Downtown Hot Springs Parking, Pedestrian, and Bicycle Enhancements Plan

Presented by Thomas P. Miller & Associates
Acknowledgements

This report is the result of a collaborative effort of sponsors, stakeholders, and the people of Hot Springs, Arkansas. Thomas P. Miller and Associates, LLC (TPMA) acknowledges the leadership and feedback provided by the City of Hot Springs and the 245 individuals who shared their time and perspectives during interviews, surveys, and input sessions. TPMA would like to also thank the leadership and staff support of West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District (WCAPDD) including Dwayne Pratt, Vicki Anderson, and Robert Tucker. The study would not have been possible without the contributions from the leadership and staff of the Hot Springs Metro Partnership including Jim Fram and Cole McCaskill. Special recognition also goes to City Manager David Frasher, Deputy City Manager Bill Burrough, and Assistant City Manager Lance Spicer for championing this cause.

The Steering Committee established for the Downtown Hot Springs Economic Development and Redevelopment Action Plan also provided guidance and leadership in this project. Comprised of leaders from the public and private sectors, the Steering Committee represents business, economic development, higher education, tourism, planning, and elected officials.
Steering Committee:
- **Dwayne Pratt**—Executive Director, West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District (WCAPDD)
- **David Watkins**—former City Manager, City of Hot Springs
- **Jim Fram**—President and CEO, Hot Springs Metro Partnership
- **Vicki Anderson**—Community Grant Coordinator, West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District (WCAPDD)
- **Robert Tucker**—Study Director, Tri-Lakes Metropolitan Planning Organization
- **Cole McCaskill**—Downtown Development Director, Hot Springs Metro Partnership
- **Daniel Messplay**—Senior Planner, City of Hot Springs
- **Christi Batts**—Director of Academic Initiatives, Henderson State University-Hot Springs
- **Jean Lacefield**—Vice President, Gateway Community Association

Host of Public Open House:
- **Jason Taylor**

Hot Springs Board of Directors:
- **Ruth Carney**, Mayor
- **Suzanne Davidson**, Director - District 1
- **Elaine Jones**, Director - District 2
- **Becca Clark**, Director - District 3
- **Larry Williams**, Director - District 4
- **Rick Ramick**, Director - District 5
- **Randy Fale**, Director - District 6

Organizations:
- City of Hot Springs
- West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District
- Hot Springs Metro Partnership
- Tri-Lakes Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Downtown Association of Hot Springs
- Downtown Hot Springs Initiative
- Park Avenue Community Association
- Whittington Valley Neighborhood Association
- Quapaw Prospect Historic District
- Gateway Community Association
- Garland County
- Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts
- Arkansas Career Training Institute
- Henderson State University-Hot Springs
- Hot Springs National Park
- Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department
Call to Action

While the development of this Downtown Hot Springs Parking, Pedestrian, and Bicycle Enhancements Plan provides a framework for positively transforming the economic vitality, function, safety, and aesthetic appeal of Downtown Hot Springs, there is still significant work to be done to ensure the project’s long-term success. To create a walkable and bikeable downtown, along with a refreshed cityscape, the Hot Springs community must immediately come together, roll up its sleeves, and continue the hard work currently underway. Successful implementation will require a true community effort including collaboration of planning, economic and community development, education, city staff, and locally-elected officials alongside business owners, community-based organizations, and citizens of Hot Springs. While the goal of this implementation plan is to impact the way visitors and residents use Downtown Hot Springs to ensure economic prosperity in the long term, the City must act now to maintain momentum and ensure success.
Executive Summary

The West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District (WCAPDD), Hot Springs Metro Partnership, and the City of Hot Springs hired Thomas P. Miller and Associates, LLC (TPMA) to engage with downtown stakeholder groups to offer a fresh look at how to enhance the function and aesthetics of vehicular parking while activating the downtown infrastructure for pedestrians and bicyclists. Recommendations on how to implement actions that will positively transform the economic vitality, function, safety, and aesthetic appeal of Downtown Hot Springs are included.

To assure this plan reflects overall community desires, TPMA hosted several focus groups; a public open house; in-person and online surveys; and interviewed key stakeholders. A total of 245 stakeholders were engaged throughout these processes, and almost every stakeholder who participated expressed an opinion that Downtown Hot Springs should be mostly focused on the destination experience rather than one-stop efficiency.

The findings indicated that currently, the majority of downtown stakeholders support the reallocation of on-street parking spaces along the west side of Central Avenue to side and off-street locations in order to activate that space for pedestrians and cyclists. In fact, eighty-four percent (84%) of survey respondents indicated that they would be willing to walk a little farther to increased parking options if the sidewalks in Downtown Hot Springs were widened, providing more spaces for amenities such as benches, landscaping, or outdoor cafes. At the public open house, most stakeholders identified walking and biking experiences among their top priorities in reimagining downtown, with on-street parking ranked last out of twenty-five options.

Walkable communities enjoy significantly higher housing values than traditional suburban developments. Walkable downtown business expansion and recruitment also creates an opportunity for entrepreneurship to thrive and grow. Additionally, bicycle infrastructure brings with it new customers and can markedly increase sales. Many are wary at first, especially when car parking spaces are being replaced, but bicycle infrastructure saves businesses money on parking provision – ten bicycles can be parked in the same amount of space used to park one car, making the cost from 30 to 300 times less.

The City of Hot Springs is becoming a bike activity destination. Events are commonly tied to Hot Springs National Park, and the International Mountain Bikers Association has designated Hot Springs a “Ride Center.” The full potential of current investments linking the historic districts with neighborhoods and the popular Greenway Trail can only be realized through a safe and attractive connection of these assets through downtown. A safe, healthy, family activity, cycling can mean big business, and businesses across the country are beginning to realize it. Similarly, walkable communities and downtowns are capturing a greater share of tourist dollars as visitors are interested in experiencing community life. Places where visitors and residents alike feel community pride and activity are increasingly likely to be strong economically.
To enhance parking, walkability, and bikeability in Downtown Hot Springs, TPMA recommends:

- Creating a parking authority to manage public parking and work with stakeholders to strategically utilize private parking infrastructure.
- Improving visibility and accessibility of existing parking assets.
- Strategically expanding the public parking inventory including parking “anchors” at each end of downtown as well as an increased focus on mixed use development along Central Avenue downtown.
- Enhancing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure including reallocating the existing on-street parking along the west side of Central Avenue from Park and Whittington to Market Street (as well as the right turn lane between Court and Prospect) to improve pedestrian and bicycle mobility and safety, enhance economic development, and increase tourism.

To implement these recommendations, the City of Hot Springs will need to partner with community groups and organizations wherever possible. One of the unique characteristics of this implementation strategy is the ability to “beta test” the reallocated space currently used for on-street parking. By embracing the concept of using “pop up” redesign of this space, the community will be able to test various ideas, configurations, and concepts before committing millions of dollars to permanent redesign. Accomplishing this task will be a true community effort which will require continued collaboration among key stakeholders to ensure a downtown where residents and visitors are excited to live, shop, eat, and find entertainment for years to come.
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PARKING ENHANCEMENT

The recommendations contained in this report pertaining to the downtown district of Hot Springs are designed to:

- Improve the functionality of vehicular parking;
- Contribute to continued economic development momentum;
- Create a healthier community; and
- Enhance the marketability of downtown as a unique and great place to live, work, and play for residents, workers, and visitors.

