

# Parking Study

Final Report



Submitted by



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# Executive Summary

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Downtown Parking Analysis prepared for the Town of Benson is a comprehensive analysis of the parking needs. The goal of the report is to evaluate the use of existing parking supply and determine if the supply is adequate to meet current and future parking demand. The intent of this report is to help prepare the Town for future parking needs and provides recommendations to aid in future changes regarding parking.

This report compiles the following assessments and findings:

- Overview of the parking study process.
- Assessment of how the existing parking is operating and if and how much new parking may be required based on current and anticipated future developments.
- Public input.
- Policy and management recommendations.
- New parking.

The study process consisted of a two-part analysis. The first part of the analysis included a determination of the current parking demand by block based on the building inventory provided by Town staff and parking generation factors calculated per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area. The demand was compared to the available supply and the resulting surplus or deficit determined on a block-by-block basis.

The second part of the analysis involved comparing the parking surplus and deficit patterns to the observed conditions as determined by the turnover and occupancy data. This comparison offered a benchmark for calibration of the surplus and deficit data.

## PARKING STUDY AREA

The study area determined by the Town of Benson is comprised of 15 blocks covering the historic downtown. Rich & Associates evaluated the parking conditions, supply and activity in the study area along with blocks just outside the study boundaries to determine potential impacts and parking supply opportunities.

## PARKING SUPPLY

The following table summarizes the existing parking supply in the study area. There is a total of 1,336 parking spaces in the study area. Of these spaces 600 (45%) are on-street spaces and 140 (10%) are public off-street spaces. The balance of 596 (45%) are privately controlled off-street spaces.

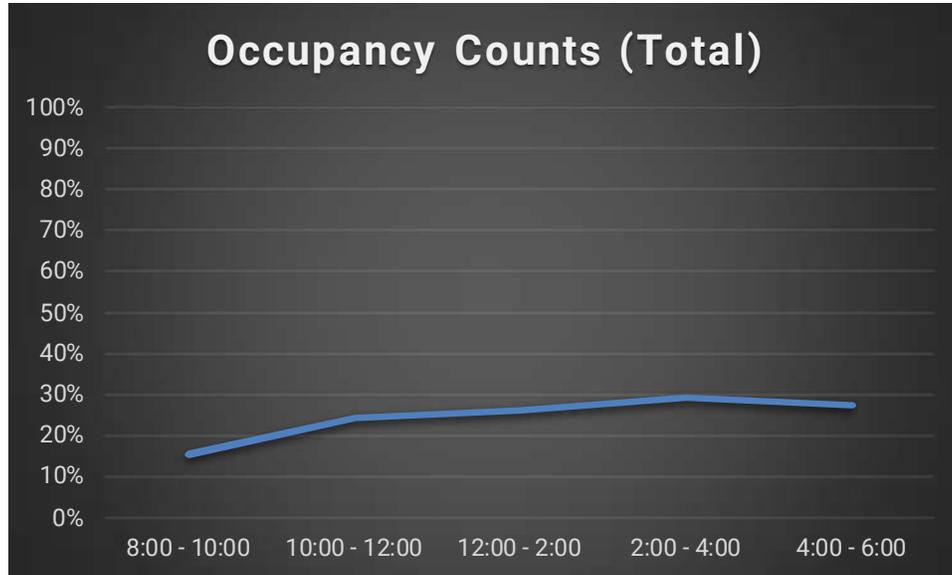
<b>Public Parking Supply</b>			
	On-Street Totals	600	45%
	Off-Street Totals	140	10%
	<b>Public Parking Total</b>	<b>740</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>Private Parking Supply</b>			
	<b>Private Parking Total</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>45%</b>
<b>TOTAL PARKING SUPPLY</b>		<b>1,336</b>	

The Town of Benson manages and controls over 55% of the parking in both the downtown core and overall study area. Based on Rich & Associates experience and best practices, we have found that to successfully manage municipal parking it is desirable for the municipality to have control of at least 50% of the supply. This allows the municipality to effectively manage the parking in terms of allocation, changing demand, market pricing, and allows the parking to be enforced with greater efficiency. Benson meets this benchmark both inside and outside of the Downtown Core Zone.

## TURNOVER AND OCCUPANCY

Fieldwork for the study included a turnover and occupancy study conducted by Rich & Associates' staff. This study involved an examination of on-street and off-street parking occupancies and vehicle movements encompassing both daytime and evening hours. Parking was observed in both public and private areas. The occupancy study occurred on Thursday, April 26, 2018 between the hours of 8:00am and 6:00pm. Thursday was chosen to conduct the analysis because Thursdays are most often an overall average day to provide a typical benchmark of activity for the study.

### Occupancy Count Summary



Type of Parking	# of spaces	8:00am-10:00am	% Occ.	10:00am-12:00pm	% Occ.2	12:00pm-2:00pm	% Occ.3	2:00pm-4:00pm	% Occ.4	4:00pm-6:00pm	% Occ.5
On-Street	504	75	15%	102	20%	126	25%	135	27%	117	23%
Off-Street	632	100	16%	175	28%	172	27%	199	31%	195	31%
Totals	1,136	175	16%	277	24%	298	26%	334	29%	312	27%

Key observations from the occupancy counts:

- The 2:00pm – 4:00pm circuit was the overall peak at 29% occupancy, with 334 parking spaces occupied out of the 1,136 parking spaces observed.
- During the day, the off-street parking had a higher occupancy than the on-street occupancy.
- The on-street parking on block 12 along the RR tracks had the highest occupancy throughout the day.

## Turnover

Turnover is an indicator of how often a parking stall is being used by different vehicles throughout the course of the day. There were a total of 55 vehicles parked beyond two hours. Thirty (30) vehicles stayed between two and four hours, 10 vehicles were observed in the same space between four and six hours and 15 additional vehicles were observed parked in the same space for over six hours. This means that during the course of the day approximately 24% of the 228 vehicles observed in on-street spaces stayed beyond two hours.

## Turnover and Occupancy Summary

The occupancy numbers in downtown Benson are relatively low. When the demand is higher, best practices are to manage the parking such that between 85% and 90% of the parking is occupied. When looking at the map the majority of the parking areas are shaded in blue which represents an occupancy percentage between 0% and 49%. The peak overall occupancy was 29% with 334 of the 1,136 spaces occupied. When we analyzed the results for the Downtown Core area we see that the peak overall occupancy increases to 45%, with 244 of the 542 spaces occupied. This tells us that there is an abundance of parking in the downtown area that is available during peak hours though all parking may not be available for all users and it may not be located as the most convenient space.

## PARKING DEMAND

Analyses were performed to determine the current and future parking demands and needs for the study area. The data collected and compiled by Rich & Associates to calculate the parking demand included:

- An inventory of the study area on-street and off-street parking supplies.
- Turnover and occupancy studies for public and private on-street and off-street parking areas.
- Block-by-block analysis of square footage and type of land use in the study area. (Building inventory was provided by the Town of Benson)
- This demand analysis contains two levels of parking analyses to determine the number of parking spaces needed. First is a mathematical or hypothetical model of parking demand based on the building gross square footage. The mathematical model multiplies a parking generation ratio (PGR) by the gross area of specific land uses to derive the number of spaces needed. The second is a method of using field observations to calibrate the mathematical model and help to establish projected spaces needed.
- The demand model is based on a weekday peak between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

A point to consider regarding the parking supply and demand is that motorists in general perceive off-street spaces with occupancies greater than 85% to be at capacity. The greater the capacity of the parking area, the less this perception is valid. When this occurs, motorists will begin to re-circulate to seek more parking, adding to traffic congestion and the drivers' perception that there is no parking available in the downtown. In our opinion, one of the biggest reasons that people perceive a parking shortage in the downtown is because some employees and business owners are parking on-street, taking prime customer and visitor spaces.

## DOWNTOWN CORE ZONE

When we focus in on the Downtown Core Zone the parking surplus decreases to 117. A second analysis was run to look at the downtown core separately from the surrounding blocks that have ample parking and less density.

Though this is a small surplus for the core blocks there is ample parking located within a couple of blocks. As development continues to change and additional businesses come to downtown Benson there is a potential for an increase in the intensity (number of people visiting each land use) of overall land use. It is important to constantly monitor the parking system and update the demand model with any changes to the parking system or land use changes.

## FUTURE

When projecting the future demand scenarios, we used a rate of 40% re-occupancy of vacant space in the five-year projections, 80% in the 10-year projections, and 100% in the 15-20 year projections. A mixed-use parking generation ratio of 2.25 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area was used to project the parking need of the existing 61,820 GSF of vacant space in the downtown.

The 5-year future scenario is reduced to a surplus of 654 spaces. The 10-year future scenario further reduces the surplus to 626 spaces and the 15-20 year future scenario becomes a surplus of 570 spaces. It should be noted that these all potential projects at this point are speculative at best, so Rich & Associates is only factoring for the re-occupancy of vacant space at this time.

## PUBLIC INPUT

Public was invited to provide their input to the study, in the form of a public meeting held on April 26, 2018 at 7:00pm. There was a brief discussion regarding the parking study and then the meeting was opened up for attendees to discuss parking issues, ideas on how to address the parking problems and general comments regarding parking. Discussions included questions specific to where they worked or had encounters with parking in the downtown.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations presented are intended to enhance the existing supply of parking through operational, management and allocation changes. While aimed primarily at increasing the efficiency of the parking system, the recommendations are comprehensive and provide a holistic approach to improving parking in the downtown today and provide a plan for accommodating future infill and development of the downtown study area.

The recommendations provided in this report are a set of tools that Benson staff can use to manage the parking system. The Town will also be given the demand matrix chart to maintain and manage the parking surplus and deficit in the downtown. This chart can be updated with new development, vacancy or in-fill, and any changes to the parking inventory. The chart allows staff to understand the impacts of potential development and allocate parking and durations to meet the needs in the downtown. A recommendation summary can be found on **pages 30 and 31**.

## NEW PARKING

Rich & Associates was asked to determine locations for new parking. There is currently a surplus of parking in the downtown and this parking would only be necessary when there are re-occupancies of vacant space and additional development occurs. A map of potential locations for lease agreements, shared use parking and potential purchase is provided on **page 60**.

## DEFINITIONS

The following are definitions used for the analysis:

- **Parking Supply** – The number of parking spaces available for use by a specified group or groups of individuals (i.e. shoppers, employees, etc.).
- **Turnover** - Turnover is the number of vehicles that occupied a parking space in a particular period. For example, if a parking lot has 100 spaces and during the course of the day, 250 different vehicles occupied the lot, then the turnover is two and a half times (2.5).
- **Occupancy** - The number of vehicles observed in a specific lot or block face represented as a percentage of spaces occupied.
- **Occupancy Rate** – The percentage of all parking spaces with vehicles parked in them at a given time.
- **Circuit** - A circuit refers to the two-hour period between observances of any one particular parking space. For the turnover and occupancy study, a defined route was developed for each survey vehicle. One circuit of the route took approximately two hours to complete and each space was observed once during that circuit.
- **Block Face** - A number was assigned to each block within the study area. Each block is then referenced by its block number and by a letter (A, B, C or D). The letter refers to the

cardinal face of the block; with (A) being the north face, (B) the east face, (C) the south face and (D) the west face. Therefore, a block designated as 1A would refer to the north face of block 1.

- **Modal Split** – Fractional split identifying what percentage of people travel by a certain transportation type (i.e. automobile, bicycle, walking, etc.).
- **Parking Demand** – The number of parking spaces generated by a single-purpose building, multi-purpose building, group of buildings or outdoor amenity.
- **Parking Need** – Represents the number of parkers who need to be accommodated in a given block after the use of alternative parking facilities is considered. Use is affected by price, location, accessibility and user restriction.



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# Introduction

## INTRODUCTION

This Downtown Parking Analysis prepared for the Town of Benson is a comprehensive study of parking and its function in the downtown. The study was undertaken to analyze the parking needs unique to the Town and the dynamics that have created those needs. This study will provide recommendations for the current parking situation as well as help prepare the Town for future parking needs. This analysis is intended to provide a “tool box” of recommendations for future changes regarding parking.

## STUDY AREA

The study area determined by the Town of Benson is comprised of 15 blocks covering the historic downtown. Rich & Associates evaluated the parking conditions, supply and activity in the study area along with blocks just outside the study boundaries to determine potential impacts and parking supply opportunities. **Map 1** details the boundaries of the study area and can be found on **page 2**.



# Map 1 Benson Parking Study Area

-  Study Area
-  Downtown Core
-  1 Block Reference



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# Analysis

## ANALYSIS

This Analysis provides an assessment of how the existing parking system is operating, the current conditions that affect the parking system and how potential new developments may affect the parking system in the future. Rich & Associates compiled and reviewed turnover and occupancy data, parking inventories and building inventories to develop a working demand model. The analysis was further refined based on our previous experience.

The process consisted of a two part analysis. The first part of the analysis included a determination of the current parking demand by block based on the building inventory provided by Town staff and parking generation factors calculated per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area. The demand was compared to the available supply and the resulting surplus or deficit determined on a block-by-block basis.

The second part of the analysis involved comparing the parking surplus and deficit patterns to the observed conditions as determined by the turnover and occupancy data. This comparison offered a benchmark for calibration of the surplus and deficit data.

## PARKING INVENTORY

Field work for this study entailed a review of the parking supply within the study area. **Table A** summarizes the existing parking supply in the study area. There are a total of 1,336 parking spaces in the study area. Of these spaces 600 (45%) are on-street spaces and 140 (10%) are public off-street spaces. The balance of 596 (45%) are privately controlled off-street spaces.

**Table A**

<b>Public Parking Supply</b>			
	On-Street Totals	600	45%
	Off-Street Totals	140	10%
	<b>Public Parking Total</b>	<b>740</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>Private Parking Supply</b>			
	<b>Private Parking Total</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>45%</b>
	<b>TOTAL PARKING SUPPLY</b>	<b>1,336</b>	

**Table C** on page 5 is a detailed supply listing types and durations of parking by each block, followed by **Map 2** which is a spatial view of the parking supply. In cases where parking spaces were not marked (on-street and off-street), the number of spaces was estimated. The core downtown commercial area is found in blocks 8-13 and has a different density than the surrounding blocks. Rich & Associates have separated this Core Zone as a separate analysis to determine the parking supply, utilization and demand that focuses on this area. **Table B** below is a summary of the parking supply in this area.

**Table B**

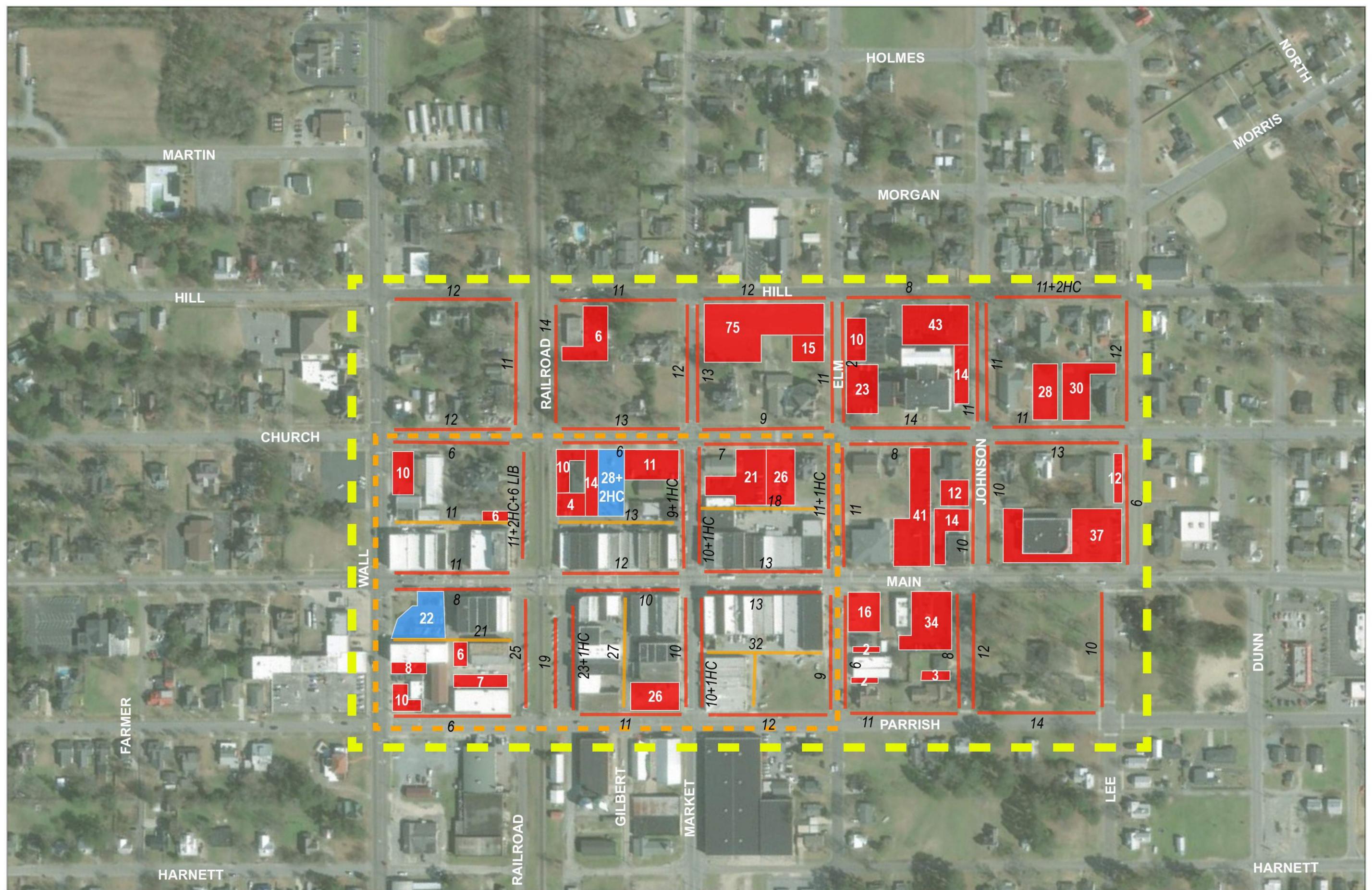
<b>Core Area Public Parking Supply</b>			
	On-Street Totals	270	47%
	Off-Street Totals	50	9%
	<b>Public Parking Total</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>Private Parking Supply</b>			
	<b>Private Parking Total</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>45%</b>
	<b>TOTAL PARKING SUPPLY</b>	<b>577</b>	

The Town of Benson manages and controls over 55% of the parking in both the downtown core and overall study area. Based on Rich & Associates experience and best practices, we have found that to successfully manage municipal parking it is desirable for the municipality to have control of at least 50% of the supply. This allows the municipality to effectively manage the parking in terms of allocation, changing demand, market pricing, and allows the parking to be enforced with greater efficiency. Benson meets this benchmark both inside and outside of the Downtown Core Zone.

