



CMAP

Village of Hinsdale Innovation in Parking Management Existing Conditions Report

DRAFT - July 2013

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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 Hinsdale, 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: Local Transportation Review
- Section 6: Parking in Hinsdale
- Section 7: Land Use Planning and Parking
- Section 8: Looking Forward

Figure 1.1 Downtown Hinsdale Study Area

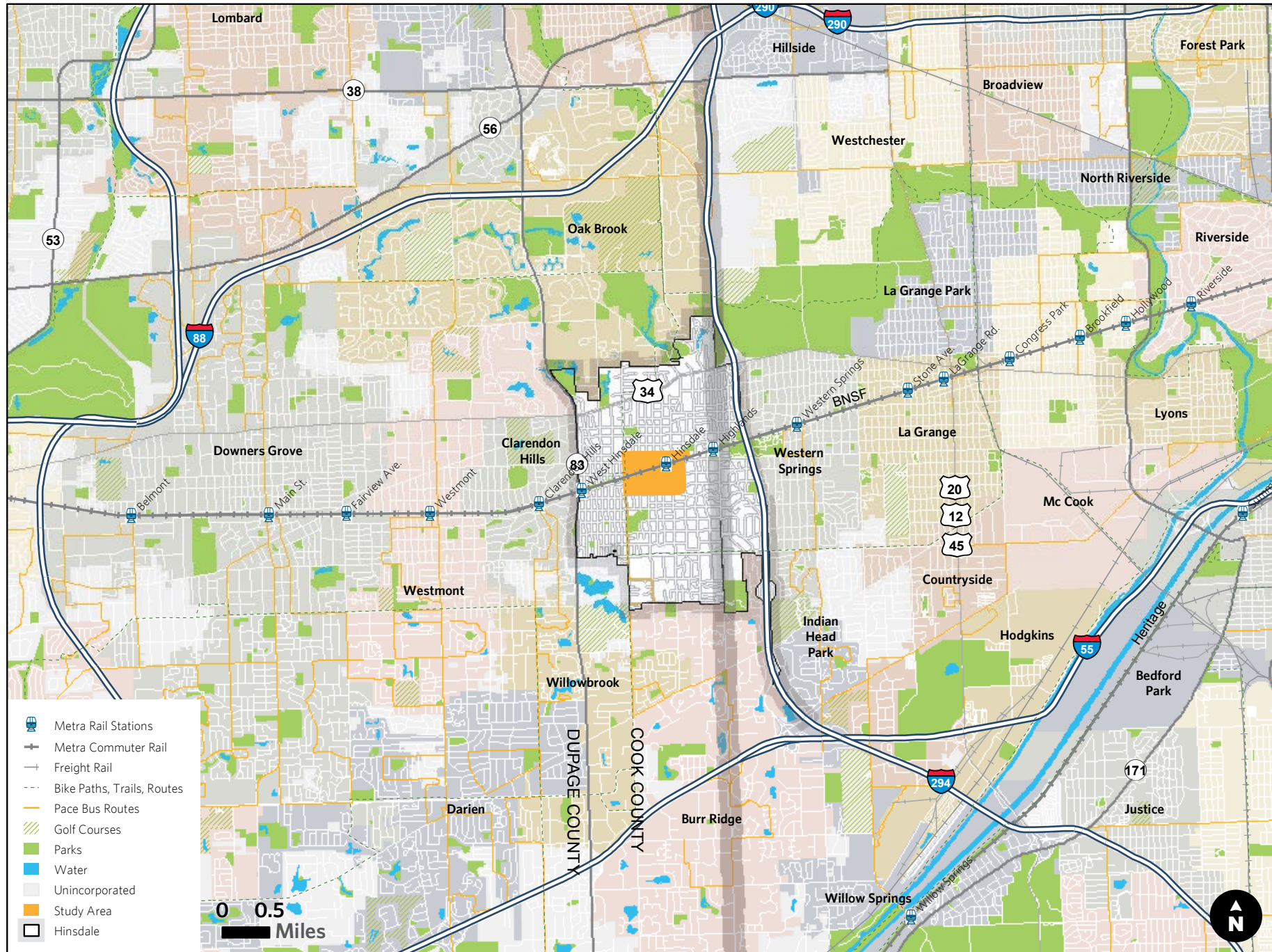
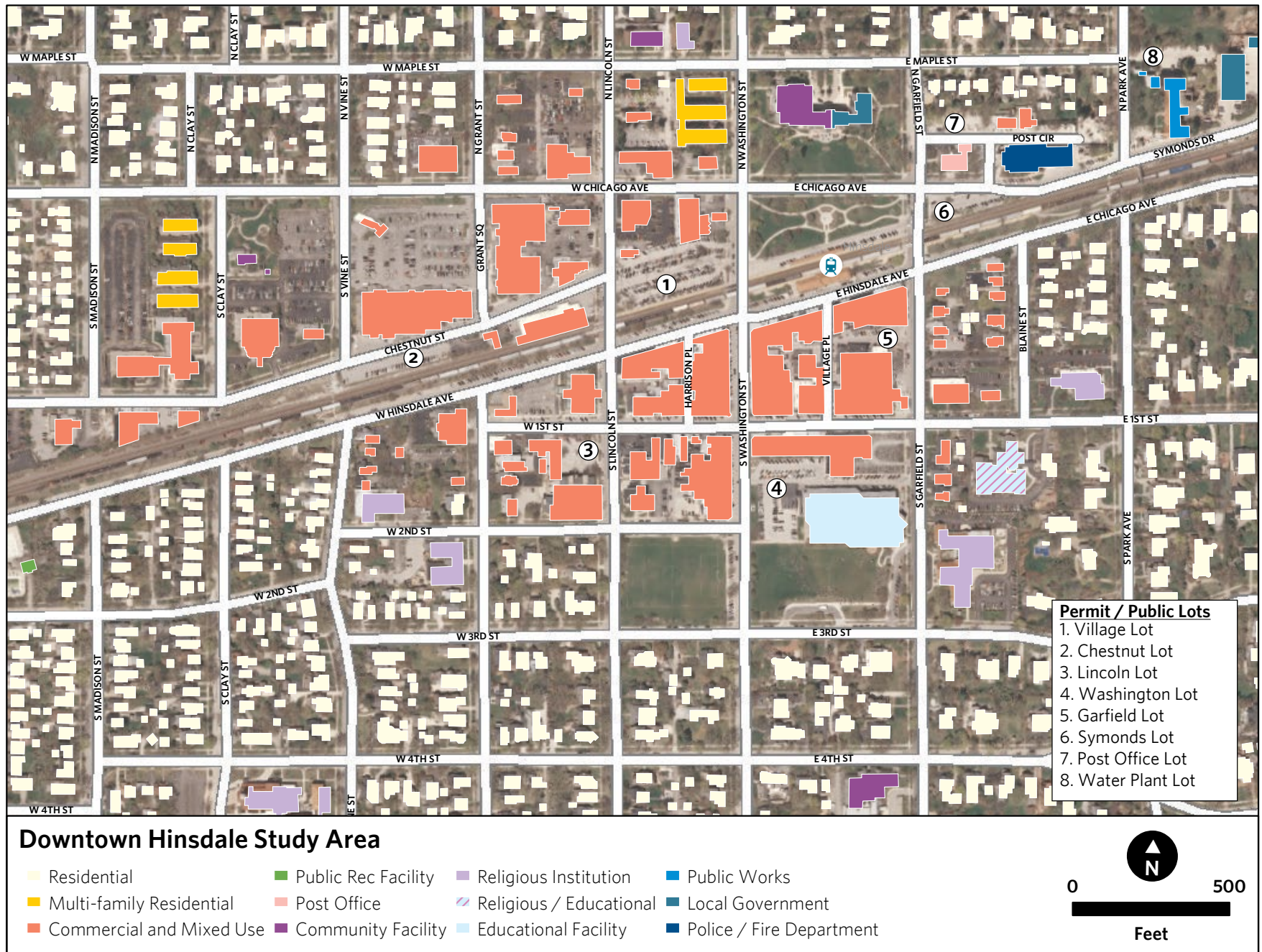


Figure 1. 2 Downtown Hinsdale Study Area and Public Parking Lots



What is an Innovation in Parking Management Plan?

The Innovation in Parking Management Plan will serve as a guide for elected officials, property owners, village 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 Hinsdale Need a Parking Management Review?

The Village of Hinsdale is undertaking a process to evaluate their parking system, with the goal of improving the livability and vitality of the historic downtown. The result of this project will be a series of recommended policies to help the Village and its residents address identified parking problems.

Hinsdale's downtown was originally designed when most people walked to amenities like stores, schools, and parks. Having retained the historic building density in their core, Hinsdale has maintained a high concentration of businesses and offices in a small area. From day spas to restaurants to coffee shops, addressing parking demand in the downtown area is varied and complex. Balancing the needs of local businesses, restaurants, rail commuters, residents, and visitors is no small feat. In addition to customer parking needs, there are many employees arriving by car. When everyone is trying to go to the same part of town, it can become a challenge to find a parking spot for each automobile; people are often forced to drive in circles searching for a convenient space.

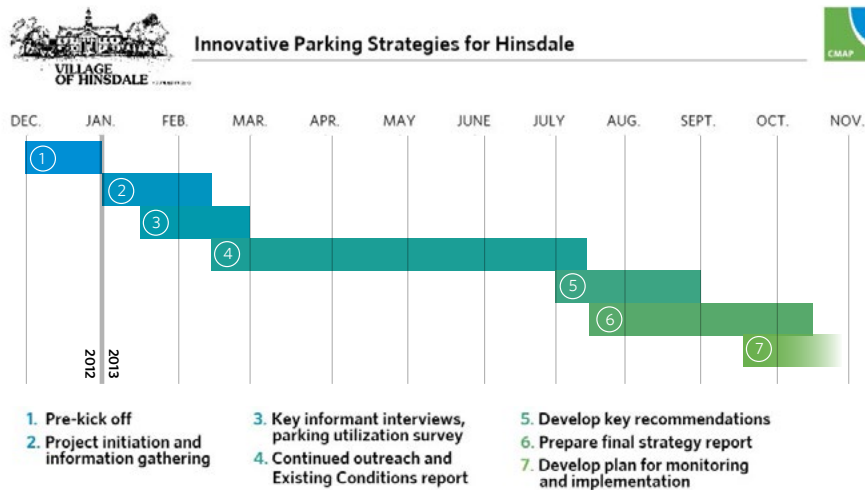
Parking congestion is an indication of a lively downtown, but too much congestion can negatively affect businesses and residents alike. To better understand and address the parking challenges in Hinsdale, the Village is partnering with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, to develop innovative parking management strategies.

How does parking affect a downtown?

The supply and management of parking influence the character, form, function and flow of a community. Too little supply makes the downtown unattractive to potential businesses; mismanaged supply keeps prime spaces full while spaces further from the core stay 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.

Hinsdale stands out for having preserved the historic downtown with consistent building façades along the main streets. However, over the last several decades, the types of business in Hinsdale have changed and so have the habits of customers. More people are driving, and shopping trips may take longer than they did in the past. Additionally, many employees are arriving from locations outside of Hinsdale, often by car.

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 plan. Driving and parking make up just one facet of a community's transportation infrastructure. While cars will continue to be the primary mode of transportation for many, small increases in the mode share of more active forms of transportation— like walking, bicycling, and transit — can help alleviate parking problems, while helping residents lead healthier lives.

Figure 1.3. Downtown Hinsdale Planning Process

Planning Process

The planning process to create the Village's Innovation in Parking Management Plan includes multiple steps that will last approximately 10-12 months. The process has been crafted with assistance from Village staff and has been designed to include resident and business owner input throughout.

In January of 2013, Village staff met with CMAP staff to develop a Scope of Work for the project. The work plan sets program tasks, a timeline for the program, and recommends participation by a community steering committee to assist CMAP staff in developing the final plan and recommendations. As indicated in Figure 1.3, 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 Hinsdale'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 Hinsdale in achieving the future vision.

Next Steps

After the Existing Conditions Report is presented to the Steering Committee and Village staff for review and discussion, the next step in the process will be to work with the community to create a shared vision. CMAP will work with residents, business owners, elected and appointed officials, and Village staff to begin creating a draft plan and recommendations to improve parking management in downtown Hinsdale.





Section 2

Regional Context

This section provides an overview of how Hinsdale and its downtown fit into the larger Northeastern Illinois region. Having a larger perspective of how the village formed 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 Hinsdale and the Downtown

Surveyors for the Chicago Burlington & Quincy Railroad began laying out what is now known as the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad in 1862. At this time, a wealthy businessman named William Robbins made a speculative investment in the land around what would become downtown Hinsdale. The Village was incorporated in 1873, at which time most of the land around the train station had been platted and many residences had been constructed. According to Hinsdale's Vision 2025 Plan there were also stores, a post office, a hotel, pharmacies, a grocer, a large stone school at the site of the Hinsdale Middle School, and two churches located in downtown Hinsdale at this time. As with other suburban downtowns of the era, these uses predominantly met daily needs of residents, and were accessible within a short walk from their homes.

The downtown has a distinct style, reminiscent of small New England downtowns. In 2006, the downtown area (roughly bordered by Maple Street, Lincoln Street, Garfield Street, and Second Street) was added to the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to the array of boutiques and unique local businesses, the form and scale of Hinsdale's historic downtown is one feature that lures visitors from other communities. The compact concentration of buildings in the central core was developed at a scale that enables residents to walk to stores, the train station, schools, parks, Village Hall and the library. The layout was primarily established before 1930, at a time when few people owned cars.

Since the 1930s, Hinsdale's community character has persevered, but the habits and mode preferences of residents and shoppers have changed significantly. Downtown offerings have also changed; there has been a shift from primarily retail to include services as well. The postwar development pattern of Hinsdale's downtown reflects the evolution of retail formats, increased automobile ownership and usage, and more retail- and commercially-zoned land on highways throughout region (such as Ogden Avenue and Route 83).

Today, the downtown's varied uses serve Hinsdale residents while also attracting visitors from the neighboring municipalities. This balance helps to ensure the Village's economic vitality, but puts strains on the parking resources of the community. Some "daily needs" retail uses, such as pharmacies and grocery stores, still exist in the downtown area, but many of them are located north of the railroad tracks in the Grant Square shopping center. The layout of Grant Square allows for easy automobile access, with a parking lot shared between a variety of stores.

South of the tracks, specialty boutiques, including those focused on apparel, fashion, accessories, and home décor - are joined by new restaurants, salons, and day spas creating an active street level while offices on upper floors are commonplace. These upper floor commercial spaces provide valuable customers for local business during the day. The occasional upper floor residential unit is less prevalent today, but still exists. This transition from upper floor residential to upper floor office has also increased parking demand. Office and retail uses have similar demands for parking by time of day, generally during business hours, whereas residential parking demand is generally lower during the peak demand periods for office and retail and higher on evenings and weekends.

Streets within a short walk of the central core are primarily single-family residential, with a variety of businesses housed in what would otherwise appear to be single-family homes. The demand for parking is minimal on these streets and most residents would prefer not to induce traffic to their streets through commuters and employees looking to leave their cars for the day, but for streets that already have a mix of uses, their capacity as a parking resource for employees or longer-term shoppers is currently underutilized.

While residents are not always in agreement with solutions, they are quite active in the development of their community and proud to call Hinsdale home. Some residents hold strongly to the past and want to preserve the aspects of Hinsdale that they value, while others want to move forward to improve the community with less consideration for history. Most residents and local stakeholders fall in the middle of that spectrum, and want to respect Hinsdale's past while planning for its future. With the acknowledgement that things have changed and people's habits are different, the Village would like to pursue a balance between honoring and respecting the unique history of the community, while adapting to future needs.



Image from the Newberry Library with caption: "Our Chicago Suburbs - Hinsdale, ILL. and the Residence of O.J. Stough, Esq. 1873." O.J. Stough purchased land west of Robbins' tract in 1868; this is the current site of the Hinsdale Public Library, according to the library's website.

