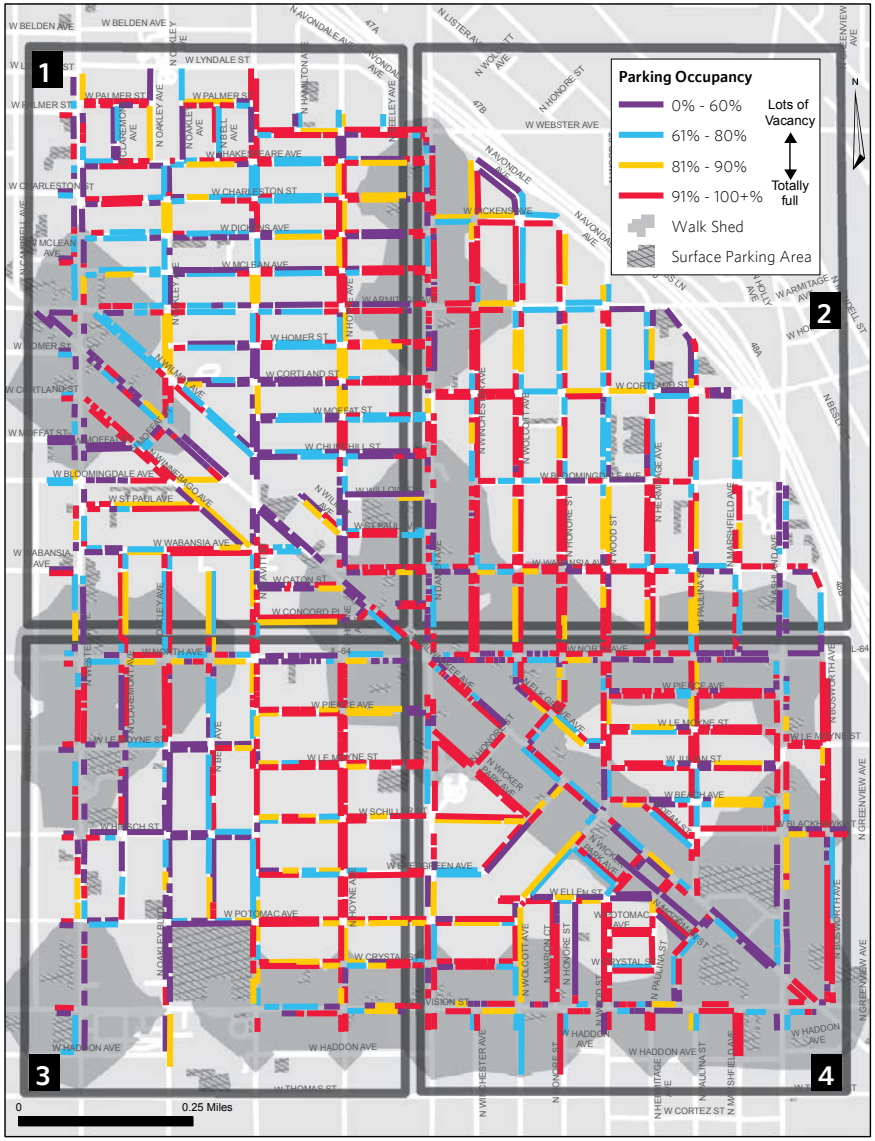
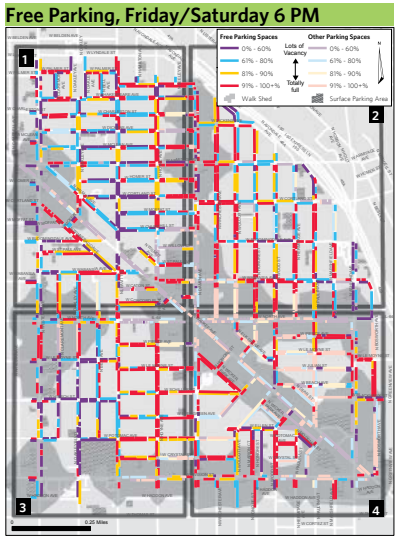
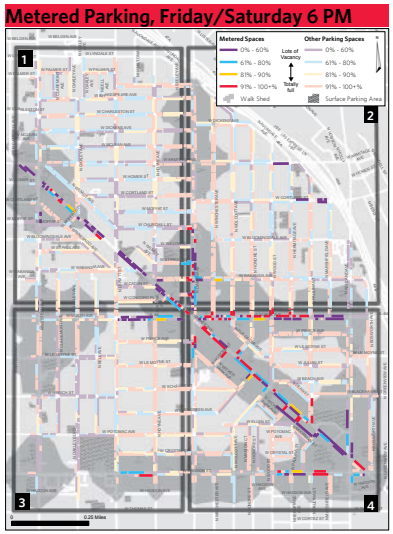


Figure 36. Free / Metered Parking Occupancy Comparison, Friday / Saturday 6:00 PM

Free Parking, Friday/Saturday 6 PM



Metered Parking, Friday/Saturday 6 PM



Sunday, 1:00 PM

Similar to Friday / Saturday counts, Sunday is not a typical workday, giving residents and potential visitors the opportunity to visit WPB's various retail shops and commercial amenities. Accordingly, Figure 38 shows a slight overall increase in metered parking occupancy, particularly in Quadrant 4. Sunday is more likely to attract consumers from other parts of the city and the free residential parking is being used by many local residents. It is likely that visitors are willing to pay for metered parking in order to visit the many commercial destinations in the study area [Parking counts were conducted when Sunday metered parking was not free].

Some of the residential streets experience higher parking demand at this time. For example, Quadrant 1 had 0-60 percent occupancy on many residential streets for all previous 1:00 PM counts, but has greater occupancy, at 61-80 percent, for this survey period.

This residential parking demand may indicate that many residents with automobiles drive their cars to work on a regular basis and are more likely to park in the study area on the weekend. Also, demand from churchgoers on these streets is likely to have an impact. Similar to the Friday/Saturday 6:00 p.m. survey period, free parking along the large institutional structures in Quadrant 3 remains underutilized on Oakley, Hirsch, and Western at 0-60 percent occupied.

