

South Congress Parking Strategy

Public Draft



**DOWN
AUSTIN TOWN
ALLIANCE**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Joseph Al-Hajeri, Austin Transportation Department

Andre Boudreaux, Downtown Austin Alliance

Casey Burack, Downtown Austin Alliance

Tien-Tien Chan, Austin Transportation Department

Donald Jackson, City of Austin | Economic Development Department

Cole Kitten, Austin Transportation Department

Matt Parkerson, South Congress Public Improvement District

Jason Redfern, Austin Transportation Department

Jeff Seiden, Bouldin Creek Neighborhood Association (BCNA)

Paula Kothmann, South River City Citizens Neighborhood Association (SRCC)

SRCC and BCNA representatives were added to the Project Management Team at the conclusion of Phase I/start of Phase II.

CONSULTANT TEAM

Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates

NuStats Research Solutions

South Congress Parking Strategy

Foreword	i
Project Overview	5
Summary of Key Findings	15
Parking Strategy Toolkit	25
Implementation Plan	61



MOTEL

SO CLOSE
YET
SO FAR AWAY

P
PUBLIC
PARKING

ONE WAY

WALKING

Person walking on sidewalk

A Note from the Austin Transportation Department

The COVID-19 pandemic has created many challenges, but we know that SoCo—and all of Austin—will recover. When that time comes, we must be ready with a plan of action to address SoCo’s long-standing parking issues and support a thriving, equitable neighborhood.

The parking and mobility challenges facing SoCo are the result of decades of success—SoCo is a vibrant and iconic neighborhood that is deeply beloved by those who live in, work in, and visit the district. While impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic may have changed how the district looks today, there is no doubt that the familiar bustle of activity in SoCo will return—and with it, so will parking and mobility challenges.

The parking strategies described in this report were developed before the full impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic reached Austin. These strategies are designed, however, to address fundamental parking and mobility challenges and support long-term neighborhood vitality. While the timeline for implementing some measures will be adjusted in light of the impacts of COVID, the underlying challenges and solutions remain the same.

In the meantime, there is lots of work to be done. Continued coordination among residents, merchants, employees, and the City of Austin is needed to further refine parking and mobility strategies. Management frameworks need to be created to support parking strategy implementation. Regulations and ordinances need to be updated to ensure that we are ready for action when the time is right.

Tracking local health and economic indicators will be key to developing a smart, strategic timeline for implementing these parking strategy recommendations. The City of Austin will work with SoCo residents, merchants, employees, and public health officials to monitor activity in the district and determine when the time is right for advancing key strategies. As conditions return to normal, it will be more important than ever to support SoCo with comprehensive solutions to the fundamental parking and mobility challenges facing the district.

Rob Spillar

Director, Austin Department of Transportation



[1]

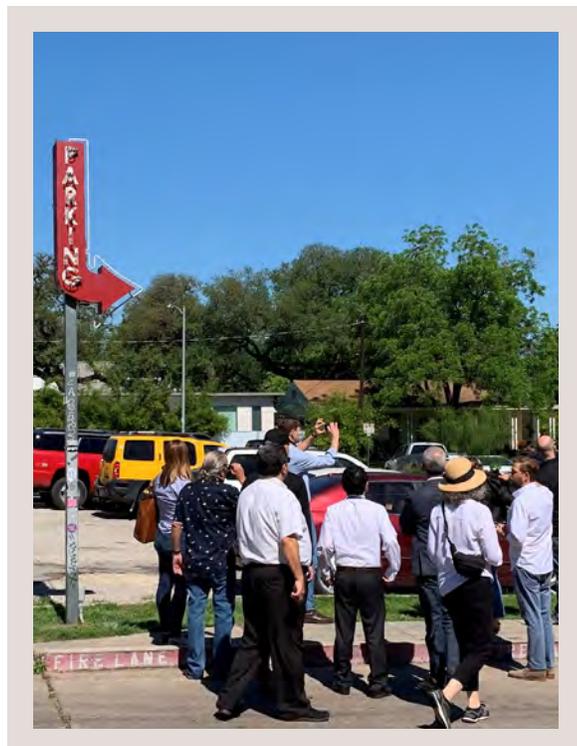
Project Overview



What is the South Congress Parking Strategy?

Parking has been a long-standing challenge in Austin's renowned South Congress (SoCo) district. Parking needs and issues vary for residents, businesses, employees, and visitors. Sporadic attempts to fix parking have resulted in a series of uncoordinated measures that improve parking for a few, but do not holistically address the district's systemic problems.

The South Congress Parking Strategy tackles these challenges head-on. Through a data-driven process, this project provides a **new vision and approach for parking in SoCo.**



Strategy Timeline: Phase I

Project Kickoff | March 2019

Stakeholder interviews, site visit and tour, and review of past plans and studies.

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.

Collect Data | April - May 2019

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

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.

The Strategy includes two core elements:

- A detailed assessment of the current parking system in the **South Congress Parking Strategy Fact Book**, documenting how many parking spaces there are, how they are used, and how they are managed. This analysis identified parking issues by block, lot, and garage, and how those challenges coalesce to impact the whole district.
- A **comprehensive parking toolkit** (Chapter 3), offering the Austin Transportation Department (ATD) and SoCo’s diverse stakeholders a flexible package of solutions. Some can be implemented quickly to address immediate needs in SoCo, while others can be refined and phased in over time as South Congress Avenue and its adjacent neighborhoods grow and evolve.

SoCo’s easiest choice is to continue down the well-worn path of the status quo where progress is slow, and frustration is common. This easy choice will not result in long-term success.

Instead, the **South Congress Parking Strategy provides a new road map** where success is possible, but its implementation will take time and require new trade-offs. SoCo’s dedicated community understands that although the challenge is complex, the neighborhood is ready for action.

Strategy Timeline: Phase II

Public Outreach

September 2019 - March 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.

Study and implementation on hold due to COVID-19

April 2020 - February 2021

Phased Implementation

Spring 2021

Strategy Development

September 2019 - March 2020

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

February - March 2021

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

What goals guided 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 recommendations regardless of physical changes to South Congress Avenue.



Support the city and 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 and incorporates input from all stakeholders.



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 (Figure 1) was 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.

The study area included **a realistic boundary for data collection and analysis for the purposes of this project**. As discussed in Chapter 3, the study area is not necessarily the boundary for a potential future parking district.

The South Congress Parking Strategy is NOT...

- *Project Connect or the Orange Line*
- *Land Development Code or CodeNEXT*
- *Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP)*
- *Citywide, downtown, or other area parking initiatives*

While these parallel efforts will have an impact on SoCo, they are all distinct and not part of this project's scope. The SoCo Parking Strategy has integrated their latest information and thinking to the greatest degree possible.

As described in Chapter 3, the Toolkit is designed to be flexible, allowing for adjustment as these key initiatives are finalized and implemented. Moving forward, the Parking Strategy will continue to be coordinated with the implementation of Project Connect and the Orange Line.

Figure 1: Study Area Map

- SoCo Parking Strategy Study Area Boundary
- South Congress Avenue Core Area

0 500 1,000 Feet



A Note on COVID-19

Like everywhere on the globe, South Congress Avenue and the broader SoCo district were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in March 2020. The societal priority to reduce the number of COVID-19 infections through social distancing led to an unprecedented shutdown of all but the most essential daily activities in SoCo and Austin.

While it remains uncertain to what degree, and for how long, the SoCo district will be impacted, it is important that SoCo be prepared to fix its parking challenges. Getting parking right will be even more crucial as SoCo navigates a new and unknown reality.

To that end, this report and its recommendations, include the following assumptions:



SoCo's vitality, **and demand for parking**, will return.



The work going into this report—data collection and analysis, stakeholder discussions, and community input—identified that SoCo's **existing parking policies and tools are fundamentally broken.**



Unless SoCo implements a new parking management approach, its **parking problems will return and slow SoCo's recovery.**



The SoCo Parking Toolkit in Chapter 3 provides a flexible package of strategies that will enable the district to nimbly **respond to and support the parking and mobility needs of all users.**



O'S



i



205
of Lard
COLD FRIED CHEESE
SANDWICHES

How was the community involved?

The SoCo Parking Strategy included frequent dialogue with SoCo’s diverse stakeholders. The SoCo community provided key insights about what it is like to live, work, and play in SoCo, how parking impacts economic vitality and quality of life, and what improvements should be prioritized. On-the-ground observations brought nuance to the project’s large data sets, ensuring a complete picture of issues and opportunities.

As summarized below, **engagement with the SoCo community occurred throughout the project and included a variety of methods.** Additional detail on stakeholder feedback can be found in the Fact Book.



Project Website

Hosted by the Downtown Austin Alliance, the [website](#) provided an **ongoing summary of project activities, meetings, materials, and reports.**

Project Management Team

Met bi-weekly to **guide project direction and provide feedback on project work, outreach activities and materials, and recommendations.** The team included representatives from the City of Austin, South Congress Public Improvement District (PID), South Congress Merchants Association (SCMA), South River City Citizens Neighborhood Association (SRCC), Bouldin Creek Neighborhood Association (BCNA), and Capital Metro.



Interviews and Focus Groups

The project team met with approximately 80 stakeholders to **gather input about neighborhood parking needs and to provide an open forum for discussion.** Participants included residents, business owners, property developers, neighborhood organization members, and representatives from regional and state agencies.

Walking Tour

The project team held a **walking tour** with a mix of residents, merchants, and other stakeholders to **observe parking conditions in the district**. Observations focused on key issues related to turnover and long-term parking on South Congress Avenue, private parking lots, residential permit parking, loading and alleyway access, signage and wayfinding, and overall transportation in the district.



Travel Survey

An **intercept survey** was conducted along the South Congress Avenue corridor to capture information from a representative cross-section of users—residents, employees, and visitors. The survey allowed for a **better understanding of how people travel to SoCo, where people prefer to park for different types of trips, and what people think are the key parking and mobility challenges facing SoCo today**. A total of 627 completed surveys were collected. Complete survey results can be found in the Fact Book.



Presentations and Workshops

The project team presented at standing meetings and hosted project-specific workshops to **update the community on work to date and solicit feedback on findings and recommendations**. The project team attended several neighborhood meetings and hosted resident/business workshops at key project milestones. A video series of project findings, draft strategies, and a survey were also posted to the website.





[2]

Summary of Key Findings



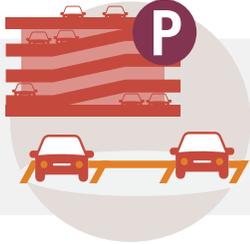
Summary of Key Findings

This study prioritized the collection, analysis, and documentation of SoCo data on the number of parking spaces, how they are managed, and how they are used. **The focus on detailed data collection and analysis** allowed for a robust, nuanced, and shared understanding of the parking challenges facing SoCo.

This chapter includes a brief summary of the key data sources, methods, and findings. Detailed information and discussion can be found in the [Fact Book](#).

Top 10 Findings

1 There are roughly **5,400 public and private parking spaces in the SoCo study area**. Roughly 63% of these spaces are in off-street lots and garages and 37% of parking is on-street.



2 Parking in the SoCo core, especially along South Congress Avenue, often fills to capacity for much of the day. However, **parking occupancy across the entire study area peaks at 60%**. Even when busy, many spaces in the SoCo district are underutilized.



3 **More than half of off-street parking is restricted to specific users**. Current restrictions create “ticket anxiety,” limit access to the general public, and result in underutilized parking.



4 **The most convenient and popular on-street spaces are free and/or unregulated**. Current management incentivizes drivers to circle and hunt for these spaces rather than pay for off-street parking.



5 **Many vehicles on South Congress Avenue are parked for 6-10 hours at a time**, or even all day. The lack of turnover in these prime spaces reduces visitor and customer access to businesses.



6 Enforcement in SoCo is limited and inconsistent. Enhanced enforcement is needed, but an enforcement-only approach is not possible given the ad hoc nature of current restrictions and limited financial resources for dedicated SoCo enforcement. Enforcement alone will also not fix some of SoCo's underlying problems.



7 There are 13 (and counting) residential parking permit (RPP) types in SoCo. RPPs vary from block to block, creating confusion and making it hard to enforce. Blocks with RPP are especially underutilized, typically peaking at about 30-40% occupancy. In 2020, RPP fees were updated to help manage demand and to better reflect program administration and enforcement costs.



8 Parking wayfinding is limited, and signage is inconsistent. The lack of information creates a confusing customer experience, makes it difficult to communicate the rules, and does not direct drivers to available parking.



9 Passenger and commercial loading cannot be fully accommodated in the alleyways, pushing loading activity to South Congress Avenue and neighborhood streets. Enhanced management of loading can reduce congestion and illegal parking, improve safety, and minimize disruptions to transit riders, bicyclists, and residents.



10 More than 40% of all trips, and 33% of employee trips, to SoCo are by transit, biking, walking, scooting, carpooling, car sharing, or drop-off. The popularity of SoCo is directly related to its unique level of access by means other than driving. Parking solutions must support and incentivize access by all travel modes.



Summary of Methods



ATD staff collected **inventory data** for public and private on- and off-street parking spaces to understand **how much parking exists in SoCo today**. Parking lots with 10 or fewer spaces and private residential parking in garages or driveways were not counted.

ATD staff collected **occupancy data** for the inventoried on- and off-street parking spaces to understand **how many vehicles park in SoCo on a typical weekday and weekend**. Counts were conducted over the course of a few weeks to capture a representative sample of parking behavior.

ATD staff collected **turnover data** for a sample of on-street spaces to understand **how long vehicles typically park** on South Congress Avenue and in the nearby neighborhoods.

Parking and travel behavior data was collected through an **intercept survey** to understand how and why people travel to and from SoCo.

Site tours were utilized to document conditions and challenges on the ground.

The project team **reviewed related planning efforts, municipal policy, and additional data sets** to ensure a complete understanding of growth, policy, and transportation trends for SoCo.

Stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and workshops were held to better understand the variety of parking challenges and test potential solutions with the community.