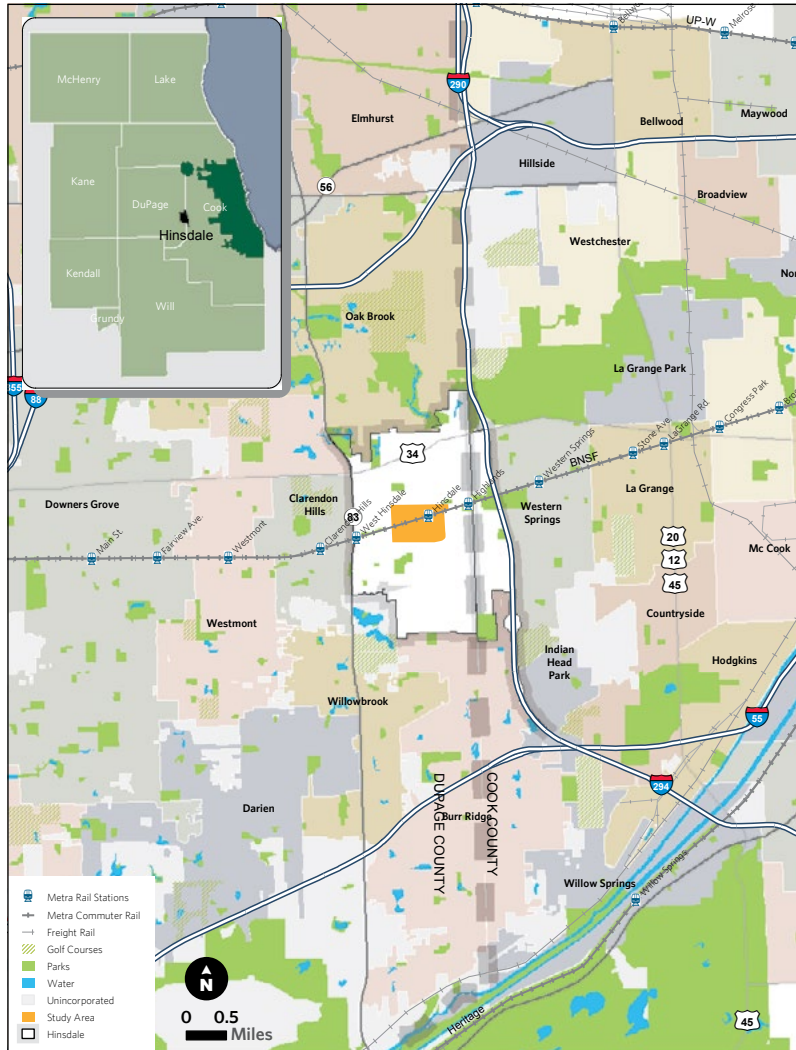
Regional Setting

Hinsdale is primarily located in DuPage County, approximately twenty miles west of Chicago (Figure 2.1). The Villages of Western Springs, Burr Ridge, Willowbrook, Clarendon Hills, and Oak Brook surround the village. Three major routes run east-west through the Village: Ogden Avenue / US-34 on the north, the BNSF tracks run through the center, and 55th Street on the south. The Village is also bounded by Interstate 294 on the east and Route 83 on the west. Hinsdale has three Metra commuter rail stations along the BNSF. The total population of Hinsdale is slightly less than 17,000 on an area of 4.64 square miles.

Downtown Hinsdale is located in the center of the village, around the Hinsdale Metra Station. The area is home to the Village government police and fire stations, Village Hall, some retail development, salons and service attractions, hardware and grocery stores.

The village is within the Des Plaines River Basin and is located north of the Des Plaines River. There are several substantial County Forest Preserves nearby, including Brush Hill Forest Preserve, Wolf Road Prairie, and Fullersburg Woods Forest Preserve. The Salt Creek Greenway Trail, running through Cook and DuPage County, connects to the northern edge of Hinsdale, providing access to the regional bike trail network and other parks and open space.

Figure 2.1. Regional context



Hinsdale and GO TO 2040

The cumulative choices of 284 municipalities and seven counties 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 GO TO 2040 plan strives to balance the need for local autonomy and regional cooperation. It provides principles that 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 makes 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, Hinsdale 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 local governments 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 will only be implemented with the full support of the Village of Hinsdale.

The full plan, as well as an executive summary, can be found at www.cmap.illinois.gov.



Section 3

Previous Plans, Studies, and Reports

A number of studies have been conducted for downtown Hinsdale regarding parking in recent years; below are some highlights from those efforts. The following plans, studies and reports are reviewed in this section:

- Hinsdale Central Business District Survey (2007)
- Hinsdale 2025 Resident Solutions Survey (2006)
- Village of Hinsdale's Police Department Parking Survey (2006)
- Hinsdale Bicycle Plan (2007)

Hinsdale Central Business District Survey (2007)

Brad Summers, a member of the Economic Development Commission, conducted a survey of downtown merchants in the Central Business District (CBD) in 2007. The survey was conducted “to gain a better understanding of the factors affecting the financial health of the commercial and professional businesses, as well as property owners,” operating within the Hinsdale CBD. This survey covered a variety of issues, and parking came up prominently as a source of frustration for merchants and their customers. It was ranked the highest priority for the Economic Development Commission to undertake to support the business community (of nine options). Some key findings include:

- Easing parking limits was noted as a significant issue to be addressed, as well as building a parking garage, while customer-only parking restrictions were not seen to be effective
- Almost 65 percent of respondents believe that the unique architecture and large percentage of independent merchants serve as an “attraction,” and many believe that empty storefronts and parking difficulty have led to a decrease in downtown activity
- Additionally, 96 percent of respondents agreed that the “perception” of a parking problem (regardless of feelings that there is or is not a parking problem) negatively affects business and leads to Hinsdale residents avoiding shopping downtown

Hinsdale 2025 Resident Solutions Survey (2006)

In 2006, nearly 2,000 residents responded to a survey for the vision for the Village of Hinsdale, organized around eight topics, one of which was parking¹. The survey asked a variety of questions about what residents would choose to do to help alleviate the parking problem (whether real or perceived). Overall, residents believed that the Village should create more parking in downtown and there is support for using tax dollars to do so. However, there was a mixed response in regards to how the parking problem should be addressed; whether by building a parking-only structure, mixed use parking structure, or no parking structure at all. Among survey respondents, 75 percent believe the Village should create more parking downtown, and support using tax dollars to do so; 62 percent of respondents believe that businesses should be required to pay into a parking fund to finance the creation of additional parking and that the businesses should not be forced to provide parking spaces in the downtown area. Residents indicated a willingness to pay an average of \$88 via property tax for a parking structure.

Based on the findings, the report made three recommendations²:

1. Study successes and failures in other communities to understand best practices with the intent of ultimately exploring the construction of a parking structure on the current site of the municipal lot between Washington and Lincoln.
2. Manage parking with consideration of demand and supply and encourage workers to park further from the core, and commuters to park north of the tracks.
3. Build a parking structure at the Highlands Metra Station, with assistance from Metra.

Each of these recommendations came with context from survey participants. In regards to the parking structure, costs, design sensitivity, and the location were key considerations. It was also noted that the desired design features and retail inclusion may make the project cost prohibitive as the community expressed a desire to minimize impact on resident tax bills. There were also a number of sub-recommendations put forth, including: revise permits, establish a new shopper-only zone, change fines and enforcement, change ordinances and policy regarding tickets, set aside special funds to be used for parking improvements, create a commuter shuttle, and move permit and metered spaces.



1. Survey results available online: <http://www.Villageofhinsdale.org/download/Files/phaseIIISurveyResults.pdf>

2. Recommendations available online: http://www.Villageofhinsdale.org/hinsdale2025/comm/SEG8Recs1_3.pdf

Village of Hinsdale Police Department Parking Survey (2006)

In 2006, the Village of Hinsdale Police Department surveyed drivers in the downtown area on parking habits with an open comment section. Responses were very similar to the Hinsdale 2025 Resident Solutions Survey. The majority of comments expressed frustration with parking downtown. Just over 25 percent specifically cited a lack of parking availability; 13 percent want the Village to build a parking garage; 10 percent are opposed to parking meters, 10 percent are frustrated with restrictive time limits, and only thirteen of the 451 commenters expressed that there is not a parking problem.

The survey also looked at the length of stay, reason for visit, and walking distance. Even with 2-hour time limits on the meters, a significant number of shoppers and visitors who said they spend more than two hours parked in downtown. Most park on the same block as where they are going, with only thirty-eight percent of employees parking further than 2 blocks from their final destination (Figure 3.2).

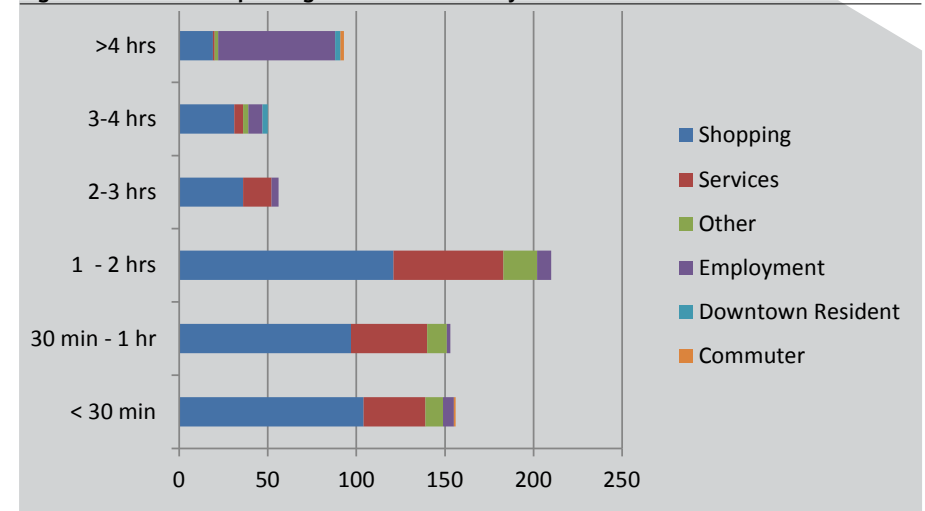
Hinsdale Bicycle Plan (2007)

Increasing the bicycling mode share can help reduce parking demand. In 2007, the Village released the Hinsdale Bicycle Plan, proposing a network of more than twenty-five miles of bike routes, bike lanes, and shared use paths to increase and improve the bicycle facilities in Hinsdale. The vision of the Bicycle Task Force was to provide residents with a network that would connect them to locations within the Village, as well as to destinations and paths outside of the Village for both recreational use and as a transportation network.

As part of the Hinsdale Bicycle Plan, bicycle parking counts were conducted in the Village. The inventory counted over 1,100 bike parking spaces, much of which is concentrated at the Hinsdale Community Pool, the Hinsdale Public Library, and Hinsdale Central High School. Many of the bicycle racks in Hinsdale are designed to hold only the front wheel of a bicycle, but do not allow for securing the bike frame; improved rack standards were recommended for those racks.

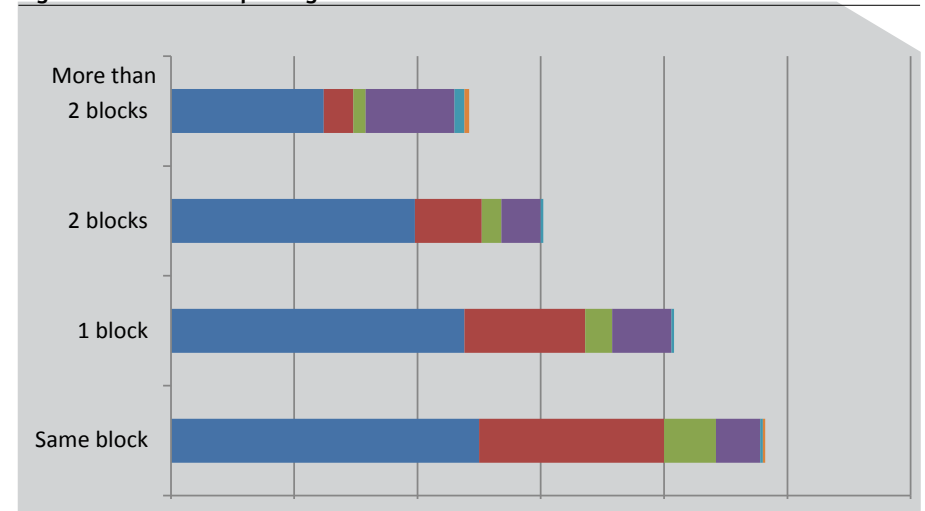
Unfortunately, the team responsible for developing and championing the Hinsdale Bicycle Plan has mostly left the Village since adoption of the plan. Without a concerted effort, the recommended improvements and necessary policy updates to support an excellent bicycling community have not been implemented.

Figure 3.1. Reason for parking and duration of stay



Source: Hinsdale Police Department, 2006.

Figure 3.2. Reason for parking and distance from final destination



Source: Hinsdale Police Department, 2006.



Section 4

Community Outreach

A primary goal in the development of Hinsdale’s Innovative Parking Strategies plan is to engage the community throughout the planning and decision-making process. One challenge to solving Hinsdale’s parking problems is agreeing on the problem in the first place. To that end, engagement activities have been designed to better understand what the community believes the problems and solutions are. Public engagement will continue throughout the planning process. To date CMAP has worked with Village staff and elected officials, interviewed with key community leaders, engaged the business community at a workshop, and reached out to the public at-large with an online tool.

Key Findings

- High demand for parking in the core from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday; many drivers “cruise” for parking, circling the block multiple times to find a space.
- Many employees park in the most desirable parking spaces for customers and feed the meters.
- Some employees are reluctant to walk more than two blocks to park; they have concerns for safety late at night when most businesses are closed (no “eyes on the street”). Limited options for employees who don’t want to walk far.
- There is limited and confusing information about where people can park.
- Many people want a parking garage.
- There is underutilized parking north of the train tracks because people don’t want to be delayed by trains and exposed to the weather while waiting.

Steering Committee

A steering committee was established to guide the overall vision of the plan and provide feedback along the way. In addition to Village staff, the steering committee includes representatives from the following:

- Local Residents (including a high school youth representative)
- Hinsdale Bank & Trust
- Zazu Salon & Day Spa
- Sweet Ali’s Gluten Free Bakery
- Hinsdale Furriers
- Hinsdale Economic Development Commission
- Hinsdale Chamber of Commerce
- Village of Hinsdale Police Department
- Metra Rail

The first steering committee meeting was held on January 23, 2013 at Village Hall to introduce members to the project and gather feedback regarding issues and opportunities for improving parking in downtown Hinsdale. Steering committee members noted a number of issues or concerns they would like to see addressed in the plan, ranging from relocating Metra commuter parking, increasing customer parking, increasing meter time limits, and stricter parking enforcement.

The second steering committee meeting was held on April 3, 2013 at Village Hall immediately following the business owners workshop. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the input collected at the business owners workshop, provide feedback on up-to-date existing conditions research and public engagement strategies. The steering committee members expressed concern that the current parking map is overwhelming and difficult to understand by residents, merchants, and shoppers. A mapping activity allowed the steering committee to identify where parking could be expanded upon or shared as well as pinpoint streets with high congestion and areas that pose parking challenges.

Key Person Interviews

In order to identify the parking issues and opportunities that exist in Hinsdale, CMAP staff conducted confidential interviews with 11 community stakeholders. These individuals represented a variety of interests and included: residents, business owners, developers, and elected officials. Although there were many similarities among the responses, each interview brought forth different viewpoints of the parking challenges in Hinsdale.

A common theme that arose from interviews was that it is difficult to find a parking spot downtown during business hours. Nearly everyone expressed that employees park in the spaces intended for customers; although it was not clear if the employees are feeding meters, moving cars every two hours, or some combination of meter-feeding and “shuffling.” Interviewees also cited an imbalance between the supply and demand of parking. Some linked this challenge to the limited amount of parking lots and spots offered, others expressed that Metra commuters park all day in prime parking spots, while others blamed the lack of parking availability in existing permit parking lots.

Some interviewees said that the lack of available parking has led to increased vacancy in retail putting strains on the economic vitality of downtown Hinsdale. The outdated parking meters, restrictive time limits, and unpleasant fines imposed were cited as deterring customers from shopping downtown. It was also suggested that, due to these barriers, customers patronize neighboring communities that have shopping malls with greater surface parking and parking garages.

Collectively, the community stakeholders interviewed brought up many similar needs, such as educating the public on different parking strategies, encouraging walking, and supporting public transportation.

Business Owners Workshop

A business focused workshop was held on April 3, 2013 at the Village Hall to better understand business owners’ perspectives on the parking challenges and opportunities. At the workshop, CMAP staff introduced the project, presented current findings, and described the online community engagement tool. Participants also heard from a business and property owner in Oak Park about the experience Oak Park businesses had in increasing parking rates in their downtown area.

Using keypad polling technology, 17 participants were also asked to anonymously answer a few questions about themselves and their businesses. Most business owners in attendance self-identified as owning retail, followed by healthcare and beauty, and banking. Over 60 percent of attendees owned their business in Hinsdale for over 20 years; and nearly a quarter of attendees have only been in business from one to five years. Staff had heard during key stakeholder interviews that some businesses reimburse employees for parking or provide incentives for not driving to work. Of the business owners in attendance a third reimburse employees for parking, and 11 percent offer incentives for biking and walking to work.

Participants were also asked to identify their parking concerns and challenges using the keypads. Close to half of participants responded that employees parking in metered spots is the biggest parking challenge, followed by 25 percent who believe there is not enough parking. A top priority for business owners is to have more parking availability in the downtown – with 82 percent of attendees in agreement. Finally, business owners were asked to choose one strategy they believe will solve the parking problem in downtown; 75 percent of participants were in agreement that parking challenges should be addressed with demand-based pricing and zones, followed by 19 percent who voted for building a parking garage.

Table 4.1. Top issues identified at Business Owner Workshop, 2013.