**Table C**

Parking Supply																
Block >	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	TOTALS
<b>Public On-Street</b>																
Unmarked	35	50	45	35	45	29	28	41	31	27	40	73	44	25	36	584
10 minute	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Barrier Free	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	9
Museum parking (NP 11pm-5am)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	6
																<b>600</b>
<b>Public Off-Street</b>																
Public	0	0	0	52	0	0	0	0	26	0	22	0	0	0	0	100
Public Reserved	0	0	0	33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	33
Barrier Free	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
																<b>140</b>
<b>Private</b>																
Off-Street	0	16	83	0	53	47	64	64	50	14	39	53	32	57	0	572
Barrier Free	0	0	7	0	5	2	3	1	2	0	2	0	0	2	0	24
																<b>596</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>1,336</b>
<b>Grey area is the Downtown Core</b>																

Source: Rich and Associates Spring 2018



# Map 2 Benson Parking Study Supply

- Study Area
- Downtown Core

- On-Street Parking
- Alley Parking
- Off-Street Public
- Off-Street Private



## TURNOVER & OCCUPANCY ANALYSIS

Rich & Associates conducted a turnover and occupancy analysis in the study area. The turnover and occupancy study involved an examination of the on-street and off-street parking supply. Additionally, we observed vehicle movements throughout the day from morning until early evening. Observations occurred in both public and private parking areas in order to understand how the system was working. The goal of the turnover and occupancy analysis is to observe a large portion of the overall parking system, not necessarily the entire supply.

The occupancy study occurred on Thursday, April 26, 2018 between the hours of 8:00am and 6:00pm. Thursday was chosen to conduct the analysis because Thursdays are most often an overall average day to provide a typical benchmark of activity for the study.

### TURNOVER

The turnover portion of the analysis, where license plate numbers were recorded, applied to portions of the on-street spaces in the Downtown Core Zone and were observed during each two-hour circuit. This is done to determine how long specific vehicles were parked in the premium customer spaces and to see if anyone was parked for long periods of time in these spaces. At the same time, the turnover information also yields occupancy results for the parking area, and therefore, for each circuit a composite occupancy can be derived.

Turnover is an indicator of how often a parking stall is being used by different vehicles throughout the course of the day. Turnover is most relevant to the short-term customer trying to find parking for a quick errand. If this customer is unable to find a convenient space, they might not stop to patronize the business. **Table D** on the following page summarizes the results of the turnover findings. There were 176 on-street parking spaces observed for turnover from the hours of 8:00am to 6:00pm.

Turnover can be low for two reasons: 1) when vehicles are parking for extended periods in the same space, or 2) the overall on-street occupancy is low. Although 55 vehicles stayed beyond two hours, there are not any signs posting a time limit and thus there is not a reason for vehicles to move. The turnover for this day was just over 1. Rich is of the opinion that this number is low due to a low overall occupancy of the combined observed spaces. There were areas with higher occupancy, though the overall occupancy for 176 observed spaces was not high.

There were a total of 55 vehicles parked beyond two hours. Thirty (30) vehicles stayed between two and four hours, 10 vehicles were observed in the same space between four and six hours and 15 additional vehicles were observed parked in the same space for over six hours. This means that during the course of the day approximately 24% of the 228 vehicles observed in on-street spaces stayed beyond two hours.

**Table D**

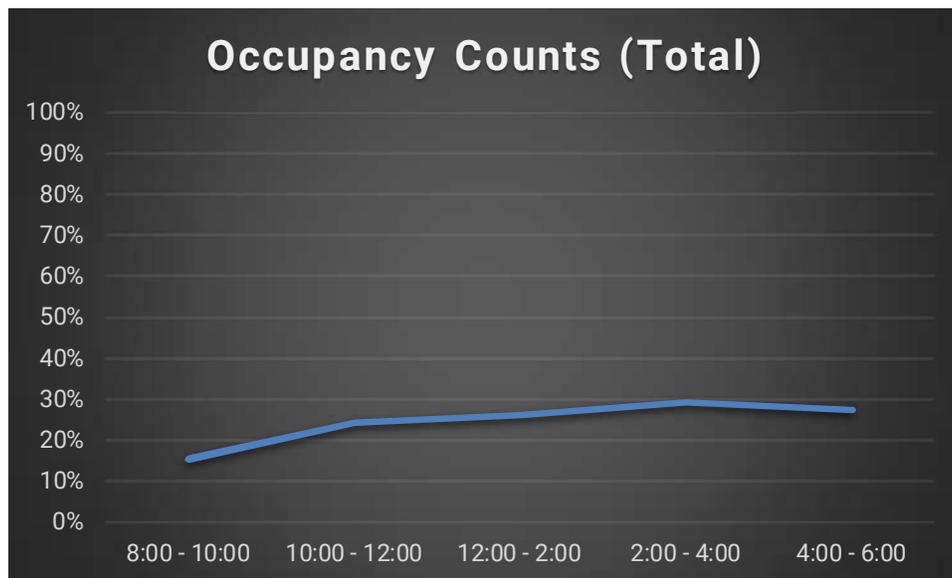
Parking Turnover Summary		
A Sample of On-street spaces in the Downtown Core		
Vehicles that remained less than 2 hours	173	76%
Vehicles that remained between 2 and 4 hours	21	9%
Vehicles that remained between 4 and 6 hours	9	4%
Vehicles that remained between 6 and 8 hours	10	4%
Vehicles that remained between 8 and 10 hours	15	7%
Total number of vehicles observed	228	
Total number of stalls analyzed for turnover	176	

Source: Rich and Associates Field Observations

## OCCUPANCY

Occupancy is an important aspect of parking because it helps us to understand the dynamic of how demand fluctuates throughout the day. Overall, the occupancy data is used by Rich & Associates to calibrate the parking demand model. **Graph 1, Table E and Maps 3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4** are the summary results of Rich & Associates occupancy findings. The full occupancy counts can be found on **page 11**.

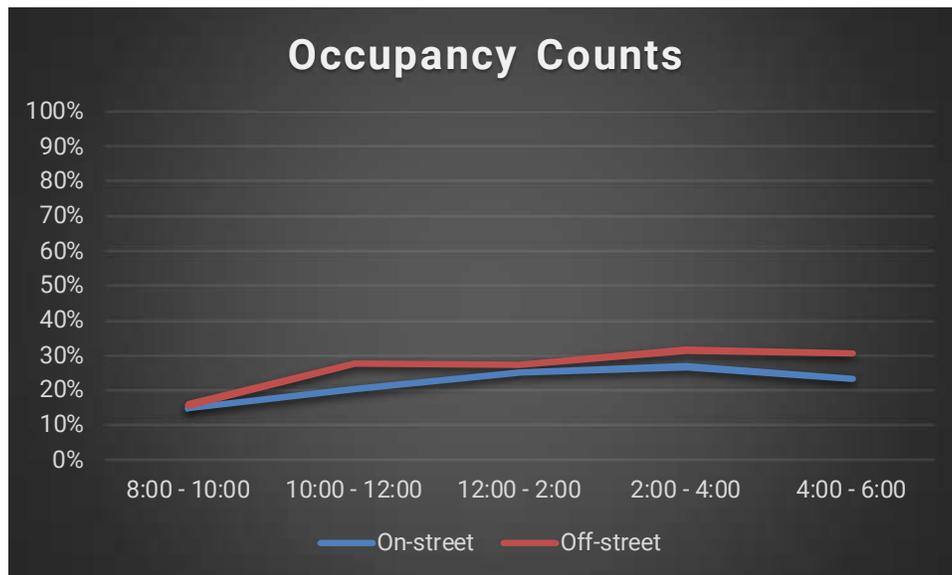
**Graph 1**



**Table E**  
**Occupancy Count Summary**

Type of Parking	# of spaces	8:00am-10:00am	% Occ.	10:00am-12:00pm	% Occ.2	12:00pm-2:00pm	% Occ.3	2:00pm-4:00pm	% Occ.4	4:00pm-6:00pm	% Occ.5
On-Street	504	75	15%	102	20%	126	25%	135	27%	117	23%
Off-Street	632	100	16%	175	28%	172	27%	199	31%	195	31%
Totals	1,136	175	16%	277	24%	298	26%	334	29%	312	27%

**Graph 2**



Key observations from the occupancy counts:

- The 2:00pm – 4:00pm circuit was the overall peak at 29% occupancy, with 334 parking spaces occupied out of the 1,136 parking spaces observed.
- During the day, the off-street parking had a higher occupancy than the on-street occupancy.
- The on-street parking on block 12 along the RR tracks had the highest occupancy throughout the day.

When we focus on the occupancy of the Downtown Core Zone (Blocks 8-13) the occupancy percentage is higher during all circuits. The peak within the core remains at the 2:00pm to 4:00pm circuit, though the overall peak is increased from 29% occupancy to 45% occupancy of the available and observed spaces. **Table F** and **Graph 3** are a summary of findings.

**Table F**  
**Downtown Core Zone Occupancy Summary**

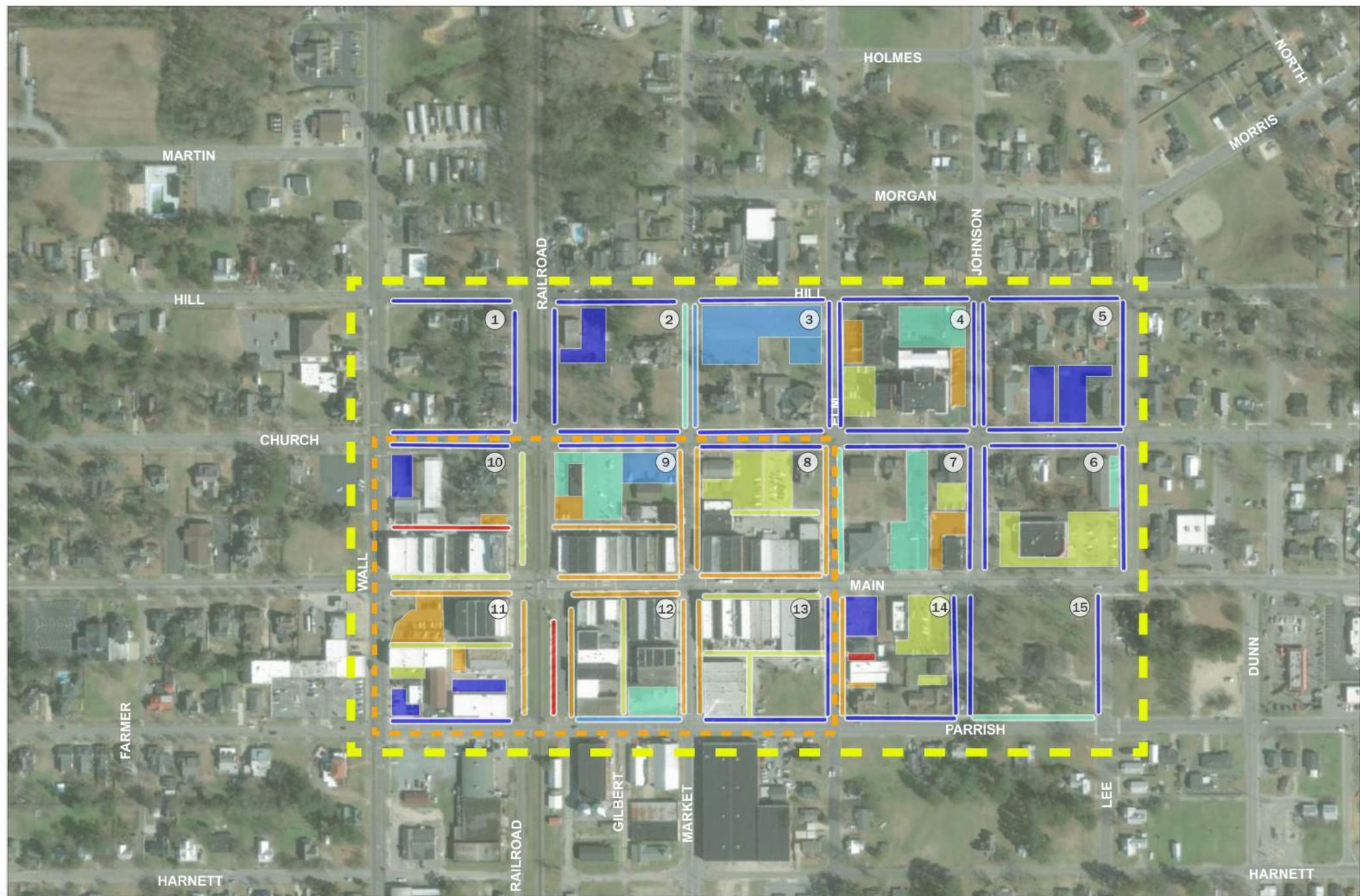
Type of Parking	# of spaces	8:00am-10:00am	% Occ.	10:00am-12:00pm	% Occ.2	12:00pm-2:00pm	% Occ.3	2:00pm-4:00pm	% Occ.4	4:00pm-6:00pm	% Occ.5
On-Street	266	67	25%	95	36%	117	44%	125	47%	108	41%
Off-Street	276	43	16%	99	36%	108	39%	119	43%	117	42%
Totals	542	110	20%	194	36%	225	42%	244	45%	225	42%

