MIDTOWN Alliance

Midtown Parking Assessment and Action Plan

Kimley»Horn

Expect More. Experience Better.

March 2015

Acknowledgements

This Plan was prepared for the Midtown Alliance by Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. Plan development was guided by a Steering Committee composed of the following representatives:

Kris Bowen, AAA Parking

Ed Brownlee, Woodruff Arts Center

Jason Ward, Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority

Tina Dyer, Parkmobile

Julia Emmons, Ansley Park Civic Association

Marc Jastremski, City of Atlanta

Molly Fortune, Fox Theatre

Damon Harvey, Parkmobile

Glenn Kurtz, Lanier Parking

Jonathan Lewis, City of Atlanta

Lance Lunsway, Georgia Tech

Tarver Siebert, MT Studio Architecture

Jason Spoeth, SP+

Andy Vance, Novare Group

Marie Worsham, Hines

Project Introduction

STUDY PURPOSE

This study identifies implementable strategies to address Midtown's growing parking challenges as a dense, mixed-use, walkable, transit-oriented district. Recent community surveys conducted by Midtown Alliance of property owners, residents, employees, and visitors revealed varying perceptions of parking in Midtown. The predominant opinion is that parking is too expensive, difficult to find, and scarce. However, a significant number of respondents feel that parking is not an issue or even that there is too much parking in Midtown. To address these perceptions and specifically identified parking challenges, this study evaluates existing and future parking needs within Midtown and proposes strategies that effectively meets these needs. By assessing both off-street and on-street parking assets, this study provides insight into opportunities to make more efficient use of existing parking assets, to reduce the demand for parking, to add parking if necessary, and to explore policy changes that address parking and access challenges. Ultimately this study will lead to the development of an implementable parking plan that supports existing development and future growth, improves the user experience, and enhances the pedestrian realm.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Parking is essential to Midtown's continued development and vibrancy

Oversupplying parking can negatively impact street-level vibrancy and result in additional traffic congestion

Travel behavior is changing, but cars will continue to be a prominent mode of transportation

On-street and off-street parking should be considered as a system

Building and maintaining parking is expensive

THE ROLE OF PARKING IN MIDTOWN

Midtown is geographically located in the center of Atlanta and is a dense, pedestrian-friendly mixed-use district. The Midtown Core supports 43,000 daytime workers, 13,000 residents, and more than 9 million annual visitors to the area's thriving arts/cultural institutions, restaurants, and retail destinations. Midtown has exceptional local and regional access via I-75/85, MARTA's heavy rail system, and a grid network of streets, sidewalks, and bike lanes. While Midtown has significant transit infrastructure, the growth pattern of the region and its lack of transit options means many users of Midtown will continue to access the district by motor vehicle and require a place to park.

PERCEPTIONS OF PARKING

Property Owners/Managers

Parking is a "major" problem	39%
Parking is not a problem	20%

Visitors

Parking is too expensive	47%
On-street parking difficult to find	46%
Not enough parking available	32%
Parking is not an issue	29%

Source: Midtown Alliance Survey, 2013

The role of parking in Midtown is a means and not just an end. Employees and visitors don't come to Midtown to park. They come to Midtown to experience the amenities that Midtown has to offer. Midtown's sustained growth has greatly reduced the amount of land available for redevelopment and parking is clearly not the highest and best use of land in a high density urban district. To that end, parking should be viewed as a tool, albeit an important one, to support the continued growth and vibrancy of Midtown as outlined in its master plan, "Blueprint Midtown."

On-street parking plays a crucial role in Midtown. When managed correctly, on-street parking spaces provide a significant economic benefit (particularly to local retailers and restaurants) by allowing for convenient access and frequent turnover. On-street parking provides a buffer between pedestrians and fast-moving traffic thereby improving safety and encouraging more foot traffic. While there is certainly less on-street parking than off-street, on-street parking spaces help to create the perception that plenty of parking is available.

The continued economic investment in Midtown by prospective businesses, residents, and cultural institutions can be encouraged through a comprehensive and implementable plan to address real (and perceived) parking challenges.