What do you see as the biggest challenge?	% of Responses
Not enough parking	25%
Ineffective permit system	6%
Disproportionate meter fees	19%
Employees parking in metered spots	50%
We don't have any parking challenges	0%
What are your top two priorities?	% of Responses
More parking availability	52%
Less traffic congestion	15%
Closer parking locations	15%
Biking and walking	11%
Lower cost to park	4%
Lower municipal costs	4%
How do you think we should address our parking challenges?	% of Responses
Demand-based pricing, zones	75%
New streets to parking, shared parking	6%
Build a parking garage	19%
Support active transportation	0%
Increase enforcement, fines	0%

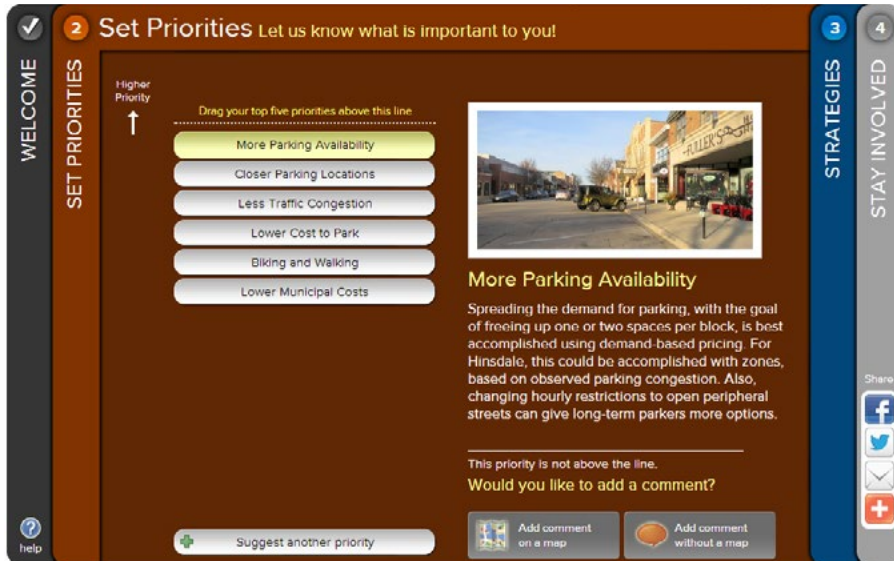
Source: CMAP, April 3, 2013 Meeting



Online engagement

In addition to reaching community stakeholders through public meetings and key person interviews, CMAP developed an interactive website to reach people who could not attend meetings. The purpose of online engagement was to educate residents on the purpose of this project. Second, CMAP wanted to hear from residents about their priorities and preferred choices for addressing parking and congestion in downtown Hinsdale. The website was available from February 19, 2013 to May 19, 2013. During this time over 281 people visited the site, and 129 people gave detailed feedback on their priorities as well as providing opinions on various strategies to help alleviate parking problems.

Upon visiting the website, users were asked to select from a list of suggested parking priorities and identify which priorities they felt were most important. If someone felt that their priorities weren't listed, users were given the option to suggest additional priorities. Overall, the top ranked priority for users was "more parking availability" followed by "closer parking locations." The least important priority to users of the site was "lower municipal costs."



The list of priorities on the website, and their accompanying details, included:

- **More Parking Availability**—spreading the demand for parking, with the goal of freeing up one or two spaces per block, is best accomplished using demand-based pricing. For Hinsdale, this could be accomplished with zones, based on observed parking congestion. Also, changing hourly restrictions to open peripheral streets can give long-term parkers more options.
- **Lower Cost to Park**—the cost of parking influences how long someone may occupy the spot. Prices too low encourage long-term parking; prices too high may deter some shoppers from shopping. Time limits are inefficient and expensive to enforce; they also discourage customers from spending time downtown. Any price increase should only be done with meters that accept credit cards.
- **Lower Municipal Costs**—Tax dollars cover many expenses for the Village, including management of the parking system, enforcing regulations, giving tickets, and providing parking—which is expensive. Building a parking garage costs about \$30,000 per space. Without outside funding, the costs fall on residents of Hinsdale to fund through higher taxes or diverted tax revenues.
- **Biking and Walking**—improving the bicycling and walking infrastructure with connected paths and trails, streetscape improvements, bike racks and amenities, while offering encouragement and incentive programs can be a low-cost way to reduce parking needs.
- **Closer Parking Locations**—in the busy core of downtown, it can be hard to find a spot right in front your destination. Shifting long-term parkers further from the central core will open up spaces closer to desired locations.
- **Less Traffic Congestion**—when drivers circle the block looking for park, this leads to traffic congestion—an estimated 30 percent of drivers in congested downtowns are searching for parking.

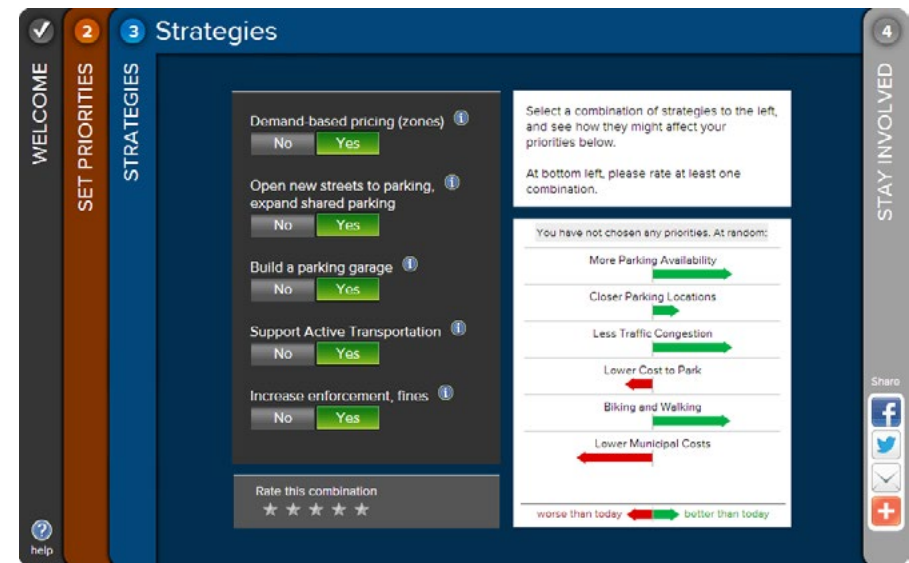
The overall priority ranking chosen by participants was:

1. More Parking Availability
2. Less Traffic Congestion
3. Closer Parking Locations
4. Lower Cost to Park
5. Biking and Walking
6. Lower Municipal Costs

Next, residents were asked to explore combinations of strategies to see how they might affect their designated priorities from the previous activity. Users could also rate various combinations of strategies on a scale of 1 to 5 stars. Most combinations users explored included two of the six strategies, “open new streets to parking, expand shared parking” and “demand based pricing.” Support for other strategies was mixed, with some users leaving additional comments about the need for a parking garage to alleviate congestion; while other users expressed frustration with the present metered time limits.

The strategies on the website that users could choose from included:

- **Demand-based pricing**—demand-based pricing eliminates time restrictions and uses the cost of parking to affect demand. With demand-based pricing, the prices of less desirable spaces are lowered and more desirable spaces are raised, to achieve an occupancy rate of 85 percent. This should be done in incremental changes as prices too high could send shoppers to neighboring communities or the mall. But prices too low would encourage day workers to feed the meter and occupy high-demand spaces.
- **Open new streets to parking, expand shared parking**—there are streets just outside of the core that are underutilized. They may have time restrictions or they may be “no parking” streets. Also, there are parking lots that have different peak demands than the business core (like churches), and they may be willing to share parking
- **Build a parking garage**—at \$30,000 per space, constructing a parking garage is presently outside of the Village’s budget. If strategies to alleviate parking problems are unsuccessful, the community may need to consider structured parking and determine who will pay for construction and long-term maintenance costs.
- **Support active transportation**—even in cold winters, there are many people who chose to walk and bike in downtown Hinsdale. Increased support for walking and biking can get some drivers out of their cars, or make a long walk from remote parking more enjoyable. Incentive programs for employees can reward those who choose not to drive to work.
- **Increase enforcement, fines**—raising the price of a parking ticket and using progressive fines can deter habitual scofflaws. A warning for the first ticket is followed by a \$25 ticket, then \$50, then \$100, for example. The increased revenue goes to the municipality.





Section 5

Downtown Hinsdale's Transportation Network

Hinsdale's location – with respect to the metropolitan transportation network and relative to regional destinations – is an asset for the community. Hinsdale's local road network provides good connectivity within the community and to neighboring municipalities.

Key Findings

- The Metra trains along the BNSF tracks running east-west through the middle of the Village provide excellent access to downtown Chicago, but the frequent trains (passenger and freight) create a barrier for crossing vehicles and people.
- According to Metra data from 2006, the downtown Hinsdale Metra station has the highest ridership of the Hinsdale stations, the most parking, and the most frequent service, and only about a quarter of riders drive alone to the station.
- The Village has a pedestrian-friendly downtown, with many amenities in close proximity, and nearly 30 percent of Metra riders walk to the station (2006).
- Bicycling has not been developed to its full potential as a mode of transportation.

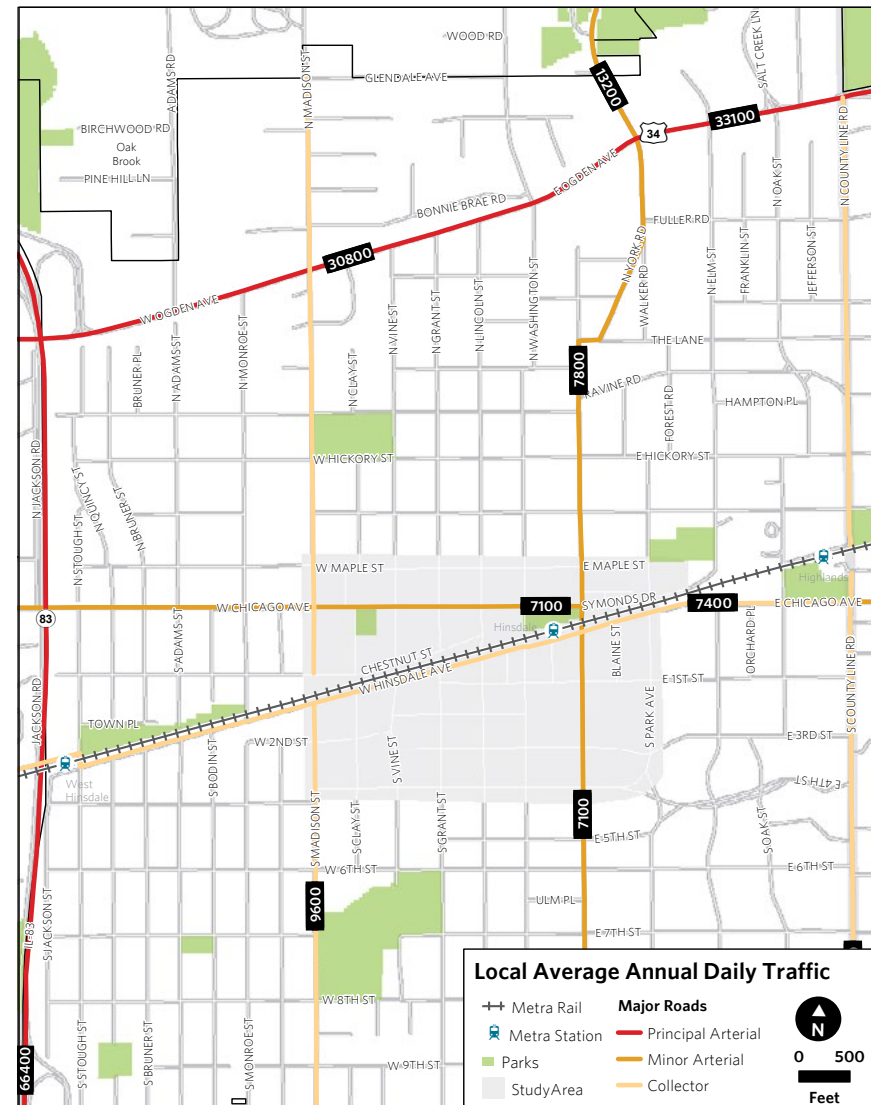
Roadways

Hinsdale's road network connects points within the Village and provides access to regional destinations. The Tri-State Tollway (Interstate 294) serves as Hinsdale's eastern border. Hinsdale residents can access the Tri-State Tollway at an interchange with Ogden Avenue (U.S. Route 34). Ogden Avenue and Kingery Highway (Illinois Route 83) provide east-west and north-south mobility, respectively. Garfield Avenue/York Road and County Line Road are principal north-south arterials. Chicago Avenue/47th Street and 55th Street are principal east-west arterials.

The study area is centered at the intersection of First Street and Washington Street. The streets in this area provide good access for vehicles, but their character – along with pedestrian amenities – fosters a walkable shopping district. The presence of the Hinsdale Metra station in this district is another key facet of the multi-modal transportation network.

Hinsdale's residential streets are primarily laid out in a grid network which enhances the connectivity within the Village, and are predominantly between 25 and 28 feet wide, a relatively narrow width that encourages slower driving and is safer for pedestrians. This network accommodates convenient access to downtown shopping, Metra train stations, schools, parks, hospitals, and other Village destinations.

Figure 5.1. Local Average Annual Daily Traffic



Transit

Hinsdale's public transportation service consists primarily of Pace Bus Route 668 and the Metra Rail BNSF route, which largely serves commuters who work in downtown Chicago. Riders can access the Metra from three stations in the Village: West Hinsdale, Hinsdale, and Highlands.

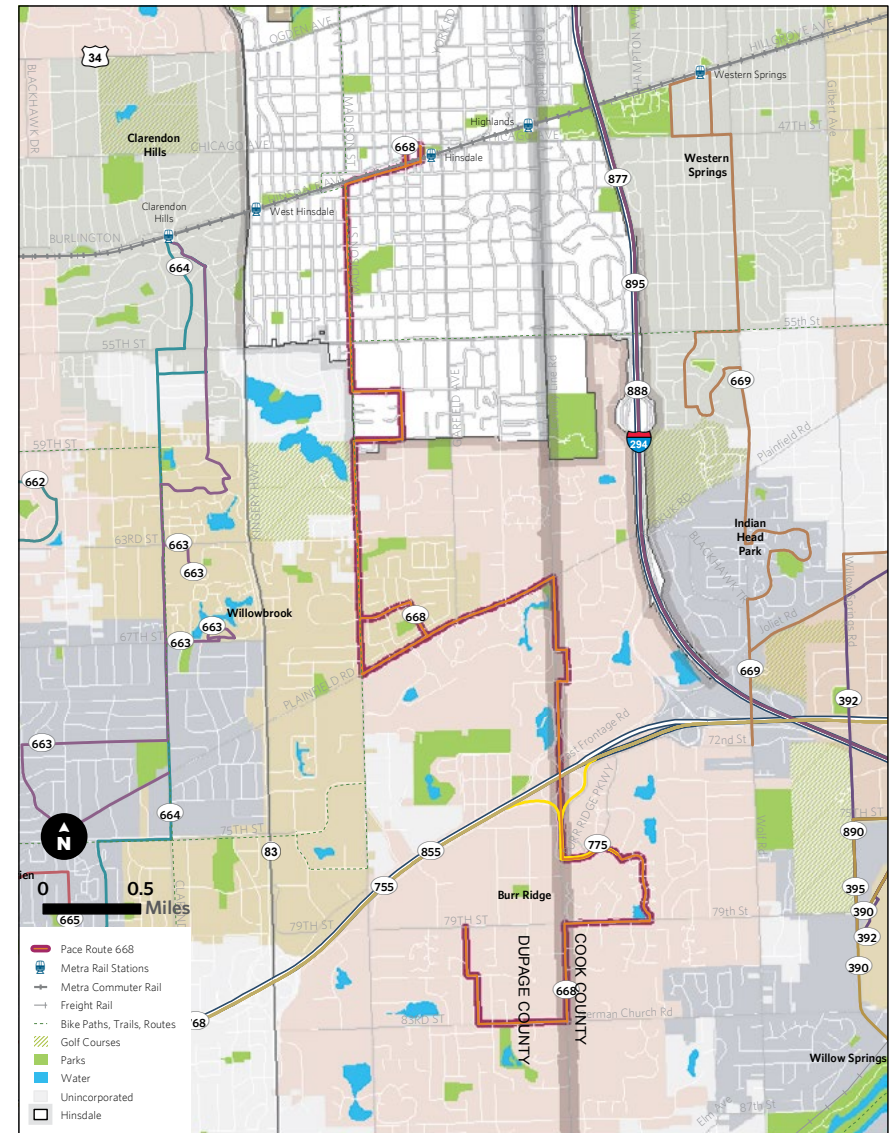
Pace Ridership

Pace Suburban Bus serves the community with Route 668: Burr Ridge-Hinsdale feeder. This route provides rush hour commuter service from Burr Ridge, Willowbrook, and Hinsdale to the Hinsdale Metra station. Through Hinsdale, it runs primarily along S. Madison Street and W. Hinsdale Avenue, south of the BNSF tracks. Average weekday ridership on Route 668 has typically been about 50 passengers; there was a decline in ridership from 2008 to 2012 from 51 to 37, but the numbers have increased in 2013 to 46.



Source: Photo from Creative Commons by Michael Kappel.

Figure 5.2 Pace Route #668



Metra Commuter Rail

The Metra BNSF Line is the busiest route in the entire regional commuter rail system. In January, 2013, it recorded more than 1.3 million total boardings, over one-third more than the line with the second most ridership. The route is 37.5 miles long, from Union Station to Aurora. Of the 26 stations along the line, three are in Hinsdale, and the downtown Hinsdale station had the 10th most boardings in 2006 (not counting Chicago Union Station). In 2006 (the last year Metra collected commuter ridership data), Hinsdale ranked 54 out of 234 outlying Metra stations by number of boardings.

