



# Depot District Parking Management Plan

February 2016



# Acknowledgements

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## **Project Steering Committee**

**John Aranza**, Roosevelt Road Business Association

**Nicole Campbell**, City of Berwyn

**Mike Christensen** and **Brian Dennen**, MacNeal Hospital

**Marcia Cohen**, Berwyn Police Department

**Jeff Janda**, Berwyn Park District

**Beverly Pastorek**, Depot District Special Events Committee (business owner)

**Ald. Margaret Paul**, City of Berwyn

**Kurtis Pozgay**, Berwyn Development Corporation (BDC)

**Laurie Richter**, Depot District Merchants Association (business owner)

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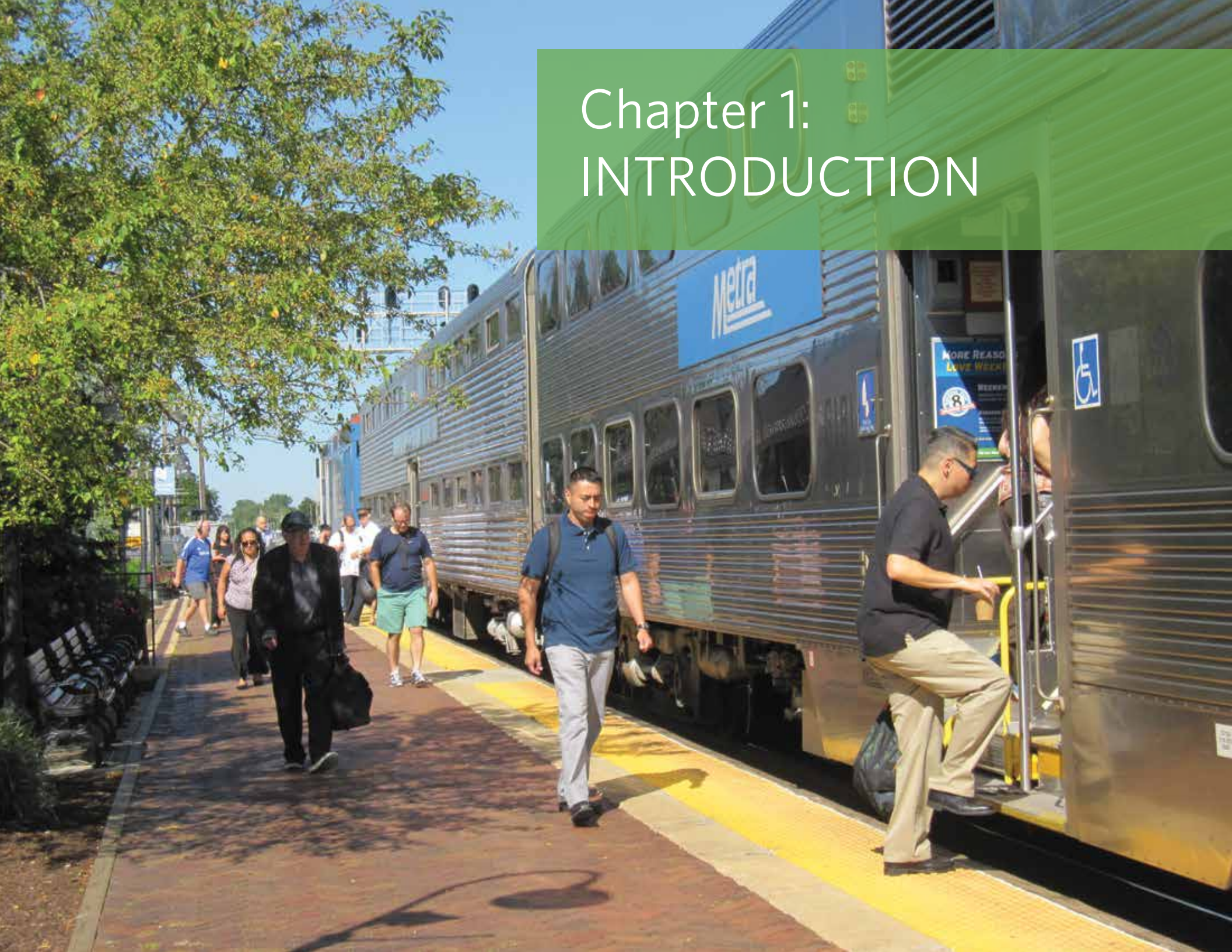


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# Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION





# Purpose and intent of the parking plan

The 2012 Berwyn Comprehensive Plan established a long-range vision for growth and prosperity in the City, with the downtown Depot District serving as the heart of the community. The plan envisioned a variety of retail establishments and high-quality residential developments near rail stations, employer-assisted housing for MacNeal employees, and a well-connected active transportation network. The plan also identified parking as a potential area for improvement, and one that needs more research to mitigate the challenges that a thriving area may bring.

While the Depot District does not currently experience the parking challenges found in larger communities or in other retail-heavy downtowns, the concentrated parking challenges can impact the overall economic health and activity of the area. MacNeal Hospital brings many positive contributions to the community, but times of heavy employee shift changes present traffic and parking challenges. As the Depot District continues to grow and add new businesses, the existing parking problems may become worse. The intent of this parking plan is to anticipate these challenges and to identify policy and enforcement changes that will help to address them.

There are approximately 2,000 public parking spots available to residents, visitors, rail commuters, and employees. If managed properly and effectively, this number of parking spots could meet the parking demands of the community even as the business district continues to grow. Better management of existing parking spaces consists of re-balancing the supply of employee and commuter parking geographically, providing improved user information and maps, incentivizing alternative transportation, and working with local businesses and their employees. This plan details numerous strategies that can be implemented to address parking management in the Depot District based on research and information gathered from the community.

CMAA worked with City staff and elected officials to interview key community leaders, engage the business community, and involve the public through a public open house meeting and an online survey. Since the start of the formal planning process, over 172 residents and stakeholders have participated in the community engagement process.

**The intent of this plan is to anticipate potential parking challenges and identify policy and enforcement changes to address them.**

# How we involved the community

A variety of significant challenges, priorities, and ideas were raised throughout the planning process of the Depot District Parking Plan. Staff received input that ranged from satisfaction with the public garage and paid parking lot to frustrations with overnight parking options and enforcement issues. Every aspect of the public input and data collected plays an important role in developing a comprehensive and strategic parking plan. People often suggest community leaders simply build more parking without fully understanding the complexities of parking, its role in the transportation system, or the high cost of building structured parking.<sup>1</sup> A key element of this plan is to focus on managing the use of existing spaces more efficiently to alleviate the parking problem before looking at major financial investments for the community.

## Steering Committee

The Steering Committee was tasked with providing guidance and feedback on existing issues and opportunities, developing central goals, reviewing plan documents, and identifying stakeholders to involve in the planning process. Composed of individuals representing a wide variety of interests and perspectives, the Steering Committee members include:

- John Aranza, Roosevelt Road Business Association
- Nicole Campbell, City of Berwyn
- Mike Christensen and Brian Dennen, MacNeal Hospital
- Marcia Cohen, Berwyn Police Department
- Jeff Janda, Berwyn Park District
- Beverly Pastorek, Depot District Special Events Committee (business owner)
- Margaret Paul, City of Berwyn
- Kurtis Pozgay, Berwyn Development Corporation (BDC)
- Laurie Richter, Depot District Merchants Association (business owner)
- David Kralik, Metra
- Joe Santangelo, Berwyn Police Department

<sup>1</sup> A 2012 CMAP analysis of public parking garages in northeastern Illinois estimates costs to be between \$25,000 and \$35,000 per space.

## Key person interviews

In order to gain further insight into parking issues and opportunities that exist in Berwyn's Depot District, CMAP staff conducted confidential interviews with 19 individuals representing a variety of interests throughout the community. Individuals ranged from neighborhood leaders to business owners to elected officials to residents. Several broad themes were highlighted, including the difficulty of finding a parking spot on certain streets in the Depot District during business hours, employees parking in spaces intended for customers, and frustration with inconsistent parking enforcement.

## Online community survey

CMAP developed a community survey to engage people who were unable to attend meetings. The community survey was designed to educate the community about the purpose of the project and learn about priorities and preferred choices for addressing parking issues as well as public and active transportation in the Depot District. The survey was available from May 15, 2014 to September 15, 2014. During this time, 127 people provided detailed feedback on the challenges, priorities, and opportunities to help address parking management.

## Community meetings

A business-focused workshop was held on June 12, 2014, during a Berwyn Depot District Business Association meeting at Mission House Café. Due to limited business owner attendance, the meeting was opened to non-association members to garner additional input. A common theme that arose among those in attendance was an imbalance of parking options in the Depot District.

Currently, Depot District employees find themselves competing with commuters for parking in the municipal garage or with customers in the free two-hour parking areas. Business owners believe that the unavailability of customer parking near businesses has contributed to store vacancies in the Depot District, with low parking availability starting as early as 7:00 a.m. and continuing through 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. While most agreed that the cost to park at meters is reasonable, they think Depot Permits are too expensive for most employees to purchase, and too expensive for employers to realistically subsidize for employees.

On August 2, 2014, a public open house was held in the Community Room of the Berwyn Police Department to better understand public perspective on parking issues and opportunities. The open house was designed to solicit information on the strengths and challenges of the City's transportation system via different stations set up around the room. Limited attendance afforded staff the opportunity to coordinate an in-depth group discussion on parking and transportation.

The room was set up with six interactive stations. The first station asked participants about their travel priorities and travel modes via a dot-voting exercise. The next four stations presented maps of the community and asked participants to locate and describe specific problem areas or assets using a dots and post-it notes. Each station was devoted to one of four modes of transportation — driving, walking, biking, and transit. The last station used a PowerPoint presentation to provide participants with information about current parking conditions in the Depot District through a set of maps displaying results from a parking turnover survey and parking occupancy survey.

## Chapter 2: PARKING AND LIVABILITY





# The relationship between parking, transportation, and land use

As communities grow, parking needs and demands also change, requiring different types of parking management. Over the last several decades, people have begun to drive more, and the approach to accommodating private vehicles has changed. The Depot District was originally designed when most people walked to the train and to amenities like stores, schools, and parks, and were not traveling great distances for work or other needs. The management of parking supply affects people's driving habits as well as the livability and walkability of the downtown. If there is not enough parking available, businesses will suffer when their customers cannot find a convenient parking space. On the other hand, too much surface parking can impact walkability and bikeability and reduce the amount of revenue generated from the land and sales.

Balancing the needs of MacNeal Hospital, local businesses, restaurants, rail commuters, residents, and visitors is no small feat. Time limits exist to create turnover of spaces. But if they are poorly enforced, employees (and possibly commuters) will leave their cars all day in parking spaces intended for customers, while less desirable spaces remain vacant.