These recommendations include enhancements to the existing physical environment as well as considerations for future growth and operational improvements. They include:

- Improvements to parking management;
- Enhanced visibility and accessibility to side and off-street parking facilities;
- Additions to the public parking inventory (free and paid); and
- Enhancing the pedestrian and bicycle environment to drive sales, improving safety, and accommodate the changing culture of current and future generations of downtown users.
Key Assumptions

The following assumptions are made concerning the addition and relocation of public parking spaces in the downtown area:

1. The area considered to be easily “walkable” for parking facilities within the downtown district is roughly defined as the intersection of Pine and Whittington Streets to Park Avenue and Arbor Street extending south along the Central Avenue corridor to Market Street, east to a line approximate to Opera Street, and west to a line approximate to Exchange Street (See map on page 11).

2. The City of Hot Springs desires to create sufficient parking inventory to accommodate the daily needs of visitors, workers, shoppers, and residents, but does not intend to create an oversupply for the few days each year when special events create unusual demand for parking.

3. Solutions to excessively high-demand events may involve the use of shuttles to outlying parking at other facilities and a public awareness campaign as instituted by many other communities for such events.

4. The current supply of off-street parking is sufficient to meet demands and has excess capacity, although poor visibility of and accessibility to these facilities creates a perception of a lack of inventory.

5. Hot Springs desires to be environmentally and economically responsible in the development of new parking facilities to assure that vehicular parking is ancillary to economic development efforts and not an end in and of itself.

6. The City desires a minimum 1:1 replacement ratio for any on-street vehicular parking spaces being relocated to side or off-street facilities.

7. The growing interest in walking and cycling represents a growing culture change nationally. The rate of change in the neighborhoods of Hot Springs remains to be seen, although the popularity of amenities like the Greenway Trail and demand for bike lanes is an indicator that interest is on the rise. Improving pedestrian and bicycle access from surrounding neighborhoods into the district will reduce the demand for short-term vehicular parking, although this reduction is not factored into the calculations for any relocation of on-street parking to side or off-street facilities.
Parking by the Numbers

If implemented, the recommendations in this report could result in the following growth and changes in public parking supply in the district:

- **Existing on-street vehicular parking spaces along Central Avenue** (from Park/Whittington to Market Street) 132
- **On-street vehicular parking spaces proposed to remain** 54
- **On-street vehicular parking spaces proposed to be relocated** 78
- **Potential side and off-street replacement vehicular parking spaces** 319
- **Net gain of public parking spaces** 241

*This does not include the potential improvements to the Aristocrat garage, new private structures being considered by the owners of private surface lots downtown, the addition of one to two levels to the Exchange Street Garage, or new parking structures anticipated with the redevelopment of the Majestic Hotel site and any new development at Chapel and Central (i.e. Confederate Square), which could add hundreds of new spaces at the north and south gateways to downtown as cited in the 1998 Parking Study (See Appendix B).*
Recommended Action Steps

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Create a Parking Authority

The most independent, non-privatized parking management entity is a Parking Authority. Its independence is a key strength, and with appointed board members, elected officials retain a measure of public oversight but allow for private-sector decision making when difficult planning choices arise. Additional strengths include the ability to accumulate and invest surplus revenue in a separate capital fund, and operation with a business-minded approach. Since major stakeholders come to the same table on a board or commission, all parties tend to gain a deeper understanding of the complexities and competing interests behind constituent groups.

A Parking Authority is managed by a group of five to six Commissioners (Board of Commissioners) who would be nominated and vetted by the City Manager and then appointed by the City Board. Another option would be to have City Board members nominate candidates and allow the City Manager to vet the candidates for potential conflicts of interest, engagement with the downtown and city staff, etc.

When first created, term lengths are usually staggered such that one term expires each year after creation; successors then serve a term of four to five years. Term limits are not always defined, although the vetted appointment process is encouraged upon each term renewal. It is often specified that Commissioners reside in the municipal boundaries and cannot hold any elective office of the city, county, or state.

There are four principal areas in which a Parking Authority can provide oversight and administration including: metered parking (on-street), garages and lots (off-street), residential and permit parking, and safety violations. The Authority may also indirectly impact the flow of traffic and overall quality of life through parking management. Depending on the ordinance language, a Parking Authority may oversee all or some of these responsibilities, while others may be left in the purview of other departments, such as law enforcement or public works.

A Parking Authority would also have the ability to coordinate and participate with private parking facility owners with regard to upgrading their facilities, including the development of new structured parking (public or private). Some examples in the study area might include surface lots owned by the Bridges family, the Roberts family, Mountain Valley Spring Water, Thomas Nagin, Jason Taylor, the Aristocrat, the Springs Hotel, the Arlington, etc. It is advised that any ordinance created should also grant the authority to build, maintain, and operate garages or other off-street parking, should the need arise.

Similar to the variation allowed in an Airport Authority model, a program manager, usually an Executive Director reports directly to the City or Parking Authority. The Executive Director oversees the daily operational aspects of the parking program and may, with approval from the Board of Commissioners, hire or outsource supporting services and/or staff. Parking Authorities can choose to keep everything “in-house” and utilize municipal employees, facilities, equipment, and/or benefits packages, while others may choose to contract out some or all of these functions.
Staff can make rate increase or rate structure recommendations to the Board of Commissioners. While a tricky equilibrium, meter and other permit rates should reflect parking demand – keeping them reasonable without leaving too much money “on the table” and being mindful to not lead the market. Premiums can be paid for key locations, though care should be taken to keep overall prices stable. Residential parking permit programs are not intended to raise revenues, but are a means for improving quality of life for citizens.

Usually outlined in a Parking Authority’s bylaws, an Advisory Committee can provide insights from the community and business stakeholders but does not need to conform to the rigidity of regulations. This committee offers a broader perspective on parking management in high density/demand situations. It is important to include a variety of represented voices on the Advisory Committee, especially downtown or smaller merchants, business associations, larger employers, and community/residential members. It is important to communicate early on that a Parking Authority does not normally enforce violations on private property. Rather, the authority will oversee public streets, designated public lots/structures, and non-moving traffic violations.

Chapter 304 of the Arkansas’ Statute (See Appendix D) was adopted in 2015 and provides general provisions for establishing parking authorities in the state. These include defining the ability to enter into contracts with any other public agency or private person; the ability to plan, design, locate and construct additional facilities; and the acquisition of real or personal property rights at or above ground level, among many others. These provisions should be used as a direct guide for establishing a Parking Authority in the State of Arkansas.

**RATIONALE**

There are efficiency gains when all responsibilities are housed under the Parking Authority. Traditionally, without an Authority in place, parking is a function of many departments (e.g. law enforcement, department of revenue, public works, information technology, etc). Cost and time savings are realized with the core functions under one umbrella, especially where it makes fiscal sense to outsource direct services. Additional efficiencies of the model include the ability to monitor consistency in signage, aesthetics of parking facilities, and other messaging to drivers.

