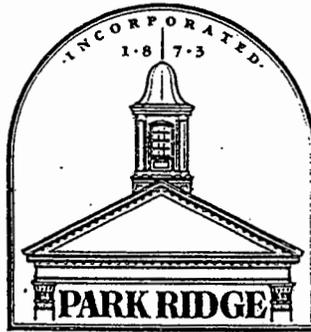


# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

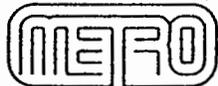
## COMPREHENSIVE TRAFFIC AND PARKING STUDY

For The City Of



July, 1991

By



Metro Transportation Group, Inc.



*Parking Consultants  
Restoration Engineers*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Park Ridge had a Comprehensive Study prepared in 1969, which projected future transportation system needs for the 1990 planning year. Since 1969, many of the anticipated development impacts and suggested operational improvements have been realized. However, the last several years have also brought considerable development growth throughout northwest Cook County and in particular in the O'Hare Airport vicinity which neighbors the City of Park Ridge.

In late 1989, the City contracted with Metro Transportation Group, Inc. and Walker Parking Consultants to update the 1969 study. The Metro-Walker team performed numerous tasks to help ensure that the City's transportation needs were addressed for the next twenty planning horizon, the Year 2010. In particular, the goals and strategies promulgated by the Vision 2000 committee were incorporated in the Comprehensive Traffic and Parking Study update.

This document highlights the results of the almost two-year effort. The Metro-Walker team would like to thank the City, staff and many citizens for their participation and cooperation throughout the study process.

## II. TRAFFIC STUDY CONTEXT

The traffic portion of the comprehensive study was divided into three primary components. First, an extensive inventory of the existing facilities and operations was conducted. A key element of this first phase included surveying and analyzing traffic conditions at almost fifty intersections in Park Ridge. In addition, accident data was summarized by the City and was used to supplement the traffic count information.

The second phase of the traffic study produced a computer model of the Park Ridge area roadway system. The model provides an important planning tool for City staff which can: 1.) help evaluate the benefits of various road improvements, 2.) analyze development impact and 3.) update and monitor traffic conditions. The model detailed traffic conditions for both the base and twenty year planning horizons.

The final phase incorporated the first two phases in the development of a series of traffic planning recommendations. The resulting street system requirements and operational strategies were developed as part of an implementation program that will best serve the City of Park Ridge. A key consideration in the recommendation strategy was to maximize the use of the existing facilities available in Park Ridge.

### III. EXISTING TRAFFIC CONDITIONS

#### Primary Roadway Network

Excellent regional access is provided by the Kennedy Expressway/Northwest Tollway (I-90), and the Tri-State Tollway (I-294). In addition, I-190 links the City to O'Hare International Airport. Park Ridge has four primary east-west routes that have continuity throughout the City and adjoining municipalities. Dempster Street (US 14), Oakton Street, Touhy Avenue, and Devon Avenue all provide four through traffic lanes. Both Dempster and Touhy have regional access to the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) via ramps to/from the south. Devon has regional access to the Northwest Tollway (I-90) just west of the City via westbound entrance ramp.

There are also several routes which run northwest to southeast including Northwest Highway, Busse Highway, Talcott Road, and Higgins Road. This orientation is based on the historical "spoke" system which directed activity to/from downtown Chicago. These routes also generally provide four through traffic lanes, except in the Uptown and South Park areas where on-street parking limit Northwest Highway and Talcott Road respectively to two through lanes.

In direct contrast to the excellent east-west accessibility, there is not a single major north-south route that has continuity throughout Park Ridge. For example, Cumberland Avenue begins as a four lane primary roadway at the southern City limits, but transitions to a two-lane residential street north of Talcott. Other north-south routes that provide varying degrees of accessibility include portions of Dee Road, Greenwood Avenue, Potter Road, and Canfield Road.

### Safety Experience

Accident data compiled by the City was reviewed to determine if any significant trends were apparent for the three year period of 1985 to 1987. No unusual circumstances were revealed. As normally anticipated, the highest number of accidents occurred over the most heavily travelled routes such as Touhy Avenue, Northwest Highway, Oakton Street, and Higgins Road.

The Touhy Avenue/Northwest Highway/Prospect Avenue interchange has consistently been a heavy accident location in Park Ridge. This intersection represented 9% of the total three year number of accidents. Contributing factors appear to include relatively confusing operations on the Prospect approaches and the general operations deficiencies created by this high volume, six legged intersection.