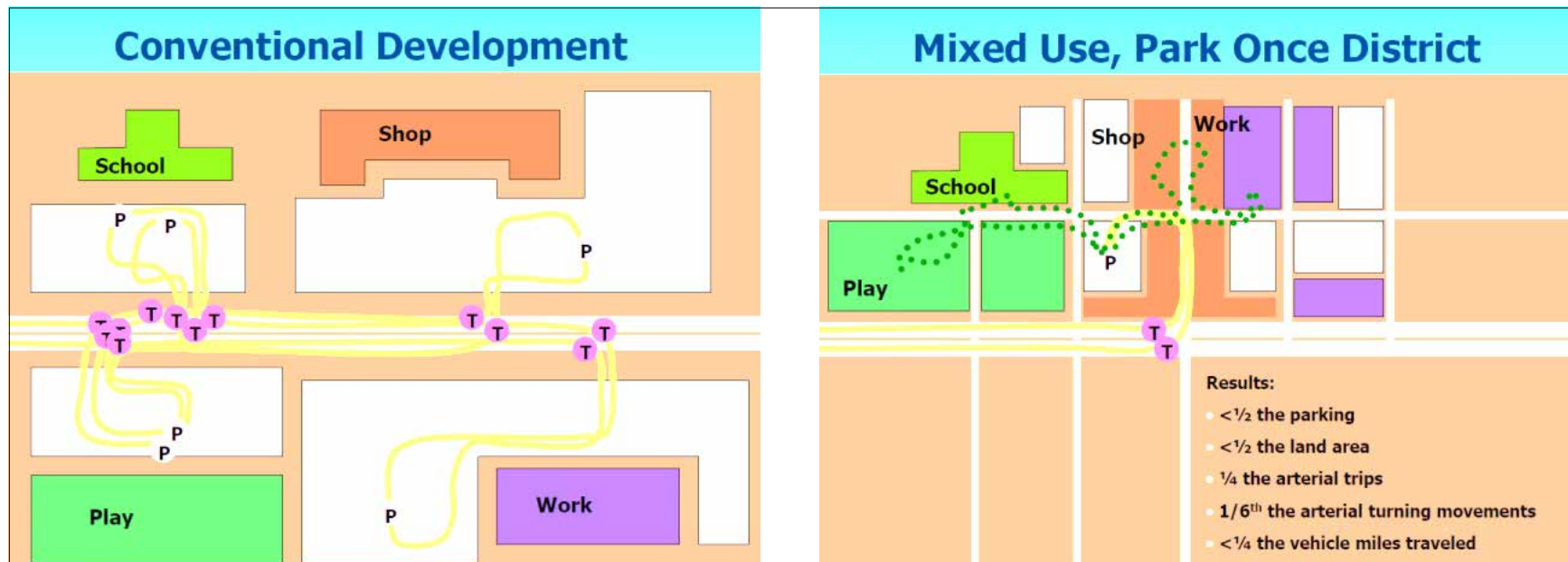
Providing the “right” amount of parking is challenging, and minimum parking requirements within zoning codes were created to provide enough parking to satisfy the desire to park for free. According to municipal code, private property owners and developers are required to provide parking for the users of their property according to use and intensity of use. Unfortunately, this strategy does not work well in a compact, walkable downtown, where there is not a lot of land for large surface parking lots. Parking garages can solve the problem of land limitations, but they are extremely expensive to build and maintain, at approximately \$30,000 per space. As a result, new development can lag because developers can't afford to provide required parking.

The Depot District is important to support the vitality of the entire municipality. 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 and reduce pollution associated with driving, while helping residents lead healthier lives through more active ways of getting around. A multimodal approach to transportation, paired with improved parking management and improved zoning codes can help increase development, spread the parking demand to underutilized areas, and increase the number of people who walk, bike, and ride transit for transportation.

# The “park once” approach for mixed-use downtowns

In a vibrant downtown, boutique shops, salons, offices, housing, and other destinations are clustered within a small area, and people walk and interact with one another. As the density and mix of uses and housing increases, the need for parking goes down. One of the most valuable aspects of a thriving downtown is that people are able to complete a variety of tasks within a single area. In the Depot District, a shopper might come downtown to pick up a birthday present at Fly Right Gifts, go to a hair appointment at Classic Touch, and meet a friend for dinner at La Notte followed by ice cream at Rissi's, all within a couple blocks.

Ideally, a driver would be able to do all those things while only using one parking space. With current parking restrictions, this person would have to move his or her car multiple times, or park very far from these destinations. A downtown functions best when drivers arrive, park once to complete all errands and tasks on foot, and leave. It is also more convenient to the patrons if they don't have to run out to move their car or feed the meter, or they don't have to skip dessert for fear of getting a ticket. The park once strategy allows people to complete tasks quickly, conveniently, and in a lively and safe environment since it requires less driving around in search of parking. It encourages walking and social interaction and uses fewer overall parking spaces.



These images show how fewer parking spaces satisfy the needs of the same land uses in a mixed-use, park once district in a smaller footprint that requires less driving.

Photo credit: Nelson Nygaard, 2012.



The particular characteristics that enable people to do a lot of different things in a small area are distinctly what make downtowns attractive places to visit: density, a mix of uses, and walkability.

Density in this context is related to the number of people, amenities, and destinations in an area. Human-scaled density<sup>2</sup> does not have to include high-rises or giant apartment complexes. In the Depot District, the number of retail, housing, and amenities within a small area make it easy for shoppers to walk from one shop to the next, eliminating the need to drive to each destination. A lower density development pattern, with large parking lots between buildings, could make walking between destinations burdensome and more dangerous.

Density alone does not make a great downtown. Downtowns also have a mix of uses in close proximity to one another. A downtown might have an ice cream store, real estate office, bank, boutique, salon, apartment building, and wine shop all in the same block. Uses in non-downtown areas are typically segregated and located further from each other, making it more difficult to walk between them.

Density and a mix of uses provide users with activities that entice them to these areas. The third characteristic — walkability — creates an inviting environment, luring people from one activity to the next. Downtowns are walkable when there are a variety of elements catering to pedestrians at a human scale, creating a comfortable, safe, and interesting environment. This can include amenities such as wide sidewalks, short blocks, street trees, benches, consistent building façades, retail window displays, and pedestrian-level lighting. This creates a pleasant microenvironment for the pedestrian, where they are protected from fast moving cars, and able to enjoy the varied streetscape.

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<sup>2</sup> In this context, scale is the relationship between people and the buildings around them. Danish architect Jan Gehl conducted an extensive study to see how people react to different kinds of environments and found that the most comfortable building height for pedestrians is about 3 to 6 stories.





## Density, mix of uses, walkability in the Depot District

The City of Berwyn has been improving the walkability of the Depot District with benches, planters, and streetscaping. They have also approved plans for an overhaul to the Depot District to improve walkability. The density of the Depot District is higher than other parts of the City, and the mix of uses is expanding outside of the medical-focused businesses found around the hospital. However, the 2-hour time limits on parking do not cater to a park-once environment, but instead encourage short trips and limited walking. When a customer is able to park once and visit many locations, this adds life to the sidewalks. People on the sidewalks are important for a number of reasons: walking customers are more likely to visit a shop as they walk by. Having more people on the street adds to a sense of safety, and people like to be surrounded by other people, adding to the overall appeal of the area.

Through improved parking management strategies and initiatives, the Depot District could further enhance its downtown and leverage the many advantages a park-once downtown enjoys: fewer parking spaces needed, more land for productive uses, better support of local businesses, a more attractive pedestrian environment, and a sense of community fostered by everyday interactions on the sidewalk.







# Chapter 3: PARKING MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES





Parking management strategies are intended to balance parking supply and demand through time limits, pricing, and other regulations. Well-designed parking policies will support the continued health and vibrancy of a downtown. If prime parking spaces are always full, frustrated customers and visitors may stop visiting downtown, ultimately hurting businesses. If there are always one or two parking spaces per block, most people will be satisfied. Unfortunately for a parking manager, the job is only noticed when things aren't going well.

## Supply and demand

To solve a community's parking problems, it is important to think about supply and demand. When the supply of a commodity is limited and the demand for it is high, the price goes up. Most communities with "parking problems" (excess demand) will find underutilized parking in less desirable locations (excess supply) and can find ways to encourage people to utilize it (pricing). If the commodity is free, it will be quickly used up by the first people who get to it, regardless of who might need it or want it more. Imagine a gas station offering free gasoline for one day, or a high school handing out free pizza. In these situations, supply is the only thing dictating how much will be consumed. The same economic principles apply to parking, which is why pricing is important. There is a limited supply of convenient spaces, and they are in high demand.

Ideally, all the streets in the downtown core would be close to 85 percent full, indicating a high level of street activity without complete parking congestion. The goal of pricing is to free up about one of every seven spaces per block, and shift the long-term parkers from high-demand spaces. While we can agree that merchants and employees shouldn't park in prime spaces, they do, and pricing is the only proven disincentive to employees parking in customer spaces.<sup>3</sup>

A parking problem is a good problem to have — it means that people want to come to the community. If a community needs to charge for parking, it should be to ration a limited supply of a coveted good — a convenient parking space. By charging the right price for parking, some people are encouraged to park further from the high demand area, others move from spaces as quickly as possible in order to pay as little as possible, and the premium spaces are made available to others. In that way, the same number of spaces can serve a greater number of visitors.

## What motivates parkers?

Drivers should be able to find parking that is convenient to their final destination. However, without effective parking regulations, some people will occupy the most convenient spaces all day long, while parking that is just outside of the most popular area is underutilized.

Parkers are motivated by a variety of factors. Therefore, in order to manage parking effectively, we must consider the different needs and motivations of parkers, who can be grouped into four categories:<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Downtown Redwood City Parking Management Plan, 2005. Online: <http://www.redwoodcity-docs.org/bit/transportation/parking/pdf/DowntownRedwoodCityParkingPlan.pdf> (Accessed 11/24/2015).

<sup>4</sup> The following categories were adapted from Downtown Redwood City's Parking Plan (The Unpleasables, The Dream Parkers, The Convenience Hunters, and The Bargain Hunters). Online: <http://www.redwoodcity-docs.org/bit/transportation/parking/pdf/DowntownRedwoodCityParkingPlan.pdf> (Accessed 11/24/2015).

## The demanding parker

There is no winning with the demanding parker. This parker believes that there should be a free parking spot waiting for them whenever and wherever they are going. What the demanding parker may not realize is that if there were free parking everywhere, other people would have the same idea and park all day long in the downtown core. If and when the demanding parker happens to find the perfect spot, it will probably still not be good enough because of time limits or parking enforcement. Paying for parking is a nuisance, as is walking.

## The reasonable parker

People who account for the time and effort necessary to find a reasonable parking spot are a busy downtown's dream parker. The reasonable parker understands that they may not be able to park right in front of their destination; they may have to walk for a few minutes from a parking spot. This type of parker also knows that parking closer may come at a higher cost.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, the demanding parkers and the reasonable parkers describe only a small number of parkers. The vast majority fall into one of the following two categories: "time-is-money" parkers and thrifty parkers.

## The “time-is-money” parker

For some people, time is money and finding the closest spot to their destination is a priority. If the parker needs to get in and out, drop something off, or pick something up, or perhaps is running late, they are willing pay for the most convenient spot. This doesn’t mean that they don’t like free parking; they simply would prefer to have a more convenient spot even if it means paying for it. If they can’t find a convenient space, they will abandon their shopping trip.

## The thrifty parker

The thrifty parker would like to avoid paying for parking at all costs. This parker will search out free parking. This may come at a cost, not a financial cost, but will probably mean driving a few blocks away from their destination and walking. This person may need to park for several hours and it isn’t worth the cost of paying for parking. Some thrifty parkers may decide to walk or bike instead of paying for parking, or they may decide to shop at a mall if they can’t get free parking in the downtown.

## Using price to balance demand

If the price of parking is adjusted according to demand, the parking demands of the thrifty parkers and the time-is-money parkers are met with different parking spaces, so that the overall demand is spread more evenly around the downtown area. A parking system that lets some drivers park for free in less desirable spaces (further from the core demand area), and other drivers pay for the convenience of a front-door space will open up options for drivers and create parking availability.

The Depot District currently has a number of metered spaces and their proximity to the hospital determines their usage. Even the inconvenient coin-only meters by the hospital are very well utilized. Given the overall demand levels for the Depot District, the current rate at metered spaces is adequate and does not need to be increased, but there could be more metered spaces in place of some currently underutilized permit spaces.



## Time limits and other regulations

Many downtowns, including the Depot District, have relied on time limits to encourage turnover. Time limits would work well if every trip or visit required the same amount of time, but that's not the case in today's eclectic downtowns. What would the ideal time limit be for a mixed-use block with a coffee shop, a day spa, and a bank? A person going to the bank may only need to park for a couple of minutes, while a spa treatment at the salon could last several hours, and coffee shop visits vary from five minutes to all day. When parking spaces are time-restricted according to the surrounding uses, they are effectively removed from the general supply of parking to a user who needs to park for longer.

Different stores and destinations also have different peak hours of demand, and the business may change from one year to the next. So if you have a few spaces limited to short-term parking and a few for long-term parking, there may be times when all of the long-term spaces are full, and other long-term visitors would not be able to use the available short-term spaces. It is not an efficient use of the valuable resource of parking. It is also costly and challenging to enforce time limits. The use of License Plate Reader (LPR) enforcement technology can make it easier to enforce, and rigorous enforcement can prevent abuse, but in the end it is not customer-friendly, and can end up punishing patrons of downtown businesses. When parking is not appropriately priced, short-term spaces are one way to help create turnover. Unfortunately, as we have seen in the Depot District, they are typically not very effective.