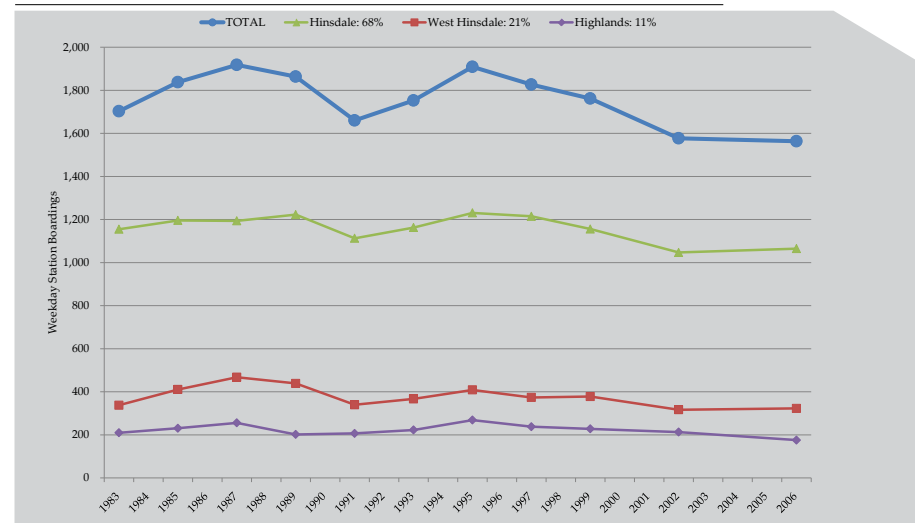
From the West Hinsdale station on the west to the Highlands station on the east is a distance of 1.4 miles, and the Hinsdale station is between them. This represents a relatively dense grouping of stations compared to many other parts of Metra's service area.

Metra Ridership

A Metra survey in the fall of 2006 found that usage of the commuter rail service in Hinsdale followed traditional commuting patterns with the vast majority of riders boarding an inbound train toward Chicago in the morning and alighting from an outbound train from Chicago in the evening. About 8 percent of the AM Metra riders using the Hinsdale station are reverse commuters. With 6 outbound morning peak period trains, including three express trains, stopping at Hinsdale, there is potential to increase this ridership.

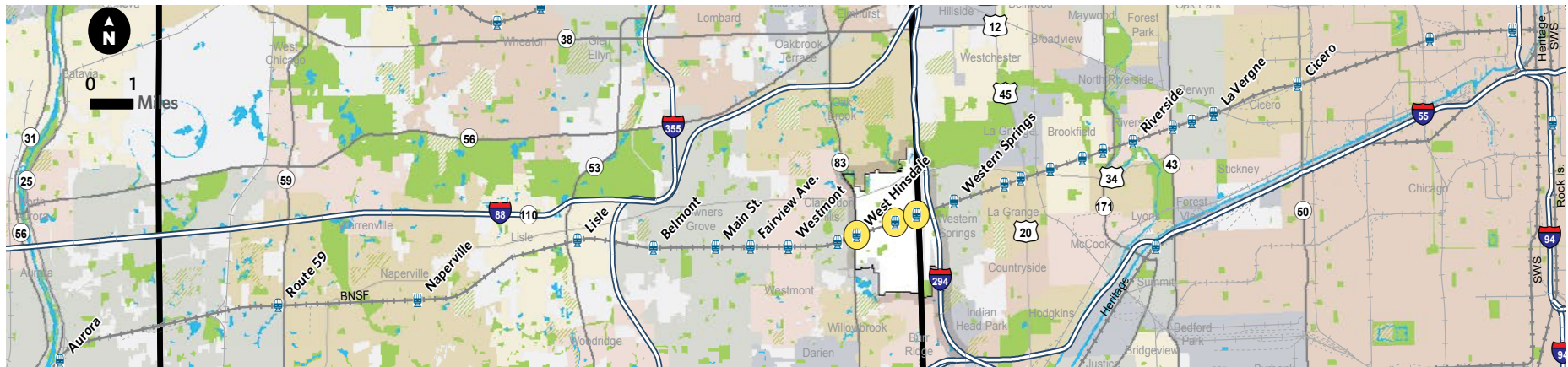
Ridership data over time (from 1983 to 2006) shows a few small peaks and valleys in the total number of commuters. For the most part, though, ridership has remained relatively consistent over time.

Figure 5.3. Hinsdale Metra Ridership, 1983 - 2006



Source: Metra, 2006.

Figure 5.4. Hinsdale Metra station on the BNSF rail line



Metra data from 2006 also show that more than two-thirds of weekday station boardings in the municipality occurred at the Hinsdale station. Boardings at the West Hinsdale station accounted for just over 20 percent of the total, and boardings at the Highlands station accounted for just over 10 percent.

The Hinsdale station is the most frequently used of the three stations in the Village, and this is likely due to several factors in combination:

- **More frequent service:** During the morning peak commute time (6:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.), the Hinsdale station has 11 scheduled stops (in the inbound direction), compared to six for West Hinsdale and five for Highlands
- **More parking:** the Hinsdale station has 170 permitted spaces for Metra commuters, compared to 139 at West Hinsdale and 10 at Highlands. Hinsdale and Highlands stations also have daily fee spaces.
- **Pace bus feeder service:** Route 668 brings commuters from Burr Ridge, Willowbrook, and Hinsdale to the Hinsdale Metra station
- **Downtown location:** Hinsdale station's location in the heart of the Village makes it a more attractive, convenient location for many people; commuters can get coffee or breakfast in the morning and pick up dry cleaning or get groceries on the way home



Figure 5.5. Boardings and Alightings for Hinsdale Metra Stations

Station	AM PEAK				MIDDAY				PM PEAK				EVENING			
	Inbound		Outbound		Inbound		Outbound		Inbound		Outbound		Inbound		Outbound	
	on	off	on	off	on	off	on	off	on	off	on	off	on	off	on	off
West Hinsdale	318	0	0	0	5	0	0	18	0	0	0	225	0	0	0	29
Hinsdale	777	18	11	69	127	11	9	160	98	26	21	562	20	4	2	151
Highlands	167	2	1	2	0	0	2	45	6	4	0	121	0	0	0	12

AM Peak: Start of service day to 9:15 a.m.

Midday: 9:16 a.m. to 3:29 p.m.

PM Peak: 3:30 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.

Evening: 6:46 p.m. to End of service day

Mode of Access to Metra Stations

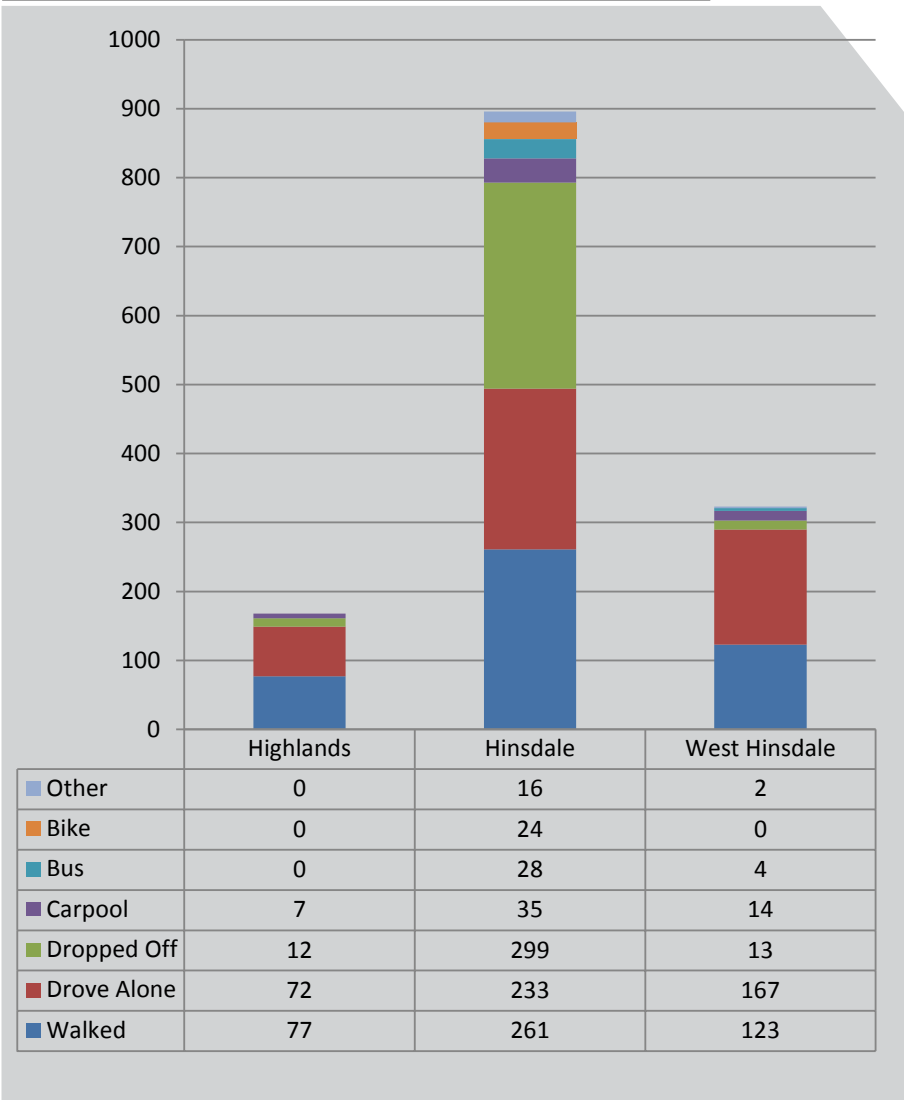
According to a 2006 Metra survey, only 26 percent of Metra riders drive alone and park at the Hinsdale station, with 33 percent dropped off and 35 percent walking, biking, or arriving by bus. For all rail commuters in the municipality, walking and driving alone were the primary modes of access. These two modes of accessing the three Metra stations in Hinsdale each represented about one-third of the total number of commuters. Being dropped off was the third most common mode of access, overall, but it was the most common at the Hinsdale station. All other modes of access combined, including carpool, bus, bike, taxi, and other, are less than any of the other three. According to the 2010 US Census, approximately 1,500 people between the ages of 18 and 65 live within a half mile of the downtown Metra station, putting many potential users within walking distance of the station.

Metra Parking

Metra provided data for the three stations in the Village of Hinsdale along the BNSF Line: Highlands, Hinsdale, and West Hinsdale station. The findings indicate more parking availability at the Highlands and West Hinsdale stations. Highlights from the 2006 Ridership Information, 2011 Parking Counts, and 2006 Mode of Access data include:

- The Hinsdale station had the highest ridership (2006) and highest observed parking use (2011): 896 morning boardings and 96 percent occupancy (230 of 239 spots).
- The Highlands station, with only 168 morning boardings (2006), had the second highest percentage of observed parking use (2011): 64 percent, or 59 of 92 spots.
- The West Hinsdale station had the lowest percentage of observed parking use (2011): 46 percent, 65 of 139 spots for 323 morning boardings (2006).

Figure 5.6. Mode of Access to Hinsdale BNSF stations



Source: Metra, 2006.

Walking and Bicycling

Downtown Hinsdale is a walkable, bike-able community helped tremendously by a well-connected grid network with short blocks and a concentration of uses in the core. The entire study area is within a 10-minute walk of the intersection of First Street and Washington Street.

Pedestrian Environment

Walkability is an important factor in the health 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. Access to amenities, stores, parks, and places of work are also important.

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:

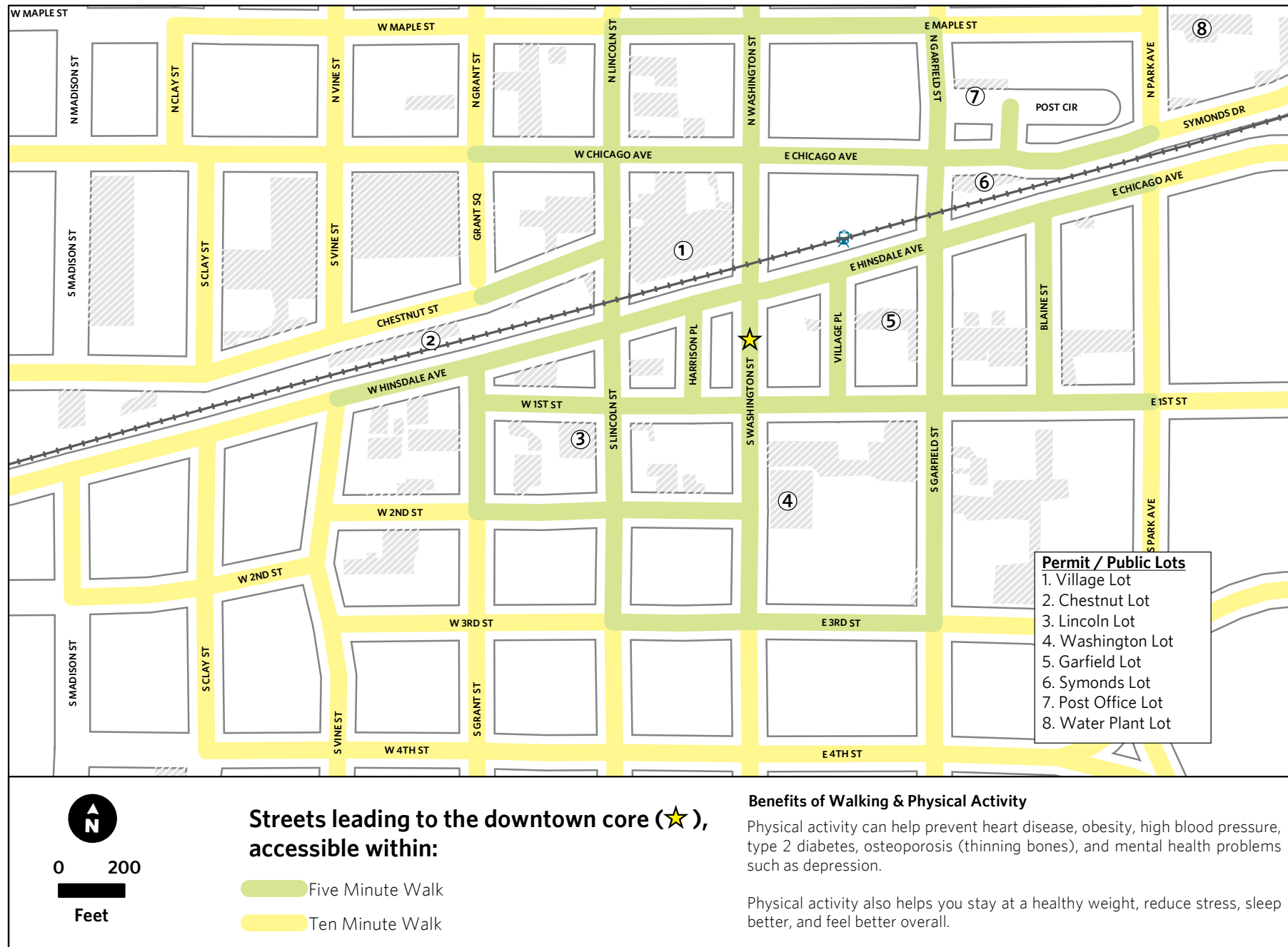
- People in walkable places weigh 6-10 lbs. less than people in auto-oriented communities.
- For every ten minutes a person spends in a daily car commute, time spent in community activities falls by 10 percent.
- One point of Walk Score is worth \$3,000 in home value.

The area centered on S. Washington Street and E. First Street Hinsdale IL 60521 has a Walk Score of 88 out of 100. This location is “Very Walkable” as most errands near South Washington Street and East First Street can be accomplished on foot. The average block length is 436 feet, and there are 152 intersections per square mile in the study area. Short blocks and lots of intersections are better for walkers.



3. For more information on Hinsdale's WalkScore, visit: <http://bit.ly/HinsdaleWalks>

Figure 5.7. Downtown Walking Map

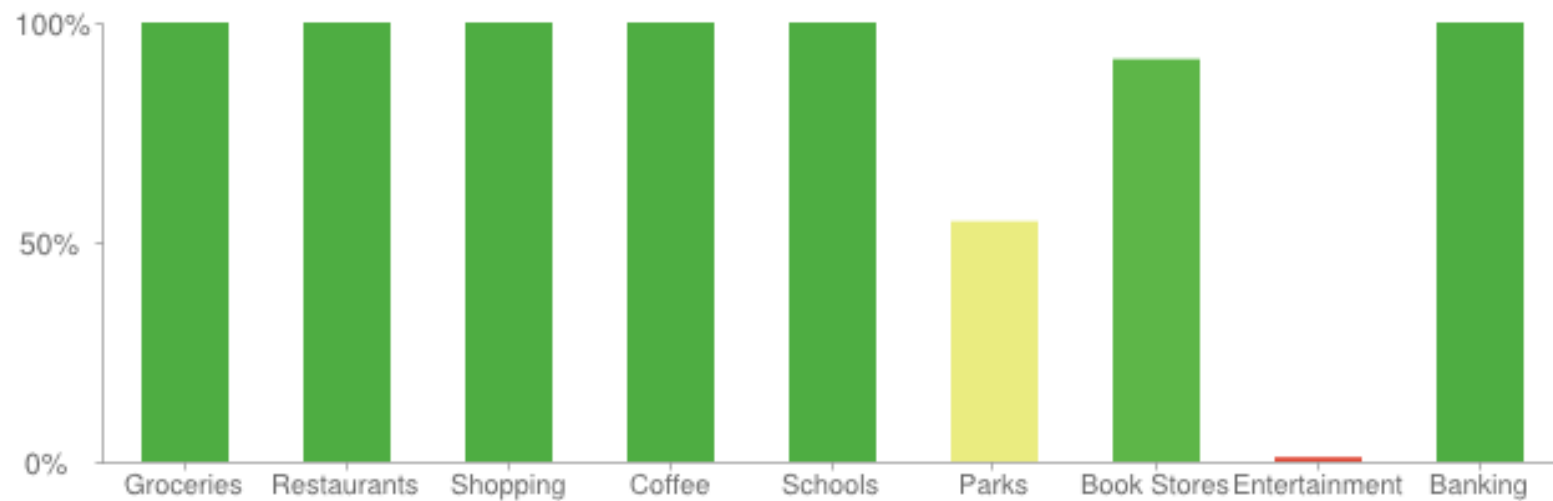


Walkability by Category (from WalkScore.com)

The downtown study area scores excellent in all categories (groceries, restaurants, shopping, coffee, schools, book stores, and banking) except entertainment and parks. If the Hinsdale Theater on First Street were still operating, this entertainment venue would have increased Walk Score. While Burlington Park is just north of the BNSF railroad tracks, most of Hinsdale's parks are found in the residential neighborhoods surrounding the downtown. Entertainment uses have stronger parking demand after 6:00 p.m., when other uses have less need for parking. As mentioned before, the limited "entertainment" venues downtown leave large areas of underutilized parking during the off-peak hours.



