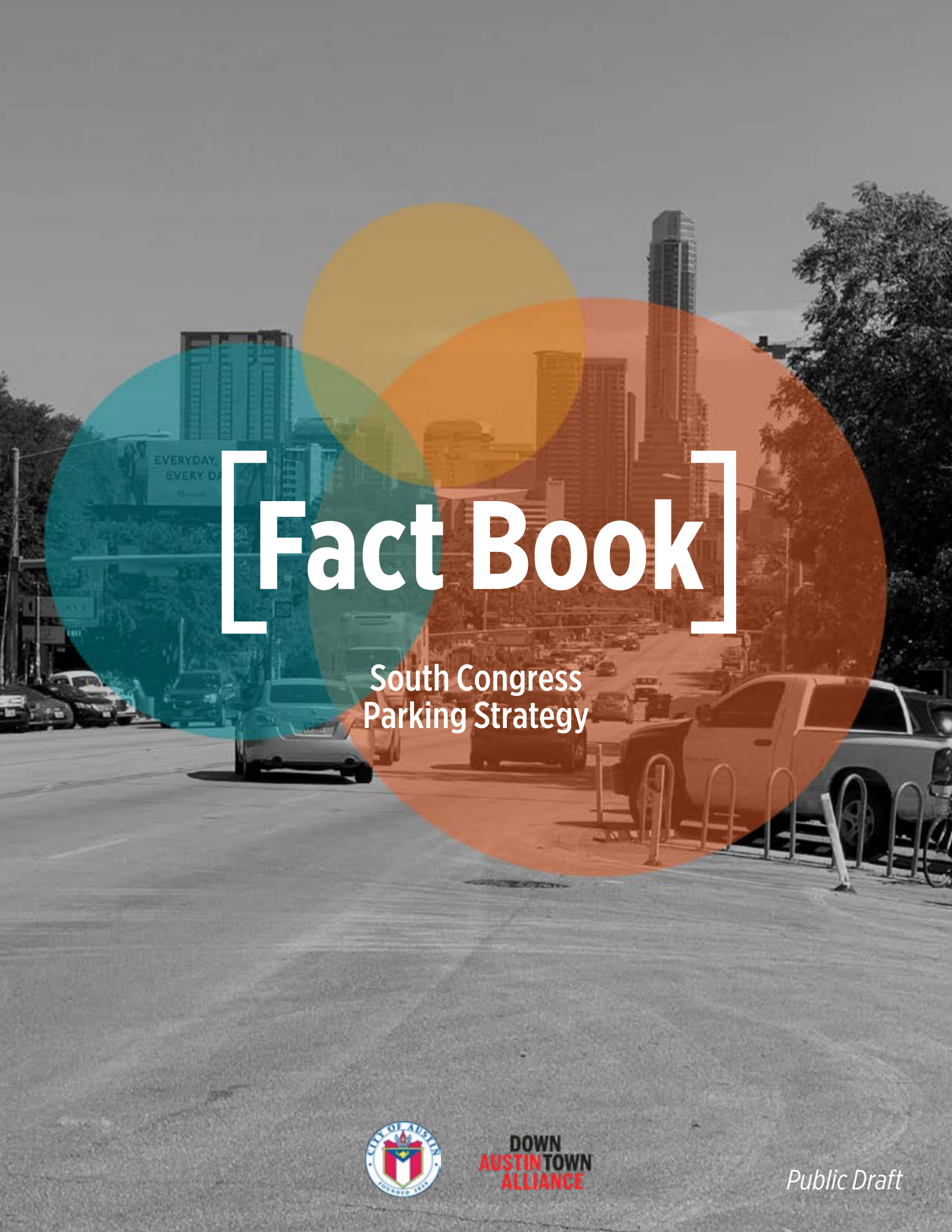

[Fact Book]

South Congress Parking Strategy

DOWN AUSTIN TOWN ALLIANCE

Public Draft

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Fact Book

South Congress Parking Strategy


BOOT

[Fact Book]

Executive Summary

The South Congress Parking Strategy is an effort to understand and comprehensively address parking challenges facing the South Congress neighborhood. The strategy is led by the City of Austin in partnership with the Downtown Austin Alliance with support and guidance from local stakeholders. The project is divided into two phases:

Phase I of the strategy is focused on collecting, analyzing, and documenting detailed data about how parking is used and managed in SoCo today. This data will allow for a better understanding of the parking challenges facing all users in SoCo.

Phase II of the strategy is focused on developing actionable solutions to address parking challenges in SoCo and adjacent neighborhoods. Recommendations will include both near-term responses to immediate parking needs as well as long-term strategies for future-proofing parking. These strategies and policies will link parking supply and management solutions with other ongoing mobility and development initiatives in the corridor.

Data Collection and Methods

Data was collected during Phase I using a variety of tools and methods, including:

- **Inventory data** for on- and off-street parking spaces to understand how much parking exists in SoCo today
- **Occupancy data** for on- and off-street parking spaces to understand how well-utilized existing parking is in SoCo
- **Turnover data** for off-street spaces to understand how usage of parking spaces changes over the course of the day and week
- **Parking and travel behavior data** through an intercept survey in SoCo to understand how and why people travel to and from SoCo
- **Local knowledge** through stakeholder interviews to understand the variety of parking challenges and solutions that employees, business owners, and community members experience in SoCo today

Top 10 Takeaways from Phase I

1. **Over half of all parking in the South Congress study area is completely unregulated, meaning it is free and has no time limit**. Two-thirds of on-street parking is unregulated and nearly half (46%) of off-street parking is unregulated, even in some of the busiest and most popular parts of SoCo.

2. **Peak parking occupancy across the entire study is 60%**. Although there are on-street spaces in the commercial core and off-street spaces north of Academy Drive that routinely fill to capacity, nearby on- and off-street parking is underutilized.

3. **Employees, visitors, and residents are competing for many of the same convenient, core area parking spaces.** A comprehensive set of strategies needs to be developed for how the most popular spaces on South Congress are prioritized for different uses based on location and land use.

4. **There is limited dedicated curb space for ridehailing/TNC pick-up and drop-off activity.** Today, many of these vehicles pick up or unload passengers using spaces reserved for ADA vehicles or other special parking purposes.

5. **Residential Parking Permit (RPP) spaces are especially underutilized. RPP regulations vary widely, and implementation is largely ad-hoc**. The RPP program is needed to protect access for residents. However, the current program presents an opportunity for improvements focused on consistency, simplicity, and optimization of public right-of-way use for a variety of people.

6. **Almost half of people traveling to South Congress arrive by some other mode than driving alone.** This is a very high rate of non-drive-alone travel, and a holistic parking strategy for the neighborhood could help further reduce drive-alone rates. Parking and transportation demand management strategies that encourage and reward alternatives to driving alone can help ensure that parking in SoCo is used as efficiently as possible.

7. **Future transit improvements could greatly increase transit access to and from the neighborhood.** Capital Metro is in the process of planning major high-capacity transit investments on South Congress Avenue and East Riverside Drive.

8. **New and planned developments are changing the mobility landscape in SoCo.** These developments will increase the parking supply and travel demand in SoCo. Parking recommendations should be crafted with these ongoing and upcoming neighborhood changes in mind.

9. **Infrastructure in the neighborhood is not as supportive of walking and biking as it could be**, even though lots of people travel to, from, and within SoCo using non-drive-alone travel modes.

10. **Parking management in South Congress needs a more systematic and holistic approach.** Many of SoCo's parking management programs and regulations are uncoordinated, and collaboration among employers around parking and transportation is limited.


BOOT

[1]

Project Overview

What is the South Congress Parking Strategy?

The City of Austin initiated a two-phase study of parking along the South Congress (SoCo) corridor to **comprehensively address long-standing parking challenges**. The first phase will document the number of parking spaces, how many vehicles are parking and for how long, and the varied parking needs of businesses, residents, employees, and visitors.

The study's **collection of detailed data** will allow for a better understanding of the parking challenges for all users and inform the development of comprehensive solutions.

The second phase of the parking strategy will provide **short-term, actionable solutions** to address the immediate parking issues on South Congress and adjacent neighborhoods. The parking strategy will also **future-proof parking in the district with a long-term framework** that links parking supply and management solutions to ongoing mobility and development initiatives in the corridor.

The study's phased approach will ensure the continued economic prosperity of local businesses and employees, while reducing the burden on residents caused by increased parking demand in the area.

What goals will guide the project?

Focus on comprehensive data collection, allowing for informed dialogue and a decision-making process guided by data.

Address short-term parking challenges and develop an actionable plan for improving parking for all users.

Future-proof any parking management, policy, and/or programmatic recommendations regardless of changes to South Congress Avenue.

Support the corridor's long-term mobility vision, recognizing that parking is ultimately one piece of a broader access strategy.

Ensure comprehensive public engagement that maximizes efficient use of the public's time and feedback.

Create solutions to support a robust, economically stable commercial corridor, while serving as a model process for similar districts in Austin.

What is the study area?

The study area is shown in Figure 1. The study boundaries are generally defined by West Riverside Drive to the north, Brackenridge Street to the east, West Live Oak Street to the south, and up to, but not including, South 1st Street to the west.


Figure 1: Study Area Map
Study Area Boundary
South Congress Core Area
Parks and Open Space
Water
0
500
1,000 Feet
WEST RIVERSIDE DRIVE
SOUTH CONGRESS AVENUE
SOUTH 1ST STREET
WEST JAMES STREET
WEST GIBSON STREET
SOUTH 3RD STREET
WEST ELIZABETH STREET
JEWELL STREET
WEST MONROE STREET
WEST MILTON STREET
SOUTH 2ND STREET
ROMA STREET
NEWTON STREET
WEST ANNIE STREET
WEST MARY STREET
WEST JOHANNA STREET
CROCKETT STREET
WEST LIVE OAK STREET
EVA STREET
FLETCHER STREET
WILSON STREET
FOREST AVENUE
EUCLID AVENUE
LINDELL AVENUE
WEST OLTORF STREET
POST ROAD
LELAND STREET
EAST LIVE OAK STREET
BROOKLYN STREET
TERRACE DRIVE
LOCKHART DRIVE
EAST MARY STREET
EAST ANNIE STREET
BRACKENRIDGE STREET
DRAKE AVENUE
EAST MONROE STREET
EAST SIDE DRIVE
SUNSET LANE
ALAMEDA DRIVE
ALTA VISTA AVENUE
FAIRMOUNT AVENUE
ROSEDALE TERRACE
ALGARITA AVENUE
MARIPOSA DRIVE
MUSIC LANE
MELISSA LANE
ACADEMY DRIVE
THE CIRCLE
EAST RIVERSIDE DRIVE
SUNNY LANE
NEWNING AVENUE
BICKLER ROAD

What is the Fact Book?

The Fact Book is a **summary of the comprehensive data collection and analysis from Phase I**. It provides a shared understanding of the key issues and opportunities and offers a foundation for a collaborative and action-oriented set of recommendations in Phase II. The Fact Book includes:

- **Summary of the SoCo corridor (Chapter 2),** including planning boundaries and foundational plans and studies.
- **Summary of corridor transportation (Chapter 3),** including current mobility services, policies, and programs.
- **Detailed documentation of corridor parking (Chapter 4),** including inventory, demand, length of stay, turnover, and existing parking policies, programs, and management practices.
- **Highlights from stakeholder engagement (Chapter 5),** including stakeholder interviews and an intercept survey.
- **Summary of key findings and next steps for Phase II (Chapter 6).**

Strategy Timeline: Phase I

Project Kickoff | *March 2019*

Stakeholder interviews, site visit and tour, and review of past plans and studies to understand issues and opportunities.

Collect Data | *April - May 2019*

Collect inventory and occupancy data for on- and off-street parking spaces. Survey residents, workers, and visitors about how they travel to, from, and within the neighborhood.

Study the Results | *June-July 2019*

Analyze the collected data, survey results, and stakeholder input to build a complete picture of parking challenges and opportunities in SoCo.

Share our Findings | *July - August 2019*

Compile the results of the data collection and create a Fact Book and Data Dashboard to share our findings with the community.

Who is involved in the parking study?

The City of Austin contracted with the **Downtown Alliance** to accelerate the project by expanding the scope of their existing contract with Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates. The Downtown Alliance will also coordinate with projects across the corridor and within downtown, recognizing that interconnectivity between SoCo and the rest of the city is critical for enhancing citywide mobility.

The parking strategy is guided by a **Project Management Team**, made up of key stakeholders from departments within the City of Austin, the South Congress Public Improvement District (PID), South Congress Merchants Association, and Capital Metro.

Strategy Timeline: Phase II

Public Outreach | *Sept. 2019 - Feb. 2020*

Continue to meet with members of the community to present information, refine strategies, and share our progress as we develop parking recommendations for SoCo.

Strategy Development | *Sept. - Oct. 2019*

Guided by data, community input, and best practices research, develop and refine potential policies and strategies to address parking needs and challenges in SoCo.

Final Strategy and Plan | *Nov. 2019 - Feb. 2020*

Craft a comprehensive parking strategy and implementation plan for SoCo and present it to the community and the City of Austin.

[2]

Planning Context

South Congress (SoCo) is a vibrant and complex district where many neighborhoods, histories, and planning efforts intersect and overlap. SoCo is home to a variety of groups, organizations, and stakeholders who share common goals and face similar challenges. This chapter summarizes these groups, organizations, plans, and studies to document past and ongoing work. An understanding of the planning context will inform recommendations made during Phase II of this project.

SoCo Groups and Organizations

Several groups and organizations are currently active in the area (Figure 2). These groups are working to improve the area and address a variety of neighborhood issues, including parking and transportation. Some groups share overlapping boundaries, objectives, and members.

South Congress Public Improvement District (PID)

The South Congress PID, also known as the South Congress Improvement Association (SCIA), covers 22 acres along South Congress Avenue. Each year, property owners within the PID boundary pay an additional $0.20 per $100 of assessed value to fund

a variety of neighborhood initiatives. Recent PID efforts have focused on public safety, infrastructure improvements, marketing opportunities, and local economic development.

South Congress Merchants Association (SCMA)

The SCMA is comprised of local business owners working to support and promote the needs and interests of South Congress-area businesses. SCMA members include businesses within the defined service area (Figure 2) as well as some businesses located outside of this boundary but within the vicinity of the core SoCo corridor. Recent efforts of the SCMA have focused on public art, historic preservation, employee retention, and marketing.

South River City Citizens Neighborhood Association (SRCC)

The SRCC is a membership-based neighborhood group which promotes neighborhood interests on a variety of topics, including public education, parks, zoning, transportation, and public safety. The neighborhood association boundary includes areas along and to the east of South Congress Avenue.

Bouldin Creek Neighborhood Association (BCNA)

The BCNA is a membership-based neighborhood group which promotes neighborhood interests on a variety of topics, including public education, parks, zoning, transportation, and public safety. The neighborhood association boundary includes areas along and to the west of South Congress Avenue.

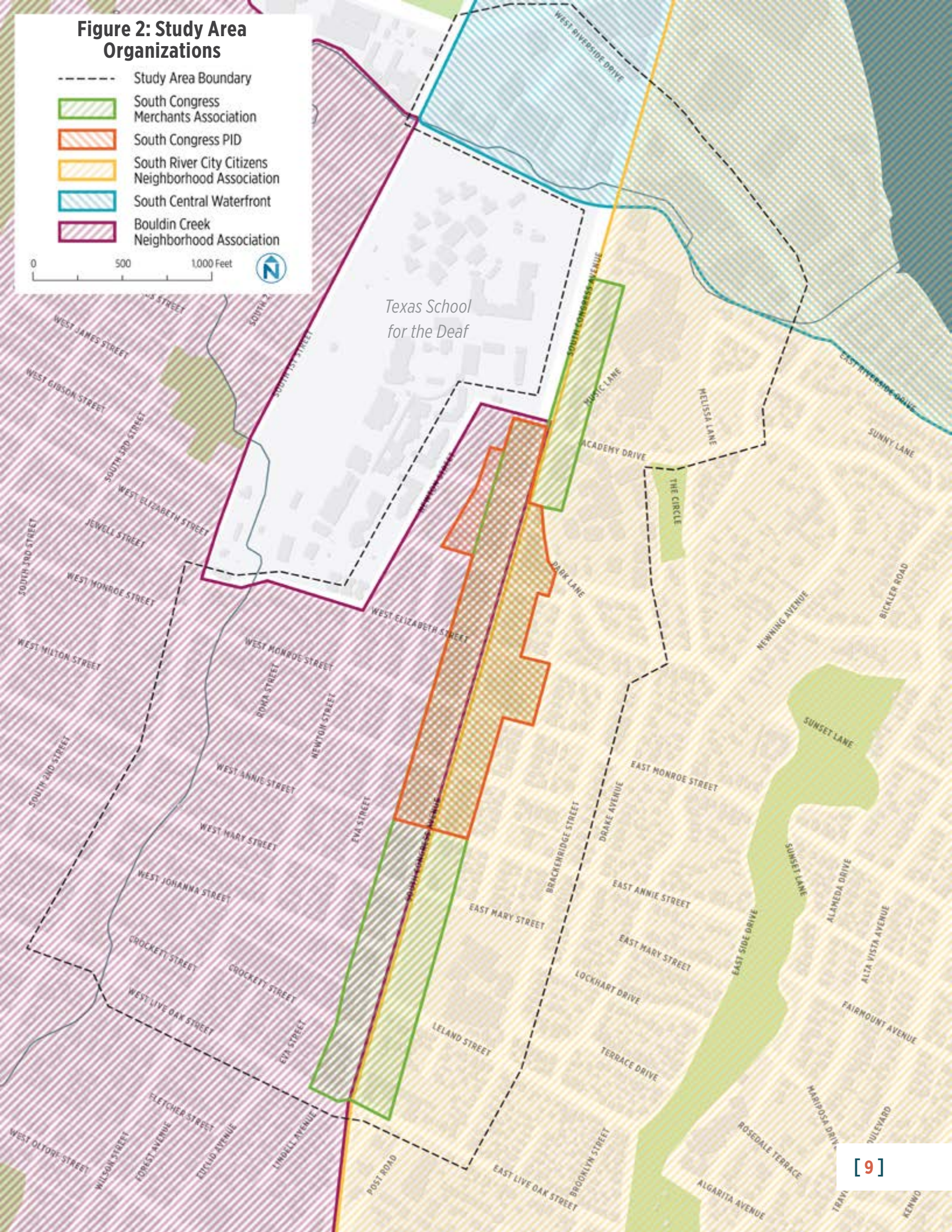
Figure 2: Study Area Organizations
Study Area Boundary
South Congress Merchants Association
South Congress PID
South River City Citizens Neighborhood Association
South Central Waterfront
Bouldin Creek Neighborhood Association
0
500
1,000 Feet
Texas School for the Deaf
WEST RIVERSIDE DRIVE
SOUTH CONGRESS AVENUE
MUSIC LANE
MELISSA LANE
ACADEMY DRIVE
EAST RIVERSIDE DRIVE
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FLETCHER STREET
WEST OLTORF STREET
WILSON STREET
FOREST AVENUE
EUCLID AVENUE
LINDELL AVENUE

Plans and Studies

Several recent and ongoing planning efforts in Austin include guidelines, recommendations, or studies that impact the transportation, parking, and mobility landscape in the South Congress area. These plans and studies share some overlapping themes and focus areas, including:

- Reducing vehicle trips and improving walking, biking, and transit options.
- Using a comprehensive, coordinated planning approach that prioritizes mobility improvements alongside other neighborhood development goals.
- Rethinking how people travel to and from the South Congress area from other neighborhoods, as well as how they get around while there.

Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP)

The ASMP[1] is a planning effort led by the City of Austin that defines a framework for achieving city-wide transportation goals. Most importantly, the ASMP establishes a mode share target for the city that aims to reduce drive-alone commuting from 74% to 50% by the year 2039.

This mode share target will play an important role in guiding project prioritization and coordination between Austin Transportation Department (ATD) and other agencies and organizations on mobility-related efforts. The development and finalization of the ASMP has been coordinated in parallel with Project Connect, Capital Metro's high-capacity transit plan.

As summarized in Figure 3, the ASMP outlines a variety of policy goals and priorities relating to parking, curb management, and transportation demand management (TDM) programs, as well as indicators for tracking progress towards city-wide mobility goals. Many of these policies emphasize the importance of district-level mobility planning and coordination, especially in relation to on- and off-street parking management.

1 www.austintexas.gov/asmp

Figure 3: Selected ASMP Policy Recommendations

Topic	Policy	Summary
Parking	Indicators and Targets	• Increase the availability of managed on-street parking • Increase real-time information on space location and availability • Decrease the amount of parking spaces per capita • Increase the availability, distribution, and percentage of parking in Imagine Austin activity centers and along activity corridors that is accessible • Increase the percentage of developments that reduce parking
Parking	Policy 1	Efficiently use existing parking supply
Parking	Policy 2	Right-size future parking supply to encourage sustainable trip options
Parking	Policy 3	Coordinate on-street parking with curb management strategies for flexibility and adaptability with future parking and mobility technology
Curb Management	Indicators and Targets	• Reduce the number of conflicts between parking and bicycle lanes • Reduce congestion on streets that incorporate curb management strategies • Increase the productivity of curb space to serve more people per hour • Reduce the number of crashes associated with conflicts at or along the curb on streets that incorporate curb management strategies
Curb Management	Policy 1	Use context to determine mobility and non-mobility curb uses
Curb Management	Policy 2	Manage curb space dynamically
Curb Management	Policy 3	Streamline objects at the curb to improve safety and mobility
TDM	Indicators and Targets	• Increase the understanding of transportation options (aside from a personal vehicle) and satisfaction of users to get around Austin (ride share, bus/train, bike, walk, etc.), reported by socioeconomic demographic measures • Reduce vehicle miles traveled per capita • Increase the share of Austin residents who carpool to work • Increase the number of people reached by TDM programming
TDM	Policy 1	Implement community-wide strategies to increase use of all transportation options and manage congestion
Shared Mobility	Indicators and Targets	• Increase the usage of shared mobility solutions • Increase the share of shared mobility trips that originate or end in areas that are historically underrepresented and underserved • Increase the density of shared mobility vehicles • Increase the capacity of park-and-rides
Shared Mobility	Policy 1	Emphasize and incentivize shared mobility solutions
Shared Mobility	Policy 3	Support the creation of Mobility Hubs

Project Connect

Project Connect[2] is Capital Metro's long-term system plan which aims to implement high-capacity transit service in Austin. Since 2014 Capital Metro has comprehensively studied the feasibility of high-capacity transit on major travel corridors throughout the city. After completing the first phase of study and corridor screening, the agency identified two high-priority corridors to move forward into preliminary engineering and environmental study: the Orange Line and the Blue Line.