According to the Department of Public Works, the City of Hot Springs manages 301 metered parking spaces in the Downtown area. The earning potential for these 301 spaces falls between $439,140 and $436,800 per year, but the revenue realization from January 1st, 2015 to December 31st, 2015 was only 18.7 percent. Furthermore, the City is tasked with managing free public parking including the Exchange Street Garage, alongside multiple surface lots.

When asked if the City should – or even wants to – be in the parking business, the majority of stakeholders indicated ‘no.’ City officials similarly express a desire to lessen the burden of parking management for the City, and business and community organizations want to see efficiency improvements linked more closely with stakeholder input. This being said, City officials directly note a need for maintaining a minimal measure of control over Hot Springs’ parking processes, and the Parking Authority model, possibly housed under a Central Business Improvement District or similar structure, satisfies these concerns.
Case Study: Little Rock, AR

An example of a Parking Authority formed to address and manage public off-street parking demand, Little Rock’s “board of directors determines and declares that excessive curb parking of motor vehicles on roads and streets within the city and the lack of adequate off-street parking facilities create congestion, obstruct the free circulation of traffic, diminish property values, and endanger the health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of the city; that the provision of conveniently located public off-street automobile parking facilities is therefore necessary to alleviate such conditions.” The Parking Authority board has joint jurisdiction with the board of directors of the city in planning, designating, designing, and planning off-street parking facilities.

The enabling ordinance code for the Little Rock Parking Authority can be found in Appendix D.

Case Study: Fort Smith, AR

Recently making local headlines due to a programmatic budget shortfall, the city of Fort Smith spent more money on operations and personnel than it raised in revenues in 2015. Originally formed in 1985 to issue revenue bonds to pay for construction of a city-owned parking deck, the Fort Smith Parking Authority met for the first time in two years in July, 2016, to discuss a nearly $26,000 deficit. Suggestions were made by the Parking Authority to raise parking deck (garage) rates and parking fines slightly to help close the spending gap.

Roughly $200,000 is transferred each year from the city’s General Fund to the Parking Authority Fund. Employees of the parking enforcement program—one Senior Clerk and two Meter Technicians—are under the direction of the Police Services Division.

The enabling ordinance code for the Fort Smith Parking Authority can be found in Appendix D.

Case Study: Texarkana, AR

Established in 1958, Texarkana, Arkansas’ Parking Authority is “authorized to plan, design, locate, finance, acquire and own property for, constructing, altering, enlarging, use, maintaining, operating and leasing off-street automobile parking facilities wherever and to the extent that such facilities are deemed necessary, and to supervise and control all other matters pertaining to the parking of vehicles.”

The enabling ordinance code for the Texarkana Parking Authority can be found in Appendix D.
Case Study: Lexington-Fayette County, KY (LexPark)

An ordinance passed in late 2005 created the Lexington and Fayette County Parking Authority which is responsible for, “the provision, maintenance and operation of adequate and reasonably priced parking facilities, structures, and meters along with the enforcement of non-moving traffic violations, including the residential parking permit program, to protect and promote the safety, comfort, convenience and welfare of the people of Lexington-Fayette County.”

Gary Means, the first and still active Executive Director of LexPark since 2007, admitted a lot of effort was invested in the beginning with the creation of the ordinances, both in giving the proper authority and in revising old ordinances (i.e. changing the language to "Parking Authority" throughout for enforcement and other responsibilities). Care should be taken to consider what the Authority has the power to do and not do.

Initially, a five-year strategic plan, informed by the public and other stakeholders, mapped the vision and goals of operation. With the addition of new garages, however, this document has morphed into a ten-year action plan that is updated periodically. While there were some parking meters present throughout the city when the Authority formed, a three-year loan at the outset was used to invest in equipment and upgrades. The loan was quickly repaid and the program is currently self-sufficient through fees, fines, and other revenues. More broadly, LexPark has gradually phased out dependence on city resources, most recently moving to a non-government owned building and subcontracting the provision of benefits, human resources, legal, IT, and accounting services. Although parking is the “heartbeat of downtown,” it can be a challenge to keep parking at the forefront when the responsibilities are distributed among multiple departments. Mr. Means acknowledges a Parking Authority helps to take the politics out of decision making and allows the pace of progress to move a bit faster.

The enabling ordinance code for the Lexington and Fayette County Parking Authority can be found in Appendix D.
RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Draft enabling legislation.
2. Seek statements of endorsement from stakeholder organizations for establishing a parking authority under the draft legislation.
3. Officially adopt legislation to establish a parking authority approved by the City Board of Directors.

ACTION STEPS

1. Request endorsement for the adoption of this implementation plan and provide a draft resolution to business and community organizations and other key stakeholder groups.
2. Adopt this implementation plan as a guide to organize, fund, and execute the action steps toward realizing the vision set forth in the Downtown Plan.
3. Travel to Fort Smith, Arkansas to tour the City and visit with the City Administrator and parking authority staff and board. Fort Smith’s parking authority model has recently experienced budgetary shortfalls and is managed in a more hands-off approach. Speaking with the staff will provide essential insight on lessons learned.
4. Travel to Lexington, Kentucky to tour the City and visit with the Executive Director of LexPark and parking authority staff and board. LexPark is a hugely successful model that unlike Fort Smith, is managed in a much more hands-on approach.
5. Identify relevant municipal ordinance requirements including ordinances impacted by the establishment of a parking authority.
6. Draft an ordinance to establish a parking authority following guidance and regulations as specified in Arkansas Statute Chapter 304. (See the code examples from Lexington-Fayette County, KY; Little Rock, AR; Texarkana, AR; and Fort Smith, AR found in Appendix D)
7. Develop a statement of endorsement for businesses, community organizations, and other key stakeholders.
8. Request endorsement and provide the statement to stakeholders including, but not limited to: Downtown Hot Springs Merchant’s Association; West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District; Planning Commission; Downtown Association; Downtown Neighborhood Associations; Tri-Lakes MPO; Metro Partnership; other civic groups; downtown developers; property owners; parking facility owners; public transit; and other key businesses and stakeholders.
9. Official adoption of the new ordinance establishing a parking authority by the City of Hot Springs Board of Directors.
### Action Step: Create a Parking Authority