Figure 38. Free / Metered Parking Occupancy Comparison, Sunday 1:00 PM

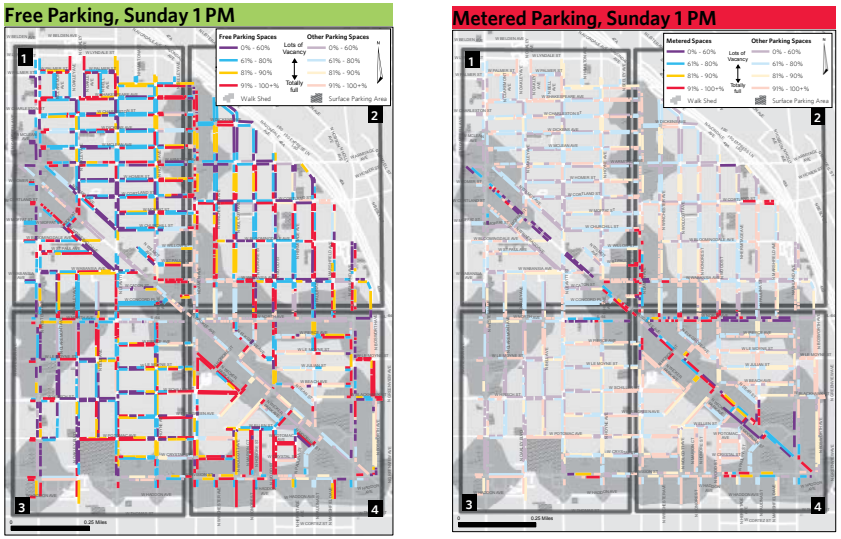
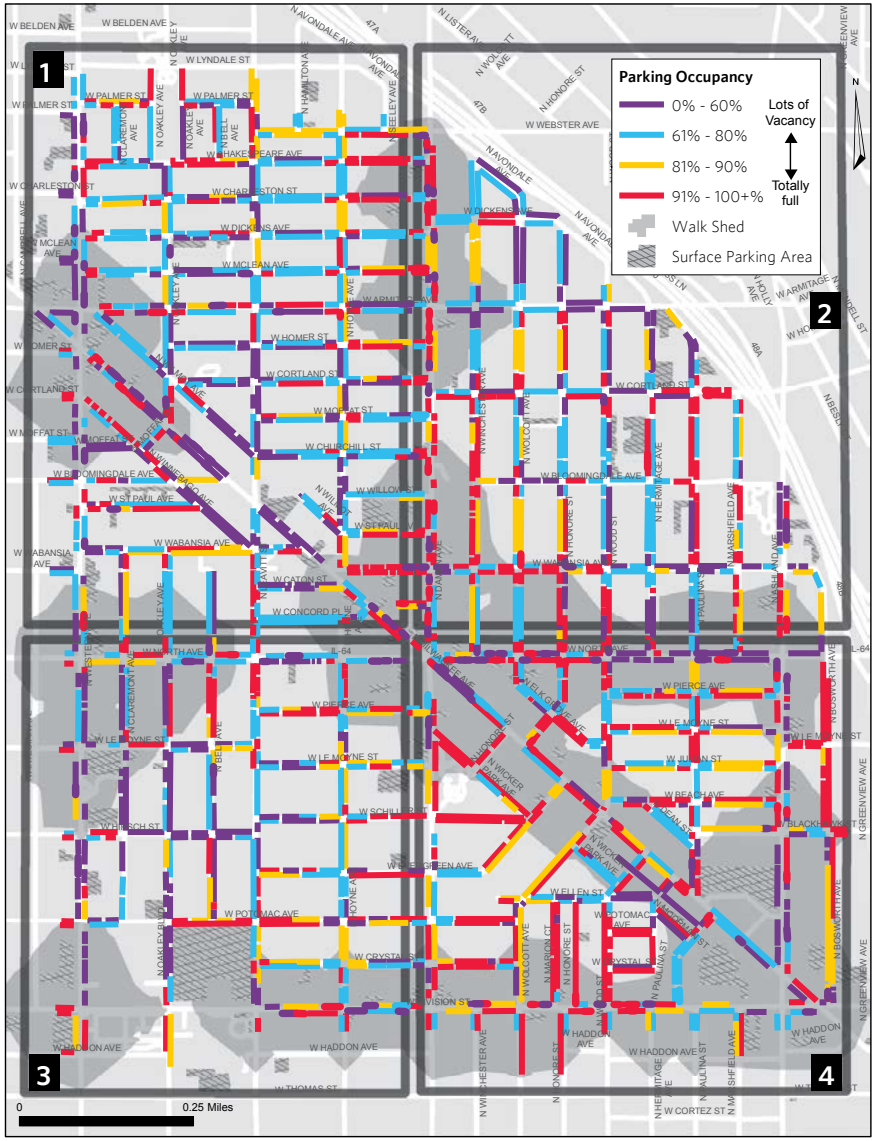


Figure 37. Parking Occupancy, Sunday, 1:00 PM



Additional Surveys of Commercial Streets

Commercial streets within the WPB SSA were surveyed at additional times to gain a better understanding of parking behavior along WPB's commercial spine. Streets surveyed include Division Street, Ashland Avenue, North Avenue, Western Avenue, Damen Avenue, and Milwaukee Avenue. Each street varies in design, traffic density, and amenities, attracting different users at different times. Ashland and Western Avenues each serve as arterial roads with steady streams of higher speed traffic, with high congestion during the morning and evening rush hours. Milwaukee Avenue, North Avenue and Damen Avenue embody more neighborhood characteristics, such as mixed-use structures, active sidewalks, and small scale streetscape design. Division Street is also more of a neighborhood scale, prized for its wide sidewalks, outdoor restaurant and bar seating. It also has two lanes of traffic, with many cars and trucks loading and making deliveries.

Weekday, 10:00 AM

Weekdays at 10:00am has the lowest rate of parking occupancy on commercial streets, with most metered spaces between 0-60 percent full.

The areas with the highest parking demand are at the intersection of Western and North Avenue (particularly along Western Avenue in Quadrants 1 and 3) and along Damen Avenue at the north end of the study are(Quadrant 2). As Figure 40 indicates, these are free parking spaces in which more commercial services are located, such as laundromats, grocery stores, and hair salons. Also, local employees are likely to seek out these free spaces.