## Neighboring communities' parking strategies

Parking is not a primary land use in historic, walkable downtowns, which inevitably leads to a lack of available parking when there are businesses that people want to patronize. Nearby communities encountering similar parking challenges have taken a variety of approaches to parking. In contrast to other communities analyzed, the City of Berwyn offers the garage parking to commuters in exchange for spaces along the rail through an agreement with Metra. The arrangement was established in 2007.

### Comparison case study: La Grange

La Grange, further west along the BNSF Metra line, has an \$8 million public parking garage constructed in 2004. The garage was funded by a public transportation grant for \$3.2 million, a \$4.5 million Tax Increment Financing (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.

Unlike Berwyn, La Grange has chosen to make the parking garage available to downtown shoppers and visitors, rather than Metra riders, by instituting time limits. The main benefit of having the garage is that a driver knows that they can go to the garage and find a parking spot, if they are unable to find an on-street space. For most, it is not the first-choice parking spot but a guaranteed back-up. The sales tax that pays for operations and maintenance is paid for by all shoppers, regardless of mode of transportation.

## Comparison Case Study: Naperville

In the 1970s, the City of Naperville removed parking meters from the downtown to compete with the nearby Fox Valley shopping mall and its free parking. They replaced the meters with a Special Service Area (SSA), with a tax levied on local businesses. Its first parking garage, funded through the SSA tax, was completed in 1987. By the time that they had completed construction of their second parking garage, the need for parking had already been negatively impacting the downtown, and the City set out to review parking conditions and prepare for increased demand. This assessment resulted in the Continuous Improvement Model, whereby new businesses pay the taxes of the prior year in addition to the current year before they open, so that they can offer patrons free parking. No matter who is shopping or how they got there, everyone is taxed at a higher rate to pay for parking. People who walk, ride bikes, or take transit will pay more to shop in Naperville so that drivers have free parking.

This model has satisfied the City of Naperville and its downtown business owners, but is not seen as a replicable formula for the Depot District. The downsides include the increasing cost of providing structured parking, the high demand for free parking, and the downside of funding garages through taxes that impact all shoppers, rather than just those that drive. In addition, the Naperville Metra station is not adjacent to the downtown like it is in Berwyn.



## Comparison Case Study: Oak Park

The Village of Oak Park is similar in area and population to the City of Berwyn and has a downtown with a similar historic character and a mix of uses. Oak Park also has more transportation options, including CTA rail lines and multiple parking garages. Much of the public parking in downtown Oak Park is metered, including the garages. In the mid-2000s, business owners were frustrated that even with on-street parking meters, Oak Park's downtown retail district parking spaces were full during business hours, while spaces in their parking garage remained underutilized.

In 2008, the Village conducted an in-depth analysis of parking supply and demand to develop a strategy to improve downtown parking conditions and create a vibrant, safe, and walkable environment. The analysis found that employees of local businesses were occupying prime parking spaces all day long while feeding the meters, which turned out to be cheaper than going to an off-street parking garage. They encouraged pricing increases in prime on-street spaces and making remote parking and off-street parking garages cheaper. By allowing people to purchase quarterly permits for the garage at a reduced rate, while raising the cost of the metered spaces, the employees changed their habits and began to park in the garage, leaving on-street spaces for retail customers. A parking management program eliminated hourly limits, priced spaces by desirability, lowered garage prices, and made it easier to pay for parking in lots with the use of pay boxes.

Parking is always a contentious issue, especially when undertaking the difficult task of raising prices, but the strategy used in downtown Oak Park has satisfied the Village. In the downtown retail area, many businesses have come to see the positive impacts that pricing can have on turnover.

Business owners even issued a statement of support for the new parking strategies, acknowledging that shoppers and customers are drawn to vibrant downtowns, not areas with free parking. One outspoken business owner who opposed parking rate increases became a supporter after seeing the positive impact, saying that the parking price increase was “the best thing the municipality had ever done.”<sup>5</sup>

At this time, Berwyn does not have the parking demand that Oak Park has and while Berwyn has metered parking that is well-utilized, a tiered pricing scale is not needed at this time. In the future, with increased demand, Berwyn should look to their neighbor to the north for downtown parking management ideas.

<sup>5</sup> Cara Pavlicek (former Parking Manager for the Village of Oak Park, current Village Manager) in discussion with CMAP staff, March 2012.



## Comparison Case Study: Hinsdale

Although the Village of Hinsdale currently has much more parking demand and congestion than the Depot District, it is also located along the BNSF railway and has a nearby hospital. Hinsdale recently adopted a parking management plan to help alleviate some of its parking congestion and improve business vitality in its downtown. Since adopting the plan, they have made steps to encourage employees to use free permit parking and to park further from the core downtown area.

While Hinsdale's parking problems are not the same as Berwyn's, they share the similarity of having downtown employees occupy prime parking spaces, and underutilized spaces elsewhere. Hinsdale raised the cost of parking in a central parking lot from \$0.25/ hour to \$1.00/ hour, and created additional free parking for employees. In the week following the price change, Hinsdale Village Hall ran out of the free employee permit hangtags demonstrating the power of pricing parking for changing behavior.





A photograph of a city street scene. In the foreground, there is a large bed of pink and yellow flowers. Behind the flowers, a silver car is parked, and a red car is parked next to it. Two parking meters are visible in front of the silver car. In the background, there is a building with a sign that says "Windsor Av" and an American flag. A green semi-transparent box with white text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

## Chapter 4: CURRENT PARKING CONDITIONS

## Key findings

- There are approximately 2,000 parking spaces that can be used by the general public at various times of day, with various permits, and for differing lengths of stay.
- Turnover surveys indicate a lack of enforcement of two-hour time limits.
- The peak parking period is midday, but most of the on-street parking spaces average around 40 percent occupied, indicating excess capacity.
- The public parking garage is well-utilized by long-stay parkers from mid-morning until early afternoon.
- Parking congestion is mostly limited to Stanley Avenue, Windsor Avenue, and Clinton Avenue (south of the tracks) around the Berwyn Metra station.
- 12-hour metered parking south of the tracks has the highest average occupancy rates, while 12-hour metered parking north of the tracks has the lowest average occupancy.
- Demand for parking south of the train tracks is higher than on the north side of the tracks, but parking on both sides of the track near the midpoint between stations is very underutilized.

**The peak parking period is midday, but most of the on-street parking spaces average around 40 percent occupied, indicating excess capacity.**

Within the Depot District study area, there is a good balance of on-street (53 percent) and off-street parking spaces (47 percent). There are, however, many restrictions on the various parking spaces. There are limited options for people who would like to park for longer than two hours, without committing to an expensive permit or walking long distances. Without adequate enforcement of short-term spaces, extended stay parkers (usually area employees, possibly others) will occupy prime on-street spaces and make it difficult for others to find a parking spot.

In addition to the estimated 2,078 spaces available for general public use, there are approximately 1,500 private and restricted use spaces in the Depot District Study area (Table 1), with the descriptions and locations shown in Figure 1.

**Table 1. Parking supply**

Type	Spaces
<b>Available for general public use</b>	<b>2,078</b>
12 HR Metered	122
Free 2 HR	464
2 HR Metered	20
Residential Parking 3am-11am, all days	22
Business Permit	29
Metered Surface Lot	26
Residential Parking 8am - 10am, M-F	636
Public Garage	375
Depot Permit, 6am - 6pm, M-F	332
Residential Parking 8am - 5pm, M-F	52
<b>Type</b>	<b>Spaces</b>
<b>Private Parking / Restricted use</b>	<b>1,560</b>
School	11
Handicapped	29
Superzone Residential	258
Private Surface Lot	788
Loading Zone	9
Private Garage	465
<b>Total spaces</b>	<b>3,638</b>

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.







Figure 1. Depot district parking supply



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

# Map Key

## 1 BNSF parking

**2 Residential Parking 3:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m., all days:** These spaces are found on the west end of the study area on Windsor Avenue between Wisconsin Avenue and Harlem Avenue. To park here between the hours of 3:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m., a driver must have a residential parking permit, acquired through the local police department. Between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 a.m., anyone can use the spaces.

**3 12-hour Metered:** The 12 hour metered spaces, found along the railroad tracks on Windsor Avenue and Stanley Avenue, are intended for Metra commuters and are owned by BNSF. They require a driver to deposit a minimum of 12 quarters for 12 hours of parking.

**4 Depot Permit, 6:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m., M-F:** Parking spaces zoned "Depot Permit" are intended for Metra commuters and Depot District employees. The permit is acquired through City Hall and is acquired through City Hall and costs \$375 for the year or \$100 per quarter. They are enforced between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. From 6:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. on weekdays and on weekends from 6:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m., anyone may park here. In addition, 300 parking spaces in the Municipal Parking Facility are designated for Depot Parking Permit holders.

## 5 School Parking

**6 Residential Parking 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m., M-F:** These spaces require drivers to display a City of Berwyn residential parking pass between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m., Monday through Friday. The intent of this designation is to prevent people from driving in from other communities and parking all day to use the Metra commuter train, which is tempting to Riverside residents because the Metra zone changes at the Harlem station. These streets can be used by employees at local businesses during typical business hours, after 10:00 a.m.

**7 Business Permit:** These spaces are reserved for local employees, and require a business parking permit that can be obtained through the local police department for \$225 per year, with proof of employment in Berwyn.

**8 Public Garage:** Berwyn's Municipal Parking Facility is located at Grove Avenue, north of 34th Street. The parking facility has four levels designed for Commuter Parking from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. To park on the first four levels requires either a Depot Parking Permit or that you pay for a minimum of eight hours of parking.

Most of the parking on the fifth level is designated for public parking that is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at a cost of \$0.25 per hour. Additionally, the public is allowed to park on the Commuter Parking levels (first four levels) after 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday and all day Saturday and Sunday, but not for longer than 24 hours (with some exceptions).

## 9 Loading

**10 Metered Surface Lot:** The small parking lot at the corner of 32nd Street and Oak Park Avenue is a public metered parking lot with 26 spaces. Metered spaces are paid for through an electronic pay box. Anyone can park here for two hours or less and the cost to park is \$0.25 / hour. Hours of enforcement are from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

**11 2-hour Metered:** These metered spaces between Oak Park Avenue and Grove Avenue are paid through an electronic pay box. Anyone can park here for two hours or less and the cost to park is \$0.25 / hour. They are enforced from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

**12 Residential Parking 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., M-F:** These spaces are found on Euclid Avenue between Stanley Avenue and 31st Street. These spaces require drivers to display a City of Berwyn residential parking pass between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The intent of this restriction is to prevent downtown employees (and commuters) from parking on the residential street all day. On the weekends and between the hours of 5:00 p.m. - 3:00 a.m., and 6:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m., anyone may park here.

**13 Private Garage:** The private parking garage is owned and operated by MacNeal Hospital. Parking is for use by hospital visitors and employees.

## 14 No Parking

**15 Handicapped:** These spaces are reserved for drivers displaying a handicapped parking placard, or with appropriate license plates.

**16 Private Surface Lot:** Private parking facilities are for the hospital, local businesses, or churches and are not available for the general public to use at any time.

**17 Superzone Residential:** These spaces require drivers to display a City of Berwyn residential parking pass 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The permit is acquired through the police department and the driver must present proof of residency on a street with this designation.

**18 Free 2-hr parking:** These parking spaces are intended for shoppers and patrons of local businesses whose trip requires short term parking. These spaces are enforced between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. On the weekends (excluding 3:00 a.m. - 6:00 a.m.) and weekdays between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. (excluding 3:00 a.m. - 6:00 a.m.), anyone may park here for longer than 2 hours.

## Average midday parking occupancy

Parking counts are used as a snapshot at a point in time, or at various times of day, to aid in the understanding of parking patterns. Occupancy counts were conducted in the Depot District at 7:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 3:00 p.m., and 7:00 p.m. The counts from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. were averaged to determine the average midday occupancy (Figure 2)<sup>6</sup>. The parking along the BNSF railway is reasonably well-utilized within a block or two of stations, but has extremely underutilized areas around the mid-points between Metra stations. The excess capacity in these areas (many averaging less than 10 percent occupied) could be leveraged to reduce the parking congestion close to the station and the hospital.