### Traffic Survey Results

Daily traffic counts were conducted and compared to historical reference data. The results suggest that traffic levels have been relatively stable within Park Ridge over the last twelve years. However, significant increases have occurred on the peripheral routes which can be attributed to growth in the O'Hare and Niles area employment corridors.

For example, traffic on Touhy near the Uptown area remained stable probably due to slow speeds and congested operations. Yet, a 15 to 20% growth was experienced to the west at I-294 and to the east at IL 43. In contrast, Dempster Street experienced substantial growth (about 30%) in Park Ridge. This can be attributed to commercial development in the Golf-Mill influence area and perhaps the reconstruction of Greenwood to a four lane arterial roadway north of Oakton.

As mentioned, almost fifty intersections were counted and observed during the peak periods. The summarized data can be found in the Appendix of the overall text. These intersections were evaluated to determine current deficiencies. The survey and capacity analysis results yield the following:

- The lack of arrows at many signalized intersections inhibits left turn movements. This is particularly evident along Touhy and Oakton, where the heavy through movements often limit left turning gaps to the number of vehicles that can turn on the amber (about two per cycle).
- The commuter train stations cause delays when trains are stopped. The Uptown station has occasional backups on Prospect that affect the Touhy/Northwest Highway intersection. The Dee Road station affects operations at the triangular intersections created by Dee, Oakton and Busse.
- Operations in the Uptown are confusing and in particular along the Prospect corridor from Touhy on the north through the railroad crossing on the south. Contributing factors include: 1.) patron parking activity, 2.) the commuter station, and 3.) the close proximity of the Courtland, Vine and Main intersections which cause confusion as to which driver has the right-of-way to proceed.

- The intersection of Dempster and Potter operates at a poor level-of-service (LOS)<sup>1</sup> for both the morning and evening peak periods. This is due in part by the significant amount of eastbound left turns and the heavy bi-directional through movements on Dempster. In addition, the northbound left turns are limited due to the absence of a left turn arrow.
- Eastbound left turns at the intersection of Dempster and Greenwood during the evening peak experience excessive delay. The intersection LOS is also decreased by large volume of right turns on all approaches without separate turn lanes.
- The intersection of Northwest Highway and Oakton operates at an unacceptable LOS during the evening peak period. The poor LOS is magnified due to left turning vehicles on Oakton awaiting available gaps in traffic thereby causing further backup and delay for through vehicles.
- Unacceptable delays at the intersection of Touhy and Greenwood are based primarily on the large amount of east/west movement with no provision of turn lanes. Southbound volumes on Greenwood are also experiencing large delays due to the absence of turn lanes.

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<sup>1</sup> Level-of-Service provides an indication of how well an intersection is operating. The 1985 Highway Capacity Manual defines six Levels-of-Service (LOS). They have been given letter designations ranging from A (the best) to F (the worst). LOS D is generally acceptable within the Chicago metropolitan area.

- The two six legged intersections of Touhy/Northwest Highway/Prospect and Devon/Courtland/Talcott experience significant delays during both the morning and evening peaks. The congested operations can be attributed to the heavy volume traveling through these locations and their respective traffic signal "green time" requirements.

#### IV. FUTURE TRAFFIC CONDITIONS

8

##### Planning Model

In cooperation with the city, Metro Transportation Group, Inc. and its Professional Solutions division has developed a microcomputer-based model of the Park Ridge area. The model, created with the commercial software package TMODEL2, was used to develop a base year simulation and to forecast conditions in 2010.

The model area is roughly bounded by Golf Road on the north, Milwaukee Avenue and Harlem Avenue on the east, Lawrence Avenue on the south, and Mannheim Road-Lee Street-River Road on the west. The Park Ridge Planning Department and the Northeastern Illinois Planning Department (NIPC) provided land use data, and regional information was obtained from the Chicago Area Transportation Study.

##### Results

The model results helped formulate the long range recommendations, as well as to confirm the short range requirements, as discussed in the next section.

Table 1 compares traffic volumes between 1990 and 2010 on many of the major roadway links. As can be seen growth outside Park Ridge will have significant impact on most of the street system. Many intersections along the regional east-west routes will experience peak hour delays. As indicated in the model, this will place increased pressure on the north-south streets in Park Ridge, as both internal and through trips attempt to minimize their drive time.