Figure 39. Parking Occupancy, Weekday, 10:00 AM

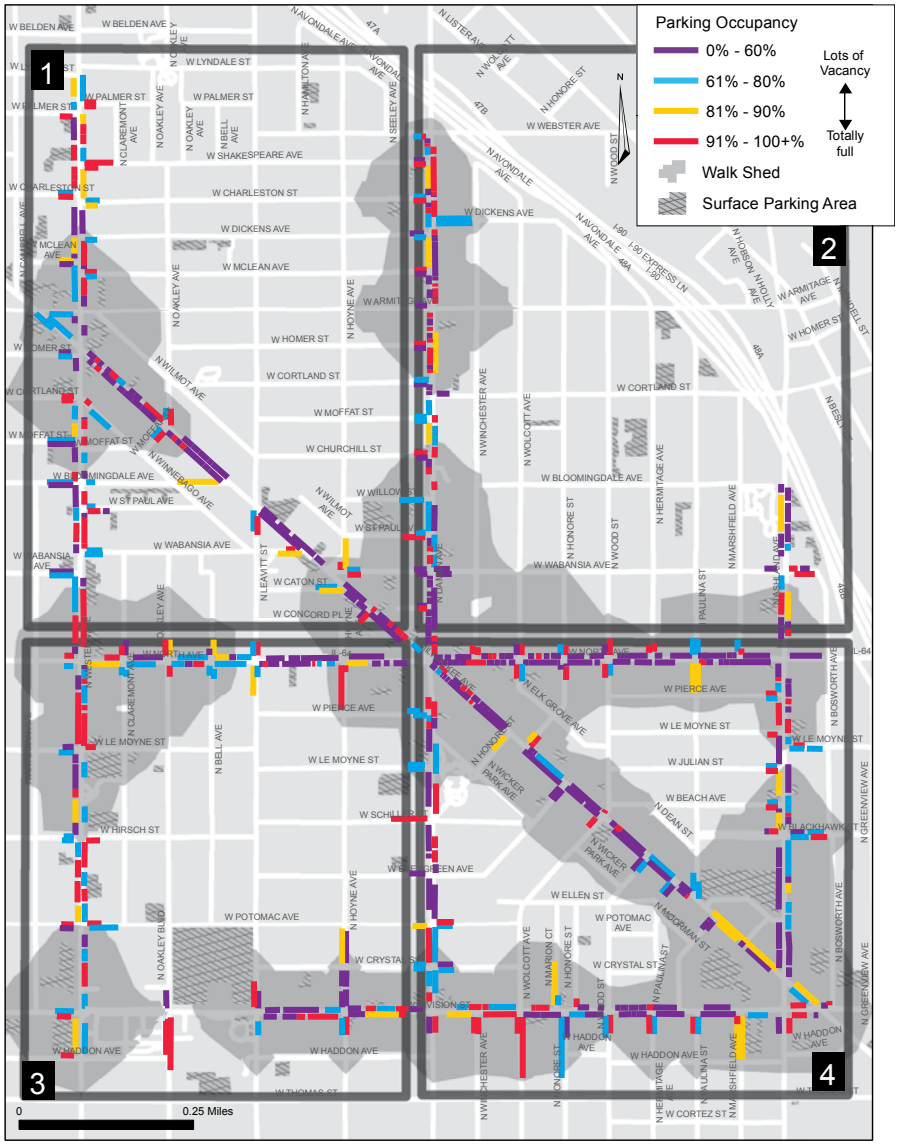
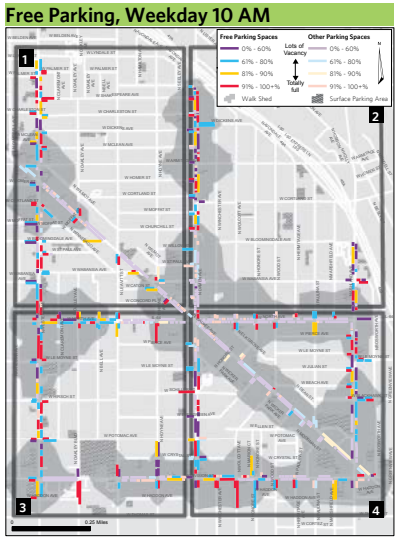
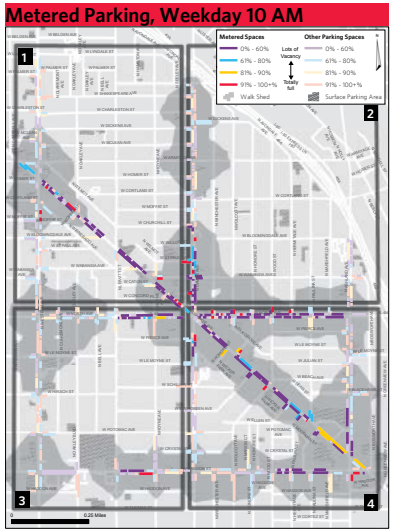


Figure 40. Free / Metered Parking Occupancy Comparison, Weekday, 10:00 AM





Weekday, 9:00 PM

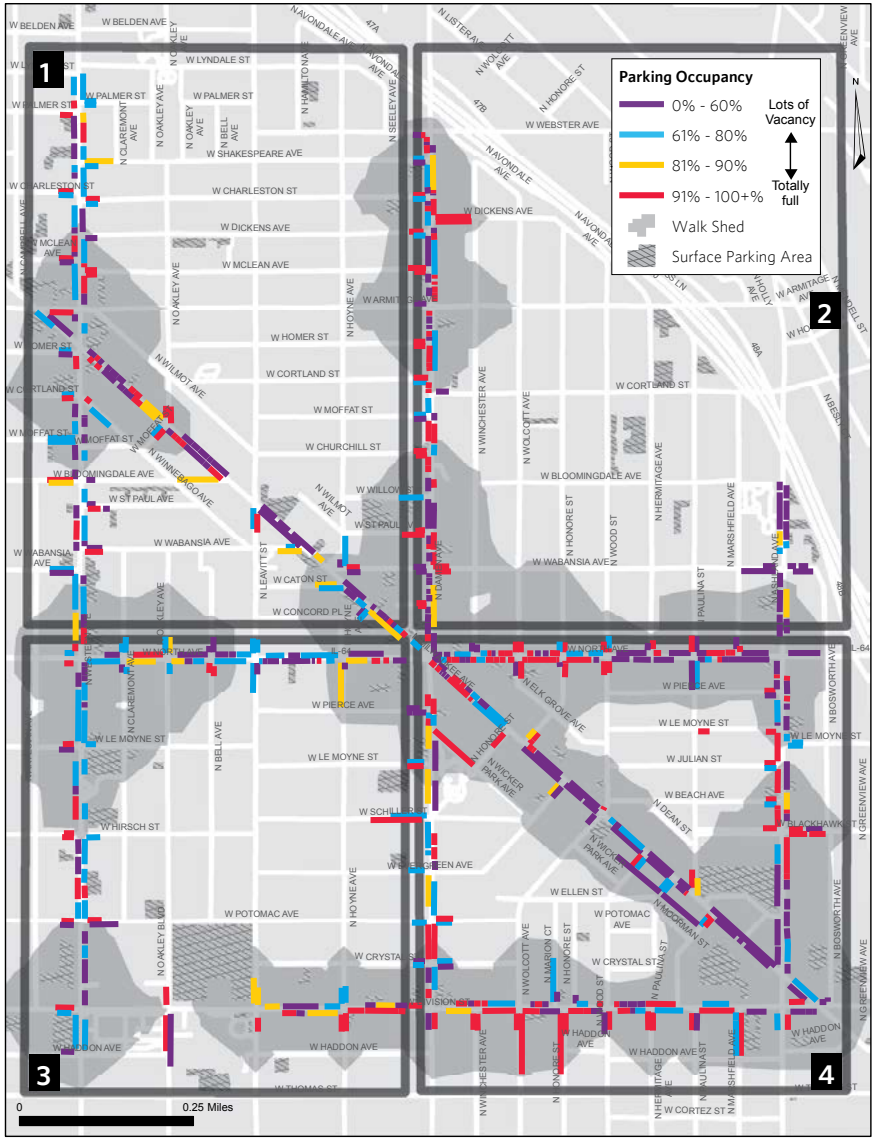
As mentioned before, when we did the survey counts, the metered parking was free after 9:00 p.m. At this time on weekdays, most residents have returned from work, while visitors have finished eating dinner and are enjoying the WPB nightlife. In comparison to other times of the day, there is an overall increase in parking occupancy. As seen in Figure 41, the highest parking demand is in Quadrant 4 along Division, North, and Ashland, where the POI walkshed borders each of these commercial streets. There is also an increased amount of parking occupancy along the northern portion of Damen Avenue in Quadrant 2, where more neighborhood bars and restaurants are located.