WHY DO VISITORS COME TO MIDTOWN?

Restaurants or bars	83%
Arts and culture events	64%
Visit friends or family	48%

Source: Midtown Alliance Survey, 2013

STUDY METHODOLOGY

The study findings and recommendations presented in this study were developed by incorporating several sources of information. The study team conducted an inventory of on-street and off-street parking in the Midtown Core in September 2014 to get a better understanding of parking supply.

A parking occupancy study for on-street parking and a sample set of off-street parking facilities was conducted to identify the current demand for parking. The study team also reviewed past parking studies of the Midtown district, examined the regulatory and policy framework, analyzed past surveys, and conducted additional surveys. A Midtown Parking Study Steering Committee made up of a cross-section of the community was established to help guide the study and review findings.

STATE OF PARKING: SUPPLY AND DEMAND IN THE MIDTOWN CORE

Supply and demand for parking can be impacted by several factors, such as regulations requiring certain amounts of parking, perceptions, availability of convenient transit options, ease of use, location, and frequency of special events. Midtown's growth has been and will continue to be a major driver of parking supply and demand.

MIDTOWN CORE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT: 1997 | 2014

Residential	Office Space	Street Level Retail	Hotel Rooms
2.7X 4,487 | 12,179 units	1.4X 14.2 M | 20.3M square feet	3.2X 313K | 997K square feet	1.5X 2,628 | 4,020 rooms

The number of residential units in Midtown has nearly tripled over the last 20 years. This increase corresponds with a tripling of Midtown's street-level retail space along with major increases to both office and hotel development. The uptick in Midtown residential development is improving the employment and housing balance while providing the potential for a larger pedestrian-oriented customer base for retail establishments.

PARKING SUPPLY

The inventory conducted for this study found that 64,795 parking spaces exist in the Midtown Core. As expected, the vast majority (over 97%) of parking spaces are located off-street. Of the off-street spaces, most (82%) are located in structured

facilities. Figure 1, at the end of the executive summary, shows a complete inventory of both on- and off-street parking locations.

Of the 1,705 on-street parking spaces in the Midtown Core, nearly half are metered spaces while the others are free. Metered spaces are predominantly located in the commercial core of Midtown between I-75/85 and Juniper Street. The non-metered (free) parking spaces are generally located in the area east of Juniper Street where the bustling commercial and mixed-use core transitions to lower density residential use before blending with the primarily single-family residential area located just east of Piedmont Avenue.

ON-STREET	OFF-STREET	TOTAL PARKING
1,705 803 metered 902 'free'	**63,090** 11,289 in lots 51,801 in decks	**64,795** Total Spaces

In Midtown there are currently no publicly owned and operated off-street parking facilities. Off-street parking costs, enforcement, and regulations depend on individual property owners and parking management companies. Off-street parking is located in surface parking lots or structured parking decks, which are either open for public access or considered accessory parking only.

Public access parking facilities allow any individual to pay for parking while accessory parking restricts parking to specifically identified users—typically employees, customers, or patrons. Accessory parking facilities often have physical barriers, parking attendants, or posted signs limiting parking use to on-site patrons only. Off-street facilities that allow public access parking account for fewer than 20% of facilities in Midtown. Other than a select number of surface parking lots, public access parking in Midtown is typically a secondary function.

OFF-STREET FACILITY	SURFACE LOTS	PARKING DECKS
79 with Public Access	47	32
342 Accessory Only	245	97

A sample study of 33 off-street parking facilities serving Midtown's largest office buildings revealed that on average, they were built at 1.87 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of space, considerably lower than the maximum allowed by Midtown's SPI zoning (2.5 spaces per 1,000 sq ft). The analysis found that the average as-built parking ratio of office buildings north of 17th Street was significantly higher (2.2/1,000) than other areas of Midtown. Lack of proximity to MARTA likely explains this difference.

PARKING DEMAND

Parking demand refers to the amount of parking that is used at a particular time, place, and price. The demand for parking in Midtown is affected by several factors—availability of transit options, geographic location (i.e., proximity to MARTA station), parking pricing, land use density, convenience, number of visitors, the type of trip (work, shopping, recreational), and other factors such as gas prices and availability of car-sharing services (i.e. Zipcar, Uber, etc.).