**Graph 3**



**Table G**  
**Occupancy Findings**

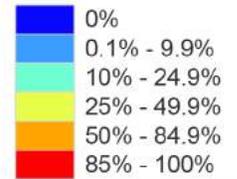
Block	Description	Spaces	8:00am - 10:00am	%Occ.	10:00am - 12:00pm	%Occ.	12:00pm - 2:00pm	%Occ.	2:00pm - 4:00pm	%Occ.	4:00pm - 6:00pm	%Occ.
1C	on-street	12	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
2A	on-street	11	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
2B	on-street	12	2	17%	1	8%	2	17%	2	17%	1	8%
3	PFWB Church lot	75	1	1%	1	1%	1	1%	1	1%	1	1%
3	Methodist Church lot	15	1	7%	1	7%	1	7%	1	7%	1	7%
3B	on-street	11	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
3C	on-street	9	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
3D	on-street	13	2	15%	1	8%	0	0%	1	8%	2	15%
4	Police	23	9	39%	9	39%	10	43%	9	39%	9	39%
4	Fire	10	4	40%	4	40%	3	30%	6	60%	5	50%
4	Town Parking rear lot	43	10	23%	10	23%	7	16%	10	23%	7	16%
4	Benson Staff and Visitor Side Lot	14	11	79%	7	50%	4	29%	7	50%	6	43%
4A	on-street	8	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
4B	on-street	11	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
4C	on-street	14	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
4D	on-street	2	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
5C	on-street	11	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
5D	on-street	11	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
6	Walgreens	37	5	14%	7	19%	11	30%	11	30%	14	38%
6	Strip Mall	12	1	8%	3	25%	1	8%	2	17%	3	25%
6A	on-street	13	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
6D	on-street	10	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
7	BB&T	14	0	0%	3	21%	4	29%	7	50%	4	29%
7	First Federal	12	3	25%	4	33%	5	42%	4	33%	2	17%
7	First Citizens	41	3	7%	8	20%	7	17%	9	22%	11	27%
7A	on-street	8	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
7B	on-street	10	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
7D	on-street	11	2	18%	2	18%	3	27%	2	18%	3	27%
8	United Bank	21	6	29%	7	33%	8	38%	10	48%	11	52%
8	Methodist Church 107	26	3	12%	10	38%	10	38%	7	27%	6	23%
8	Alley	18	4	22%	4	22%	5	28%	7	39%	4	22%
8A	on-street	7	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
8B	on-street	12	5	42%	9	75%	9	75%	9	75%	7	58%
8C	on-street	13	2	15%	4	31%	7	54%	10	77%	7	54%
8D	on-street	11	4	36%	3	27%	4	36%	9	82%	7	64%
9	ABC Liquor	14	0	0%	3	21%	5	36%	4	29%	6	43%
9	Public lot	28	9	32%	7	25%	9	32%	8	29%	8	29%
9	Alley	13	3	23%	6	46%	12	92%	8	62%	8	62%
9	Orbe's lot	11	0	0%	3	27%	4	36%	1	9%	1	9%
9A	on-street	6	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
9B	on-street	10	4	40%	4	40%	6	60%	6	60%	6	60%
9C	on-street	12	0	0%	1	8%	2	17%	6	50%	4	33%
9D	on-street	4	0	0%	2	50%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
10	Alley	11	1	9%	6	55%	9	82%	11	100%	11	100%
10	Gravel lot next to Library	6	0	0%	0	0%	3	50%	3	50%	1	17%
10A	on-street	6	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
10B	on-street HC	2	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
10B	on-street reserved Library	6	0	0%	0	0%	2	33%	1	17%	1	17%
10B	on-street	11	3	27%	3	27%	3	27%	4	36%	4	36%
10C	on-street	11	0	0%	2	18%	3	27%	4	36%	6	55%
11	Benton side lot	4	0	0%	3	75%	1	25%	3	75%	3	75%
11	Benton Lot	7	0	0%	3	43%	3	43%	3	43%	3	43%
11	Public Lot	22	4	18%	7	32%	6	27%	15	68%	17	77%
11	Alley combined	10	5	50%	5	50%	4	40%	9	90%	10	100%
11A	on-street	9	0	0%	2	22%	2	22%	6	67%	4	44%
11B	on-street along RR tracks	25	6	24%	11	44%	12	48%	13	52%	12	48%
11C	on-street	6	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
12	Gravel lot	26	0	0%	4	15%	4	15%	4	15%	4	15%
12	Alley	27	4	15%	14	52%	10	37%	12	44%	13	48%
12A	on-street	10	1	10%	2	20%	7	70%	5	50%	4	40%
12B	on-street	10	4	40%	4	40%	6	60%	6	60%	5	50%
12C	on-street	9	0	0%	1	11%	1	11%	1	11%	1	11%
12DD	on-street along RR tracks	19	17	89%	17	89%	18	95%	17	89%	14	74%
12D	on-street along buildings	22	13	59%	16	73%	13	59%	13	59%	11	50%
13	Alley	32	4	13%	17	53%	15	47%	14	44%	11	34%
13A	on-street	13	2	15%	4	31%	12	92%	4	31%	6	46%
13B	on-street	9	2	22%	3	33%	1	11%	3	33%	3	33%
13C	on-street	12	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	17%
13D	on-street	11	3	27%	7	64%	9	82%	8	73%	4	36%
14	Private lot under construction	16	0	0%	1	6%	2	13%	0	0%	3	19%
14	Eye Works	34	7	21%	14	41%	3	9%	9	26%	8	24%
14	Progressive	3	1	33%	0	0%	1	33%	1	33%	1	33%
14	Cleaners	4	1	25%	1	25%	1	25%	1	25%	1	25%
14	Dentist	3	0	0%	3	100%	3	100%	2	67%	2	67%
14B	on-street	8	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
14C	on-street	11	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
14D	on-street	6	2	33%	2	33%	3	50%	3	50%	2	33%
15B	on-street	10	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
15C	on-street	14	0	0%	1	7%	1	7%	2	14%	0	0%
15D	on-street	12	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	8%
	<b>Total Occupancy</b>	<b>1,136</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>27%</b>

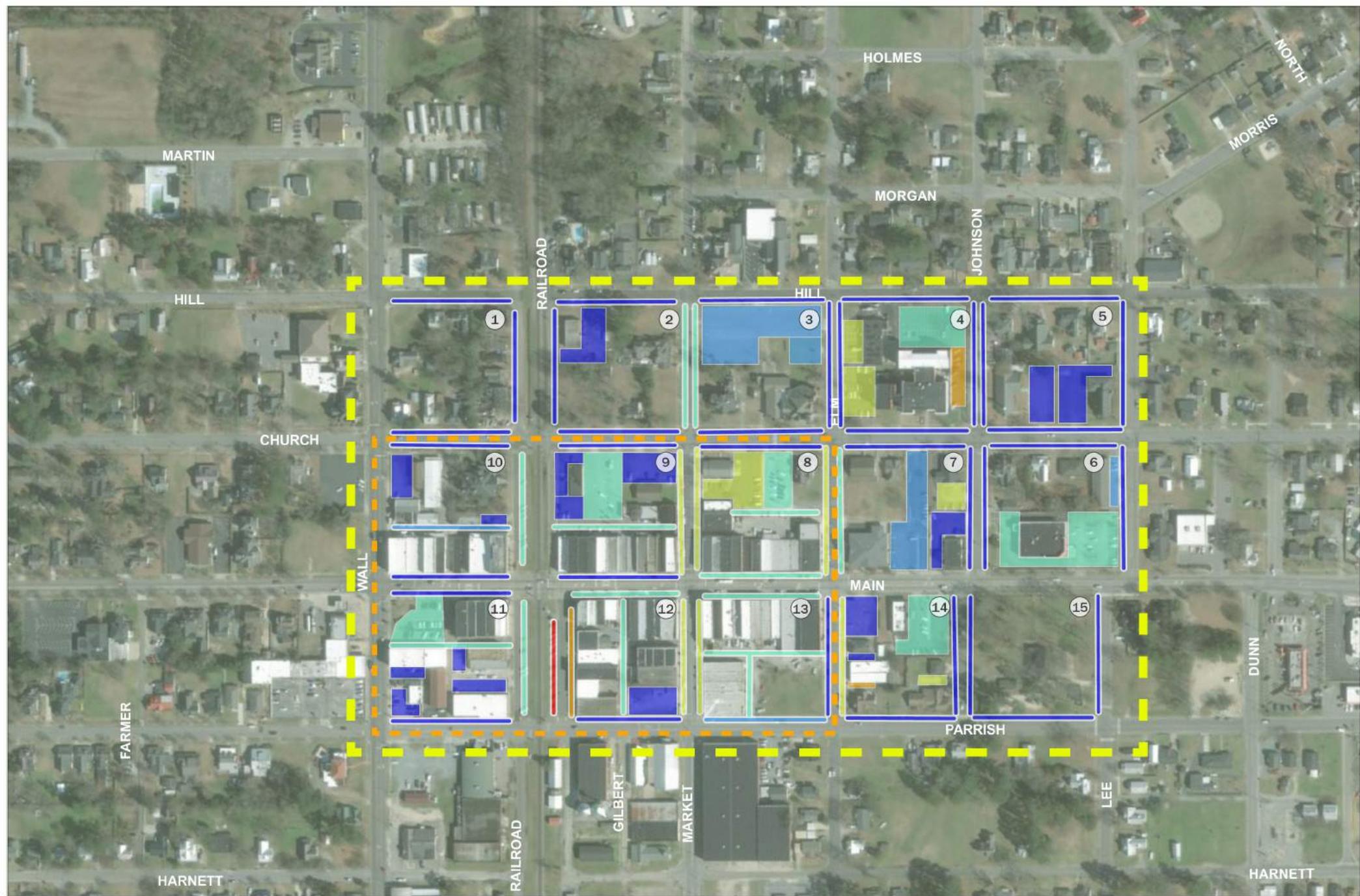


**Map 3**  
**Benson Parking Study**  
**Parking Occupancy**  
**Peak**

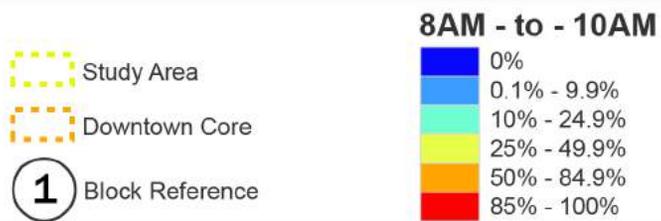
**2PM - to - 4PM**

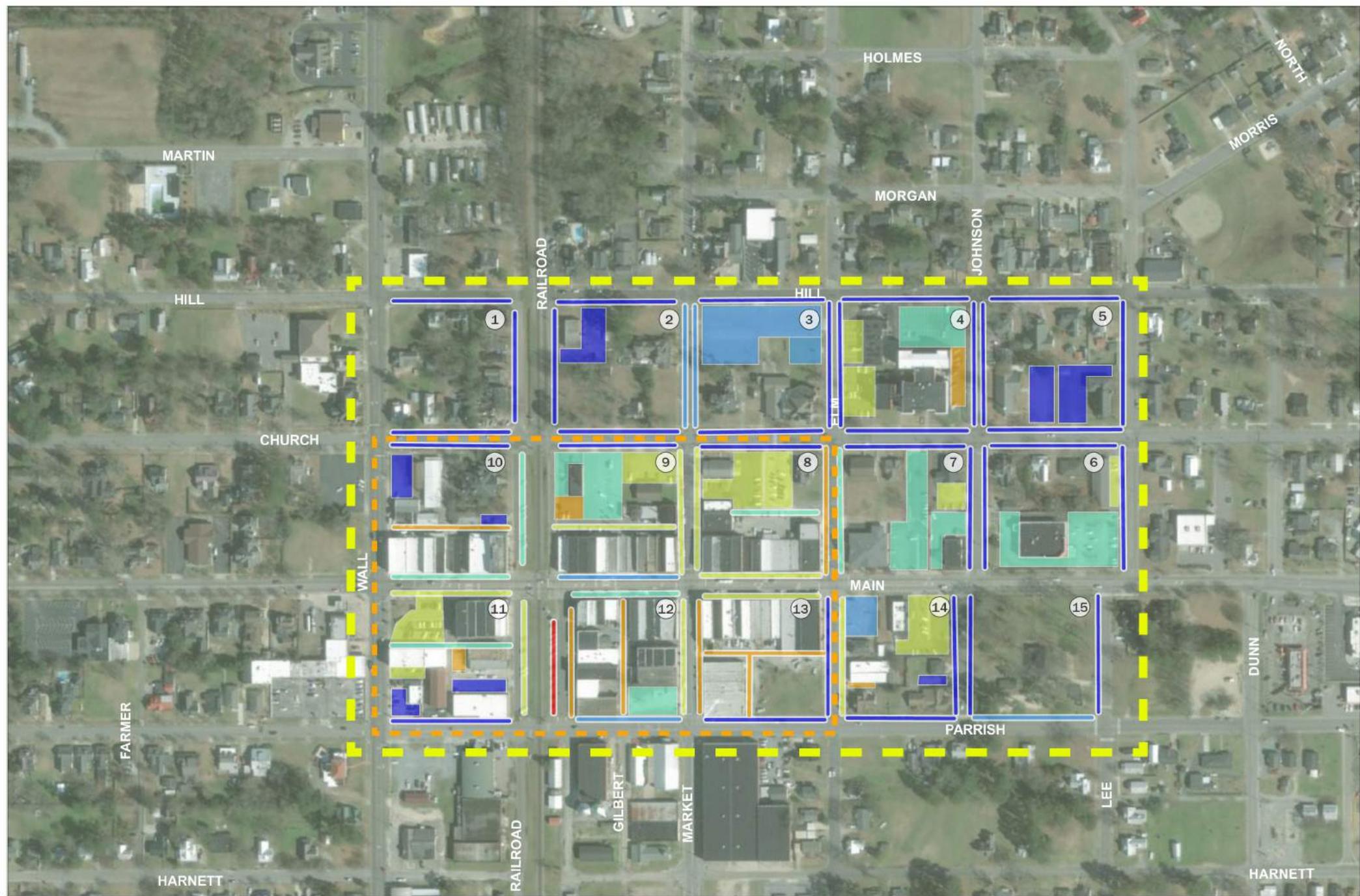
-  Study Area
-  Downtown Core
-  Block Reference





# Map 3.1 Benson Parking Study Parking Occupancy

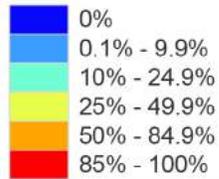


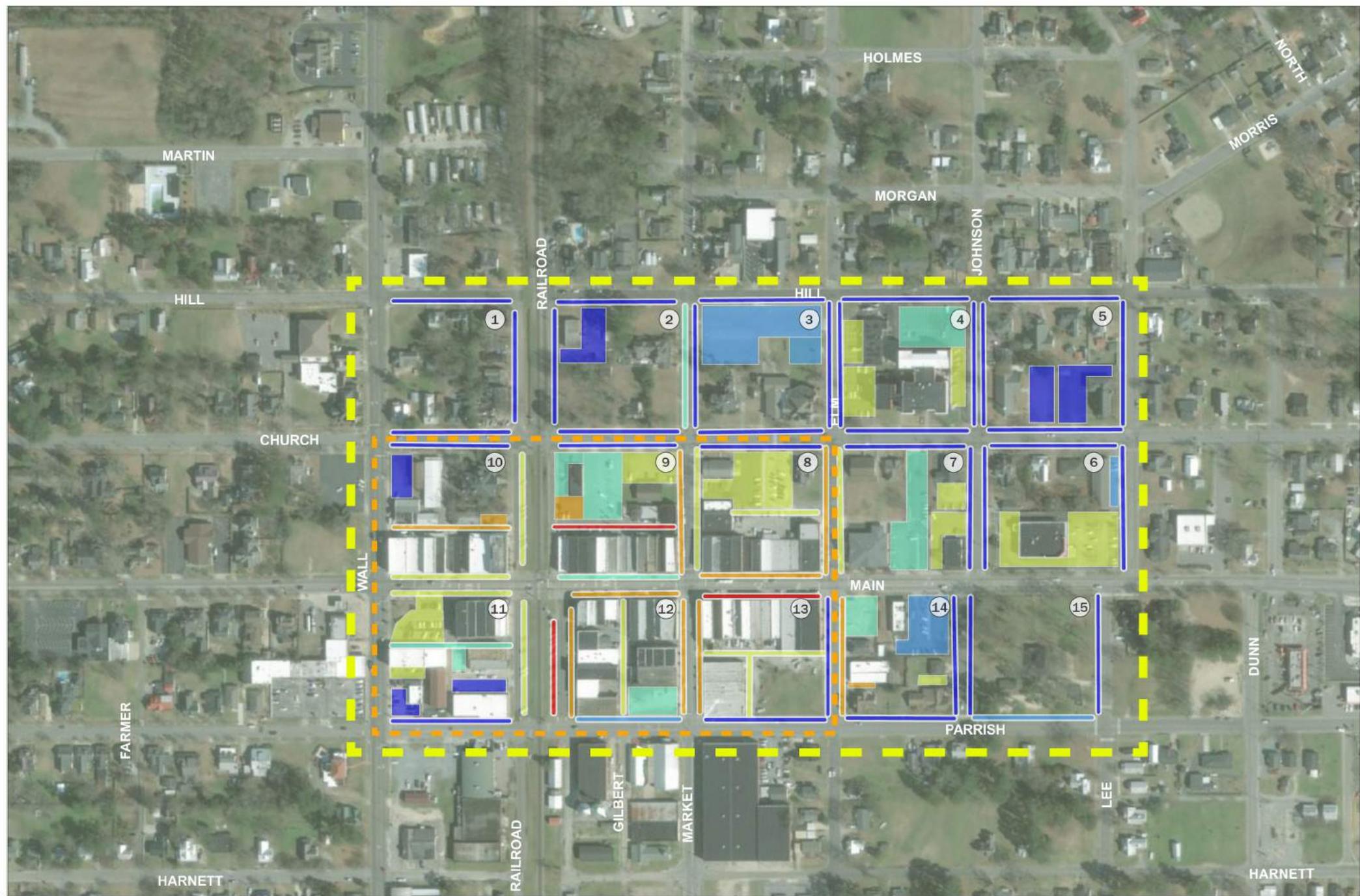


# Map 3.2 Benson Parking Study Parking Occupancy

10AM - to - 12PM

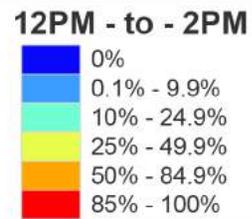
-  Study Area
-  Downtown Core
-  Block Reference