**TABLE 1**  
**POTENTIAL TRAFFIC GROWTH**

| Roadway Segment   | Two-Way Traffic Volume<br>PM Peak Hour <sup>2</sup> |      |          |
|-------------------|---|------|----------|
|                   | 1990  | 2010 | % Growth |
| Dempster Street   |   |      |          |
| - near Greenwood  | 3360  | 4120 | 23%      |
| Greenwood Avenue  |   |      |          |
| - near Dempster   | 2030  | 2660 | 24%      |
| - near Touhy      | 1370  | 1650 | 20%      |
| Oakton Street     |   |      |          |
| - near Busse      | 2260  | 3400 | 33%      |
| - near Greenwood  | 2130  | 2810 | 24%      |
| Touhy Avenue      |   |      |          |
| - near Talcott    | 2930  | 3590 | 18%      |
| - near Prospect   | 2090  | 2770 | 24%      |
| Devon Avenue      |   |      |          |
| - near Dee        | 1370  | 1890 | 28%      |
| Northwest Highway |   |      |          |
| - near Dee        | 1760  | 2060 | 14%      |
| - near Canfield   | 2050  | 2450 | 16%      |
| Busse Highway     |   |      |          |
| - near Dee        | 1120  | 1650 | 32%      |
| Talcott           |   |      |          |
| - near Greenwood  | 1250  | 1730 | 27%      |

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<sup>2</sup> The model results reflect the key traffic planning considerations such as the connection of Busse to Summit.

## V. STREET SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

### Street System Hierarchy

The classification of City streets by functional capabilities is intended as a goal toward which upgrading existing streets and planning future links can be directed. Criteria include items such as continuity, route spacing, right-of-way, street widths, speed limits, access availability, and pedestrian facilities. Figure 1/presents the recommended functional classification map.

The strong system of arterial routes minimizes the need to establish several east-west collectors. Routes such as Dempster, Oakton, Touhy, and Devon effectively accommodate both the regional and local demands. Sibley, Belle Plaine, and Granville were noted in that they tend to "collect" neighborhood traffic more so than their adjoining streets. In addition, Sibley attracts traffic destined to Uptown and the Touhy corridor via Howard Street to the east.

Unfortunately, Park Ridge does not have a good system of arterial north-south routes. In fact, there is not a single continuous north-south arterial route within the City limits.

Thus, the establishment of several collector routes are needed to accommodate the north-south travel demand and to avoid major widening and other improvements. One particular long range consideration would be a railroad crossing and improvements for Western to enhance flexibility of the north-south corridors. Its importance is already noted via traffic signal control at Touhy. TMODEL suggests that Western may ultimately accommodate about 500 peak hour trips near the railroad, which are representative of a collector status route.

These future trips would otherwise be oriented along Greenwood, resulting in the need to widen Greenwood south of the railroad. This would change the character of Greenwood substantially.

Flexibility in the Uptown area can be maximized by connecting Busse with Summit. This link will: 1.) attract 300 to 400 trips from the over capacity Touhy/Prospect/Northwest Highway intersection, 2.) improve access to the railroad station, 3.) promote use of four lane Busse rather than the two lane Northwest Highway and 4.) increase traffic circulation opportunities for Uptown patrons, visitors, and employees.

South of the railroad, the Prospect collector corridor should shift to Courtland. Courtland provides more convenient access to the South Park area which is emphasized by the signal at Devon and Talcott. Conversely, Prospect's character changes to a local street as it becomes a more narrow and less travelled street with STOP control at both Talcott and Devon.

#### Recommended Improvement Program

Table 2 summarizes the recommended roadway improvement program and provides a priority listing and cost estimates based upon the parameters described. Two time periods were chosen. Short range improvements should generally be considered for implementation within the next five years. The long range improvements correspond to the Year 2010 planning horizon.

The roadway improvement program was developed to take the best advantage of the established street network. As can be seen from Table 2, the list of recommendations is quite extensive, many of which are considered very important. The following are the five key improvements during the short range planning horizon. They should be considered as a "package" in order to maximize efficient

and safe traffic flow throughout Park Ridge.