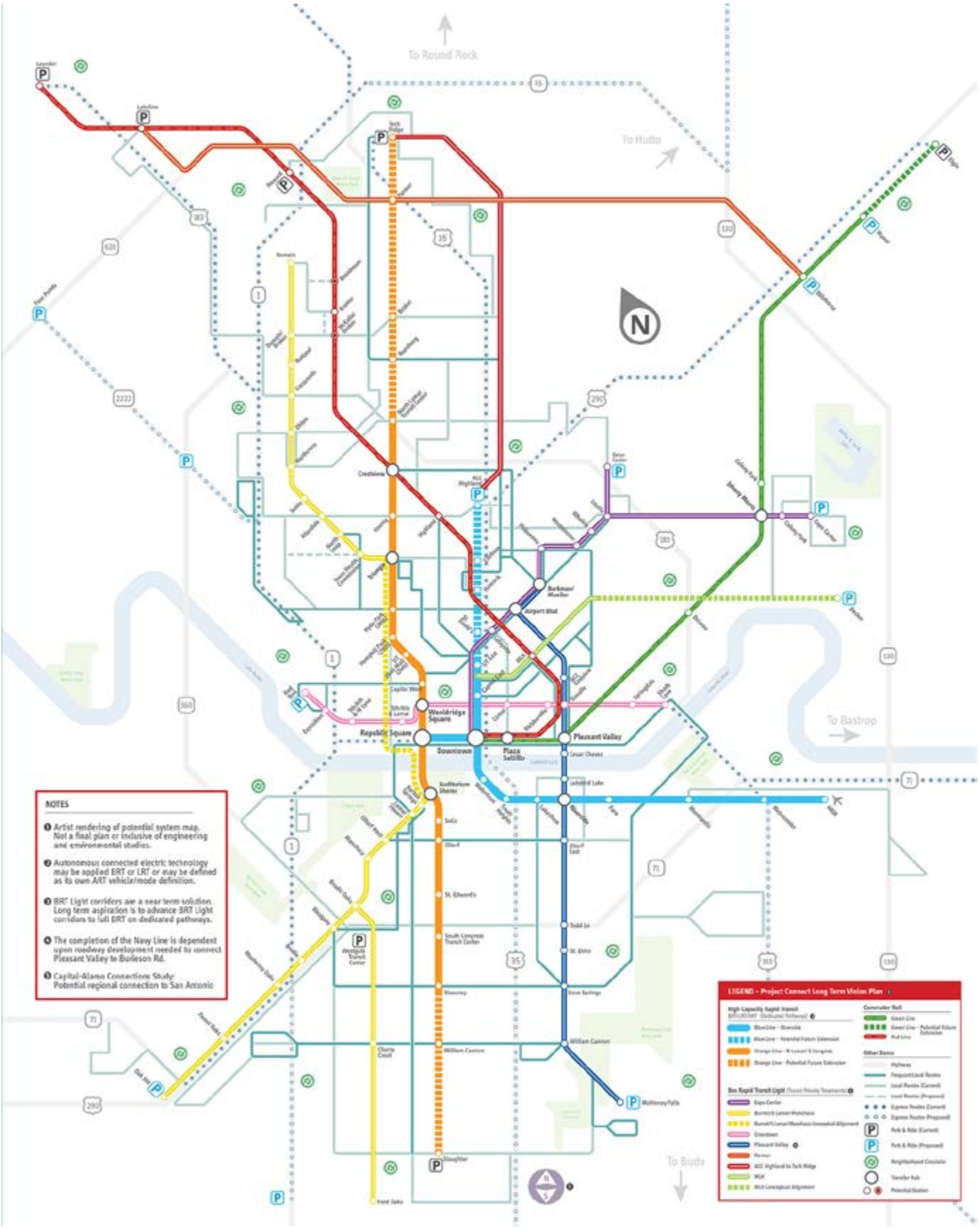
The Orange Line extends from Tech Ridge to the north to Slaughter Lane in the south and includes South Congress Avenue. The Blue Line extends from ABIA airport to downtown along East Riverside drive and could include a station in the South Central Waterfront area. These two projects would make it easier for SoCo residents, visitors, and workers to travel to and from the neighborhood without using a personal vehicle.

In particular, the Orange Line would provide faster, more frequent transit access from SoCo to downtown Austin, UT, and other neighborhoods to the north. Regardless of technology choice or transitway design, the Orange Line project would likely require the reconstruction of South Congress Avenue, including sidewalks, bike lanes, and general-purpose lanes. A park-and-ride facility, which could potentially be located along the Orange Line in the SoCo area, would allow travelers to park their cars and transfer to transit service.

Over the course of 2019, Capital Metro will continue meeting with community members and stakeholder groups in neighborhoods along the Orange Line and the Blue Line to refine details of the plan including station area designs, transitway design, and mode. In late 2019 and early 2020, Capital Metro will adopt the final plan for these projects in anticipation of putting a funding referendum before voters in November 2020.

2 www.capmetro.org/projectconnect/

Figure 4: Project Connect Vision Plan



South Congress Avenue Corridor Mobility Plan

The South Congress Avenue Corridor Mobility Plan was initiated as part of the City of Austin's Corridor Mobility Program using funds from the 2016 Mobility Bond. The purpose of the plan is to evaluate recommendations that will enhance mobility, connectivity and safety for all users—including people who drive, walk, bike, and take transit. Though preliminary work began on the plan in late 2018, this effort has been put on hold pending the finalization and adoption of Project Connect's recommendations for South Congress Avenue.

Smart Trips Austin

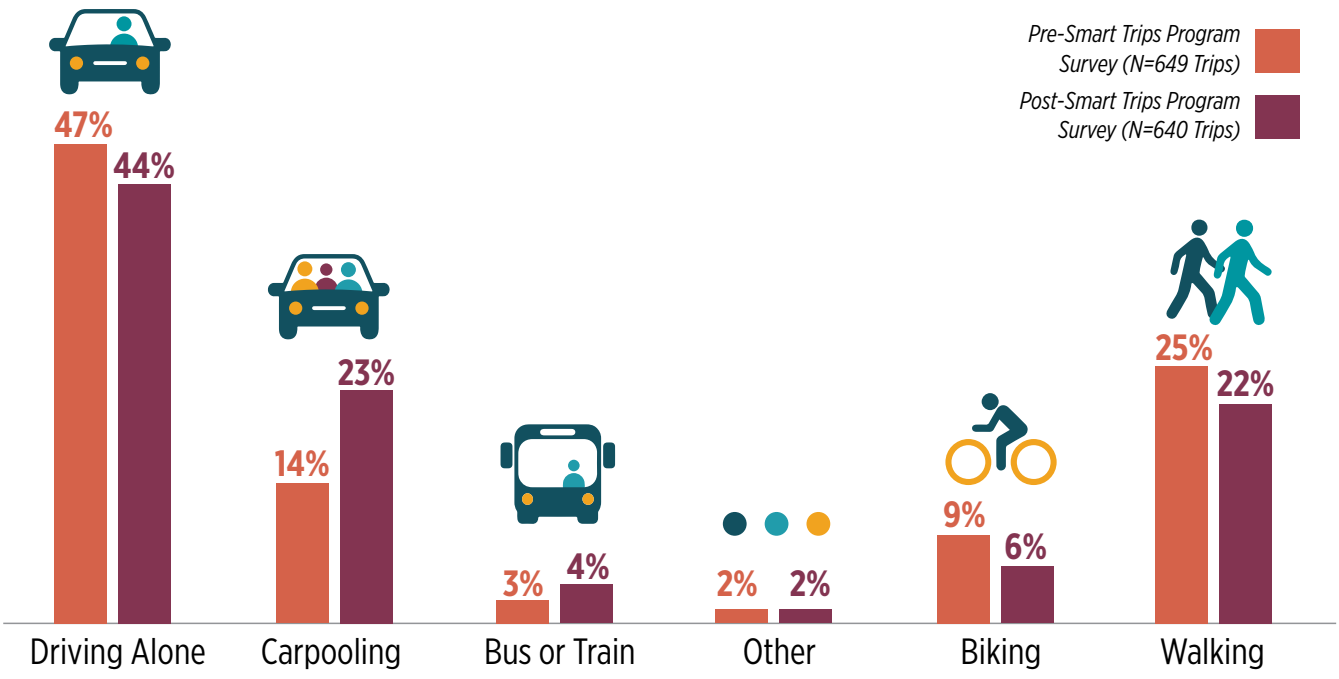
Smart Trips Austin is a TDM program operated in partnership between the City of Austin and Capital Metro. The program aims to provide information, gather data, and facilitate events to promote active and sustainable travel options and reduce drive-alone travel.

The Smart Trips Austin program focused on South Central Austin in 2017.

The geographic area of Smart Trips Austin changes each year—in 2017, the program focused on South Central Austin, which including the South Congress area. Over the course of four months, program ambassadors distributed transportation toolkits containing maps and free transit and bikeshare passes, collected commute information, and spoke at local events and meetings to learn about mobility challenges facing the neighborhood and to encourage multimodal travel. Stakeholders interviewed as part of the program expressed a need for better parking signage, management, and planning to address safety concerns and alleviate pressure from on-street parking supplies in residential areas.

A follow-up program survey found that one in three respondents increased their use of transportation options because of Smart Trips (Figure 5). Both the pre- and post-program surveys collected information about neighborhood mode share, which indicated a much lower drive-alone rate (44% – 47%) than the city-wide mode share published by the City of Austin (74%).

Figure 5: Smart Trips Central South Austin Mode Share Survey Results



Note: Inclimate weather likely impacted biking and walking rates in post-program survey results.

South Central Waterfront Initiative

The South Central Waterfront (SCWF) initiative will develop a planning framework to guide redevelopment in the South Central Waterfront Area, just south of Lady Bird Lake along Congress Avenue and East Riverside Drive. In 2016, the SCWF initiative released the South Central Waterfront Vision Framework Plan, which outlines circulation, transportation, open space, sustainability, and urban design priorities.

An initial market assessment conducted in support of the vision framework plan estimated a need for the construction of up to 9,722 new parking spaces to meet future development needs in the South Central Waterfront. As part of the discussion on funding and implementation, the market assessment recommends public-private parking partnerships to fund parking facilities in the area. Benefits of city participation in these partnerships cited by the study include:

- Enabling shared parking partnerships and reducing single-use parking needs
- Generating revenues for the city from priced parking
- Enabling developers to invest more in non-parking uses that provide housing and jobs

South Congress District Economic Strategy

The South Congress District Economic Strategy was published in January 2018 by the Austin Economic Development Department through the Souly Austin Program in collaboration with the SCMA. The plan identifies policy goals and district priorities that would support businesses in the South Congress area. Recommendations include placemaking improvements, funding strategies, partnership opportunities, and marketing concepts.


MOTEL
SO CLOSE
YET
PUBLIC
PARKING

Zoning and Development in SoCo

Zoning and Land Use

The study area and base zoning districts are shown in Figure 7. Areas along South Congress Avenue, South 1st Street, and Riverside Drive are primarily zoned for a variety of commercial uses, while neighborhoods to the east and west of South Congress Avenue are zoned for single-family and multi-family residential uses.

Several zoning overlays further restrict or enable uses within the study area, including the Neighborhood Conservation Combining District (NCCD) in the Fairview Park area and the Vertical Mixed-Use Building Combining District (V). The Neighborhood Plan Combining District (NP) designation, which allows neighborhoods to add special use options and apply additional design standards through the adoption of neighborhood plans, applies to all zoned areas within the study area. The Texas School for the Deaf, which is a state-owned property, does not have a local zoning designation.

Figure 6: City of Austin Parking Requirements

Use/Activity	Minimum Parking Requirement
Residential	
Single-family residential	2 spaces per unit
Accessory apartment Condominium residential Multifamily residential	First bedroom: 1 space Each additional bedroom: 0.5 space
Commercial Uses	Schedule A Requirements
<2,500 sq. ft.	1 space for each 275 sq. ft.
2,500—10,000 sq. ft.	1 space for each 100 sq. ft.
>10,000 sq. ft.	1 space for each 50 sq. ft.
Office or administrative activity	1 space for each 275 sq. ft.
Indoor sales, service, or display	1 space for each 500 sq. ft.
Outdoor sales, services, or display	1 space for each 750 sq. ft.
Indoor storage, warehousing, equipment servicing, or manufacturing	1 space for each 1,000 sq. ft.
Outdoor storage, equipment servicing, or manufacturing	1 space for each 2,000 sq. ft.

The SoCo study area is within the Reduced Parking Area established in Section 25-6-478 of Austin's Land Development Code. This provision sets the minimum parking requirements within the area at 80% of the base pakring requirements prescribed in the Land Development Code.

NCCD, V, and NP combining districts do not have specific implications for parking beyond the modification of permitted uses.

Figure 7: Study Area Zoning

Ongoing or Proposed Projects

Numerous developments and construction projects are planned or underway along South Congress Avenue. These new developments include a mix of hotels, office, retail, and residential projects, many of which will be partially or fully completed in the next two years. Additionally, the South Central Waterfront area is expected to undergo major redevelopment as implementation of the South Central Waterfront Initiative progresses and several major mixed-use projects break ground in the next five years.

Many of these projects include new parking spaces in either underground, street-level, or above-ground parking facilities (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Recent and Planned Developments

Project Name	Description	Proposed Size	Estimated† On-site Parking
Austin-American Statesman	Large mixed-use development on a 19-acre site adjacent to Lady Bird Lake on the east side of Congress Avenue	3.5million sq. ft.	~4,000 spaces
RiverSouth	Office and retail development at Barton Springs Road and West Riverside Drive	318,000 sq. ft.	843 spaces
Hotel Magdalena	Hotel and residential development under construction at 110 Academy drive (expected completion Fall 2019)	70,000 sq. ft.	N/A
Music Lane	Office, retail, and hotel development at the corner of Academy Drive and South Congress Avenue	163,000 sq. ft.	500 spaces
Saint Vincent	Office and retail development (under construction as of July 2019)	20,000 sq. ft.	30 spaces
State House	Office, retail, and dining development at 1221 Congress Avenue	100,000 sq. ft.	N/A
Kimber Modern SoCo	Hotel with retail, dining, and entertainment space	34 hotel rooms	68 spaces
H-E-B Grocery Store	Large supermarket with indoor/outdoor food hall and beer garden	100,000 sq. ft.	2 levels underground

†Parking estimates are based on publicly-available or reported development information.


Figure 9: SoCo Developments
Study Area Boundary
Future Developent (Planned or Under Construction)
Parks or Open Space
Bodies of Water
0
500
1,000 Feet
RiverSouth
843 Spaces
Austin-American Statesman
4,000 Spaces
Music Lane
500 Spaces
Hotel Magdalena
State House
Saint Vincent
30 Parking Spaces
Kimber Modern SoCo
68 Parking Spaces
H-E-B Grocery Store
WEST RIVERSIDE DRIVE
EAST RIVERSIDE DRIVE
SOUTH CONGRESS AVENUE
SOUTH 1ST STREET
WEST JAMES STREET
WEST GIBSON STREET
SOUTH 3RD STREET
WEST ELIZABETH STREET
JEWELL STREET
WEST MONROE STREET
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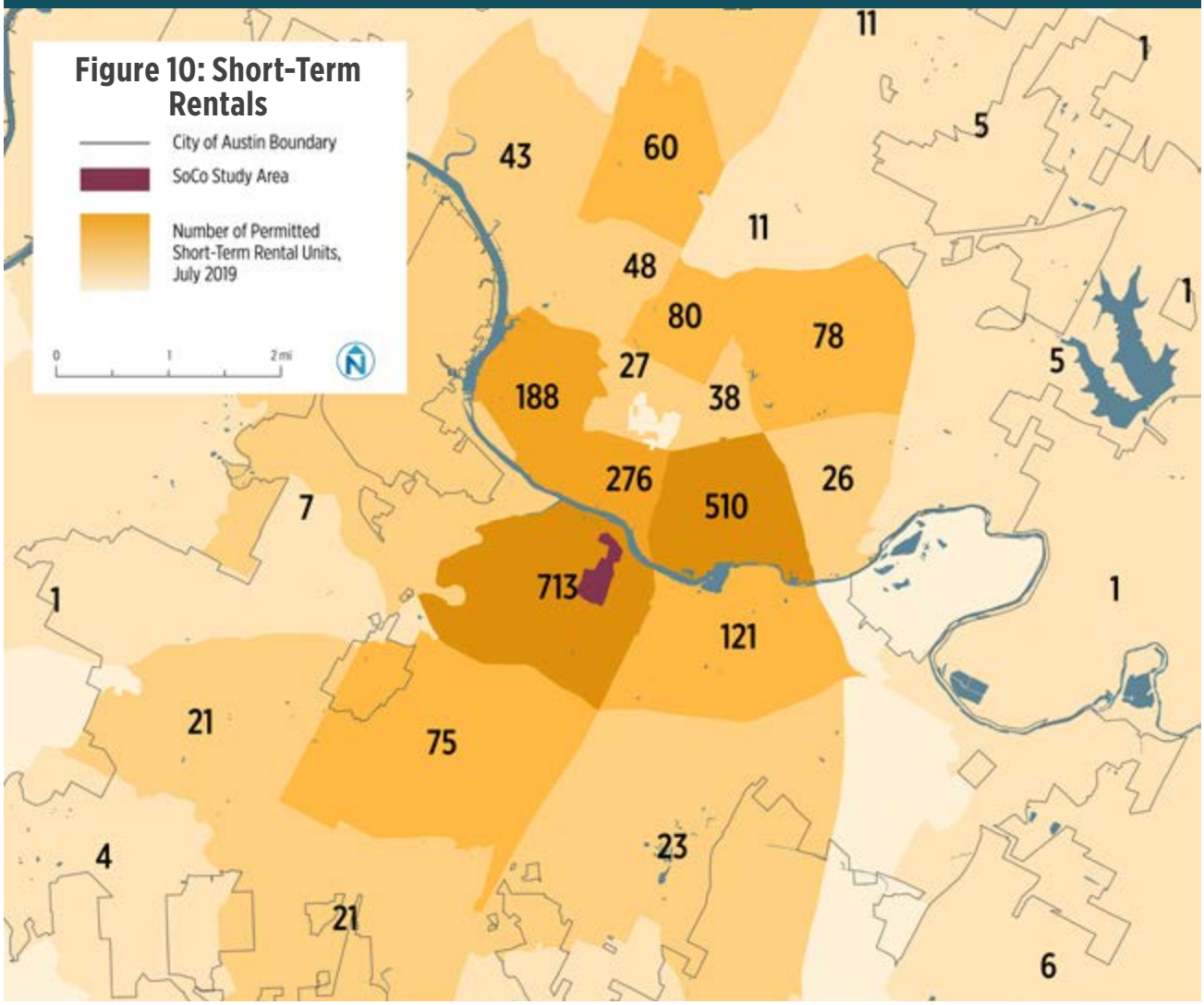
FAIRMOUNT AVENUE
LELAND STREET
TERRACE DRIVE
EAST LIVE OAK STREET
BROOKLYN STREET
ROSEDALE TERRACE
ALGARITA AVENUE
MARIPOSA DRIVE
TRAVIS HEIGHTS BOULEVARD
KENWOOD AVENUE

SoCo and Short-Term Rentals

Short-Term Rentals (STRs) are either owner-occupied or non-owner-occupied units that are rented out to guests and are often found using websites, such as Airbnb, HomeAway, or Vrbo. The City of Austin requires STRs to apply for an annual license to operate—as of July 2019, the Code Department had registered over 2,500 STRs across Austin. Over 700, or 28% of all licensed STRs, are located in the neighborhoods of SoCo, Travis Heights, Bouldin, South Lamar, and Barton Hills (zip code 78704). Many of these STRs are categorized as Type-II rentals, which are non-owner-occupied rental properties.

STRs present several potential challenges for neighborhood parking. Not all short-term rental properties offer off-street parking, prompting guests to compete for parking on neighborhood streets. In areas with residential parking permits (RPP), guests may use a guest pass provided by the rental owner, which some stakeholders believe to be a misuse of the permit system. Other guests may fail to notice or adhere to RPP regulations. Stakeholder discussions and conversations with residents suggested that there was a general perception that STR guests were more likely to litter, make noise, and block driveways than other neighborhood residents.




RESERVED
FOR
GUESTS


20
Perla's


PLEASE
Save a parking space for residents
We really appreciate it!

Planning Context: Top Five Takeaways

1. **SoCo sits at the intersection of numerous organizations, neighborhood groups, and business districts.** Parking strategies will need to balance the needs of all of these groups, including both shared goals and differing perspectives.

2. **City-wide plans and policies reflect similar goals and challenges as those experienced in SoCo.** The recently-completed ASMP provides a range of parking policy recommendations that could provide some direction for developing strategies for SoCo.

3. **Transit service in SoCo is limited to bus service today, but future improvements could greatly increase transit access to and from the neighborhood.** Capital Metro is in the process of planning major high-capacity transit investments on South Congress Avenue and East Riverside Drive, which would provide fast and frequent connections to downtown, UT, and the airport.

4. **New and planned developments are changing the mobility landscape in SoCo.** These developments will increase both the parking supply and travel demand in SoCo. Parking recommendations should be crafted with these ongoing and upcoming neighborhood changes in mind.

5. **SoCo attracts many visitors, who present unique issues and opportunities for parking and mobility.** On one hand, visitors staying in short-term rental units may be unfamiliar with local mobility options or parking regulations. On the other hand, visitors to the shopping, dining, and entertainment destinations in SoCo may be eager to minimize driving and parking within the neighborhood.


boutique
MOTEL
SO CLOSE
YET
PUBLIC
PARKING

[3]

Corridor Mobility and Access

South Congress Avenue and the greater SoCo neighborhood are well-served by a diverse transportation system. On any given day, the area is bustling with cars, buses, pedestrians, bikes, scooters, and ride-hail services as residents, workers, and visitors traverse the corridor.

These mobility options help support the vibrant mix of neighborhood activities, while also having an immediate and long-term impact on how parking should be supplied and managed. This chapter provides an overview of how each of these modes is used in SoCo today, and how they are expected to change based on ongoing planning efforts.

Transit

The Capital Metro bus network is primarily a hub-and-spoke system—most routes connect to and through downtown Austin, with only a handful of cross-town routes. Recent updates to the network made as part of CapRemap[1] focused on streamlining

1 https://capmetro.org/remap/

route alignments and increasing service frequency along the highest ridership corridors. Project Connect, Capital Metro's long-term planning effort, has studied many of these corridors to evaluate the potential for implementing high capacity transit. Project Connect is discussed in Chapter 2.

Today, bus service is the only transit option available in the South Congress neighborhood. Several Capital Metro bus routes running along South Congress Avenue connect the neighborhood to downtown Austin. Additionally, several routes that serve East Riverside Drive and South 1st Street are within walking distance of SoCo.

Project Connect

Project Connect, Capital Metro's ongoing high-capacity system planning effort, includes two high-priority corridors in the South Congress area on South Congress Avenue (the Orange Line) and East Riverside Drive (the Blue Line). If implemented, these projects will greatly increase the level of transit service in SoCo, though impacts to existing transit service are not yet known.