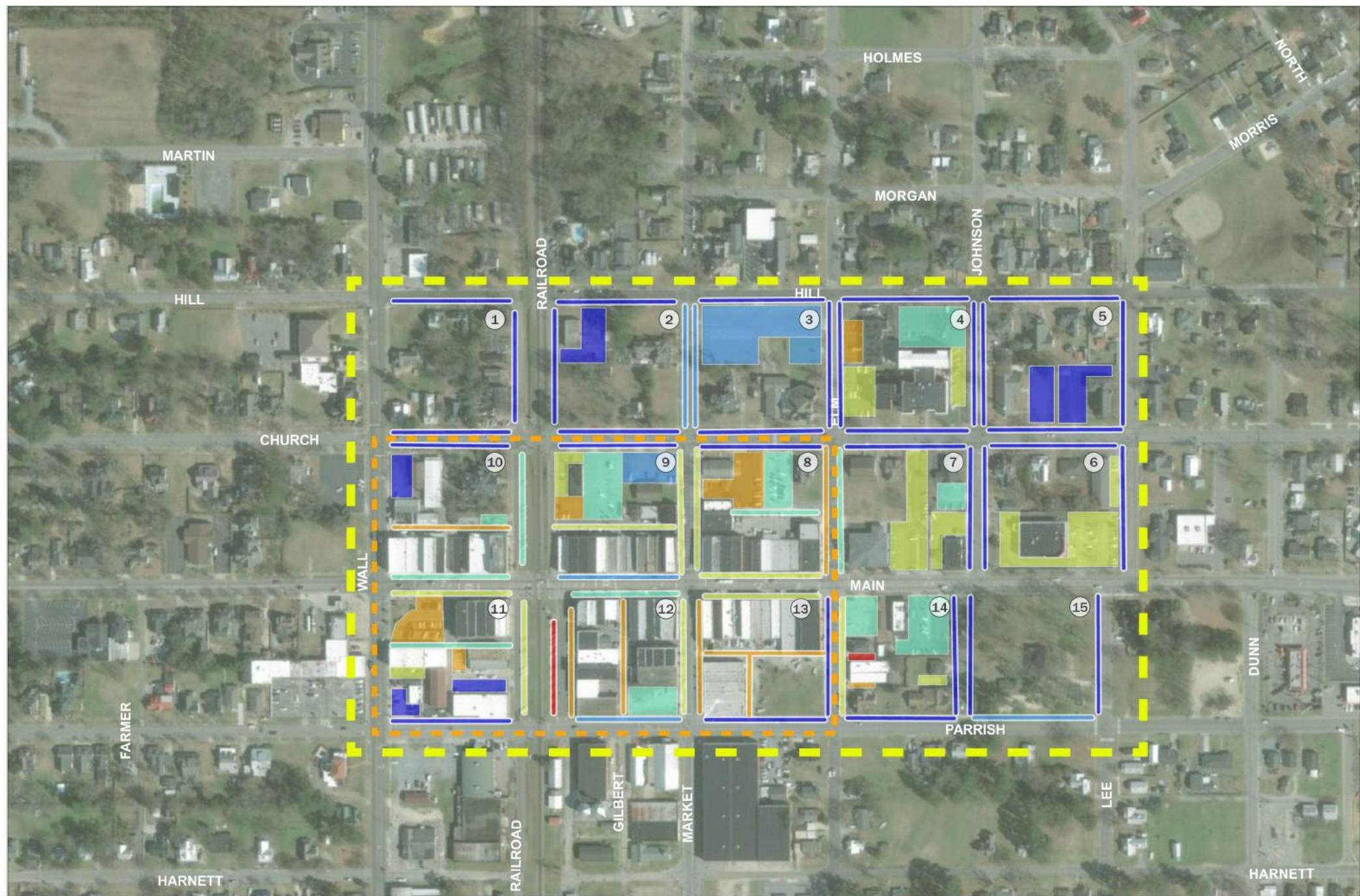




### Map 3.3 Benson Parking Study Parking Occupancy

-  Study Area
-  Downtown Core
-  Block Reference

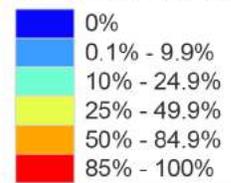




# Map 3.4 Benson Parking Study Parking Occupancy

-  Study Area
-  Downtown Core
-  Block Reference

## 4PM - to - 6PM



## OCCUPANCY SUMMARY

The occupancy numbers in downtown Benson are relatively low. When the demand is higher, best practices are to manage the parking such that between 85% and 90% of the parking is occupied. When looking at the map the majority of the parking areas are shaded in blue which represents an occupancy percentage between 0% and 49%. The peak overall occupancy was 29% with 334 of the 1,1136 spaces occupied. When we analyzed the results for the Downtown Core area we see that the peak overall occupancy increases to 45%, with 244 of the 542 spaces occupied. This tells us that there is an abundance of parking in the downtown area that is available during peak hours though all parking may not be available for all users and it may not be located as the most convenient space. This occupancy data is used to calibrate the parking demand model.

## PARKING DEMAND CALCULATION

Analyses were performed to determine the current and future parking demands and needs for the study area. The data collected and compiled by Rich & Associates to calculate the parking demand included:

- An inventory of the study area on-street and off-street parking supplies.
- Turnover and occupancy studies for public and private on-street and off-street parking areas.
- Block-by-block analysis of square footage and type of land use in the study area. (Building inventory was provided by the Town of Benson)
- This demand analysis contains two levels of parking analyses to determine the number of parking spaces needed. First is a mathematical or hypothetical model of parking demand based on the building gross square footage. The mathematical model multiplies a parking generation ratio (PGR) by the gross area of specific land uses to derive the number of spaces needed. The second is a method of using field observations to calibrate the mathematical model and help to establish projected spaces needed.
- The demand model is based on a weekday peak between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

A point to consider regarding the parking supply and demand is that motorists in general perceive off-street spaces with occupancies greater than 85% to be at capacity. The greater the capacity of the parking area, the less this perception is valid. When this occurs, motorists will begin to re-circulate to seek more parking, adding to traffic congestion and the drivers' perception that there is no parking available in the downtown.

The PGR's were established from Rich & Associates field work and previous experience with work in similar communities. The demand factor for each land use type includes an estimate for

employees and patrons to that particular land use and reflect a daytime peak. Once parking demand has been calculated for both current and future conditions, a comparison with the existing supply of parking is made. The resulting figures are parking surplus or deficit figures for each block.

The PGR's are used in conjunction with information from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and the Urban Land Institute (ULI). These two sources are the generally accepted standards for parking generation. Rich & Associates uses experience along with these sources to modify or customize the parking generation ratios specifically to the study area.

Once a parking demand model is developed that illustrates the surpluses and deficits numerically and graphically, we then compare the model with the actual field observations, specifically the turnover and occupancy counts. The comparison serves as a test of the demand model and allows Rich & Associates staff to make further revisions or adjustments where necessary, thus ensuring accuracy to the overall parking dynamic in the downtown area. It is important to note that the demand calculations are slightly higher than the observed observations due to changes in land use, intensity in demand and allowance for some growth of current businesses.

The assumptions used in developing the PGR's and the parking demand calculations are:

**Assumption 1:** It was assumed that parking demand per block was dependent on the floor area contained in the block. Demand computed for one block was not affected by the amount of gross floor area available on surrounding blocks. Therefore, a block with surplus parking supply is not used to offset calculated shortfalls on adjacent blocks.

**Assumption 2:** The projected parking demand for the future was derived under the assumption that currently occupied properties would remain occupied at existing or higher than existing levels into the future.

## PARKING NEED

Once we have determined the base parking demand calculation we then need to modify the parking generation factors to demonstrate the actual parking need for the downtown. Rich & Associates factors in the reality of parking to the demand such as walking distances to public parking locations, conditions of parking lots and the conditions of the path to and from the lots. Parking need will fluctuate based on several factors such as use changes and intensity of land use. A restaurant or retail spaces could become a destination in the region increasing the overall demand for that specific land use or an office space could go from selling insurance to a call center which requires a much larger staff and will have an evening shift. The following are issues that are considered when developing the number of parking spaces needed:

- Building size, purpose and special use conditions.

- Alternative modes of transportation, including availability, level of use, attractiveness and policy impacts.
- Proportion of the downtown trips that are multiple-use or linked (available shared use parking).
- Vehicle traffic.
- Cost of parking.
- The intensity of developments in the downtown.
  - The overall number of businesses in a downtown drawing customers.

The gross square footage of the sorted land use categories by block was provided by the Town of Benson. The different land uses for each block are in general multiplied by a parking generation ratio (PGR) of spaces required per 1,000 square feet. The resulting demand number is deducted from the available parking supply on each block to determine a surplus or deficit condition for each block.

**Table H on page 21** is the Parking Demand Matrix, followed by a summary of the parking demand represented spatially in **Map 4 on page 22**. This model is intended to be used as a tool to determine the current parking demand and help project the future parking demand. The parking generation ratios are not for zoning purposes, they are to be used along with the demand matrix as a tool to determine the parking impact of existing and new development coming into the study area. The results from the parking demand matrix are compared to the turnover and occupancy results to make sure that there is a correlation with the observed needs of the downtown.

Some stakeholders stated that peak time is in the summer with many travelers stopping in town on their way to beaches, they felt that the downtown was overall fairly consistent. With this information we can adjust the calculations to reflect that the overall demand could be slightly higher. If the demand was 15% higher, the overall parking system would still peak at just over 45% occupancy. Therefore, the demand model was adjusted to demonstrate an increased peak time. It should also be noted that the model is not designed around an overall peak event in the downtown, but instead it is designed to reflect accommodating parking for the average weekday peak.

In our opinion, one of the biggest reasons that people perceive a parking shortage in the downtown is because some employees and business owners are parking on-street, taking prime customer and visitor spaces. When an employee parks on-street due to greater convenience when their business has a private parking space available for their use, the employee is actually taking two spaces out of the parking supply. This is because the space is not a shared parking space, instead it is reserved only for the business, whereas the public on-street spaces are intended to be available for anyone visiting the downtown to visit multiple destinations. Shared

use is an important component of parking that allows municipalities to develop less parking for each land use due to the ability to park once and visit multiple locations.

The current parking situation is calculated showing an overall surplus of 709 spaces. When we focus in on the Downtown Core Zone the parking surplus decreases to 117. A second analysis was run to look at the downtown core separately from the surrounding blocks that have ample parking and less density. The Downtown Core Zone demand can be found in **Table I** (*page 23*) and spatially represented on **Map 4.1 on page 24**.

Though this is a small surplus for the core blocks there is ample parking located within a couple of blocks. As development continues to change and additional businesses come to downtown Benson there is a potential for an increase in the intensity (number of people visiting each land use) of overall land use. It is important to constantly monitor the parking system and update the demand model with any changes to the parking system or land use changes. The updated model should then be compared to occupancy counts from the parking system.

**Table H  
Demand Matrix**

Daytime Parking Demand Matrix																
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Block	Office	Medical Office	Retail	Service	Mixed Use	Restaurant/Bar	Residential	Library/Museum	Church	Vacant	Demand	Parking	Surplus/Deficit	Projected Surplus/Deficit	Projected Surplus/Deficit	Projected Surplus/Deficit
							(per unit)				(current)	Supply	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit	Deficit
Current Parking Generation Ratios	2.00	2.35	1.65	1.65	1.90	4.20	1.50	1.50	0.25	2.25			(current)	5 YEAR (40%)	10 YEAR (80%)	100%
1	4,125	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	35	27	27	27	27
2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	66	66	66	66	66
3	1,987	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	135	131	131	131	131
4	27,892	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	56	125	69	69	69	69
5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	105	105	105	105	105
6	15,033	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	78	48	48	48	48
7	19,353	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	39	95	56	56	56	56
8	19,979	-	16,644	1,721	-	-	-	-	-	3,650	70	108	38	34	33	30
9	11,743	-	12,173	10,366	-	-	-	-	15,962	22,638	65	112	47	27	17	-4
10	2,300	-	9,907	6,772	-	-	-	9,400	-	-	46	50	4	4	4	4
11	1,590	9,600	3,375	17,837	-	-	-	-	-	5,400	61	103	42	37	35	30
12	31,860	5,784	9,300	6,823	-	-	-	-	1,408	25,348	104	127	23	0	-11	-34
13	9,892	-	24,812	25,992	-	2,230	-	-	2,392	4,784	114	77	-37	-41	-43	-47
14	1,008	4,937	-	4,608	4,647	-	-	-	-	-	30	84	54	54	54	54
15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	36	36	36	36	36
<b>Totals</b>	<b>146,762</b>	<b>20,321</b>	<b>76,211</b>	<b>74,119</b>	<b>4,647</b>	<b>2,230</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9,400</b>	<b>19,762</b>	<b>61,820</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>1,336</b>	<b>709</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>626</b>	<b>570</b>
											(stalls)	(stalls)	(stalls)	(stalls)	(stalls)	(stalls)



**Map 4**  
**Benson Parking Study**  
**Current Surplus/Deficit**

-  Study Area
-  Downtown Core
-  Block Reference



**Table I**  
**Downtown Core Zone Demand Matrix**

Daytime Parking Demand Matrix																
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
Block	Office	Medical Office	Retail	Service	Mixed Use	Restaurant/Bar	Residential (per unit)	Library/Museum	Church	Vacant	Demand (current)	Parking Supply	Surplus/ Deficit	Projected Surplus/ Deficit	Projected Surplus/ Deficit	Projected Surplus/ Deficit
Current Parking Generation Ratios	2.00	2.35	1.65	1.65	1.90	4.20	1.50	1.50	0.25	2.25			(current)	5 YEAR (40%)	10 YEAR (80%)	100%
8	19,979	-	16,644	1,721	-	-	-	-	-	3,650	70	108	38	34	33	30
9	11,743	-	12,173	10,366	-	-	-	-	15,962	22,638	65	112	47	27	17	-4
10	2,300	-	9,907	6,772	-	-	-	9,400	-	-	46	50	4	4	4	4
11	1,590	9,600	3,375	17,837	-	-	-	-	-	5,400	61	103	42	37	35	30
12	31,860	5,784	9,300	6,823	-	-	-	-	1,408	25,348	104	127	23	0	-11	-34
13	9,892	-	24,812	25,992	-	2,230	-	-	2,392	4,784	114	77	-37	-41	-43	-47
<b>Totals</b>	<b>77,364</b>	<b>15,384</b>	<b>76,211</b>	<b>69,511</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,230</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>9,400</b>	<b>19,762</b>	<b>61,820</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>(22)</b>
											(stalls)	(stalls)	(stalls)	(stalls)	(stalls)	(stalls)



# Map 4.1 Benson Parking Study Downtown Core

 Downtown Core

 Block Reference



## FUTURE

When projecting the future demand scenarios, we used a rate of 40% re-occupancy of vacant space in the five-year projections, 80% in the 10-year projections, and 100% in the 15-20 year projections. A mixed-use parking generation ratio of 2.25 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area was used to project the parking need of the existing 61,820 GSF of vacant space in the downtown.

The 5-year future scenario is reduced to a surplus of 654 spaces. The 10-year future scenario further reduces the surplus to 626 spaces and the 15-20 year future scenario becomes a surplus of 570 spaces. It should be noted that these all potential projects at this point are speculative at best, so Rich & Associates is only factoring for the re-occupancy of vacant space at this time. The demand matrix can be used by staff when new projects are proposed to determine the overall change to parking.



**Map 5**  
**Benson Parking Study**  
**Future 5 Year**  
**Surplus/Deficit**

-  Study Area
-  Downtown Core
-  Block Reference





**Map 5.1**  
**Benson Parking Study**  
**Future 10 Year**  
**Surplus/Deficit**

-  Study Area
-  Downtown Core
-  1 Block Reference



0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

## PUBLIC INPUT

Public was invited to provide their input to the study, in the form of a public meeting held on April 26, 2018 at 7:00pm. There was a brief discussion regarding the parking study and then the meeting was opened up for attendees to discuss parking issues, ideas on how to address the parking problems and general comments regarding parking. Discussions included questions specific to where they worked or had encounters with parking in the downtown.