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<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Request endorsement for the adoption of this implementation plan and provide a draft resolution to business and community organizations and other key stakeholder groups.</td>
<td>City Manager’s Office; Parking Authority; Metro Partnership’s Downtown Manager</td>
<td>City Staff*; West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District; Tri-Lakes MPO; Planning Commission; Advertising and Promotion Commission; Downtown Association; Educational Institutions including ASMSA, National Park College, and Henderson State; and Downtown Neighborhood Associations.</td>
<td>Q4 - 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td>Requests should be made for adoption of the resolution at each organization’s next meeting. Upon passage, endorsements should be collected and forwarded to the plan partner organizations including WCAPDD, City of Hot Springs, Metro Partnership, and the City Planning Department. Endorsements should also be listed on the websites where the plan document is posted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopt this implementation plan as a guide to organize, fund, and execute the action steps toward realizing the vision set forth in the Downtown Plan.</td>
<td>City Board of Directors</td>
<td>City Manager’s Office; City Staff*; City Board of Directors, West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District; Metro Partnership</td>
<td>Q4 – 2016</td>
<td></td>
<td>Adoption of this implementation strategy should be done with an understanding that changing social, economic and other conditions over time may require modification and adjustment to action steps laid out in this document. This is intended as a guide, not an instruction manual to be followed precisely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel to Fort Smith, Arkansas to tour the City and visit with the City Administrator and parking authority staff and board.</td>
<td>Metro Partnership’s Downtown Manager</td>
<td>City Manager; City Staff*; City Board of Directors; Metro Partnership; Downtown Association; Parking Stakeholders</td>
<td>Q1 - 2017</td>
<td>General Fund</td>
<td>Fort Smith, Arkansas – 2nd most populous city in Arkansas behind Little Rock – utilizes the parking Authority model. Fort Smith’s parking authority model has recently experienced budgetary shortfalls and is managed in a more hands-off approach. Speaking with the staff will provide essential insight on lessons learned. The City Administrator contact is: Jeff Dingman, 479-784-2201 <a href="mailto:jdingman@fortsmithar.gov">jdingman@fortsmithar.gov</a>.</td>
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<td>Travel to Lexington, Kentucky to tour the City and visit with the Executive Director of LexPark and parking authority staff and board.</td>
<td>Metro Partnership’s Downtown Manager</td>
<td>City Manager, City Staff*; City Board of Directors; Metro Partnership; Downtown Association</td>
<td>Q1 - 2017</td>
<td>General Fund</td>
<td>Lexington and Fayette County Parking Authority is a model created in 2007 which has been hugely successful. LexPark is an older, hugely successful model that unlike Fort Smith, is managed with much greater City influence. The Executive Director of LexPark’s contact is: Gary Means, 859-233-7275 <a href="mailto:gmeans@lexpark.org">gmeans@lexpark.org</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify relevant municipal ordinance requirements including ordinances impacted by the establishment of a parking authority.</td>
<td>City Manager’s Office</td>
<td>City Staff*</td>
<td>Q1 – 2017</td>
<td></td>
<td>There is no one-size-fits-all Parking Authority model. Rather, the City will need to compare the lessons learned from existing models and review local and state ordinance requirements to draft a model which best fits Hot Springs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft an ordinance to establish a parking authority following guidance and regulations as specified in Arkansas Statute Chapter 304.</td>
<td>City Manager’s Office</td>
<td>City Staff*</td>
<td>Q1 - 2017</td>
<td></td>
<td>Arkansas Statute Chapter 304 provides general provisions for the establishment of a Parking Authority. An ordinance should address the following: membership; management of personnel; establishing and supervising facilities; contracting; planning, locating, and designing facilities; acquisition of property and property rights; construction of facilities; and enforcement. (See the code examples from Lexington-Fayette County, KY; Little Rock, AR; Texarkana, AR; and Fort Smith, AR found in Appendix D)</td>
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<td>Develop a statement of endorsement for business and community organizations and other key stakeholder groups.</td>
<td>Metro Partnership’s Downtown Manager</td>
<td></td>
<td>Q1 - 2017</td>
<td></td>
<td>Statement template identifying the need for key strengths of a parking authority including, but not limited to, the ability to: enter into contracts, develop additional facilities, and acquire property rights. This statement should include reference to Arkansas Statute Chapter 304 and municipal examples such as Fort Smith.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request endorsement and provide the statement to stakeholders for signature.</td>
<td>Metro Partnership’s Downtown Manager</td>
<td>Downtown Association; West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District; Planning Commission; City Staff*; Downtown Neighborhood Associations; Tri-Lakes MPO; Metro Partnership; Other Civic Groups; Downtown Developers; Property Owners; Parking Facility Owners; Public Transit; and Other Key Businesses and Stakeholders.</td>
<td>Q1 - 2017</td>
<td></td>
<td>If applicable, request should be made for adoption of the statement at each organization’s next meeting. Upon passage, endorsement should be collected and forwarded to partner organizations including WCAPDD, City of Hot Springs, and Hot Springs Metro Partnership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official adoption of the new ordinance establishing a parking authority by the City of Hot Springs Board of Directors.</td>
<td>City Manager’s Office</td>
<td>City Board of Directors</td>
<td>Q1 - 2017</td>
<td></td>
<td>Upon adoption, the new ordinance should be posted on all appropriate websites. Additionally, a press release should be issued by partner organizations including WCAPDD, City of Hot Springs, and Hot Springs Metro Partnership.</td>
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*City Staff to be determined by the City Manager*
Improve the Visibility and Accessibility to Existing Parking Assets

According to a recent inventory conducted by students from the Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts, Downtown Hot Springs has 936 parking spaces located along, adjacent to, or within a short walk of Central Avenue. These include both public and private surface lots, free and pay garages, and free and metered parking along Central Avenue, side streets, and in small surface lots. There are 110 free on-street spaces along the west side of Central Avenue between Park/Whittington and Bridge Street - 57 along the east side of the street, and 53 along the west side. The focus of this action item is on the off-street and side street parking since this plan recommends the reallocation of on-street parking along the west side of Central Avenue, and the available on-street parking along the east side of Central is readily visible by motorists.

Improving the visibility of these assets is crucial to creating a user-friendly environment where drivers can easily locate and access parking spaces. Poor location and a lack of uniform and easily recognized signage and wayfinding identifying and directing motorists to public parking options, coupled with limited access to major assets, creates confusion and leads to low utilization rates of available parking.

RATIONALE

According to City officials, the collection of revenue from parking meters throughout the downtown area varies greatly due to a lack of enforcement, and low use of several locations that are all within reasonable walking distance of destination businesses along the avenue. The impact of enforcement on creating turnover and increasing utilization of these metered spaces is discussed in the Parking Authority recommendation of this report. Improving visibility of these spaces will also impact their use.
The free parking garage on Exchange Street is the largest parking asset and is underutilized, except for days of major public events. In addition to poor wayfinding signage directing motorists to this facility, stakeholders and focus group participants identified access to the garage as a major challenge. While the garage is located one block west of Central Avenue, it and its large FREE PARKING sign are visible from the street thanks to a pedestrian corridor connecting Exchange Street to Central Avenue and two surface lots flanking the walkway. If a motorist traveling north on Central misses the turn onto Court Street (the only way to currently access the garage), he or she must continue on Central Avenue and turn around to get to the garage. Mountain Street is one-way going east between Exchange and Central, serving as an exit-only from the garage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Adopt the universal blue “P” parking symbol and standardize its implementation on wayfinding and parking facility identification.
2. Create an additional access point to the Exchange Street Garage by reversing the one-way direction of Mountain Street to one-way west.