National and local trends toward decreasing driving and vehicle ownership are starting to impact the demand for parking in Midtown. Transit usage is increasing in Midtown as more people are moving to communities that have access to transit. However, a significant mode shift is unlikely without additional regional transit service. The densification of office space and sustained lower gas prices will likely result in more pressure on parking facilities.

TRENDS AFFECTING PARKING DEMAND	
	Impact to Parking Demand
Increased Transit Ridership/Supply	↓
Increased Local Housing Options	↓
Fewer Vehicle Miles Traveled	↓
Increased Office Space Density	↑
Sustained Lower Gas Prices	↑

To better understand current parking demand, parking occupancy data was collected for on-street spaces and a sample set of off-street parking. This quantitative data was paired with stakeholder interviews and survey data to develop the findings listed in Table 1 and recommendations listed in Table 2 located near the end of the executive summary.

ON-STREET PARKING DEMAND

On-street parking occupancy was studied in September 2014 during several time periods—weekday midday and weekday evening for all on-street parking, and weekend evening hours for spaces adjacent to entertainment-rich areas. Based on the data collected, parking occupancy for the on-street parking system as a whole ranges from 47% on weekdays at midday to 65% on weekend evenings.

Not surprisingly, the maps in Figure 2, at the end of the executive summary, show that on-street demand is heaviest in locations with active street level retail and non-metered spaces. The non-metered spaces are located in the transitional areas east of Juniper Street and provide parking for multiple users—residents in the evenings, office workers during the daytime, and visitors on weeknights and weekends. The maps also show locations that consistently experience lower levels of demand—segments of east/west corridors between 13th Street to Pine Street. The demand for on-street spaces is ever-changing as Midtown continues to densify and adds street-level retail, particularly in corridors that haven't experienced much growth in the past.

2014 ON-STREET PARKING OCCUPANCY STUDY		
WEEKDAY MIDDAY *11AM-1PM*	WEEKDAY EVENING *7-9PM*	WEEKEND EVENING *8-10PM*
47% 797 of 1,705 spaces occupied	57% 964 of 1,705 spacets occupied	65% 777 of 1,192* spaces occupied

OFF-STREET PARKING DEMAND

The project team conducted an occupancy study of a sample of Midtown office building parking facilities during peak demand periods and found that the average parking space occupancy at these properties was approximately 74%. This average takes into account some buildings that have significant tenant vacancy rates. When the data was normalized to assume an overall 90% tenant occupancy rate, the average parking occupancy would be 86% for the sampled off-street office parking facilities, which is nearing full utilization if effective supply is taken into account. Based on this information, the demand for parking in these buildings is high but does not exceed supply.

1.87	86%
Avg. as-built office parking ratio from a sample of 33 existing office buildings in Midtown	**Avg. midday office parking occupancy** normalized for 90% tenant occupancy in 24 Midtown buildings

PARKING POLICIES & REGULATIONS

Parking policies and regulations in Midtown are regulated through requirements provided by the City of Atlanta and Midtown's SPI zoning code. A summary of these policies is described in the sections below.

City of Atlanta On-Street Parking Requirements

METERED PARKING

The City of Atlanta establishes all policies and procedures relating to parking including meter rates, hours of operation, areas of enforcement, and the installation/removal of meters. The City entered into a seven year contract (through Fall 2016) with ParkAtlanta to enforce City of Atlanta parking regulations, maintain parking meters and regulatory signage, and collect parking revenue. The City of Atlanta has defined zones, specifically for meter enforcement policies with regulated hours and maximum time limits. The current contract with ParkAtlanta guarantees revenue from a minimum of 2,500 total parking meters. Contract terms require the City to pay a penalty for every meter below this threshold.