Figure 5.8. Walkability by Category (from Walkscore.com)



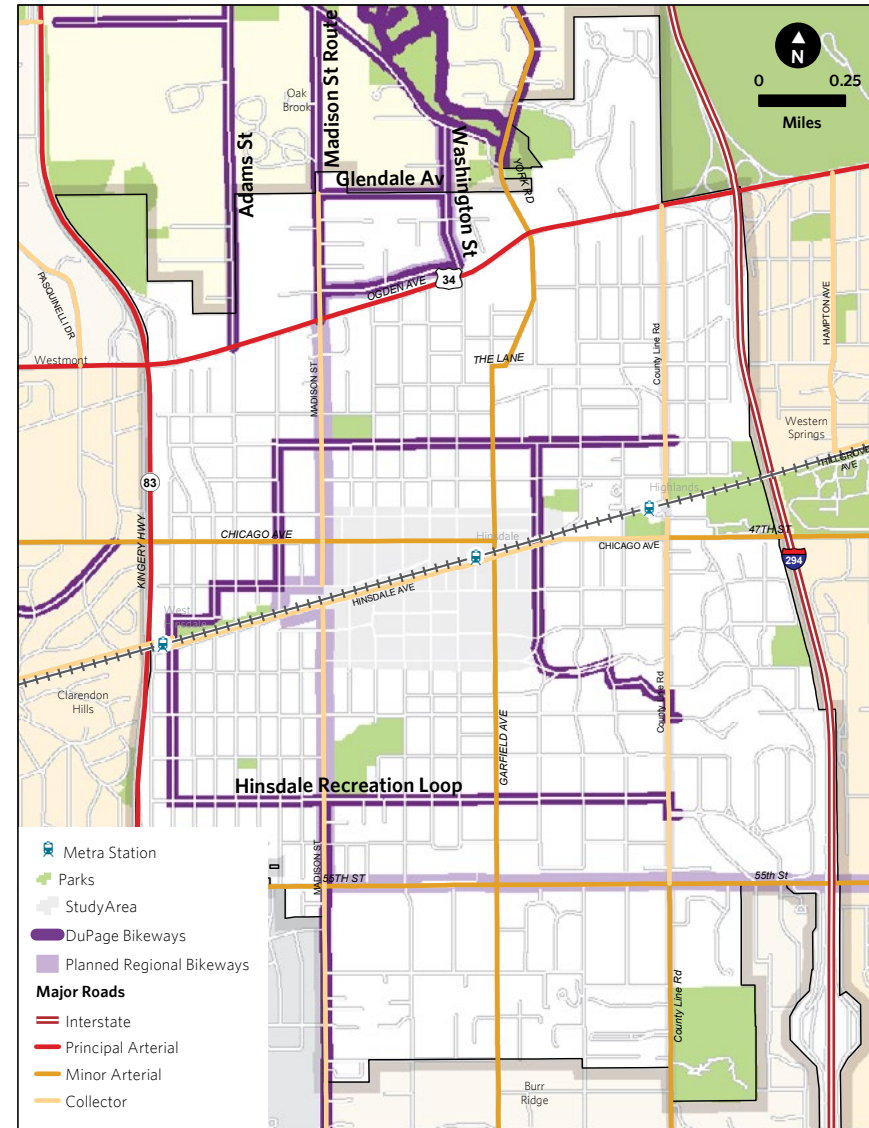
Bicycling

The existing bicycle network has a long history, but has not had the continuous attention and maintenance to develop into a complete transportation network. In 1975, the Hinsdale Recreation Route was officially open, consisting of a 7.8 mile loop through the Village mainly south of Ogden and north of 55th Street. This route was incorporated into the bicycle plan for DuPage County in 1994. There are two county trails that travel through the Village of Hinsdale: the Salt Creek Trail and the Southern DuPage County Regional Trail. The closest portions of the Salt Creek Trail are mostly in the Village of Oak Brook, touching Hinsdale's boundary briefly near the Graue Mill on the north. The Southern DuPage County Regional Trail enters Hinsdale north along Madison Street, and continues through the southern boundary of the Village. East-west connections to neighboring communities are challenging due to Interstate 294 on the east and Route 83 on the west.

The bicycle routes in Hinsdale have historically favored recreational riders, but many commuters still ride bikes to the Metra station, as evidenced by the number of bicycles at Metra bike racks (even in January). There is a solid bicycling community, but without safe, connected networks and paths throughout the Village, it will continue to be seen as a recreational activity, rather than a mode of transportation.



Figure 5.9. Hinsdale Bikeways





Freight

While Hinsdale is not a destination for freight transportation, it is significantly affected by the BNSF tracks running through the Village. An average of 143 trains pass through the station per day, with approximately 100 serving commuter passengers⁴. In addition to the Metra trains, about 35 daily freight trains and eight Amtrak trains use the BNSF railway. Travelers seeking to get from one side of the tracks to the other frequently experience delays and congestion when a train is passing through the Village; for example, a coal train can have from 110 to 120 cars per train. This is also seen as a deterrent from using the permit parking north of the tracks for employees who work south of the tracks; people dislike being exposed to the weather while waiting for trains to pass and the uncertainty of when a train might come and how long they might have to wait.

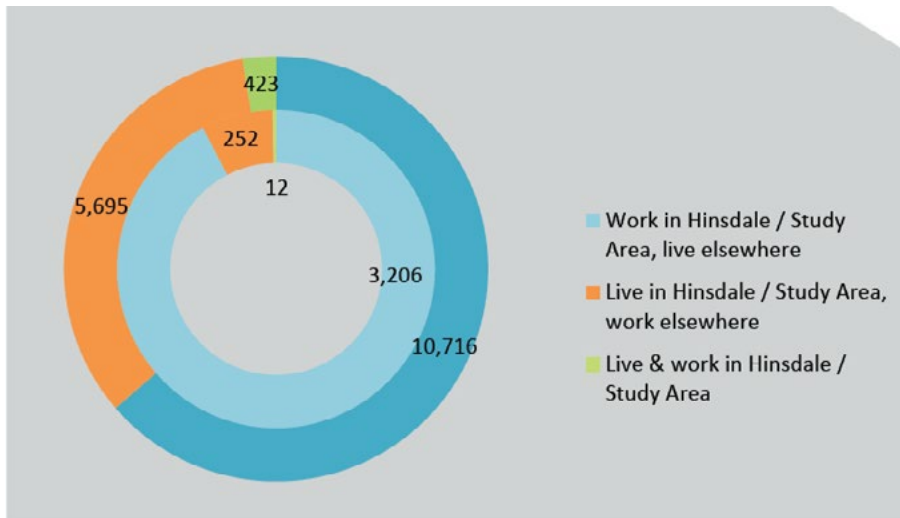
4. Fieldman, Chuck. "Trains part of daily life in Doings communities." The Doings Hinsdale, 24 May 2012. <http://hinsdale.suntimes.com/12685966-417/trains-part-of-daily-life-in-doings-communities.html>

Commuting in Hinsdale

According to data from the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) – a program of the Center for Economic Studies at the U.S. Census Bureau – approximately twice as many people enter Hinsdale to work as people who leave Hinsdale to go to work. Comparatively few people both live and work in Hinsdale. The following chart shows the proportion of workers by place of work and place of residence. The larger outer ring is for the Village of Hinsdale, and the smaller circle is for the downtown study area.

Another aspect of LEHD analysis shows where workers employed in Hinsdale reside. The plurality (26.7 percent) of the 6,118 jobs in consideration is held by residents of the City of Chicago. Hinsdale itself is home to the second highest proportion of Hinsdale's workforce (6.9 percent). However, those top two municipalities together account for only 33.6 percent of Hinsdale's work force. The rest come in relatively small proportions from suburbs in the region. Each of only four nearby suburbs – Oak Brook, Westmont, Downers Grove, and Naperville – contributes two-percent or more of Hinsdale's workforce.

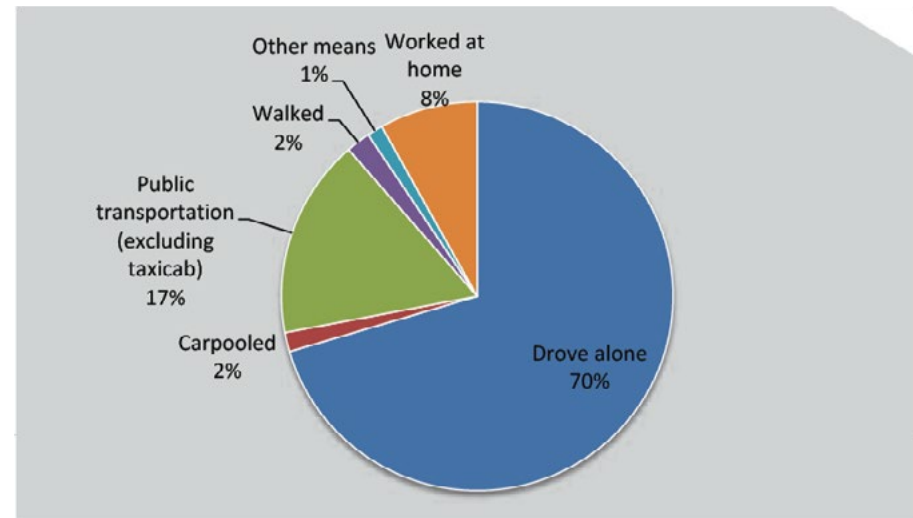
Figure 5.10. Worker Profile: Village of Hinsdale and downtown study area



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2013. OnTheMap Application. Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program. <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

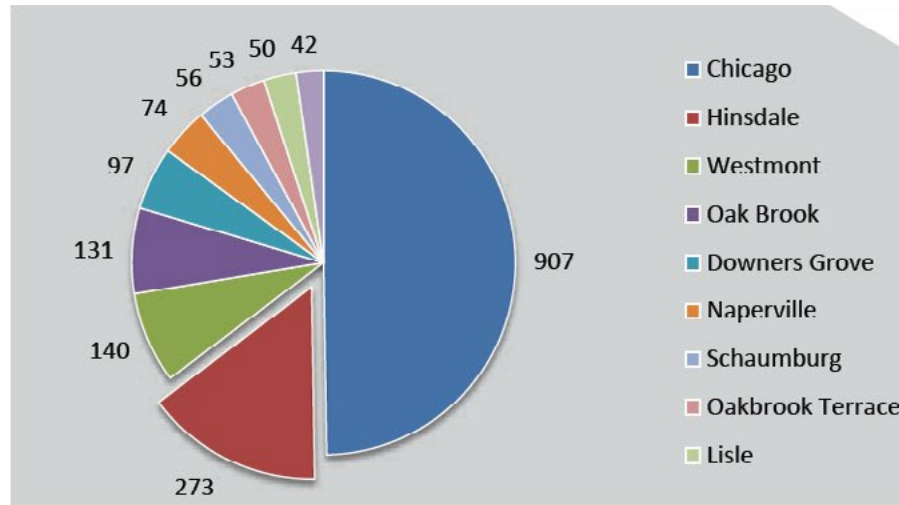
Among Hinsdale residents who work outside their homes, nearly three-quarters drive to work alone. Transit also makes up a significant share (17%); this is higher than most comparable communities, and primarily consists of residents taking the Metra to downtown Chicago. While census data is not available to show the percentage of workers in Hinsdale driving, anecdotal evidence would suggest that the vast majority of them have no option but to drive alone. The majority of workers are arriving from neighboring communities, and there are limited options for alternative modes. Providing these employees with convenient parking is a significant challenge for the Village.

Figure 5.11. Commuting to work by Hinsdale residents



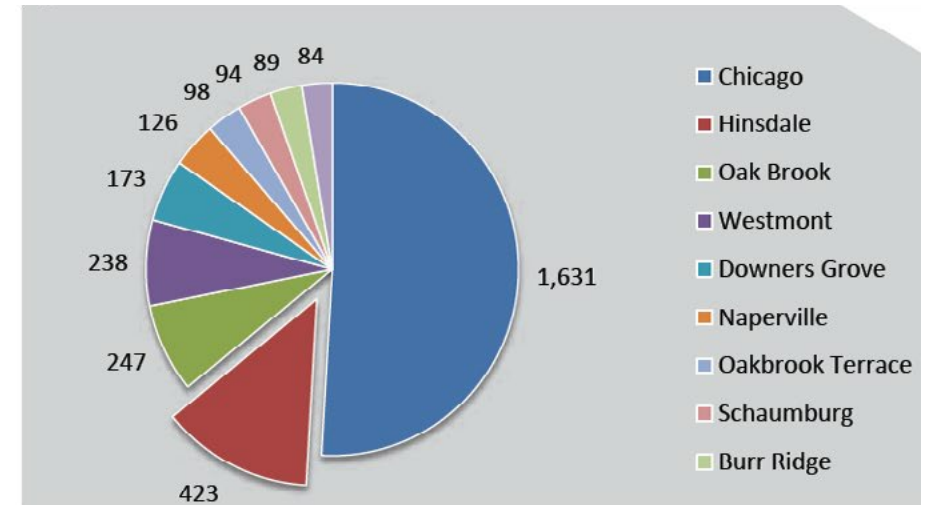
Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates - Selected Economic Characteristics - Hinsdale.

Figure 5.12. Where Hinsdale study area residents work



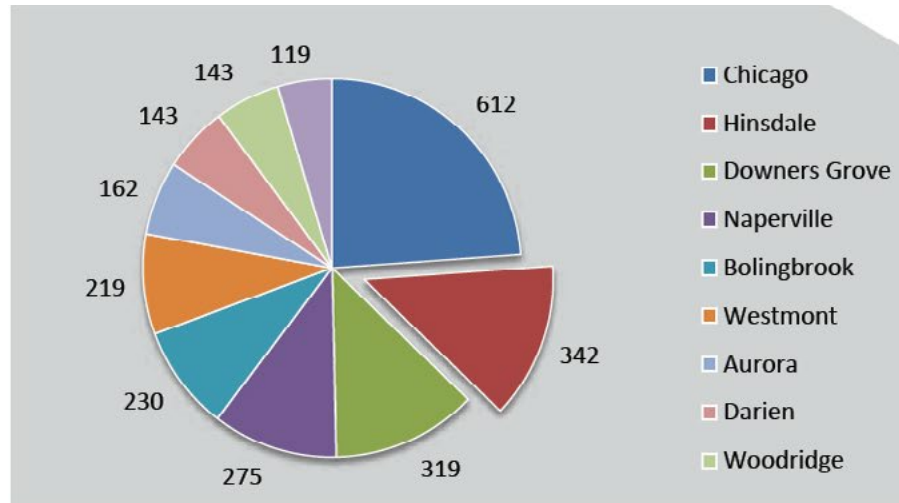
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2013. Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program.
 Note: Jobs in All Other Locations (46.6%) are not shown in chart.

Figure 5.13. Where Hinsdale residents work



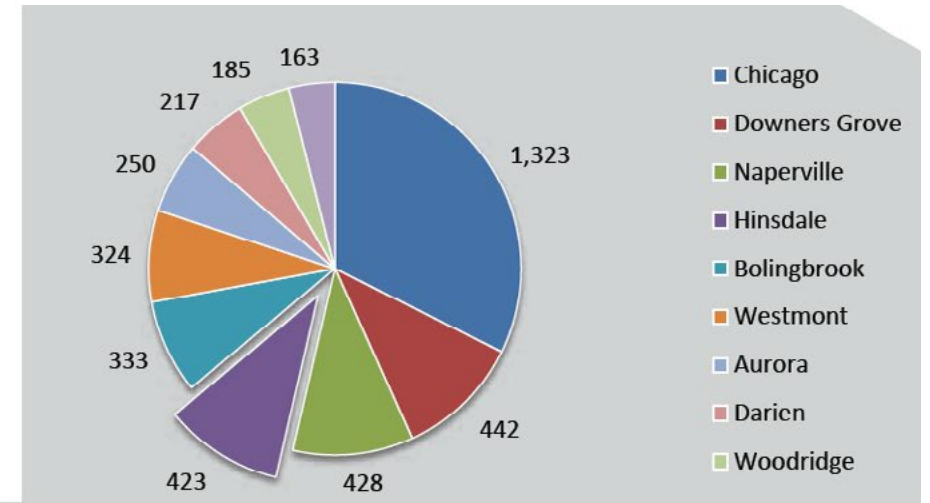
Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2013. Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program.
 Note: Jobs in All Other Locations (47.6%) are not shown in chart.