Parking comments and concerns:

- Paradise Pawn – has public lot – need accessible parking on-street / congestions in alleyway
- Dental Office on RR Street – On-street parking is full / employees taking up spaces
- Consider RR Street on west bound continuing one-way streets for additional on-street angle parking.
- M-DOT paving Main Street – consider parallel without turn lanes 46-foot curb to curb.
- Truck route needed
- Traffic circle north of town - coming
- High traffic volumes downtown heading to the beach. In the last 4-5 years traffic has increased likely due to routing provided via Google Maps.
- Too many business owners park too close or on-street
- Music on Mainstreet coming soon
- Cross-walk –
  - want new lighting
  - pedestrian crossings have cost approximately \$30,000 per intersection
  - look at Fayetteville stamped crosswalks
- Dumpster agreement ready but not enough buy in currently
- There is a Façade improvement for back door improvements \$1,500 each to help encourage customers to park in the back.
- Improvements underway for the Benson Parking Lot and alleys
- Lighting available through Town for alley ways



Shop  
Local



Shop  
Benson

# Policy & Management Recommendations



## POLICY AND MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

### Introduction

The recommendations presented here are intended to enhance the existing supply of parking through operational and management changes. While aimed primarily at increasing the efficiency of the parking, the recommendations are comprehensive and provide a holistic approach to improving parking in the downtown today as well as provide a plan for accommodating future growth of the downtown study area.

The recommendations in this section are a set of tools that Benson can use to manage and develop a parking system. Benson will also be given the demand matrix chart (**Table H**) to use as a tool to manage land use and parking in the Town. This chart can be updated with new development, vacancy or in-fill data, along with any changes to the parking inventory. The chart allows Benson to understand the impacts of potential development and will assist in meeting the future parking needs of the Town.

Managing a parking system is not just about parking vehicles, it also involves the walkability of a downtown. Elements such as signage, enforcement, lighting and marketing parking to business owners, employees and customers/visitors effect the overall usage of the parking system. The utilization of individual lots can depend on any or all of these factors, as well as the overall condition of the lot. Fundamentally, these issues can impact a parking system and therefore the downtown economics in general.

Rich & Associates believes that it is most important to first provide recommendations on how to better manage the current parking supply in the downtown. There are several recommendations that will make the parking in the downtown easier to use. Some of these recommendations can be implemented easily and quickly with little or no cost to the Town while others may require significant budgeting and time to complete. The Recommendations section of the report focuses on policy and actions to the current parking condition while providing a road map to develop an efficient parking system for the future. With a unified approach, Benson will be best prepared to address parking related issues and handle new development now and in the future.

Table J

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
2	Downtown Parking Study Implementation Plan		Time Frame					
3	Recommendations Summary		Immediate Action	As needed	0-3 Years	3-6 Years	6-10 Years	
4	<b>1. Parking Management</b>							
5	1.1 Appoint a Parking Manager to oversee the parking system.			✓				
9	<b>2. Discourage the Development of Any New Private Parking Lots in the Downtown</b>							
10	2.1 The town should discourage the development of any new private parking lots in the downtown that are not for residential use or public parking.		✓					
14	<b>3. Work with Private Parking Lot Owners in the Downtown to Create additional Shared Use Parking.</b>							
15	3.1 The town should work with owners of private lots to allow for public shared use of the private parking areas where possible.				✓			
17	<b>4. ADA Parking</b>							
18	4.1 Add additional parking spaces to the lots with barrier free deficiencies.		✓					
23	<b>5. Marketing</b>							
24	5.1 Develop a flyer that can be distributed to businesses and can be carried by the Parking Enforcement Officers.				✓			
26	5.2 Work to Improve downtown bicycle infrastructure and add bike racks.				✓			
28	5.3 Develop a marketing program to encourage bicycle use as an alternative to driving					✓		
30	<b>6. Bicycle Racks</b>							
31	6.1 Add additional bicycle racks to the downtown following the guidelines provided.				✓			
33	<b>7. Special Event Parking</b>							
34	7.1 Develop a flyer that can be distributed to businesses and purchase sandwich boards to be used as temporary wayfinding signs during special events.			✓				
37	<b>8. Parking Signs</b>							
38	8.1 Name all public lots and add introduction signs to all public lots to aid in marketing and signage.		✓					
40	8.2 Rich & Associates recommends the addition of a family of parking wayfinding in the downtown.				✓			
42	8.3 All of the parking signs should use the same text size and color scheme. The text should remain consistent for parking signs both on-street and off-street. The lot introductions signs should be placed at the entrance of all lots and the text should be large enough to read while driving.				✓			
44	8.4 Purchase and install 2 hour parking signs along Main Street. Further discussed under Recommendation 11. Parking Duration & Allocation.				✓			
46	<b>9. Pedestrian Enhancements &amp; Activity</b>							
47	9.1 Follow landscaping criteria outlined in the land use ordinance for all parking lots in the downtown (public and private) in order to enhance pedestrian safety by increasing the separation from motor vehicle traffic.				✓			
49	9.2 Conduct a lighting study along sidewalks and all public lots.				✓			
51	9.3 Consider working with building owners in public and private alleys and to make the alleys more pedestrian friendly with additional lighting, protected walkways and possibly murals.				✓			
53	9.4 Consider shared dumpsters in lots that have several businesses surrounding the lot.				✓			
55	9.5 Consider listed pedestrian enhancements to make the downtown a more pedestrian friendly environment.				✓			
57	<b>10. Residential Parking /Overnight Parking</b>							
58	10.1 Create a residential parking flyer clearly defining overnight parking and locations of approved overnight parking.			✓				
60	<b>11. Parking Duration &amp; Allocation</b>							
61	11.1 The on-street parking along Main Street should be 2 hour.				✓			
63	11.2 Add loading zones or short term spaces (15-30 minute) to blocks as the end or middle stall as necessary.				✓			
65	<b>12. Walking Considerations for Shared Use Parking</b>							
66	12.1 Encourage employees to walk to the appropriate parking areas so they are not taking the most convenient customer spaces.		✓					

Table J continued

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
2	Downtown Parking Study Implementation Plan		Time Frame					
3	Recommendations Summary		Immediate Action	As needed	0-3 Years	3-6 Years	6-10 Years	
68	<b>13. Parking Enforcement</b>							
69	13.1	Consider conducting enforcement of parking when changing on-street parking along Mains Street to two hours. Use Police staff until budgeting allows for part-time PEO.			✓			
71	13.2	PEO's should use chalk to mark tires and hand write tickets until handheld parking ticket writers can be purchased that track license plate numbers and print tickets.			✓			
73	13.3	PEO's should be dedicated to parking duties as an ambassador of the downtown, only being reassigned during emergencies or special circumstances that may arise.				✓		
75	<b>14. Parking Fines (Only necessary if Recommendation 13 is completed)</b>							
76	14.1	Adopt the recommended fine schedule along with courtesy tickets.		✓				
78	14.2	It is recommended that all fines revenue go into the parking fund.		✓				
80	<b>15. Maintenance of Parking Spaces On-street and Off-street</b>							
81	15.1	Maintain striping for on-street spaces as budget and resources are available.			✓			
83	15.2	Stripe all on-street spaces.			✓			
85	15.3	Develop a maintenance schedule for the lots to keep up with maintenance needs and help budget yearly costs.	✓					
87	<b>16. Create a Sinking Fund for Maintenance and Upgrades to the Parking System</b>							
88	16.1	Create a sinking fund for maintenance and upgrades to the parking system.	✓					
90	<b>17. Opportunities for Angled Parking</b>							
91	17.1	Reverse the one-way flow and parking along S. Railroad from Main Street to Parish Drive to make the one-ways consistent.			✓			
93	17.2	Make N. Railroad completely one-way, from Main Street to Church Street to make the one-ways consistent and allow for angled parking along the entire street.			✓			

## **1. Parking Management**

As the Town grows it should consider having one person overseeing the overall parking function and having a single point of contact for the parking system. This person would act as a liaison between the Town Commission, Town departments, as well as potentially enforcement and the public.

Having a single parking point of contact expedites decision making and allows for better integration of the various aspects of parking. The revision to the parking system under the direction of one person will benefit the parking system from an ability to adapt to changes in the downtown. If possible, it is helpful to have all parking related expenditures and enforcement under one budget, allowing for an efficient way to track the system and create checks and balances.

Additionally, a managed parking system is able to adapt to changes that are brought on by new development, businesses moving in and or out along with land use changes in buildings in the downtown area.

### **Actions, Time Frame and Cost:**

**1.1** Action – As needed appoint a person to oversee the parking system

Time Frame – As needed

Cost – N/A

## **2. Discourage the Development of Any New Private Parking Lots in the Downtown**

A parking system works best when the parking can be shared and the municipality is in control of 50% or more of the available parking in the downtown. This is an important benchmark because it allows shared use parking. Maximizing the percentage of the parking supply that is shared among different users and recognizing that different types of use will peak at different times of the day, allows the parking needs of the Town to be met with fewer spaces, thereby requiring less investment. The Town's control of 55% of the parking meets the 50% benchmark. At higher percentages of public parking, even more flexibility is available.

When parking spaces are reserved for specific businesses or uses and are not available for multiple businesses in the downtown, many may often go unused during parts of the day. While the current parking demand analysis showed that there is an overall sufficient parking supply, the availability of shared use public parking is vital for downtown businesses to succeed. When there is a lack of available public parking because the parking is reserved for specific uses, this makes it difficult for a customer/visitor of the downtown to visit more than one location. This also makes it difficult to provide a sufficient amount of employee parking off-street for those businesses without their own lots.

Density combined with a mixture of land use types encourages activity in an urban setting. Privately developed surface parking lots can be discouraged through zoning ordinances. Some communities outright ban parking development by private developers, while others implement parking maximums that limit the amount of on-site parking that can be built with development.

When a community chooses to discourage private parking within a specific business district, the Municipality takes on the task of providing enough parking to support economic activity for all developments (other than residential) within the district. Like Benson, many downtowns do not require parking in Central Business Districts. The reasoning behind this move is that a dense downtown can be created without an excess of parking or driveways. The parking that is built, is intended to be shared among all businesses increasing the efficient use of the spaces and encourages walking, thus encouraging customers to visit multiple locations. Additionally, this allows the Town to keep development where they want, parking in locations that benefit the whole district and a more pedestrian friendly downtown.

Under this scenario, the majority of the parking need is provided by the Town. The Town can then consider charging an in-lieu of fee for new development or create an assessment district to fund new parking projects. This is discussed further in New Parking regarding funding options as the parking system grows.

Excepting parking requirements for development in Downtown Business Districts encourages density, mixed land use and development in the district. Most communities do require residential developments to provide parking in a Downtown Business District. Residential parking can sometimes work as shared use parking, though it is difficult to rent or sell units when there is not a dedicated parking space provided, especially in an area that does not have multiple forms of public transportation.

**Actions, Time Frame and Cost:**

- 2.1** Action - The Town should discourage the development of any new private parking lots in the downtown that are not for residential use or public parking.

Time Frame - Immediately

Cost – To be determined

**3. *Work with Private Parking Lot Owners in the Downtown to Create Additional Shared Use Parking***

Public and private partnerships are another key factor in providing additional shared use parking. It is recommended that the Town work with lot owners that have underutilized lots to bring these spaces into the public parking system, through a lease or an agreement to clean, light, sweep and enforce. Where possible it will benefit the Town to seek out additional

public/private partnerships with parking to increase the amount of publicly available parking. Even though there is enough parking in the study area it would be beneficial for agreements to be developed to share parking lots. This will be especially helpful if the Town decides to regulate, update and clean up the alleys where many employees park.

**Actions, Time Frame and Cost:**

**3.1** Action - The Town should work with owners of private lots to allow for public shared use of the private parking areas where possible.

Time Frame – 0-3 years

Cost – Potentially would require cleaning, lighting, sweeping and enforcement of lots and agreement.

**4. ADA Parking**

As part of the parking analysis, Rich & Associates reviewed the number of barrier free (handicap) parking stalls in Benson. **Table K** is a copy of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) parking guidelines followed by **Table L** listing the public lots and the number of barrier free parking stalls provided.

Rich & Associates encourages the development of on-street barrier free stalls to ensure the downtown is accessible to everyone. Generally, the number and location of these spaces on-street should be based on where the existing off-street spaces are located and if there have been requests by the public for additional barrier free spaces. Locating these spaces as either the first or last space or in the middle of the block face tends to work best. Currently Benson has 5 barrier free on-street spaces that are located at the ends of block faces near Main Street.



**Table K  
ADA Parking Guidelines**

Total Parking in Lot	Required Minimum Number of Accessible Spaces
1 to 25	1
26 to 50	2
51 to 75	3
76 to 100	4
101 to 150	5
151 to 200	6
201 to 300	7
301 to 400	8
401 to 500	9
501 to 1000	2% of total
1001 and over	20, plus 1 for each 100 over 1000

*One in every eight accessible spaces, but not less than one, shall be served by an access aisle 96 in (2440 mm) wide minimum and shall be designated "van accessible".*

**Table L  
Comparison of Off-Street ADA Provided to ADA Recommended**

Block #	Lot	Total Capacity	# of Barrier Free Spaces Required	# of Barrier Free Spaces Provided	Surplus/ Shortfall
4	Municipal Building*	75	3	5	2
9	Public/Private	26	2	2	~
11	Public	22	1	0	-1
*not including stacked Fire Department spaces				Total	1

Along with the parking guidelines it is important to make sure that once a person is parked they will be able to access the sidewalk from where they are parked. All intersections should have sidewalks that are barrier free and all lots should have a clear path of access.

#### **Actions, Time Frame and Cost:**

##### **4.1 Action - Add additional parking spaces to the lot with barrier free deficiencies.**

Time Frame – As soon as possible.

Cost – Approximately \$450-\$550 per space

## **5. Marketing**

Marketing is a key aspect of a successful parking system. Marketing should be done every time there is a change to the parking system and should be directed towards downtown employees, business owners, residents and customers and visitors of the downtown. It is important to help encourage downtown employees to park in the long term parking areas, leaving the most valuable on-street parking for customers and visitors. Additionally, an individual's perception of Benson is greatly enhanced if they know ahead of time where they can park and what, if any, restrictions on parking duration apply.

Marketing materials can include direct mailings, brochures, maps, kiosks, on-line web pages and articles in magazines and newspapers. Information contained in the marketing materials should include location, up-coming changes, regulations, fine payment options and any other information relating to the parking system.

Flyers that list the downtown businesses included with a map showing parking areas and key attractions work well to market both the businesses and the parking system. The flyer is even more beneficial if it includes the durations of parking both on-street and off-street. Marketing will be vital to a successful transition of adding time limited durations and parking enforcement to the downtown.

Develop a flyer that explains parking rules for the downtown. The flyer should be available on the Town website and in businesses. This is intended to be marketed toward customers and visitors of the Town as well as employees. There should be clear distinctions of where employees should park and where customers wanting to spend more than two hours downtown can park.

Rich & Associates included an example of a parking flyer on **page 37 and 38**. This flyer is intended to be specific to parking in the downtown including locations of bicycle racks. Selling advertising space to businesses on the flyer will help defray the expense of printing.

### Welcome to Benson

Whether you are a first time visitor, a local resident who enjoys all that downtown Benson has to offer, a business operator or employee, we want to make your downtown experience even better. This brochure will guide you to where you can park.

### Parking is Easy in Downtown Benson

The map indicates time restrictions for on-street parking, lots open to the public and lots with parking available for monthly lease.

Most parking in public lots are available for use free of charge. Please be aware of overnight restrictions in public lots and on-street .

If you would like to check on availability of leasing a parking space in a public lot or if you would like to discuss a parking idea or concern please contact the Police Department.