1. The extension of Summit to Busse will improve operations at the Touhy/Northwest Highway/Prospect intersection without the need for substantial roadway modifications.
2. In conjunction with the first recommendation, traffic signal installations/modifications should be provided at the Summit/Prospect, Busse/Touhy/Meacham, and Prospect/Touhy/Northwest Highway intersections.
3. Oakton should be widened to provide five lanes from I-294 to Delphia and the effected traffic signals should be modified as necessary.
4. Operations should be modified at the Devon/Talcott/Courtland intersection including traffic signal phasing and lane striping.
5. The Dempster/Potter intersection should be improved to include dual eastbound left turn lanes and will also require widening of Potter to four through lanes north of Dempster. This improvement will better facilitate the traffic demand oriented along the Golf Road corridor which, in turn, will improve operations along the Dempster corridor.

Two improvements are considered key in the long range planning horizon. These include:

1. The resolution of operations along the Touhy corridor including replacement of the railroad structure.

2. Additional north-south capacity should be provided to serve Park Ridge residents. One possibility would secure Western as a continuous north-south collector route throughout Park Ridge, including a new railroad crossing. If this becomes unfeasible, extensive roadway improvements will be required on the parallel north-south routes. In particular, the residential "collector" character of Greenwood will be changed to a four lane arterial route south of Oakton.

TABLE 2  
ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM  
City of Park Ridge

| <u>Corridor/Location</u> | <u>Improvement</u>   | <u>Priority<sup>(1)</sup> and Costs<sup>(2)</sup></u> |   |
|--------------------------|--|---|---|
|                          |  | <u>Short Range</u><br><u>1991-1995</u>                | <u>Long Range</u><br><u>Beyond 1995</u> |
| Potter Road              | • Widen for 5 lanes Dempster to Ballard (NOT IN PR.)   | **** \$ 700K  |   |
| Dempster Street          | • Widen I-294 to Potter Street for 5 lanes (1/2 IN PR)<br><small>STOPS SHORT OF POTTER</small>     | **** \$ 250K  |   |
| 2. Dempster at Potter    | • Provide dual eastbound left turn lanes and modify traffic signals (1/2 IN PR)                    | **** \$ 300K  |   |
|                          | • Provide 3 through lanes on Dempster and modify traffic signals (1/2 IN PR)                       |   | ** \$ 500K                              |
| 3. Dempster at Dee       | • Widen to two-way traffic Dempster to Ballard and modify traffic signals at Dempster (NOT IN PR)* |   | *** \$ 400K                             |
| 4. Dempster at Luther    | • Relocate hospital access to Hamlin   |   | *** \$ 50K                              |
|                          | • Provide traffic signals and turn lanes   |   | *** \$ 250K                             |
| Western Avenue           | • Extend Weeg Way to Manor   | ** \$ 150K  | ****                                    |
|                          | • Extend 3 lanes across C&NW   | *   | **** \$ 500K <sup>(4)</sup>             |
|                          | • Traffic signals at Dempster, Oakton, Northwest Highway, Busse, and Talcott                       | *   | **** \$ 500K                            |
|                          | • Intersection widening on Western approaches at signalized intersections for left turn lanes      | *   | **** \$ 100K                            |
|                          | • Provide connection to Dee near Peterson  | *   | *** \$ 200K                             |
| 5. Dempster at Greenwood | • Provide dual eastbound left turn lanes and modify traffic signals (INTO ALLEYS)                  |   | * \$ 300K                               |
| Oakton Avenue            | • Widen I-294 through Delphia for 5 lanes and modify traffic signals                               | **** \$1,350K   | <small>26% of<br/>2000</small>          |
|                          | • Provide eastbound right turn lane at Busse   | **** \$ 100K  |   |
| 11. Oakton at Prospect   | • Modify traffic signals — 1/2 IN  | **** \$ 100k  |   |
|                          | • Widen south approach for 3 lanes   | **** \$ 20K   |   |