Figure 5.14. Where Hinsdale study area workers live



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2013. Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program.
 Note: Jobs in All Other Locations (62.2%) are not shown in chart.

Figure 5.15. Where Hinsdale workers live



Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2013. Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program.
 Note: Jobs in All Other Locations (63.3%) are not shown in chart.



Section 6

Parking Downtown

The majority of the public parking spaces in the downtown area are found on local streets, rather than in surface parking lots. This presents challenges when everyone wants to park in the closest space, within eyesight of their destination. The blocks with the highest retail density have a very high demand for parking and many employees are using these high demand parking spaces, keeping occupancy above 90 percent for the business hours. Finding metered spaces occupied, visitors and customers circle the block searching for a space, often unaware that they can park for free just a couple blocks away.

Key Findings

- Depending on working hours, it can be cheaper to feed the meter than pay for an employee permit and park further from the core.
 - The demand for parking is concentrated on Washington Street from Chicago Avenue to Third Street, Hinsdale Avenue between Lincoln Street and Garfield Street, and First Street between Lincoln Street and Garfield Street.
 - There is some underutilized parking on streets within a five minute walk of the core.
-

Existing Parking Supply

The Village has approximately 2,000 public parking spaces within the downtown study area. Private parking lots account for approximately 1,800 additional off-street parking spaces, for a total of 3,800 parking spaces in the study area. Both public and private parking lots were surveyed to understand how supply is utilized at different times of day. For supply counts, the study area was divided into quadrants, with Washington Street as the east-west divider and the BNSF rail as the north-south divider. The map on the following page shows the parking spaces, with colors to represent the various quadrants; the parking lots with black outlines are the public and/or permit parking lots.

Because over three-fourth of Hinsdale’s supply of public parking is on-street, rather than in off-street parking lots, increasing utilization of the on-street supply can be helpful to addressing supply and demand challenges.

Figure 6.1. Parking Supply by Quadrant



Source: Hinsdale Police Department, 2006.

The approximate breakdown of the 2,027 public parking spaces is:

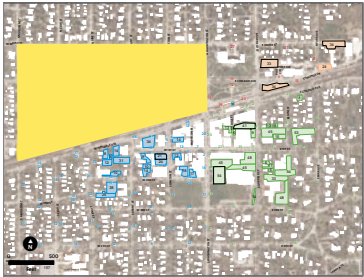
Table 6.1. Public Parking Supply

Total public spaces	2027	
Total off-street spaces	457	
Total on-street spaces	1570	
North of the tracks	789	
South of the tracks	1238	
Total Northwest Quadrant	526	(286 on-street and 240 off-street)
Total Northeast Quadrant	263	(162 on-street and 101 off-street)
Total Southwest Quadrant	760	(739 on-street and 21 off-street)
Total Southeast Quadrant	478	(383 on-street and 95 off-street)

Source: CMAP collected data, 2013.

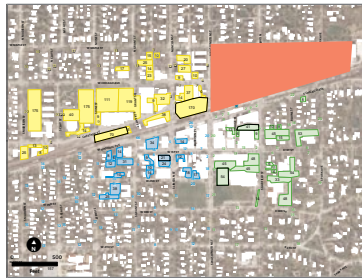
The northwest quadrant

The northwest quadrant, in yellow, has over 1,000 private parking spaces in addition to the 526 public spaces. It has easier auto-access and is not pedestrian-oriented. It is also where the two commuter parking lots are located, and there is one private permit lot.



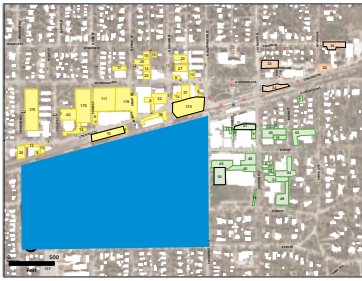
The northeast quadrant

The northeast quadrant, in pink, is the smallest and has the least amount of parking, with a total of 287 spaces, only 24 of which are in private parking lots. This area houses the Village Hall, public library, police department, post office, and public works department.



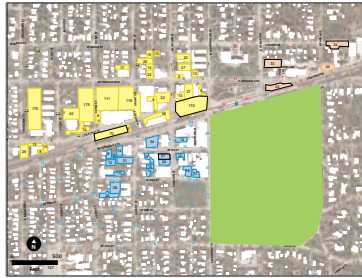
The southwest quadrant

The southwest quadrant, in blue, is the largest. Many of the on-street spaces counted in this quadrant are along residential streets. The parking lots in this quadrant are mostly small private parking lots. The building density increases on the eastern side along Washington St. The only public / permit lot is the Lincoln Lot at Lincoln Street and First Street. All of the on-street parking spaces along the train tracks on the north side of Hinsdale Avenue west of Lincoln Street (approximately 100) are permit parking spaces.



The southeast quadrant

The southeast quadrant has the Hinsdale Middle School, several churches, and small businesses in single family homes, in addition to the retail-rich block with Starbucks, Corner Bakery, Zazu salon, Fuller's, and more. This quadrant has the Washington Lot, intended for shopper parking. The public Garfield lot with 2-hour meters is also in this quadrant, off Garfield Street south of Hinsdale Avenue.



Parking information, signage, and permits

In an effort to address parking challenges, the Hinsdale police department overhauled their regulations, creating more short-term spaces and allowing some permit holders to park in a variety of spaces. Some business owners said that this helped to alleviate some problems, and others expressed confusion about where and when they are allowed to park.

The information for each permit is not available on-line. There is a printable map of parking restrictions (below), but it has red and orange lines that look to be the same color on some print-outs, the parking lots are not sized to scale, and the free merchant parking is not shown on this map. This map is not very helpful to a visitor who is otherwise unfamiliar with Hinsdale, especially if all of the areas shown on the map are full when they arrive.

Figure 6.3. Existing Hinsdale Parking Map

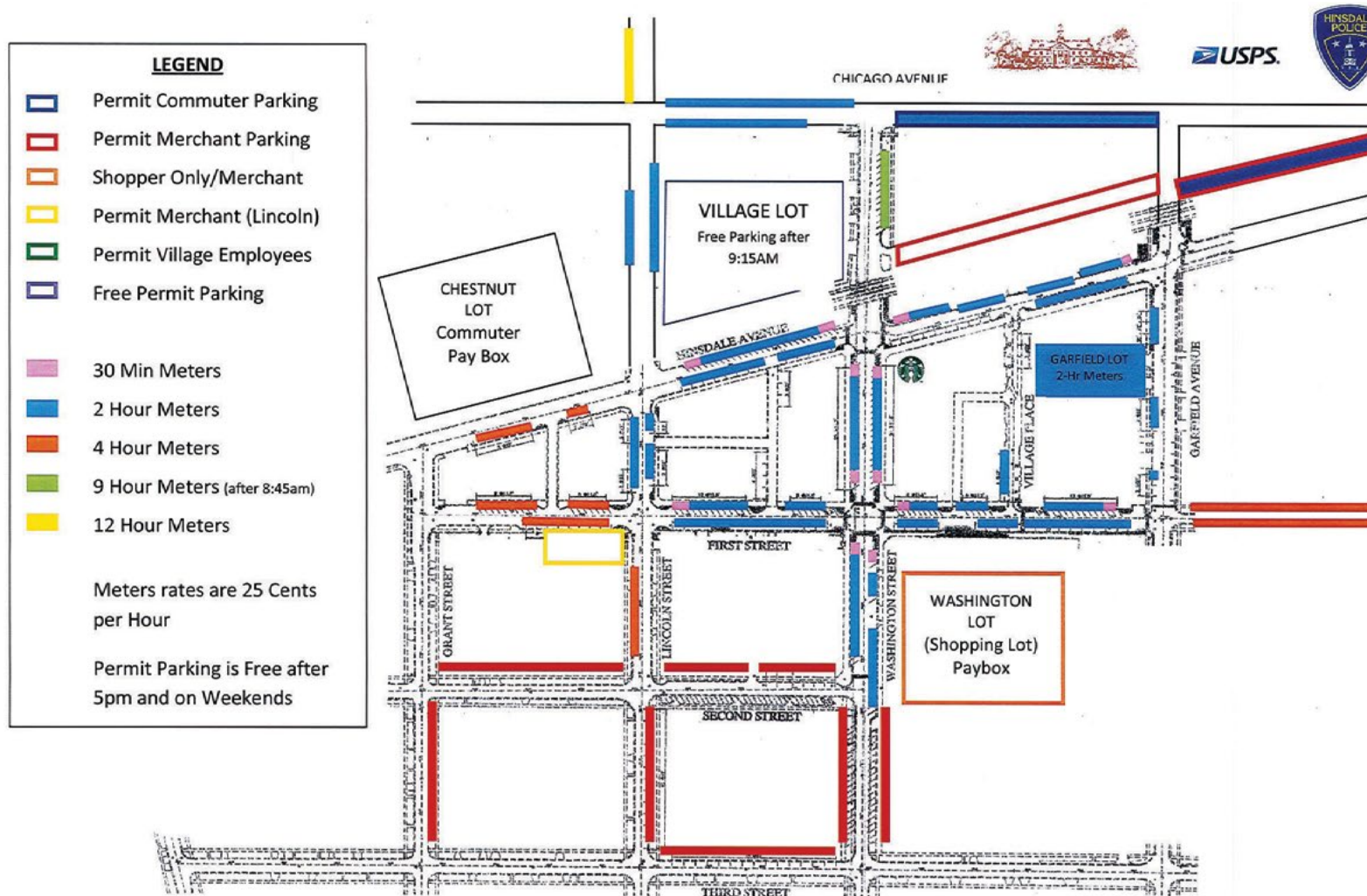
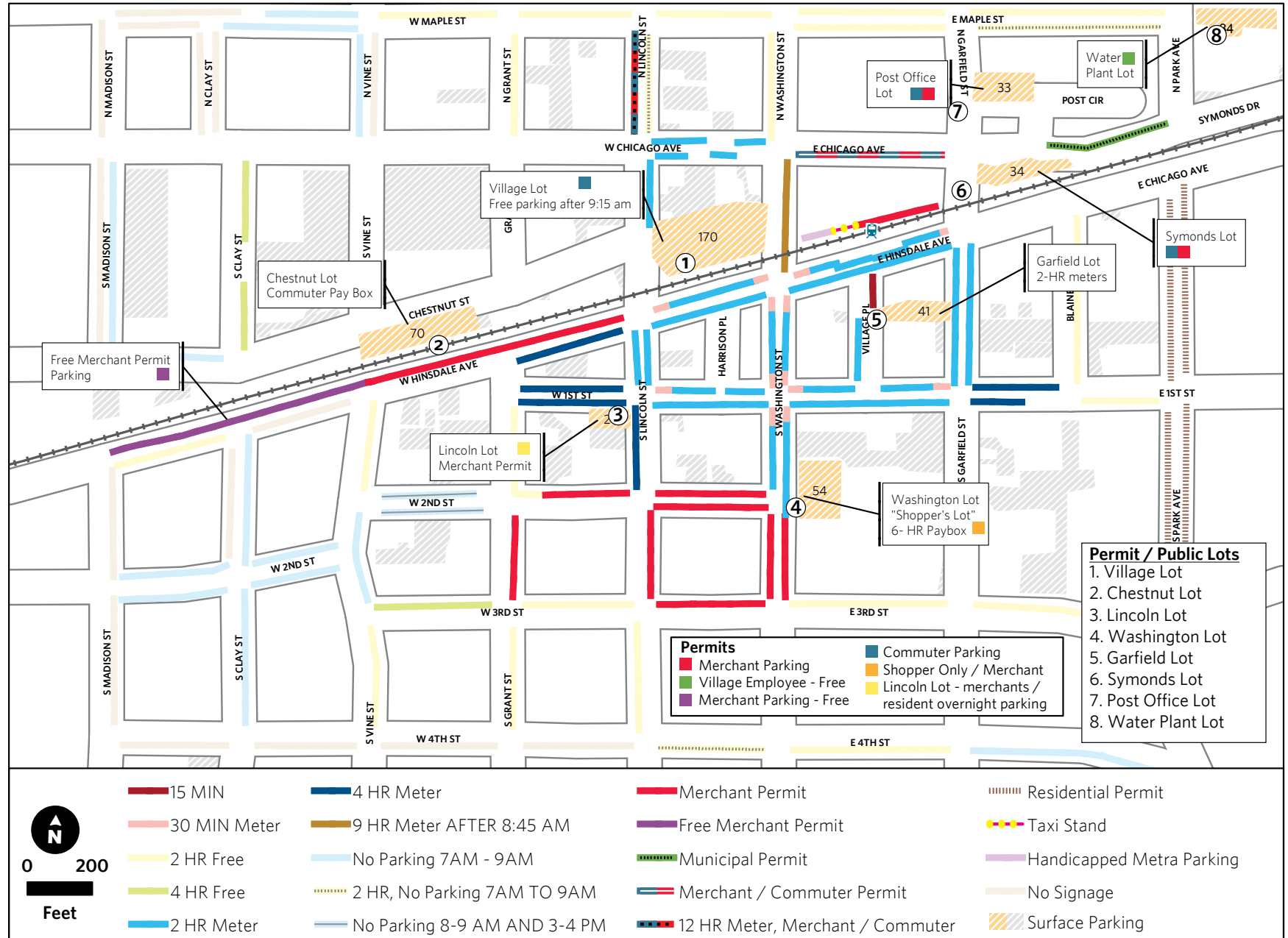


Figure 6.4. Parking Restrictions and Regulations



Parking Restrictions and Regulations

In order to document all the parking restrictions in the study area, CMAP staff produced the map shown above, using data available online as well as site visits. There are many regulations and restrictions, each in place to serve various objectives. The Village wants merchants to have a place to park, but without regulating the parking through permits and time limits, such spaces would most likely be used by commuters driving to the Hinsdale station. The restrictions on early morning hours are to prevent commuters from parking all day. The hourly restrictions in the core exist to encourage parking turnover and availability for shoppers. A tiered permit system was developed, with more expensive permits allowing permit-holders to park in more desirable locations. The hourly restrictions in the periphery are in place to prevent commuters and employees from parking all day long on the residential streets. There are a significant number of streets without signage to indicate any restrictions at all.

The existing permits are priced per six months: Blue Commuter (\$310), Red Merchant (\$180), Yellow Merchant / Overnight residential (\$180), Orange Merchant (\$240 - discontinued), Free Green Municipal Employee and Free Purple Merchant parking. While some employees use the free merchant permit area, many find the distance to be too far, especially if their place of work is on the eastern side of downtown. The current price for the red merchant permit is \$30 per month. For employees whose hours fall slightly outside of the 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. meter hours, it can be cheaper to feed the meter than pay for a merchant permit. Meters are enforced on Saturdays, but the commuter lots are free and employees know that they can park there on the weekends. Many employees are willing to pay during the week if they can park closer to their final destination.

One early online survey respondent commented:

"I haven't shopped in Hinsdale for months... not worth the hassle of finding somewhere to park. The various color 'zones' for parking are so complicated that I don't even try to understand/remember what each one means..."



Confusing signage.

Observed Parking Occupancy Rates

To understand where people park in Hinsdale, staff counted the number of parked cars on street segments and in parking lots at various times of day. The following maps show line segments and surface parking lots color-coded by the percentage of parked cars observed at that time of day.

The first count was conducted at 8:00 a.m. on a weekday morning, followed by 10:00 a.m., noon, 2:00 p.m., and 6:00 p.m. The parking count on Saturday took place at noon. While parking occupancy will vary from day to day, month to month, or seasonally, these counts help to give a better general understanding of where people want to park. The times were chosen to reflect arrival and departure times of commuters, downtown employees, lunch patrons, and middle school teachers and students. When staff resources do not allow for data collection at multiple time periods, follow-up parking counts could be conducted at 11:00 a.m. on a weekday, or at times reflective of any changes in land use or business peak periods. For instance, if more restaurants open, evening demand for parking will increase and may necessitate more parking counts at 6:00 p.m.

The percentage breakdowns used in the maps were chosen to reflect our target occupancy rate of 85 percent. When the street (or lot) is 85 percent full, that means that there are many cars parked, but there are still one or two spaces available per block. When occupancy levels exceed 90 percent, this leads to “parking congestion,” where 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 downtown area for other locations. Ideally, all the streets in the downtown core would be blue, indicating a high level of street activity without complete parking congestion, in the range of 81 to 90 percent occupied. Pale yellow indicates that there is 60 percent occupancy or less; green is 61 -80 percent occupied; and red is above 90 percent - sometimes exceeding 100 percent in parking lots where cars were illegally parked and / or observed circling for spaces when the lot was already full.

Weekday parking counts were kept separate from Saturday counts because the habits of weekday commuters have a significant impact on parking availability in the Village. Private parking lots were also included in the survey to compare with the Village supply. Not all parking spaces were counted at all times of the survey. No parking counts were conducted on Sunday.