All-Day Bus Routes

Capital Metro operates five all-day bus routes in the SoCo area. These routes provide direct transit connections between SoCo and major destinations around Austin including downtown, UT, and Austin-Bergstrom International Airport. Route 801, which runs on South Congress Avenue, has the highest average daily ridership among all CapMetro routes. The five all-day routes in the SoCo area rank among the top seven routes citywide by total annual riders. Capital Metro bus service in the SoCo area is summarized in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Bus Routes in the SoCo Area

Route	Service	Alignment	Frequency (Minutes)		Span	Total Riders, FY 2019
			Peak	Off-Peak		
801	MetroRapid	Southpark Meadows to Tech Ridge via South Congress Avenue, Guadalupe/Lavaca Streets, and North Lamar Boulevard	10	5-20	5:00AM – 12:30AM	2,142,000
10	MetroBus	Southpark Meadows to Heritage Hills via South 1st Street, Trinity Street, Red River Street, and Berkman Drive	15	20-30	5:00AM – 11:30PM	1,440,000
7	MetroBus	Crestview to William Cannon Drive via Duval Street, Trinity Street, East Riverside Drive, and Parker Lane	15	20-30	4:30AM – 11:30PM	1,412,000
20	MetroBus	ABIA to Delco Center via East Riverside Drive, Guadalupe/Lavaca Streets, and Manor Road	15	20-30	5:00AM – 11:30PM	1,284,000
1	MetroBus	William Cannon Drive to Tech Ridge via South Congress Avenue, Guadalupe/Lavaca Streets, and North Lamar Boulevard	30	30	4:30AM – 11:15PM	749,000
935	MetroExpress	Tech Ridge to Travis Heights via I-35, downtown Austin, and Riverside Drive	15-30	--	AM and PM Peaks	185,000
987	MetroExpress	Leander Station to Travis Heights via Route 183, Route 45, MoPac, and downtown Austin	15-30	--	AM and PM Peaks	52,000
142	Flyer	North Burnet to Riverside Drive via Metric Boulevard, Rundberg Lane, and I-35	30	--	AM and PM Peaks	22,000
483	Night Owl	Oltorf to downtown Austin via Burton Drive, Riverside Drive, and South Congress Avenue	--	35	12:30AM – 3:30AM	22,000
486	Night Owl	William Cannon to downtown Austin via Stassney Lane and South Congress Avenue	--	30	12:30AM – 3:30AM	18,000

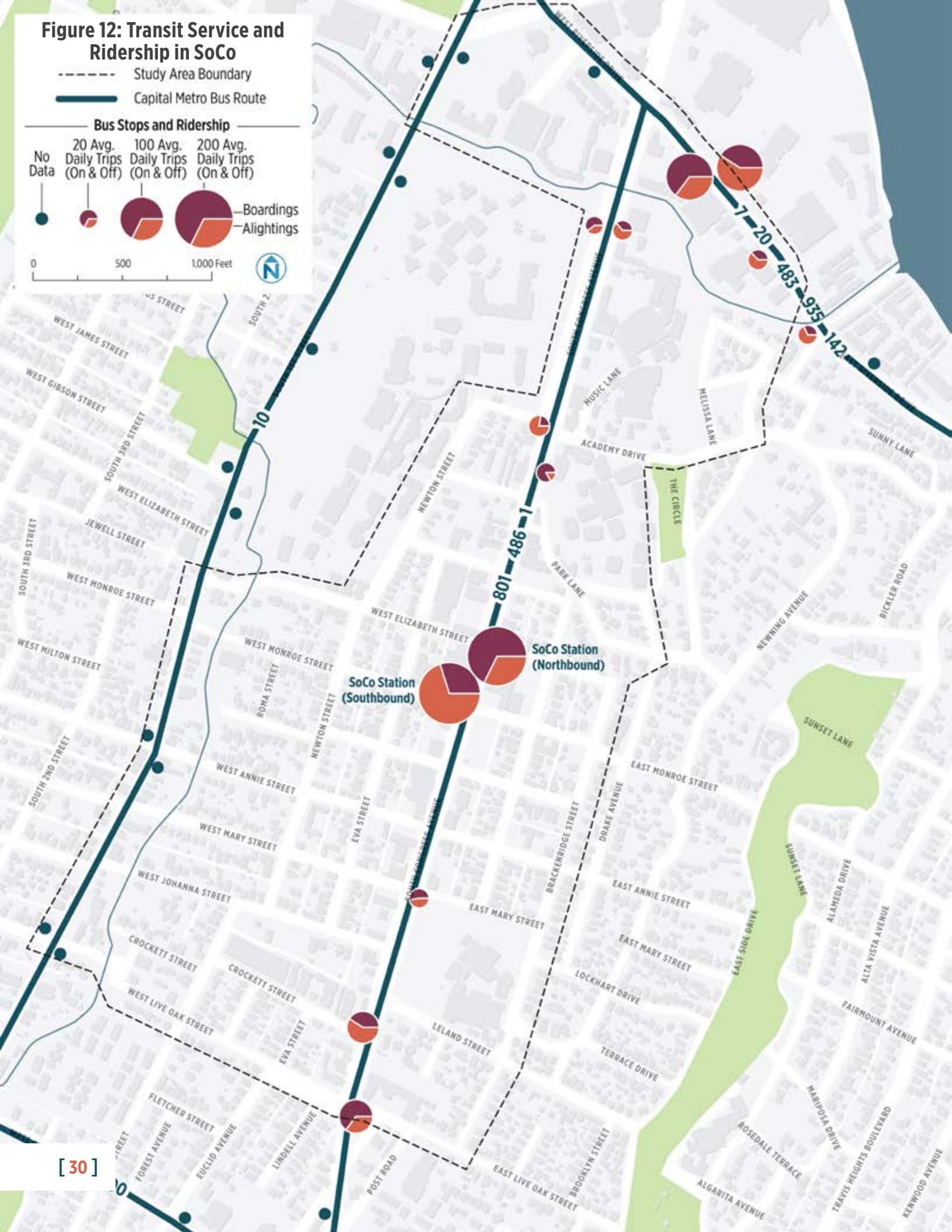


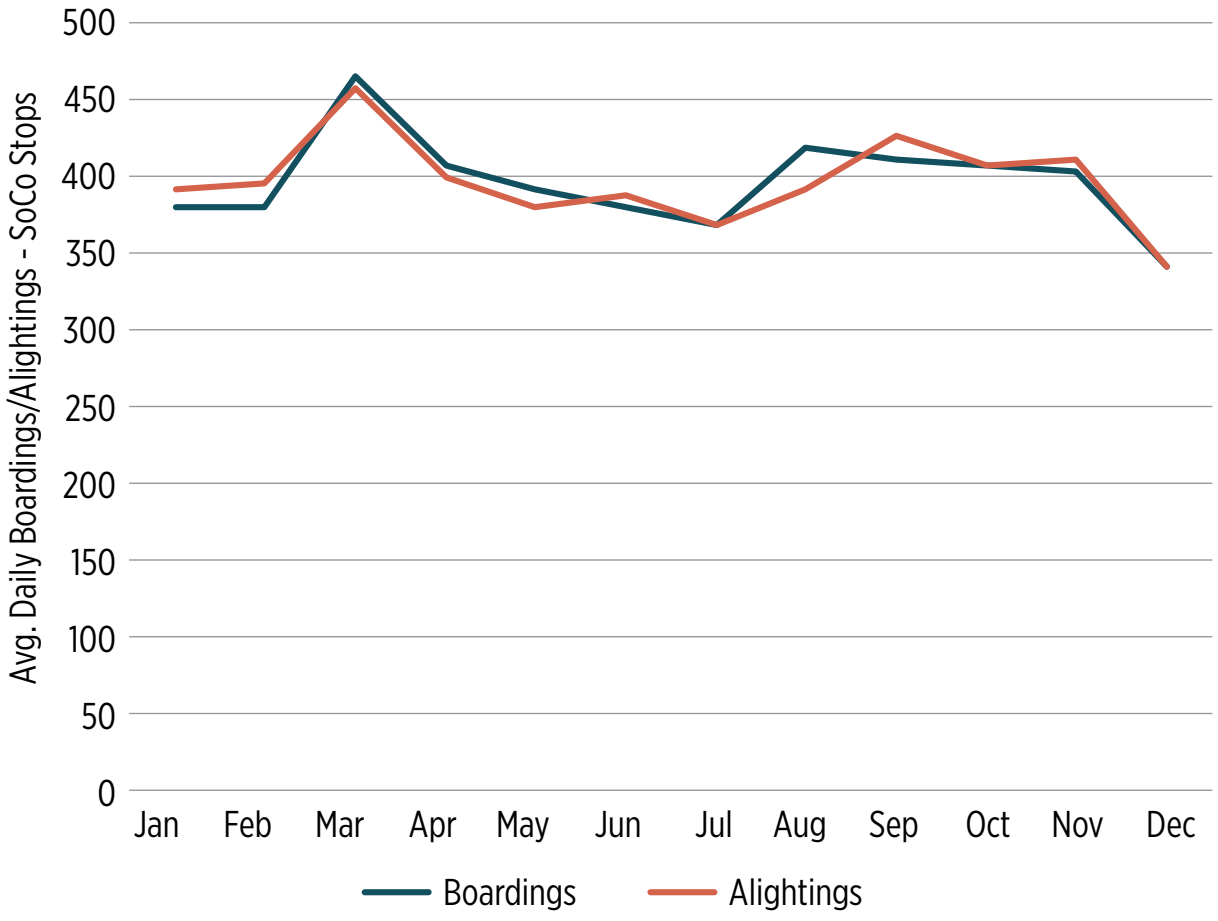
Figure 12: Transit Service and Ridership in SoCo
Study Area Boundary
Capital Metro Bus Route
Bus Stops and Ridership
No Data
20 Avg. Daily Trips (On & Off)
100 Avg. Daily Trips (On & Off)
200 Avg. Daily Trips (On & Off)
Boardings
Alightings
0
500
1,000 Feet
SoCo Station (Northbound)
SoCo Station (Southbound)
10
801
486
1
7
20
483
935
142
WEST JAMES STREET
WEST GIBSON STREET
SOUTH 3RD STREET
WEST ELIZABETH STREET
JEWELL STREET
WEST MONROE STREET
WEST MILTON STREET
SOUTH 2ND STREET
WEST ANNIE STREET
WEST MARY STREET
WEST JOHANNA STREET
CROCKETT STREET
WEST LIVE OAK STREET
FLETCHER STREET
FOREST AVENUE
EUCLID AVENUE
LINDELL AVENUE
POST ROAD
EAST LIVE OAK STREET
BROOKLYN STREET
ROMA STREET
NEWTON STREET
EVA STREET
LELAND STREET
BRACKENRIDGE STREET
DRAKE AVENUE
EAST MONROE STREET
EAST ANNIE STREET
EAST MARY STREET
LOCKHART DRIVE
TERRACE DRIVE
EAST SIDE DRIVE
SUNSET LANE
ALAMEDA DRIVE
ALTA VISTA AVENUE
FAIRMOUNT AVENUE
MARIPOSA DRIVE
ROSEDALE TERRACE
ALGARITA AVENUE
TRAVIS HEIGHTS BOULEVARD
KENWOOD AVENUE
MUSIC LANE
MELISSA LANE
ACADEMY DRIVE
THE CIRCLE
PARK LANE
NEWNING AVENUE
BICKLER ROAD
SUNNY LANE

Transit Ridership in SoCo

The busiest transit stop in SoCo is SoCo station, where over half of the daily riders in the district utilize Route 801. Route 801 provides the fastest and most frequent transit option for connecting to key destinations in downtown and around the UT campus—the vast majority of people who ride route 801 to or from SoCo station depart in the northbound direction in the morning and arrive in the southbound direction in the afternoon (Figure 12).

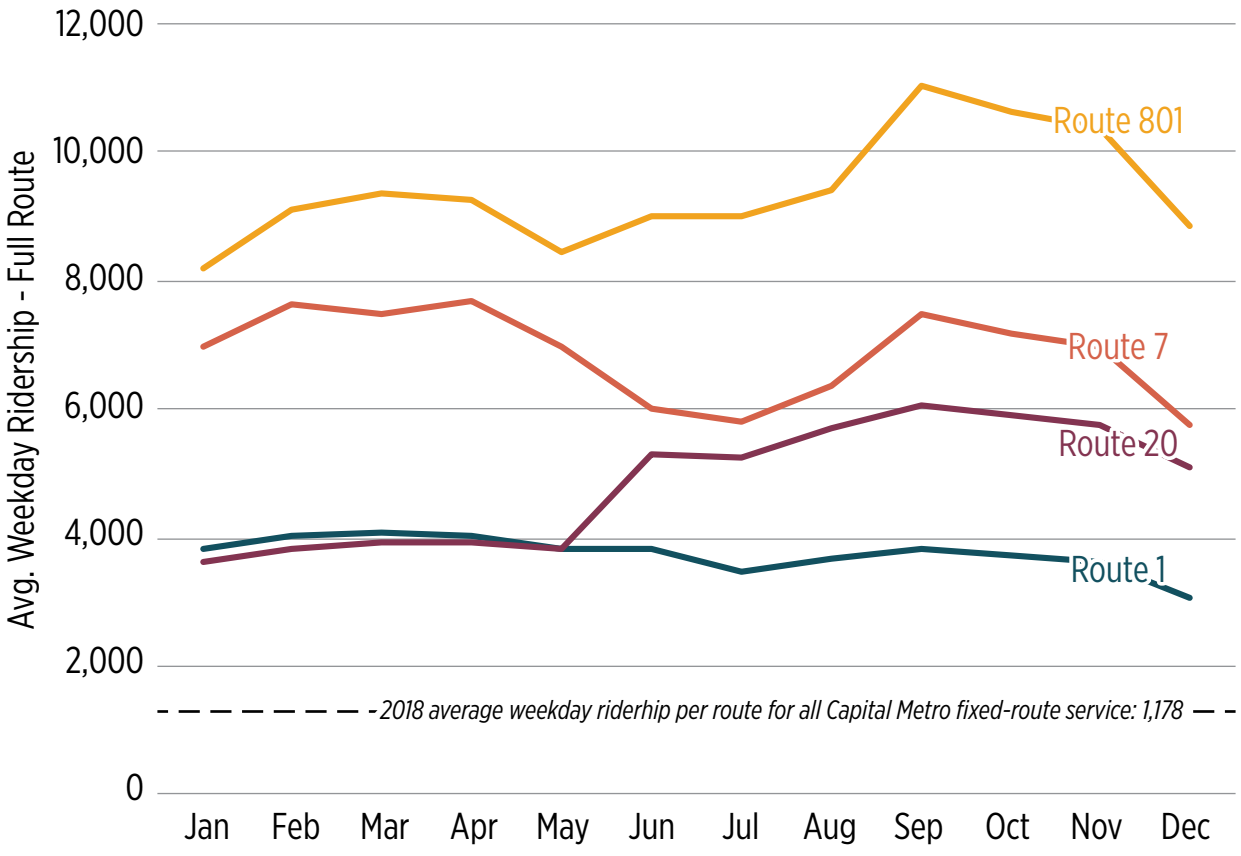
The second highest-activity stop in the study area, located on East Riverside Drive just east of South Congress Avenue, shows the opposite directional trend—most of the boardings are in the outbound direction and arrivals in the inbound direction. The data suggest that many visitors and employees are arriving from residential areas to the east and walking to SoCo and nearby destinations.

Figure 13: Average Daily Transit Ridership in SoCo Area, All SoCo Routes (2018)



In 2018, transit ridership in the SoCo study area did not vary much by season, despite a major bus network redesign that was implemented in June (Figure 13). Among the four all-day bus routes that pass through the study area, Route 20—which began offering more frequent service and using a new alignment with a connection to the airport—saw the greatest sustained route-wide increase in ridership in the months following this service change (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Average Weekday Ridership for SoCo All-Day Routes (2018)



Biking

The Austin bicycle network consists of a mix of on- and off-street paths, lanes, and routes. Many of these facilities offer ample space for cyclists and protection from vehicle traffic, while others present safety and comfort challenges for both new and experienced riders alike.

Expansion and enhancement of the citywide bicycle network is guided by the 2014 Bicycle Master Plan,[1] although improvements on South Congress Avenue are on hold while Project Connect's Orange Line corridor plans are under development.

Infrastructure and Network

In the SoCo study area, the primary bike routes available are a north-south route along South Congress Avenue and an east-west route along East Annie Street and West Mary Street (Figure 15). Both bike routes consist of on-street bike lanes with no buffer or curb between cyclists and mixed traffic. Several bicycle priority treatments have been implemented in the neighborhood, such as bike boxes at the intersection of East Annie and South Congress.

There are only two bicycle routes that connect across Lady Bird Lake—the Pfluger Pedestrian bridge provides a connection near South Lamar, and South 1st Street includes separated bikeways cantilevered on each side of the roadway. The Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike shared use path, which is a popular bike route for both recreational cycling as well as biking to work, provides a key east-west connection to these limited river crossing options for cyclists looking to travel between SoCo and neighborhoods north of the lake.

1 http://www.austintexas.gov/page/austin-bicycle-master-plan

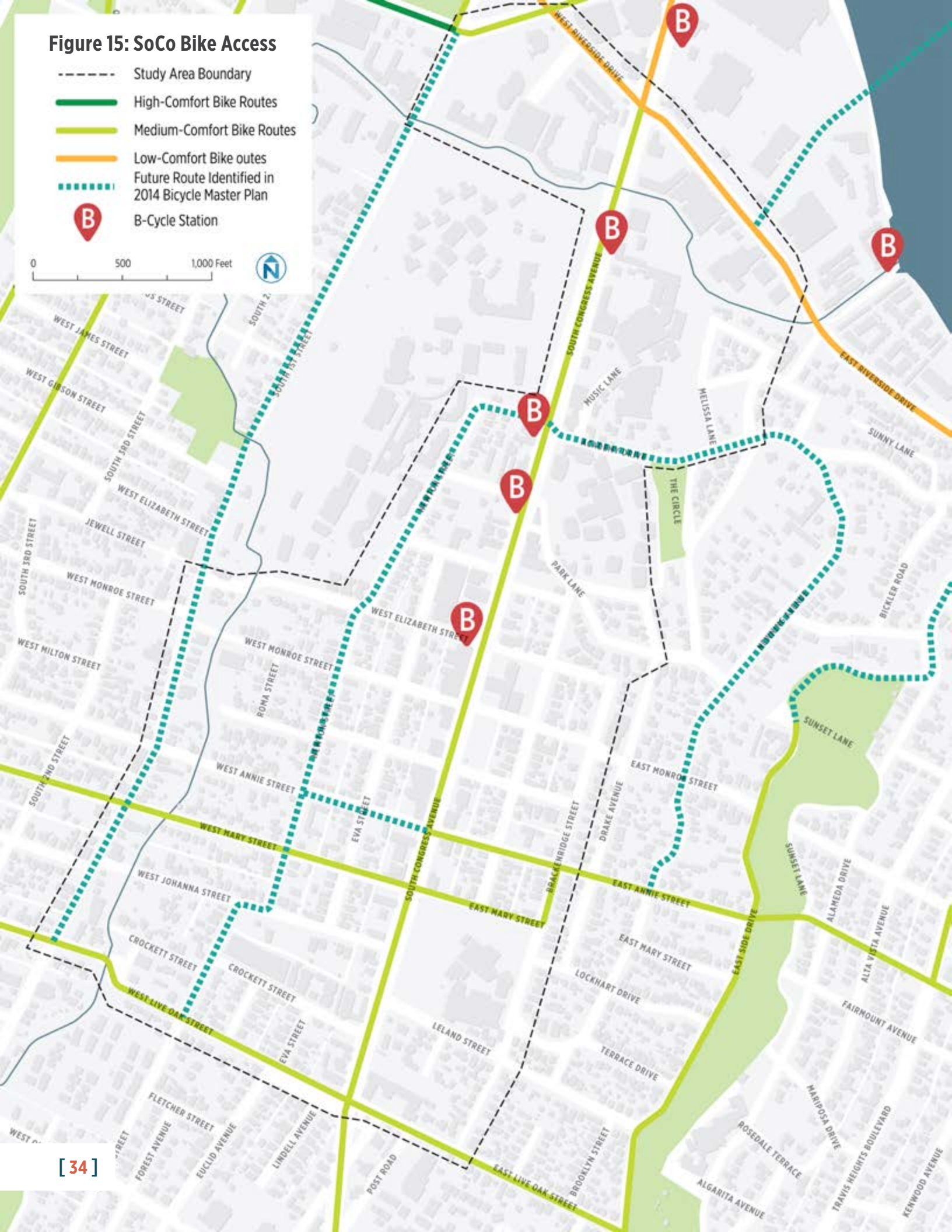


Figure 15: SoCo Bike Access
Study Area Boundary
High-Comfort Bike Routes
Medium-Comfort Bike Routes
Low-Comfort Bike outes
Future Route Identified in 2014 Bicycle Master Plan
B-Cycle Station
0
500
1,000 Feet
WEST RIVERSIDE DRIVE
SOUTH CONGRESS AVENUE
EAST RIVERSIDE DRIVE
WEST JAMES STREET
WEST GIBSON STREET
SOUTH 3RD STREET
SOUTH 1ST STREET
MUSIC LANE
MELISSA LANE
SUNNY LANE
THE CIRCLE
WEST ELIZABETH STREET
JEWELL STREET
WEST MONROE STREET
PARK LANE
BICKLER ROAD
WEST MILTON STREET
ROMA STREET
SUNSET LANE
SOUTH 2ND STREET
WEST ANNIE STREET
EVA STREET
EAST MONROE STREET
WEST MARY STREET
BRACKENRIDGE STREET
DRAKE AVENUE
EAST ANNIE STREET
WEST JOHANNA STREET
EAST MARY STREET
ALAMEDA DRIVE
ALTA VISTA AVENUE
EAST SIDE DRIVE
CROCKETT STREET
LOCKHART DRIVE
WEST LIVE OAK STREET
FAIRMOUNT AVENUE
LELAND STREET
TERRACE DRIVE
FLETCHER STREET
MARIPOSA DRIVE
FOREST AVENUE
EUCLID AVENUE
LINDELL AVENUE
POST ROAD
BROOKLYN STREET
ROSEDALE TERRACE
TRAVIS HEIGHTS BOULEVARD
EAST LIVE OAK STREET
ALGARITA AVENUE
KENWOOD AVENUE

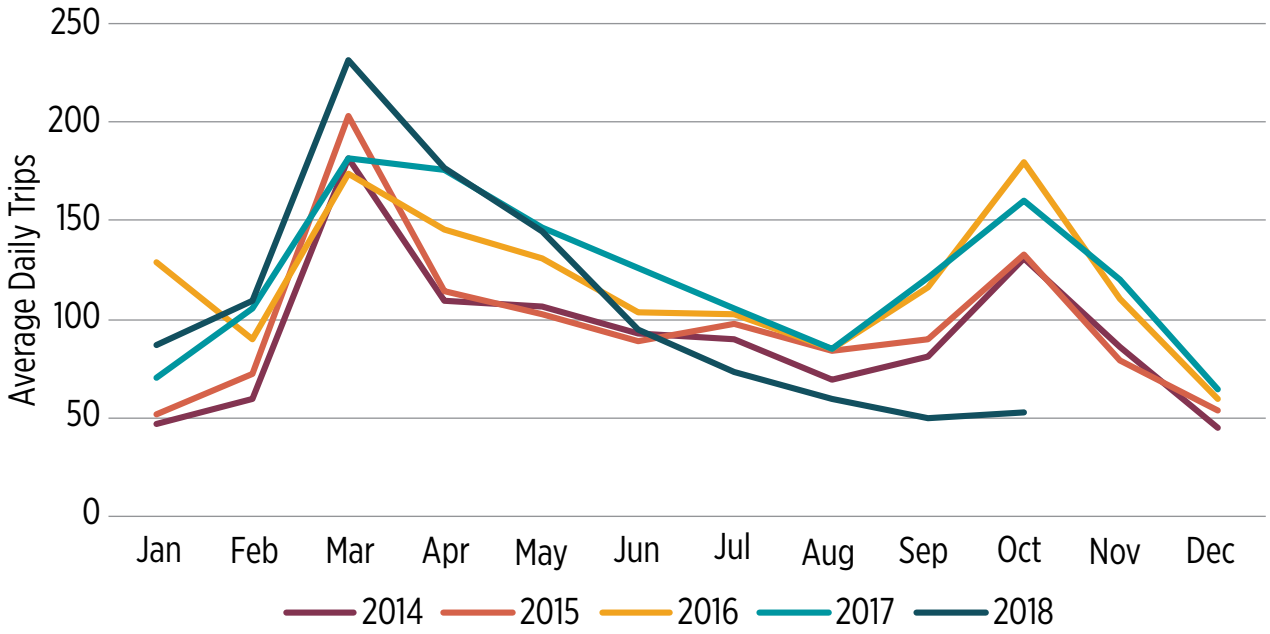
Bicycle Sharing Services

Austin B-Cycle is a dock-based bike sharing service with stations across central Austin. Three stations are located in the northern portion of the SoCo study area along South Congress Avenue, and two additional stations are located just outside the study area boundary in the South Central Waterfront neighborhood.