Conversely, Quadrants 1 and 3 have a low parking occupancy rate during this time period, particularly along North and Western Avenue in Quadrant 3 and Milwaukee Avenue in Quadrant 1. This increased vacancy may be attributed to the types of businesses located along these streets; although they contain POI's, many of them are not open or utilized after the typical workday hours of 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Comparison maps of free and metered parking are not shown because all of the parking was free at 9:00 pm, when the surveys were conducted.

Photo from Creative Commons, by Eric Rogers.

Figure 41. Parking Occupancy, Weekday, 9:00 PM



Friday / Saturday, 10:00 AM

At this time, on Saturdays more so than Fridays, visitors, employees, and residents can be found window shopping, receiving shipments, or running errands along WPB commercial streets, reflecting an overall increase in parking occupancy compared to weekdays at 10:00 a.m.

There is a slight increase in metered parking occupancy, particularly along streets with a larger POI walkshed. For example, sections of Milwaukee Avenue in Quadrant 4 and between Western Avenue and Oakley Avenue in Quadrant 1 (Figure 43). Whereas, commercial streets without a POI walkshed, such as Milwaukee Avenue in Quadrant 1 between Oakley Avenue and Leavitt Street, and North Avenue between Leavitt Street and Damen in Quadrant 3, have many segments with parking occupancy levels of less than 60 percent.

Similar to weekdays at 10:00 a.m., the northern portions of Damen and Western Avenues in Quadrants 1 and 2 displayed an occupancy rate between 90-100+ percent; this is likely—again—due to the service-oriented stores lining these streets with free parking, used by both resident and employees.

Figure 43. Free / Metered Parking Occupancy Comparison, Friday / Saturday 10:00 AM

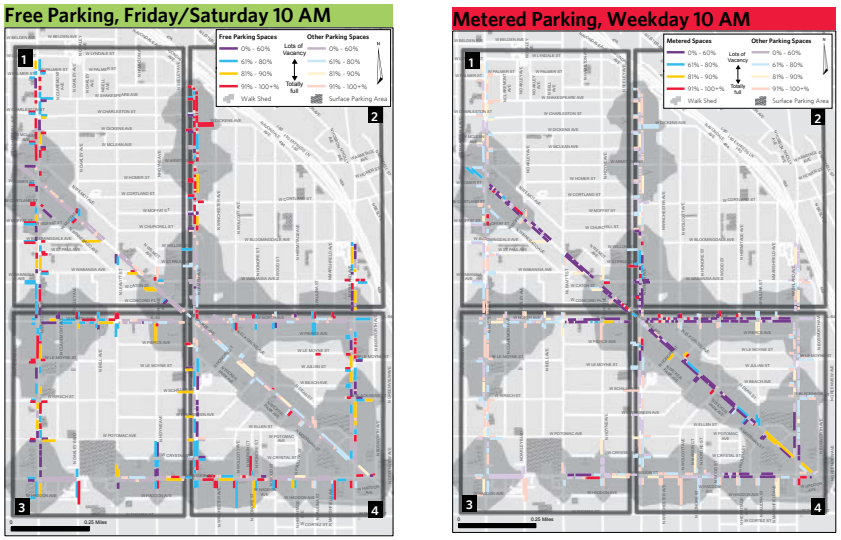
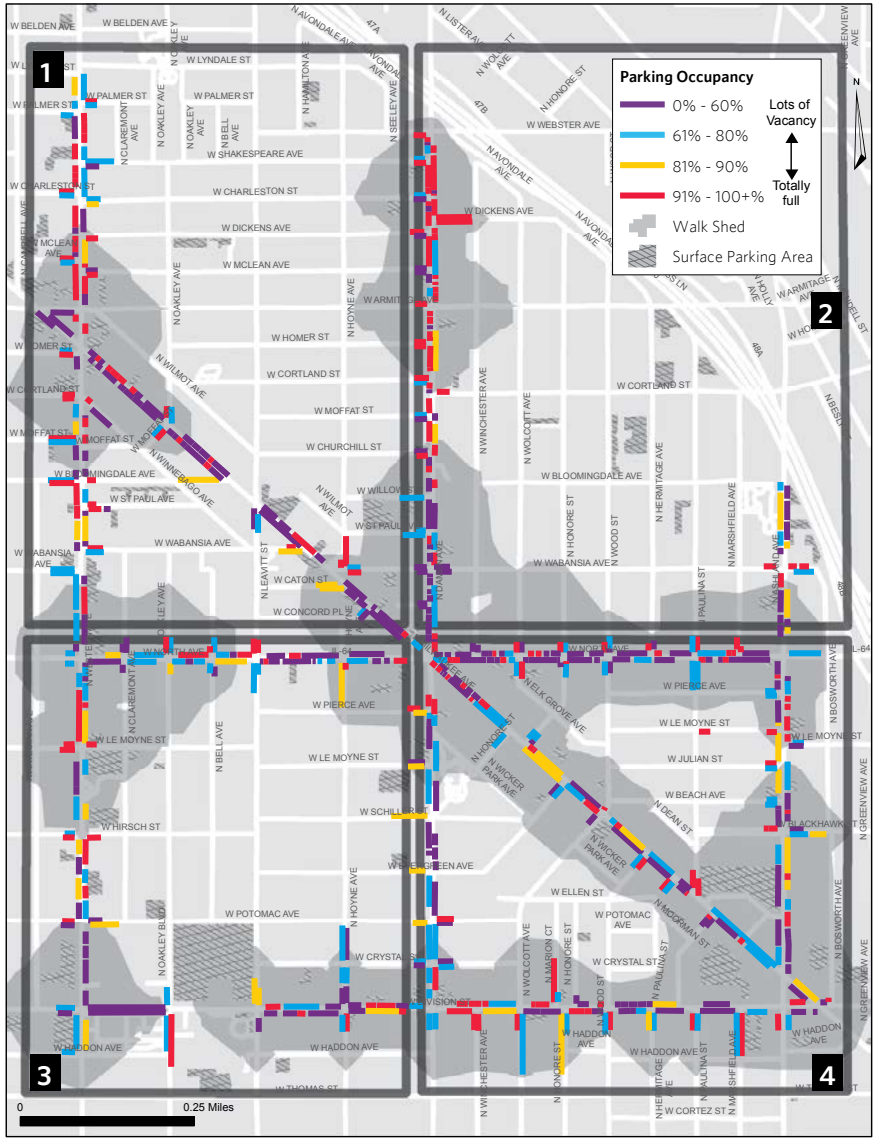