Weekdays: Early morning

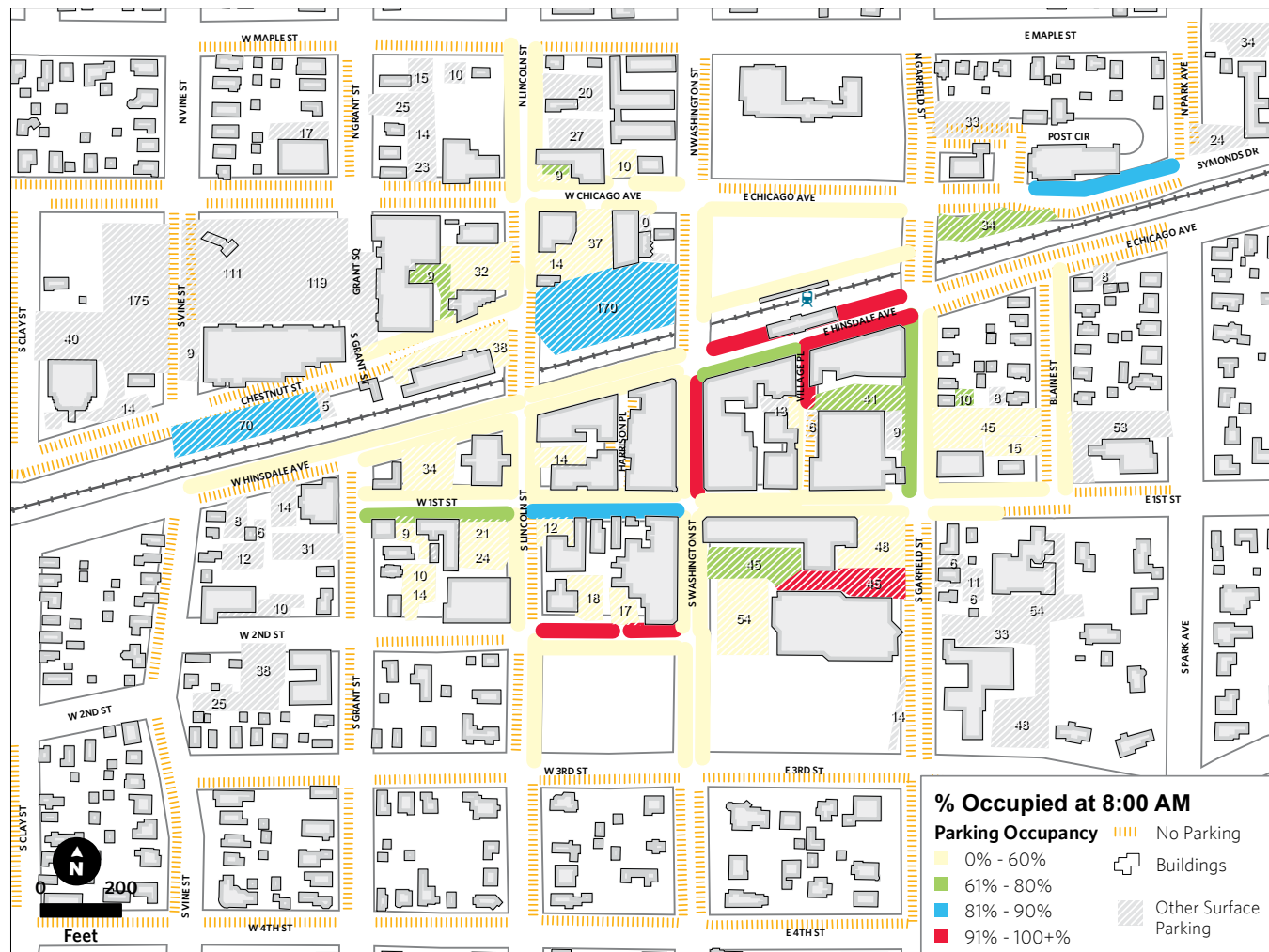
Commuters are generally the first to arrive downtown, as indicated by the occupancy in the commuter parking lots. There is frequent weekday Metra train service to downtown Chicago Union Station during the morning rush hour, with many “express” trains (indicated in green in the table below). Many commuters want to arrive at their jobs by 9:00 a.m., so the rush for commuter parking in Hinsdale is between 7:00 a.m. and 8:27 a.m. At 8:00 a.m., the lots primarily used by commuters are approaching 90 percent occupancy.

The large lot with 170 spaces converts to free parking at 9:15 a.m., but it is typically full before most merchants arrive downtown. Some businesses are open early to cater to the morning commuters, such as the Starbucks at the southeast corner of Washington Street and Hinsdale Avenue. The metered spaces are free until 9:00 a.m.

There are two faculty parking lots for the Hinsdale middle school, with the eastern one approaching 100 percent full at 8:00 a.m. as teachers get an early start to their day.

Train #	Hinsdale	Chicago Union Station
1200	5:05	5:32
1202	5:15	6:00
1206	5:55	6:35
1212	6:16	7:00
1218	6:50	7:12
1230	6:56	7:44
1226	7:02	7:35
1234	7:22	7:56
1238	7:40	8:05
1246	7:44	8:22
1248	8:00	8:23
1258	8:27	8:51
1260	8:56	9:47

Figure 6.5. Observed Parking Occupancy Rates: Weekday early morning

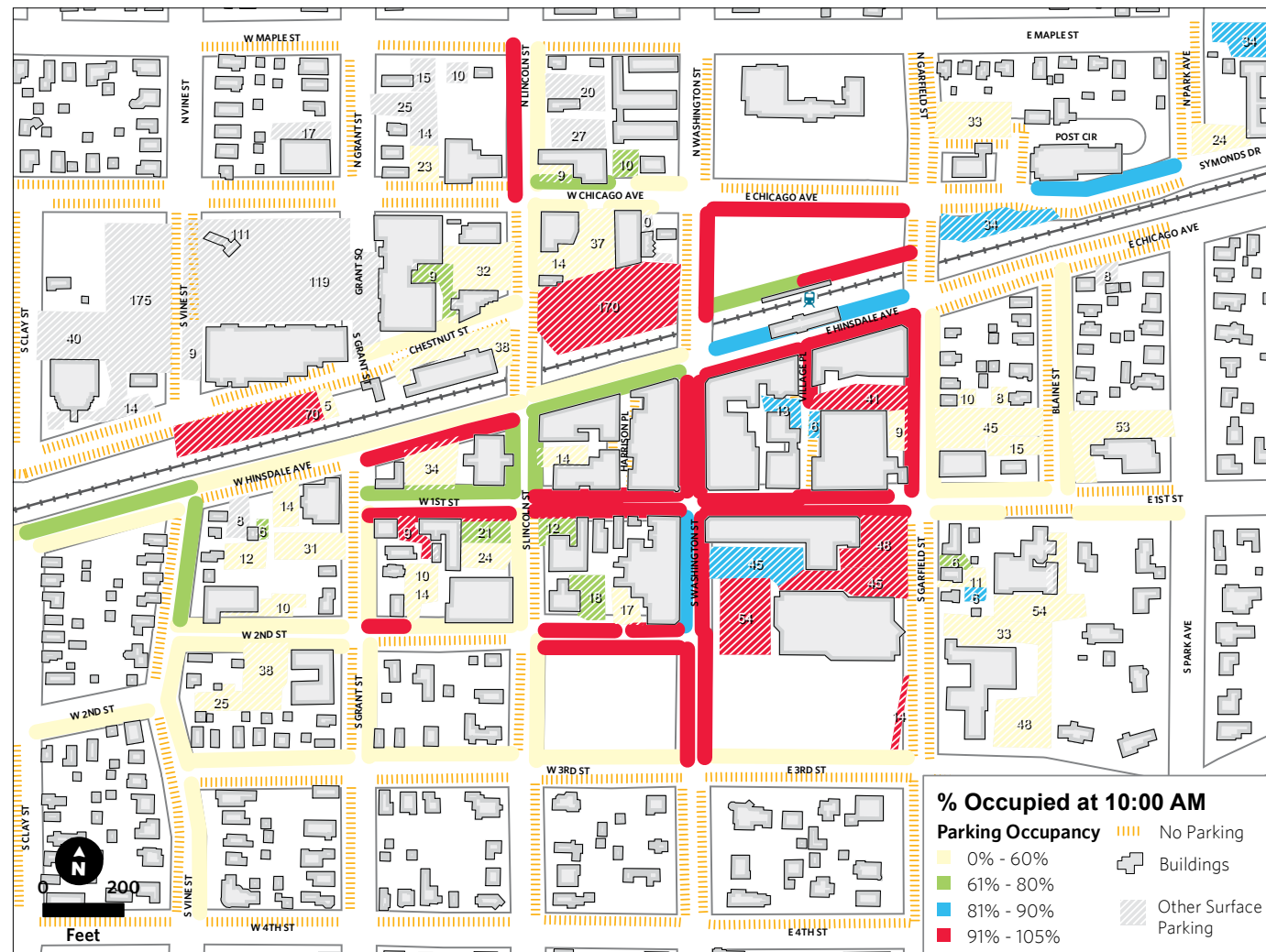


Weekdays: Mid-morning

By mid-morning, finding a parking spot becomes a hunting game along Washington Street and First Street. The Garfield Lot, Village Lot, Washington Lot, and Chestnut Lot are full; the second middle school lot passed 80 percent occupancy. As expected, commuter lots remain full until the evening rush hour trains return. The back-in diagonal parking north of the tracks between Garfield and Washington is not fully occupied, but the vacant spaces are mostly handicapped spaces and taxi waiting stalls, making them unavailable

to merchants or commuters without mobility impairments. The merchant permit spaces on the north side of Hinsdale Avenue from Lincoln Street to Vine Street are less than 60 percent occupied and the free merchant parking from Vine to Madison is only 65 percent occupied. The permitted merchant lot at Lincoln Street and First Street is at 76 percent occupancy.

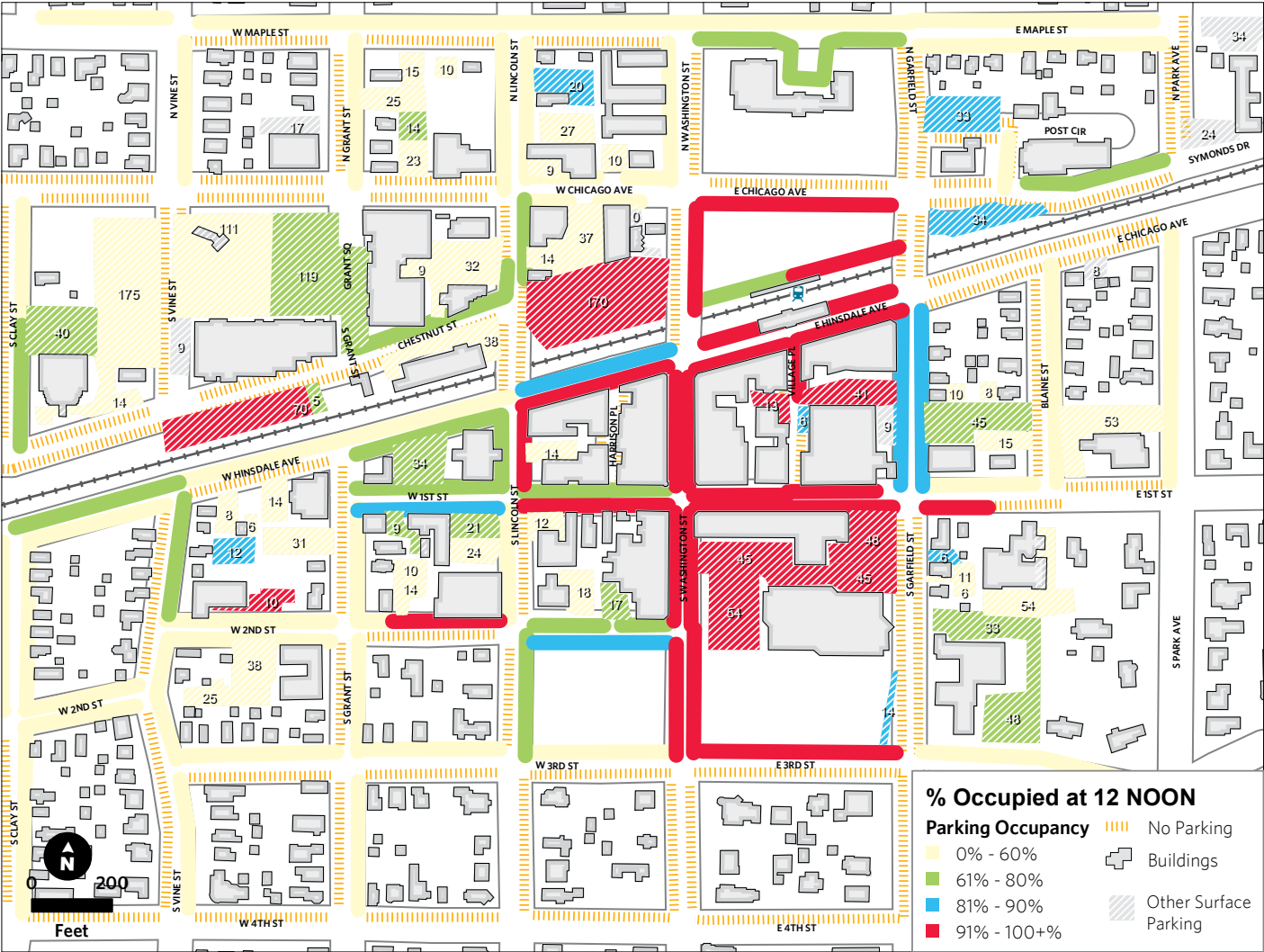
Figure 6.6. Observed Parking Occupancy Rates: Weekday mid-morning



Weekdays: Noon

Lunch-time rush hour doesn't seem to change the parking occupancy much from the mid-morning levels, but there may be more cars circling for a space, especially along First Street, where there are more restaurants.

Figure 6.7. Observed Parking Occupancy Rates: Weekday noon

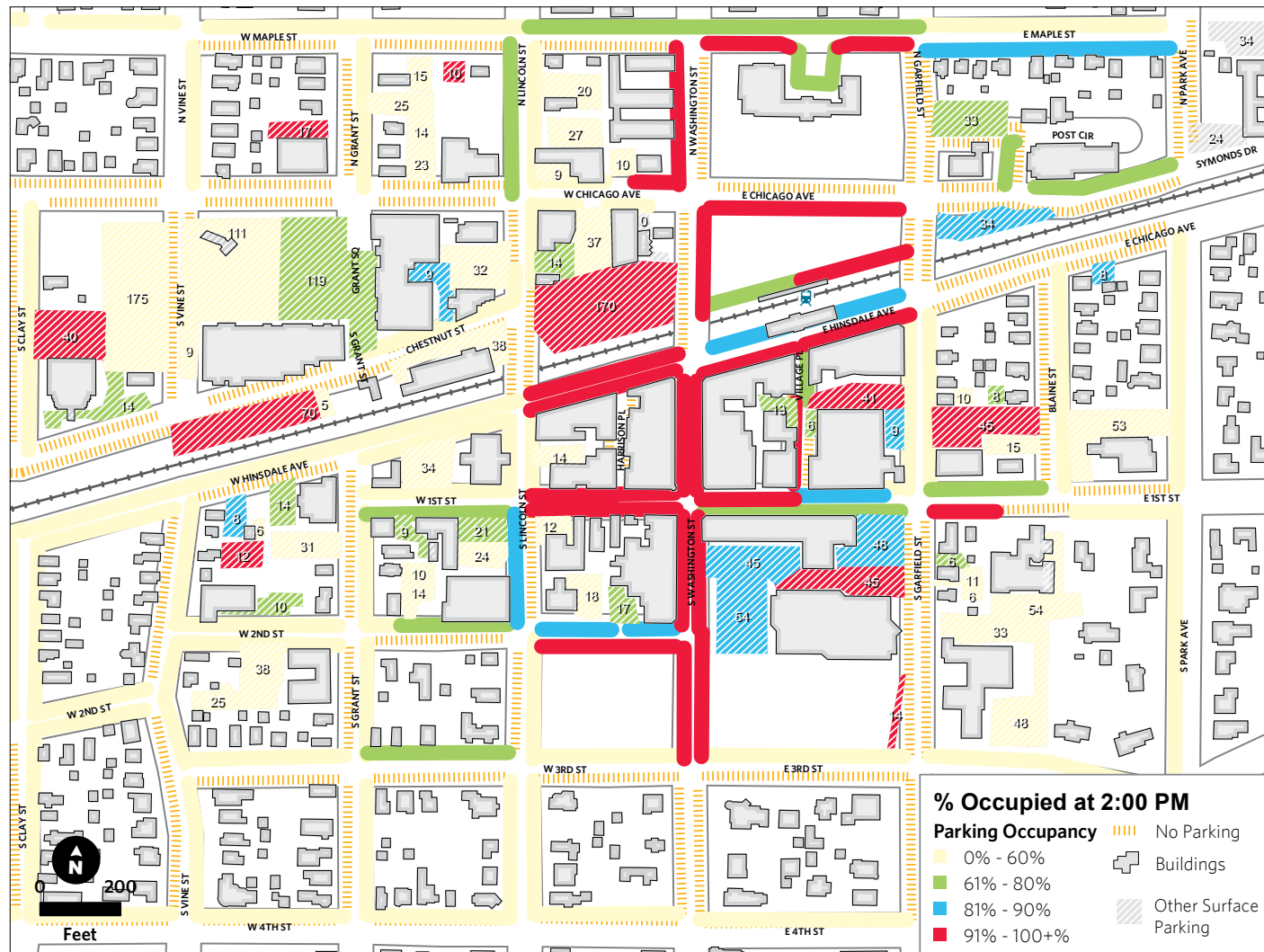


Weekdays: Afternoon

During the 2:00 p.m. count, we observed a mid-afternoon rush around the middle school as parents arrive to pick up their children from school; many parents wait in their cars in the “Shopper Only” lot. This also affects traffic on Washington Street. The survey covered

the downtown area from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., and may not fully capture the middle school congestion that happens closer to 2:00 p.m.