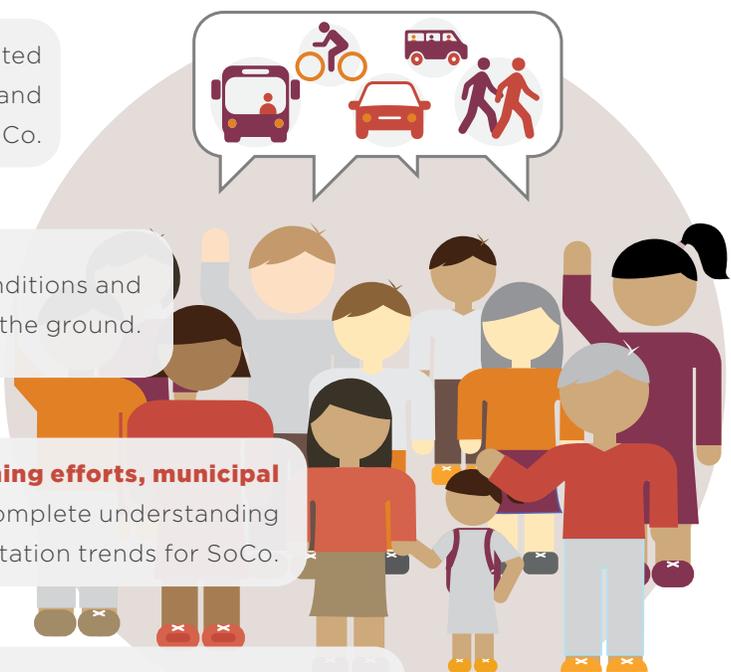


Figure 2: Parking Inventory

Off-Street Parking

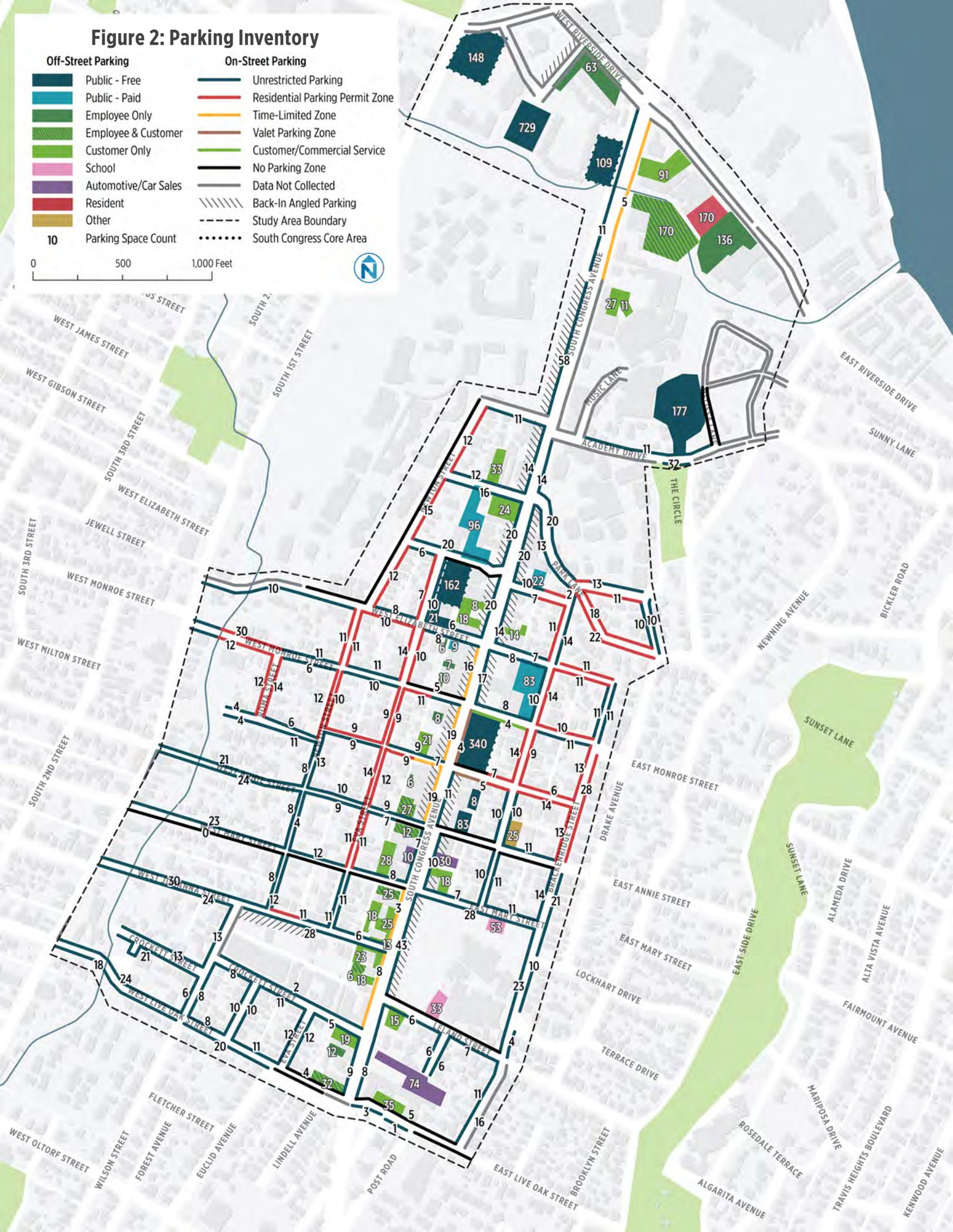
- Public - Free
- Public - Paid
- Employee Only
- Employee & Customer
- Customer Only
- School
- Automotive/Car Sales
- Resident
- Other

On-Street Parking

- Unrestricted Parking
- Residential Parking Permit Zone
- Time-Limited Zone
- Valet Parking Zone
- Customer/Commercial Service
- No Parking Zone
- Data Not Collected
- Back-In Angled Parking
- Study Area Boundary
- South Congress Core Area

10 Parking Space Count

0 500 1,000 Feet



Austin Parking FAQ

Parking management in SoCo is guided by existing citywide policies. **Citywide tools, technology platforms, and systems are also in place to support management and enforcement in SoCo.** As SoCo looks to revise its parking approach, a summary of frequently asked questions about parking in Austin is provided.

Who manages off-street parking?

Private off-street garages and lots are managed by **individual property owners**, often in partnership with third-party parking management companies. The **Austin Transportation Department** (ATD) manages some public, city-owned lots/garages in other parts of Austin, but does not currently manage any in SoCo.



Who manages on-street parking?

The **Austin Parking Enterprise**, a division of ATD, manages on-street parking throughout the city. This includes parking meters, parking enforcement, loading zones and permits, residential parking permits, car share parking, valet zones and permits, and compliance with city parking ordinances.



How is the Parking Enterprise funded?

The Parking Enterprise is an “enterprise fund,” meaning it is **self-funded by user fees** (i.e., meters and permits). The Parking Enterprise is independent from the General Fund and is **not supported by municipal or state taxes**. Similarly, the General Fund cannot utilize Parking Enterprise revenue.



How is parking enforcement funded? Where does citation revenue go?



Parking enforcement is funded by meter and permit revenue. Parking citations do not fund enforcement but are instead allocated to the General Fund. Because SoCo does not have paid on-street parking, **other meter areas in Austin currently subsidize enforcement in SoCo.**

How are on-street meter rates set?



City Council has granted **authority to the Transportation Department Director** to set rates based on several factors, including cost to support operations and level of parking occupancy. Staff can adjust rates up or down in response to parking demand by block or area, with a **minimum rate of \$2 per hour** and a maximum rate of \$5 per hour (not including special events). Rates can only be adjusted a maximum of four times per year.

What is a residential parking permit (RPP)? How is the program funded?



Residential parking permits (RPPs) are **intended to mitigate parking spillover on residential streets**, as they allow residents in certain areas to purchase a permit that exempts them from on-street parking time limits. RPPs require an application from the neighborhood and approval by ATD, and charges an application fee of \$350. **RPPs are funded by permits fees**, which have historically not covered the full cost of administering and enforcing the program. ATD updated RPP permit fees in 2020 to better reflect these costs. Residents in SoCo may purchase up to six permits per household – **permit costs range from \$20 for the first permit to \$70 for the sixth.**

Austin Parking FAQ (Continued)

**What is a Parking and Transportation Management District (PTMD)?
What happens with parking meter revenue in a PTMD?**



A **PTMD** allows residents and businesses to propose a boundary surrounding an area that will benefit from the installation of meters, where **a portion of the meter revenue raised within the district is dedicated for local projects**. To create a PTMD, a formal application must be submitted and certain conditions met for approval by City Council.

A PTMD advisory committee, comprised of local representatives, will advocate for public projects with support from ATD staff. There are currently four PTMDs in Austin – Mueller, Colorado River, East Austin, and the West Campus Parking Benefit District (PBD).

After subtracting out operating costs, net meter revenue is split 49%/51% between the Parking Enterprise and the local PTMD fund.

For every \$1 put in a PTMD meter, approximately \$.34 is returned to the district. PTMD revenue can fund a variety of parking, signage, streetscape, and multimodal improvements, including but not limited to new parking facilities.

What is Park ATX?



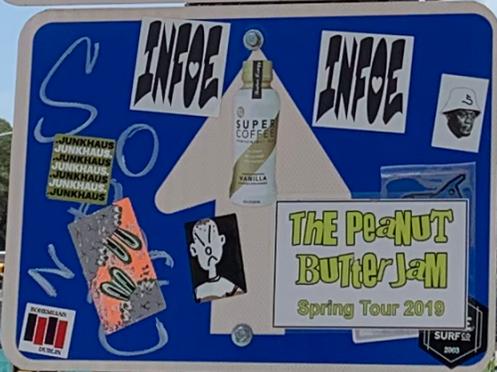
Park ATX is the universal **brand, signage, and technology system** that supports on-street parking management and paid parking in Austin. Park ATX allows for payment of parking through a mobile phone app and at parking kiosks.

How much on-site, off-street parking is required for a new development in SoCo?



Off-street parking requirements for new development are currently set by **Chapter 25.6 – Article 7 of the Land Development Code (LDC)**.

The proposed, and yet to be approved, revisions to the LDC would modify parking requirements in the city, including within SoCo.





BACK-IN ANGLE PARKING

← The Circle 100
W James

A METROBUS

WILDY PARKS

ENJOY SUMMER SAVINGS

CLUBS

[3]

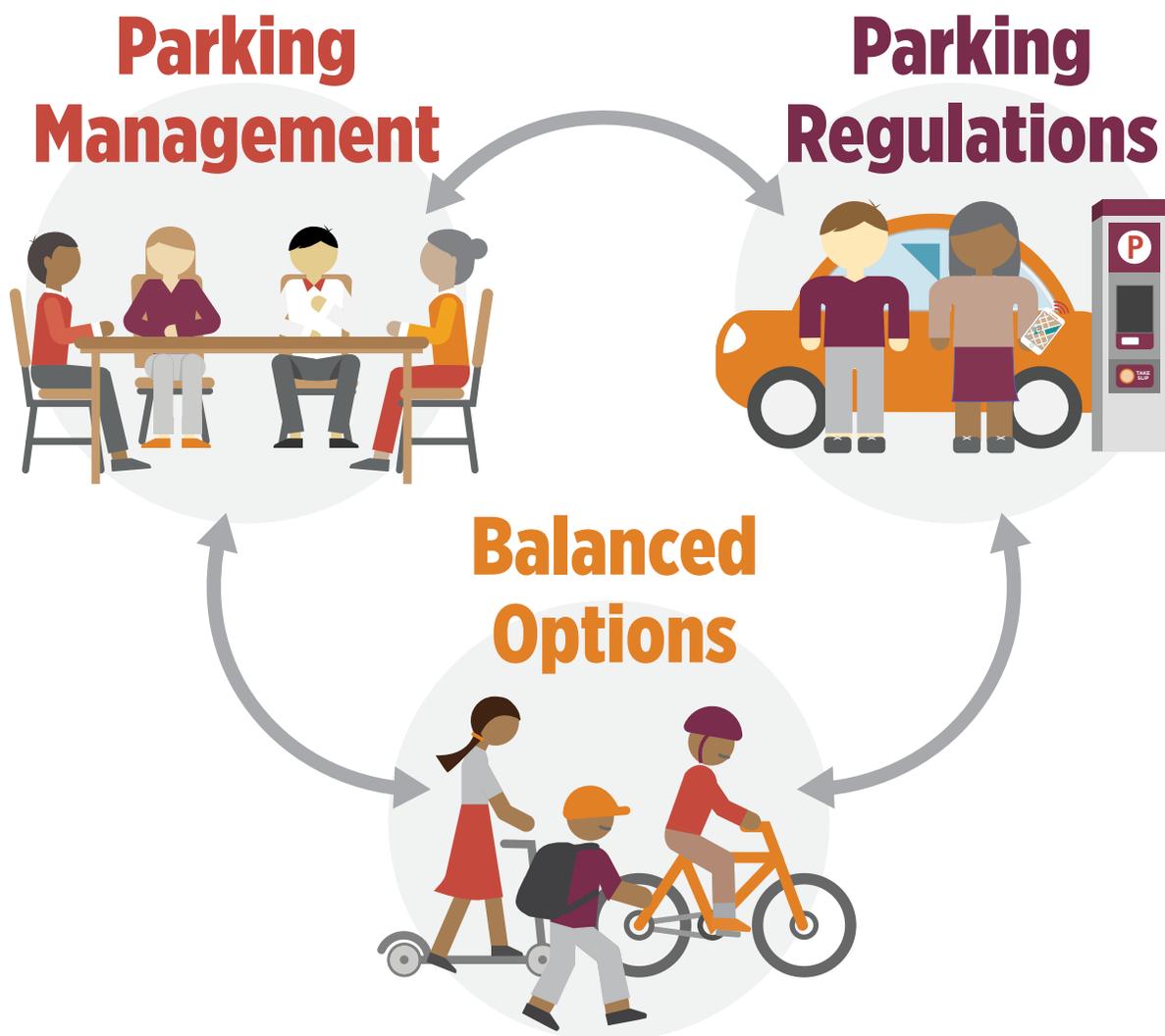
Strategy Toolkit



A Comprehensive Approach

The Strategy Toolkit is a coordinated package of **16 policies, programs, and systems** to address SoCo’s parking needs. There is no “silver bullet” solution to the parking challenges SoCo is facing—the toolkit reflects the need for a **comprehensive approach** that balances the many different needs of people who live in, work in, and visit SoCo.