### Parking Rates / Fines

### Visitor Information

Benson Area Chamber of Commerce  
122 East Main Street  
Benson, NC 27504  
Phone: 919.894.3825

Loretta@benson-chamber.com  
www.benson-chamber.com

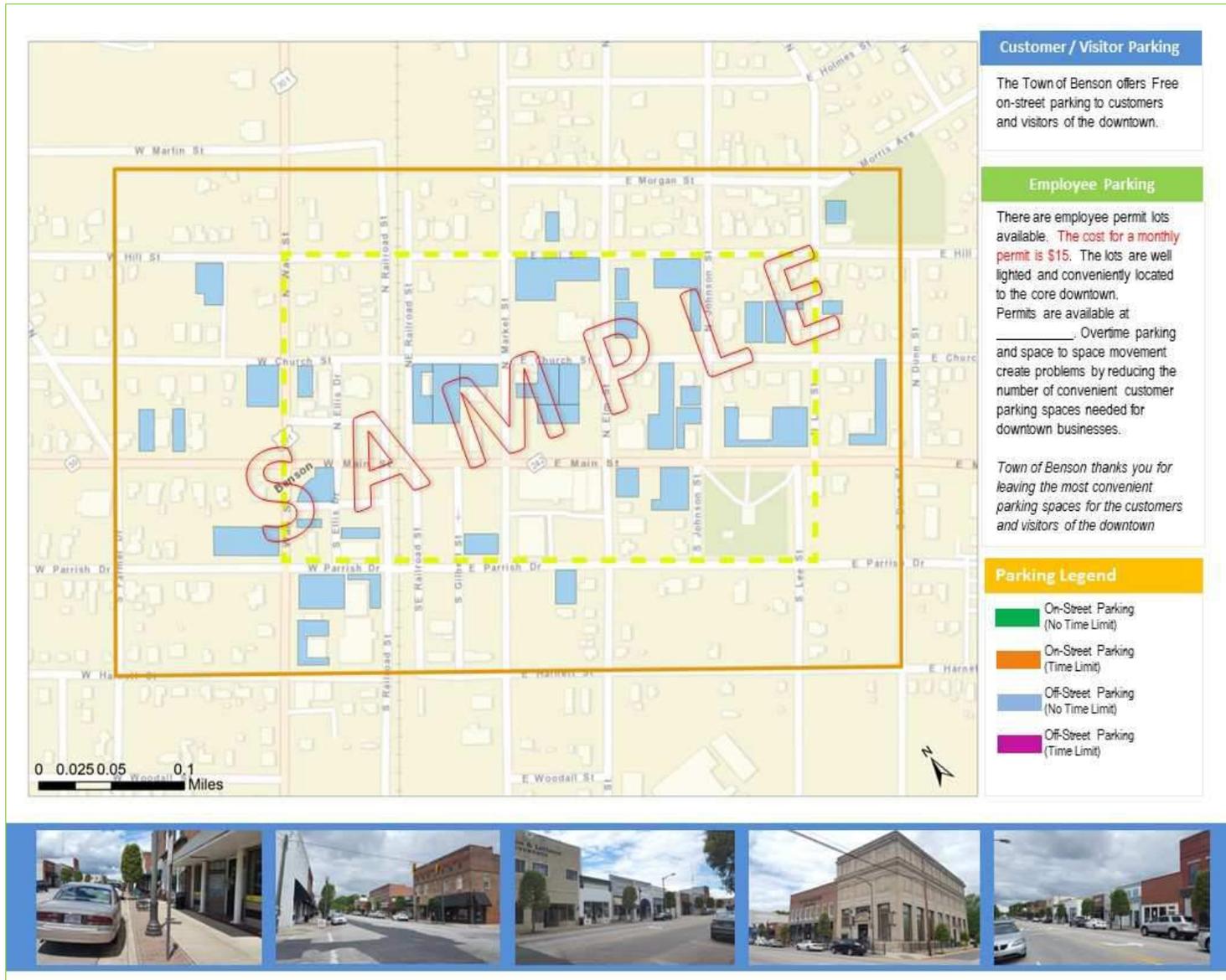
### Questions?

Benson Police Department  
303 East Church Street  
Benson, NC 27504  
Phone: 919.894.2091 ♦ Fax: 919.207.1993  
admin@bensonpd.org

Hours:  
Monday - Friday  
\_\_\_ am - \_\_\_ pm



### DOWNTOWN PARKING GUIDE



### Marketing Bicycle Ridership

Promote bicycle ridership in the downtown. Develop a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plan that includes education, enforcement and encouragement measures. Encouragement measures could include a marketing program to promote bicycle use as an alternative to driving. A future goal could be achieving the designation as a “Bicycle Friendly Community” recognized by the League of American Bicyclists to assist in this program. Additional encouragement measures could include hosting a special event to promote bicycle ridership in a Town-wide effort to use alternative modes of transportation. This will in turn cut down on the number of parking spaces needed.

*“Communities that are bicycle-friendly are seen as places with a high quality of life. This often translates into increased property values, business growth and increased tourism. Bicycle-friendly communities are places where people feel safe and comfortable riding their bikes for fun, fitness, and transportation. With more people bicycling, communities experience reduced traffic demands, improved air quality and greater physical fitness” [www.bikeleague.org](http://www.bikeleague.org).*

- There are several communities throughout the U.S. that participate in National “Ride Your Bike to Work Day/Month” in May. Information can be found through the League of American Bicyclists [www.bikeleague.org](http://www.bikeleague.org).
- Source of possible grant funding through people for bikes, <http://peopleforbikes.org/>.
- Pedestrian and Bicycling Information Center is a helpful link that offers advice on funding and marketing bicycling in downtowns. <http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/>

### Actions, Time Frame and Cost:

**5.1** Action - Develop a flyer that can be distributed to businesses and found on the Town website.

Time Frame – 0-1 year and continued yearly.

Cost – \$300-\$500 for flyers with \$800 annually for ongoing maintenance.

**5.2** Action – Work to improve downtown bicycle infrastructure and add bicycle racks to the downtown. See recommendation 6, Bicycle Racks.

**5.3** Action - Develop a marketing program to encourage bicycle use as an alternative to driving.

Time Frame – 3-6 years, then yearly.

Cost - \$150-\$400 initially and then wrap into cost of annual marketing.

## 6. Bicycle Racks

Benson should consider making the downtown more bicycle friendly and providing additional and useable bicycle parking which in turn cuts down on the number of motor vehicle spaces needed.

### Guidelines on Bicycle Racks:

- Racks should allow bike frame to make contact at two points.
- Should allow for more than one bike per rack.
- Needs to allow for popular “U” shape lock.
- Racks should be placed where they will not impede upon pedestrian traffic, though need to be readily identifiable.
- Should be clearly signed with a bicycle parking sign or pavement markings.



### Actions, Time Frame and Cost:

**6.1** Action - Add bicycle racks to the downtown following the guidelines provided.

Time Frame - 0-3 years

Cost - \$100 - \$300/rack, depending on size and number of racks



These are examples of on-street bike facilities, that meet the guidelines for bicycle racks. Both are a version of the popular U-rack. The pictures show an on-street parking space turned into 14 to 12 parking spaces for bicycles.

## 7. Special Event Parking

Rich & Associates recommend that a plan be developed for parking during special events. This plan should include a remote lot location (public school, church, Town or Municipally

owned lot) and if necessary an agreement with the lot owner, as well as some form of shuttle service possibly arranged with the local transit service, or schools. The availability of adequate and quality event parking will enhance visitors' overall downtown experience.



Purchase sandwich boards and flyers to be used during special events. The flyers can be handed out to businesses and used in marketing the event on the Town website. The sandwich boards are used as temporary wayfinding signs during special events leading parkers to the temporary event lots.

### Actions, Time Frame and Cost:

**7.1** Action - Develop a flyer that can be distributed to businesses and purchase sandwich boards to be used as temporary wayfinding signs during special events.

Time Frame – Monitor the need.

Cost - \$200-\$450

## 8. Parking Signs

Parking areas can be difficult to find if they are located behind buildings, particularly if someone is not familiar with the downtown. There should be more directional/location signs in the downtown, especially to lead parkers to public parking lots. The parking lots need identification signs to inform a visitor of the downtown that the specific parking area is not only for public use, but also at no charge (free). It is helpful to name the lots so that a customer can remember where they parked. Naming the lots can also help with giving directions to businesses in the downtown. The names should reflect the lot locations by using street names.

Pedestrian wayfinding is critical once a person parks their vehicle and transitions to walking. Being able to follow wayfinding maps or signs, aid pedestrians in locating key destinations, and then back to where they parked. These are particularly important elements in tourist/customer/-visitor oriented downtowns. Benson should consider adding one or two kiosks to the downtown with business listings and parking locations.

Rich & Associates has developed a parking signage best practices package that is detailed in this recommendation. The information is provided to show how the signs work together and provide a comprehensive wayfinding system.

### Best Practice Sign types include

The following four types of parking signs are strongly recommended as best practices for improving driver wayfinding. Communities often miss the important role that signs play in making visitors comfortable with their surroundings and the effect that signs can have on vehicle travel and parking use efficiency.

#### Directional/Location:



Directional-parking signage is distinct in color, size and logo and directs drivers to off-street parking areas. Parking location signage complements the directional parking signage. The signs can have arrows pointing to the off-street lots. The signs are mounted on poles at standard heights, on the streets directing parkers to off-street lots.

#### Identification:



Identification signage is placed at the entry of each parking lot. The name of the parking area is identified and the type of parking available as well as hours of enforcement and the hours of lot operation are listed on the signage. The identification signage is distinctive in color and size, and it is located on a pole at a lower height. The text should be large enough to read while driving.

#### Vehicular Wayfinding:



Vehicular wayfinding signs are placed at points in the downtown leading drivers to places of interest and parking locations. The sign also points out the various landmarks or attractions that can be found. These types of signs are placed at key locations easily found by a driver and are intended to help a driver orient themselves to the downtown area. Arrows should always point forward, to the left and right. Avoid using downward pointing arrows causing drivers turn around.

#### Pedestrian Wayfinding:



Pedestrian wayfinding signs or kiosks are placed at the points of pedestrian entry/exit to parking lots. Typically, a map illustrating the downtown area that points out the various shops or attractions. These types of signs are placed at locations easily found by a pedestrian and are intended to help that person orient themselves to the downtown area, to locate their destination and then be able to return to where they parked.

**Action, Time Frame and Cost:**

**8.1** Action - Name all public lots and add introduction signs at the entrance to all public lots. This will aid in marketing and wayfinding.

Time Frame – As soon as possible

Cost –See 7.2.

**8.2** Action - Rich & Associates recommends the addition of a family of parking wayfinding (4 sign types) in the downtown.

Time Frame – 0-3 years

Cost – \$50,000-\$150,000 for a package of signs.

**8.3** Action - All of the parking signs should use the same text size and color scheme. The text should remain consistent for parking signs both on-street and off-street. The lot introductions signs should be placed at the entrance of all lots and the text should be large enough to read while driving. Currently there are not any time restrictions on parking.

Time Frame – 0-3 years.

Cost - Included in sign package cost.

**8.4** Action – Purchase and install 2 hour parking signs along Main Street. Further discussed under Recommendation 11. Parking Duration & Allocation.

Time Frame – 0-3 years.

Cost - Included in sign package cost.



**9. Pedestrian Enhancements & Activity**

Pedestrian movement is an important aspect of parking. It is extremely difficult to get people to park beyond the front door of their destination if there is any concern regarding safety or if the experience is not pleasant. Lighting and landscaping can greatly change a perception of safety in lots and along sidewalks. Murals, art, window decorations and flowers can create a pleasant walking experience during the day and night. Consider creating landscaping criteria for all parking lots in the downtown.

All pedestrian walkways should be barrier free and easy to navigate. Minimize pedestrian and vehicular interaction by creating a clear distinction between the street and sidewalk. This can be done by using texture, colors, trees, or planters between the sidewalks and streets. It is also

important to provide handicap accessibility at all intersections. There were complaints in the public meetings regarding the speed that vehicles travel on Main Street. There were also concerns regarding the number of trucks and their closeness to vehicles. It is difficult to have a vibrant downtown when people are unwilling to walk and bicycle, due to a fear of being hit by a vehicle.

Having two-way streets with on-street parking typically reduces the speed of vehicles in a downtown setting. One-way streets can be difficult to navigate for someone unfamiliar with the area. They can make it difficult to find parking for a particular destination. The one-way streets currently act as parking lots with angled parking and this type of use does typically not lead to confusion with direction. Additionally, converting to two-way traffic would result in a reduction in the number of on-street spaces.

Trees, banners, art and window displays are other ways to help reduce the speed in downtowns. Bump outs or bulb outs help provide an area of safety when pedestrians are crossing the street. Creating a more pedestrian friendly downtown encourages people to park once while visiting the downtown helping cut down on congestion.

Minimize surface lots and large breaks between buildings to promote walking in the downtown. This is easier for a community to accomplish when the Town takes on the responsibility of providing parking and does not allow private lots in the core downtown area. People tend to walk further without complaint if the walk is pleasant enjoyable and engaging. Landscaping, murals, art and decorated store windows tend to create an experience worth walking. Consider working with building owners to add murals or art to the pedestrian walkways.

Consider working with building owners in public and private alleys and to make the alleys more pedestrian friendly with additional lighting, protected walkways and possibly murals. Many of the alleys are the pedestrian connection between the parking lots and the businesses. Currently it is not extremely safe for pedestrians to walk in the alleys due to the haphazard way vehicles are parking along buildings in the alleys. Work to create a uniform layout with designated parking or loading areas, pedestrian ways and a clear drive aisle. Where possible develop a more uniform approach to parking and unloading in alleys.



Dumpsters are also an issue in some of the parking lots. Consider trying a combined dumpster service and limiting the number of dumpsters allowed with the use of a shared dumpster plan. This would free up parking spaces in lots and provide a more aesthetically pleasing alley. It also creates a safer walkway because it eliminates places for people to hide.

Examples:



Pedestrian should be able to cross all arterial streets at convenient intervals and locations. Consider the following pedestrian enhancements to help create a more comfortable walking environment in the downtown.

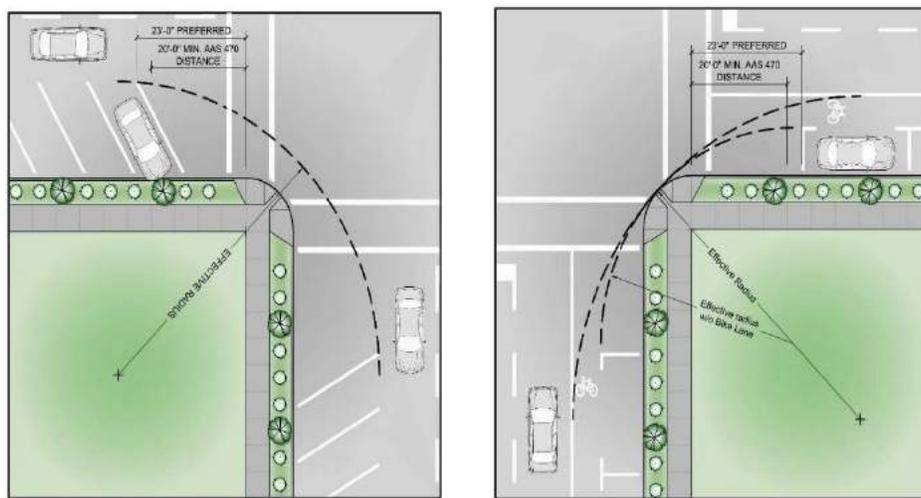
- Pedestrian signals should be provided at all signalized intersections. In addition, all signalized pedestrian crossings could be equipped with countdown clocks to operate during the pedestrian clearance phase.



- Minimize intersection corner turn radii to take into account the effective turning radius into any available lane, instead of the more common curb-to-curb turning radius (see **Exhibit A**), and select an appropriate design vehicle based on the size and type of vehicle expected to make each turn. Not all intersection movements need to accommodate larger semi-trailer trucks. Some on-street parking spaces will need to be removed to allow maximum sight distances.

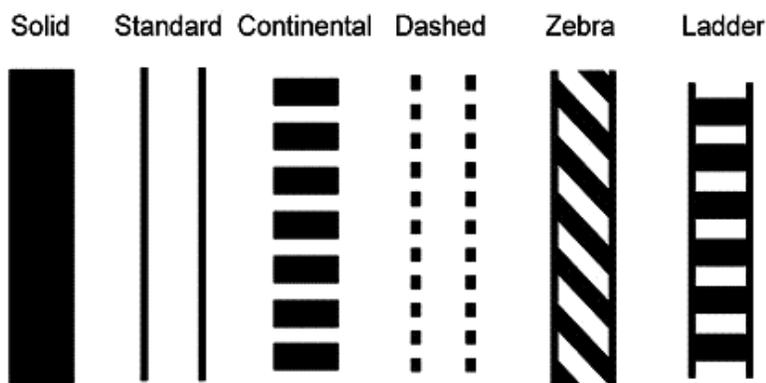
- At unsignalized intersections, use high visibility crosswalk designs (see **Exhibit B**) and supplement with signs and flashing beacons, where appropriate. All crosswalk locations should have high-level nighttime illumination.
- Street trees, curb bulb outs, on-street parking and bicycle lanes can all help to slow traffic. Wherever on-street parking is allowed, consider curb bulb outs at intersections like the existing bulb outs on Main Street.

### Exhibit A: Effective Turning Radius



*\*drawing not to scale, for planning purposes only*

### Exhibit B: High Visibility Crosswalk Markings



*\*<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/04100/02.cfm>*

**Action, Time Frame and Cost:**

**9.1** Action - Follow landscaping criteria outlined in the land use ordinance for all parking lots in the downtown (public and private) in order to enhance pedestrian safety by increasing the separation from motor vehicle traffic.

Time Frame – 0-3 years

Cost – Must be determined on a case by case basis.