## Turnover survey

On Wednesday, June 10, 2015, from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., CMAP conducted a parking turnover survey in the Depot District. The survey covered two-hour free parking, two-hour metered parking, and the top floor of the public parking garage, ignoring long-term spaces intended for employees and commuters. In order to determine the usage pattern, staff recorded the last three digits of license plate numbers of each car parked in the study area for every hour over an eight-hour period. Average occupancy rates by block over the course of the day are shown in Figure 3. The average length of stay per block is shown in Figure 4.

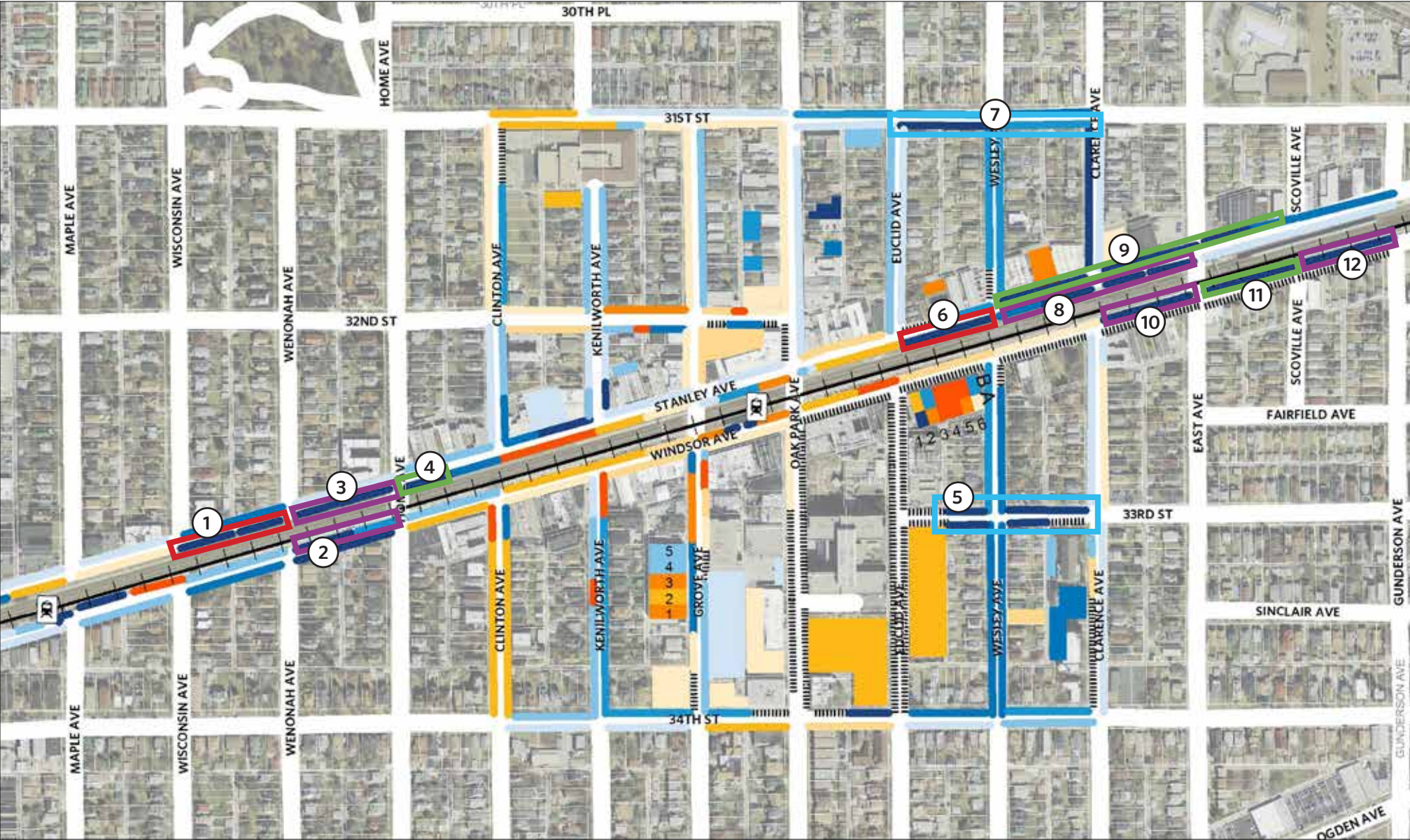
<sup>6</sup> The parking occupancy counts were conducted on a Thursday and Friday in March, and on a Wednesday in June. Counts can be influenced by events that are unknown to the survey taker. A new business opening, a religious holiday, or other event can impact the parking occupancy, and for that reason, we are using the average of different counts to look for patterns.







Figure 2. Average Parking Occupancy, weekdays midday (underutilized areas highlighted)



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

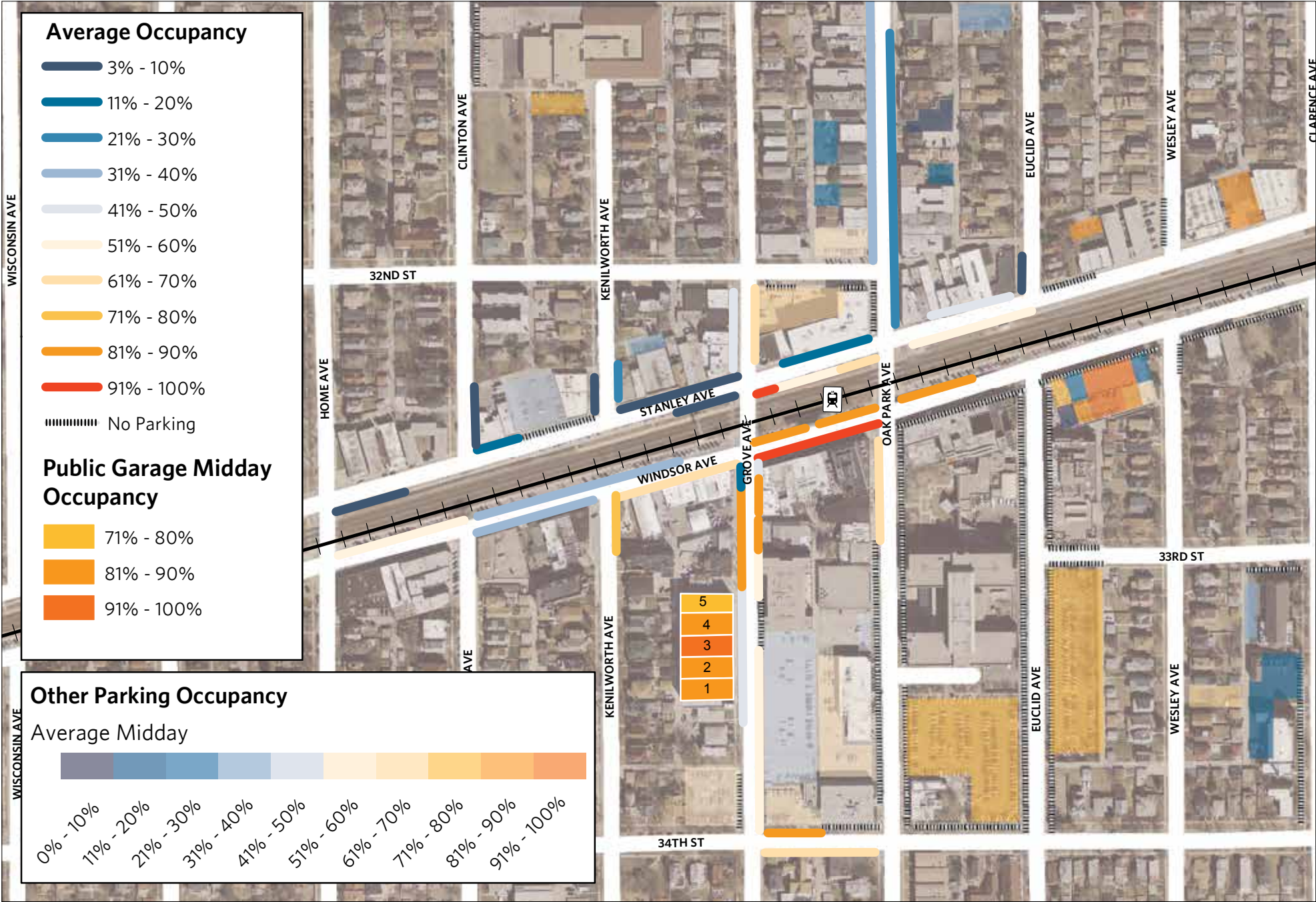


## Map Key

- ① Underutilized 12-hour metered parking (27 spaces)
- ② Underutilized Depot Permit parking (26 spaces)
- ③ Underutilized Depot Permit parking (24 spaces)
- ④ Underutilized free two-hour parking (14 spaces)
- ⑤ Underutilized Superzone permit parking (24 spaces)
- ⑥ Underutilized 12-hour metered parking (28 spaces)
- ⑦ Underutilized residential permit parking (21 spaces)
- ⑧ Underutilized Depot Permit parking (48 spaces)
- ⑨ Underutilized free two-hour parking (40 spaces)
- ⑩ Underutilized Depot Permit parking (18 spaces)
- ⑪ Underutilized free two-hour parking (11 spaces)
- ⑫ Underutilized Depot Permit parking (24 spaces)



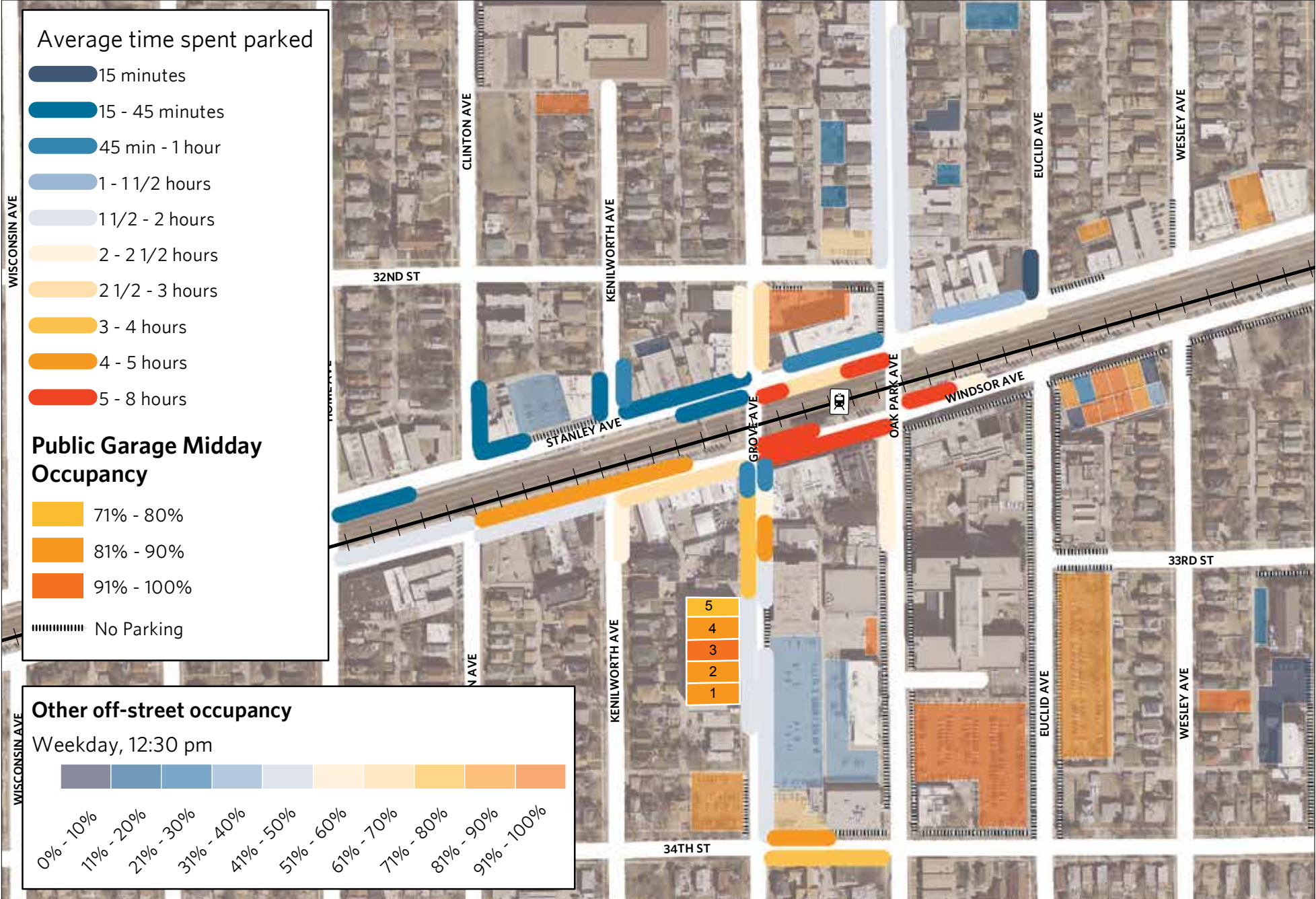
Figure 3. Average occupancy during turnover survey



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.