METER ZONE	MAX | REGULATED HOURS	PARKING METER COST:
Business	2 | Mon–Sat 7am–7pm	**$2/hour** During regulated hours; Sunday City holidays exempt.
Entertainment	4 | Mon–Sat 7am–10pm	
Hospital	4 | Mon–Sat 7am–10pm	
Mixed-Use	3 | Mon–Fri 8am–6pm	

NON-METERED PARKING

Non-metered parking is less regulated by the Park Atlanta contract and has varied enforcement periods and time limits. The majority of free on-street parking has a posted 2-hour maximum time limit, yet enforcement periods vary widely for day, night, weekday, and weekend time periods, including up to 24 hours per day. There are areas with residential permit restrictions that are effective all day, only during the day, or only during the night. There are also a number of streets with no posted restrictions at all. The complex array of enforcement periods is not well communicated through regulatory signage and leads to confused and frustrated drivers.

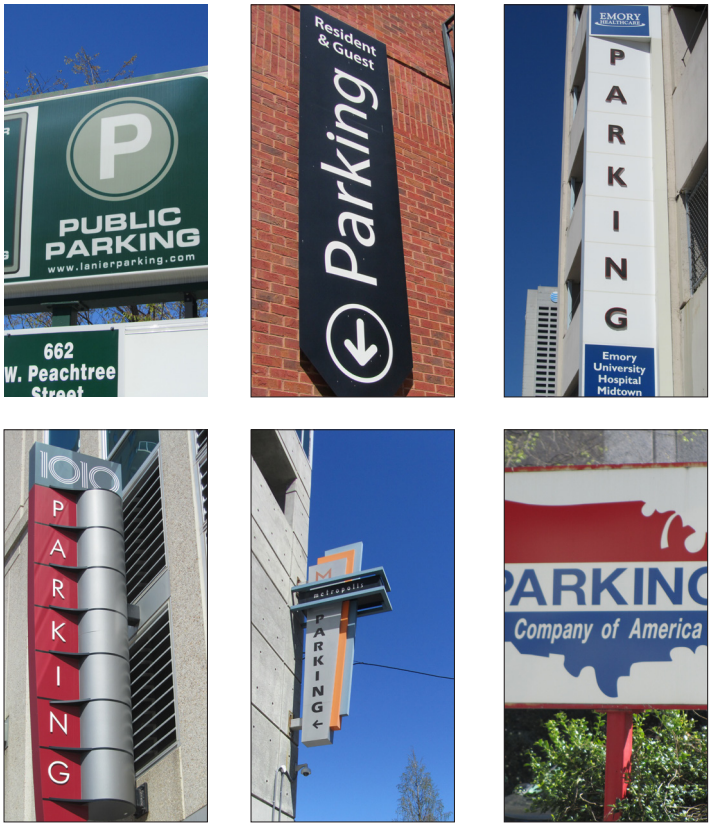
Zoning Regulations

Midtown's zoning code has several provisions related to on- and off-street parking facilities.

OFF-STREET PARKING REQUIREMENTS OVERVIEW

Off-street parking requirements in Midtown's SPI-16 zoning code generally encourages parking structures and surface lots to be accessible from side-streets rather than the main street frontage and for parking facilities to be structured, hidden, and screened. Shared parking is encouraged rather than providing individual accessory parking facilities. Parking structure facades are required to conceal the visibility of automobiles from any public right-of-way and should provide continuous street-fronting ground level active uses as well as have the overall

appearance of a horizontal storied building above the street-level space. SPI-16 also prohibits the development of new surface park-for-hire lots. Signage standards (style and branding) for parking structures is regulated through the City's sign



Example of disjointed branding

Example of desired signagage standard

ordinance and many parking facilities in Midtown are not in compliance with the regulations.

Parking ratio requirements vary by land use, but generally include a maximum and/or minimum ratio. In Midtown, office uses can provide a maximum of 2.5 spaces per 1,000 square feet of floor area. Benchmarked against other Atlanta office markets and other downtowns nationally, Midtown falls somewhere in the middle – lower maximums than more suburban markets and higher maximums than more densely developed downtowns.

Residential uses allow up to 1 space per bedroom for the first two bedrooms and ½ space for each additional bedroom. Guest parking is considered per dwelling unit rather than per bedroom and is allowed a maximum of 1 guest parking space per 3 dwelling units.