**9.2** Action – Conduct a lighting study along sidewalks and in all public lots.

Time Frame – 0-3 years

Cost – \$9,000-\$15,000

**9.3** Action - Consider working with building owners in public and private alleys and to make the alleys more pedestrian friendly with additional lighting, protected walkways and possibly murals.

Time Frame – 0-3 years

Cost: To Be Determined

**9.4** Action - Consider shared dumpsters in lots that have several businesses surrounding the lot.

Time Frame – 0-3 years

Cost: To Be Determined

**9.5** Action - Consider listed pedestrian enhancements to make the downtown a more pedestrian friendly environment.

Time Frame – 0-3 years

Cost: To Be Determined

**10. Residential Parking/Overnight Parking**

Downtown residents are an important component of downtown revitalization. Currently there are no downtown residents in the Core Downtown Area though there is a desire for this type of development to occur. When the opportunity presents itself, it will be important to develop regulations on when, where and how long residents are allowed to park. It will be beneficial to create an ordinance and downtown residential parking permit to meet this need.

At this time, it will be important to work with landlords to create a flyer for locations of permitted overnight parking. The flyer should include a map identifying locations to park overnight without the worry of a parking ticket, the ordinance relating to overnight parking and the fine for parking

in the parking spaces that are not identified as overnight parking. This flyer would be provided to new downtown residents when signing leases.

**Action, Time Frame and Cost:**

**10.1 Action-** Create a residential parking flyer clearly defining overnight parking locations approved for overnight parking.

Time Frame – When residential development occurs in the downtown.

Cost – Minimal

## **11. Parking Duration & Allocation**

### **On-Street**

Two-hour parking should be the predominant duration for on-street parking as it suits the needs of the majority of customers and visitors. Based on parking Best Practices, it is generally agreed that on-street parking should be reserved for customers and visitors. Individuals requiring more than two hours should be directed to off-street parking areas. The other duration that should be found on-street is 15 or 30 minute parking for use as pick-up and drop off and loading spaces. The 15 or 30 minute spaces (loading zones) should be located as either the first or last space on the block face where needed. These spaces do not belong to a specific use, rather the space is for anyone who has a short-term errand or quick pick up.

Long term (3 hours or more) parking is acceptable in areas where turnover is not the desired effect. This parking can be used for additional employee or customer/visitor parking. The customer/visitor parking is often set at three hours to discourage employees from parking in these spaces. Three-hour parking requires most employees to move their vehicle two times in a workday discouraging this action. Unrestricted on-street parking where turnover is not required is typically used for employee parking.

### **Off-Street**

The majority of the off-street parking should be long term for customers and visitors who plan on spending longer periods of time in Town. Public off-street parking is where most employees of Town businesses that do not have their own parking should park. It is important that long term parking be differentiated from the short-term parking with signs that are easy to understand.

Currently there are not any restriction on parking either on-street or off-street. It would be beneficial to businesses in the downtown to have parking on Main Street become two hour parking to encourage turnover of these spaces. Theses spaces are extremely vital to downtown businesses and the signs with an ordinance for two hour parking will be needed if parking enforcement is to occur.

There also needs to be long term parking for customers/visitors of the downtown available in the public lots. This would be parking for the customer who plans on visiting several businesses and does not want to have to move their vehicle. Long term customer spaces should be the most convenient spaces in parking lots, closest to building access.

**Action, Time Frame and Cost:**

**11.1 Action-** The on-street parking along Main Street should be two hour. Signs will need to be installed and enforcement will need to be conducted to make sure that the vehicles are not parked beyond posted time limits.

Time Frame – 0-3 years

Cost – Minimal (signs)

**11.2 Action-** Consider adding loading zone spaces (15 - 30 minute) at either the ends of or the middle stall of where these are not currently provided. Adopt an enforcement strategy before implementing loading zone space plans.

Time Frame – 0-3 years

Cost – Minimal (signs)

**12. Walking Considerations for Shared-Use Parking**

Customer and visitor parking should remain close and convenient, while it is generally expected that employees walk farther in downtown settings. Educating business owners, managers and employees on appropriate parking behaviors is important. There should be a clear understanding with business owners and employees that leaving on-street parking and the close, convenient off-street spaces for customers is vital to the success of businesses in the downtown.

The intent of a Town parking program, is to provide an equitable parking system that works for all businesses in the downtown. As discussed earlier, education and marketing are a key component to a successful parking system.

The following chart details people’s tolerance for walking depending on the environment. We understand that every community is different and that individual’s tolerance for walking will vary depending on the vibrancy, density and age of the downtown. Following **Table M** is **Map 6** detailing the walking distances from the center of the study area.

**Table M**  
**To Illustrate Individual's Tolerance For Walking**

	Minutes	Feet
In a highly attractive, completely weather protected and artificially acclimatized environment	20	5,000
In a highly attractive environment in which sidewalks are protected from sunshine and rain	10	2,500
In an attractive but not weather-protected area during periods of inclement weather	5	1,250
In an unattractive environment (parking lot, garage, traffic-congested streets)	2	600

*Gruen, Victor, The Heart of Our Cities. The Urban Crisis: Diagnosis and Cure. Simon and Schuster 1964, New York, p. 250:*

“An average walk is at a speed of 2.5 miles per hour. This converts to 13,200 feet per hour or 220 feet per minute. On this basis, a 5-minute walk would be 1,100 feet and a 10- minute walk would be at 2,200 feet.”

*Pushkarev and Zupan. Public Transportation and Land Use Policy. Indiana University Press from a study by Regional Plan Association of New York (RPA).*

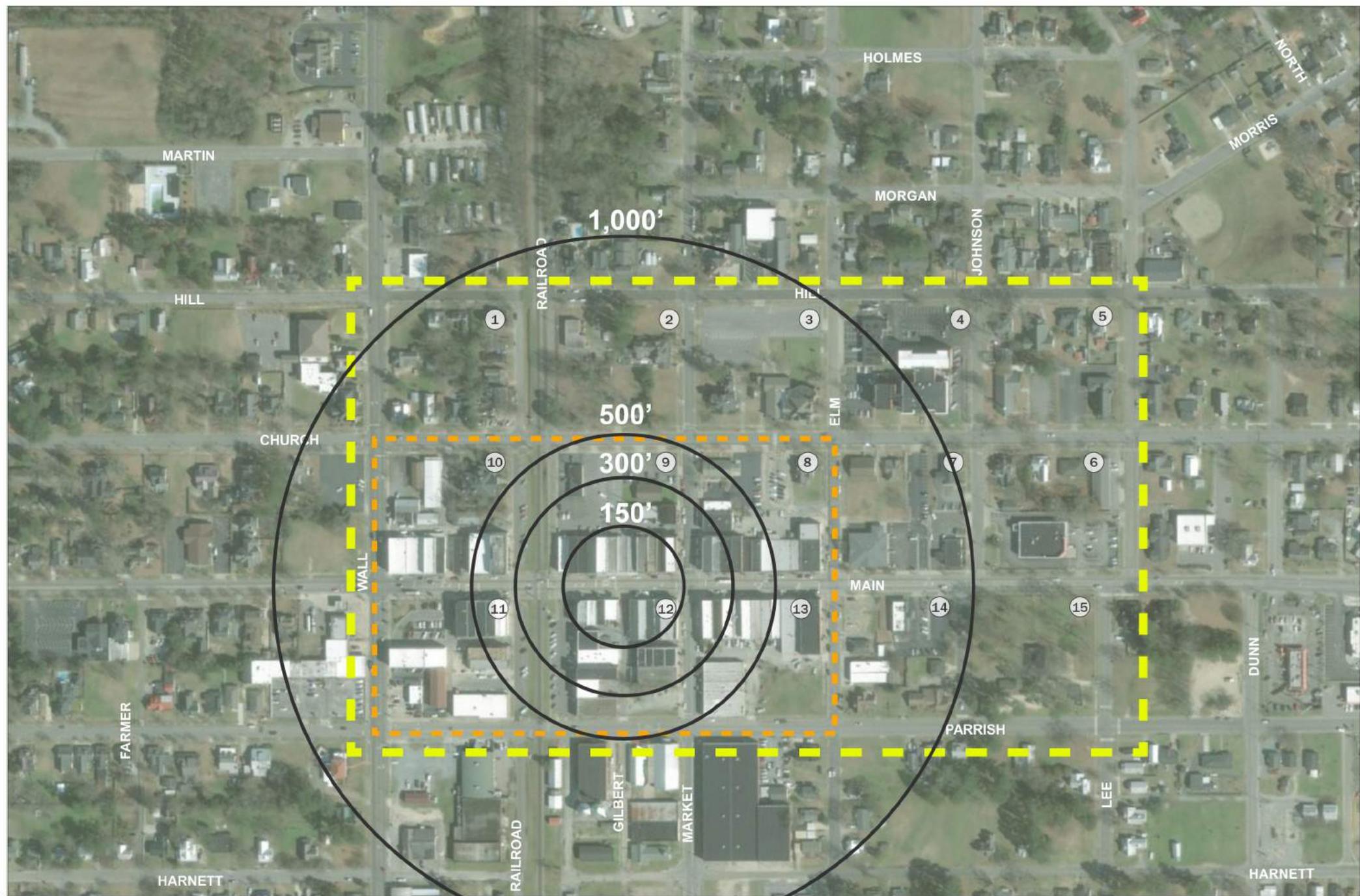
During the turnover and occupancy surveys, 24% of the vehicles observed were overstaying the posted time durations in on-street spaces in front of and near retail businesses. It is difficult for a retail business to survive in an area when there is not convenient on-street parking available. If a customer wanting to visit a retail store to run a specific errand cannot find convenient parking they may go elsewhere. If a customer is planning on visiting more than one retail location they will be willing to park a bit further away and if a customer is planning on spending longer periods of time in a downtown they may be more willing to park off-street and even further away. It is important to move the employees to further away on-street spaces where turnover is not needed and or into the off-street parking.

**Action, Time Frame and Cost:**

**12.1 Action-** Encourage employees to walk to the appropriate parking areas so they are not taking the most convenient customer spaces.

Time Frame – As soon as possible.

Cost – Is included Marketing and enforcement.



# Map 6 Benson Parking Study Walking Distances

-  Study Area
-  Downtown Core
-  1 Block Reference



### **13. Parking Enforcement**

Parking enforcement is an important component of a parking system. By differentiating the time limits of parking between off and on-street parking, with shorter limits for convenient on-street spaces to encourage turnover. we are helping to ensure that customers and visitors always have adequate and convenient parking. However, it is necessary to enforce the parking time limits in order for the allocation to work.

Enforcement of time restrictions and other regulations should follow the posted enforcement time in the entire downtown. Within reason, the enforcement staff cannot choose who gets a ticket. Enforcement must be fair and consistent. Parking regulations are necessary and implemented to increase the efficiency of the parking system by allocating certain parking areas to specific users. When the regulations are not followed the system efficiency is degraded.

Parking Enforcement Officers (PEOs') staffing levels will need to be adequate to ensure that parking is routinely monitored per the applicable regulations. Specifically, one PEO can monitor a route consisting of between 600 and 800 parking spaces. This ratio assumes the use of handheld ticket writers and includes the PEO covering a mixture of long and short-term parking. If an individual is in a vehicle, a specified route of 600 to 800 parking stalls can be monitored up to four times during a standard shift (as permitted with scheduling). There should be multiple routes with varied times so that patterns are not developed allowing patrons to know when and where to park to avoid a citation.

If parking enforcement is done consistently there is no need to have full time PEO's or to cover every space for every hour of the enforcement time. It is important to maintain a level of staffing to cover the entire parking supply though this can be done randomly. Begin with Police staff and as budgeting allows, follow the recommendations below for parking enforcement. The officer should work varying schedules between 9:00am – 5:00pm Monday through Friday.

The PEO should use chalk to mark tires until handheld parking ticket writers that track license plate numbers and print tickets can be purchased. Handheld units increase efficiency by storing the license plate numbers of vehicles, thus negating the need to physically chalk tires. This allows enforcement to occur during inclement weather, whereas marking tires with chalk cannot be done in rain or snow because the chalk does not mark well on a wet tire. When using the handheld device and following a route, every parking space, whether occupied or not, is then entered into the device (typed in or a picture taken of plate) giving a time stamp of when the PEO checked the space. This helps ensure that a vehicle is not given a ticket before the posted duration.

Handheld units can also store data concerning warrants, previous offenders, shuffling of vehicles and unpaid tickets. If a vehicle needs to be booted or towed due to multiple unpaid tickets, the information will come up on the handheld unit. Software needs to be purchased to run a handheld system and process and file tickets. A cloud based back up or a "home base"

where the handhelds can be downloaded and updated daily will also be required. There are several options of specific ticket writing units. Much of the software written for enforcement can be used with tablets or smart phones. The units can also take pictures of the vehicle in violation.

PEO's should be dedicated to parking duties, only being reassigned during emergencies or special circumstances that may arise. Street signs should indicate that parking is enforced from 9:00am to 5:00pm Monday – Friday in any and all areas where there is a limited duration or restrictions for parking. Enforcement of the parking lots as well as on-street parking is necessary to make the system work.

**Action, Time Frame and Cost:**

**13.1** Action- Consider conducting enforcement of parking when changing on-street parking along Main Street to two hours. Use Police staff until budgeting allows for a part time PEO.

Time Frame – 3-5 years (when budget allows)

Cost – To be determined.

**13.2** Action- PEO's should use chalk to mark tires and hand write tickets until handheld parking ticket writers can be purchased that track license plate numbers and print tickets.

Time Frame – 3-5 years (when budget allows)

Cost – Depending on unit and software approximately \$5,000-\$8,000 per unit and then software for ticket tracking to be determined.

**13.3** Action- PEO's should be dedicated to parking duties as an ambassador of the downtown, only being reassigned during emergencies or special circumstances that may arise.

Time Frame – When budget allows

Cost – To be determined.

**14. Parking Fines**

When handheld ticket writers are purchased, it is recommended that the Town move to a graduated fine system (i.e., the first ticket would be a courtesy ticket, and the second ticket would be \$10.00 with each ticket after increasing in price). By offering a courtesy ticket first, the parker has clearly been warned of the parking time durations and with free long-term parking available there are the appropriate parking options.

The recommended graduated parking fine schedule for overtime parking tickets:

- 1<sup>st</sup>– Courtesy ticket
- 2<sup>nd</sup> –\$10.00
- 3<sup>rd</sup> –\$15.00
- 4<sup>th</sup> –\$20.00

Offer courtesy tickets during the first few weeks of enforcement. After the first few weeks, adopt the recommended fine schedule and only offer a courtesy ticket when a parker has not received a ticket in six months (or whatever time frame is chosen). From a public relations standpoint, it would be preferable to issue a Courtesy ticket alerting the parker of their violation and then explaining the rules for parking in the downtown including a map of labeled parking areas.

All fines should go to a parking fund and should be used to cover parking operating expenses with any net revenue going back into the downtown area (parking fund) for things such as parking enforcement, sidewalk cleaning, signs, lighting, banners etc. Parking revenue is then helping to pay for the upkeep of the downtown.

**Action, Time Frame and Cost:**

**14.1** Action- Adopt the recommended fine schedule along with courtesy tickets.

Time Frame – 3-5 years (when enforcement begins)

Cost – Minimal

**14.2** Action- It is recommended that all fines revenue go into the parking fund.

Time Frame – Once enforcement begins

Cost – N/A

**15. Maintenance of Parking Spaces On-street and Off-street**

Develop a maintenance schedule for the lots to keep up with maintenance needs and help budget yearly costs. This should include trash removal, sweeping, striping, lighting (lens cleaning, bulb replacement), signs, landscaping and tree trimming. A rotating schedule should be developed with daily, weekly, monthly and annual tasks to assure proper maintenance is completed.

Keep up with maintenance of striping the on-street parking spaces and stripe all on-street spaces within the study area. Striping makes it easier for parkers by providing a clear distinction of the spaces, allowing a parker to clearly see the defined parking space and not take several spaces. This also helps prevent vehicles from being blocked in on-street. Striping will also aid in enforcement when and if parking enforcement occurs in the downtown.

**Action, Time Frame and Cost:**

**15.1** Action- Maintain striping for on-street spaces as budget and resources are available.

Time Frame – 0-3 years

Cost – To be determined

**15.2** Action- Stripe all on-street spaces that are not striped within the downtown area as budget and resources are available.

Time Frame – 0-3 years

Cost – To be determined

**15.3** Action- Develop a maintenance schedule for the lots to keep up with maintenance needs and help budget yearly costs.

Time Frame – As soon as possible

Cost – To be determined

**16. Create a Sinking Fund for Maintenance and Upgrades to the Parking System**

Create a sinking fund for maintenance and upgrades to the parking system. We recommend putting aside \$25.00 per parking space per year. This money would go into a parking fund and should be allocated for long term maintenance and upgrades.

