



Appendix B

Examples of Collaborative Parking Systems

The public and private parking system is one of the most critical components of a successful and vibrant downtown economy. In fact, many cities view parking as an economic development tool that can accelerate development and growth of a downtown. Parking is the only service a city provides that often competes with the private sector; however, the approach of the Center City Transportation Plan is to partner rather than compete with each other to the benefit of both parties and the local economy – hence, the term “collaborative” parking systems.

The following examples represent a growing movement by cities across the United States to leverage their parking resources to support economic development. Their common goal is to ensure that the right amount of parking is available to users, that all visitors can find parking, and that both the private and public sectors work together for their mutual benefit.

City of St. Paul, Minnesota

St. Paul implemented a variable message sign (VMS) system in 1997 – the first of its kind in the nation – primarily to direct tourists and visitors attending special events in the downtown. The goal is to create a visitor-friendly downtown in terms of access to parking.

The VMS system uses both “static message signing” (fixed signs) and sign boards displaying real-time parking availability in each of the participating parking facilities. The VMS uses a common design scheme and is easily recognized as parking guidance. The signage is purposely designed to “inform” rather than “direct” visitors to available parking, leaving the decision of where to park to the driver.

The program was funded by a Congestion Management and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant applied for by the City of St. Paul, the Federal Highway Administration and Minnesota Department of Transportation. Initially, there were seven garages and three surface lots (both public and private) in the system. The private parking owners and operators participated through contractual agree-





ments which identified the role and expectations of both the public and private participants.

St. Paul's system includes three components: (1) parking equipment for space counting and access control; (2) a computerized central communications system; and (3) electronic and static signs. This program is considered successful, although the technology is now outdated. The City of St. Paul is moving towards a full replacement and expansion of the system.

City of San Jose, California

San Jose has made it a priority to enable visitors find available parking more readily. The City of San Jose has designed a parking guidance system to direct visitors to special events, sports venues and convention center events. The system incorporates both static and dynamic (real-time) signing that displays current parking availability by those facilities participating in the program.

Information is provided to the parker through dynamic message signing, internet web pages, and an automated phone system. Phase I of the installation is estimated to cost about \$2.8 million and will include portable message signs and a parking guidance system of 42 dynamic and 117 static message signs. Eleven public and 15 private parking facilities will initially participate in the program. The program was designed with full expansion capability.

San Jose views this system as proactive support for the city's continued economic development. In practice, the system aids visitors and people unfamiliar with the downtown and displays information for the traveler about the location and amount of parking available. In so doing, it reduces travel time for the motorist, reduces congestion and air pollution, and increases garage revenue.

City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Milwaukee, which is comparable in population to Charlotte, has been striving to improve its downtown parking system through its "Park Once" program. The program's objective is to effectively market the downtown and

to conserve resources, reduce congestion and ultimately promote economic development.

"Park Once" enables motorists to park once in a convenient, easily located parking space and then use alternative means of transportation, if necessary, to visit the distinct sections of downtown. These alternative transportation modes include trolleys, walking, bike routes, country transit, and a shuttle service connecting the lakefront with the historic district, arena, convention center, businesses, and cultural, entertainment and shopping areas.

Milwaukee's strategy is to include both public and private parking by working out agreements on the respective roles of public and private owners and operators. The "Park Once" program benefits the owners through branding and joint marketing, establishing coordinated pricing strategies, incorporating a parking tax, and adopting common design standards for new facilities. The City also has a parking fund for payment-in-lieu of parking contributions for new development.

The City of Milwaukee recently applied for and received a \$1.5 million CMAQ grant for the planning, design and implementation of the first phase of a parking guidance system (PGS).

This system will include wayfinding for special event parking along the interstate link that runs directly through a portion of the downtown to the lakefront. This link provides access to much of the parking and attractions located in the downtown.

The PGS will include dynamic displays located along the interchange exits that direct parkers to facilities with available parking and away from congested areas or from areas where parking is not available. The initial objective is to use the parking guidance system to inform the estimated one million visitors to the city's lakefront each summer.

Cleveland, Ohio (University Circle, Inc.)

University Circle Incorporated (UCI) is a non-profit organization established to nurture the growth of University Circle, Cleveland's cultural, educational and medical center. More than 45 non-profit

institutions are members of UCI and share interests about safety, transportation, parking and the Circle environment.

The UCI parking system includes 11,000 parking spaces in 13 garages and 54 surface lots, and serves over 1.2 million visitors a year in addition to 14,000 residents and employees. UCI manages parking for special events, parking security, maintenance of parking structures and surface lots, enforcement of parking regulations, snow plowing, sign maintenance, landscaping, and horseback-mounted courtesy greeters.

City of Kalamazoo, Michigan

Kalamazoo is one of the true innovators of parking system management. They were first city to establish a collaborative parking system, “Central City Parking,” and brand it. Their original objective was to support and promote economic development downtown.

Central City Parking is managed by Downtown Kalamazoo, Inc., a group similar to Charlotte Center City Partners. Central City Parking is responsible for maintenance and management of all city on-street and off-street parking, plus numerous private parking facilities.

City of Dallas, Texas

The Central Dallas Association (CDA) is an entity created by private and public partnerships as the Transportation Management Association (TMA). This is a federal designation with specific requirements and responsibilities in air quality non-attainment areas. The TMA manages the transportation resources in the downtown core of Dallas.

The CDA created a brand, “Pegasus,” which manages access for some downtown parking facilities with smart card technology that is integrated into the toll road payment and access system. There are six downtown public and private parking structures participating in the program. Payment for parking is handled through the same back office clearinghouse used for the toll road smart card

payment system, so that no cash is needed for parkers using those integrated facilities.

Like all other examples cited here, the impetus behind this system was to create a more user-friendly parking system to encourage visitors to the downtown, increase revenues for participating facilities, and maximize existing assets before investing in expansion. All of these objectives support the end result, economic development.