B-Cycle usage across the city peaks during March and October, likely driven by the South by Southwest and the Austin City Limits festivals. Ridership is lowest during the winter and late summer, when the weather presents a challenge for both recreational users and bike commuters.

Several dockless bike companies began offering bike sharing services throughout the city in 2018, but most of these services have since ceased operations. Jump, which is owned and operated by Uber, continues to offer pedal-assisted electric bikes throughout the city, including in SoCo. These bikes can be accessed through a smartphone app, and trips can start and end anywhere within the designated service area in central Austin.

Figure 16: Average Daily B-Cycle Trips from SoCo Area Stations, 2014-2018



Safety and Comfort

Biking in Austin can be challenging for cyclists with limited experience or confidence. The hot weather during the summer months can also make commuting difficult for employees who do not have access to a shower or other end-of-trip facilities at their workplace. Furthermore, portions of the bicycle network are not well demarcated, making conflicts with vehicles a challenge.

South Congress Avenue includes on-street bike lanes that are described as "medium comfort" by the City of Austin. The lanes can be uncomfortable for many cyclists.

The bike lanes on South Congress Avenue are located between travel lanes and back-in parking where vehicles are often stopped waiting for space, picking up riders, or unloading freight. Some bike routes in SoCo require cyclists to share a travel lane with vehicular traffic.

At night, many of these conflicts and safety challenges are amplified by dim or intermittent lighting along South Congress Avenue.

Walking

SoCo is one of the most vital and dynamic pedestrian centers in Austin, especially along South Congress Avenue. On weekends, visitors flock to the neighborhood to access shopping, dining, and entertainment destinations. Residents and workers also travel on foot, both along South Congress Avenue and in the adjacent residential neighborhoods to the east and west.

Pedestrian comfort and safety are also essential to the functioning of the parking system—every driver becomes a pedestrian on their way to or from a vehicle. Neighborhoods with well-connected sidewalks, lighting, and shade make it easier, safer, and more appealing to walk farther to and from parking. These types of walkable neighborhoods can support "park once" strategies that encourage parkers to walk, and not drive, short distances within a district.

Infrastructure and Network

The sidewalk network quality varies significantly from block to block and from street to street in SoCo. South Congress Avenue itself includes sidewalks on both sides of the street, though the sidewalk width in some areas is uncomfortably narrow for a busy pedestrian district.

Though some steps, ramps, slabs, and other uneven surfaces are still found in the sidewalk in some areas, many blocks have been recently improved and repaired as part of adjacent redevelopment and construction projects.

In most areas along South Congress Avenue, back-in parking acts as a buffer between pedestrians and vehicle traffic. Only a few block faces have street trees or awnings that provide shade, potentially making pedestrian travel hot or uncomfortable during the summer months.

Safety and Comfort

Pedestrian crossings on South Congress Avenue are well marked with stripes and signals. At some intersections, the queuing area for pedestrians waiting to cross overlaps with the large curbside drainage gutters. Though the crossing distance across South Congress is relatively long, sidewalk bulbs at some intersections help make the pedestrian experience safer and more comfortable.

Pedestrian Plans

The Sidewalk Master Plan (2016) and the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (2018) provide a city-wide analysis of pedestrian network challenges and potential policy solutions. Though neither of these plans identified SoCo as a specific area of concern, both provide general guidance for prioritizing pedestrian safety improvements throughout the city that are applicable to the study area.

The Pedestrian Safety Action Plan identified a hotspot of pedestrian and vehicle crashes at the intersection of South Congress Avenue and East Riverside Drive, which is a major junction for pedestrian, bike, transit, and vehicular traffic traveling to and from SoCo. Safety improvements at this intersection could improve multimodal travel to and from the district.

The Action Plan ranked most streets in the study area as "very low" in terms of pedestrian safety risk characteristics, with "demand for pedestrian improvements" highest along residential streets where the lack of sidewalks limits walkability in otherwise pedestrian-friendly areas.

Beyond South Congress Avenue itself, few streets in the neighborhood include sidewalks on both sides of the street, and many include no sidewalk at all. On these streets, residents walking from homes and visitors walking from on-street parking tend to walk in the roadway, creating a potential safety challenge.

Shade trees are plentiful along most of these side streets, but street lighting is limited—this can present safety challenges for pedestrians walking to homes or vehicles parked off of South Congress Avenue after dark.

Shared Mobility

Shared mobility services are an increasingly popular mode of travel to access SoCo. Many people, especially visitors, access the neighborhood using ride-hail services, scooters, and bikeshare, especially on weekends and during special events.

While shared mobility options can reduce parking pressure by providing alternatives to driving, they also compete with drivers and parked vehicles for curb access and street space. Addressing neighborhood parking challenges in SoCo will require balancing and prioritizing the needs of all modes.

Ride-hail and Taxis

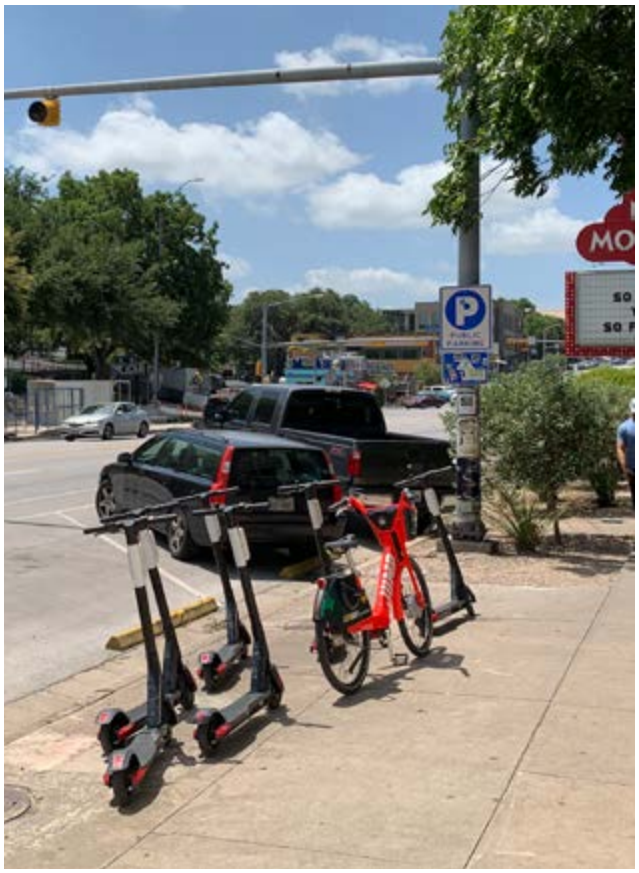
Ride-hail services (also known as Transportation Network Companies, or TNCs) provide private or shared point-to-point trips and are accessed using a smartphone app. Services available in Austin include Uber, Lyft, and Ride Austin. The costs of using these services vary depending on trip length, weather, real-time demand, and ride type, but they are usually too expensive to meet daily commuting needs.

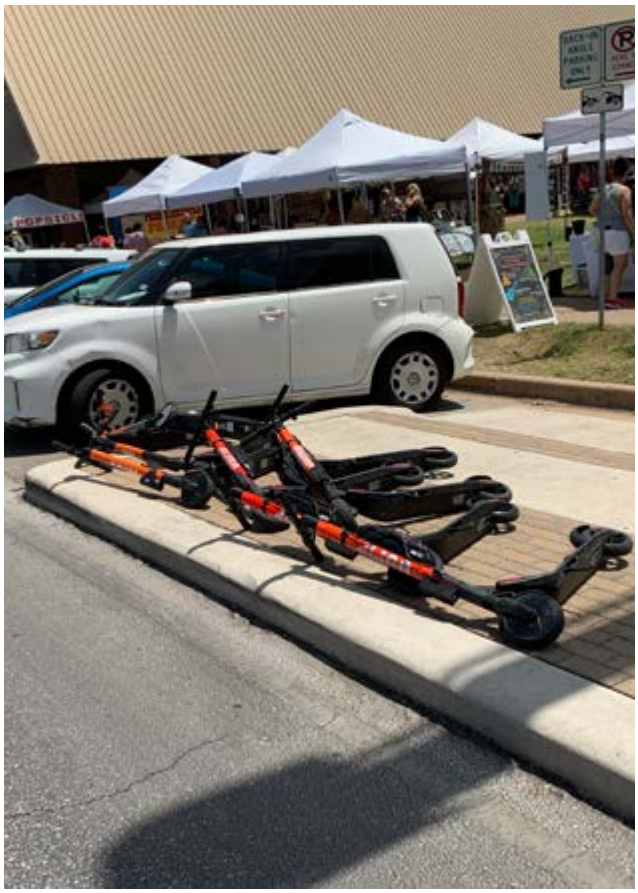
In SoCo, where curb space for safe loading or unloading is limited, ride-hail vehicles may make sudden stops in busy traffic areas or in bike lanes to pick up or drop off passengers. Although service providers have some ways to help mitigate these conflicts, such as geofencing for directing users towards designated safe pick-up or drop-off areas, it can be difficult to completely prevent ride-hail vehicles from making stops in high-traffic areas.

Ride-hailing can also create traffic challenges as vehicles circle the neighborhood looking for riders and making drop-offs. While making stops on side streets adjacent to South Congress Avenue helps mitigate the safety threat of other high-speed cars, the limited road space and sidewalk network can create other curb access challenges.

E-scooters

Dockless electric scooters, or e-scooters, have become popular in Austin since launching in 2018. These services allow users to unlock a scooter using a smartphone app and complete their trip anywhere within the designated service area in Central Austin. E-scooters can travel up to 15 miles per hour and can make trips as far as 15 miles. As of July 2019, eight service providers operate in Austin.





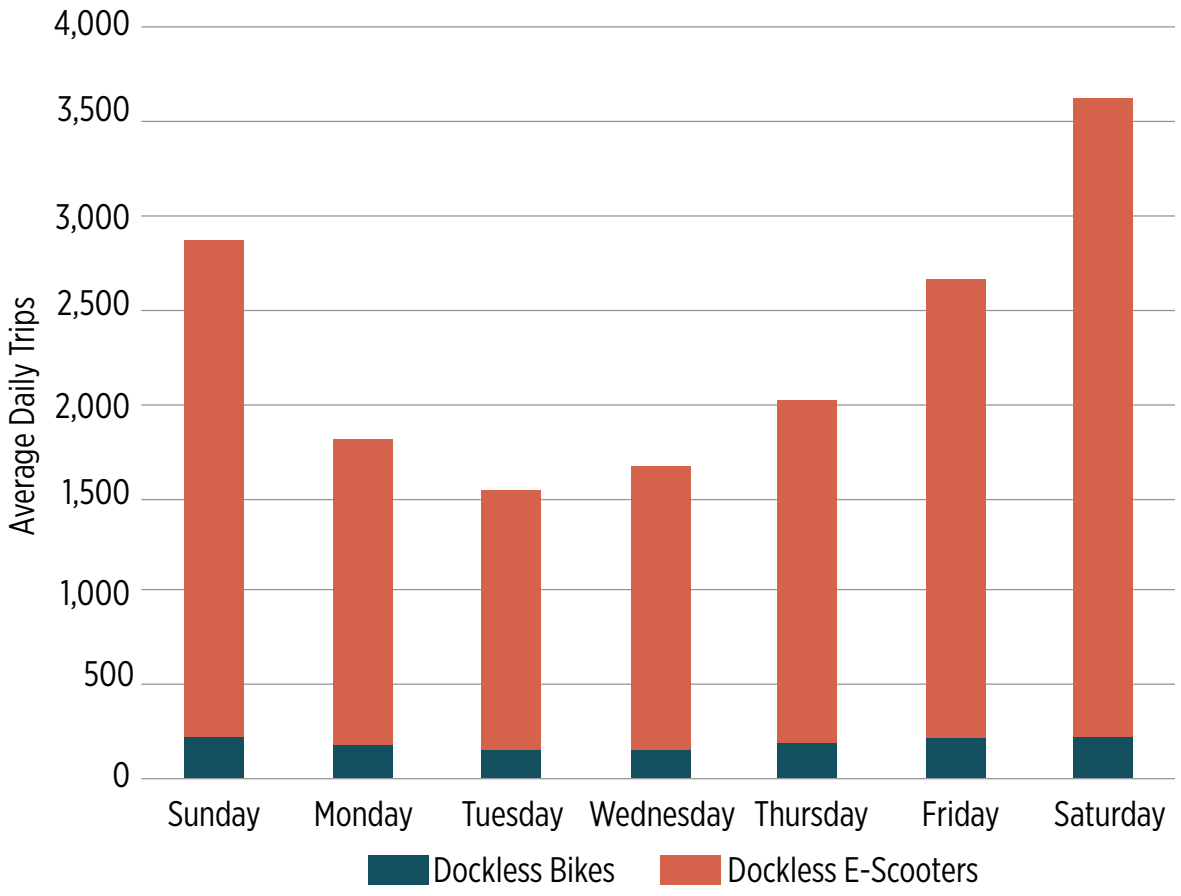
Since the widespread adoption of e-scooters, safety and parking have become key areas of focus. The high speeds of travel, lack of safety equipment, and lack of safe supporting infrastructure contribute to safety concerns. Some areas, such as the UT campus, have begun to experiment with implementing slow-zones, digitally limiting scooter speed when users are within a geofenced area.

Though e-scooter companies require users to park scooters in safe areas where they do not obstruct the sidewalk, it can be difficult to enforce this policy. In SoCo, where sidewalks are narrow and many e-scooters and bikes are distributed each day, managing sidewalk clutter while supporting alternatives to driving will help some of the neighborhood travel needs and parking challenges.

According to 2019 trip data provided by the City of Austin, most trips that start or end in the study area census tracts are either between SoCo and the South 1st Street/ Bouldin area, between SoCo and downtown Austin, or entirely within SoCo (Figure 17). Over 40% of trips that start in SoCo or Bouldin also end in one of these two neighborhoods, indicating that many users in the study area use e-scooters for short trips to local destinations. The average trip length of scooter trips starting or ending in study area census tracts was approximately 1.2 miles, and the average dockless bike trip was 1.8 miles.

Scooter and dockless bike activity in the study area peaks on the weekend, with just over 3,500 average trips to or from Bouldin and SoCo on a typical Saturday compared with 1,500 on a typical Tuesday.

Figure 17: Average Daily SoCo-Based Dockless Bike and E-Scooter Trips, January-July 2019



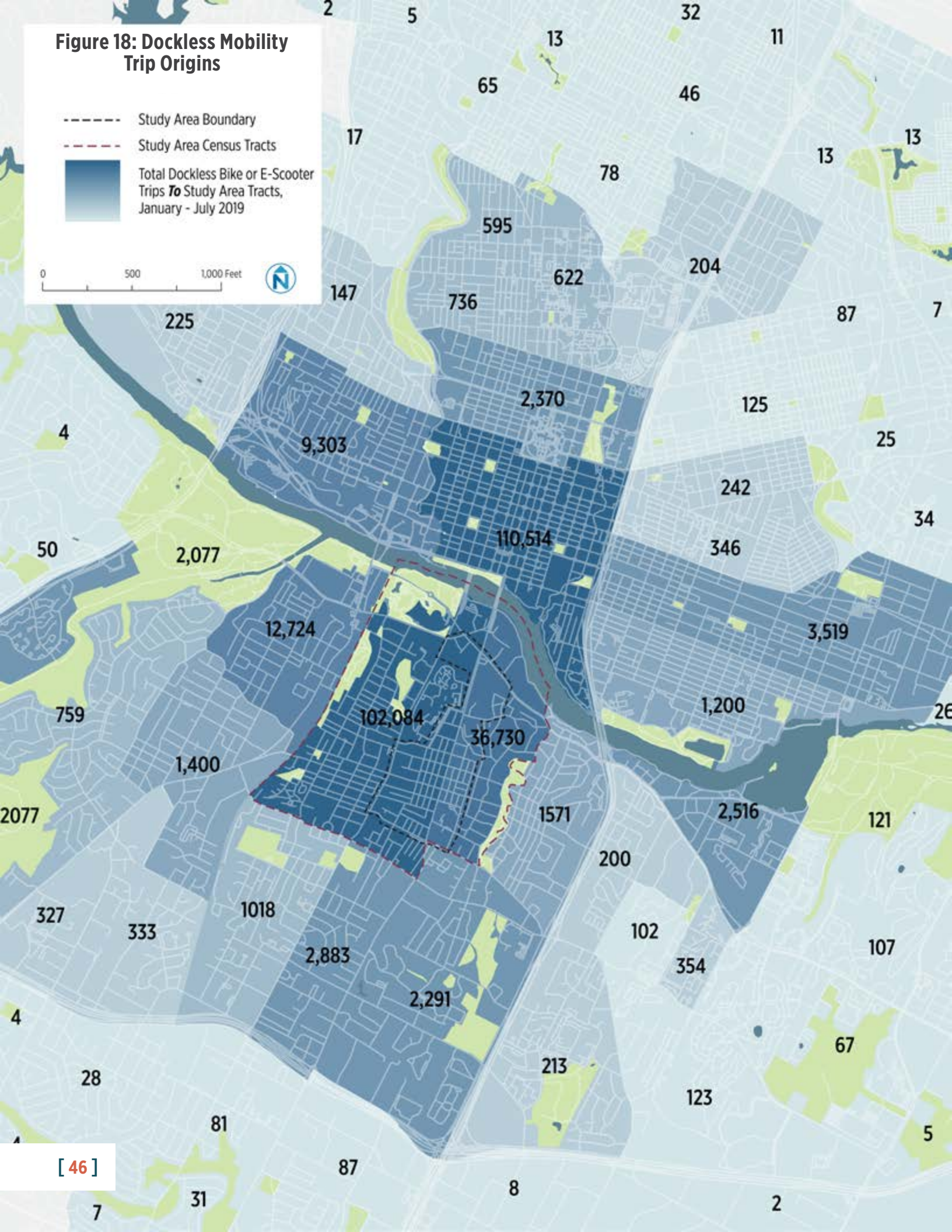


Figure 18: Dockless Mobility Trip Origins

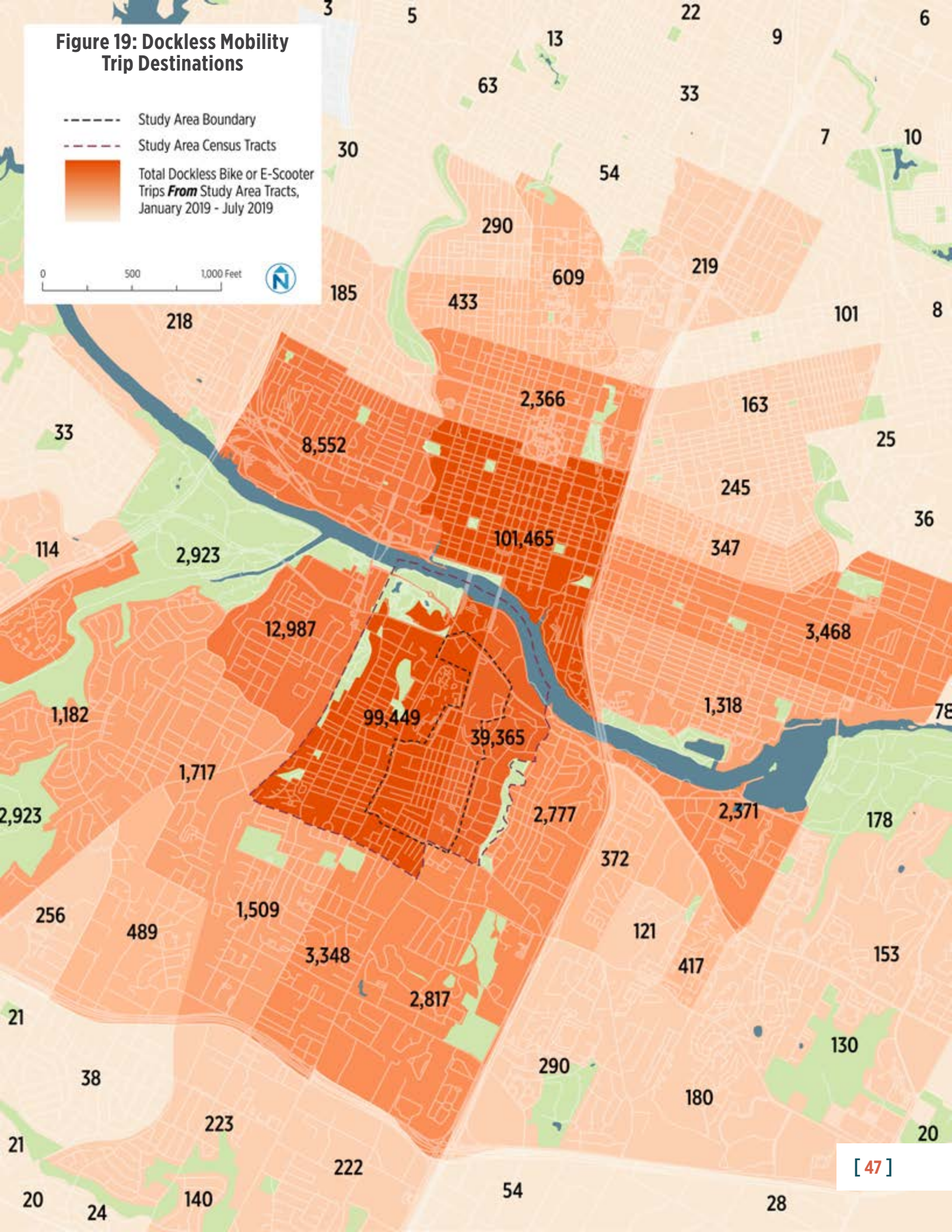


Figure 19: Dockless Mobility Trip Destinations
Study Area Boundary
Study Area Census Tracts
Total Dockless Bike or E-Scooter Trips From Study Area Tracts, January 2019 - July 2019
0
500
1,000 Feet
3
5
22
6
13
9
63
33
7
10
30
54
290
219
609
185
433
101
8
218
2,366
163
33
8,552
25
245
36
114
2,923
101,465
347
12,987
3,468
1,182
99,449
39,365
1,318
78
1,717
2,923
2,777
2,371
178
372
256
1,509
489
121
3,348
153
417
2,817
21
130
38
290
180
223
20
21
222
54
20
140
28
24

Freight

Freight deliveries for restaurants and shops along South Congress Avenue also require safe curb access that avoids conflicts with other street users. Freight deliveries may include large trucks and trailers, which require significant space to maneuver. Alleyways and mid-block lanes in SoCo can support some freight and delivery activity, but many are too narrow for large truck deliveries. Additionally, SoCo alleyways are also used by employees, residents, and visitors for parking and neighborhood access. Trucks that stop on Congress Avenue to make deliveries can obstruct bike lanes, parking stalls, and travel lanes.

Corridor Mobility and Access: Top Five Takeaways

1. **Lots of people travel to, from, and within SoCo using non-drive-alone travel modes,** even though infrastructure in the neighborhood is not as supportive of walking and biking as it could be. Holistic parking solutions for SoCo could better leverage these other modes to help meet overall neighborhood travel needs.

2. **SoCo Station is the busiest transit stop in SoCo today.** Route 801, which only stops at this location in the study area, has the highest ridership of all Capital Metro routes. If implemented, the Orange Line would increase transit frequency and travel speed between SoCo and downtown Austin/UT.

3. **Some of the street features that create potential obstacles for pedestrians and those with mobility challenges are also perceived to be part of the signature character of SoCo.** Parking strategies will have to balance the need to support walkability while preserving the things that make SoCo unique.