Other non-residential uses including parking for hotels, retail, and restaurants generally require a minimum of 1 space per 600 square feet of floor area and a maximum of 2.5 spaces per 600 square feet of floor area. Developments of this type near transit station areas do not have a parking minimum and those located east of Juniper Street have a higher minimum (1 per 300) and a higher maximum (2.5 per 300). Additionally, SPI-16 requires bicycle parking and the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at a ratio of 1 station per 100 parking spaces up to a maximum of twelve.

INCENTIVES FOR NEW ON-STREET PARKING

The inclusion of new on-street parking for the redevelopment of parcels in Midtown is currently not required by code. However, the code provides an incentive for developers to build new on-street parking by allowing each new on-street space to couns towards their Useable Open Space Requirements (UOSR) as long as they meet specific criteria outlined in the code. While several developments have added on-street parking, most are doing so to support their ground floor retail uses. Most developments are able to satisfy their open space requirement without this incentive.

Findings and Recommendations

The recommended strategies (summarized in Table 2) are in response to the study findings (summarized in Table 1) that were identified through an analysis of the current parking system, stakeholder input, and a review of national best management practices. The driving forces behind these recommendations are to support the guiding principles defined previously, enhance community growth and development, promote efficient use of the parking system, support good management of parking assets, and encourage effective use of the parking system through improved communication strategies. Recommendations are broken out into the following categories:

- Short-term: Relatively easy and cost effective, can be completed within 1 year
- Mid-term: Requires more coordination/additional study or is more costly, can be completed in 1-3 years
- Long-term: Requires much more coordination/ additional study, can be completed in 3-5 years

A comprehensive description of methodologies, findings, and detailed recommendations are provided in Technical Appendices A, B, and C.

Table 1: Summary of Findings

OVERALL

- Redevelopment of surface lots over time will likely place additional pressure on existing parking decks
- Lack of high-capacity regional transit options contributes to high demand for parking
- Lack of easily accessible and comprehensive parking information for users contributes to perceptions of lack of parking
- Shared parking arrangements are allowed and encouraged by zoning but uptake is minimal due to complexity
- Trend toward driving less, uptick in transit ridership
- Increased use of curb lane as loading with increased retail and residential throughout district
- Need for more flexible parking practices and policies as part of the City's outsourcing contract with Park Atlanta
- Lack of best management practices and policies to make highest and best use of electric vehicle and bicycle parking spaces

OFFICE

- Office building developers are not building to parking maximums
- Trend toward higher number of workers per square foot of office space may place more pressure on parking supply
- Demand management strategies are helping to reduce demand for more parking

ARTS & CULTURAL

- Lack of adequate and nearby parking for patrons is a concern for major arts facilities
- Even though the Fox Theatre and Woodruff Arts Center are located adjacent to MARTA stations, most patrons currently arrive by car

RETAIL & RESTAURANT

- Retail brokers state that supply and convenience of parking is critical to attract retailers to Midtown
- Considerable walk up traffic occurs today but perception exists with prospective retailers that there isn't enough parking in Midtown
- Lack of consistent high visibility parking deck signage and/or wayfinding to publicly accessible parking
- Valet parking can be an effective way to make parking more convenient for visitors
- No municipal parking or large retail-serving deck
- On-street parking demand is generally highest in locations near retail
- On-street parking is lacking on the section of Peachtree Street with the most amount of retail existing and planned

RESIDENTIAL

- Parking demand is generally decreasing as more residents adopt a car-lite lifestyle, however, occupancy of residential parking remains high
- Trend towards unbundled parking costs from the sale or lease price
- Parking for guests of residents is a challenge for many residential buildings
- Piedmont Avenue throughout most of Midtown, as well as the transitional area between 14th Street, 10th Street, Juniper Street, and Piedmont Avenue have heavy on-street use, with competition between local area residents, guests, and patrons of the commercial areas