Figure 42. Parking Occupancy, Friday / Saturday, 10:00 AM



Friday / Saturday, 9:00 PM

Given WPB's popularity as a nightlife destination in the Chicago area, parking along commercial streets significantly increases in demand on Friday and Saturday nights. As seen in Figure 44, most streets are fully occupied at this time. The only exception was the central portion of Western Avenue in Quadrants 1 and 3, which primarily houses institutional and service facilities. Some of these facilities are not open during evening hours and they are not very close to the more desirable nighttime destinations along Division and Milwaukee Avenue (primarily located in Quadrant 4).

When the parking survey was conducted, all meters were free after 9:00 p.m., creating a surge in demand for parking at this time, incentivizing patrons to remain in these spots for the duration of the night, decreasing—if not completely eliminating—turnover rates at this time. The lack of turnover, combined with a substantial increase in demand, results in an overall parking inefficiency during this time period. The lack of available parking spaces frustrates drivers who are forced to cruise around looking for a vacant spot, adds to the congestion in the area, and ultimately drives potential consumers from WPB.

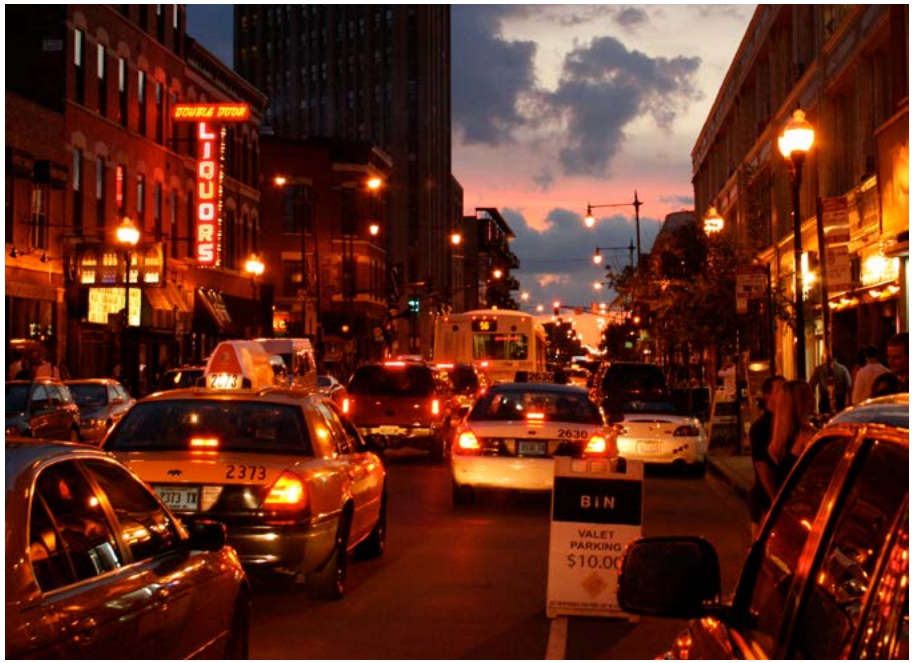
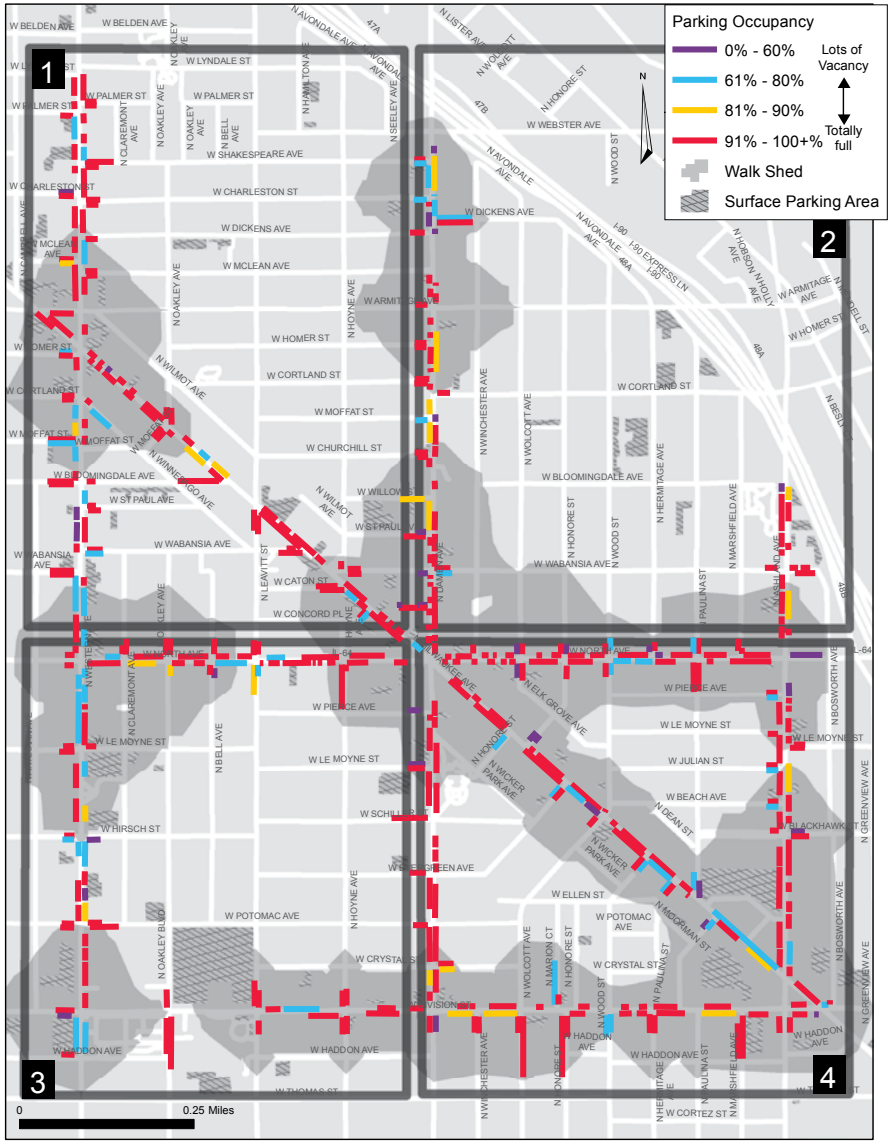


Photo from Creative Commons, by Ben Hussman.