Figure 6.8. Observed Parking Occupancy Rates: Weekday afternoon

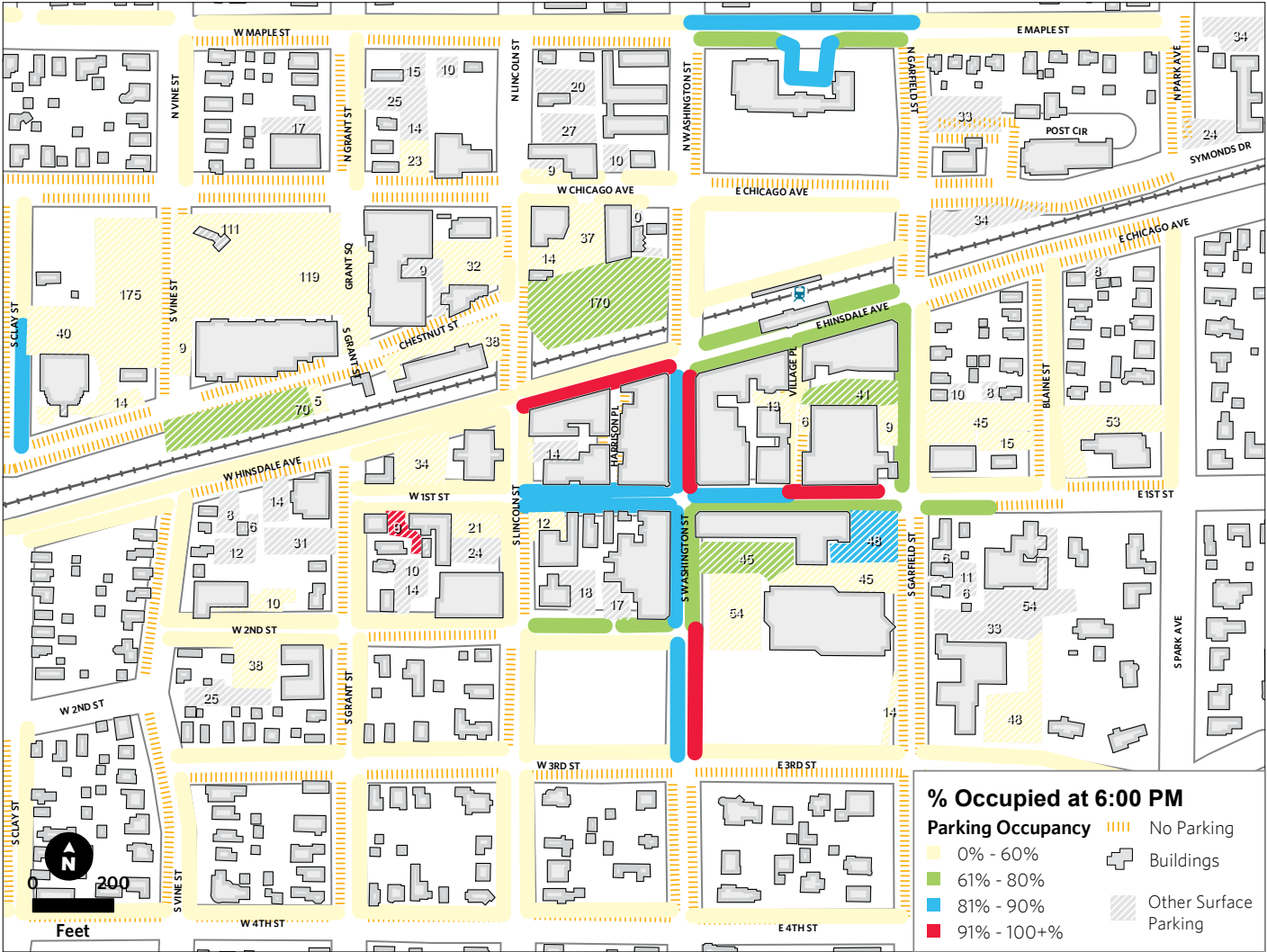


Weekdays: Evening

As commuters begin returning to their cars, the main commuter lots begin to empty out. There is a flood of activity with each train that arrives in the station, including the freight trains that pass through. Drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and scooters queue up to go

north or south across the tracks during the evening rush hour. Some businesses are closing for the evening, but the restaurants keep the streets at a healthy occupancy level around 85 percent in the core. Parking is free after 5:00 p.m.

Figure 6.9. Observed Parking Occupancy Rates: Weekday evening

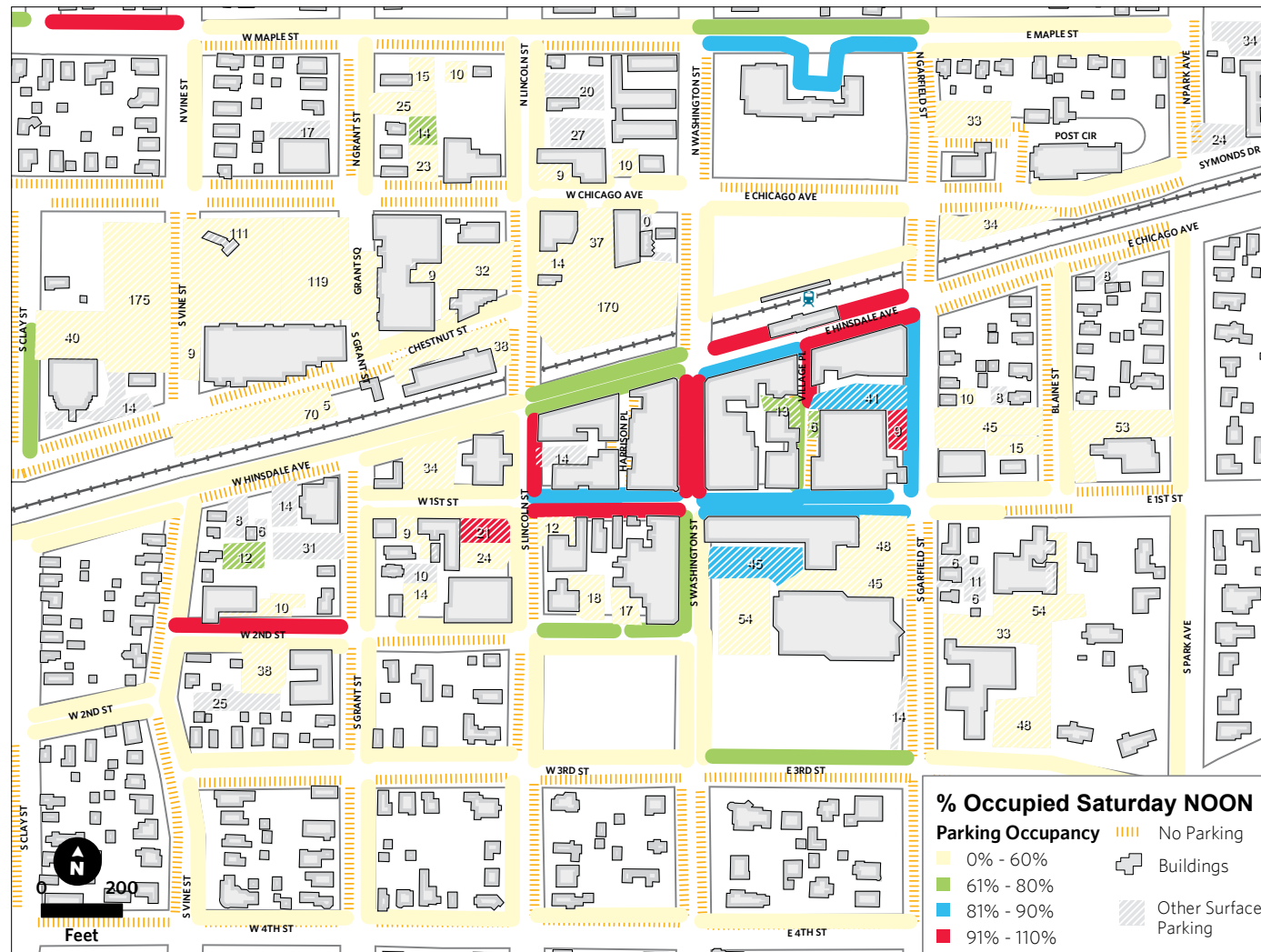


Weekends

Permit parking is free on the weekends, and downtown employees are encouraged to park in the Village Lot, which is typically full of commuters' cars on the weekdays. Meters are enforced on Saturdays. Despite the absence of commuters, there is still a lot of activity in Hinsdale's downtown, particularly along Washington Street between Hinsdale Avenue

and First Street, Hinsdale Avenue between Washington and Garfield, as well as First Street between Lincoln and Garfield. Interviewees reported that Sundays were less problematic for parking than Saturdays, and with a relatively low level of congestion on Saturdays, we decided not to conduct a parking count on a Sunday.

Figure 6.10. Observed Parking Occupancy Rates: Weekend noon





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 Hinsdale residents, 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 in 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.

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



Section 8

Looking forward

A small shift in the habits of downtown employees and customers could eliminate parking congestion in the core streets. With only 10 to 15 percent of drivers parking further from the core, or shifting modes (to walking, biking, or transit), the parking occupancy would fall to the desired “blue” level of 81 to 90 percent full, meaning that most drivers could easily find a space.

Demand-based pricing? Parking Garage?

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 (See Figure 8.1), parking garages are expensive and rarely pay for themselves. The management of parking supply affects the livability and walkability of the downtown. 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, the frequency of Metra trains to Chicago makes downtown Hinsdale a desirable commuter station; additional parking will attract more Metra commuters. Conversely, managing the existing supply can be a cost-effective way to reduce demand or increase attractiveness of underutilized spaces.

Currently, the parking spaces in the core are full from 10 am to 5 pm. This is damaging to the local businesses whose customers cannot find a parking space, and waste their time driving in circles hoping for someone to vacate a space. It is clear that many of the cars in the core belong to employees who either would rather feed the meter than buy an employee permit, do not want to walk more than 2 blocks, or are not aware of the options available for long-term parking, such as the free merchant permit parking area.

The cost of parking is the only proven disincentive to employees who regularly take up prime parking spaces. Since they park every day, facing increased costs to park, they quickly learn where they can find cheaper or free parking. At the current rate of \$0.25 per hour, many of them would rather pay than walk a bit further. If they work outside of the traditional 9 to 5, Monday - Friday schedule, it is cheaper than purchasing an employee permit.

Demand-based pricing helps the on-street parking achieve the delicate balance between making spaces available for customers and not hurting businesses by raising the cost of parking too much. When the price is set to match demand levels, it keeps the spaces about 85% full (about one of every seven spaces is available). If this hurts businesses and there is excessive parking vacancy, prices should be lowered. If spaces are 85% full, businesses aren't suffering. And when it's easy to find parking, customers will find it more convenient. Typically, price adjustments would happen quarterly, and a website would show the changes.

Of course, some customers are strictly opposed to paying for parking and may cite this as a reason for avoiding Hinsdale altogether. These customers should be considered; there should be options for people who don't want to pay for parking. The existing free parking is not clearly communicated to residents and shoppers through the website or the existing parking map; many people are unaware that they could park for free, for two hours, within a 5-minute walk of the core.

When it comes to customer convenience, there are two things about Hinsdale's parking meters that are inconvenient and outdated: payment options, and length of stay flexibility. It is already frustrating to many to pay for parking in the first place; needing to carry quarters for the meters is an added frustration. If you have a hair appointment that takes three hours, there's no reason you shouldn't be able to pay for additional parking. The multiple layers of frustration in Hinsdale come from wasting time circling the block looking for an open space, having to pay a meter, having to use coins, not being able to extend your stay remotely, and the ultimate frustration: possible parking tickets.

Customer-friendly meters accept credit cards and cell phone payment, as well as coins. These meters remind customers when the meter is about to run out with a text message and allow them to add time remotely. When the price of parking keeps demand in check, there is no need for length of stay limits.

Despite the high costs of structured parking, it can complement parking management and encourage drivers to go directly to a garage rather than circling for a space. Parking garages are recommended when the price that drivers are willing to pay in the most desirable spaces on-street can cover the daily cost of a space in a structure, which is approximately five dollars. Revenue from on-street spaces can be used to pay for debt financing, operations, and maintenance fees for a structure. Since most drivers still prefer to park directly in front of where they are going, the prices in the garage can be lower than on-street prices to encourage longer-term garage parking, and turnover of on-street spaces.

The idea of having a parking garage in Hinsdale is popular with business owners to increase the supply of parking for their customers. Village officials are aware that the funding necessary to build a garage is not available, and some residents object to parking garages because they are typically unattractive structures and they can add to traffic congestion. Investigations into the cost of underground parking, or structures that may be more compatible with their surroundings should be pursued, alongside calculations for a pricing structure of both on-street and off-street spaces to finance a garage.

Neighboring communities are often compared to Hinsdale when looking for ideas and solutions. La Grange, to the east, frequently comes up, especially in reference to parking. In 2004, the Village of La Grange constructed an \$8 million parking garage. The garage was funded by a public transportation grant for \$3.2 million, a \$4.5 million TIF note, and \$300,000 of available TIF reserve funds. The TIF note was paid off in 4 years utilizing the annual property tax increment. A 0.25 percent non-home rule sales tax increase was approved by referendum to cover \$35,000 in annual operating and maintenance costs, including funds for long-term maintenance. If Hinsdale chooses to pursue a parking garage, Village leaders may want to consider a financing arrangement that ensures that the drivers who use the facility bear the financial burden of its construction and maintenance, rather than the community at large.

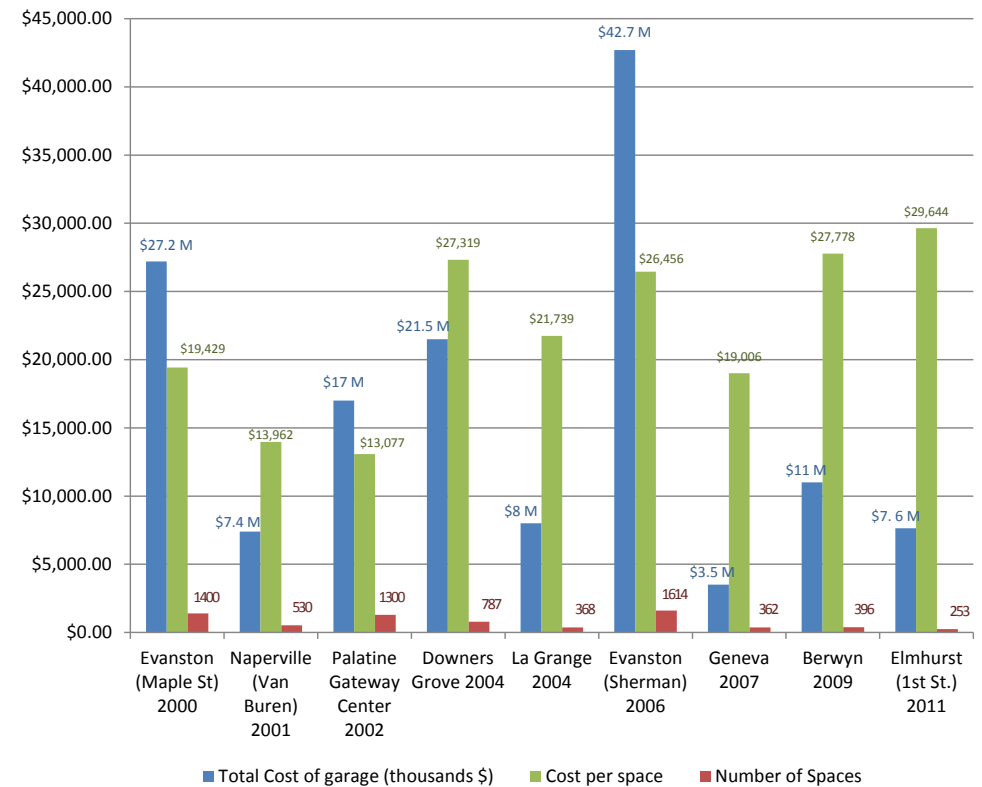


Figure 8.1. Public Parking Garages in northeastern Illinois: construction costs, cost per space, and total number of spaces.

Hinsdale is a charming Village, with unique local businesses, high-end services and retail, excellent schools, and an ideal location for Chicago commuters. Based on the data and information gathered for this Existing Conditions Report through discussions with Village residents, stakeholders, officials and staff as well as the research conducted, the Innovations in Parking Management Plan serves an opportunity to create an even better Hinsdale. The priority issues to be addressed by this plan are: an increase in parking supply (particularly long-term employee parking), performance-based pricing to manage the most desirable spaces and lower costs for less desirable spaces (with improved technology), improved user information, and encouragement of alternative modes of transportation and carpooling through financial programs and infrastructure improvements. ■



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