Table 2: Recommended Strategies

	Encourages Efficient use of Existing Parking Assets	Reduces Demand on Parking System	Enhances Parking Supply
OVERALL			
SHORT-TERM			
• Develop template for shared parking arrangements and aggressively broker arrangements	●		
• Pursue the expansion of Gotcha Ride or other similar demand-responsive small scale transit service into Midtown Core	●	●	
• Develop a curbside management policy to address short-term on-street loading	●		
MID-TERM			
• Develop and publish online map/database of existing parking assets, likely to be hosted by the City of Atlanta as a City-wide app	●		
• Pursue "smart parking" pilot project that allows for real-time availability of parking assets to be accessed via app	●		
• Develop parking sign standard for facilities with publicly accessible parking and require adoption of the standard through zoning for new development or creation of a parking signage district	●		
• Provide an online platform for centralized real-time parking information available for the public for parking operators using parking signage standards and who install technology that can feed into a "smart parking" program	●		
• Provide more flexibility in management and policy control and stronger Midtown Alliance representation in the City's on-street parking program upon completion of the outsourcing contract with ParkAtlanta (See detailed suggested program changes in Appendix)	●		●
• Support property managers by providing best practices and guidance on how to increase the use of electric vehicle and bicycle parking spaces	●	●	
LONG-TERM			
• Support new regional transit connections to Midtown			
OFFICE			
SHORT-TERM			
• Communicate map/database of existing parking assets for use by leasing agents/property managers	●		
• Continue promoting employer-based demand management solutions to reduce demand for parking		●	
MID-TERM			
• Update zoning with requirements for carpool/vanpool parking spaces in new office building parking facilities	●	●	

Table 2 (continued)

	Encourages Efficient use of Existing Parking Assets	Reduces Demand on Parking System	Enhances Parking Supply
ARTS & CULTURAL			
SHORT-TERM			
• Encourage agreements with nearby parking decks and shuttle patrons to facility	●		
• Encourage Arts and Cultural destinations to provide incentives to patrons that arrive via transit (ex. discounts on tickets, concessions, etc.)		●	
• Encourage the City to increase requirements of organizers of special events to better coordinate the supply of adequate parking and strengthen the use of MARTA	●	●	
MID-TERM			
• Explore the development of a publicly accessible parking deck through a public/private partnership to support arts and retail destinations			●
RETAIL & RESTAURANT			
SHORT-TERM			
• Promote the City's valet parking permit program	●		
• Explore the development of a parking collaborative- a marketing, branding and standards strategy designed to overcome disadvantages of multiple ownerships, varied signage, and no common branding	●		
• Develop communications plan to counter the misperceptions around lack of available parking	●		
• Advocate for expansion and utilization of pay-by-phone technology	●		
MID-TERM			
• Encourage and/or regulate the addition of more on-street parking spaces			●
• Consider adding on-street parking to Peachtree Street between 14th Street and North Avenue			●
• Encourage City to implement demand-based pricing structure for metered parking spaces to ensure parking availability	●		
• Encourage City to upgrade meters to improve ease of use and convenience	●		
• Upgrade on-street parking signage design to reduce confusion, consider coordinating brand with off-street public parking signage	●		
• Conduct a study to determine walk-up vs. drive-up patronage and trip generation for various retail types, for distribution to retailers interested in locating to Midtown and to be used as guidance for traffic and pedestrian circulation studies within the Midtown district	●	●	
LONG-TERM			
• Explore the development of a publicly accessible parking deck(s) to support the build out of the Midtown Mile through a public/private partnership			●

Table 2 (continued)

	Encourages Efficient use of Existing Parking Assets	Reduces Demand on Parking System	Enhances Parking Supply
RESIDENTIAL			
SHORT-TERM			
• Promote the use of parking space sharing technologies, such as *Spotshare* by residential properties as a tool to provide more convenient guest access	●		
• Explore opportunities for expansion of car-sharing and support launch of community bike-share program		●	
• Conduct a study to assess the impact that unbundled parking has on demand	●	●	
MID-TERM			
• Explore implementing a residential permit program in the transitional area between 14th Street, 10th Street, Juniper Street, and Piedmont Avenue	●		
• Conduct a study to determine the impacts of converting one off-peak parking lane to permanent on-street parking OR a permanent on-street bicycle lane on Piedmont Avenue			●