Figure 44. Parking Occupancy, Friday / Saturday, 9:00 PM



Turnover Study

On Thursday May 24, CMAP conducted a turnover survey along portions of Milwaukee Avenue and Division Street The data below represents the average duration of stay for cars parked over a seven hour period of time in each space of a given block. License plates were checked by individual staff members at one hour intervals walking a particular route. The study was conducted to reveal parking patterns for free, metered, and loading zone spaces.

Milwaukee Avenue

One thing that stands out is the usage of loading zone spaces on Milwaukee Avenue; the only space used for the entire seven hour period was a car parked in a loading zone, while the metered spots are predominately occupied for one to three hours. This represents one of the more common issues found in WPB's current parking management strategies: the lack of loading zone enforcement and misunderstanding of loading zone function. Business owners purchase loading zones from the city in order to receive shipments during specific times of the day. Since shipments are not made at all times during these hours, and some stores have alley access, many employees and / or business owners use the loading zone spaces for personal use, preventing potential customers from utilizing a prime parking space they would be willing to pay for. From their perspective, they pay for the space and are entitled to use it.

Figure 45. Parking Turnover on Milwaukee Avenue

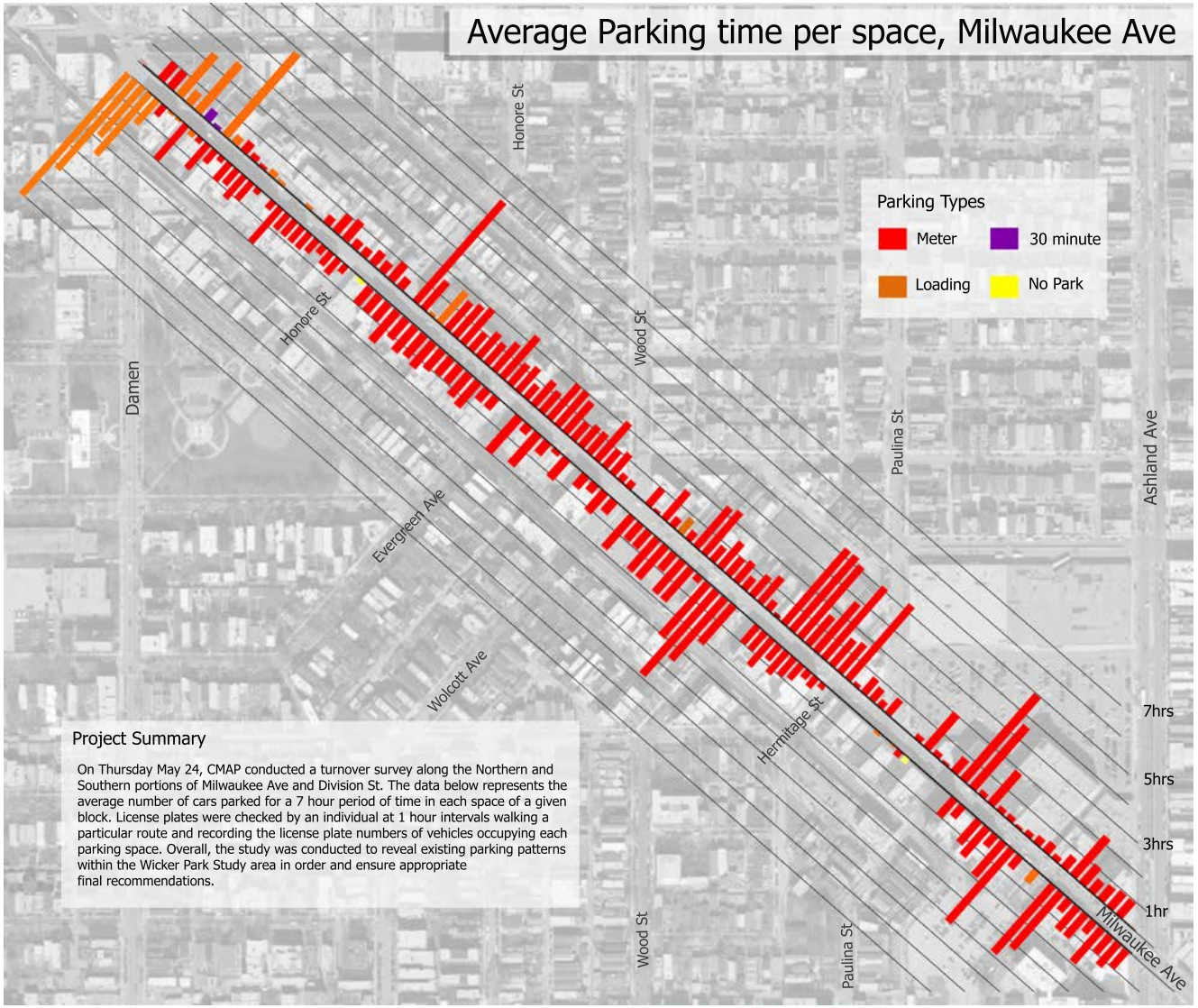


Figure 46. Parking Turnover on Division Street

Also interesting is the difference in turnover along the northwestern portion of Milwaukee Avenue in comparison to the southeastern portion, south of Wood Street. While most cars north of Wood Street stay for less than an hour, cars parked south of Wood Street were parked for three to four hours at a time.

Division Street

Unlike Milwaukee Avenue, half of Division Street is free parking while the other half is metered parking. Metered parking spaces, between Ashland Avenue and Wood Street, have about a two hour turnover rate, ranging between 30 minutes to three hours. Free parking, in comparison, between Wood Street and Damen Avenue has an average turnover rate of six hours, with 16 out of the 36 parking spots (35%) occupied for the entirety of the seven hour study period. Free parking incentivizes drivers to remain in prime parking spots for as long as possible. Since employees, commuters, and local residents are more likely to arrive at these commercial spots first, they are typically the ones who remain in them for an extended period of time.

Section 7
Planning and Healthy Communities

Vibrant , healthy communities have coordinated land use planning and transportation to help create great places to live. Developing in ways that support livability reduces costs not only for the public sector, but also for individual households. An important feature of livability is its support for alternative transportation that helps reduce reliance on driving. Supporting alternative transportation and shortening trips also reduce congestion, with benefits for all users of the transportation system — even those who continue to drive.

Planning and Healthy Communities

Driving will continue to be the mode of choice for many people in WPB, but it is important to plan for all modes, especially walking. Small increases in the mode share of pedestrians and bicyclists to accomplish short trips can significantly increase public health, as well as reduce parking needs. The physical and mental health of residents can be improved with community design. The rise chronic disease rates across the nation has put the spotlight on the relationship between public health and planning. The layout of buildings and parking, the concentration and diversity of uses, and pedestrian and bicycle amenities all influence mode choice. According to the 2009 National Household Travel Survey, 50 percent of all trips are less than three miles and 28 percent are less than one mile. Complete streets that encourage active transportation for short trips over driving can improve people's health by increasing physical activity, reducing injury by creating safe places to walk and bike, improving air quality, decreasing mental health stresses, and strengthening the social fabric of a community.