4. **There is limited dedicated curb space for ridehailing/TNC pick-up and drop-off activity.** Today, many of these vehicles pick up or unload passengers using spaces reserved for ADA vehicles or other special parking purposes.

5. **E-scooters are extremely popular in SoCo.** They are primarily used for short trips to the South 1st Street area and downtown Austin. These vehicles could be used as first- or last-mile connections to nearby parking locations, but safety and accessibility challenges should be addressed.

[4]

Parking in SoCo

This chapter summarizes the current state of parking in the South Congress study area. The project team collected data to document the following parking system elements:

- **Inventory** – how many on- and off-street parking spaces are there, and how are they regulated?
- **Occupancy** – how are parking spaces utilized by time of day, day of week, and space type?
- **Duration and Turnover** – how long are people parking, and how efficiently are parking spaces being utilized?

Reviewing current parking management programs, and utilizing feedback from stakeholders and field observations, the team also sought to answer the following questions:

- **Parking policies, regulations, and programs** – what types of parking regulations apply in SoCo? How do these programs work and are there opportunities for improvement?
- **Parking experience** - What is the quality of wayfinding and signage for people parking and visiting the area? What types of technology are available? How walkable is the parking system?
- **Travel behavior** - How often do people come to SoCo, and for what purpose? How long do they stay? What travel modes do they use to get to and from the district?

It is important to emphasize that the data presented in this chapter represents a snapshot summary. The number of parking spaces, and how they are being used, on any given day or time is constantly changing. Nevertheless, the data highlights key trends on a representative set of days. Additional and consistent data collection will allow the city and stakeholders to monitor trends over time.

Methodology

From early April to mid-May of 2019, Austin Transportation Department (ATD) staff collected data on key elements of the SoCo parking system—inventory, occupancy, and turnover. Figure 20 summarizes the dates of data collection.

Figure 20: Data Collection Dates

Data Type	Dates of Collection
Inventory	• Early April 2019
Occupancy	• Weekdays – April 25th, May 1st, 8th, and 9th 2019 • Saturdays – April 27th, May 4th, 11th, 2019 • First Thursday – May 2nd, 2019
Turnover	• Weekdays – May 7th, 9th, 14th, 16th, 21st • Saturdays – May 11th, 18th

Inventory

On-street parking inventory data were collected at the block face level. A **block face** is the area on one side of the street between two consecutive intersections. The type and count of spaces available within each block face were recorded in the database. Data collected by block face and individual space include:

- Regulations (loading, time-restricted, disabled, user group, etc.)
- Hours of enforcement
- Pricing, payment system, and technology

Off-street parking inventory data were collected for public and private lots and/or garages,[1] with the type and count of spaces available within each lot/garage recorded in the database. Data collected by lot/garage include:

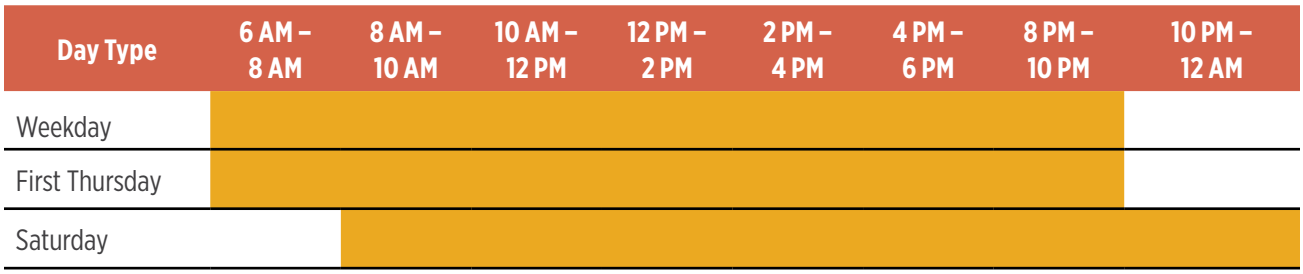
1 It is important to note that the data collection excluded parking spaces associated with hotels, single-family, and/or multi-family residential driveways, lots, or garages.

- Owner and operator
- Regulations (loading, time-restricted, disabled, user group, etc.)
- Hours of enforcement
- Pricing, payment system, and technology

Occupancy

ATD collected occupancy data for a sample[2] of on- and off-street spaces identified in the parking inventory. Within the block faces and lots or garages for which occupancy was collected, observations were broken down by identified space, user, and regulation type. Occupancy counts were conducted every two hours during the time periods illustrated in Figure 21 to represent a typical weekday, first Thursday, and Saturday.

Figure 21: Occupancy Collection Time Periods



Turnover

ATD also collected turnover and duration data for a sample of 14 block faces throughout the study area. Turnover and duration data were collected by observing the last four digits of a license plate number in each space every 30 minutes from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Turnover and duration data were collected to represent a typical weekday and a typical Saturday. Using the collected data, the analysis can describe trends related to the number of unique vehicles, average length of stay per vehicle, and average vehicles per space.

Analysis Zones

The greater SoCo neighborhood has distinct zones with varied parking supply, management practices, land uses, densities, built environments, and transportation services. To facilitate analysis at a smaller scale, the study area was broken up into

2 A sample-based approach was required to accommodate available ATD staffing resources. Approximately 90% of all inventoried spaces were counted during the occupancy study, a very high sampling rate for a study area of this size.

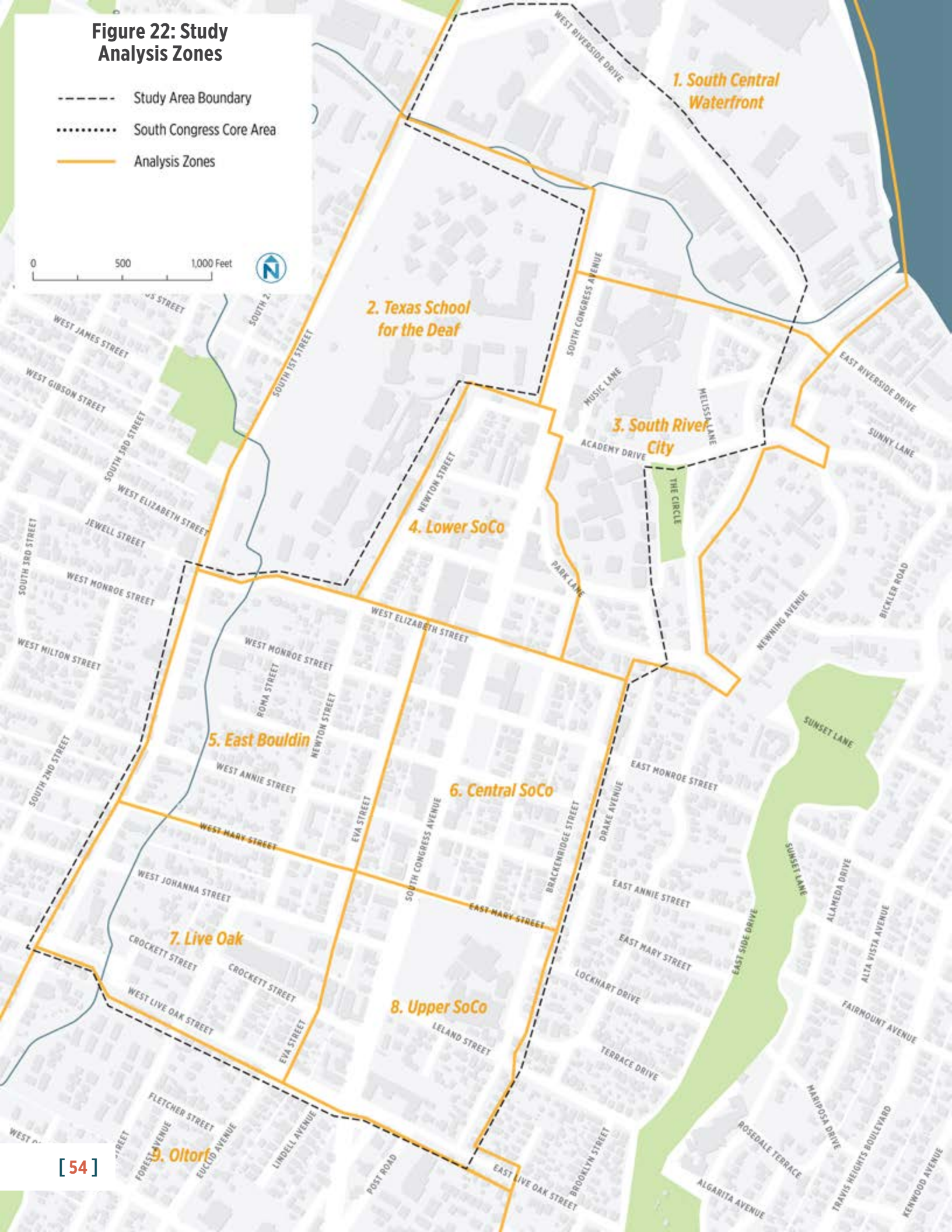


Figure 22: Study Analysis Zones

sub-zones. These sub-zones were developed based upon discussion with staff and stakeholders based on common boundaries, a reasonable walk shed, and similar land uses. The zone boundaries and names are specific to this project only.

Summary of Key Findings

Inventory

- Overall, there are **nearly 5,400 parking spaces** within the South Congress study area, 3,221 (60%) of which are off-street, and 2,169 (40%) of which are on-street.
- **Two thirds of on-street spaces are unrestricted**, allowing any person who drives to park for free for as long as they like.
- Most the area's **most popular and convenient spaces along South Congress Avenue are unrestricted**—only a limited number of block faces have two-hour restrictions.
- **100% of on-street parking spaces in the study area are free of charge.**
- **Almost 28% of on-street parking is reserved for residents and their guests** through the residential parking permit (RPP) program. On-street and RPP regulations vary, however, throughout the study area, even from block to adjacent block.
- Public access to off-street parking varies throughout the study area.
  - » Nearly **60% of off-street parking is free and unregulated**.
  - » Roughly **6% of off-street parking** requires the public to pay.
  - » Over one third (36%) of the larger parking facilities north of Academy Drive are **restricted to employees only, customers only, or both**.
- In all, almost 60% of all parking spaces in the study area are completely unrestricted. **About one in three spaces has some level of restriction to public usage**.
- Based on available data (Chapter 2), **more than 1,300 new off-street spaces** are planned for the study area in the near-term. Approximately 9,700 spaces were estimated at full build out of the South Central Waterfront—4,000 are currently planned for the Austin-American Statesman, just north of the study area.

Parking Dashboard

Additional parking data and analysis can be viewed using the interactive SoCo Parking Dashboard, which is available online at: https://nelsonnygaard.shinyapps.io/soco_dashboard/

Figure 23: On-Street Inventory by Space Type

Space Type	# Spaces	% of Spaces
Unrestricted Parking[1]	1,448	66.8%
Residential Parking Permit	600	27.7%
Time Limited Zone	64	3.0%
Customer/Commercial Service Zone	20	0.9%
Marked ADA Parking	17	0.8%
Motorcycle Parking	10	0.5%
Valet Parking Zone	9	0.4%
Zipcar Parking Only[2]	1	0.0%
Total	**2,169**	**100.0%**

[1]There are no metered spaces in the SoCo study area.

[2]In addition to dedicated off-street spaces, Car2Go allows users to park in any public on-street space within the designated service area that has a metered or unmetered time limit of at least 2 hours.

Figure 24: Off-Street Inventory by Space Type

Space Type	# Spaces	% of Spaces
Public - Free	1,466	45.5%
Employee Only	408	12.7%
Customer Only	401	12.4%
Resident	222	6.9%
Employee & Customer	194	6.0%
Public - Paid	152	4.7%
Automotive/Car Sales Lots	114	3.5%
School	82	2.5%
ADA	79	2.5%
Valet	65	2.0%
Shared	22	0.7%
Other Reserved	16	0.5%
Total	**3,221**	**100%**

Figure 25: On- and Off-Street Inventory by Space Type

Combined Type	Unrestricted to Public Parking?	# of Spaces	% of Spaces
Unrestricted Public Parking	Yes	2,914	54.1%
Resident Reserved Parking	No	822	15.3%
Customer Reserved Parking	No	595	11.0%
Employee Reserved Parking	No	408	7.6%
Paid Public Parking	Yes	152	2.8%
Other Reserved Parking	No	141	2.6%
Automotive/Car Sales Lots	No	114	2.1%
Marked ADA Parking	Yes	96	1.8%
Valet Parking	No	74	1.4%
Time Limited Zone	Yes	64	1.2%
Motorcycle Parking	Yes	10	0.2%
Total	**3,326 spaces (62%) publicly unrestricted**	**5,390**	**100%**

Figure 26: Parking Inventory

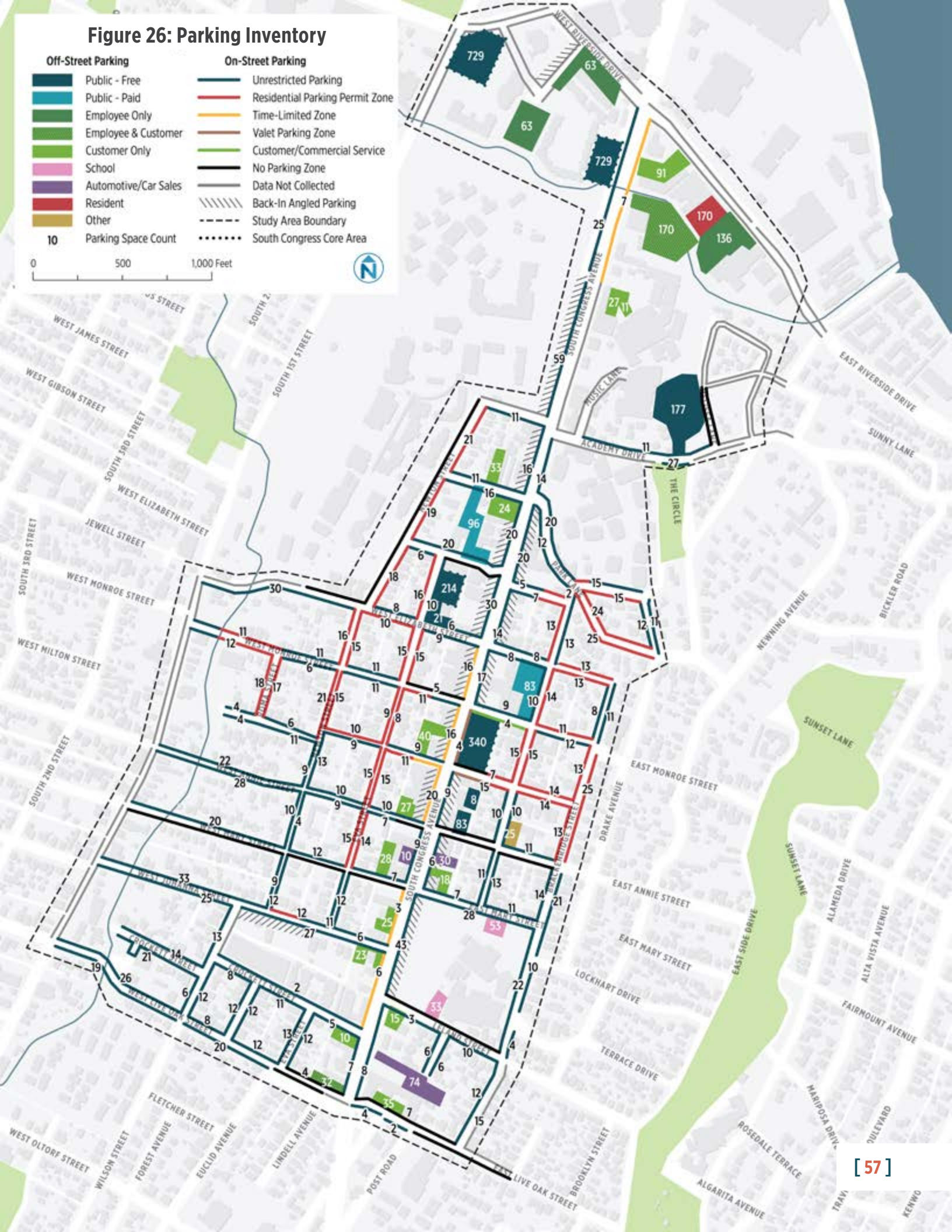


Figure 27: Residential Parking Permit (RPP) Areas

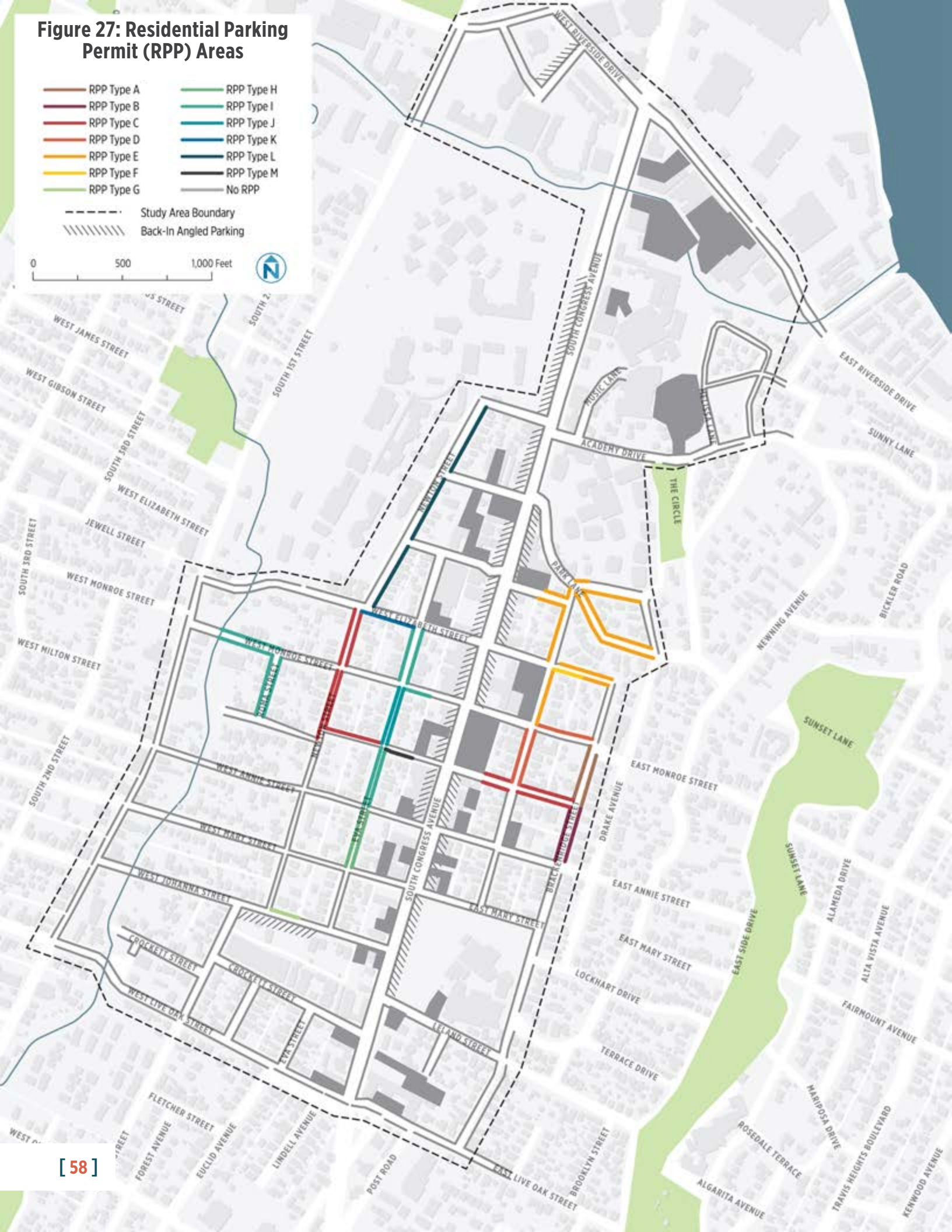
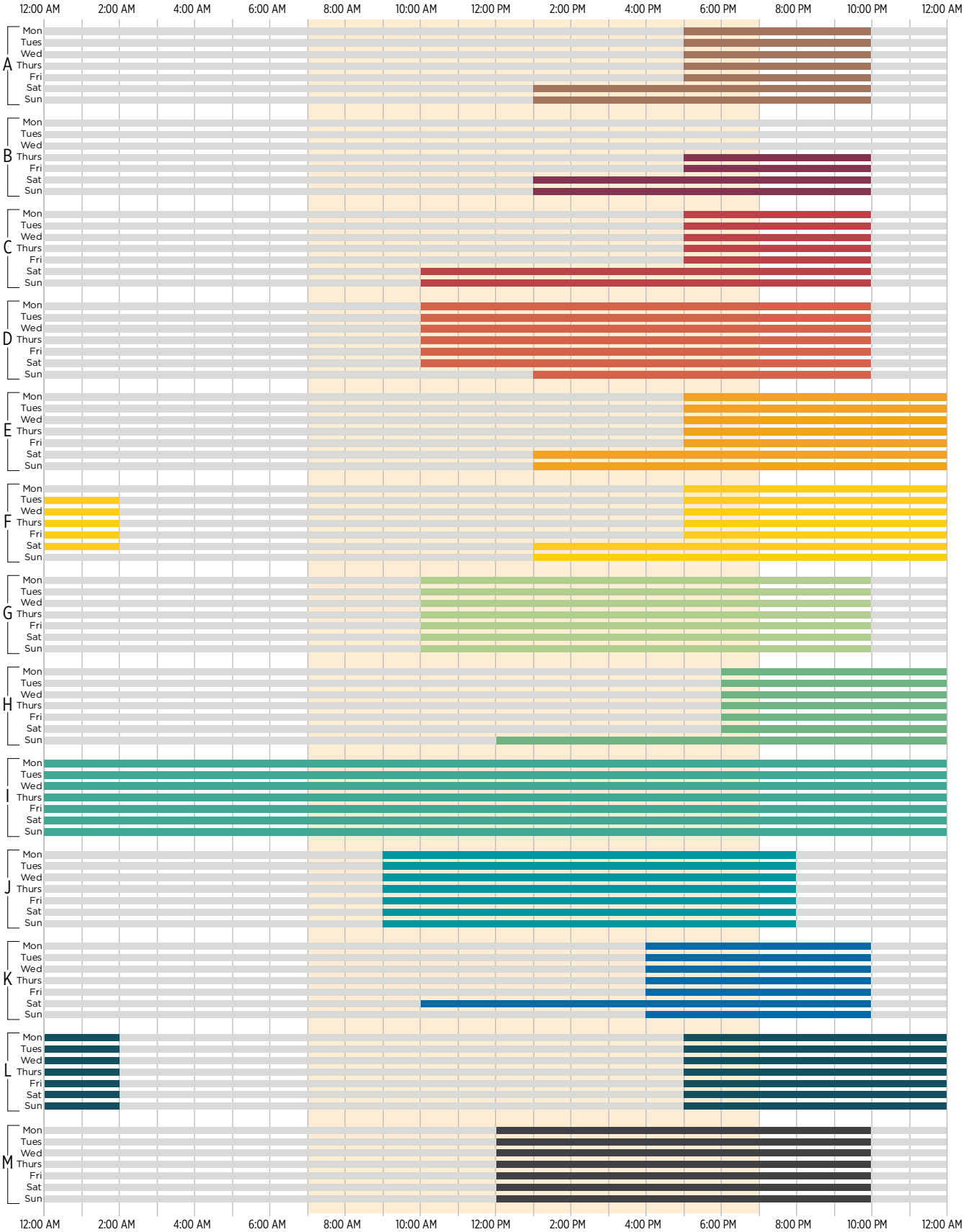


Figure 28: RPP Restrictions in SoCo

Hours and days of parking by residential permit only in the SoCo study area



Occupancy

- The peak occupancy observed for the overall study area (both on-street and off-street spaces) was **60% from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. on weekdays** (Figure 32).
- **At peak, there are about 1,300 to 1,600 spaces under-utilized across the whole study area**, yet many of these spaces are not available to the general public or are in less convenient locations. Spaces are considered under-utilized if they are below the occupancy target of 85% to 90% (see **Target Parking Occupancy** below).
- **Parking demand varies by geography, on- versus off-street, and time of day.** At certain locations and times of day, parking can be very difficult to find, such as:
  - » The most popular parking spaces, **on South Congress Avenue**, are in high demand—occupancy peaks near 90% between 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. on weekdays (Figure 33).
  - » The **South Central Waterfront area** occupancy peaks at 88% between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. on weekdays.
  - » Demand is typically much higher on blocks on or adjacent to South Congress Avenue, **north of Monroe Street**.
- **On-street parking adjacent to South Congress Avenue** tends to have lower demand, approximately 60% at peak. Of these spaces, only 50% are available to the public, as most of the restricted spaces are only for RPP holders.
- **Overall, RPP spaces were observed to be 25% full at peak**. RPP spaces account for 27.7% of the total on-street spaces in the study area.
- Off-street parking is typically underutilized at night and on weekends, especially at the north end of the study area where parking facilities are restricted for 9-to-5 weekday employees. **During a typical Saturday peak period, nearly 80% of the 1,831 off-street parking spaces north of Academy Drive are not utilized**.