Figure 4. Average length of stay by block during turnover survey



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.

## Turnover details

Time limits and pricing are both intended to incentivize shorter parking stays, increase turnover, and allow a limited number of spaces to serve more users. In the most congested parts of Berwyn's Depot District, neither strategy is achieving its potential. Similar to the results of the turnover survey conducted in 2014, a lack of enforcement of the two-hour time limit is a primary cause for parking congestion in the Depot District.

As observed in previous parking surveys, parking north of the railroad tracks was less utilized than south of the tracks. Despite obvious day-long violations in two-hour parking spaces, no tickets were observed on vehicles. Two-hour parking on residential blocks was very underutilized, especially Euclid Avenue, which only had one observation of a parked car.

### North of the train tracks

Unlike most of the blocks north of the tracks, Stanley Avenue between Grove Avenue and Oak Park Avenue had occupancies between 82 percent and 100 percent in the morning hours, with a steep decline in occupancy during the afternoon hours. The average length of stay in those spaces was 2.8 hours, with one car parked for eight hours. Despite the fact that many parkers overstayed the two hour limit on Oak Park Avenue (average parking time was 2.3 hours), the block was relatively underutilized; occupancy throughout the day ranged from 46 percent to 78 percent.

### South of the train tracks

The two hour parking on Windsor Avenue, between Home Avenue and Kenilworth Avenue, had very low occupancy rates, and an average parking duration of 1.8 hours. Closer to the center of the Depot District, occupancy rates were higher on Windsor and more parkers ignored the two hour limit. The free two-hour parking between Grove and Oak Park Avenue was at 100 percent capacity almost the entire day, with an average parking duration of 3.75 hours. The two-hour metered spaces on the south side of the same block were also at high capacity, full almost all day. Thirteen of the 27 spaces had the same car parked for the entire eight-hour observation period.

The block of 34th Street between Grove Avenue and Oak Park Avenue also has two-hour parking on both sides of the street. The north side of the street, in front of a medical office, has only four parking spaces, three of which were occupied by the same cars almost the entire day. The fourth space was also occupied most of the day. The south side of the street had more turnover than the north side, but still had an average parking time of four hours. Most of the day, occupancy was high (78 percent to 89 percent) with a drop-off to 33 percent by 3:30pm.

The public parking garage was also observed during this parking survey. Floors 1-4 are designated for all-day parking for Metra commuters and employees in the Depot District, which had a peak occupancy of 95 percent midday. Throughout the day, occupancy rates of the top floor ranged between 64 percent and 80 percent. The majority of parking spaces were occupied by one car over the course of the day; average time was 6.9 hours. About half of the cars were parked for the entire eight-hour observation period.







A photograph of a residential street with several cars parked along the side. The street is lined with mature trees, and houses are visible in the background. A green semi-transparent box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the chapter title.

## Chapter 5: PARKING GOALS AND STRATEGIES

## Depot District Parking Goals and Strategies

The following section describes the four main goals of the Depot District Parking Plan, the issues surrounding each topic, and potential implementation action items. These goals were developed based on the research and analysis of the Depot District's existing parking and consideration of the impacts of future development on parking. A detailed table with these action items is also found in the appendix.

- Improve parking options for downtown employees and long-term parkers, and encourage parking outside of the core.
- Plan for the long-term management of parking resources.
- Improve the parking experience for visitors, shoppers, and commuters.
- Promote active transportation for residents and employees.



## **Goal #1: Improve parking options for downtown employees and long-term parkers, and encourage parking outside of the core.**

Business owners and employees often park all day in two-hour free and two-hour metered parking. Although some areas of the Depot District are designated for Depot Permit and Business Permit, many Depot District employees feel that these permits are prohibitively expensive. Moreover, with lax enforcement of two hour time limits, many employees feel confident about parking in those spaces rather than in the spaces designated for employees. These spaces are the most desirable to customers and visitors, and should be available to them. At the same time, for anyone visiting Berwyn that wants to stay longer than two hours, it is not obvious what the options are for parking (and they are limited).

The Depot District has many assets to build upon when addressing common parking challenges, including:

- A centrally-located parking garage
- A large downtown workforce
- Over 1,600 public on-street parking spaces
- A Metra commuter rail station with service to downtown Chicago and Aurora
- A rich history and strong building stock
- Unique independent retailers
- Easy access to major transportation arteries

The parking challenges facing the Depot District are not unique; many communities in the region have similar parking issues. When a large number of people want to visit a compact downtown around the same time for various reasons, the most desirable spaces fill up first and remain full if not properly managed. At the same time, nearby spaces remain underutilized.

The goal of parking management is to balance supply and demand of a highly desirable product — a convenient parking space — while keeping customers, residents, and businesses satisfied.



# Implementation strategies

**1. Create a free or low-cost “Small Business Employee” permit.** To many business-owners and employees, the Depot Permit is expensive and unnecessary when two-hour parking is not strictly enforced. As the City begins to increase enforcement with license plate reader (LPR) technology, employees will need a legal place to park to avoid tickets. A provision of discount employee permit parking for businesses with fewer than 25 employees could help to free up desirable spaces for visitors and shoppers by encouraging some employees to park slightly further from the core.

Large portions of Stanley and Windsor, as well as some residential blocks, are very underutilized, including spaces within a five minute walk from the core. Residential parking restrictions prevent hospital employees from parking on these streets all day and night. Allowing some spaces on underutilized blocks to be used by “Small Business Employee” permit-holders would make better use of the otherwise underutilized streets. Windsor Avenue between Maple and Wisconsin could have one or two spaces that allow the small business employee permit to accommodate employees who work late hours at downtown bars and restaurants.

Working with local aldermen, the City should determine where to locate these spaces. And the permits should be registered with the license plate of the employee, to work with the LPR technology that the City is already using.

As shown in Figure 2 (page 26), there are approximately 55 12-hour metered spaces, 128 Depot Permit spaces, 65 free two-hour spaces, and 45 residential permit spaces that were found to be underutilized:

- 54 free two-hour spaces on Stanley Avenue
- 72 Depot permit spaces on Stanley Avenue
- 55 12-hour metered spaces on Stanley Avenue
- 21 residential permit spaces on 31st Street
- 24 Superzone residential permit spaces on 33rd Street
- 56 Depot permit spaces on Windsor Avenue
- 11 free two-hour spaces on Windsor Avenue

**2. Increase enforcement of parking time limits.** Depot District employees will likely continue to prefer parking in the two-hour spaces if they remain confident of not being ticketed. Increasing enforcement of parking regulations is a necessary component of promoting turnover and improving the parking experience of the Depot District.

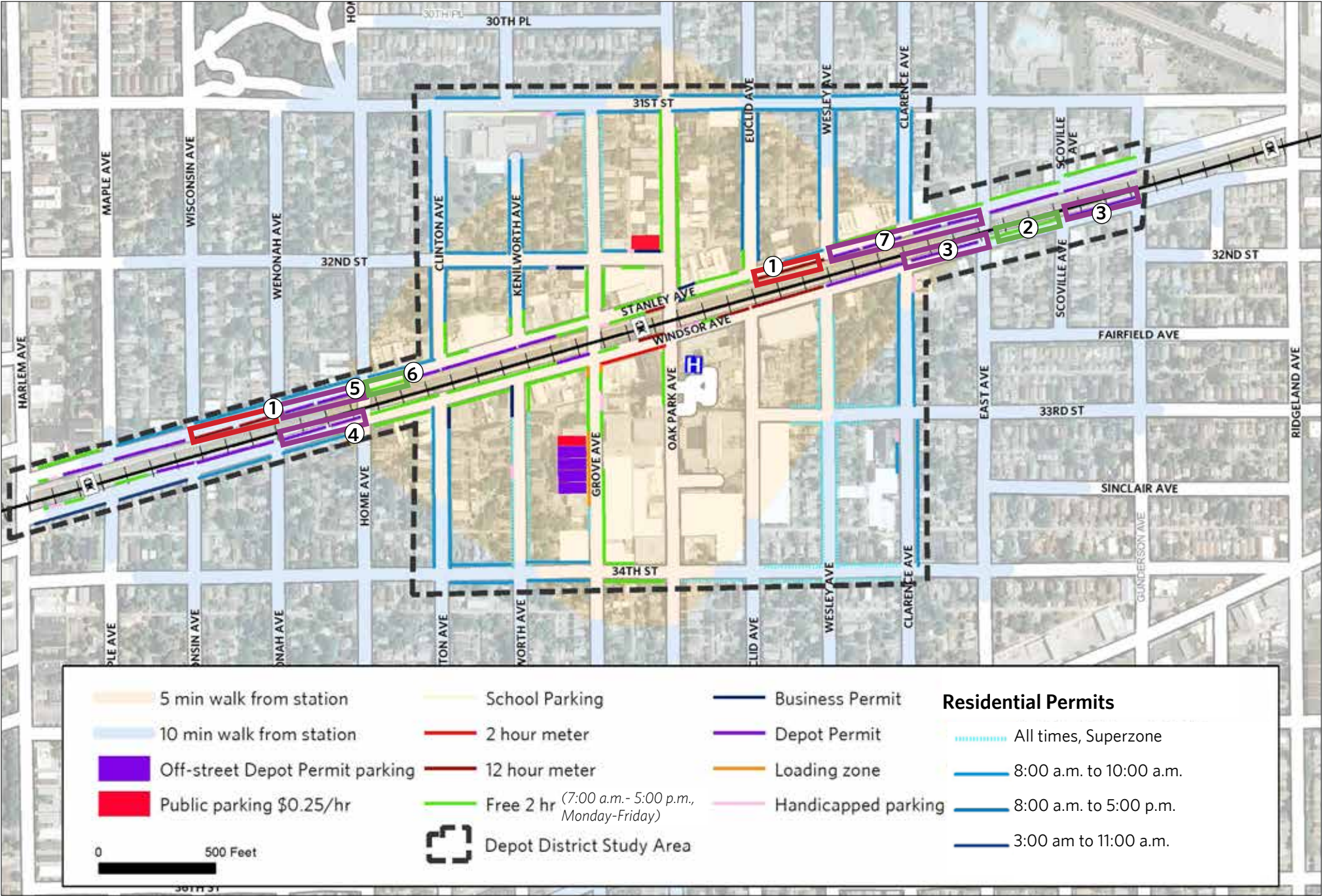
**3. Provide more options for longer-term parking and highlight existing options.** Visitors, employees, and commuters would all benefit from more parking options that allow for longer parking durations without having to commit to a permit or deposit many quarters. The first step would be to increase awareness of the existing parking options with maps and signage. For example, a visitor map with the residential parking (8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.) shown as “Free parking after 10:00 a.m.” could help. The second step would be to convert all “quarters only” 12-hour parking meter heads to accept electronic payment. According to Section 7 of the Station Agreement between the City of Berwyn and BNSF Railway Company, the City of Berwyn “shall allow commuter patrons at least twelve (12) hours of continuous commuter parking at rates... not less than \$2.00 for twelve (12) hours.” There is also a requirement for a minimum number of spaces on the Leased Premises for all three station areas (784, including five spaces for BNSF employee parking). Any changes to the parking spaces require the written approval from BNSF; this includes changes in parking rates, commuter parking improvements, and re-organization of commuter spaces.