**Action, Time Frame and Cost:**

**16.1** Action- Create a sinking fund for maintenance and upgrades to the parking system.

Time Frame – As soon as possible

Cost – Minimal

**17. Opportunities for Angled Parking**

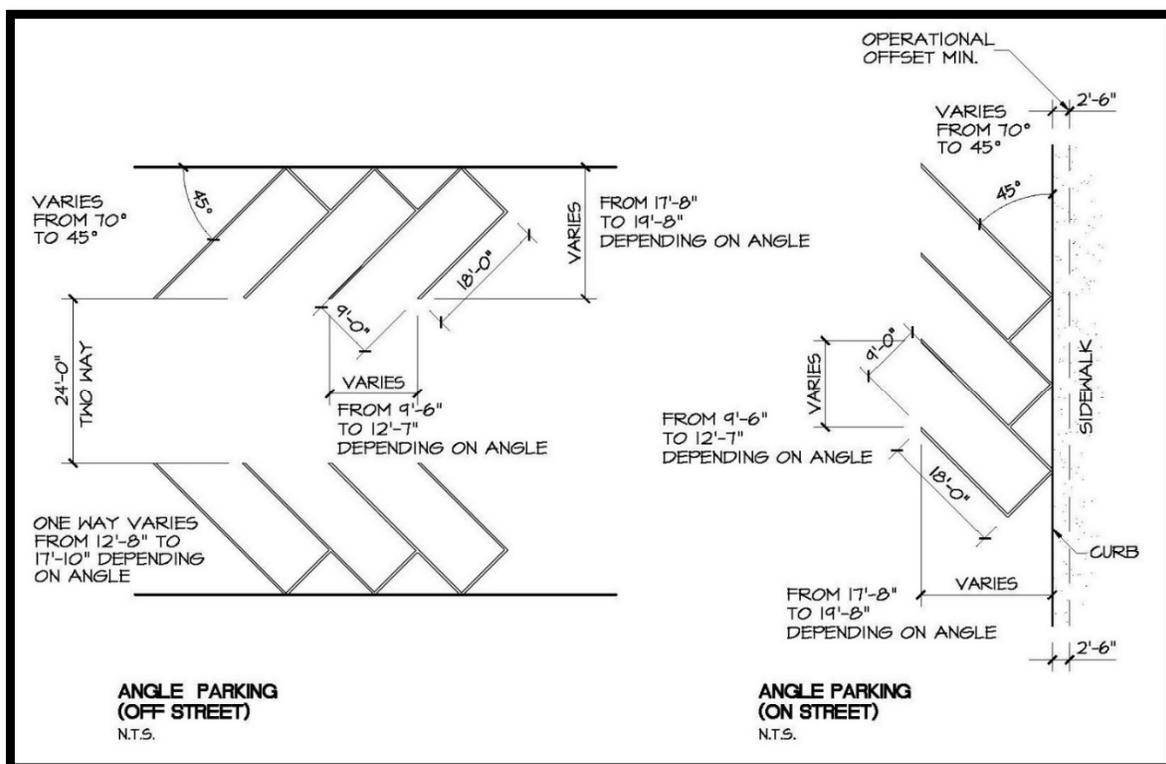
Rich & Associates was asked to look into adding additional angled parking to the downtown in order to pick up additional on-street parking. **Exhibit C** on the following page shows the dimensions needed for on-street and off-street angled parking. This is followed by **Map 7** showing the street widths within the study area.

Rich & Associates does not recommend creating several one-way streets in order to add additional angled parking. One-way streets make a downtown difficult to navigate for a driver and can confuse and frustrate visitors of a downtown who are unfamiliar to an area. Additionally, it is not always the case that angled parking will drastically change the supply

numbers. It will depend on the number of curb cuts and the angle of the parking allowed by the width of the street.

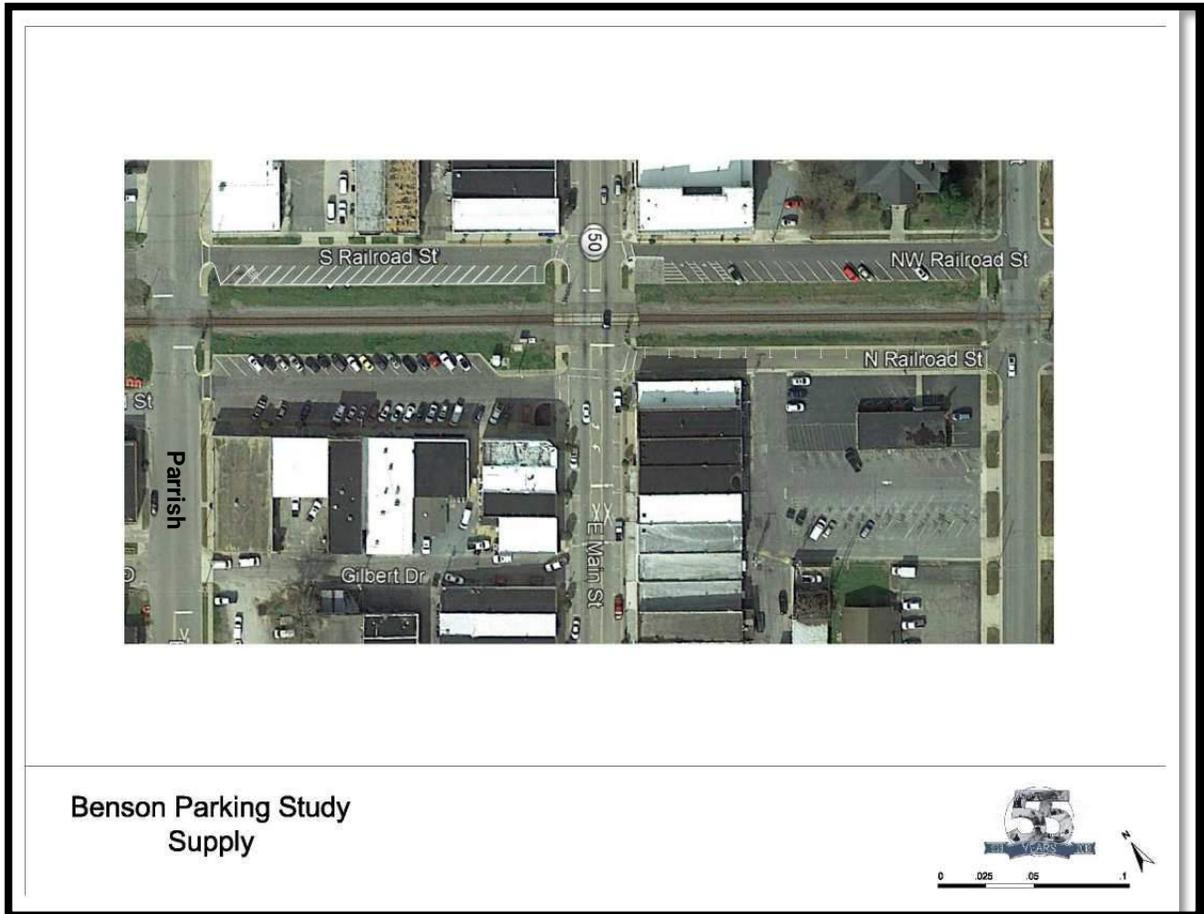
Several stakeholders suggested that Main Street would be a good opportunity to create additional angled parking. Rich & Associates does not feel that this is a good idea due to the level of truck traffic on this street. Several people stated that it was difficult to get out of their car when a truck was going by and that many drivers do not obey the speed limit on this street. All of these issues combined do not create a good environment for angled parking.

Exhibit C



Rich & Associates recommends reversing the one-way street on S. Railroad from Main Street to Parish Drive (see Exhibit D) and adjusting the angled parking accordingly. This change will also create a better flow for vehicles looking for parking, though it will result in a loss of five parking spaces if the spaces are striped nine foot in width. There is also a potential to gain nine parallel spaces along N. Railroad Street if this entire street is converted to one-way from Main Street to Church. This street appears to be 20 feet wide, allowing for a nine foot parking space with a 11 foot driving lane. This street currently only has four parallel spaces.

Exhibit D



**Action, Time Frame and Cost:**

**17.1** Action- Reverse the one-way flow and parking along S. Railroad from Main Street to Parish Drive to make the one-ways consistent.

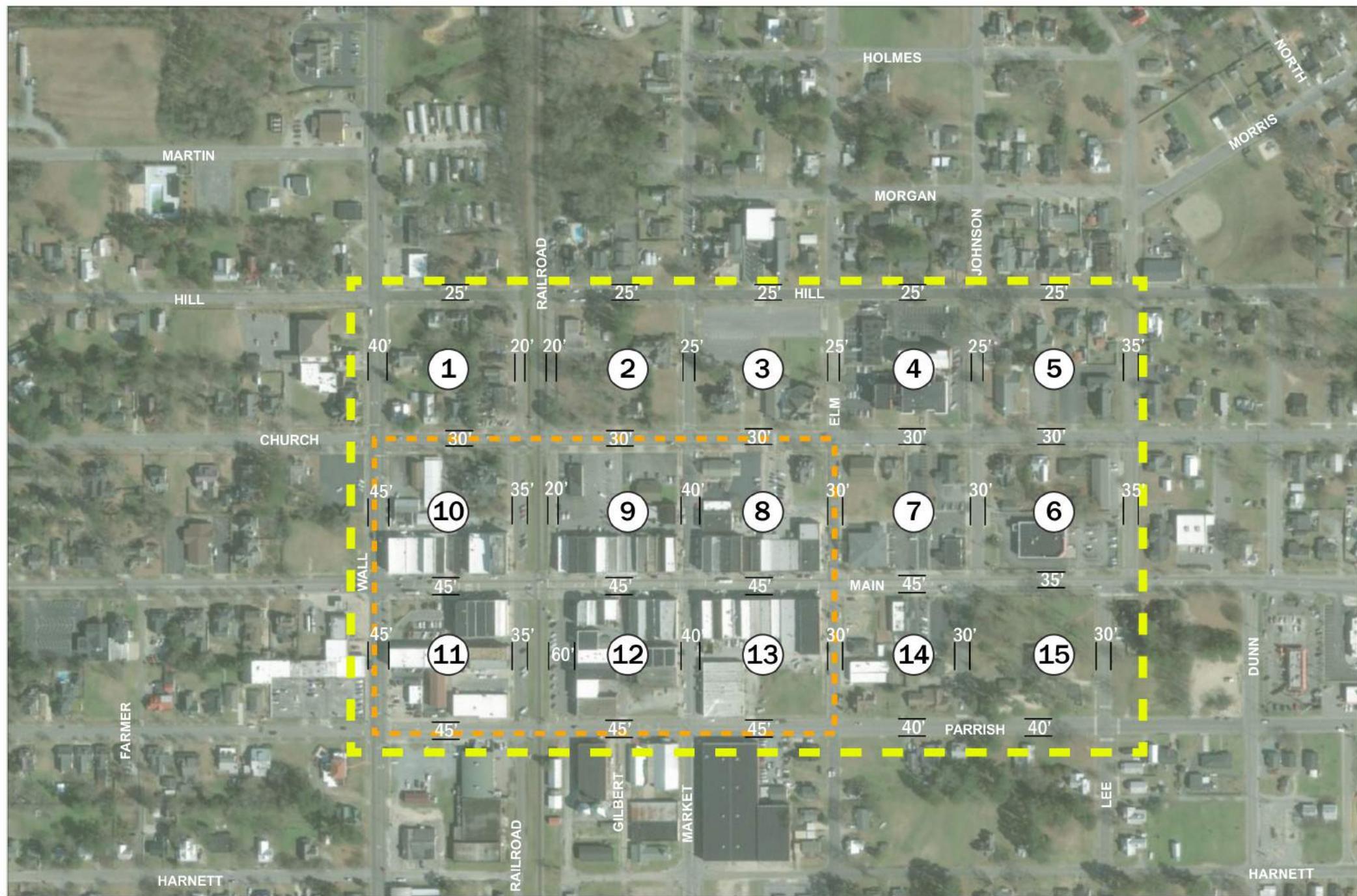
Time Frame – 0-3 years

Cost – To be determined

**17.2** Action- Make N. Railroad completely one-way, from Main Street to Church Street to make the one-ways consistent and allow for angled parking along the entire street.

Time Frame – 0-3 years

Cost – To be determined



## Map 7 Benson Parking Study Street Widths

-  Study Area
-  Downtown Core
-  Block Reference



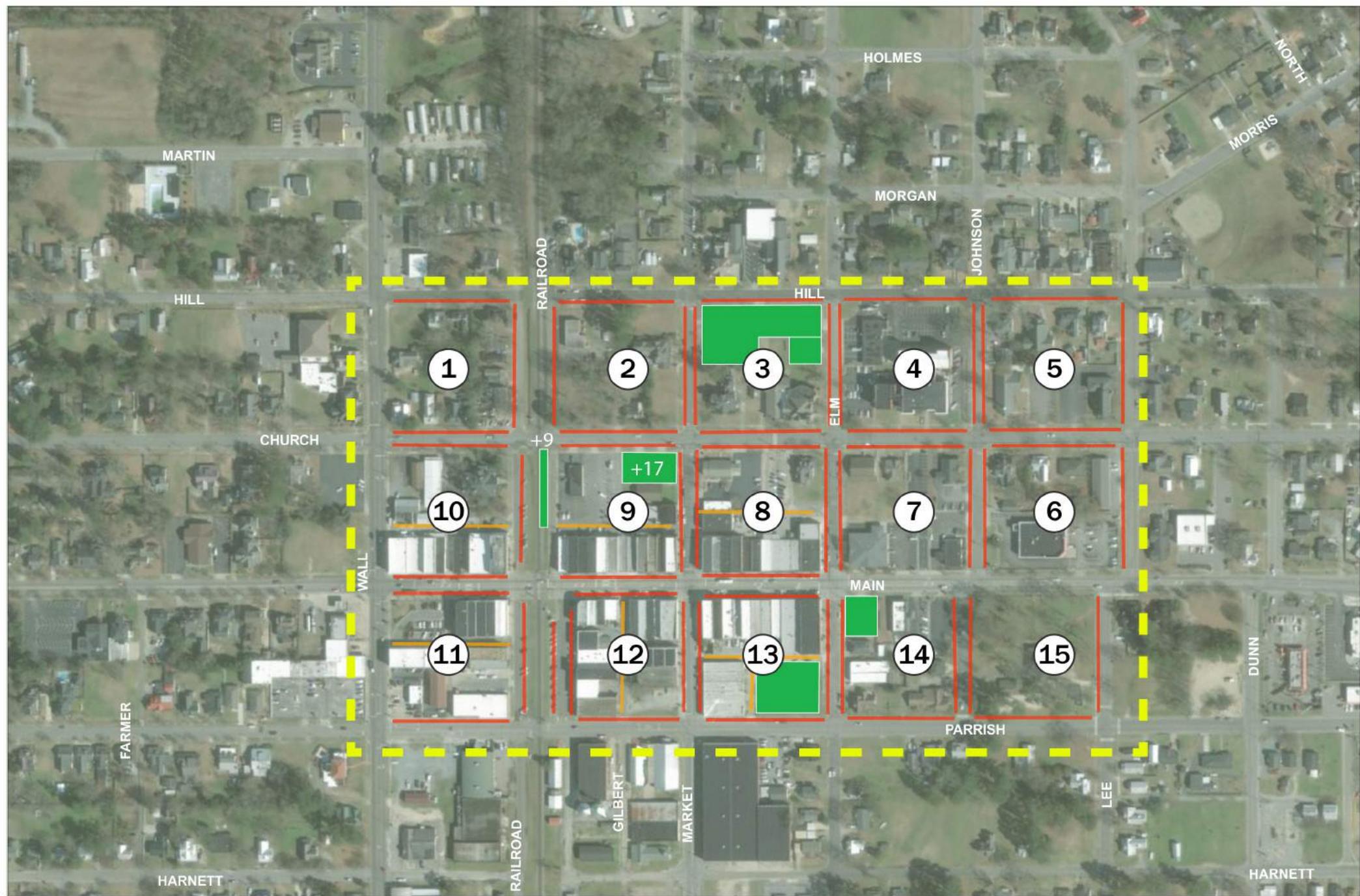
Shop  
Local  
♥  
Shop  
Benson

# New Parking



## **NEW PARKING**

Rich & Associates was asked to determine locations for new parking. There is currently a surplus of parking in the downtown and this parking would only be necessary when there are re-occupancies of vacant space and or when additional development occurs. The following map shows potential locations for public private lease and or shared use agreements, a potential on-street location for additional parking and locations for potential purchase.



**Map 8**  
**Benson Parking Study**  
 Potential New Parking  
 Opportunities Through Shared  
 Use Agreements and/or Purchase

- New Parking**
-  Study Area
  -  Downtown Core
  -  1 Block Reference