Target Parking Occupancy

Parking demand should not be too high or too low. At, or approaching, 100% occupancy, people who drive typically circle in search of parking, creating traffic congestion. By contrast, a street, lot, or garage that is consistently underutilized represents an ineffective use of resources and valuable land.

Therefore, parking demand is often assessed not against 100% of supply, but against an "effective" supply, typically 85-90% for on-street parking and 90-95% for off-street parking. Using effective supply as a target threshold ensures that there is always an available space for would-be parkers and that there is an adequate buffer in the parking system to accommodate typical fluctuations in daily or hourly demand. The target threshold for on-street occupancy is set slightly lower, as cruising for on-street parking generally generates greater externalities for traffic congestion.

Figure 29: Average Occupancy, RPP Spaces vs. Non-RPP Spaces

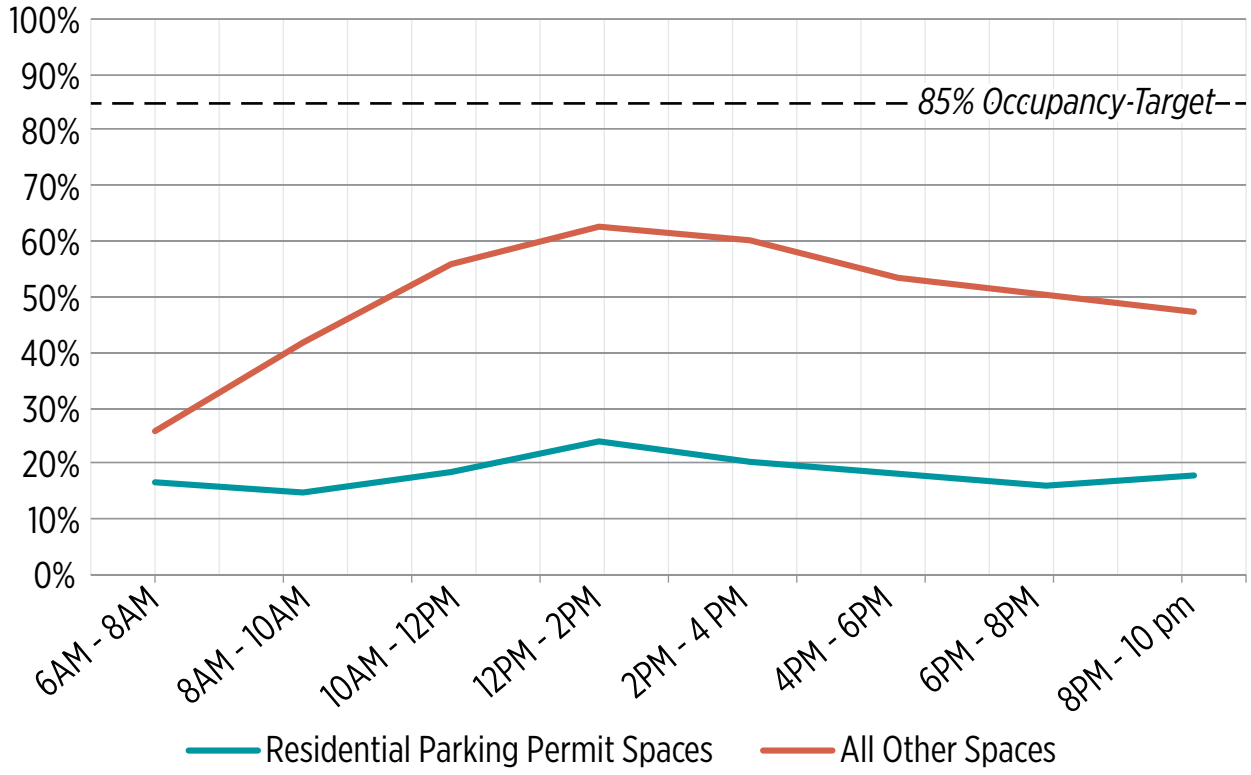


Figure 30: On-Street Occupancy By Day

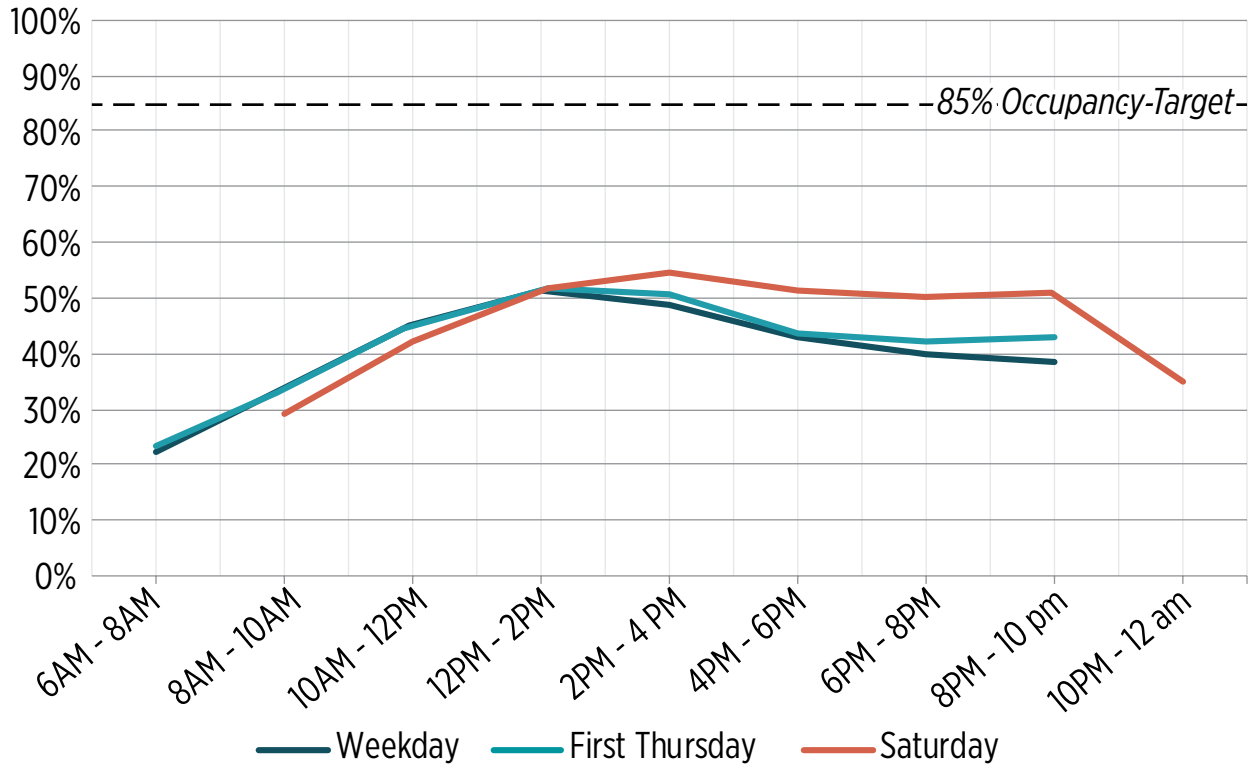


Figure 31: Off-Street Occupancy By Day

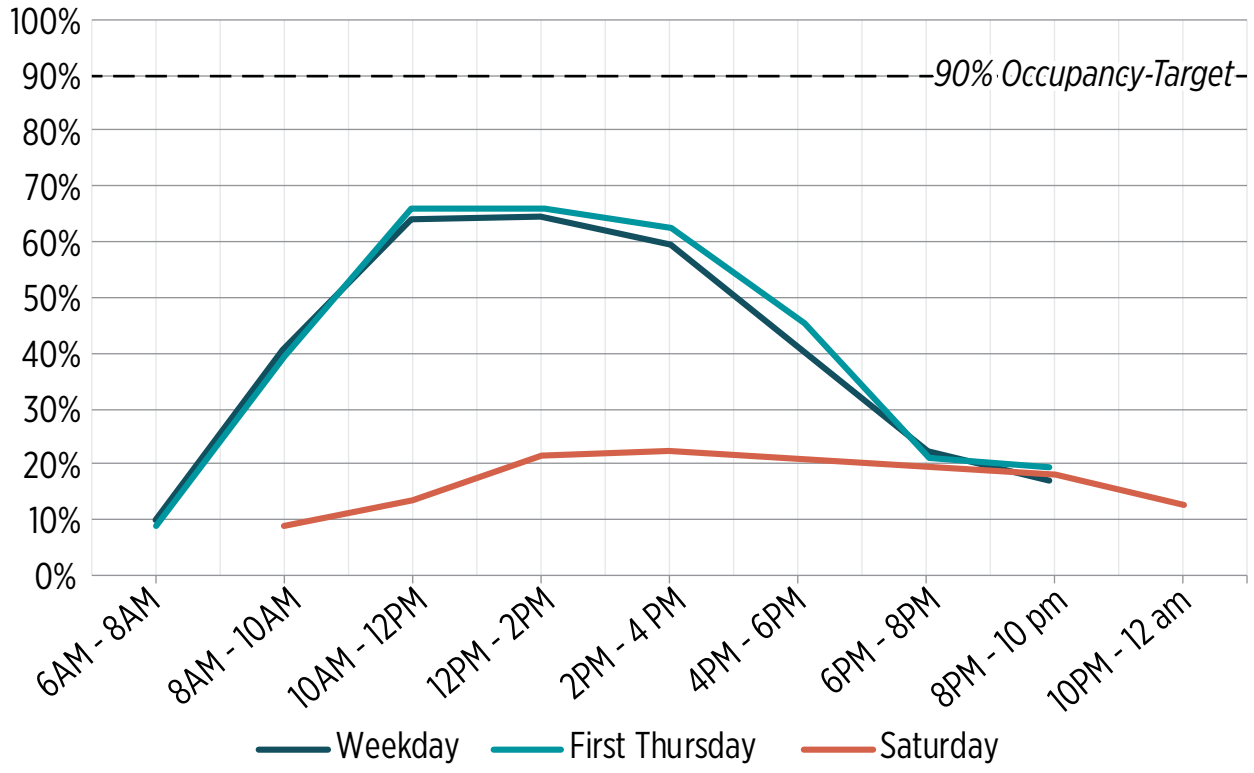


Figure 32: Combined On- and Off-Street Occupancy

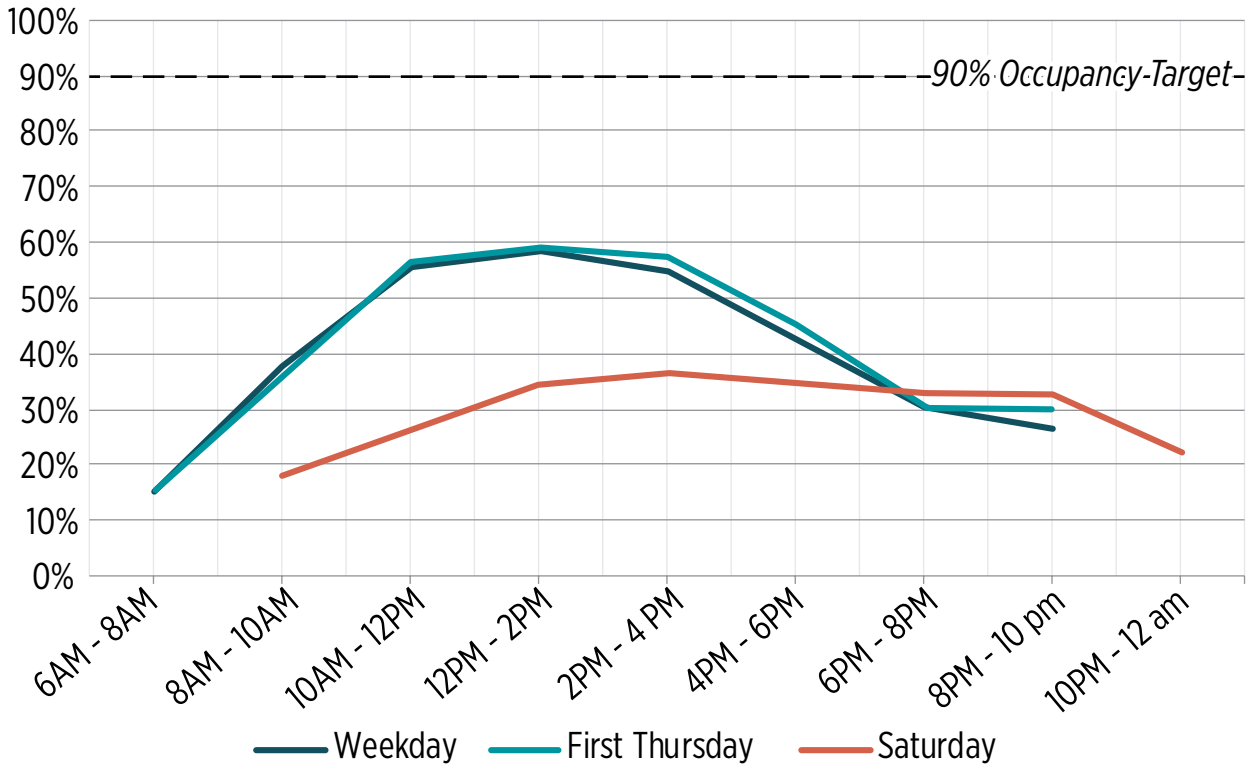


Figure 33: Weekday Occupancy, South Congress "Core"

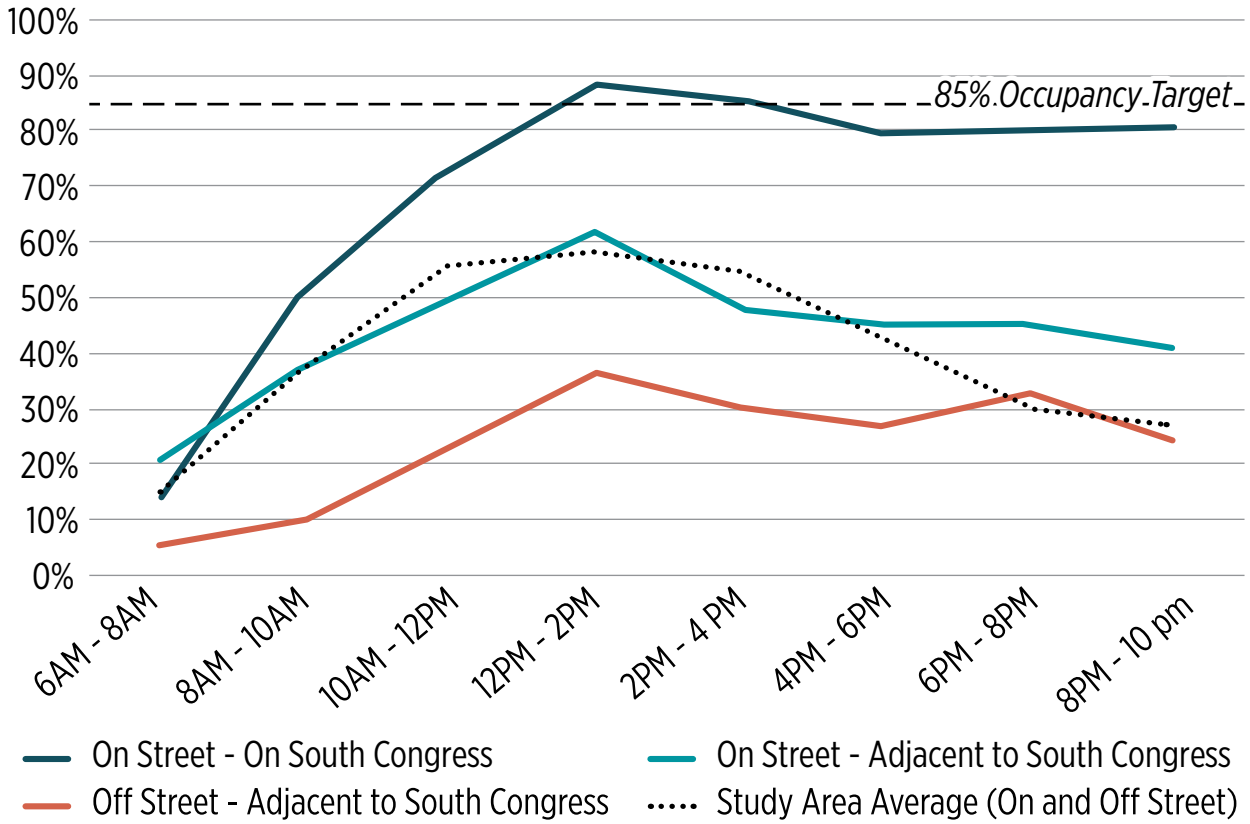


Figure 34: Peak Occupancy, Weekday 12PM to 2PM

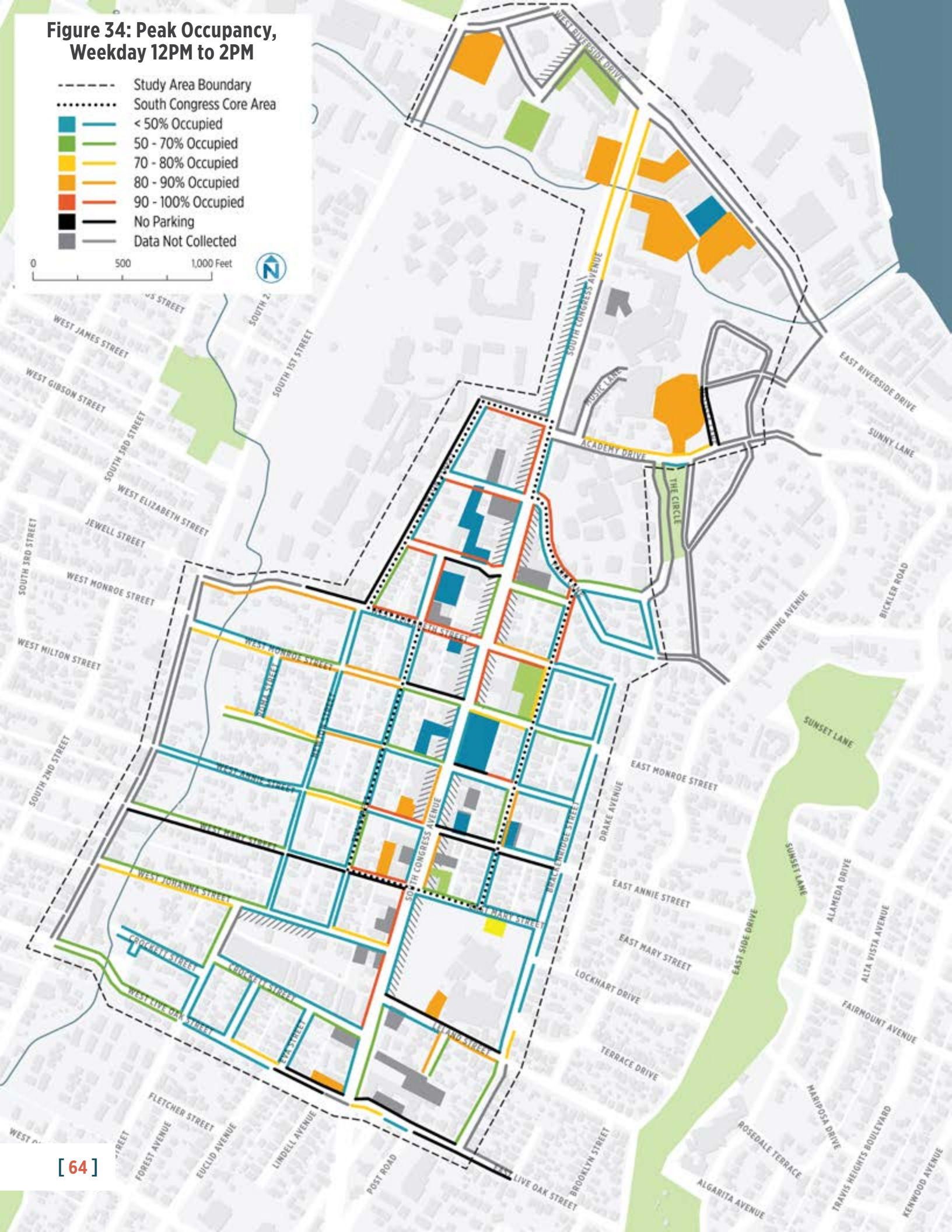


Figure 35: Peak Occupancy, First Thursday 12PM to 2PM

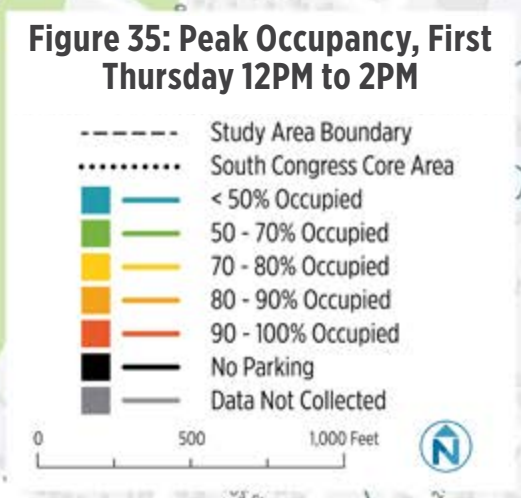
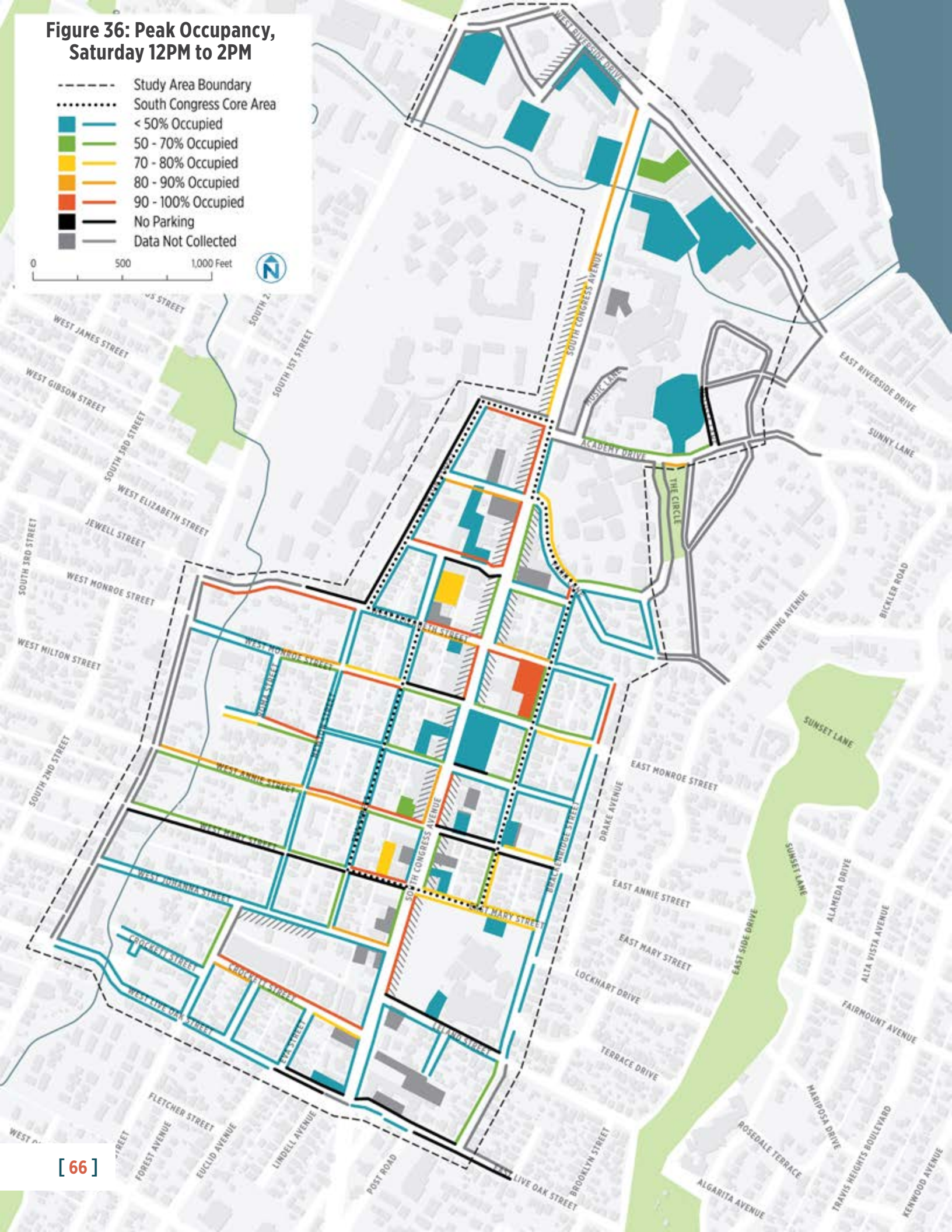