The strategies in the Parking Toolkit are spread across three categories: **parking management, parking regulations, and balanced transportation options**. Success with any one of these categories will depend on the other two—they are designed to be complementary, synergistic, and interdependent. Over time, as SoCo continues to evolve and the parking and mobility needs of the district change, **strategies will need to be regularly updated and monitored** to ensure ongoing success for years to come.



Summary of Toolkit

M Parking Management

- M.1** Create a SoCo Parking and Transportation Management District (PTMD) to support parking management and multimodal access.
- M.2** Adopt formal parking goals and metrics. Collect and track data annually to support ongoing management.
- M.3** Implement consistent and equitable parking enforcement. Raise citation rates.
- M.4** Roll out a communications campaign for SoCo's parking and mobility options.
- M.5** Ensure the Land Development Code supports public access to shared parking as part of new larger developments.

R Parking Regulations

- R.1** Simplify and standardize the Residential Permit Program (RPP).
- R.2** Implement paid parking in SoCo to manage demand and generate turnover.
- R.3** Adjust regulations on South Congress Avenue and other streets.
- R.4** Provide employees with affordable off-street parking options.
- R.5** Pilot a universal valet program.

B Balanced Transportation Options

- B.1** Implement a comprehensive wayfinding program in SoCo.
- B.2** Provide incentives or subsidies to SoCo employees and/or residents.
- B.3** Enhance shared mobility service guidelines and implementation.
- B.4** Improve intersections and multimodal facilities throughout SoCo.
- B.5** Support evaluation of a new circulator shuttle.
- B.6** Plan for a new public parking supply.

MANAGE • STRATEGY M.1

Create a SoCo PTMD to support parking management and multimodal access.

Strategy Overview

- Chapter 12-7 of the Austin City Code allows for the creation of a Parking and Transportation Management District (PTMD) to address local parking challenges.
- PTMDs are guided by ATD rules, but a local Advisory Committee would determine SoCo priorities.
- In a PTMD, 51% of net parking revenue is returned to the district for local parking and transportation improvements. The Advisory Committee will develop an annual project and expenditure proposal for how ATD should spend net parking revenue.

Strategy Benefits



Provides the local management capacity and financial resources necessary to implement comprehensive parking reform in SoCo, while supporting multimodal travel.



Ensures that parking revenue generated in SoCo supports SoCo projects and priorities.



Creates a local entity to collaborate with ATD on parking and transportation issues.



Serves as a platform for business and employer coordination on mobility benefits and programs, such as discount transit passes.

Relative Cost: *Low*



Strategy Priority: *Very High*



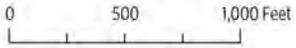
Action Steps

- 1 Create a local Advisory Committee and formalize meeting procedures.
- 2 Define a SoCo PTMD Boundary.
- 3 Submit formal PTMD application, documenting proposed boundary, need, regulations and tools, financial estimates, and expenditure priorities for SoCo.
- 4 Upon approval, implement paid parking (Measure R.1), other district-wide parking and mobility programs, and ongoing monitoring.
- 5 Update financial program and expenditure priorities each year.

Figure 3: Potential PTMD Boundaries

- SoCo Study Area
- - - - - Potential Boundary Option A
- - - - - Potential Boundary Option B

Future public engagement will determine boundary.



MANAGE • STRATEGY M.2

Adopt formal parking goals and metrics. Collect and track data annually to support ongoing management.

Strategy Overview

- A set of formal PTMD goals will guide parking management and use of revenue in support of SoCo’s unique needs. Potential focus areas: availability and turnover, customer-friendliness, employee access, safety, equity, neighborhood preservation, and economic vitality.
- A set of formal metrics, supported by consistent data collection and reporting, will allow for ongoing adjustment to rules, programs, and systems. Potential focus areas: public and private parking inventory, peak and average occupancy, turnover, RPP permits sold and utilization, citations, revenue/ expenditures, and mode split to SoCo.

Strategy Benefits

-  Establishes community consensus for parking policies in SoCo.
-  Provides long-term continuity and accountability for staff, stakeholders, and decision-makers.
-  Increases transparency of decision making and policy changes.
-  Ensures efficient resource allocation as SoCo trends emerge and evolve over time.

Relative Cost: *Very Low*



Strategy Priority: *Medium*



Action Steps

- 1** Adopt a formal set of goals and metrics in collaboration with the PTMD Advisory Committee. Communicate goals to public (Strategy M.4).
- 2** Utilizing study data as a baseline, develop and refine methods to include a combination of manual data collection and automated system reports. Collect data on a consistent basis.
- 3** Establish internal and external data sharing protocols, including making data “open source” via a data dashboard.
- 4** Each year, issue an annual report that is made publicly available.

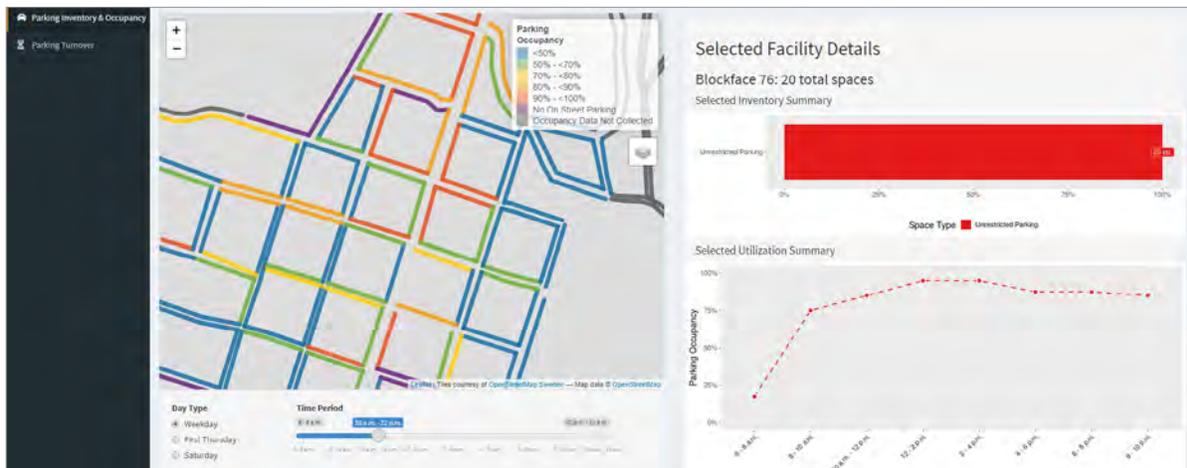
Key Details and Features



Data-Driven Management. Any parking regulations implemented today will need to be adjusted over time to respond to changes in demand. An ongoing data collection approach based on formally-adopted metrics and goals will enable the City to manage parking and adjust regulations in a way that is systematic and transparent to the community.



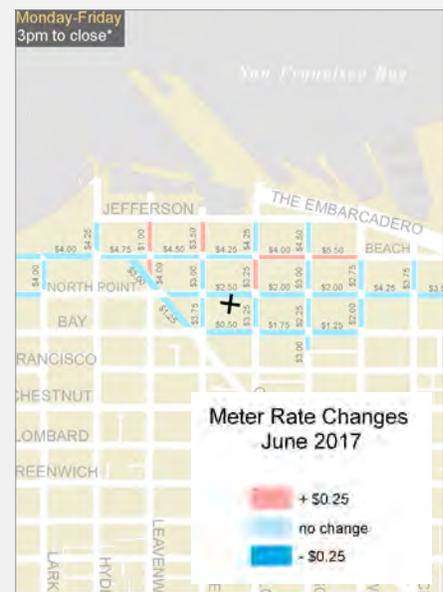
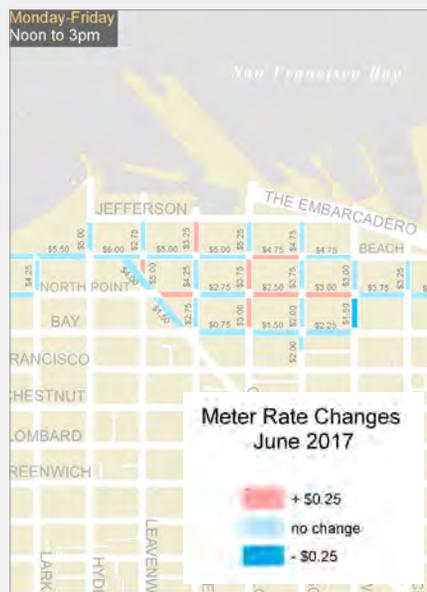
Data Dashboard. Sharing data directly with the community via a web-based data portal would help build confidence and make it easier to address future parking needs of the neighborhood. The SoCo Data Dashboard is an example of how a parking data could be maintained in an interactive website that provides a user-friendly visualization.



The SoCo Parking Dashboard is an example of how a SoCo PTMD could visualize and share parking data. It can be viewed online at: https://nelsonnygaard.shinyapps.io/soco_dashboard/

Case Study: SFPark (San Francisco, CA)

San Francisco uses data to dynamically manage on-street parking prices based on demand. The city makes rate adjustments about once per quarter—each adjustment announcement is accompanied by public-facing maps, progress reports, and supporting data. (<https://www.sfmta.com/demand-responsive-parking-pricing>)



MANAGE • STRATEGY M.3

Implement consistent and equitable parking enforcement. Raise citation rates.

Strategy Overview

- Paid parking can fund more consistent and effective enforcement in SoCo.
- Dedicated enforcement officers in SoCo should target key issues related to long-term parking, construction impacts, residential spillover, and turnover on South Congress Ave.
- A parking ambassador program that is focused on customer service and education, not just punitive enforcement, can support a thriving commercial district.
- In addition to education and outreach, higher citation rates are required to ensure that enforcement is a real deterrent.

Strategy Benefits

-  Addresses common SoCo violations, especially long-term parking in prime spaces.
-  Increases transparency and accountability of the parking program.
-  Provides more cost-effective and equitable distribution of enforcement resources.
-  Ensures that citations are working as an effective deterrent.

Relative Cost: *Medium*



Strategy Priority: *High*



Action Steps

- 1** Increase parking citation rates via City Council action.
- 2** Develop SoCo-specific enforcement metrics and schedule.
- 3** Use SoCo's paid parking revenue to augment staffing and implement more efficient enforcement tools and systems.
- 4** Revise training programs as needed for SoCo-specific rules and programs.
- 5** Collect data to assess enforcement metrics. Conduct a periodic review with parking personnel. As part of Strategy M.2, include enforcement data in public reports.

Key Details and Features



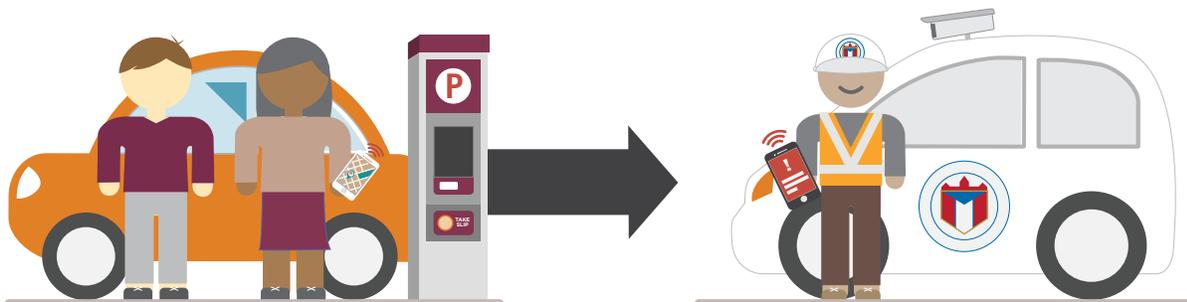
Enforcement Technology. New technologies can make parking enforcement more cost-efficient and effective. License plate readers (LPRs) use cameras to quickly capture license plate information and cross-check data with previous observations to identify violators. LPRs can also substantially improve permit programs, creating “virtual” permits that can be easily purchased, shared, administered, and enforced. Systems also have safeguards for data privacy.



Deterring Parking Violations. If parking citation rates are too low, they do not effectively deter motorists from violating parking regulations—there is no financial incentive to follow the rules when it is cheaper not to do so. When off-street parking options are more expensive than the cost of a parking citation, motorists looking for longer-term parking are more likely to simply park on the street and violate time restrictions. Adjusting parking citation rates will support more effective and consistent parking enforcement in SoCo.



Local Funding for Enforcement. Today, parking enforcement in SoCo is subsidized by parking meter revenues from other parts of Austin. Improving or expanding enforcement in SoCo will require identifying additional local funding. Forming a SoCo PTMD (Strategy M.1) and implementing paid parking (Strategy R.1) would provide the necessary funds for implementing consistent and equitable parking enforcement in the neighborhood.



MANAGE • STRATEGY M.4

Roll out a communications campaign for SoCo's parking and mobility options.

Strategy Overview

- A robust and diverse communications program will ensure that all are aware of the why, what, how, and where of SoCo parking and mobility.
- Additional marketing will allow SoCo to maximize use of off-street parking and shared parking programs, while incentivizing use of transit, carpooling, and active modes.
- Key elements could include: SoCo-specific website and social media channels; user-friendly maps, brochures, and FAQs on SoCo's PTMD, paid parking, RPP, and mobility options; messaging and collateral at ParkATX kiosks/apps; ongoing trainings, pop-up events, and informational sessions with merchants, employees, and residents; and information on transit and multimodal options.

Strategy Benefits



Improves the user awareness and convenience of SoCo's parking and transportation system.



Reduces overall parking demand and distributes vehicles to off-street facilities.



Communicates benefits of paid parking revenue that supports SoCo's priorities.



Leverages existing marketing programs such as ParkATX, SmartTrips, and doingthestreets.com

Relative Cost: *Medium*



Strategy Priority: *High*



Action Steps

- 1 Develop communications program, defining key messages, collateral, and tools.
- 2 Roll out communication effort in coordination with paid parking implementation.
- 3 Update PTMD expenditure plan and allocate revenue as needed to support communications.
- 4 Explore partnerships with other parking and mobility efforts, such as Project Connect, Movability, and SmartTrips.
- 5 Gather data about campaign effectiveness and revise communications as needed.