The City should write a letter to BNSF asking for approval to create more convenient pay options and to improve utilization of underutilized parking spaces (see Figure 5). Any new or additional revenue should be used to improve access to the station area; such improvements may include maintenance of parking facilities, expansion of parking capacity, and bicycle or pedestrian improvements. The price to park at newly metered spaces should be established by an occupancy goal of 85 percent, with no time limits. The cost of \$0.25 per hour — the same price as other meters in the area — should be the initial fee. If the spaces are consistently full (above 85 percent occupied, from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.) the price should increase slightly every few months until the occupancy target is achieved. If there is a lot of vacancy at metered spaces, the price should be lowered slightly every few months until the occupancy target is achieved (to the floor established by BNSF of \$1 for six hours). The occupancy data should be made available through the Police Department’s LPR system. This strategy could be combined with the previous strategy by allowing Small Business Employee permit holders to park in these spaces.





Figure 5. Underutilized parking along BNSF rail



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2014.



## Map Key

- ① Add mobile payment options to all 12-hour metered parking to make the commuter parking more convenient. The 12-hour metered parking on Stanley Avenue (55 spaces) had an average occupancy rate of less than 10% during weekday parking counts.
- ② Convert 11 free two-hour spaces on Windsor between East Avenue and Gunderson to metered parking. This should appeal to BNSF and Metra because it would create commuter parking options in spaces that were previously “off limits” due to time limits. This can be done with single space meters, pay boxes, or with mobile phone payment options such as Park Mobile (the last option being the most cost efficient).
- ③ Convert 30 Depot Permit spaces on Windsor, between Clarence and Gunderson Avenue to metered parking.
- ④ Convert 26 Depot Permit spaces on Windsor between Wenonah and Home Avenue to metered parking.
- ⑤ Convert 24 Depot Permit spaces on Stanley between Wenonah and Home Avenue to metered parking.
- ⑥ Convert 14 free two-hour spaces on Stanley between Home and Clinton to metered parking.
- ⑦ Convert 48 Depot Permit spaces on Stanley between Wesley and East Avenue to metered parking.





## Goal #2: Plan for the long-term management of parking resources.

As more development occurs in the Depot District, and more retail establishments open, demand for parking will change. Many municipalities implement strategies once parking demand has outgrown supply. The City of Berwyn is in a good position to address potential parking issues before they become problematic. By anticipating future growth, the Depot District can thrive without being overburdened by excess parking demand. With the proper strategies, the City can manage the parking demand effectively with minimal impact on residents, employees, or visitors. At the same time, they can redevelop underutilized lots and create a more livable core.

## Implementation strategies

1. **Improve data sharing between the police department and City transportation planners.** Police LPR data should be shared with, and analyzed by, city transportation planners or engineers on a regular basis. Analysis can help to inform the City of problematic areas, underutilized parking areas, and the parking impacts of new businesses or developments.
2. **Continue to monitor development patterns, updated zoning codes, and parking habits.** The City is in the process of updating its zoning ordinance (through another CMAP Local Technical Assistance project) and the results of this parking analysis were considered in the development of zoning updates. The zoning update should help to encourage new development and allow for more development to occur closer to transit stations in the Depot District. Some of this development will have reduced parking requirements that should encourage pedestrian-friendly development. Reducing parking requirements in areas with higher parking demand seems counter-intuitive, but can help to reduce overall vehicle miles traveled when paired with thoughtful parking management. New development can also lead to increased demand for parking, especially on-street, and the City should monitor parking occupancy rates around areas that have a higher demand for parking.

For residential areas experiencing high demand for on-street permit parking, the City should keep track of the number of spaces available (estimate), the number of cars per household, and institute an increasing cost per vehicle where necessary.

**3. Replace traditional parking meters with modern meter heads, payboxes, or add pay-by-phone technology.** The 12-hour meters along the BNSF train tracks are outdated and inconvenient. They are hard to read and will not register any time until 12 quarters have been deposited. Newer technology that accepts payment through credit cards or smart phone applications can make the parking experience easier. Any new metered spaces should be credit card enabled and allow for mobile phone payment integration. The easiest and most cost-effective modernization of old meters would be to integrate with a pay-by-phone system. The costs include signage and fees to the company that runs the service. In weighing the pros and cons of using pay boxes or replacing meter heads with credit-card enabled meters, the latter has a higher up-front cost than pay boxes, but can have lower maintenance costs over time. With low parking rates and relatively low area-wide demand levels, a pay-by-phone system with signage makes the most sense for the Depot District at this time. This would leave the existing meters in place; allowing for people without cell phones to continue to use the meters.



Meter text reads:

**"\$3.00 MINIMUM PARKING FEE  
MUST DEPOSIT 12 QUARTERS BEFORE TIME IS DISPLAYED  
USE QUARTER ONLY"**

**4. Monitor the need for additional parking meters.** The metered parking in the Depot District is reasonably well-utilized, but the metered spaces are limited. There are 46 spaces with 12-hour meters along Windsor Avenue and 75 spaces on Stanley Avenue between the Berwyn Metra station and Wesley Avenue. The south side of Windsor Avenue has 20 two-hour metered spaces between Grove Avenue and Oak Park Avenue. There is a small metered parking lot on Oak Park Avenue north of 32nd Street (with 26 spaces), and the top floor of the public parking garage is also metered (88 spaces). Properly priced metered spaces help to achieve 85 percent occupancy, by spreading some of the demand to less desirable spaces. This reduces the amount of time it takes for a driver to find a space. The current level of parking demand does not warrant higher prices. However, parking surveys conducted in the Depot District indicate that the metered spaces are relatively well-utilized, meaning people are willing to pay to park in the Depot District and perhaps more people would pay if it were more convenient. As more retail development occurs, the City should monitor parking occupancy levels, and shift the supply of parking to include more metered parking as necessary, using modern parking meters that accept multiple forms of payment.

**5. Reinvest parking meter revenue in the Depot District.** If more priced parking spaces are introduced to the Depot District, any additional revenues collected from those spaces should be reinvested into the Depot District, rather than used to fill budget gaps. The funds can be used to improve streetscaping, repair potholes, add amenities to the parking garage, or build a fund to add more parking. These improvements may make people more willing to park and walk a little farther to their destinations. Ideally, the funds would be used for improvements that are visible to residents and visitors, so that they can see that their money is helping to improve the Depot District.

### Goal # 3: Improve the parking experience for visitors, shoppers, and commuters.

Visitors to the Depot District may not know where to park if they need to stay for more than two hours and many commuter spaces are often underutilized. The most important factor for drivers is finding a parking spot. When customers arrive at their destination, they want to be able to park their car and do their errands as quickly as possible. If someone is running late to catch a train, they want to find a spot immediately to avoid missing the train. The second most important factor is cost.

The Depot District has a variety of parking options, not all of which are available to visitors. For quick trips, free two-hour parking is convenient and can usually be found within a block or two of final destinations. If a visitor is planning to visit multiple locations and stay for longer than two hours, options are limited. With the goal of creating a “park once” environment, where visitors can walk to multiple destinations from one parking space, time restrictions on parking can negatively impact a downtown. The public parking garage has spaces on the upper level where people can pay to park longer, but not everyone knows to go there first and there are not always available spaces. Clear signage may better direct visitors to the parking garage, and a new approach to the organization of parking spaces and payment options should be pursued for maximum benefit to all drivers.

## Implementation strategies

- 1. Improve parking information.** New parking maps with clear information could include a map designed for customers and visitors, and another map designed for employees or commuters (see appendix for examples). Improved parking information on the website would include a section on upcoming changes, focusing on efficiency of parking spaces, improving customer friendliness and options, and the benefits that it will bring. The City or Berwyn Development Corporation (BDC) could develop informational flyers that business owners can share with their customers. And finally, the City could add wayfinding signs directing drivers to the garage. While some signs are located on Grove Avenue, near the garage, there is no signage on other streets to direct drivers to Grove Avenue, so visitors may not know that the garage is there. Placing wayfinding signs on other streets around the Depot District will help direct visitors to the garage.
- 2. Rearrange parking in the garage.** The first four levels of the parking garage are reserved for Depot District permit holders. This includes both commuters and area employees. The top level is available to the general public for \$0.25/hour. Drivers who are leaving their car for most of the day should not occupy the most valuable spaces in the parking garage. Visitors parking for shorter durations are less likely to drive all the way to the top level of the garage. The City should work with Metra to locate some paid parking spaces on the lowest level. Because these spaces would be more desirable than driving to the top floor, they could be priced at \$0.50 / hour depending on demand levels. Overall, if paid spaces are regularly above 85 percent occupied, the price is too low and should be raised. If they are frequently experiencing high vacancy rates, the price is too high and should be lowered.



**3. Improve usage of two-hour metered parking spaces.** The metered spaces on Windsor Avenue between Grove Avenue and Oak Park Avenue were implemented to increase turnover and prevent long-term parkers from using the spaces. The lack of turnover on these spaces indicates two things: drivers are willing to pay for parking convenience, and time limits on paid desirable parking spaces are not very effective. A better incentive for turnover is pricing; increased cost to park or an increasing scale of cost will shift long-term parkers from this area to other locations. And finally, it can be difficult for some people to distinguish the metered spaces from the two-hour free parking surrounding them. There are two signs that say “Pay for parking at meter,” but there is one sign in the middle that says “2-hour parking” like all the other free two-hour parking signs in the City. This could be very frustrating for a visitor who receives a parking ticket if they are unaware that the space is metered. Better signage could alleviate potential frustrations. If the City is interested in creating more turnover on this block, it could eliminate time limits and increase the cost per hour. While there are some long-term parkers, the overall demand in the area is still not exceedingly high, and a price increase is not necessary at this time. That could change with new development or with increased enforcement (as drivers adapt).

**4. Install parking count displays at the garage entrance.** Many visitors to the Depot District often assume that the garage is full, because they can see the first level is full. Dynamic signs at the garage entrance displaying the number of available spaces can help change this perception. The signage would have to have two counters: one for the first four levels indicating available permit spaces and one for the fifth level indicating available daily fee spaces.

**Sample parking space counter display**

AVAILABLE SPACES	
Level 1	FULL
Level 2	FULL
Level 3	36
Level 4	78
Level 5	42

For a description of how this system could work, see: <http://www.tcsintl.com/solutions/level-counting/>.

## Goal #4: Promote active transportation for residents and employees.

Small shifts in the habits of Depot District visitors and employees can reduce parking needs.

While cars will continue to be the primary mode of transportation for most, small increases in other modes — like walking, bicycling, and transit — could make up a greater share of trips in the future, and would help to alleviate parking problems, activate the sidewalks, and improve public health. According to the 2010 Census, nearly 7,000 people live within a ten-minute walk of the Depot District Berwyn Metra station.

## Implementation strategies

1. **Promote walking for health and encourage bicycling as transportation (not just recreation).** Providing general information about existing travel options and how to use them for getting around Berwyn can motivate people to talk alternative modes. Ideally, a City staff person would be assigned to promoting healthy commuting options. Their role could include developing a partnership with MacNeal hospital to host walking events and informational material about the health benefits of walking and bicycling. The City could also provide bike maps, include walking distance shown on downtown maps (in minutes, not miles), participate in bike-to-work week, and give employers information about biking around Berwyn.
2. **Continue to improve the bicycling network, as recommended by the Active Transportation Plan.** On-street bike lanes leading to the Metra station from neighborhoods and to nearby existing bike lanes and paths would support additional bicycle travel. Making it safer to get around Berwyn on a bicycle for adults and children requires a commitment to a connected network of bike lanes and bike paths. Connections to the Metra station are important to offer commuters a safe alternative to driving to the station. The City is already active in this role and should continue these efforts.