ACTION STEPS

1. Adopt a resolution changing the direction of Mountain Street between Central Avenue and Exchange Street and Exchange Street between the garage entrance and Mountain Street.
2. Implement street directional changes, including signage, pavement markings, and public notices.
3. Adopt the universal blue “P” parking symbol as the official mark for all public off-street parking facilities and concentrated areas of metered spaces.
4. Develop two additional versions of the symbol to reflect FREE and METERED parking (See examples on page 24). The standard symbol should be used to direct drivers to pay lots, the version with FREE to guide motorists to the Exchange Street Garage and any future free options, and the metered version to direct people to lots like the Bridge Street lot and areas with a large concentration of meters (e.g. Regions Plaza, Hill Wheatley Plaza, and Fountain Street).
5. Produce a basic signage package that private pay lot owners can purchase or receive free in exchange for removal of negative and non-universal parking signage.
6. Replace existing facility identification and wayfinding/directional signs with the universal blue “P”. Signs should be placed at driver eye-level whenever possible to promote pedestrian safety.
7. Secure approval from the state highway department to paint the universal “P” symbol and directional arrows on the pavement in locations to direct drivers to off-street public parking.
8. Coordinate with the MPO on any potential (or proposed) wayfinding signage program to include the universal parking symbol where appropriate.
Universal “P” Parking Symbol Design Options
### Action Step: Improve the Visibility and Accessibility to Existing Parking Assets

*(Continued on following pages)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Adopt a resolution changing the direction of Mountain Street between Central Avenue and Exchange Street and Exchange Street between the garage entrance and Mountain Street.</td>
<td>City Manager’s Office</td>
<td>Hot Springs Board of Directors; Tri-Lakes MPO <em>(Information on change)</em>; Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department <em>(Information on change)</em></td>
<td>Q1 - 2017</td>
<td></td>
<td>If possible, notification should also include Google Maps and other GPS mapping and guidance services. Confirmation on the ability to upgrade the streetlight on Central Avenue should also be obtained from AHTD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement the street directional changes, including signage, pavement markings, and public notices.</td>
<td>City Manager’s Office</td>
<td>City Staff*; Metro Partnership; Downtown Association; Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department <em>(Information on change)</em></td>
<td>Q1 - 2017</td>
<td>General Fund <em>(Signage)</em> AHTD <em>(Upgrade the streetlight on Central Avenue)</em></td>
<td>City policy for such changes should be followed, including notification of adjoining property owners. Additional messaging via the Metro Partnership’s Downtown Director and the Downtown Association as well as media releases to create awareness of the change is recommended.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Adopt the universal blue “P” parking symbol as the official mark for all public off-street parking facilities and concentrated areas of metered spaces.</td>
<td>City Manager’s Office</td>
<td>Hot Springs Board of Directors; Tri-Lakes MPO <em>(Inclusion in wayfinding project)</em></td>
<td>Q1 - 2017</td>
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<td>Develop two additional versions of the symbol to reflect FREE and METERED parking (See examples on page 24).</td>
<td>City Manager's Office</td>
<td>City Staff*; Tri-Lakes MPO <em>(Inclusion in any potential or proposed future wayfinding project)</em></td>
<td>Q1 - 2017</td>
<td>General Fund or In-House Staff</td>
<td>The standard symbol should be used to direct drivers to pay lots, the version with FREE to guide motorists to the Exchange Street Garage and any future free options, and the metered version to direct people to lots like the Bridge Street lot and areas with a large concentration of meters <em>(e.g., Regions Plaza, Hill Wheatley Plaza, Fountain Street etc.)</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produce a basic signage package that private pay lot owners can purchase or receive free in exchange for removal of negative and non-universal parking signage.</td>
<td>Metro Partnership's Downtown Director <em>(Agreements with lot owners)</em></td>
<td>City Staff*; Private parking lot/garage owners.</td>
<td>Q2 - 2017</td>
<td>Cost invoiced to parking owners or general fund if provided for free.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replace existing facility identification and wayfinding/directional signs with the universal blue &quot;P&quot;. Signs should be placed at driver eye-level whenever possible to promote pedestrian safety.</td>
<td>City Manager's Office</td>
<td>City Staff*; Tri-Lakes MPO <em>(Inclusion in any potential or proposed future wayfinding project)</em>; Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department <em>(Information on change)</em></td>
<td>Q2/Q3 - 2017</td>
<td>General Fund Any Potential or Proposed Future Wayfinding Signage Project</td>
<td>Currently the MPO has made a request to AHTD for additional funding to implement a wayfinding contract.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| Secure approval from the state highway department to paint the universal "P" symbol and directional arrows on the pavement in locations to direct drivers to off-street public parking (See example on page 23). | City Manager's Office                                               | City Staff*; Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department *(Information on change)* | Q1 – 2017 *(Seek approval)*  
Q2 – 2017 *(Paint symbols)* | General Fund Any Potential or Proposed Future Wayfinding Signage Project | Currently the MPO has made a request to AHTD for additional funding to implement a wayfinding contract. |
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<tr>
<td>Coordinate with the MPO on any proposed future wayfinding signage system and any other ideas where funding might be found for wayfinding signage program to include the universal parking symbol where appropriate.</td>
<td>MPO Study Director</td>
<td>City Staff*</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Any Potential or Proposed Future Wayfinding Signage Project</td>
<td>Currently the MPO has made a request to AHTD for additional funding to implement a wayfinding contract.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*City Staff to be determined by the City Manager*
Strategically Expand Public Parking Inventory

One of the overwhelming responses from the public and key stakeholders is to strategically improve visibility, access, and availability of off-street parking. This is especially relevant when considering the reallocation of on-street parking along Central Avenue for bicycle and pedestrian mobility and safety. Too much parking wastes resources, increases costs for current and existing development, and negatively impacts the resulting community character, natural environment, and economic vitality. At the same time, a lack of parking availability, or inadequate pedestrian access to parking facilities, limits access to key destinations, businesses, and services, hurting both mobility and economic vitality.

The design and availability of parking has the potential to shape both the look and feel of the city, the quality of life of its citizens and visitors, and the potential for new growth and development. The need to accommodate parking must be balanced with other competing goals for the built environment such as livability and economic development.

RATIONALE

As Downtown Hot Springs becomes more dense and walkable, there is an opportunity to approach parking needs at the area level, as opposed to the individual business level. The goal of an area-wide strategy to parking is to optimize the access and availability of the overall parking resource; facilitate desired new development; support and improve access for customers, residents, employees, and freight in a cost-effective manner; and support a “park once and walk” strategy that reduces traffic and increases pedestrian activity and consumer spending.

In the short-term, there are numerous actions the City of Hot Springs can take to address inventory, such as improving visibility and establishing an operational model to focus solely on supply, demand, and the administration of public parking resources. The City can also realign some of the existing inventory and add public spaces through acquisition of facilities and land, or enter into lease arrangements with land owners which would allow the City to control the use, signage, and operations of these facilities in a more visible and uniform manner. Recommendations for specific acquisitions, lease agreements, improvements, etc. are listed below.