Northwest Parking District Communications Materials -Transportation Wallet Report
(Credit: Portland Bureau of Transportation)

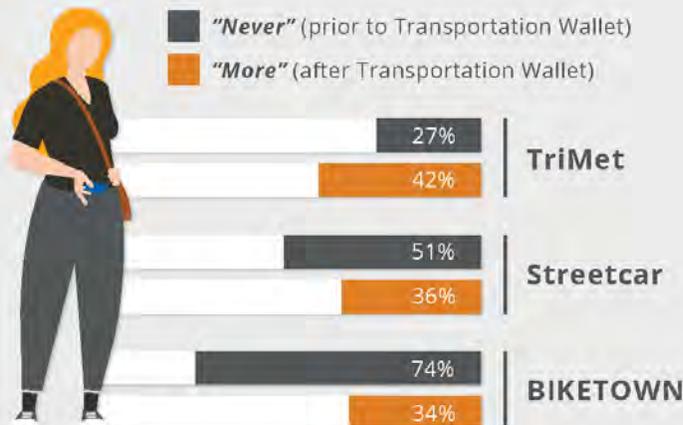


Case Study: Northwest Portland (Portland, OR)

As part of a comprehensive parking strategy for the neighborhood, The NW Parking District began a communications campaign that includes a website, newsletter, and distributable “kits” of graphics, maps, and informational materials for local merchants to help customers find parking.

In addition to parking information and communications, the NW Parking District [parking website](#) also includes information about alternatives to driving and parking. Residents and employees who work in the neighborhood are eligible for a package of discounts and non-driving travel incentives called the Transportation Wallet (Strategy B.2).

“How often do you use these modes per week?”



Best Practice: Signage for Local Improvements

Many downtowns and commercial districts have implemented messaging and signage that emphasize the local projects and improvements paid for with local meter revenues. This type of communications campaign helps link the hourly cost of parking with the local benefits of implementing paid parking in the neighborhood.



Photo Credit:
Mike Linksvayer
via Flickr



MANAGE • STRATEGY M.5

Ensure the Land Development Code supports public access to shared parking as part of new larger developments.

Strategy Overview

- A revision of the Land Development Code (LDC) presents an opportunity to reduce parking demand in transit-priority and mixed-use corridors while maximizing shared parking.
- The SoCo PTMD should support LDC revisions that: 1) minimize vehicle trips and support a multimodal district; and 2) make it as easy as possible to share parking and provide public parking options as part of new developments.
- Potential revisions could include: reduced or eliminated parking minimums based on geography and/or use; incentive programs to encourage shared parking, such as allowing parking to be built in excess of parking maximums if the incremental amount is shared; clarifying requirements for signage, technology, and payment systems for any shared, publicly available parking; as-of-right provisions for sharing and/or off-site parking based on use and site proximity; provisions to limit residential permit parking eligibility for new residential development of a certain size.

Strategy Benefits



Supports Austin’s vision and efforts to reduce vehicle trips and promote affordable housing through reduced and/or eliminated parking requirements.

Relative Cost: *Very Low*



Strategy Priority: *Low*



Action Steps

- 1 In partnership with ATD staff, monitor LDC revision efforts and status.
- 2 Explore opportunities to support current LDC revisions and/or provide comments to ensure zoning provisions best support new management approach in SoCo.



Maximizes sharing and public access to new parking facilities.



Minimizes new development impacts on existing on-street parking availability.



Changes to the LDC should support a multimodal district that prioritizes a park-once district and sharing of public and private parking.

REGULATE • STRATEGY R.1

Simplify and standardize the Residential Permit Program (RPP).

Strategy Overview

- In 2020, ATD updated annual RPP permit fees to better reflect program administration and enforcement costs. The cost of the first permit per address is low, and up to six permits per address can be purchased at an escalating rate.
- Beyond permit fees, further updates to the RPP program would simplify the system, reduce confusion, make it easier to enforce, and ensure that public streets are optimally and equitably utilized.
 - » Current RPP zones should be consolidated into one zone (Zone 2), allowing 2-hour paid parking for all. Residents and their visitors, however, would be exempt.
 - » To improve employee access and ensure public streets are utilized, pilot a program where employers and/or employees could buy from a limited pool of Zone 2 permits.
 - » All permits would be linked to license plates. “Virtual” permits will make it easy to purchase a permit, change vehicles, distribute visitor passes, and enforce compliance.

Strategy Benefits



Preserves resident access but facilitates equitable use of underutilized public streets.



Supports SoCo employee access and diversifies their parking options.



Improves user-friendliness and reduces confusion.

Relative Cost: *Medium*



Strategy Priority: *Very High*



Action Steps

- 1 As needed, revise the RPP ordinance and guidelines to allow for RPP standardization, employee pilot program, and program cost recovery.
- 2 Confirm RPP parameters with additional input from residents and merchants. Define eligibility, price, and size for a pilot employee permit program.
- 3 Modify vendor agreements and/or deploy new systems to launch new RPP program, virtual permit system, and LPR enforcement.
- 4 Use occupancy and sales data to adjust regulations, pricing, and size of employee permit pool.



Incentivizes use of on-site parking and minimizes number of permits purchased per address.



New pricing structure and systems allow for cost-effective program administration.



There are at least 13 different types of RPP in SoCo with restrictions that vary by time and day. Such a complex system is very difficult for visitors to obey and for parking staff to enforce.

Key Details and Features



Employee RPP Participation. On blocks with underutilized parking, pilot an employee parking program. Allow employers and employees who work within certain proximity to SoCo to purchase a limited number of permits. Allow for sharing of employee permits across vehicles.



Revised Cost Structure. Monitor the impact of the updated RPP fee structure put into place in 2020. As needed, continue to fine-tune RPP permit fees to cover program administration costs and manage demand for permits. Incorporate affordable options for low-income employees and residents.

Proposed RPP Schedule:



General RPP Cost Framework:

	Residents	Employers	Employees	Employees (Low-Income)
1st Permit	\$	\$ \$ \$	\$ \$	\$
2+ Permits	\$ \$	\$ \$ \$ \$		
Visitor Passes	Initial set for free, \$ for extras			

REGULATE • STRATEGY R.2

Implement paid parking in SoCo to manage demand and generate turnover.

Strategy Overview

- **In light of the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, the timeline for implementing paid parking could be tied to economic data and metrics.**
- In a popular commercial district, paid parking is the most effective tool for incentivizing multimodal travel and ensuring that prime spaces are available for short-term trips.
- The right price for parking is the lowest price that will ensure that South Congress Avenue and the SoCo district has consistently available parking and motorists no longer need to circle.
- The price for parking should be adjusted over time, using data to find the sweet spot of availability by location, day of week, and time of day.
- Net revenue from paid parking should be reinvested back into SoCo (Strategy M.1) to support improved enforcement, new infrastructure, and other parking and mobility programs.

Strategy Benefits



Supports businesses by ensuring turnover and availability of prime spaces for visitors and customers.



Distributes demand for parking across the district to maximize the use of existing parking supply.



Net revenue would fund other local parking and mobility improvements.



Provides ATD staff the flexibility to dynamically manage the system based on consistent data.

Relative Cost: *Low*



Strategy Priority: *High*



Action Steps

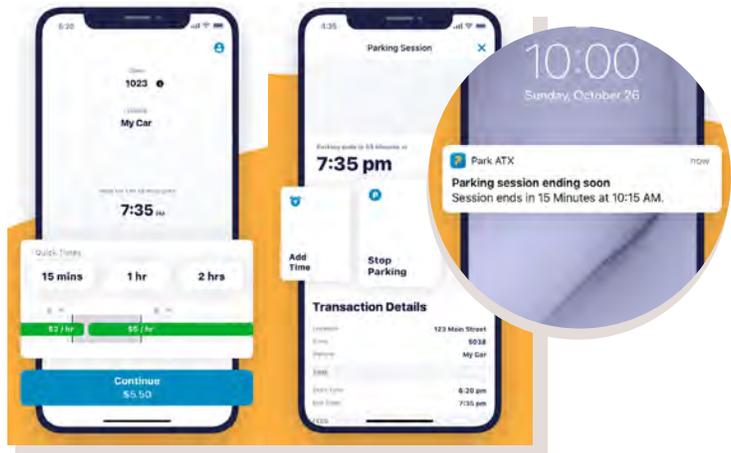
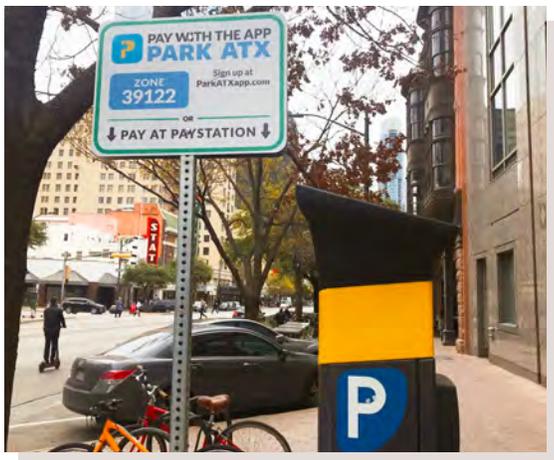
- 1 As part of Strategy M.2, establish parking availability targets for SoCo.
- 2 Collaborate with ATD to confirm rate structure and time restrictions (Strategy R.1 and R.3).
- 3 Coordinate with ATD to propose and adopt any needed revisions to the city's variable pricing ordinances.
- 4 Install Park ATX technology and payment systems in SoCo.
- 5 Use occupancy data and availability targets to adjust parking rates up or down based on an adopted set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the district.
- 6 Communicate program goals, benefits, and performance (Strategy M.4).

Key Details and Features

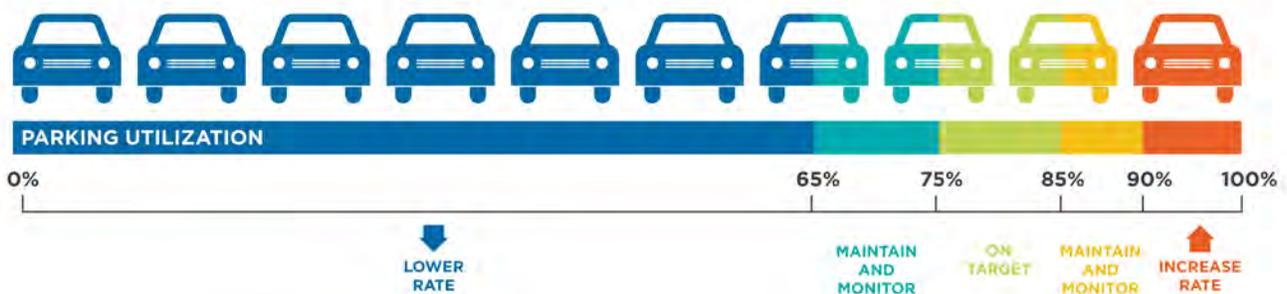
Proposed on-street parking rates for SoCo:



Make the user experience as easy as possible. New user-friendly tools and technologies reduce “meter anxiety.” Credit cards and smartphone apps allow motorists to ditch the quarters, and remote pay options allow for additional parking time if a visit lasts longer than planned.



Adjust pricing based on targets. The goal of paid parking is to make parking easier to find by promoting turnover. Paid parking management is a “living” process, requiring periodic rate adjustments if parking spaces remain too full or too empty. Any rate or time adjustments should be made based on data collected and occupancy targets adopted by the SoCo PTMD.



REGULATE • STRATEGY R.3

Adjust regulations on South Congress Avenue and other streets.

Strategy Overview

- To create a more effective, user-friendly, and equitable SoCo parking system, time restrictions for South Congress Avenue and other streets should be revised.
- Three new zones will simplify the on-street system and better serve SoCo's diverse needs. The zones are coordinated with paid parking (Strategy R.1) and modifications to the RPP program (Strategy R.3).

Zone 1: South Congress Avenue

- » 2-hour paid parking (no exemptions) (8 a.m. – 10 p.m.)

Zone 2: All other streets

- » 2-hour paid parking OR non-paid/unrestricted parking for permit holders (8 a.m. – 10 p.m.)

Zone 3: Flex loading zones

- » Commercial loading (6 a.m. – 5 p.m., M-F; 6 a.m. – 1 p.m., Sa-Su)
- » Passenger loading (5 p.m. – 12 a.m., M-F; 1 p.m. – 12 a.m., Sa-Su)

Strategy Benefits



Prioritizes prime spaces for customers and visitors rather than long-term parkers.



Creates consistency throughout the district and ensures that SoCo parking is easy to understand.

Relative Cost: *High*



Strategy Priority: *Very High*



Action Steps

- 1 Collaborate with ATD to confirm rate structure (Strategy R.1) and time restrictions.
- 2 Coordinate with ATD to propose and adopt any needed revisions to the city's variable pricing and/or RPP ordinances.
- 3 Install Park ATX technology and payment systems in SoCo.
- 4 Use parking and survey data to adjust time regulations on a consistent basis.



Makes it easier and more efficient to enforce parking regulations.