Improving walkability requires consideration of four factors. For short trips, most people with a choice between driving and walking will only make the choice to walk if the walk is "simultaneously useful, safe, comfortable, and interesting."[5] Parking supply and design impacts walkability. When the amount of surface parking increases, buildings must be spaced further apart, making walking more of a chore, and less pleasant. When walking is enjoyable and feels safe, people walk more. Improving the walkability of streets and the perception of safety can encourage more trips on foot, as well as increase the distance drivers are willing to walk from a parking spot.

Finally, increasing the mode share of transit riders can also improve public health. Currently, about half of Americans do not meet the Surgeon General's daily recommendation of thirty minutes or more of physical activity, However, Americans who use transit "spend an average of 19 minutes daily walking to and from transit; 29 percent achieve 30 minutes of physical activity a day solely by walking to and from transit." Health experts even recommend parking further from your final destination to incorporate walking into daily activities. Improvements to the local transit and to overall safety in WPB can also help to encourage the use of public transit, which will reduce overall parking demand.

5. Speck, Jeff. Interview "On Walkability: An Interview with Jeff Speck." Online: http://parksify.com/post/56508222584/on-walkability-an-interview-with-jeff-speck

KIDS
RULE
Kids Rule
DX
30 YEARS

Section 8
Looking forward

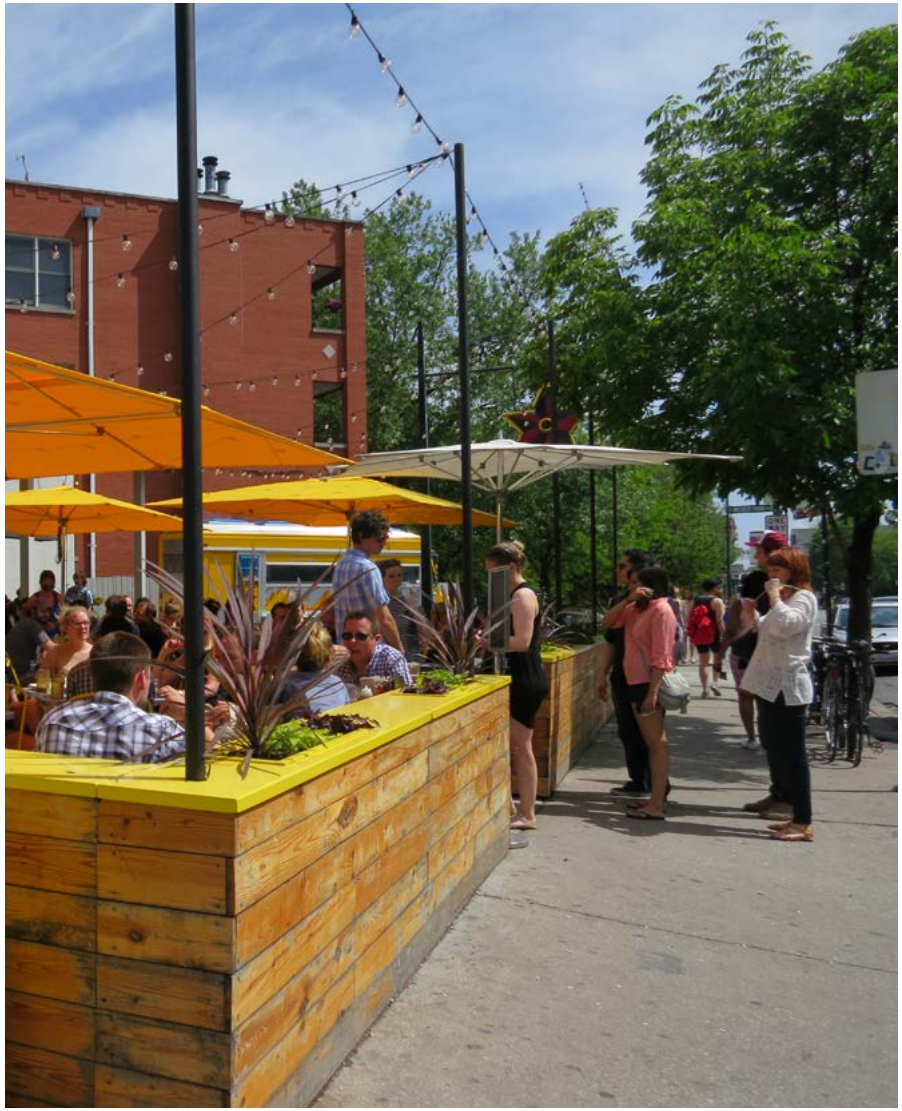
The vibrant, eccentric neighborhood of WPB has many qualities that make it a desirable place to live and visit. The density of people and attractions makes parking a hot commodity. The transit coverage for the area is excellent, but service, quality and safety shortfalls make transit less competitive to the private automobile. Dangerous conditions, and even the perception of danger, prevent many people from riding bikes, and can lead to tension between bicyclists and other road users.

Parking is more complex than most people realize

When a driver cannot find a parking space close to her destination, the obvious conclusion is that there is not enough parking. She may not even know that there are available parking spaces a short walk from her destination. Without understanding the complexities of parking and its role in the transportation system, people often say, "Just build more parking!" At $30,000 per space for a simple above ground structure, excluding land costs (See Figure 47), parking garages are expensive and rarely pay for themselves. Building additional parking without properly managing the existing supply can induce driving and increase parking demand, leading to shortages even after having built a garage. For example, WPB is a quick Blue Line trip away from downtown or O'Hare, making the area a desirable location for people to access the Blue Line from nearby areas. Additional parking could attract more commuters or airport travelers. Conversely, managing the existing supply can be a cost effective way to reduce demand or increase attractiveness of underutilized spaces.

In The High Cost of Free Parking, Donald Shoup writes, "We all want to park free. But we also want to reduce traffic congestion, energy consumption and air pollution. We want affordable housing, efficient transportation, green space, good urban design, great cities and a healthy economy. Unfortunately, ample free parking conflicts with all these other goals." One online survey respondent said, "It's so hard to find free parking in Wicker Park...which is discouraging from the perspective of a visitor from the northwest suburbs." The businesses don't want to lose customers from other communities, but providing parking is never free and in a dense, transit-rich neighborhood like WPB, more free parking leads directly to more traffic congestion without guaranteeing available parking spaces for these driving customers. There are people who come to the area via public transportation, taxis, or by bike, who would drive if they knew they could easily find free parking.