In 1998 the Phase 1 study of the Central Business District Redevelopment Plan (See Appendix B) identified more than 2,300 parking spaces in the business district with approximately 75 percent of those being designated as public (including free and metered spaces). A smaller study conducted in 2016 by students at the Arkansas School of Math, Science, and the Arts (ASMSA) (See Appendix C) revealed that free and metered public parking in the Downtown area now accounts for a little more than 50 percent of total availability.

The 1998 study recognizes the importance of maintaining a contiguous street edge to promote pedestrian flow and economic vibrancy. To strategically address public parking availability, one of that plan’s recommendations is to utilize infill structures that provide lower floor parking with commercial spaces at street level facing Central Avenue, where allowable under flood control regulations, and upper level office or residential spaces. The same consideration should
be given for the sale of air rights for development over City-owned surface lots to incorporate public parking and realize new sources of revenue.

The second phase of the study took an in-depth look at specific planning issues related to parking. A top recommendation included both establishing a range of parking options containing major parking structures at the entry to downtown to reduce traffic flow, as well as the establishment of a mixed-use facility on Exchange Street to divert traffic from Central Avenue. The Exchange Street Garage has since been completed, and although this facility currently is a single-use facility for parking only, future demand for retail space may warrant conversion of first floor frontage to retail space.

According to stakeholders, these issues remain important. Stakeholders and City officials have identified both the former Majestic Hotel site and the intersection of Chapel Street and Central Avenue as primary locations for parking anchors on each end of Downtown Hot Springs. Both of these sites should be developed as mixed-use, and both can directly support Hot Springs’ educational institutions including ASMSA at the north site and the National Park College and the Henderson State University extensions at the south site, which is currently being marketed for development.

Stakeholders – including business and property owners – also expressed interest in strategically utilizing private parking infrastructure such as those on Park, Whittington, and Canyon, as well as the lots on either side of the fountain in front of the Exchange Street Garage.

Doing this through a Parking Authority would allow contractual agreements, as well as provide an incentive for more efficient use of the many private lots in Downtown Hot Springs. Benefits include the standardization of rates and parking identity, as well as many other enhancements, and arrangements that could include monthly leases to satisfy the needs of both a growing residential population Downtown, and employees who work in the area.
Private Lots Which Could Potentially Be Leased
RECOMMENDATIONS

Shorter-term

1. Remove the meters and add uniform, free parking signage to the City surface lot on the west side of Central Avenue at Bridge Street to provide free parking for the customers of businesses in the southern portion of the district.

2. Acquisition or a long-term lease of the privately-owned surface lot (south) located at Central and Bath to provide additional free parking and access to the Exchange Street Garage. The estimated yield is 34 additional spaces if configured for one-way traffic coming in, but a reduction of approximately 10 spaces would be necessary if the lot is configured for two-way traffic going in and out (not recommended). Uniform signage and screening/beautification would improve the visibility and aesthetic appeal of this facility.

3. Acquisition or a long-term lease of the privately-owned surface lot (north) located at Central and Bath would yield 33 additional spaces. Uniform signage and aesthetic improvement would tie the design into one large parking anchor that includes the south surface lot, Exchange Street Garage, and the pedestrian walkway from the garage to Central Avenue.

4. A long-term lease of the privately-owned Malco Theatre parking structure would yield an estimated 40 additional spaces. Uniform signage and minor aesthetic improvements would improve the appeal of this facility.

5. A lease of the property at the southwest corner of Chapel Street and Central Avenue (i.e. Confederate Square) would yield an estimated 40 new spaces. The portion of this site formerly occupied by structures and subsequent paving, striping, and screening could be accomplished and used until development of the larger site occurs. For a more significant investment, the higher grade portion of the property could also be leased, paved, striped, and used for parking until development occurs. This could provide an estimated 80 additional spaces. Inclusion of structured parking with a set amount of space for public parking should be negotiated with developers during the design phase of development.

6. A long-term lease with the First Presbyterian and Hot Springs Family Church lots on Whittington would yield an estimated 90 additional spaces. Paving striping, maintenance, security, and management could be traded for use during non-church service hours.

7. A long-term lease with the Arkansas Career and Training Institute’s (ACTI) surface lot at Opera and Spring Street would yield an estimated 30 additional spaces. ACTI has indicated an interest in making a portion of its lot available for public use in exchange for management and maintenance. Uniform signage, striping, and minor aesthetic improvements would improve the appeal of this lot. This lot’s location in proximity to the National Park facilities could be promoted for park visitors, relieving some of the pressure on other facilities to accommodate these parkers, such as the Exchange Street garage and other sort-term parking along Central Avenue.

Longer-term

1. Add one or two levels to the top of the Exchange Street Garage.

2. Optimize parking in mixed-use sites along Central Avenue.

3. Create “anchor” parking facilities at the entries to Downtown (Majestic Hotel site and Chapel at Central).
ACTION STEPS

1. Remove meters and install uniform, free parking signage at the City-owned Bridge Street parking lot on Central Avenue.
2. Negotiate for the acquisition or long-term lease of existing privately-owned parking facilities at Central Avenue and Bath Streets, the Malco Theater, First Presbyterian Church, Hot Springs Family Church, and ACTI.
3. Negotiate with the owners of the property at Chapel and Central to develop a temporary surface parking lot until development of the site begins.
4. Commission an engineering consultant to develop a cost estimate for the addition of one or two levels of parking at the Exchange Street Garage.
5. Determine feasible uses for air rights development of City-owned surface lots, when the market warrants, and assure public parking inclusion in all redevelopment and/or infill plans for public and private lots.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remove meters and install uniform, free parking signage at the City-owned Bridge Street parking lot on Central Avenue.</td>
<td>City Manager’s Office</td>
<td>City Staff*; Businesses in the Area</td>
<td>Q2 - 2017</td>
<td>General Fund</td>
<td>This lot should be signed and directional signage installed only after a signage standard has been established. See related recommendation about improving visibility of parking facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiate for the acquisition or long-term lease of existing privately-owned parking facilities at Central Avenue and Bath Streets, the Malco Theater, First Presbyterian Church, Hot Springs Family Church, and ACTI.</td>
<td>City Manager’s Office</td>
<td>City Staff*; Property Owners; Businesses in the Area of Each Facility</td>
<td>Q2 - 2017</td>
<td>General Fund; Possible EDA Grants</td>
<td>Signage and aesthetic improvements should be in alignment with the standards developed based on the related recommendation to improve visibility of parking facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiate with the owners of the property at Chapel and Central to develop a temporary surface parking lot until development of the site begins.</td>
<td>City Manager’s Office</td>
<td>City Staff*; Property Owners</td>
<td>Q1 - 2017</td>
<td>General Fund; Possible EDA Grants</td>
<td>The City may wish to tie any development incentives to negotiations for the use of the property for public parking in the interim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission an engineering consultant to develop a cost estimate for the addition of one or two levels of parking at the Exchange Street Garage.</td>
<td>City Manager’s Office</td>
<td>City Staff*; Businesses in the Area of the Garage</td>
<td>Q2 - 2017</td>
<td>General Fund</td>
<td>Upon receipt of the cost estimate, the City should evaluate the cost/benefit and time expansion to coincide with growing demand created by additional development, especially hotel, residential, and office development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine feasible uses for air rights development of City-owned surface lots, when the market warrants, and assure public parking inclusion in all redevelopment and/or infill plans for public and private lots.</td>
<td>City Manager’s Office</td>
<td>City Staff*; Downtown Developers; Downtown Association; Educational Institutions including ASMSA, National Park College, and Henderson State; Downtown Neighborhood Associations; MPO; WCAPDD</td>
<td>Q2 - 2017</td>
<td>EDA Planning Grants; Public-Private Partnership; EPA Brownfield Cleanup</td>
<td>The City must both identify funding and potentially issue an RFP for studies of this type.</td>
</tr>
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*City Staff to be determined by the City Manager
Enhance Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure