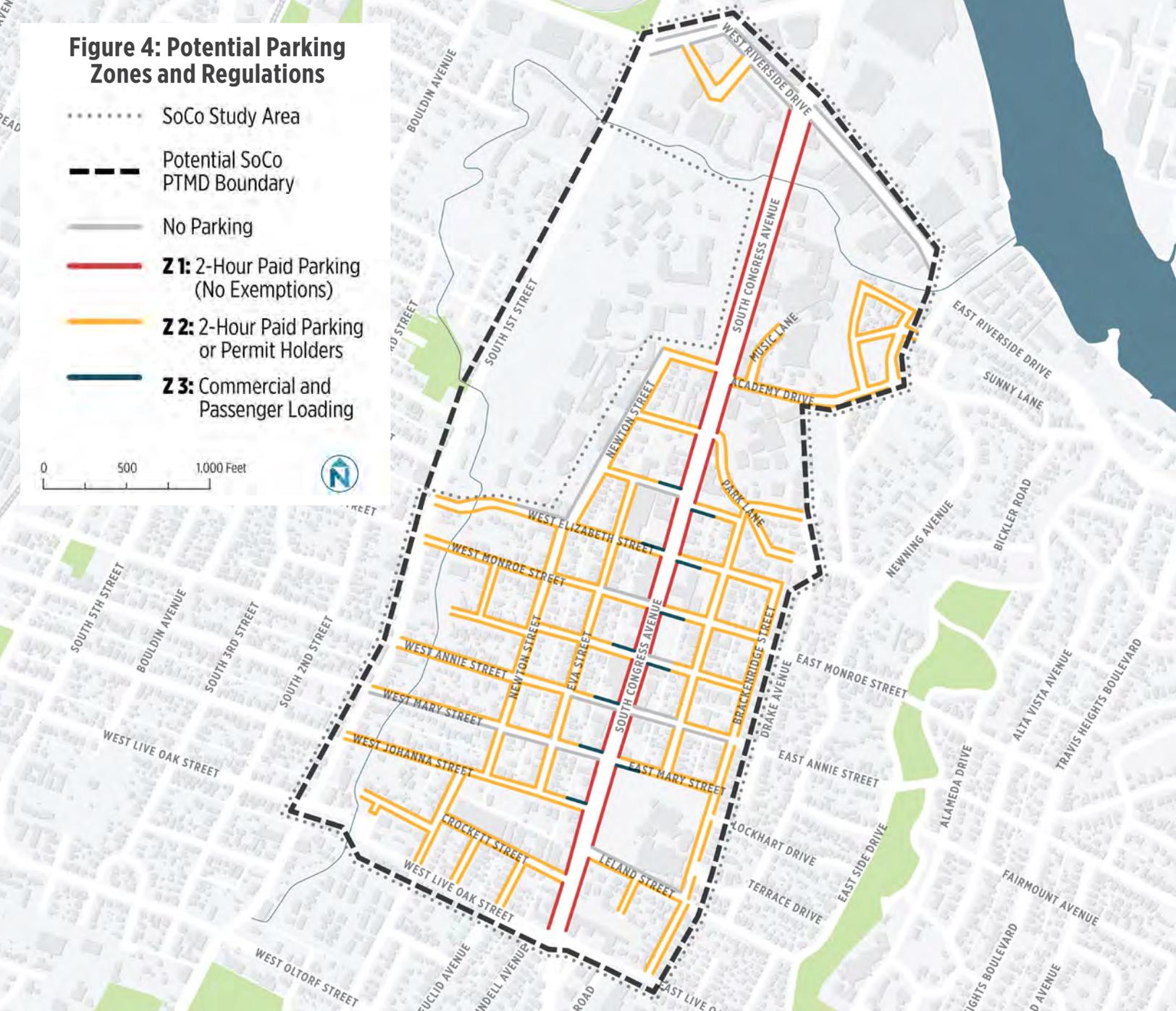


Minimizes commercial and passenger loading impacts on South Congress Avenue and neighborhood streets.

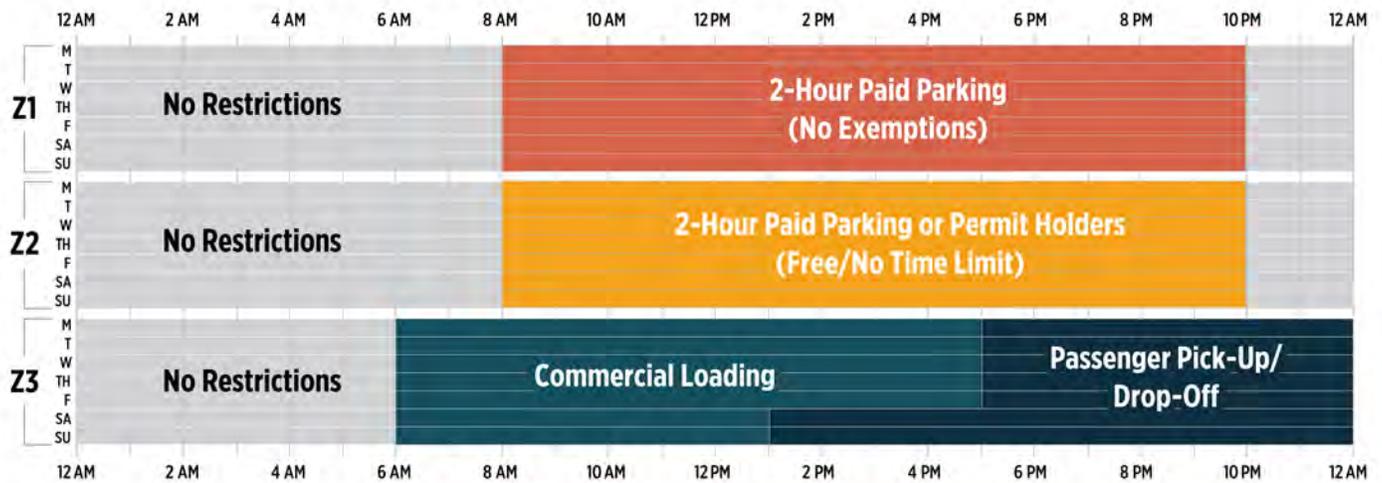
Figure 4: Potential Parking Zones and Regulations

- SoCo Study Area
- Potential SoCo PTMD Boundary
- No Parking
- Z1:** 2-Hour Paid Parking (No Exemptions)
- Z2:** 2-Hour Paid Parking or Permit Holders
- Z3:** Commercial and Passenger Loading

0 500 1,000 Feet



Proposed on-street parking regulations for SoCo:



Case Study: PUDO and Flex Loading Zones (Washington, DC)

PUDO (Pick-Up/Drop-Off) Zones

In response to congestion and pedestrian hazards resulting from transportation network company (TNC) (e.g. Uber, Lyft, etc.) activity on weekends, DDOT implemented a pilot program to convert parking lanes to TNC pick-up/drop-off lanes in 2017. Before the pilot, on-street parking spaces were unrestricted and parking turnover was low after 10 p.m., which was also when TNC activity was busiest. The PUDO zones are intended to make more productive use of curb space and to provide safe, easy-to-find locations for TNC activity.

Local partnerships were key to successful PUDO zone implementation. The local business improvement district (BID) managed outreach aimed at local businesses to increase support for the program. BID stakeholders were supportive of the idea because overnight use of the previously-free overnight parking did not address the needs of dining and entertainment customers.



Photo Credit: DowntownDC.org

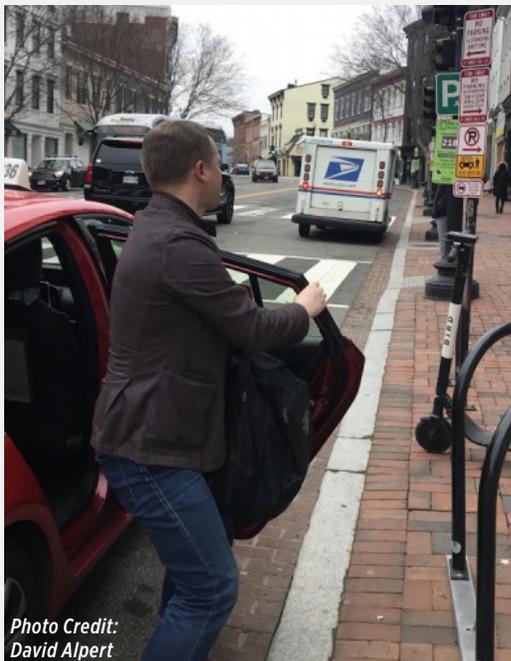


Photo Credit: David Alpert

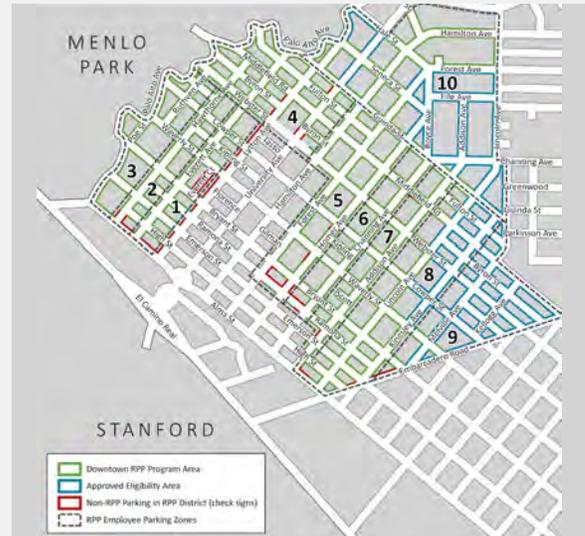
Flexible Loading Zones

DDOT cites benefits that included improved pedestrian safety, faster TNC pick-up/drop-off times, increased customer traffic to businesses in the area, and favorable reactions from both business owners and law enforcement. Driver education and awareness has been a challenge for the program—some motorists have continued to park illegally in the designated PUDO zones.

In 2018, DDOT expanded the pilot to include six new Flexible Loading Zones that allow 24-hour commercial unloading and passenger pick-up/drop-off. Like the PUDO zones, the flex zones were intended to mitigate safety and traffic hazards created when delivery drivers, TNCs, and taxis stop to load or unload in travel lanes, bike lanes, and crosswalk areas. DDOT collaborated with local businesses and BIDs to identify suitable locations for flex zones.

Case Study: Employee Permit Program (Palo Alto, CA)

The City of Palo Alto has implemented a parking permit system that makes a limited number of permits available for neighborhood employers and employees to purchase. The goal of the program is to help meet employee parking needs by creating access to underutilized on-street parking spaces in the neighborhood. Parking for participating employees is restricted to a limited area within the broader permit parking zone, and permits are more expensive for employees than for residents.



	Residents	Employers and Employees
Restriction:		Permit required for parking 2+ hours, M-F, 8 a.m. – 6 p.m.
How Many?	Resident: Up to 4 per unit Guest: Up to 50 daily permits	Employees: 1 per vehicle per 6 months; 4 daily per month Employers: Shift worker permits (as available)
How Much?	Resident: First is free, then \$50 each Guest: \$5 each	Employees: \$403 per 6 months or \$50 per 6 months (low-income) Employers: \$375 per 6 months
What?	Resident: Vehicle-specific decal Guest: Hangtags	Employees: Vehicle-specific decal Employer: Transferable hangtags
Where?	Anywhere within RPP zone	Anywhere within one of 10 assigned zones



The City of Fort Lauderdale has transitioned to an online residential parking permit system. Here's what's new:

- Annual Residential Beach Parking Permits may be purchased or renewed online at www.fortlauderdale.gov/parking.
- Decals will no longer be provided.
- Your license plate will serve as your parking permit.
- Order Residential Beach Parking Permits from the comfort of your home.

Best Practice: Digital Permit Application Systems

Many cities are transitioning to digital permit management systems. These web- and app-based systems allow applicants to submit forms and get information more quickly and easily than paper or in-person systems. They also make it easy to update permits with new license plate information or to purchase additional guest passes. From the city's perspective, digital permit systems make it easier and less expensive to administer and enforce permit programs by making management less time consuming and more efficient.

REGULATE • STRATEGY R.4

Provide employees with affordable off-street parking options.

Strategy Overview

- Many SoCo employees do not have access to reasonably priced off-street parking, a key challenge for employees who work late at night or do not have reasonable access to transit.
- Austin’s Affordable Parking Program (APP) provides reduced monthly rates for downtown employees to park in public and private garages during off-peak hours. Expansion of the APP to SoCo should be prioritized and combined with a pilot permit program for on-street employee permit parking (see Strategy R.1).
- Per a future PTMD expenditure plan, net parking revenue from paid parking could be utilized to subsidize APP permits.
- As SoCo’s transportation network evolves with the implementation of Project Connect, plan for affordable parking options within any future City-managed parking facilities (see Strategy B.6).

Strategy Benefits



Provides affordable transportation options that support the needs of SoCo employees and merchants.



Better utilizes existing off-street parking supply in SoCo by allowing employee use during each facility’s off-peak period.



Creates an additional revenue stream for property owners and parking operators.

Relative Cost: *Medium*



Strategy Priority: *High*

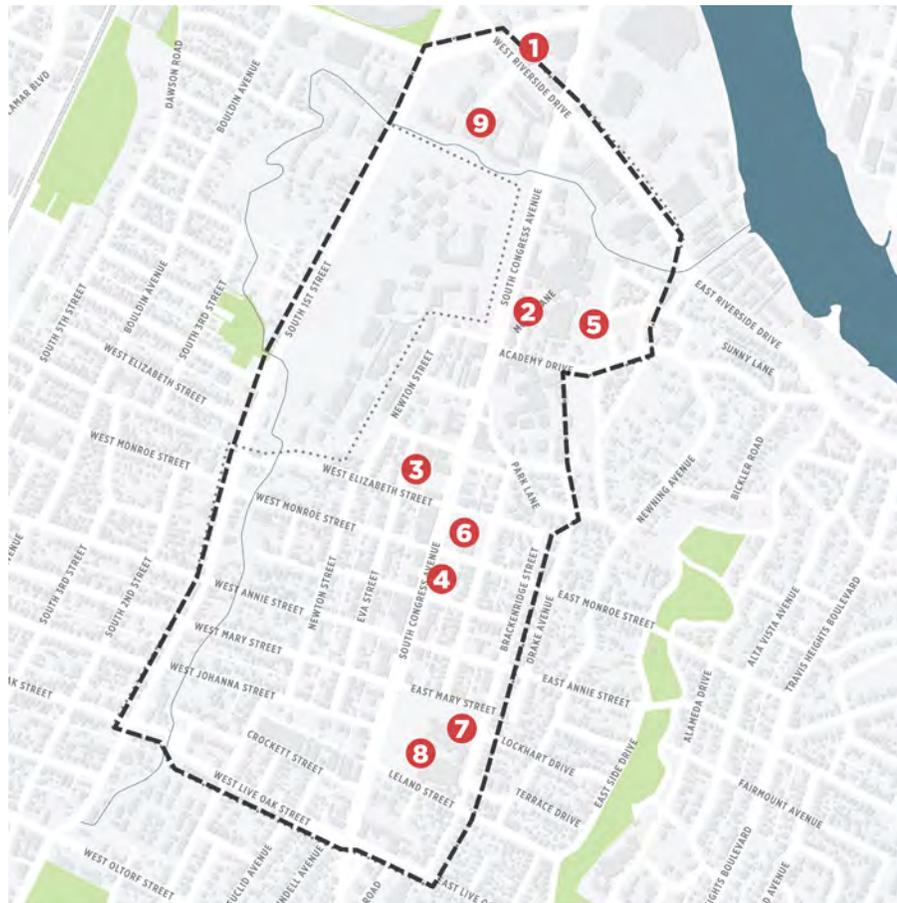


Action Steps

- 1 Identify potential facilities in SoCo area for program participation.
- 2 Identify and modify zoning restrictions that may prevent shared parking in SoCo.
- 3 Via the PTMD and ATD, negotiate and secure agreements for SoCo employees. If desired by PTMD, allocate parking funds to support APP permit subsidies.
- 4 Combine mobility discounts (transit, bike share, scooter, ride hail) with purchase of a permit (see Strategy B.2). Improve transit, biking, scooting, and walking infrastructure.
- 5 Promote affordable parking options to SoCo merchants and employees.
- 6 Monitor and adjust program as needed.
- 7 Plan for affordable options within any future City-managed parking facility (see Strategy B.6).