As the parking occupancy survey has shown, parking occupancy is highest on Friday and Saturday nights – when spaces are free. While the parking meter deal has caused great controversy, it did raise meter prices, which was needed in many areas. It created turnover and parking availability in areas that were previously congested. Unfortunately, the prices do not reflect local variations in demand and so there are areas with excess parking capacity and times when parking is still congested.



The priority issues to be addressed in the Innovation in Parking Management Plan echo many recommendations that are found in the WPB Master Plan, and are as follows:

- Balancing parking supply and demand with particular attention to when and where WPB is most congested
- Evaluation of the parking permit system to prevent permits from becoming merely "hunting licenses"
- Improvements to the safety and quality of public transportation, to increase the attractiveness of transit as an alternative to driving
- Loading zone changes to open prime spaces to customers and reduce personal use by business owners
- Innovative ways to improve the safety of bicycling, particularly on Milwaukee Avenue
- Better use of technology, apps, and signage to inform people about parking, particularly to highlight streets with underutilized parking
- Advocating for the elimination of the two-hour time limit on metered streets
- Increased shared parking arrangements to better utilize the existing supply, particularly with institutional uses in the study area
- Investigations into the possibility of a taxi stand, a shuttle service, or improved valet services

Small shifts in the habits of regular visitors and residents can mean big improvements in safety and congestion for everyone. In addition, freeing up parking spaces in the most congested areas would relieve the frustration of "cruising for a spot."

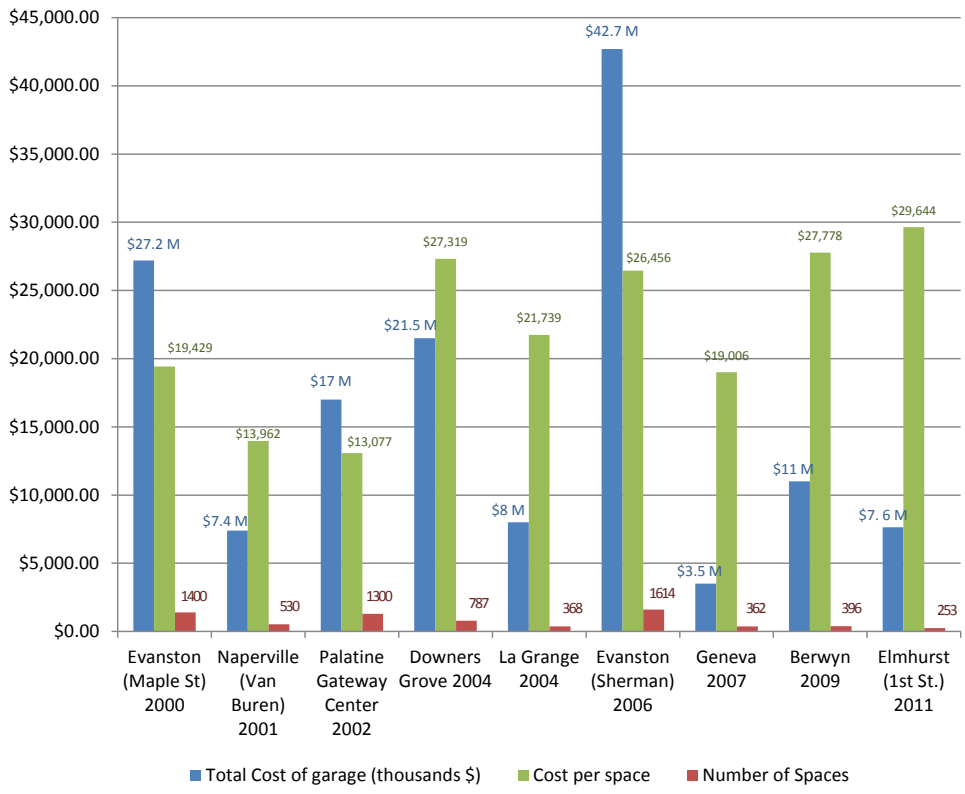


Figure 47. Public Parking Garages in northeastern Illinois: construction costs, cost per space, and total number of spaces.

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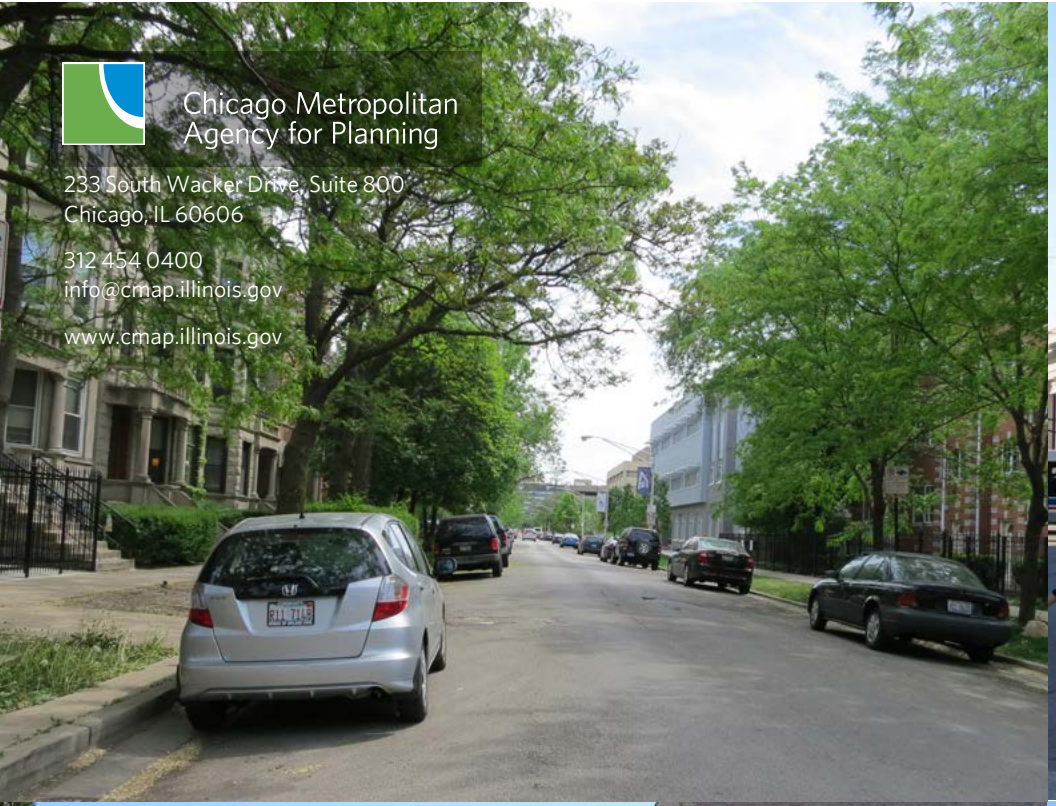
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