2800

| <u>Corridor/Location</u>           | <u>Improvement</u>   | <u>Priority<sup>(1)</sup> and Costs<sup>(2)</sup></u>                               |  |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--|
|                                    |  | <u>Short Range<br/>1991-1995</u>  | <u>Long Range<br/>Beyond 1995</u>          |
| 12. Oakton at Milwaukee            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide right turn lanes on Oakton approaches</li> <li>• Provide dual left turn lanes on Milwaukee approaches</li> <li>• Modify traffic signals</li> </ul>  |   | *** \$ 100K<br>*** \$ 150K<br>*** \$ 100K  |
| Touhy Avenue                       | 2014=28<br>1013=13<br>71<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider restriping between Dee and Cumberland for 3 lanes</li> <li>• Modify traffic signals at Talcott, Western, Greenwood, Cumberland, and Washington</li> <li>• Restripe east of Washington for 3 lanes</li> <li>• Widen RR structure for 5 lanes</li> <li>• Widen Dee to Cumberland for 5 lanes</li> <li>• Restripe Prospect to Washington for 5 lanes</li> </ul> | (IN NILES)<br>**** \$ 20K<br>*** \$ 500K <sup>(3)</sup><br>*** \$ 10K<br>**** \$ 5K | **** \$9,500K<br>** \$ 750K <sup>(3)</sup> |
| 15. Touhy at Western               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stripe left turn lanes on Western approaches</li> </ul>   | **** \$ 5K  |  |
| 16. Touhy at Greenwood             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widen north approach for 3 lanes</li> </ul>   | **** \$ 20K   |  |
| Summit Avenue                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend 3 lanes to Busse from Prospect</li> <li>• Modify traffic signals at Touhy/Busse/Meacham</li> </ul>   | **** \$ 500K<br>**** \$ 150K  |  |
| 19. Touhy at Prospect at Northwest | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend eastbound right turn lane on Touhy</li> <li>• Modify north approach on Prospect for 3 lanes</li> <li>• Provide left turn arrows on Northwest Highway approaches</li> <li>• Widen Northwest Highway approaches for 5 lanes</li> </ul>   | *** \$ 20K<br>*** \$ 50K  | *** \$ 50K<br>* \$ 600K                    |
| 20. Touhy at Washington            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widen north and south approaches for 3 lanes</li> </ul>   | *** \$ 50K  |  |
| 23. Devon at Western               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide traffic signals</li> <li>• Provide left turn lanes on all approaches</li> </ul>   |   | *** \$ 100K<br>*** \$ 120K                 |
| 24. Devon at Greenwood             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide traffic signals</li> <li>• Stripe left turn lane on north approach and modify south approach to provide left turn lane</li> <li>• Provide left turn lanes on Devon approaches</li> </ul>  | *** \$ 10K  | *** \$ 100K<br>*** \$ 50K                  |

Accum S-T 4310

14,420

| <u>Corridor/Location</u>             | <u>Improvement</u>  | <u>Priority<sup>(1)</sup> and Costs<sup>(2)</sup></u>                 |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|
|                                      |   | <u>Short Range</u><br><u>1991-1995</u>                                | <u>Long Range</u><br><u>Beyond 1995</u> |
| 25. Devon at Courtland<br>at Talcott | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide left turn lanes on Devon approaches</li> <li>• Restripe north approach on Courtland for 3 lanes</li> <li>• Restripe Talcott approaches for 3 lanes</li> <li>• Modify traffic signal phasing from split-phase to left turn responsive on Talcott approaches</li> <li>• Stripe eastbound right turn lane on Devon</li> </ul> | **** \$ 150K<br>**** \$ 5K<br>**** \$ 5K<br>**** \$ 10K<br>**** \$ 5K |   |
| 26. Devon at Canfield                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modify traffic signals (1/2 IN)</li> <li>• Restripe all approaches for separate left turn lanes</li> <li>• Widen Devon approaches for 5 lanes</li> </ul>   | *** \$ 100K<br>*** \$ 10K<br>*  | *** \$ 100K                             |
| Talcott Road ✓                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widen Oakton to Western for 3 to 5 lanes and modify traffic signals</li> </ul>   | **** \$ 2300K <sup>(3)</sup> - 10%<br>of all costs                    |   |
| Talcott at Greenwood                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide left turn lanes on Talcott approaches</li> <li>• Modify traffic signals</li> <li>• Stripe left turn lanes on Greenwood approaches</li> </ul>   | **** \$ 5K  | *** \$ 100K<br>*** \$ 50K               |
| Talcott at Cumberland                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide left turn lanes on Talcott approaches</li> <li>• Modify traffic signals</li> <li>• Stripe left turn lanes on Cumberland approaches</li> </ul>  | **** \$ 5K  | *** \$ 100K<br>*** \$ 50K               |
| Dee Road                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widen at Sibley, Touhy and Talcott for left turn lanes and modify traffic signals</li> </ul>   |   | * \$ 50K                                |
| Greenwood Avenue                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widen to provide 2 standard drive lanes Elm to Touhy</li> <li>• Widen to provide center turn lane Oakton to Northwest Highway</li> </ul>   | * \$ 200K   | * \$ 200K                               |
| 34. Cumberland at Touhy              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrade traffic signals</li> </ul>   |   | **** \$ 120K                            |
| 35. Cumberland at Devon              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modify traffic signals</li> <li>• Widen Cumberland approaches for 5 lanes</li> </ul>   | ** \$ 100K<br>** \$ 100K  |   |