Affordable Parking Program: Potential Parking Facilities

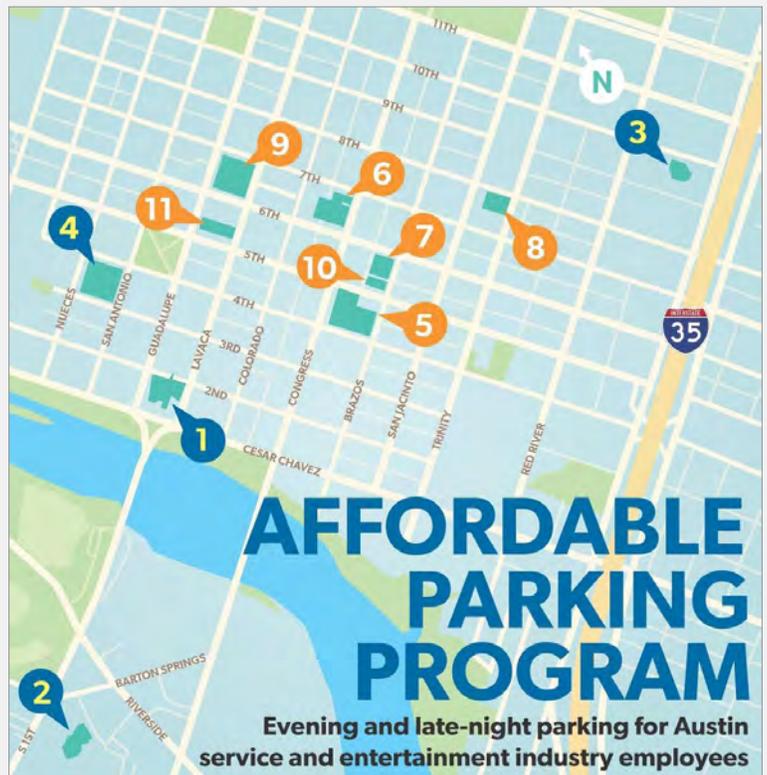
- 1 Embassy Suites/210 Barton Springs Road (garage)
- 2 Music Lane (garage)
- 3 Hopdoddy/1400 South Congress Avenue (garage)
- 4 South Congress Hotel (garage)
- 5 200 Academy Drive (surface lot)
- 6 The Church on Congress Avenue (surface lot)
- 7 Restore Austin (surface lot)
- 8 Lively Middle School (surface lot)
- 9 One Texas Center (garage)



Affordable Parking Program

The City of Austin and the Downtown Austin Alliance launched the **Affordable Parking Program** in 2016. The program is designed to create affordable parking options for service industry workers while maintaining the availability of market-rate parking for customers at downtown restaurants, bars, and entertainment destinations. Through the program, private parking operators who have excess parking capacity in the evening and overnight offer parking leases to program participants for \$35-\$40 per month.

The Affordable Parking Program expanded from 500 spaces to a total of 2,500 spaces in August 2018, including one parking facility within the SoCo Parking Strategy study area—the One Texas Center Garage on Haywood Avenue.



REGULATE • STRATEGY R.5

Pilot a universal valet program.

Strategy Overview

- Universal, district-wide valet services allow motorists to drop their vehicle off at one valet stand and pick up at any other valet stand in the area.
- A universal valet pilot can distribute parking demand across SoCo, while providing a convenient parking option on South Congress Avenue. Employee participation could be explored (see strategy R.3 and R.4).
- An initial pilot program should first prioritize peak periods, such as evenings and/or weekends, and two to three dispersed valet stands. Any pilot program should address key operational issues, including:
 - » Prohibition of on-street vehicle storage by operators
 - » Partnerships for off-street storage
 - » Permitting fee structure that, at a minimum, is reflective of per space, per hour on-street rates
 - » Branding and signage
 - » Technology requirements, such as smartphone apps and texting services
 - » Validation options

Strategy Benefits



Increases the efficiency of existing underutilized off-street parking facilities in and around SoCo.



Maximizes productivity of South Congress Avenue parking spaces during peak periods.

Relative Cost: *Medium*



Strategy Priority: *Low*



Action Steps

- 1 As needed, modify Chapter 13-5 of the municipal code to enable a universal valet program and ensure market-rate fee structure.
- 2 In partnership with ATD, define days and times of implementation, valet locations, and storage facilities.
- 3 Issue a request for proposals and competitively select a vendor. Contract provisions should address fees, branding and signage, minimum technology requirements, and validation options.
- 4 Pilot the program, monitor use, and adjust program as needed.



Increases convenience and access to South Congress Avenue for those willing to pay for valet service.



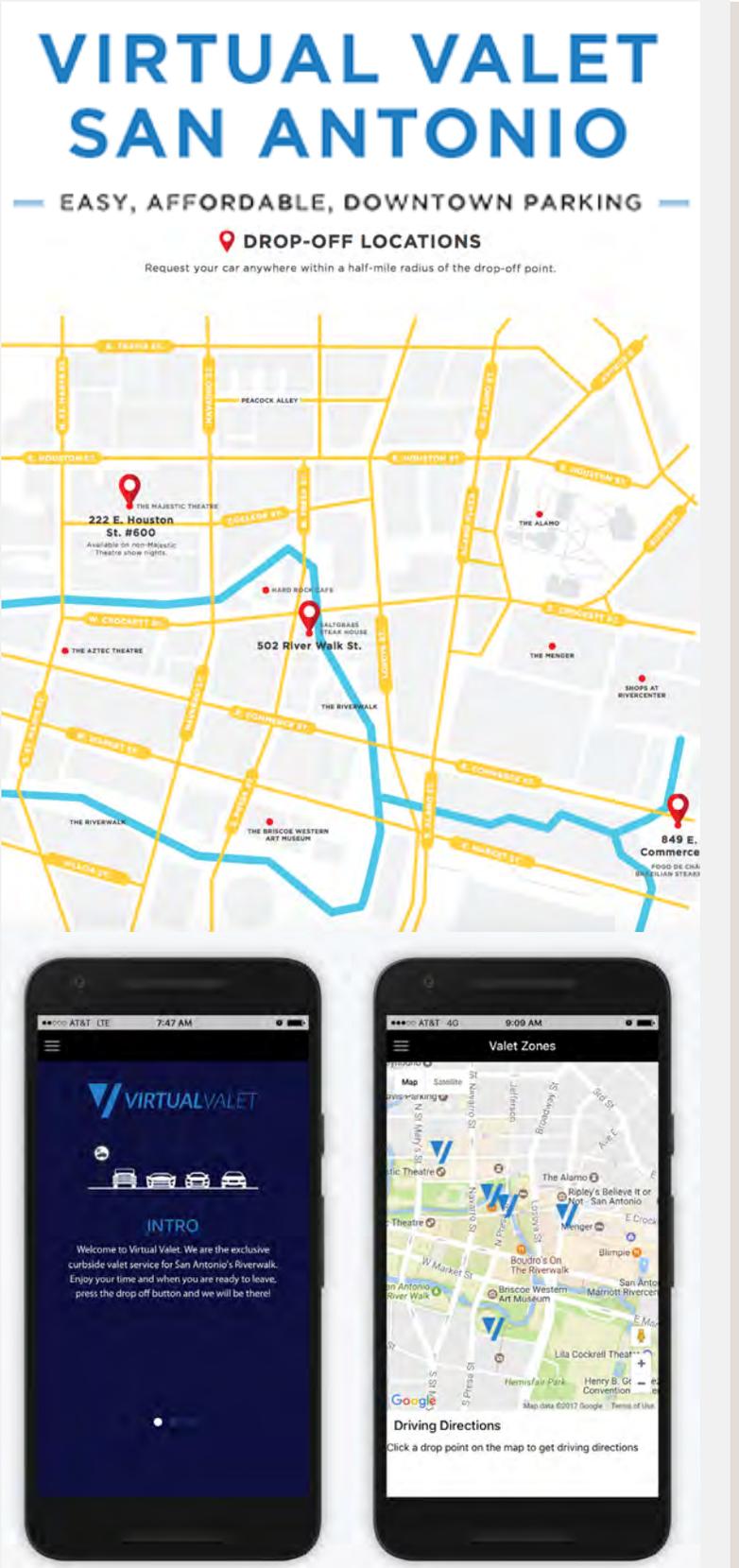
Supports a park-once, walkable district.

Case Study: Virtual Valet (San Antonio, TX)

The city of San Antonio launched a **public valet program** in 2017, allowing drivers to drop off their vehicles at three downtown locations. Operated by a parking management contractor, the system uses a mobile phone app called Virtual Valet, which allows users to alert valet staff of their arrival, and request a pickup from a location different than the designated curbside drop-off point. Drivers may also use the service without using the app, but those drivers must return to the same drop-off point to retrieve their vehicle.

Valet employees park vehicles in city-owned facilities first, with spillover parking accommodated in several privately-owned facilities. The cost to use the service ranges from \$12 to \$15, of which the City receives 20% in exchange for giving the valet contractor access to city parking facilities and dedicated space at sidewalks and curb at the three pickup locations.

The City also has access to user data through the vendor agreement, which will allow valet locations to be refined over time to maximize efficiency. The service may be scaled up in the future, with additional curbside points or service areas added in response to demand. The valet operates from 5 p.m. to midnight, Thursday through Saturday.



BALANCE • STRATEGY B.1

Implement a comprehensive wayfinding program in SoCo.

Strategy Overview

- Parking wayfinding in SoCo is limited, uncoordinated, and confusing. An abundance of restrictive parking signage also creates “ticket anxiety” and undermines SoCo as a park-once district.
- A comprehensive and robust wayfinding program for public and private parking can make the parking experience intuitive and customer friendly.
- A SoCo wayfinding program should include a suite of directional, pay station, regulatory, promotional, and real-time availability signs. Leveraging the Park ATX brand, SoCo can explore ways to highlight its unique identity.

Strategy Benefits



Enhances the customer experience, while reducing parking search time and “cruising” traffic.



Directs motorists to underutilized off-street facilities and maximizes system efficiency.



Creates consistent look and feel for parking, supporting SoCo “brand.”



Increases utilization and revenue at underutilized lot/garages.

Relative Cost: *Medium*



Strategy Priority: *Very High*



Action Steps

- 1 Collaborate with ATD to review wayfinding options as part of the Park ATX brand and platform. Define SoCo-specific program elements and identify priority installation locations.
- 2 Integrate the wayfinding program with communications program (Strategy M.4), including web-based information/platforms and other collateral.
- 3 Implement wayfinding program as part of paid parking program roll out.
- 4 Explore use of PTMD revenue to expand program with a focus on partnerships with privately managed off-street facilities.



The variety of parking signage makes it confusing for visitors and difficult for motorists to find available parking.

Key Details and Features



Consistency and Customization. A consistent city-wide brand for parking signage and information helps motorists easily identify and find available parking. Wayfinding elements can be customized to fit the local neighborhood style.



Physical and Digital Wayfinding. The most effective wayfinding programs include both real-time signs on the street, as well as smartphone apps and web-based tools. In addition to the Park ATX platforms, SoCo could include text message services and coordinate with existing digital wayfinding resources such as doingthestreets.com.

Best Practice: Parking Brands with Real-Time Information

A strong city-wide parking brand that includes real-time parking information can help motorists find available spaces and create a user-friendly experience. In Seattle, the e-Park brand includes a variety of digital signs that indicate how many off-street spaces are available in garages. In Boise, the ParkBOI brand also includes real-time parking availability signs as well as wayfinding for bicycle parking.

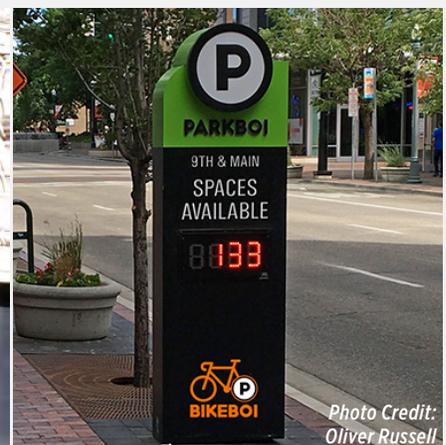


Photo Credit: Oliver Russell



BALANCE • STRATEGY B.2

Provide incentives or subsidies to SoCo employees and/or residents.

Strategy Overview

- SoCo is popular in large part because people can take transit, walk, bike, scoot, or ride hail to, from, and within the district. It offers a different experience than a strip shopping center.
- While some need to drive and park, SoCo should prioritize use of PTMD improvement funds to incentivize non-driving trips that reduce parking demand, minimize traffic, and preserve its unique identity.
- Potential program options include: subsidized CapMetro transit passes; subsidized trips or passes for bike share, scooters, car share, or ride hail; and/or a transportation “wallet” that can be used for a variety of mobility programs and services.