Unlike suburban shopping districts, merchants and restaurateurs in Downtown Hot Springs depend on pedestrian traffic to drive sales. There is also a growing part of the population who are concerned about personal health and the environment and are choosing to travel shorter distances via bicycle. Accommodating these customers with improved infrastructure, such as wider pedestrian space, a dedicated bike trail, more intimate gathering spaces, and amenities designed to promote longer stays downtown will provide merchants with opportunities to realize additional sales and add the next generation of unique flavor to the historic district.

RATIONALE

The current allocation of public right-of-way along Central Avenue is overwhelmingly dedicated to the automobile, through multiple driving lanes and parallel parking on both sides of the street (excepting the stretch on the east side at Bathhouse Row). All 89 of the participants in a downtown open house event focused on parking, pedestrian, and bicycle issues indicated they prefer an environment with more amenities and space for pedestrians and bicyclists over the perceived convenience of on-street parking. The responses to a survey conducted at the open house and later provided via the internet to merchants and other downtown stakeholders show a definitive preference for these concepts (Full survey results are provided in Appendix A).

Three smaller studies conducted by students at the Arkansas School of Math, Science, and the Arts (ASMSA) revealed the following:

- There is a large volume of unused off-street parking inventory along and adjacent to Central Avenue;
- Walking distances between these areas and destination shops and restaurants are comparable to the walking distances from suburban shopping center parking to destination departments (Additionally, the majority of the suburban lots include walking through a parking lot versus an activated and interesting downtown sidewalk environment);
- Most downtown patrons surveyed who parked a vehicle on Central Avenue did so at least a block from their destinations; and
- Downtown patrons surveyed indicated they would be willing to walk further if additional pedestrian and bicycle amenities were present.

The Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department representatives interviewed as part of this study indicated a willingness to consider improvements to safety, mobility, and efficiencies which could be achieved by removing on-street parking and using the parking lane to increase bike and pedestrian facilities.

According to research conducted as part of this plan, bicyclists may spend less in shops than those traveling by car per trip, but they tend to make more frequent trips, thus increasing sales opportunities for stores and restaurants. A 2012 study in New York City's East Village – which had recently installed protected bike lanes – found that per capita, cyclists spend the most money at local businesses. A 2013 study in Seattle showed a 350 percent increase in sales index just two years after the installation of bike lanes.

Both the Park and Whittington neighborhoods have added or are currently creating bike lanes to provide safer access to downtown and Central Avenue. However, upon reaching the historic district, bike riders are funneled into the vehicular travel lanes with only painted “sharrows” to provide any sense of protection.
Based on the open house and merchant survey, 77 percent of respondents indicate that
downtown is not welcoming to cyclists, even though Hot Springs has been designated a “Ride
Center” by the International Mountain Bikers Association. The Greenway Trail currently
terminates at the transit center.

Creating a dedicated bike trail to connect the bike lanes at Park, Whittington, and Central with
the Greenway Trail would not only improve safety to families and individuals traveling by
bicycle, but also create a world-class trailhead and connection to the national park and a hub
for numerous other trails proposed in the Hot Springs Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

If the Central Avenue trail is developed as envisioned in the plan to connect the neighborhoods
with the Transportation Center and Greenway Trail, it also serves to help connect children and
adults to healthier food options by virtue of the fact that the Farmers Market would also be
accessible via this trail. Significant funding opportunities exist in the space of Healthy
Communities designed to connect people living in “food deserts with healthy food and to help
reduce obesity and develop healthy lifestyles.”

The benefits of walkability and bikeability are becoming well-known. They include lower rates
of obesity (Arkansas is currently ranked third in the nation for obesity) and associated chronic
diseases, reduced emissions of greenhouse gases, improved sustainability and resilience, and
even increased happiness. But, there is also an economic story to both.

Walkable communities and downtowns are capturing a greater share of tourist dollars as
visitors are interested in experiencing community life. Places where visitors and residents alike
feel community pride and activity are increasingly likely to be economically strong.
Walkable shopping centers that offer a ‘sense of place’ illustrate the opportunities of emulating what is already authentically present in the downtown setting. To do this, developers focus on:

- Small building footprints;
- An open-air environment; and
- Infrastructure that is pedestrian-friendly, convenient, and safe.

Maintaining the vibrancy and utilization of these characteristics in the downtown setting can help realize the potential of increased sales. Walkable downtown business expansion and recruitment creates an appropriate mix of retail, entertainment, and service businesses.

Booming business centers like New York City, Atlanta, and Houston are showing how an overdependence on the car can gridlock economic development. In New York City, the city’s Department of Transportation found that:

- Small expansions of pedestrian rights-of-way were tied to a 49 percent reduction in commercial vacancies;
- Transformation of an underused parking area translated into a 172 percent increase in retail sales at local businesses over three years; and
- Conversion of a curb lane into outdoor seating increased pedestrian counts by more than 75 percent and increased sales at bordering businesses by 14 percent.

Walkability is “driving” more than just demand. Walkable communities enjoy significantly higher housing values than traditional suburban developments. This translates into price resiliency as well:

- A 2012 Brookings report found that after the peak in the housing market in the mid-2000s, residential values in neighborhoods with above-average walkability experienced less than half the decline in value as compared to neighborhoods with below-average walkability.

Hot Springs is becoming a bike activity destination. Events are commonly tied to Hot Springs National Park. A safe, healthy, family activity, cycling can mean big business, and businesses are beginning to realize it. The implementation of bicycle infrastructure in urban districts has been linked to increased retail sales and safer roads. Bikes provide a more convenient way for residents of surrounding neighborhoods to come downtown more frequently. Exercising before work has been shown to increase employee productivity by an average of 15 percent, and employees who regularly bike to work have less sickness related absences than their non-cycling counterparts. Physically-fit workers are also more mentally alert and thus, make fewer mistakes.

City bike sharing programs have exploded in popularity over the last decade. Accessibility and affordability have helped to promote the concept as a win-win, enabling commuters to leave the stress of congested downtown traffic in the garage. Opportunities for bike shops, accessory retailers, repair businesses, and rentals all stem from increased cycling interest. It is a huge benefit not only for residents but also for tourists who can enjoy meandering without having to hassle with multiple bus transfers, taxi fares, and sore feet.

