



# Downtown Lisle Parking Management Plan Executive Summary

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## Purpose of Downtown Lisle's Parking Management Plan

This plan seeks to develop locally-appropriate parking management strategies to balance the needs of the community – residents and businesses – with the Village's long-range goals for development, while maintaining a balanced budget. Any place worth visiting will have a high demand for parking, so a parking problem is a good problem to have. The same traits that make a compact downtown an attractive place to be make it difficult to find parking when prime spaces are not managed with pricing. The strategies in this plan were developed to strike the right balance between parking supply and demand.

Several re-occurring themes emerged from public engagement activities, including the difficulty of finding a parking spot on certain streets during lunchtime and early evening hours. Some employees are unsure about where to park, or dislike the Garfield parking lot, and some are parking in spots intended for customers. Many people would like the Village to have a parking garage, but struggle to identify how the Village would pay construction costs of \$30,000 for each space in a garage.

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## Community Involvement and Input

In order to get a detailed understanding of Lisle's perspective on parking, a series of public outreach and engagement opportunities were designed to gather input throughout the project phases.

- CMAP staff conducted 12 in-person confidential interviews with stakeholders, residents, and main street business owners
- CMAP staff hosted a table at a public workshop on downtown development priorities, collecting input on parking challenges and opportunities (March 2017)
- An online survey collected 430 responses (June – August 2017)
- CMAP staff presented findings to the Village Board (July 2017)
- A public open house held at Village Hall to solicit information from the community and to gather feedback on the proposed strategies to address parking challenges (December 2017)
- All steering committee meetings were open to the public and televised on the local cable access station

## Data collected and issues identified

After pairing information from stakeholders with site visits to collect parking data at different times of day, during different seasons and days of the week, some clear challenges emerged. The primary source of Lisle's "parking problem" is a shortage of convenient public parking spaces, an abundance of private parking spaces, increasing demand as new developments are built and commercial activity increases, a reluctance to walk to parking off Main Street, and onerous parking requirements in the Village code.

Active downtowns have high demand for parking. If that demand is managed properly, Lisle can continue to grow and provide a positive experience and a friendly business climate. Many people have visited downtown Lisle and struggled to find a parking space on Main Street. Few drivers venture off Main Street to use the Garfield parking lot, or other less convenient spaces. While prime spaces are full, less desirable spaces are underutilized. Peak parking occupancy in the study area was just over 55%, even during recounts after new restaurants had opened.

## Goals of proposed parking management strategies

- *Increase the supply of publicly-available parking in the downtown, while making it easier for Metra commuters and employees to park reliably;*
- *Develop a long-term plan for parking that relies on a "park once" design and considers the construction of a parking structure in combination with paid parking on Main Street if required by future conditions;*
- *Simplify Village zoning to foster downtown economic development and create a shared supply of public parking;*
- *Improve public parking information in advance of trips, with clear parking signage and better-quality parking experiences in Main Street spots and in remote lots;*
- *Increase the number of people who choose to reach downtown without a car by making the travel experience comfortable for people walking, riding bikes, or taking the bus.*



## Goal 1: Improve existing parking and provide additional public parking



There is a need for additional public parking, as much of the downtown parking supply consists of restricted access private lots. The publicly available spaces are often the locations with the highest occupancy. The following strategies can be employed to expand the supply of public parking at little cost to the Village.

### Implementation strategies

- *Expand on-street parking where possible*
- *Create free employee parking areas*
- *Increase the number of daily Metra parking spaces with digital payment options*
- *Develop a parking partnership with owners of underutilized parking lots for public usage*
- *Create a surface parking lot south of the existing Garfield lot*

## Goal 2: Create flexibility in policies to prepare for long-term parking needs



The Village can encourage pedestrian-friendly and transit-supportive development through parking policy. Through shared parking and new policies, the Village can make better use of the existing parking resources and remove barriers to small business development. Minimum parking requirements have created an abundance of private parking that is not useful to the general public. Parking demands are shifting across the U.S. and it is difficult to know exactly what the future will hold. Nimble policies allow a community to adapt to the changes in market demand.

### Implementation strategies

- *Focus on creating a "park-once" downtown with more public parking*
- *Allow for flexible shared parking*
- *Eliminate or reduce requirements for private parking provision*

## Goal 3: Improve parking finances with a vision for the future



The parking management plan is intended to help make appropriate decisions about parking to support local businesses and enable a thriving, growing downtown area that is financially sustainable. A well-tuned parking management program must be supported by a solid finance rationale and system.

### Implementation strategies

- *Create a transparent system to help track parking revenue and expenses*
- *Use pricing to provide more convenient parking options for commuters*
- *Develop a dedicated parking fund*
- *Use revenue information to analyze funding opportunities for a future parking garage and parking pricing*

## Goal 4: Improve the parking experience for visitors and shoppers

Most people will drive to downtown Lisle, and the ease of finding a parking space is an important aspect of their trip. If the parking spot is not directly in front of their destination, it should be easy to find and comfortable to walk to. Parking that is centrally located, and shared between destinations allows people to visit multiple locations while only parking in one spot, reducing the overall parking need and encouraging walking.

### Implementation strategies

- *Improve signage for the Garfield parking lot*
- *Provide maps and information for employees and visitors*
- *Consider making School St. eastbound and testing back-in angled parking*
- *Improve the experience of parking in the remote lots*
- *Pilot paid parking for some spaces on Main Street, allowing some to pay for convenient parking if they want*



## Goal 5: Enhance transportation options for downtown travel

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. For people who choose to walk downtown, ride a bicycle, take a bus or get a ride, the Village can make improvements that enhance their experience and encourage others to do the same.

### Implementation strategies

- *Make walking an enjoyable experience*
- *Promote public transit*
- *Enhance connections to downtown for people riding bicycles*



## Moving Forward

Implementing changes to downtown Lisle's parking system may be more challenging than leaving it as it is, or than spending millions of dollars on a parking garage. However, the alternatives would not solve the main problem, which is a lack of convenient parking spaces open to the public.

Implementing the recommended strategies would address this key problem, with a customer-first approach focused on convenience and options. This would strengthen the historic downtown and ensure that it succeeds as new residential developments and commercial additions continue.