Figure 1: On and Off-Street Parking Locations

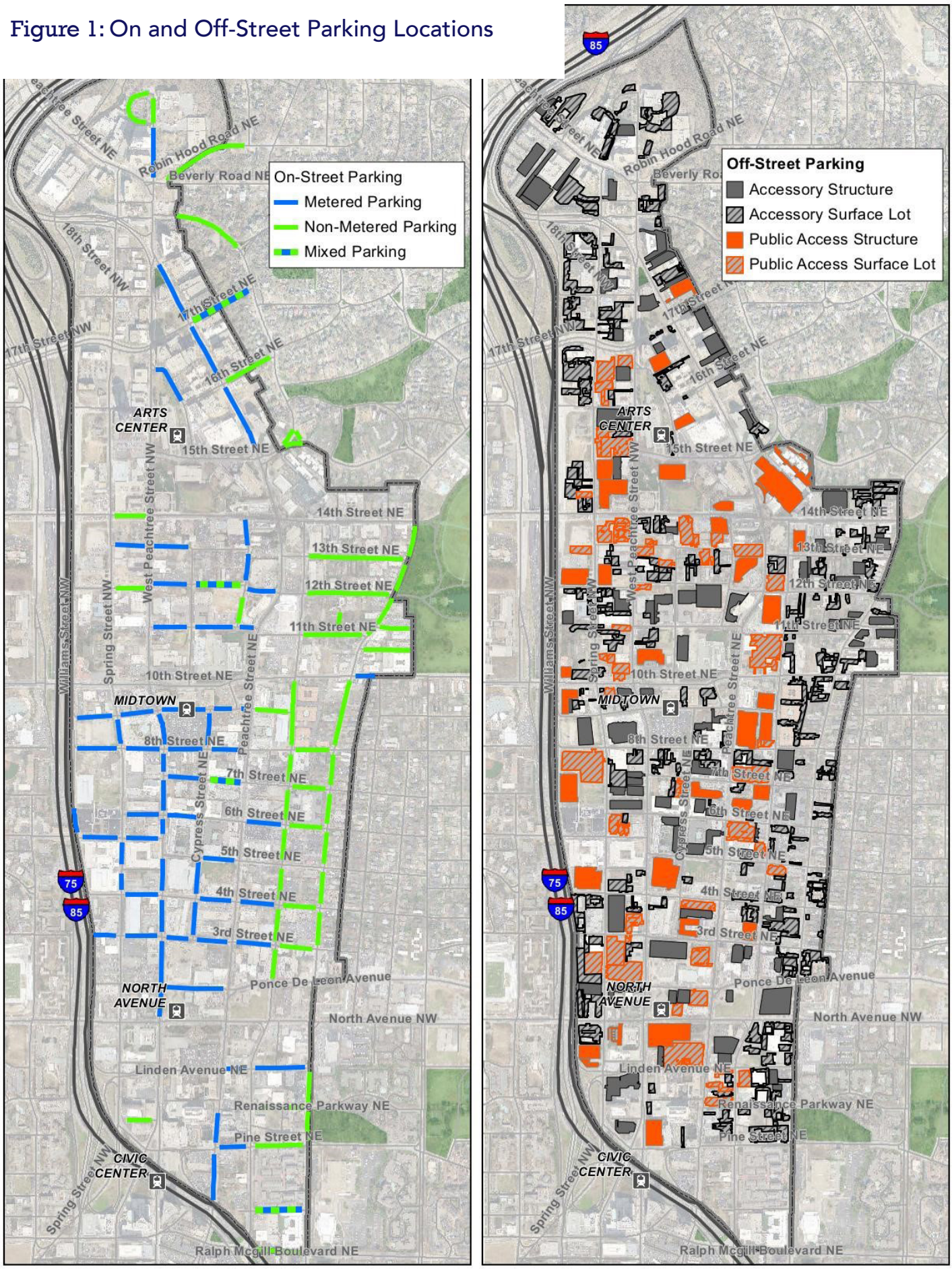


Figure 2: On-street Parking Occupancy