**3. Develop incentive programs to reduce car trips to the Depot District.** Land use, urban design, and parking policies are determined by the City, and have direct impacts on travel choices. Decisions and benefits offered by local employers also have a significant impact. The City could assist MacNeal Hospital in the development of a transportation demand management (TDM) program that would provide employees with incentives to reduce single-occupant driving. MacNeal Hospital could provide subsidized Metra and Pace passes and/or reward employees who walk or ride bicycles to work; they could also assign priority parking to carpoolers. For example<sup>7</sup>:

- A. Instead of providing free parking for employees, provide a commuter stipend that can be used to pay for: (the newly priced) parking, transit fares, or bicycle maintenance. This allows commuters who do not drive alone to save money.
- B. Designate a handful of the most desirable parking spaces for carpool participants only (and enforce it).
- C. Promote pre-tax transit benefits, which allow commuters to contribute up to \$130 of pre-tax income each month towards transit fare or passes. The RTA estimates that the pre-tax benefit program can save a typical commuter as much as \$100 each month.
- D. Promote Pace bus and Metra rail service that connects the hospital to the region.

- E. Install bus and train tracker displays (with real-time arrival information) in convenient, highly-visible locations at the workplace to promote awareness of transit service and make riding it more convenient.
- F. Participate in commuter challenges (such as Active Transportation Alliance's Bike Commuter Challenge during Bike to Work Week) that reward employees for using alternative modes of transportation.
- G. Install secure, indoor bike racks and other amenities to make biking to work more convenient.
- H. Participate in employer-assisted housing programs in Berwyn to help workers live closer to their jobs.
- I. Create an emergency ride home program that guarantees employees a way to return home (such as paying for a cab fare or car share) in case of a family illness or other emergency.

<sup>7</sup> Metropolitan Planning Council's report "Chicago Demands Transportation Management," recommends many of these strategies and has more information about TDM programs: <http://www.metroplanning.org/commuteoptions>.





The southeast corner of Oak Park and Stanley Avenue is less inviting. A planter box adds some nice greenery in the summer, but there is no shelter from the elements and no bench to rest upon. Photo credit: Google Streetview.



Benches and shade trees near the track crossings can be especially useful in creating a more pleasant space to wait for a passing train, such as that found at the crossing at Grove Avenue, on the northeast corner of Windsor and Grove. Photo Credit: Google Streetview.



The northeast corner of Oak Park and Ogden Avenues has a sheltered bench . Photo credit: Google Streetview.

4. **Improve bicycle facilities Metra stations.** Installing covered bicycle racks for Metra commuters who ride bikes to the station could make cycling to the train a more appealing option. Other communities, such as Wilmette and Arlington Heights, have shown that communities can make even better bicycle parking by providing a safe, sheltered area for bikes as close to the station platform as possible.

5. **Improve the pedestrian experience crossing the BNSF tracks.**

Analysis of parking behavior in the Depot District indicates people do not like to park north of the BNSF tracks because they may be delayed by a train when walking between their car and destination. Creating an environment that is pleasant to walk in would not only encourage people to walk to the Depot District but may also make parking north of the tracks and walking a few blocks south a more attractive option. Some improvements may include benches, lighting, planters, and signage. Benches and shade trees near the track crossings can be especially useful in creating a more pleasant space to wait for a passing train, such as that found at the crossing at Grove Avenue, on the northeast corner of Windsor and Grove. Since the Illinois Commerce Commission regulations prohibit plantings higher than 18 inches within 500 feet of a grade crossing, the City should investigate shelter options other than trees — such as the covered bus shelter on Ogden Avenue at Oak Park Avenue.







# Chapter 6: CONCLUSION





## Conclusion

The goal of the parking management plan is to make it easier for customers to find convenient parking to support a lively Depot District, accommodate employees and commuters, and strategize for future parking needs with minimal impact on residents. The strategies recommended in this plan include improving parking options for downtown employees, planning for long-term management of parking resources, providing increased options for parking convenience, promoting active transportation options, and enforcing parking regulations.

If customers need a convenient parking spot, a paid space should be available for them. If they don't want to pay, a free space should be easy to find within a short walking distance. If they need a paid space for more than two hours, they should be able to pay a premium for that time. If they are an employee, there should be a low-cost space available for them to park outside of the core during business hours.

As stated previously, the cost of parking is the only proven disincentive to employees who regularly take up prime parking spaces. Facing increased costs to park, a daily parker will typically seek out cheaper or free parking. Without proper enforcement of time limits, many employees will illegally park in spaces intended for customers. It requires less walking, it is free, and employees know that they can get away with it.

The City should work with Metra and BNSF to upgrade commuter parking meters and convert more spaces to paid parking without time limits. Existing meters along the rail line should be upgraded for improved customer convenience. Customer-friendly meters accept various forms of payment, including credit cards and cell phone payment, as well as coins. These meters should be able to remind customers when time is about to run out with a text message and allow them to add time remotely. The City could undergo customer testing and/or surveying for thoughts on different types and styles of meters (pay-by-space, pay-by-plate, pay-and-display, pay-by-phone, multi-space pay boxes, etc.), or they could choose to simply add online payment options to their existing coin meters, such as the service offered by ParkMobile.

The City should continue to invest in the walkability of the Depot District, as well as improve bicycling infrastructure. Small increases in the mode share of pedestrians and bicyclists to accomplish short trips can significantly increase public health and community vitality, as well as reduce parking needs. 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. Driving will continue to be the mode of choice for most people who visit the Depot District, but it is important to plan for all modes, especially walking since everyone is a pedestrian at the end of their trip.

Implementing changes to any parking system can be more challenging than leaving it as it is, or than spending millions of dollars on a parking garage. However, the City does not have the resources to provide another parking garage, and that would not solve the main problem — which is employees parking in the most convenient spaces. Implementing the recommended changes would address this key problem, with a customer-first approach focused on convenience and options. This would strengthen the historic area and ensure that it continues to provide convenient access to people visiting the unique local businesses, medical facilities, and restaurants in the Depot District.



If parking demand is spread more evenly throughout the Depot District, some people will walk further from their parking space to their destination. In his book, "Walkable City," Jeff Speck explains that in order for someone to choose a walk over other modes, it must be useful, safe, comfortable, and interesting:

Each of these qualities is essential and none alone is sufficient.

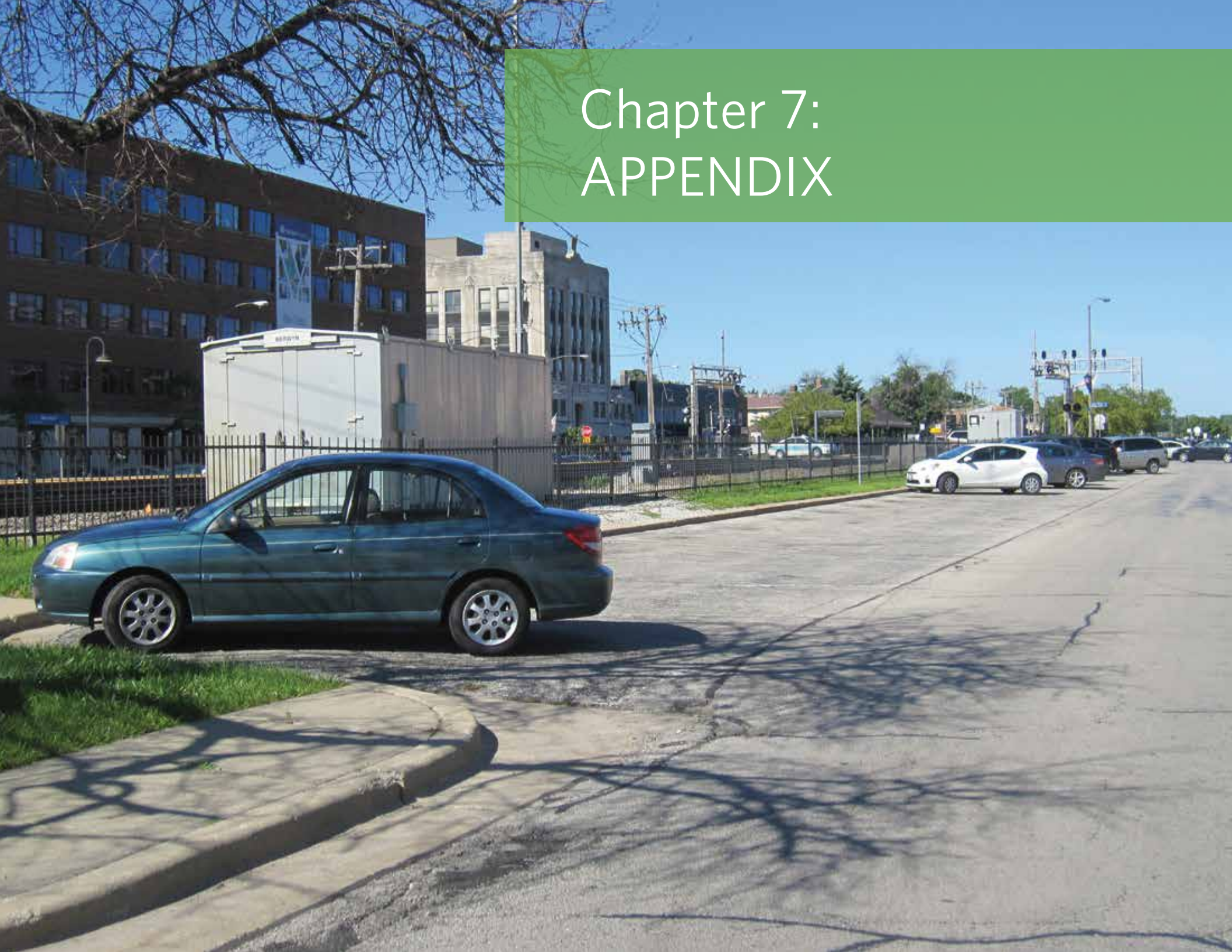
- *Useful* means that most aspects of daily life are located close at hand and organized in a way that walking serves them well.
- *Safe* means that the street has been designed to give pedestrians a fighting chance against being hit by automobiles; they must not only be safe but feel safe, which is even tougher to satisfy.
- *Comfortable* means that buildings and landscape shape urban streets into "outdoor living rooms," in contrast to wide-open spaces, which usually fail to attract pedestrians.
- *Interesting* means that sidewalks are lined by boutique buildings with friendly faces and that signs of humanity abound.

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Jeff Speck, *Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step at a Time* (North Point Press, 2012), 11.



# Chapter 7: APPENDIX



# Appendix

## Implementation Actions

This section contains tables with the implementation goals and associated actions, with general timeframe estimates from “Short-term/quick win” to “Long-term.” These actions list the associated responsible implementers and partners, as well as some ideas for initial first steps. Finally, some sample maps are included to indicate shopper parking options and employee parking options.

## Acronyms

BDC	Berwyn Development Corporation
CMAP	Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
IDOT	Illinois Department of Transportation
LPR	License Plate Reader
LTA	Local Technical Assistance
RTA	Regional Transportation Authority
SSA	Special Service Area
TDM	Transportation Demand Management
TIF	Tax Increment Financing

## Implementation Action Items: Goal # 1

ACTION	TIMELINE	LEAD	INITIAL STEPS
<b>1. Improve parking options for downtown employees and long-term parkers, and encourage parking outside of the core.</b>			
Create a free or low-cost "Small Business Employee" permit	Early/ mid-term	City of Berwyn, BDC	Overall outreach to businesses about parking options should be handled by BDC. Working with aldermen, the wCity should determine where to locate these new permit spaces, and work with the Police Department for enforcement coordination.
Increase enforcement of parking time limits	Short-term / quick win	City of Berwyn Police Department	The police department needs to enforce the existing regulations, particularly in the two-hour free parking spaces. If their LPR technology does not allow officers to see which cars were parked before their shift began, they should coordinate hours of officer surveillance to ensure that a shift change does not mean that people can park for an additional two hours.
Provide more options for longer-term parking and highlight existing options	Mid-term	City of Berwyn	The first step to highlighting existing longer-term parking options would be to publish maps for visitors (or shoppers) and employees (See sample maps). Also, additional signage could be implemented to highlight parking options. For creating additional long-term parking options, the initial step would be to draft a letter to BNSF requesting changes to the current parking configuration along the rail lines, including options for Small Business Employee permit parking areas.