Accum S-T 7305

15,190

| <u>Corridor/Location</u>  | <u>Improvement</u>   | <u>Priority<sup>(1)</sup> and Costs<sup>(2)</sup></u> |                                   |
|---------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------------|
|                           |  | <u>Short Range<br/>1991-1995</u>                      | <u>Long Range<br/>Beyond 1995</u> |
| 36. Cumberland at Higgins | • Provide dual northbound and westbound left lanes and modify traffic signals $(\frac{1}{2} IN)$ |   | ** \$ 500K                        |
| Canfield                  | • Provide left turn lanes at Higgins and Talcott and modify traffic signals $(\frac{1}{2} IN)$   |   | ** \$ 250K                        |
| 47. Prospect at Courtland | • Provide traffic signal control including interconnect and railroad crossing preemption         | **** \$ 175K  |                                   |
|                           | • Operate Vine approach one-way west from Park Place   | **** \$ 5K  |                                   |
| 48. Prospect at Summit    | • Provide traffic signal control including interconnect and railroad crossing preemption         | **** \$ 125K  |                                   |

\$ 7,610,000

13,942,000

23,550,000

NOTES:

- (1) \*\*\*\* and \*\*\* = Very Important  
\*\* and \* = Important
- (2) Thousands of 1990 dollars; doesn't include land acquisition
- (3) Proposed/planned by IDOT, Cook County, others
- (4) Assumes at-grade crossing

| <u>Priority<sup>(1)</sup> and Costs<sup>(2)</sup></u> |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| <u>Short Range</u>                                    | <u>Long Range</u> |

## VI. EXISTING PARKING CONDITIONS

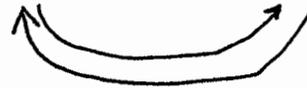
### Context

"Vision 2000" identified six specific actions affecting public parking needs in the community:

- Explore options to address parking problems throughout the community
- Consider appropriateness of multi-level parking
- Develop a community policy regarding expansion of parking
- Build beautified underground parking at a central location, i.e., the Library Lot
- Improve parking at the Cumberland L Station
- Better manage available parking resources

As a first step towards achieving several of these goals, the City included a parking study for two business districts with known (or at least perceived) parking problems Uptown (CBD) and South Park (SPBD).

The area of Uptown observed for this study included an area two to three blocks wide that runs parallel to the railroad tracks. The South Park study area may be most easily described by the fact that it includes all properties fronting on Talcott Road and Devon Avenue, from Cumberland on the east to Vine on the west.



### Uptown District

The total actual parking capacity in the Uptown study area is 3,771 spaces. A system of parking operates at optimum efficiency when occupancy is at 85% to 90%. The existing "effective" supply of parking spaces in Uptown totals 3,270 spaces.

Two field studies of parking occupancy were conducted in December, 1989, to encompass day/evening parking needs on a weekday as well as daytime demand on a Saturday during the peak shopping season.

There was an extremely wide range of occupancy observed across the study area in each of the time periods. Blocks with substantial parking availability were located just one block away from each of the high occupancy blocks. This is indicative of localized demand concentrations and a resistance to walking even relatively short distances.

The Park Ridge Department of Community Preservation and Development performed parking occupancy surveys in Uptown for approximately one week each in the months of August and December for the past several years.

The highest recorded occupancies were in the 80th percentiles and recorded Thursday and Friday in August of 1986, followed closely by the same days in August of 1989. The highest December occupancies were in the mid 70's, while the mean of all time periods is around 70%. The Saturday recordings, taken only in 1986 were in the mid-sixties. The December, 1989 recordings by WALKER were well below the historical occupancies at 60.8% on Thursday and 50% on Saturday.

#### South Park Area

The actual capacity of the area totals 897 spaces. The effective supply is 771 spaces.