Strategy Benefits



Incentivizes multimodal travel, reduces parking demand, and minimizes congestion on South Congress Avenue and in residential neighborhoods.



Supports employee attraction and retention by providing desirable mobility benefits.



Supports smaller businesses by leveraging SoCo’s collective employee base and buying power.



Leverages current and future transit service and infrastructure improvements in SoCo.

Relative Cost: *High*



Strategy Priority: *High*



Action Steps

- 1 Define key program elements including services offered and management platform, program eligibility (employees, residents, or both), and cost/subsidy structure.
- 2 Define financial program, including use and timing of PTMD revenue.
- 3 Identify program administrator.
- 4 Launch program and collaborate with property owners, merchants, and resident groups to promote program.
- 5 Monitor program participation. Adjust offerings, eligibility, cost, and budget as needed.

Case Study: Capital Metro MetroWorks Program (Austin, TX)

MetroWorks is a program operated by Capital Metro that allows employers and schools to purchase discounted bulk transit passes for employees and students. Both local and commuter 31-day passes are available through the program, which provide unlimited rides on Capital Metro services for 31 days after activation.

In 2020, employers participating in the program received a discount of up to 20% below the standard 31-day pass price for purchases of 200 passes or more.



Case Study: Transportation Wallet Program (Portland, OR)

Portland's **Transportation Wallet** program offers a package of transportation passes and benefits at a steeply discounted price for people who live or work in the Northwest or Central Eastside districts. The wallet includes \$100 pass value on TriMet, a streetcar pass, bikeshare credits, and e-scooter credits.

The Transportation Wallet program is funded by permit surcharge fees collected through the Northwest and Eastside Central Permit Parking Districts. As with PTMDs in Austin, funds collected in these parking districts must be spent on local transportation projects and programs.

Portland's Transportation Wallet includes:

An Austin Mobility Wallet could include credits, passes, and discounts such as:

2020 NORTHWEST TRANSPORTATION WALLET

→ \$99 GETS YOU ←

	\$100 TriMet Hop card	
	Annual Portland Streetcar Pass	
	\$25 BIKETOWN credit	
	\$30 scooter credit	

	Capital Metro transit passes
	Austin B-Cycle Membership
	Shared Moped credits
	E-Scooter and E-Bike credits

BALANCE • STRATEGY B.3

Enhance shared mobility service guidelines and implementation.

Strategy Overview

- Ride hail, vehicle share including car and moped, bike share, and scooter services are all popular ways to get to, from, and within SoCo.
- Shared mobility services reduce parking demand in the district, as well as extend the reach of the parking system by making it easier to get to and from nearby parking garages and lots.
- Additional guidelines, policies, and infrastructure can support use of shared mobility services in SoCo and minimize their impacts on safety, access, and aesthetics.
- As SoCo's transportation network evolves through the implementation of Project Connect, shared mobility services should be incorporated within future transit and parking facilities to support multimodal access and provide first mile/last mile connections.

Strategy Benefits



Creates seamless access to and from SoCo parking supply locations that may be farther than people are willing to walk.



Organizes mobility devices to reduce sidewalk parking, maintain pedestrian access, and reduce spillover into residential streets.



Leverages site design to make sustainable travel modes more visible and convenient.

Relative Cost: *Low*



Strategy Priority: *Low*



Action Steps

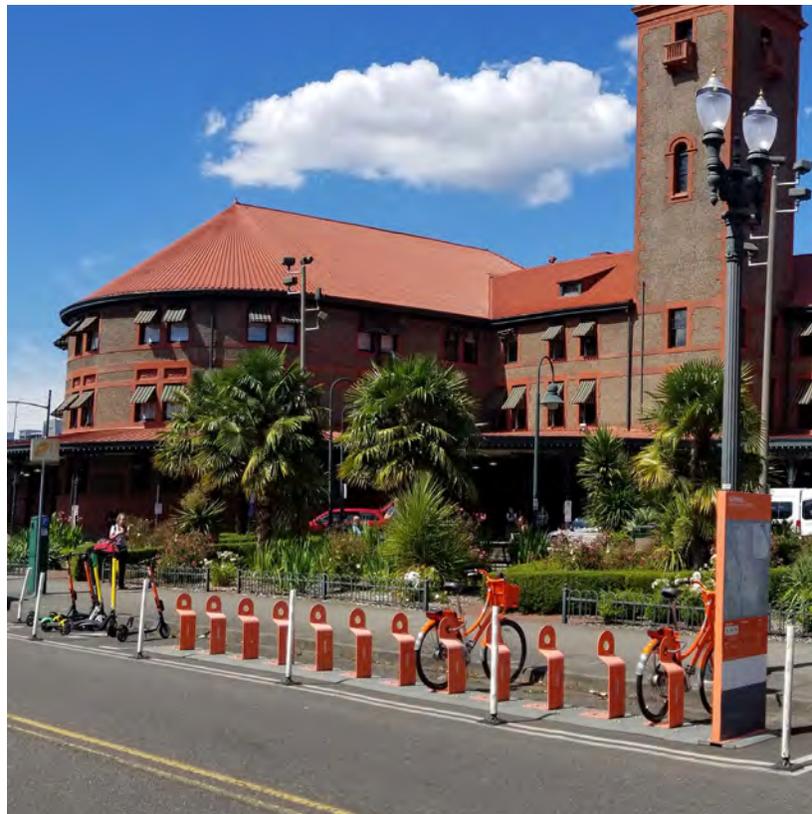
1 Collaborate with ATD to modify guidelines and regulations for shared mobility services, focusing on safety, equity, and storage/parking.

2 In partnership with Project Connect and Austin Strategic Mobility Plan (ASMP), explore the development and designation of shared mobility hubs in SoCo, prioritizing high-traffic nodes. Mobility hubs should leverage transit stops and utilize on-street parking for formal parking and storage areas.

3 Work with shared mobility operators to expand service availability, maximize use of geo-fencing features, and mitigate sidewalk clutter from on-street devices.



In SoCo today, e-scooters and dockless bikes are parked on sidewalks and curbs throughout the neighborhood. When these devices are parked improperly in front of a crosswalk or in the middle of a sidewalk, they can create obstacles and safety hazards.



A variety of micromobility parking options—including painted sidewalk zones and on-street corrals—can help encourage users to park devices properly.

BALANCE • STRATEGY B.4

Improve intersections and multimodal facilities throughout SoCo.

Strategy Overview

- A substantial number of people bike, scoot, or walk to SoCo. Motorists and transit riders are also pedestrians during the start and end of their trips to SoCo.
- SoCo stakeholders should prioritize additional investments in SoCo’s walking and biking infrastructure to increase vitality, enhance safety, reduce congestion, expand the district parking walkshed, and improve emergency vehicle access.
- Examples of potential investments include completing the sidewalk network or filling sidewalk gaps, lighting improvements, and implementing Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan projects.
- Any future City-managed parking facility in SoCo (see Strategy B.6) should be supported with multimodal access and investments to help achieve a “park-once” vision for the district.

Strategy Benefits



Targets safety issues on South Congress Avenue and in residential neighborhoods.



Elevates SoCo’s status as a premier walking, biking, and scooting district in Austin, supporting its unique qualities.



Increases willingness to walk, bike, and scoot to parking facilities throughout SoCo corridor.

Relative Cost: *Very High*



Strategy Priority: *Medium*



Action Steps

- 1 In partnership with Project Connect and ASMP, prioritize and implement multimodal projects, focusing on safety and walk/bike/scoot projects that complement the shared parking management approach.
- 2 Confirm cost estimates and identify funding options, including potential use of PTMD improvement funds.
- 3 Develop timeline for implementation that aligns with Project Connect/Orange Line as well as ASMP projects.



Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in SoCo is not as supportive of multimodal travel as it could be. Unprotected bike lanes can deter less confident bicyclists. Sidewalk gaps create accessibility and safety challenges for pedestrians.



South Congress Avenue is a busy travel corridor that is well-used by bicyclists and e-scooter riders. Although the street includes on-street bike lanes, creating protected micromobility lanes would support safer and more enjoyable multimodal travel through the district.

BALANCE • STRATEGY B.5

Support evaluation of a new circulator shuttle.

Strategy Overview

- The SoCo district currently benefits from both local and rapid bus service. In the coming years, light rail transit service will be added along South Congress Avenue via Project Connect (Orange Line).
- A local circulator, however, may be able to better serve intra-district travel, connections to district and downtown parking nodes, and SoCo employee work schedules.
- The Downtown Austin Alliance has completed a study evaluating the feasibility of a Downtown/ SoCo circulator service.
- Key areas of analysis include route alignment, service span and frequency, potential operators, capital and operating cost, fare structure and funding options, and level of compatibility with existing and proposed transit investments.

Strategy Benefits

 Can support better utilization of existing supply by improving connections to nearby parking facilities, thereby reducing parking demand in the SoCo core.

 May better serve SoCo's unique and local transit needs, such as supporting the work schedules of employees in the service industry.

 May offer a near-term service enhancement for SoCo and downtown, depending on the timing of Orange Line implementation.

Relative Cost: *High*



Strategy Priority: *Very Low*



Action Steps

- 1** Review DAA feasibility study findings and recommendations.
- 2** If deemed feasible, evaluate potential use of PTMD revenue to support a circulator service.
- 3** If implemented, support service with marketing and promotion.
- 4** Evaluate expansion of SoCo mobility programs (Strategy B.2) to include free/ subsidized passes for circulator service.

BALANCE • STRATEGY B.6

Plan for new public parking supply.

Strategy Overview

- This study identified underutilized parking capacity in SoCo and proposes a new framework to maximize current supply, while addressing SoCo’s systemic policy and management challenges.
- As SoCo’s transportation network evolves through the implementation of Project Connect, new public parking supply could help support several key goals: 1) mitigating potential loss of on-street parking on South Congress Avenue; 2) supporting connections and access to the Orange Line; and 3) increasing shared, public parking supply to support a “park-once” district vision.
- If desired, PTMD revenue could help fund the cost of building and maintaining a public parking facility.
- Adding more off-street parking alone will not solve SoCo’s fundamental problems. Improved management should be SoCo’s near-term focus and priority.

Strategy Benefits



Increases shared, public parking supply that can mitigate potential on-street parking loss and support a park-once district.



Leverages future development nodes and transit investments to provide a district-wide benefit.

Relative Cost: *Very High*



Strategy Priority: *Medium*



Action Steps

- 1 Implement management, regulatory, and multimodal recommendations from SoCo Parking Strategy, and monitor impacts.
- 2 Conduct a parking garage feasibility study that specifically addresses: 1) traffic and congestion impacts; 2) design and aesthetic impacts; 3) capital and operating costs; 4) funding mechanisms; 5) management that prioritizes shared, public, and affordable employee parking; 6) connectivity to transit; and 7) location analysis to find the best location within the district to build a new parking structure.
- 3 If constructed, ensure facility is included in Affordable Parking Program and its management is coordinated with PTMD policies.



feathers

STURGEON

PARALLEL
PARKING
ONLY
←
P



[4]

Implementation Plan



Implementation Plan

The SoCo Parking Strategy is the culmination of more than a year of effort, yet it also marks the start of implementation. **SoCo's stakeholders want definitive action and the City of Austin is ready to support.** Implementation will take time, however, and should not occur all at once. Some strategies will take more time to plan, design, or finance. Some actions may also be dependent on implementation of others first.

In November 2020, **voters passed Proposition A to fund Project Connect**, which includes light rail service along South Congress Avenue via the Orange Line. This plan will transform the local transportation network in SoCo, and its passage **further underscores the need for a coordinated action plan to address parking and mobility challenges in the district.** As the timeline for Orange Line construction and implementation takes shape, parking strategy phasing will be refined accordingly.

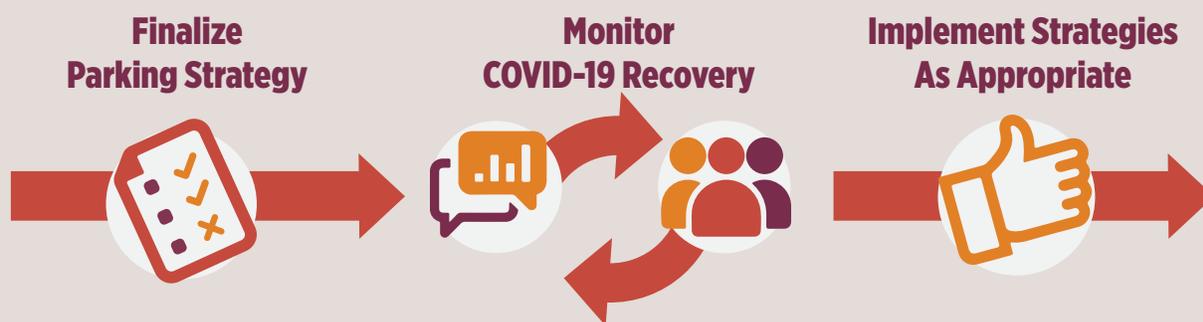
The **COVID-19 pandemic complicates implementation**, as the timeline and extent of its impacts remain unknown. As noted in Chapter 1, this report assumes that SoCo will once again be one of the most vital, dynamic, and unique destinations in Austin. Parking challenges will return with that resurgence, and **SoCo must be prepared with a new approach to parking management** that helps catalyze short-term recovery and long-term success.

To that end, this chapter provides a **roadmap for implementation.** It summarizes a series and sequence of near-term action steps that can be prioritized from the Parking Toolkit to generate quick wins. To further support implementation, **a financial program** was developed to estimate revenues and expenditures after rollout of paid parking in SoCo. Finally, **a menu of potential local improvements** from the Parking Toolkit is provided, summarizing possible options for use of net PTMD improvement funds.

COVID-19 Recovery Indicators and Metrics

The COVID-19 pandemic has created major challenges for SoCo. As the familiar bustle of activity in SoCo begins to return, tracking key health and economic indicators and metrics will help ATD and the PTMD Advisory Committee develop an appropriate timeline for implementing parking strategies.