## Implementation Action Items: Goal # 2

ACTION	TIMELINE	LEAD	INITIAL STEPS
<b>2. Plan for the long-term management of parking resources.</b>			
Improve data sharing between the police department and City transportation planners	Early/ mid-term	City of Berwyn, Police Department	Police LPR data should be shared with, and analyzed by, city transportation planners or engineers on a regular basis. Analysis can help to inform the City of problematic areas, underutilized parking areas, and the parking impacts of new businesses or developments.
Continue to monitor development patterns, updated zoning codes, and parking habits	Short-term/ quick win	City of Berwyn Police Department	<p>Reducing parking requirements in areas with higher parking demand can help to reduce overall vehicle miles traveled when paired with thoughtful parking management. New development can also lead to increased demand for parking, especially on-street, and the City should monitor parking occupancy rates around areas that have a higher demand for parking.</p> <p>For residential areas experiencing high demand for on-street permit parking, the City should keep track of the number of spaces available (estimate), the number of cars per household, and institute an increasing cost per vehicle where necessary.</p>
Replace traditional parking meters with modern meter heads, payboxes, or add pay-by-phone technology	Mid-term	City of Berwyn	The first step to highlighting existing longer-term parking options would be to publish maps for visitors (or shoppers) and employees (See sample maps). Also, additional signage could be implemented to highlight parking options. For creating additional long-term parking options, the initial step would be to draft a letter to BNSF requesting changes to the current parking configuration along the rail lines, including options for Small Business Employee permit parking areas.
Monitor the need for additional parking meters	Long-term	City of Berwyn, BDC	The current level of parking demand does not warrant additional metered parking (beyond conversion of permit spaces as mentioned previously). As retail activity and development increases, the parking habits of visitors should be monitored to determine if additional meters are needed and if the price to park is appropriate.
Reinvest parking meter revenue in the Depot District	Long-term	City of Berwyn	If additional meters are added to the downtown area, any additional revenue collected from those spaces should be set aside for improvements to the Depot District.

## Implementation Action Items: Goal # 3

ACTION	TIMELINE	LEAD	INITIAL STEPS
<b>3. Improve the parking experience for visitors, shoppers, and commuters.</b>			
Improve parking information	Mid-term	City of Berwyn, BDC	New maps with clear parking information and information on the City website to inform people about upcoming changes. Informational flyers for businesses could be distributed by the BDC. Wayfinding and improved signage for the garage could also help direct people to the garage.
Install parking count displays at the public garage entrance	Short-term / quick win	City of Berwyn	Installing dynamic signs at the garage entrance displaying the number of available spaces can help change the perception that there are no available spaces in the garage.
Rearrange parking in the public garage	Mid-term	City of Berwyn, Metra	Short-term parking spaces for the parking garage should be the most convenient, on the first floor. The City would have to work with Metra to find an agreeable rearrangement of spaces.
Improve usage of the two-hour metered parking spaces	Mid-term	City of Berwyn	Using time limits on metered parking is counter-productive. The price should be the deterrent to parking for extended lengths of time. A well-managed system with appropriately priced spaces does not need time limits. If the City would like to see increased turnover on these spaces, the price to park should be increased and time limits should be eliminated.

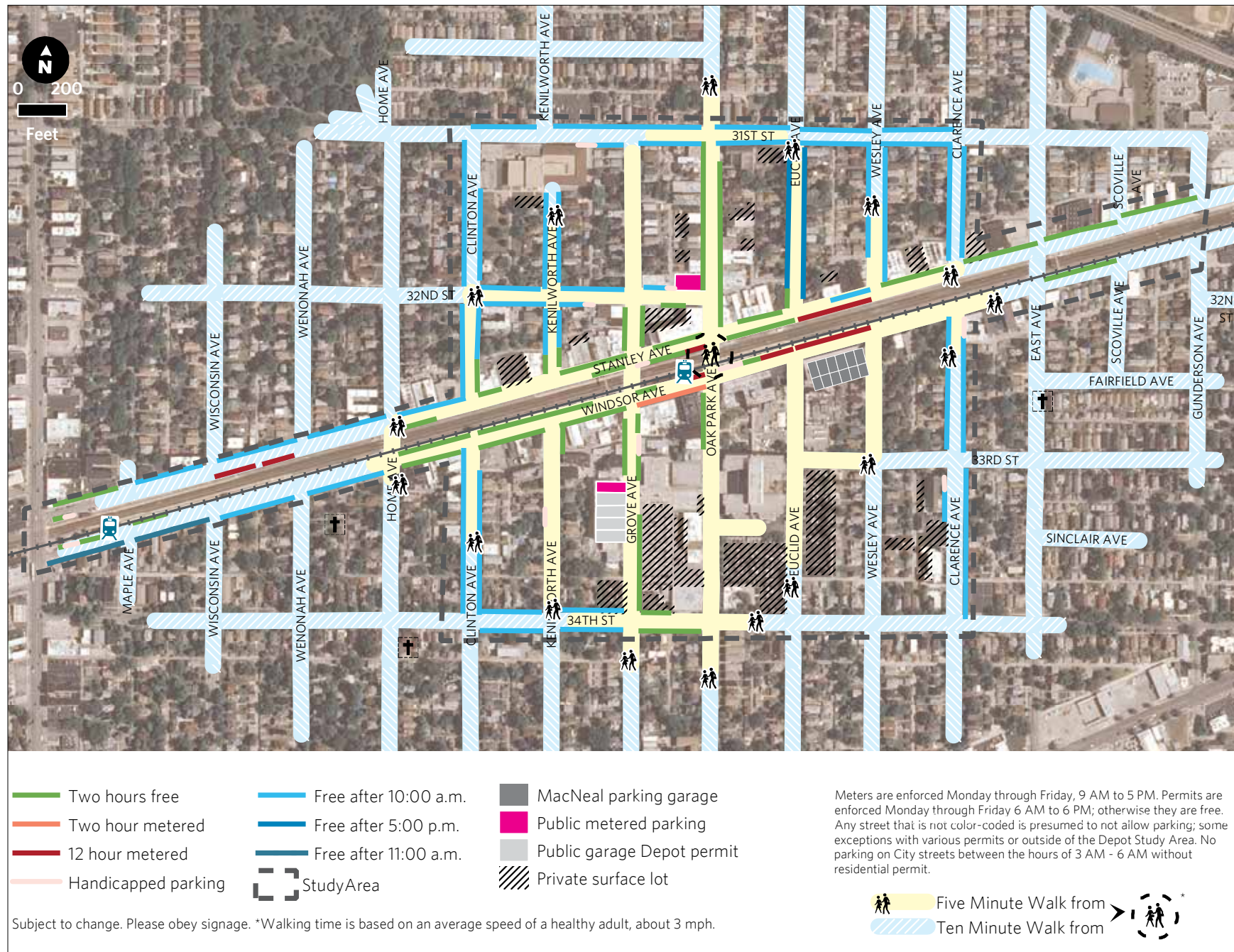
## Implementation Action Items

### Goal # 4

ACTION	TIMELINE	LEAD	INITIAL STEPS
<b>4. Promote active transportation for residents and employees.</b>			
Develop incentive programs to reduce car trips to the Depot District	Mid-term	City of Berwyn, MacNeal Hospital	The City of Berwyn should assist MacNeal Hospital in the development of a transportation demand management (TDM) program to would provide employees with incentives to reduce single-occupany driving.
Promote walking for health and encourage bicycling as transportation	Short-term / quick win	City of Berwyn	Providing general information about existing travel options and how to use them for getting around Berwyn is something that the City currently does, but a more pro-active approach to changing commute patterns, particularly with MacNeal Hospital could include organizing walking and bicycling events such as bike-to-work week. Displaying walking distance shown in minutes on maps is also helpful.
Continue to implement the Active Transportation Plan	Ongoing	City of Berwyn	In 2011, the Active Transportation Alliance published the Berwyn Active Transportation Plan which should be used as a guide when planning for transportation improvements.
Improve bicycle facilities at Metra stations	Mid-term	City of Berwyn, Metra	Installing covered bicycle racks for Metra commuters who ride bikes to the station could make cycling to the train a more appealing option.
Improve the pedestrian experience crossing the BNSF tracks	Mid-term	City of Berwyn, Metra	Improvements such as benches, planters, lighting, signage and weather protection would enhance the pedestrian experience near the train tracks.

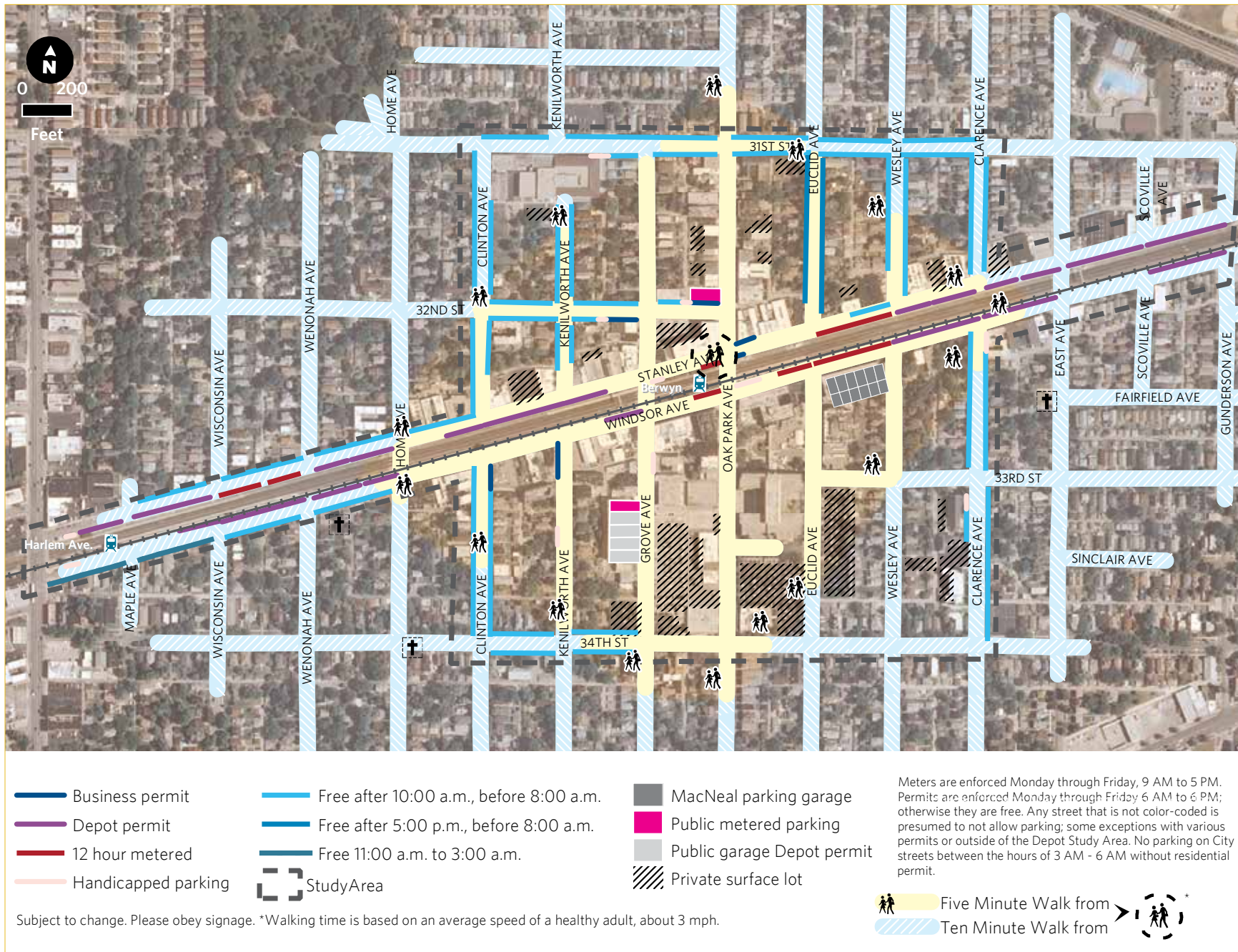


# Depot district shopper parking map





## Depot district employee parking map





Chicago Metropolitan  
Agency for Planning

233 South Wacker Drive, Suite 800  
Chicago, IL 60606

312-454-0400  
[info@cmaphillinois.gov](mailto:info@cmaphillinois.gov)

[www.cmapillinois.gov](http://www.cmapillinois.gov)