There is no such thing as free parking, someone is always paying. That’s why business owners tend to like bike parking. Many are wary at first, especially when car parking spaces are being replaced.
But once a bike corral or staple is put in, the value added becomes immediately clear:

- Ten bicycles can be parked in the same amount of space used to park one car;
- The cost is from 30 to 300 times less; and
- When bike parking is available at destinations, people are more likely to choose to ride to those places.

Bicycling, just like walking, helps make a street more vibrant. It also adds more eyes and ears to the street making it safer.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Reallocate the existing on-street parking along the west side of Central Avenue from Park and Whittington to Market Street (including the right turn lane between Court and Prospect) to pedestrian and bicycle mobility safety uses.
2. Test various design concepts and dimensional allocations using “pop-up” or tactical urbanism techniques prior to building permanent improvements.
3. Promote the activation of pedestrian spaces to incentivize lingering and longer stays by downtown visitors in order to increase sales for merchants.
4. Explore creation of a Bike Share program in the historic district (Several models are described in the Best Practices section of Appendix B).
5. Work with the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department to improve safety, mobility, and traffic flow at the intersection of Park, Whittington, and Central Avenue in the form of a roundabout as recommended in the downtown plan.

**ACTION STEPS**

1. Obtain a temporary permit to develop a “pop-up” or sanctioned tactical urbanism approach to reallocation of the parking lane on the west side of Central Avenue.
2. Contract with an urban design consultant to develop a design and implement temporary improvements to bike and pedestrian space in the west side parking lane of Central Avenue for a trial period of not less than 6 months.
3. Develop a process for feedback and modifications during the trial period.
4. Study funding alternatives for build out of permanent improvements.
5. Amend the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (short-term roadway section) to include the reallocation of the parking lane on the west side of Central Avenue from Park Whittington to Market Street for pedestrian and bicycle mobility uses.
6. Commission an engineering and urban design consultant to develop designs and engineering documents for permanent improvements to Central Avenue.
Pop-up Bike Lane Example

Concrete Barrier Planters
Pricing Varies

http://www.externalworksindex.co.uk/entry/39139/LivinggreenDesign/Barrier-trough-outdoor-

6’ Commercial Parking Block
$39.95 ea

https://www.trafficsafetystore.com/parking-blocks/plastic-commercial-6#PBCGS
**Action Step: Enhance Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure**
*(Continued on following pages)*

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<td>City Manager’s Office</td>
<td>City Staff*; Tri-Lakes MPO Policy Board; Metro Partnership; Marketing and Promotions Committee; Downtown Investors; Downtown Association;</td>
<td>Q4 - 2017</td>
<td></td>
<td>Send a letter to AHTD District Engineer Mark Headley requesting permission to do pop-up. The letter should be accompanied by the following supporting documents: Location for Pop-Ups along Central Avenue; Temporary Conceptual Design Drawings; Research Documentation into why it’s a good thing to do (Demonstration project discussion - completely removable, enhances safety, promotes economic development, promotes tourism, promotes public health, increases access to health foods [farmers market], and promotes mobility); Budget and Schedule for the temporary project; Support Letters from area stakeholders (City Manager &amp; Mayor, MPO Policy Board, Downtown Association, Other Investors and Developers, Real Estate Investors, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contract with an urban design consultant to develop a design and implement temporary improvements to bike and pedestrian space in the west side parking lane of Central Avenue for a trial period of not less than six (6) months.</td>
<td>City Manager’s Office</td>
<td>City Staff*, Tri-Lakes MPO (Inclusion in wayfinding project); Metro Partnership; Hot Springs Board of Directors (Potential funding sources); West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District (Potential funding sources); Downtown Association; Property Owners Developers and Investors Volunteer Group (Assistance with installation)</td>
<td>Q4 - 2017/Q1 - 2018</td>
<td>(See Funding Opportunities Attachment in Appendix B - Especially transportation and Healthy Communities grants) Property/Business Owner match program Crowdfunding (e.g., Kickstarter, GoFundMe) Donations of time, materials and products in exchange for acknowledgement on elements. (e.g., “Plantings provided by Acme Garden Center”)</td>
<td>The ideal temporary solution is to implement the design from Park/Whittington to Market Street. This will allow the incorporation of the bike trail concept, as attempting to gauge the effectiveness of a bike trail over a shorter distance without connecting existing bike lanes on Park and (soon to be) lanes on Whittington with another trail of key destination will be compromised. If the entire length cannot be implemented, the next best approach will be to connect the bike lanes to the National Park at Reserve Street. In addition to the potential funding sources identified in the attachment, the City may wish to consider an opportunity to allow property owners and businesses to contribute through volunteer labor, supplies, or cash contributions to the pop-up effort. This will also create ownership in the improvements in a less formal manner than creating a formal business improvement district. If well-developed a crowd funding appeal could prove successful. In just 13 days, a Kickstarter campaign raised over $11,000 to build a parklet in San Francisco with over 200 backers.</td>
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<td>Other Stakeholders</td>
<td>Timeframe</td>
<td>Potential Funding Sources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop a process for feedback and modifications during the trial period. Evaluation of effectiveness of the project.</td>
<td>Metro Partnership’s Downtown Director</td>
<td>City Staff*; Marketing and Promotions Committee; Tri-Lakes MPO <em>(Assistance with impact measures)</em></td>
<td>Q1 - 2018</td>
<td></td>
<td>A web-based feedback tool should be created to allow visitors, merchants, investors, and others to provide feedback about the temporary improvements. This feedback should be memorialized and incorporated into permanent designs as appropriate. After the pop-up solutions have been in place for at least 3 months, document performance <em>(e.g. photos of various users, vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian, traffic counts, other means)</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study funding alternatives for build out of permanent improvements.</td>
<td>MPO or City Manager’s Office</td>
<td>City Staff*; MPO; West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District; Possible Grant Researcher/Writer</td>
<td>Q2/Q3 - 2018</td>
<td>Possible Grant Services Contract – MPO, City, WCAPDD</td>
<td>Investigation should include TAP, FLAP, Complete Streets Program, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amend the Metropolitan Transportation Plan <em>(short term roadway section)</em> to include the reallocation of the parking lane on the west side of Central Avenue from Park Whittington to Market Street for pedestrian and bicycle mobility uses.</td>
<td>MPO</td>
<td>Hot Springs Board of Directors; City Staff*; City Engineer; Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department <em>(Informational)</em></td>
<td>Q2 - 2018</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Downtown Hot Springs Parking, Pedestrian, and Bicycle Enhancements Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commission an engineering and urban design consultant to develop designs and engineering documents for permanent improvements to Central Avenue.</td>
<td>City Manager’s Office</td>
<td>MPO; Hot Springs Board of Directors; City Staff*; Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department</td>
<td>Q4-2018</td>
<td><em>(See Funding Opportunities Attachment in Appendix B)</em></td>
<td>Feedback, lessons learned, and modifications made during the trial run with the pop-up approach should be documented and provided to the designers selected to develop the plans for permanent improvements. Include AHTD support for permanent improvements, design drawings, cost estimates, grant applications, and sponsorship packages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*City Staff to be determined by the City Manager*