Metrics and indicators could include sales tax revenue, unemployment rate, transit and shared mobility ridership, community surveys, and input from stakeholders.



Priority Actions

M Manage

R Regulate

B Balance

Phase 1:
Complete SoCo parking strategy and lay groundwork for implementation

- M** Define boundary and create PTMD committee (M.1)
- M** Submit formal PTMD application with updated financial plan (M.1)
- M** Initiate PTMD meetings - adopt goals, metrics, and availability targets (M.2 + M.3)
- M** Increase citation rates (M.3)

- R** Adopt needed ordinance changes (R.1)
- R** Define RPP program parameters and pilot employee program (R.3)
- R** Confirm rate structure and time restrictions (R.1 + R.2)

Metrics Check

✓ **Assess COVID-19 Health and Economic Indicators and Metrics**

Phase 2:
Develop program details and materials

- M** Develop communications campaign (M.4)

- R** Identify and secure employee APP facilities (R.4)

- B** Define Park ATX and SoCo-specific wayfinding program (B.1)
- B** Modify shared mobility service guidelines and SoCo infrastructure (B.3)
- B** Define transportation incentives and subsidies. Identify administrator and management platform (B.2).

Phase 3:
Begin program implementation

- M** Launch communications program (M.4)

- R** Install Park ATX systems (R.1)
- R** Deploy new "virtual" RPP and enforcement systems (R.3)
- R** Launch employee APP facilities (R.4)

- B** Install Park ATX and SoCo-specific wayfinding program (B.1)
- B** Launch employee/resident incentive program (B.2)

Launch - Permits and Enforcement

Implement RPP changes, pilot employee permit program, and enforcement program

Metrics Check

✓ **Assess COVID-19 Health and Economic Indicators and Metrics**

Launch - Paid Parking

Implement paid parking - timeline TBD, guided by public health and economic indicators/metrics

- M** Develop and refine monitoring program. Collect data (M.2 +M.3)
- M** Issue annual report (M.2)

- R** Adjust rates and regulations based on monitoring program (R.1 - R.3)

- B** Study feasibility of new public parking supply; coordinate with Project Connect Implementation (B.6)
- B** Build new public parking supply (B.6)

Phase 4:
Monitoring and modification

- M R B** Update PTMD budget + expenditure plan. (M.1)

- M R B** Modify paid parking, RPP, communications, and incentive programs based on performance and budget.

Financial Program

Summarized below is a financial program for a future SoCo Parking and Transportation Management District (PTMD), per the details of Strategies M.1, R.1, and R.2 in the Parking Toolkit. The financial plan shows estimated revenues and expenditures upon full implementation of the PTMD and its paid parking components.

It is important to emphasize that the financial program is not a formal budget, but rather a modelling exercise to **(1)** ensure the strategies recommended are realistic and within a feasible range of estimates and **(2)** guide the discussion of priorities for use of net parking revenue.

As with any model, several assumptions have been made based on the best available data and standard practices in Austin. Assumptions should be updated on an ongoing basis as actual SoCo data is generated and the PTMD adopts an annual budget and expenditure plan. **Experience with previous PTMD implementation in Austin has shown that realization of full net revenue can take time as the program is rolled out and adjusted.**

Scenario 3 represents the paid parking extent that corresponds to the diagram on the following pages and the strategies in Chapter 3.

Financial Scenario Summary:

Paid Parking Scenarios:	Scenario 1: South Congress Avenue only	Scenario 2: South Congress Ave. and Adjacent Blocks*	Scenario 3: Full SoCo Study Area**
Annual Gross Revenue:	\$900K - \$1.2M	\$1.6M - \$1.8M	\$2.0M - \$2.4M
Annual Costs:	\$435K	\$880K	\$1.3M
Parking management infrastructure costs:	\$45K	\$130K	\$220K
General operating costs:	\$275K	\$520K	\$750K
Enforcement in SoCo:	\$115K	\$230K	\$350K
Annual Net Revenue:	\$400K - \$700K	\$720K - \$920K	\$700K - \$1.1M
51% for SoCo PTMD:	\$200K - \$350K	\$360K - \$460K	\$350K - \$550K
49% for Parking Enterprise:	\$200K - \$350K	\$360K - \$460K	\$350K - \$550K

*Includes on-street spaces roughly within one block of South Congress Ave., South 1st St., and East Riverside Dr.

**Includes all on-street spaces within the proposed initial PTMD boundary

Financial Forecast and COVID-19

This financial analysis assumes that paid parking would be implemented on an appropriate timeline after activity and parking demand in SoCo has returned to pre-COVID-19 levels. Therefore, although these financial scenarios were developed prior to COVID-19, they continue to reflect expectations for parking revenues and costs in SoCo.

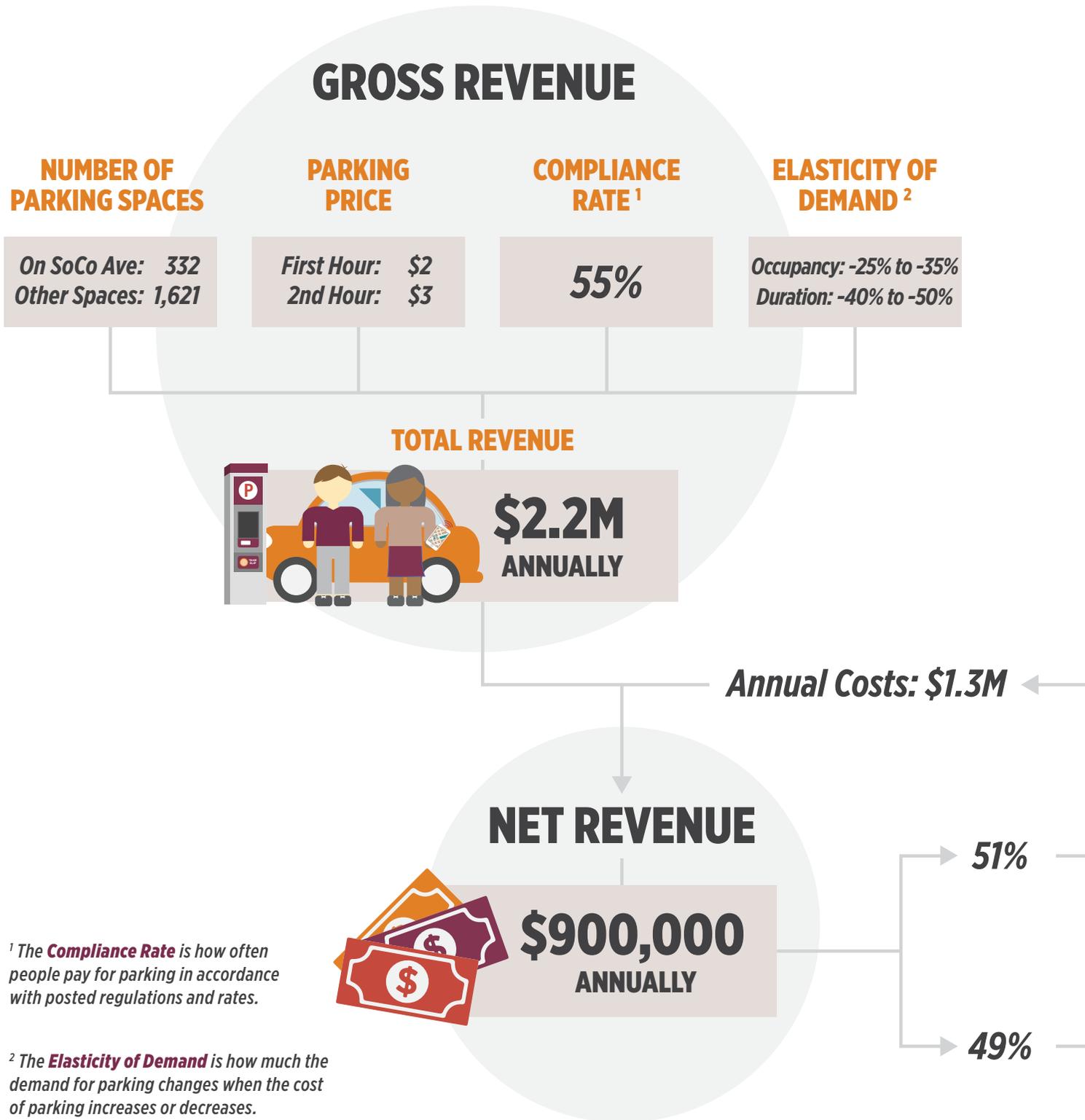


Key Financial Assumptions

- Paid parking in SoCo is implemented per the **boundary and rate structure detailed in Strategies M.1, R.1, and R.2.**
- Paid parking has a direct impact on driver behavior—a higher price will incentivize lower parking demand and shorter lengths of stay. This is commonly known as the **price elasticity of demand** and is based on best-available national research and professional judgement.
- Not every driver will pay the meter, resulting in a **meter compliance rate less than 100%**. The assumed meter compliance rate of 55% is based on data from other meter districts in Austin.
- **Credit cards** are the primary payment method at pay stations, assumed as **85% of transactions**. A fee is charged to ATD for each credit card transaction.
- Per ATD rules, **revenue from citations and residential permit parking (RPP) permits does not go to ATD or the local PTMD.** Therefore, it is not included in the annual gross revenue.
- A share of vehicles parking on neighborhood streets are permitted vehicles – residents, resident visitors, or employees with permits. **These vehicles are exempt from paid parking** and do not generate meter revenue for the PTMD.
- Paid parking is in effect for **360 non-holiday days per year.**
- **A single pay station** can service an average of **20 spaces on South Congress Avenue** and an average of **40 spaces on other streets.**
- **Pay stations** are purchased outright through a capital fund and are then repaid through paid parking revenue. **Repayment costs are calculated at \$125 per month,** or \$1,500 per year. Over the typical 8-year lifespan of each pay station, this total is \$12,000, which also covers ATD expenses for pay station infrastructure, installation, and maintenance.
- **Enforcement of parking in SoCo will increase,** requiring two dedicated parking enforcement officers for a daily enforcement span of 14 hours per officer.
- ATD has **other PTMD operational costs,** including payment of sales tax on each paid parking transaction, program administration, and back-end office support.

SoCo Financial Summary

Note: This financial program is not a formal budget, but rather a modelling exercise to ensure the strategies recommended are realistic and within a feasible range of estimates and to guide the discussion of priorities for use of net parking revenue.



COSTS

**PARKING MGMT.
INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS**

\$220,000

**CREDIT CARD FEES
AND SALES TAX**

\$475,000

**PARKING
ENFORCEMENT**

\$350,000

**OTHER OPERATING
AND ADMIN. COSTS**

\$275,000

TOTAL COSTS

**\$1.3M
ANNUALLY**



\$460,000
SOCO PTMD (ANNUALLY)

*Invested in local
transportation programs
and improvements*

\$440,000
**PARKING ENTERPRISE
(ANNUALLY)**

*Supports city-wide
operations of the Parking
Enterprise Division*

PTMD Expenditures

The implementation of paid parking in SoCo and its management via a PTMD is estimated to **generate annual net revenue of approximately \$460,000 for local SoCo improvements**. A future SoCo PTMD, led by its local advisory committee, will have to determine what, where, and when to spend that money.

To support implementation, a **preliminary “menu” of local improvements** is provided. It includes projects and programs from the Strategy Toolkit and a planning-level estimate of their relative one-time capital and/or ongoing operational costs.

As part of the required PTMD application, the committee will need to develop an **expenditure plan of priority projects and programs**, including more detailed cost estimates and a budget over a 3-5 year period. Budgets and expenditures plans should be adjusted at least annually based on prior year revenues and program costs.

Menu of Local Improvements

Strategy	Local Improvement	Relative Cost	
		Capital	Operating
All	Additional staff dedicated to support SoCo PTMD operations and implementation of its parking and mobility programs. Staff could also support other Austin PTMDs through cost-sharing agreements.	NA	\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$
M.4	SoCo-specific parking/transportation website, social media, marketing, promotions, and rewards.	\$	\$
M.4, B.1	SoCo-specific parking and transportation collateral—maps, brochures, FAQ—for distribution at businesses, hotels, and rentals.	\$	\$
M.1, M.4, B.2	Technical assistance and training to property owners, businesses, employees, and residents.	NA	\$-\$\$
All	Data collection services—occupancy/inventory, intercept survey, employee travel survey—to support annual monitoring.	NA	\$\$-\$\$\$
R.1	Customer validation program, allowing businesses to provide coupon/voucher code at parking pay stations.	\$-\$\$	\$\$-\$\$\$\$

Strategy	Local Improvement	Relative Cost	
		Capital	Operating
M.1, M.4, B.4	SoCo “ambassador” program with cleaning and/or security services.	NA	\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$
M.3	Additional parking enforcement services (beyond the 3 assumed in the financial analysis).	NA	\$\$-\$\$\$\$
B.1	Universal parking wayfinding/signage program, including implementation at private off-street lots/garages.	\$\$\$	\$-\$\$
B.2	Employee transit pass program – a full or partial subsidy of Capital Metro passes for SoCo employees.	NA	\$\$-\$\$\$\$
B.2	Transportation “wallet” – discount collection of passes and credits for use on transit, bike share, and E-scooters. Could be available to employees, residents, or both.	\$\$	\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$
R.4	Expansion of Affordable Parking Program, allowing employees to park at lots/garages at a discount rate. Could include full or partial subsidy of monthly discount costs.	NA	\$\$\$
M.1, M.4, B.1	Shared parking database, connecting businesses and employees to private lots/garages.	\$\$	\$\$
R.2, B.4	Minor infrastructure projects, such as: curb (re)painting, (re)striping, streetscape amenities and beautification.	\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$	\$
B.4	Major infrastructure projects, such as: new sidewalks, sidewalk expansion/reconstruction, traffic calming projects, mobility hubs, lighting, or bike/pedestrian projects.	\$\$\$\$+	\$
B.5	Implement circulator shuttle service.	\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$
B.6	Construct a new public parking garage.	\$\$\$\$+	\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$+
R.5	Partner with private parking operators to pilot a universal valet service in the district	\$	\$\$\$



**DOWN
AUSTINTOWN
ALLIANCE**