Figure 36: Peak Occupancy, Saturday 12PM to 2PM



Turnover

- The average person who drives **parks in the study area for 2.4 hours**, but there is significant variability in parking duration by area, day, and space type.
- For example, block face 134 (Figure 40) has vehicles often parking much longer than 4 hours – **sometimes up to and beyond 8 hours**. This parking activity is likely associated with the Texas School for the Deaf.
- **People who park on weekdays are typically staying longer** than people who park on weekends (3 hours vs. 2.4 hours).
- **Time limited spaces have higher turnover** and lower average durations of stay (1.4 hours).
- While time limited spaces tend to have higher turnover, **numerous instances of vehicles violating the time restriction were observed**. For example, in space 3 on Block 149, a vehicle was parked from before 9 a.m. to after 6 p.m (Figure 39). Similar parking activity was observed throughout the two-hour zones and on unrestricted blocks on South Congress.

Figure 37: Duration and Turnover, by Day and Space Type

Day	Space Type	# of Spaces Observed	# of Unique Vehicles	Avg. Vehicles per Space	Avg. Parking Duration (hours)
Weekday	Marked ADA Parking	6	4	1.1	3.8
	Time Limited Zone	52	114	2.2	1.4
	Unrestricted Parking	1,065	477	0.5	3.4
	Total	**1,122**	**657**	**0.6**	**3.0**
Saturday	Marked ADA Parking	6	10	1.6	2.2
	Time Limited Zone	52	129	2.5	1.4
	Unrestricted Parking	1,064	828	0.8	2.5
	Total	**1,122**	**966**	**0.9**	**2.4**

Figure 38: Distribution of Duration Observations by Day

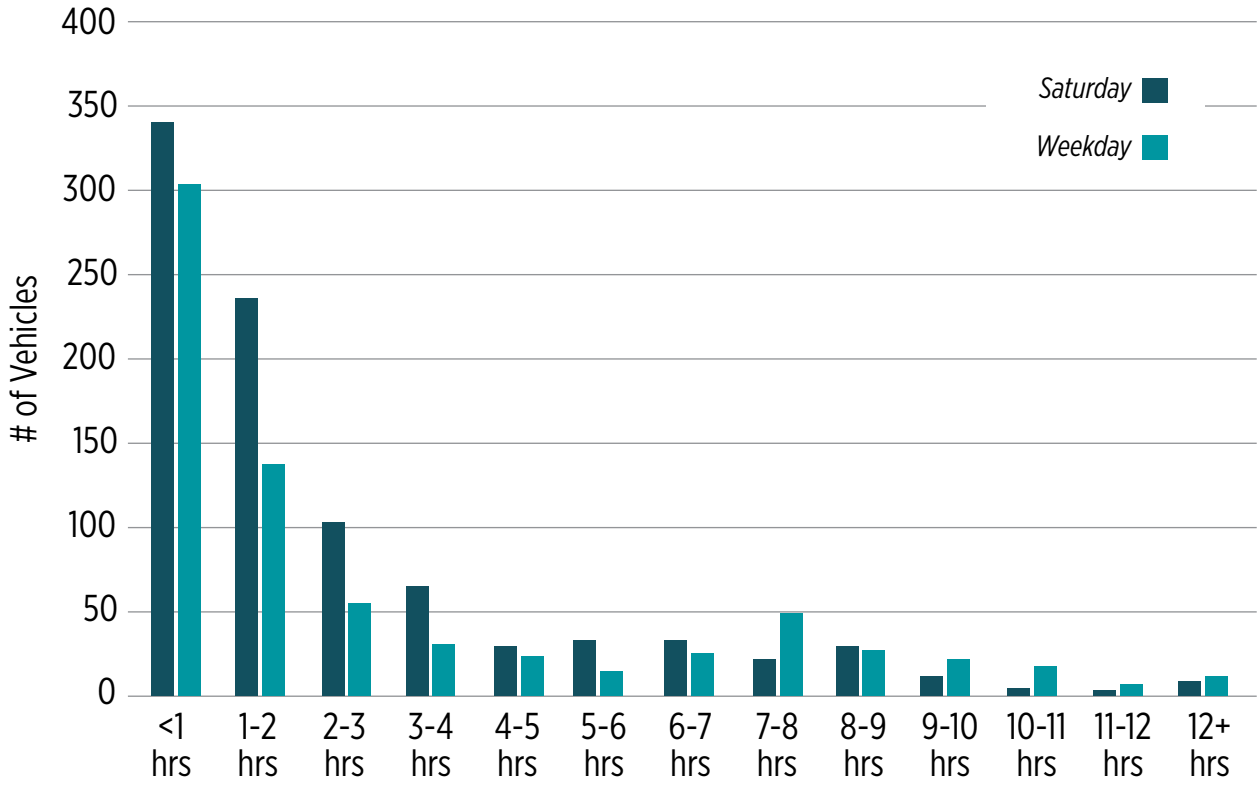


Figure 39: Weekday Occupancy of Time-Limited Parking on Block 149

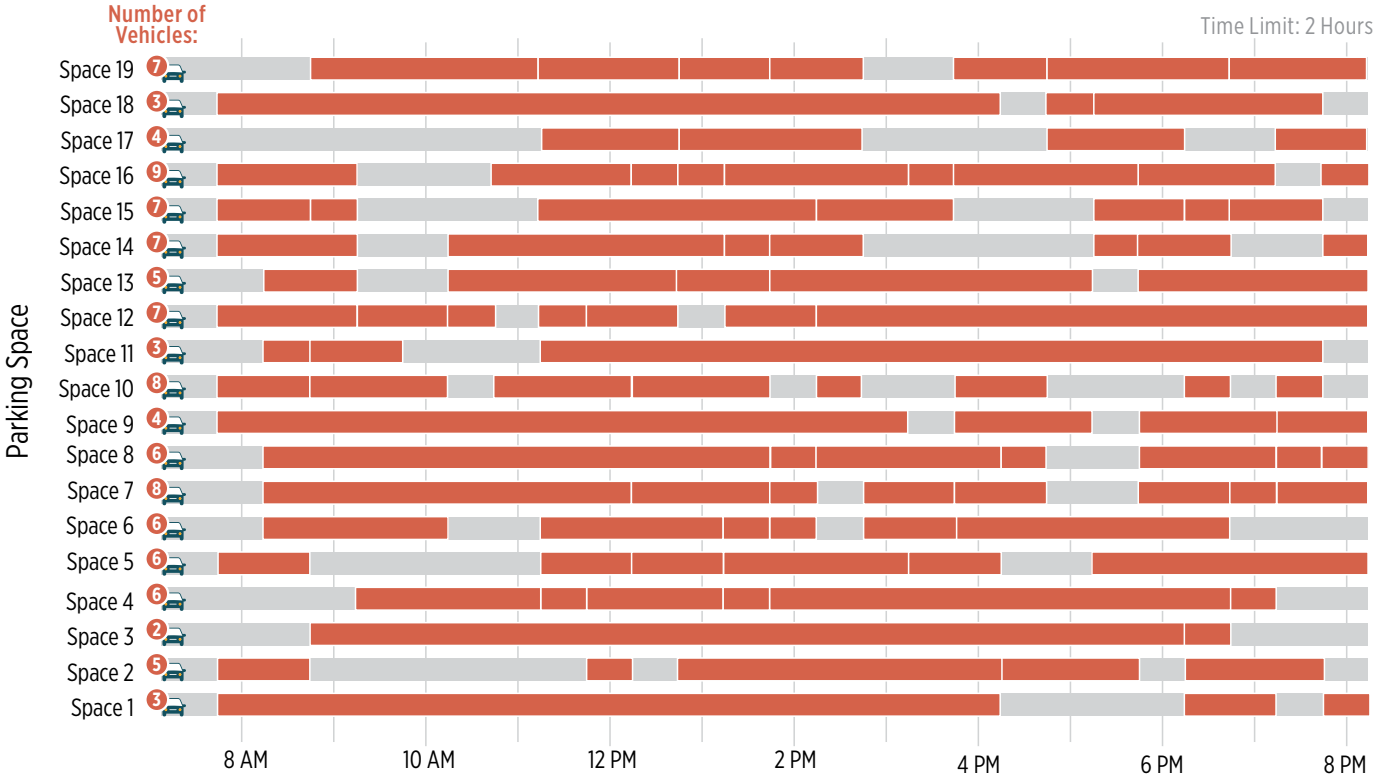


Figure 40: Average Duration of Stay, Weekday

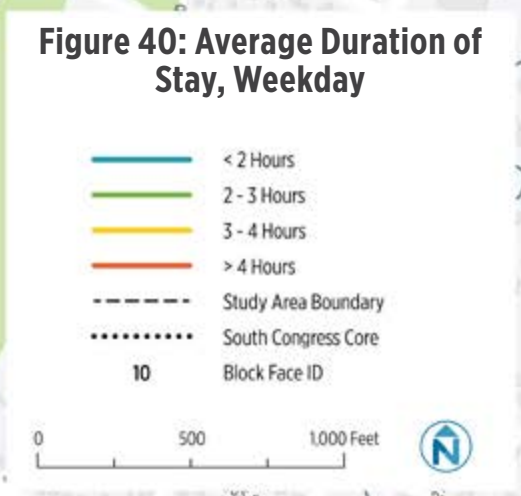


Figure 41: Average Duration of Stay, Saturday

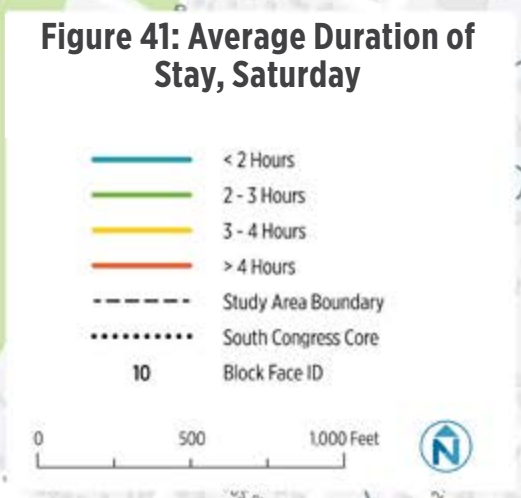


Figure 42: Summary of Inventory, Peak Occupancy, and Turnover by Zone

Zone ID and Name[2]		Inventory (# of Spaces)					% of Supply	Peak Occupancy[4]		Vehicles per Space		Avg. Duration (hours)	
		On-Street	Off-Street[3]			Total		% Occupied	Time Period	Weekday	Saturday	Weekday	Saturday
			Surveyed	Non-Surveyed	Total								
1	South Central Waterfront	18	1,446	170	1,616	1,634	30.4%	87.8%	First Thursday, 10 AM - 12 - PM	Data not collected			
2	Texas School for the Deaf	Data not collected											
3	South River City	198	177	38	215	413	7.7%	67.8%	Weekday, 10 AM - 12 PM	2.0	2.6	5.2	3.9
4	Lower SoCo	333	310	78	388	721	13.4%	63.6%	Saturday, 2 PM - 4 PM	3.2	4.0	3.0	2.2
5	East Bouldin	499	0	0	0	499	9.3%	51.1%	Saturday, 6PM - 8 PM	1.8	2.2	4.5	3.9
6	Central SoCo	536	644	58	702	1,238	23.0%	48.2%	First Thursday, 12 PM - 2 PM	4.1	4.9	2.2	2.0
7	Live Oak	362	0	0	0	362	6.7%	42.3%	Weekday, 2 PM - 4 PM	Data not collected			
8	Upper SoCo	208	118	182	300	508	9.5%	68.1%	First Thursday, 12 PM - 2 PM	1.6	3.4	2.1	1.6
9	Oltorf	Data not collected											
Total		**2,154**	**2,695**	**526**	**3,221**	**5,375**	**100%**	**59.7%**	**First Thursday, 12 PM - 2 PM**	**2.8**	**3.7**	**3.0**	**2.4**

[2] See Figure 22 for zone map.

[3] A sample-based approach was required to accommodate available ATD staffing resources. Approximately 90% of inventoried spaces were counted during the occupancy study, a very high sampling rate for a study area of this size.

[4] This is the observation period with the highest parking occupancy for that zone.

Policies, Regulations, and Programs

The following section summarizes the policies, regulations, and programs governing the current management of the parking system in South Congress.

Figure 43: Parking Policies, Regulations, and Programs in SoCo

Category	Policy/Program	Description
Permits	Residential Parking Permit (RPP)	The RPP program was instituted by the Austin City Council in 1996 to increase the availability on-street parking spaces for residents in areas where parking demand from nearby non-residential uses may be spilling over. Residents work with their Neighborhood Associations to apply to ATD for an RPP zone. At least 60% of the residents at addresses along the block face for which RPP is being considered must sign in support of the RPP application. Upon meeting this requirement, ATD will conduct a parking study—that parking study must indicate that the parking occupancy of the blocks is a least 75%, with no less than 25% of those vehicles being identified as "commuter traffic." Upon meeting the requirements, signs are installed, and parking permits are distributed to residents along the street. Enforcement of the zone starts two weeks after the installation of the sign. Permits cost $15 each. Each year, households can purchase 1 or 2 resident decal permits and 1 or 2 visitor hangtag permits depending on location. There are a total of 600 RPP spaces in the study area on 47 different block faces. Different block faces have the RPP program in effect for different times of day and day of week, as shown in Figure 27 and Figure 28.
Programs	Public Off-street Parking	Several areas throughout South Congress are signed for Public off-street parking, including under the South Congress Hotel. The facilities are managed not by the City of Austin, but by private operators, businesses, or both.
	Valet Parking	There are nine valet spaces throughout the South Congress area, such as those adjacent to the South Congress Hotel. Valet parking cost ranges from $12-$34.
	ZipCar	A single ZipCar is available for short-term car rental within the South Congress neighborhood—a space is reserved specifically for this vehicle.
Regulations	Time Limited Zones	Six block faces (comprising 64 spaces) on South Congress have a two-hour time limit for parking. These block faces are located directly adjacent to commercial and retail establishments.
	Customer Loading Zones	Seven block faces (20 spaces) have a customer loading regulation, some of which limit the amount of time customers can park (e.g., for take-out food).

Parking Experience

The parking experience is determined by more than just the price and the availability of spaces. For example, a certain block face, parking lot, or garage may be inefficiently utilized because people are unaware of these spaces, or because there is not convenient and comfortable access from these spaces to travelers' final destinations.

Wayfinding and Signage

Public off-street parking is generally signed, but wayfinding varies throughout the study area. There are different colors, fonts, and symbols to indicate the location of parking facilities and their respective regulations. A consistent parking "brand" does not exist in the SoCo area.

Some signage is obscured by trees or other structures, creating legibility challenges for drivers seeking available public parking.

Most lots have "No Parking" or towing signs within the facility or at specific spaces. The variety of signs and regulations can create user confusion and uncertainty about what parking is publicly available versus what is restricted to specific users. This often creates ticket anxiety and negative perceptions about the system.

Parking Information

The City of Austin does not offer online information for parking on South Congress—a Google search generates private information providers (e.g., TripAdvisor, ParkingPanda, etc.) with limited information and tips for parking. Doing the Streets

is a website that provides trip planning and event information about South Congress Avenue shops and restaurants and includes parking locations and pricing.[1]

Technology

Parking technology in the area is very limited and provides no real-time parking availability information. One lot has a pay-by-plate kiosk that offers payment via a smartphone application.

Walkability

Despite some challenges for pedestrians, including uneven pavement, sidewalk network gaps, and inconsistent shade and lighting, SoCo is one of the most popular districts for walking in Austin. SoCo's identity as a vibrant, walkable neighborhood is a valuable asset that can help support a successful parking strategy. Even so, the perceived walkability of SoCo can vary greatly between different types of users. Service employees with late or early shifts may be reluctant to walk to or from parking through poorly lit areas. People with mobility challenges may have difficulty navigating the irregular sidewalk network. Neighborhood residents may wish to avoid walking through busy shopping and dining areas on a daily basis.

1 http://www.doingthestreets.com/southcongress

Parking in SoCo: Top Five Takeaways

1. **There are nearly 5,400 parking spaces within the South Congress study area,** 60% of which are off-street, and 40% of which are on-street.

2. **Over half of all parking in the South Congress study area is completely unregulated**. 2/3 of on-street parking is unregulated, and nearly half (46%) of off-street parking is unregulated. These include some of the most popular, highly utilized blockfaces in the core business area of South Congress, as well as some adjacent off-street facilities that are significantly underutilized.

3. **Parking occupancy across the entire study area peaks at 60%**. Nevertheless, there are on-street spaces in the commercial core and off-street spaces north of Academy Drive that do routinely fill to capacity. Nearby on- and off-street parking goes underutilized.

4. **Parking is underutilized and could be regulated differently and signed better to encourage use**. Making these underutilized spaces more apparent and available to the public with obvious and consistent parking signage could help.

5. **RPP spaces are underutilized, regulations vary widely, and implementation is largely ad-hoc**. The RPP program presents opportunity for improvements focused on consistency, simplicity, and optimization of public right-of-way use for a variety of people.


FIRE LANE

[5]

Public Outreach

During April of 2019, the consultant team engaged with community members through a series of stakeholder discussions, as well as a travel and parking survey along the corridor. The **Phase I** outreach efforts were designed to gain insight into the travel behavior of SoCo workers, visitors, and residents, and to better understand how parking challenges were impacting the neighborhood today. This chapter provides a summary of the key themes and findings from these efforts.

Phase II of the parking strategy will include additional public outreach to facilitate strategy development, including further stakeholder discussions, community presentations, and public workshops.

Stakeholder Discussions

Stakeholder discussions were held on Wednesday, April 24, 2019. Discussion groups included residents, business owners, property developers, neighborhood organization members, and representatives from regional and state agencies (Figure 44).

Figure 44: Stakeholder Discussion Groups

Group	Number of Participants
South Congress Merchants Association	7
South Congress Public Improvement District	7
Bouldin Creek Neighborhood Association	6
South Central Waterfront Initiative Project Planners	2
South Congress Developers and Property Owners	11
State and Regional Stakeholders	2
South River City Neighborhood	1

The primary goals were to gather input from stakeholders about neighborhood parking needs and to provide an open forum for discussion about perceived challenges and opportunities for improvement. Discussions touched on a variety of subjects, many of which recurred throughout the day across multiple groups. Key themes, as presented to the consultant team by stakeholders, are summarized below.

Key Theme: Users of local businesses, especially employees, struggle to find available parking.

- The challenge of finding parking for employees—especially longer-term, off-street parking—is making hiring and retention difficult, which in turn can impact business growth.
- Employee safety is a concern. Walking four to five blocks from a place of employment to a car after a late shift, potentially with a large amount of cash on-hand, presents risks for employees.
- Employees in lower-wage jobs are unlikely to be able to afford paid parking.
- Some business owners try to discourage employees from parking directly on South Congress, but often it is their only option. People who consistently park in the area know there is little to zero parking enforcement on South Congress.
- Off-street parking facilities can be underutilized, but their use is typically restricted. There are barriers to sharing of off-street parking.
- Many visitors simply do not know where publicly available parking is located, as signage and wayfinding is limited or ineffective.

Key Theme: Most merchants, businesses, and non-residents believe the Residential Parking Permit (RPP) program is inefficient. By contrast, residents highly value the RPP program to minimize parking spillover.

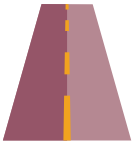
- Most businesses and commercial property owners believe the current application of the RPP program is inefficient. A consistent theme was that many blocks sit empty during the day, but employees or visitors are not allowed to park there, resulting in an underutilized parking asset. Many also believe the RPP has primarily shifted, rather than alleviated, parking challenges due to its ad hoc block-by-block implementation.
- The RPP program is seen by some business owners as an unfair privatization of what should be a shared public amenity.
- Many business owners believe the current RPP program could be improved by allowing employees to obtain permits, or by allowing time-limited parking for visitors in RPP zones during residential off-peak hours.

- Residents believe very strongly in the need for an RPP program to minimize spillover into their neighborhood and to avoid the nuisances associated with non-resident parking behavior, including blocked driveways and litter. The RPP program is currently the only parking management tool available to residents.
- RPPs have been implemented in a piecemeal way throughout the neighborhood with inconsistent rules—one block has a 24-hour restriction, while the immediately adjacent block's RPP is only for certain times of day. It can be very confusing for visitors.
- Another key concern is the use of RPPs by short-term rentals, and the question of whether short-term rental guests should get (free) access to on-street parking.

Key Theme: Holistic parking and mobility solutions—rather than piecemeal strategies—are needed.

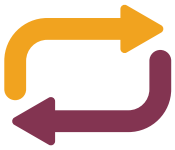
- To date, parking management has largely been ad hoc. RPPs have been rolled out on a block-by-block basis without district-wide coordination. Pricing and meters as potential solutions have primarily been presented independently, rather than as part of a comprehensive approach.
- A previous effort to create a SoCo Parking Benefit District (PBD), which included a plan for parking meters and a fund-sharing program for neighborhood transportation initiatives, was unsuccessful. During this planning process, there was significant opposition to parking meters.
- Without a comprehensive parking framework, parts of the parking supply can go unused, including empty blocks covered by RPP permits and off-street supply that is hard to find or unavailable for shared parking arrangements.

- Some business owners subsidize bulk transit passes, but those types of employee benefits are implemented on a business-by-business basis and are not coordinated.
- No formal body helps facilitate mobility options for businesses and their employees within the corridor. To date, Movability has not focused its work as a TMA in the South Congress district.
- Many people who work in the district live far away and cannot get to South Congress on transit without one or more bus transfers.
- Transit service does not run late enough into the night to accommodate the late night shifts of people working in South Congress.
- Many people who work in the district have multiple jobs or family needs that impact mobility options, travel choices, and vehicle availability.



Key Theme: The current design of South Congress Avenue is a challenge to ongoing economic vitality, safety, and access.

- The current bike and pedestrian facilities make multimodal travel difficult or unappealing. Challenges include unprotected bike lanes, narrow sidewalks, difficult pedestrian crossings, lack of neighborhood sidewalks, and lack of shade.
- Many believe that the back-in angled parking on South Congress causes vehicle delays and safety issues. SoCo stakeholders emphasized that back-in angled parking was implemented with little input from local businesses and residents.
- The lack of pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, including lighting and street trees, may reduce visitor willingness to walk even short distances to and from a parking spot. Walkability is especially limited during the hot summer months.
- Though changes to South Congress are generally desired, the potential for disruption during road construction and the uncertainty of change is a concern for both local business owners and residents.
- With few designated pick-up and drop-off areas in the neighborhood, ride-hailing vehicles often stop in unsafe locations and disrupt other traffic.
- Commercial vehicles sometimes compete for loading space with people who are parking, especially on alleyways behind South Congress businesses.



Key Theme: Systemic changes in the neighborhood further complicate and exacerbate the parking challenges.

- As neighborhood growth puts additional pressure on the available parking supply, tensions about who should have access to on-street parking have increased.
- The rise of short-term rentals in the residential areas adjacent to South Congress Avenue further complicates perceptions about who is using and benefiting from neighborhood parking.
- Most businesses and long-term residents value the historic, low(er)-density character of the neighborhood, and some are averse to projects that threaten to add density or allow structured parking.
- Developments at the northern and southern end of the study area may soon provide significant off-street parking supply. These developments offer opportunity to expand corridor parking supply through a shared parking program.

Such parking nodes must be connected to the neighborhood with mobility improvements.

- Spillover parking from South 1st Street is also increasing pressure on neighborhood parking supply in the blocks adjacent to South Congress.

Key Theme: The economics of parking in the district needs to be revisited.

- "Hide-and-ride" users—commuters who park on South Congress Avenue and ride the bus into downtown for work—are taking advantage of free and unregulated on-street parking, which would otherwise be available to neighborhood employees, residents, and visitors.
- RPP permit prices are very low; while there is a limit to how much can be legally charged for permits, a pricing structure that better recognizes the market value of on-street parking may be needed.
- Some types of parking programs are prohibitively expensive to enforce, even with new technologies. For example, the cost of deploying parking officers to enforce hourly time restrictions is typically greater than the ticket revenues collected, even with license plate recognition technology.

Key Theme: There is a sense of neighborhood fatigue around all these issues.

- Business owners, property owners, and neighborhood residents expressed frustration about long-running parking discussions and studies which have yielded few actionable results.
- Many stakeholders believe that dialogue with city staff and elected officials to express frustrations and implement solutions have not been successful.

Walking Tour

A walking tour of the South Congress neighborhood was held on Thursday, April 25. Approximately 15 stakeholder attendees convened to walk through the neighborhood and review parking conditions in the study area. Many of the discussion points raised in the stakeholder meetings were observed in the field, including RPP regulations, pedestrian and biking conditions, informal shared parking arrangements, wayfinding and signage, and back-in parking dynamics.


NO PARKING
9AM – 8PM
MON – SUN
EXCEPT WITH
AREA (8)
RESIDENTIAL
PERMIT


BACK–IN
ANGLE
PARKING
ONLY
2 HOUR
PARKING
8AM-6PM
HERE TO
CORNER

Travel and Parking Survey

A survey was conducted along the South Congress Avenue corridor to capture travel behavior and parking information from a cross-section of corridor users—residents, employees, and visitors. The survey allows for a better understanding of how people travel to SoCo, parking location by user type, perception of parking, and how travel behaviors may or may not impact parking solutions in the area.

The questions were administered as an intercept survey in the South Congress corridor, utilizing field surveyors with tablets. The survey collected data from a representative sample of users at various times of day and days of week.

A total of 627 completed surveys were collected between April 22 and April 30. Data elements collected are shown in Figure 45 and survey response locations are shown in Figure 46. Note that some variability in survey locations shown in Figure 46 is the result of GPS inaccuracies and geocoding anomalies.

Figure 45: Survey Elements

Category	Main Element	Sub-elements
Trip Characteristics	Trip purpose	If travel elsewhere, where?
	Mode of travel to SoCo	If parked, where?
		Ranking of parking experience
		If bike, type of bike?
		If ride-hail, which provider?
	Frequency of visits	
	Length of trip	
	Estimated spending	
Respondent Characteristics	5-digit zip code of home address	
	Age	
Observational by Surveyor	Gender	


Figure 46: Survey Response Locations
Study Area Boundary
Analysis Zones
Intercept Survey Location
0
500
1,000 Feet
1. South Central Waterfront
2. Texas School for the Deaf
3. South River City
4. Lower SoCo
5. East Bouldin
6. Central SoCo
7. Live Oak
8. Upper SoCo
9. Oltorf
WEST RIVERSIDE DRIVE
SOUTH CONGRESS AVENUE
SOUTH 1ST STREET
SOUTH 3RD STREET
WEST JAMES STREET
WEST GIBSON STREET
WEST ELIZABETH STREET
JEWELL STREET
WEST MONROE STREET
WEST MILTON STREET
SOUTH 2ND STREET
WEST ANNIE STREET
WEST MARY STREET
WEST JOHANNA STREET
CROCKETT STREET
WEST LIVE OAK STREET
FLETCHER STREET
WEST OLTORF STREET
WILSON STREET
FOREST AVENUE
EUCLID AVENUE
LINDELL AVENUE
POST ROAD
EVA STREET
ROMA STREET
NEWTON STREET
MUSIC LANE
ACADEMY DRIVE
PARK LANE
THE CIRCLE
MELISSA LANE
EAST RIVERSIDE DRIVE
SUNNY LANE
BICKLER ROAD
NEWNING AVENUE
SUNSET LANE
EAST MONROE STREET
DRAKE AVENUE
BRACKENRIDGE STREET
EAST ANNIE STREET
EAST MARY STREET
EAST SIDE DRIVE
ALAMEDA DRIVE
ALTA VISTA AVENUE
LOCKHART DRIVE
FAIRMOUNT AVENUE
TERRACE DRIVE
LELAND STREET
EAST LIVE OAK STREET
BROOKLYN STREET
ROSEDALE TERRACE
ALGARITA AVENUE
MARIPOSA DRIVE
BOULEVARD

Figure 47: Survey Response Location Summary

Zone ID	Zone Name	Peak Occupancy	Peak Occupancy Period	Survey Responses	% of Responses	Drove Alone Responses	Drive Alone Rate
1	South Central Waterfront	87.8%	First Thursday, 10 AM - 12 PM	55	8.8%	30	54.5%
2	Texas School for the Deaf			13	2.1%	8	61.5%
3	South River City	67.8%	Weekday, 10 AM - 2 PM	86	13.7%	32	37.2%
4	Lower SoCo	63.6%	Saturday, 2 PM - 4 PM	209	33.3%	109	52.2%
5	East Bouldin	51.1%	Saturday, 6 PM - 8 PM	7	1.1%	4	57.1%
6	Central SoCo	48.2%	First Thursday, 12 PM - 2 PM	172	27.4%	96	55.8%
7	Live Oak	42.3%	Weekday, 2 PM - 4 PM	0	0.0%	-	-
8	Upper SoCo	68.1%	First Thursday, 12 PM - 2 PM	64	10.2%	30	46.9%
9	Oltorf			21	3.3%	7	33.3%
	Total	**59.7%**	**First Thursday, 12 PM - 2 PM**	**627**	**100%**	**316**	**50.4%**

Figure 48: Survey Respondent Home Address Location

Respondent Home Address Location	Share of Respondents
Austin	52.2%
Austin Suburbs	17.4%
Other Places in Texas	8.9%
Other States in the U.S.	18.5%

Parking Dashboard

Additional parking data and analysis can be viewed using the interactive SoCo Parking Dashboard, which is available online at: https://nelsonnygaard.shinyapps.io/soco_dashboard/

User Groups

All survey respondents were asked to describe the purpose of their trip to the SoCo area. The distribution of those trip purposes is described in Figure 49.

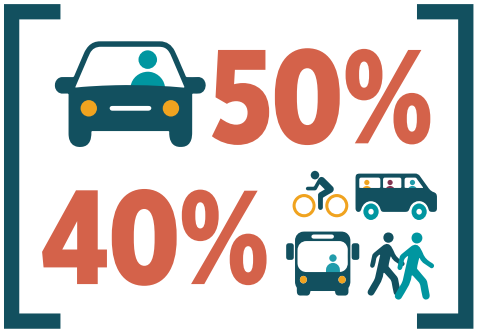
Most respondents (53%) were in SoCo for relatively short, utilitarian purposes: shopping, running errands, dining, meeting with friends or family, sightseeing, or recreating. A quarter of the respondents were in South Congress traveling to work. An additional fifth of respondents were residents (11%) or staying in the area temporarily (10%).

These trip purposes were grouped into four primary user groups, plus an "other" group, for analysis purposes.

Figure 49: Respondent Trip Purpose by User Group

Trip Purpose	By Trip Purpose		User Group	By User Group	
	# of Respondents	% of Respondents		# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Dining out/Drinking	101	16.1%	Shopping, Errands, Dining, Social, and Recreation	334	53.3%
Shopping/Browsing	90	14.4%			
Meeting with friends/family	59	9.4%			
Entertainment/Sight-seeing	51	8.1%			
Running errands	25	4.0%			
Exercise	8	1.3%			
Work	154	24.6%	Employee	154	24.6%
I live here	70	11.2%	Resident	70	11.2%
I am a visitor with lodging in the South Congress area	62	9.9%	Lodging Visitor	62	9.9%
I am passing through or traveling elsewhere	6	1.0%	Other	7	1.1%
Other, please specify	1	0.2%			
Total	**627**	**100%**	**Total**	**627**	**100%**

Summary of Key Findings: Travel Mode



Half of respondents come to South Congress by driving alone in a personal vehicle. More than 40% of respondents arrive by carpooling, bus, walking, biking, or other shared mobility service. People who work in the area are the most likely user group to drive alone or carpool.

Walking is a popular way of accessing SoCo. The highest rates of walking were among residents and lodging visitors. The highest rate of ride-hail and bicycle use was among lodging visitors.

Summary of Key Findings: Length of Trip

Almost 75% of respondents indicated that they stay in SoCo for less than four hours. The most common trip length for respondents (33%) was between one and two hours. Nearly half of these travelers were shopping, running errands, dining, or making social trips.

Summary of Key Findings: Frequency of Visits

The SoCo area attracts repeat visitors. More than 70% of respondents come a few times per month or more. Lodging visitors are the most likely user group to be first-time visitors. Most of those coming to SoCo more than four times a week either work or live in SoCo.

Summary of Key Findings: Parking Location

50% of lodging visitors parked in the Central SoCo area. People making short trips to SoCo and people who work in SoCo most often park in the Lower SoCo and Central SoCo areas.

50%
of Lodging Visitors Park in Central SoCo

Summary of Key Findings: Parking Experience

50%
Satisfied or Extremely Satisfied

Overall, half of respondents rated their parking experience "satisfying" or "extremely satisfying." The parking experience was rated most highly among lodging visitors and general visitors.

People working or living in SoCo rated the parking experience lower, with residents giving the worst average rating.

Summary of Key Findings: Planned Spending

Lodging visitors planned to spend the most money, on average. Short-term visitors planned to spend more than $25 but less than $100. Travelers using ride-hail services tended to spend more money than travelers using other modes of transportation, on average.

Short-Term Visitors Plan to Spend Between
$25 - $100

Public Outreach: Top Five Takeaways

1. **Parking management in South Congress needs a more systematic and holistic approach.** Many of SoCo's parking management programs and regulations are ad-hoc and uncoordinated, including the Residential Parking Permit program (RPP), a lack of consistent time limited zones on key blocks in core areas, limited coordination among employers around parking and transportation, and other issues.

2. **Employees, visitors, and residents are competing for some of the same convenient, core area parking spaces.** A comprehensive set of strategies needs to be developed for how parking spaces in South Congress are prioritized for different uses based on location and land use. Employers feel that RPP spaces occupy much of the on-street parking employees and visitors would like to be able to use, and residents feel there is too much parking overflow into residential neighborhoods.

3. **Almost half of people traveling to South Congress arrive by some other mode than driving alone.** This is a very high rate of non-drive-alone travel, and a holistic parking strategy for the neighborhood could help further reduce drive-alone rates. Parking and transportation demand management strategies that encourage and reward alternatives to driving alone can help ensure that parking in SoCo is used as efficiently as possible.

4. **Over half of people traveling to South Congress are making short trips**—visiting for shopping, errands, dining, social engagements, and recreation. These types of trips support the South Congress economy and typically take less than four hours. Less than half of them are made by people driving alone. The majority of these people are satisfied with their parking experience.

5. **Residents had the lowest opinion about the parking experience in South Congress**. Visitors had the highest opinion, and employees were evenly spread in the middle. Finding a parking management approach that addresses residents' concerns but enables employees and visitors to easily access SoCo remains a key priority for Phase II.

[A]

Appendix

Survey Results and Key Findings

Travel Mode

- Half of respondents come to South Congress by driving alone in a personal vehicle. Another 7% arrive by driving alone in car share vehicle.
- More than 40% of respondents arrive by carpooling, bus, walking, biking, or other shared mobility service.
- Mode choice varies by trip purpose. Area employees are the most likely user group to drive alone or carpool. Residents and visitors are less likely to drive to SoCo.
- Walking is a popular way of accessing SoCo. The highest rates of walking were among residents and lodging visitors.
- Residents and employees are most likely to ride the bus, at 16% and 10% respectively.
- The highest rate of ride-hail and bicycle use was among lodging visitors.

Figure 50: Respondent Travel Mode, by User Group

Travel Mode	Resident	Lodging Visitor	Shopping, Errands, Dining, Social, and Recreation	Work	Total Count by Mode	Total Proportion by Mode	Proportion of Non-SOV Travelers
Drove Alone (personal vehicle)	45.7%	33.9%	47.0%	67.5%	316	50.4%	-
Walked	27.1%	24.2%	12.3%	7.8%	88	14.0%	28.3%
Carpool/Vanpool	2.9%	11.3%	13.2%	6.5%	65	10.4%	20.9%
Drove alone (car share/ rental vehicle)	1.4%	11.3%	10.2%	2.6%	46	7.3%	14.8%
Bus	15.7%	8.1%	3.9%	9.7%	45	7.2%	14.5%
Ridehail/Taxi	0.0%	8.1%	6.9%	2.6%	33	5.3%	10.6%
Bicycle, Scooter, Skateboard	5.7%	3.2%	5.1%	2.6%	27	4.3%	8.7%
Dropped off by family/ friend	1.4%	0.0%	0.9%	0.6%	5	0.8%	1.6%
Total Count by User Group	**70**	**62**	**334**	**154**	**627**	**100%**	**100%**

Note: Percentages within user group. 'Other' groups excluded for the sake of brevity.

Length of Stay

- Almost 75% of respondents indicated that they stay in SoCo for less than four hours.
- The most common trip length for respondents (33%) was between one and two hours. Nearly half of these travelers were shopping, running errands, dining, or making social trips.
- SoCo employees are most likely to stay for extended periods of time. Almost 70% of employee respondents stay four hours or more.

Figure 51: Respondent Length of Stay, by User Group

Length of Stay	Resident	Lodging Visitor	Shopping, Errands, Dining, Social, and Recreation	Work	Total Count by Length of Stay	Total Proportion by Length of Stay
Less than 30 minutes	2.9%	6.5%	5.4%	5.2%	34	5.4%
30-60 minutes	10.0%	3.2%	12.0%	2.6%	53	8.5%
1-2 hours	30.0%	32.3%	45.8%	8.4%	208	33.2%
2-4 hours	28.6%	29.0%	29.3%	14.9%	162	25.8%
4-8 hours	7.1%	12.9%	4.8%	44.8%	98	15.6%
More than 8 hours	21.4%	16.1%	2.7%	24.0%	72	11.5%
Total Count by User Group	**70**	**62**	**334**	**154**	**627**	**100%**

Note: Percentages within user group. 'Other' groups excluded for the sake of brevity.

Frequency of Visits

- The SoCo area attracts repeat visitors. More than 70% of respondents come a few times per month or more.
- Most of those coming to SoCo more than four times a week either work or live in SoCo.
- Lodging visitors are the most likely user group to be first-time visitors.

Figure 52: Frequency of Visits, by User Group

Visit Frequency	Resident	Lodging Visitor	Shopping, Errands, Dining, Social, and Recreation	Work	Total Count by Visit Frequency	Total Proportion by Visit Frequency
This is my first time	5.7%	48.4%	18.9%	5.2%	108	17.2%
Once a month or less	2.9%	19.4%	13.5%	7.8%	72	11.5%
A few times a month	7.1%	11.3%	29.0%	9.7%	126	20.1%
1-3 times a week	11.4%	8.1%	23.4%	18.8%	120	19.1%
4-6 times a week	8.6%	8.1%	6.9%	33.8%	86	13.7%
Every day	64.3%	4.8%	8.4%	24.7%	115	18.3%
Total Count by User Group	**70**	**62**	**334**	**154**	**627**	**100%**

Note: Percentages within user group. 'Other' groups excluded for the sake of brevity.

Parking Location

Figure 53 describes the distribution of people parking by zone and user group – see zones in Figure 46.

- The highest proportion of residents parked in the South River City and Lower SoCo areas.
- The highest proportion of lodging visitors parked in the Central SoCo area.
- The highest proportion of short utilitarian/recreational visits parked in the Lower SoCo/Central SoCo areas.
- The highest proportion of employees parked in the Lower SoCo/Central SoCo areas.

Figure 53: Parking Location (for Those Who Drive Alone), by User Group

Analysis Zone ID and Name		Resident	Lodging Visitor	Shopping, Errands, Dining, Social, and Recreation	Work	Total Count	Total Proportion
1	South Central Waterfront	12.1%	7.1%	11.0%	5.6%	33	9.1%
2	Texas School for the Deaf	3.0%	0.0%	3.1%	1.9%	9	2.5%
3	South River City	24.2%	17.9%	12.6%	3.7%	41	11.3%
4	Lower SoCo	24.2%	10.7%	35.6%	40.7%	125	34.5%
5	East Bouldin	0.0%	7.1%	0.5%	0.9%	4	1.1%
6	Central SoCo	21.2%	50.0%	24.1%	35.2%	105	29.0%
7	Live Oak	Survey not Collected					
8	Upper SoCo	12.1%	3.6%	12.0%	8.3%	37	10.2%
9	**Oltorf**	**3.0%**	**3.6%**	**1.0%**	**3.7%**	**8**	**2.2%**
	Total County	**33**	**28**	**191**	**108**	**362**	**100%**

Note: Percentages within zone.

Parking Experience

- Overall, half of respondents rated their parking experience "satisfying" or "extremely satisfying." Another 25% were "neutral."
- Less than one of ten respondents were "extremely dissatisfied" with their parking experience.
- The parking experience was rated most highly among lodging visitors and general visitors.
- Those working or living in SoCo rated the parking experience lower, with residents giving the worst average rating.

Figure 54: Parking Experience (Drive Alone Respondents Only)

Parking Experience	Resident	Lodging Visitor	Shopping, Errands, Dining, Social, and Recreation	Work	Total Count by Satisfaction Category	Total Proportion by Parking Experience
Extremely Dissatisfying (1)	17.1%	5.7%	5.1%	14.4%	37	8.7%
Dissatisfying (2)	14.3%	11.4%	14.0%	17.8%	63	14.8%
Neutral (3)	31.4%	28.6%	27.2%	21.2%	110	25.8%
Satisfying (4)	20.0%	34.3%	35.7%	22.0%	133	31.1%
Extremely Satisfying (5)	17.1%	20.0%	17.9%	24.6%	84	19.7%
Total Count by User Group	**35**	**35**	**235**	**118**	**427**	**100%**
Average Parking Experience Rating	**3.06**	**3.51**	**3.47**	**3.25**	**3.38**	

Note: Percentages within user groups. 'Other' groups excluded for the sake of brevity.

Planned Spending

- Lodging visitors indicate they plan to spend the most money, on average.
- Short-term visitors indicate they plan to spend more than $25 but less than $100.
- Given their trip purpose, most residents and workers tended to spend the least on their trips.
- Travelers using ride-hail services tended to spend more money than other modes, on average.

Figure 55: Planned Spending, by User Group

Money Planned to Spend	Resident	Lodging Visitor	Shopping, Errands, Dining, Social, and Recreation	Work	Total Count by Money Spent	Total Proportion by Money Spent
None	34.3%	14.5%	6.9%	31.2%	107	17.1%
Less than $25	27.1%	11.3%	16.5%	33.1%	132	21.1%
$26-$50	15.7%	16.1%	35.0%	20.8%	172	27.4%
$51-$100	18.6%	12.9%	26.9%	11.7%	130	20.7%
$101-$150	1.4%	12.9%	9.3%	1.9%	43	6.9%
More than $150	2.9%	32.3%	5.4%	1.3%	43	6.9%
Total Count by User Group	**70**	**62**	**334**	**154**	**627**	**100%**
Average Amount Spent by User Group	**$30**	**$90**	**$55**	**$25**	**$45**	

Note: Percentages within user group. 'Other' groups excluded for the sake of brevity.

Figure 56: Planned Spending, by Travel Mode

Travel Mode	None	Less than $25	$26-$50	$51-$100	$101-$150	More than $150	Total Count	Average Amount by Mode
Drove Alone (personal vehicle)	16.5%	23.7%	27.8%	21.8%	3.8%	6.3%	316	$45
Walked	19.3%	23.9%	21.6%	19.3%	5.7%	10.2%	88	$50
Drove alone (car share/rental vehicle)	2.2%	10.9%	45.7%	26.1%	13.0%	2.2%	46	$55
Bus	35.6%	24.4%	24.4%	11.1%	2.2%	2.2%	45	$25
Carpool/Vanpool	9.2%	16.9%	29.2%	21.5%	12.3%	10.8%	65	$60
Ridehail/Taxi	12.1%	9.1%	18.2%	24.2%	27.3%	9.1%	33	$75
Bicycle, Scooter, Skateboard	29.6%	22.2%	25.9%	7.4%	7.4%	7.4%	27	$40
Dropped off by family/ friend	40.0%	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5	$35
Total Count by User Group	**107**	**132**	**172**	**130**	**43**	**43**	**627**	**$50**

Note: Percentages within mode. 'Other' groups excluded for the sake of brevity.


RESERVED
PARKING
VAN
ACCESSIBLE