Similar studies over the same time periods were conducted in South Park. Some of the on-street block faces had occupancies of 100% or greater, but off-street occupancy was much lower, reducing overall occupancy. It is interesting to note that the on-street parking was better utilized in the evening, with more block faces

achieving 90% or better occupancy than in the daytime.

On Saturday, December 2, 1989, the overall percentage of occupied spaces peaked at 57.5% at about noon. Although the overall occupancy of parking is only 6% higher than on the Thursday, the utilization and turnover of street spaces was much higher, compensated for by lower use of off-street parking. This is likely due to the lower presence of employees in spaces reserved for their use.

### Summary

Based on both the historical data and that collected in December 1989, we conclude there is an adequate supply of parking in Uptown and South Park. Even in the most heavily utilized time periods, the demand does not reach the effective supply. However, it is clear that the spaces are not as conveniently located as desired. The perceived shortage of spaces is compounded by the restriction of some spaces to certain users. The situation is also aggravated by the fact that the most convenient spaces are full most of the time.

It is our opinion that parking problems in the South Park area are extremely localized, and limited to employee abuse of two hour time limits on a few block faces. These problems do not justify major changes in policy and can be minimized by improved enforcement.

## VII. PARKING EVALUATION

### Parking Management Tactics

It is our recommendation that the City of Park Ridge's system be structured as follows:

- two hour free parking within a recommended zone;
- a buffer zone of long-term on-street meters immediately outside the two hour zone;
- free, unrestricted parking on streets outside the buffer zone;
- long-term parking for employees within the two hour free parking zone should be at the rate of \$100 for six months, with 5-hour meters increased to \$0.10 per hour and 12-hour meters increased to \$0.25 per three hours, and;
- commuter permits in the lots closest to the train station should be at \$100 for six months for Park Ridge residents and \$150 for six months for non-residents.

Employees and some business owners sometimes park for long periods of time in the free two hour spaces. They may skirt enforcement by moving the vehicles every two hours. There is also meter "shaving" in that those who stay all day may only pay the fees for 5 or 6 hours though they fully intend to stay longer. A more effective enforcement technique to discourage long-term parking in the short-term spaces would be to implement time limits within the recommended two hour parking zone.

Finally, it is suggested that the zoning ordinance be amended to provide appropriate one-size-fits-all dimensions for the mix of vehicles present in Park Ridge.

### Library Lot Structure

Eleven Alternatives of various sizes and shapes were evaluated. The most cost effective scheme is a two-bay, two-level flat floor structure oriented east-west along Summit Street. In the smaller version, there would be 191 spaces in the structure and up to 71 spaces in the remaining surface lots (depending upon the design of the expansion of the library). A maximum of 80 spaces would be added for a project cost of \$1,250,000. A longer version would add up to 200 spaces (depending again on the Library expansion) at a project cost of \$1,935,000.

With parking pricing as existing, and financing at 8% for 20 years, the smaller structure would require a subsidy of \$100,000 to \$150,000 each year, while the larger structure would require \$200,000 to \$250,000 of annual subsidy.

It is important to remember that there does not exist a large deficit of parking in Uptown. There is a localized shortage of spaces. This is not to say that there is not some negative impact on the land uses in the immediate area of the localized shortages. However, every parking system has an "elasticity" of demand that is affected by a number of factors such as price, intensity of demand, and convenience. Employee parking is much more elastic than customer parking, but a significant increase in parking fees could affect the shopper's decision as to whether to patronize downtown Park Ridge. If parking fees for a structure are high enough to make the facility self-supporting, it is likely that the demand for parking in the current areas of localized shortages will reduce, and that the structure will not be filled. A substantial subsidy from other funds will be required to provide free parking to the short-term parker and low cost parking for employees.

The analysis of alternative structure schemes is designed to help the City of Park Ridge quantify the amount of subsidy that would be required and weigh this against the impact of the current localized shortage of spaces. Only the community can

determine if the potential relief is worth the subsidy necessary to insure that a parking structure is a positive development for the community. Another factor to remember is that parking alone does not a successful Uptown make. There are many other issues affecting the erosion of the American downtown and those communities that have been successful in bucking that trend have taken a multi-disciplined approach, of which parking structures are but one facet.

## **APPENDIX**

**Not provided**

- 1) Weekday Hourly Parking Occupancy  
by M-F and Saturday**
- 2) Weekday Parking Turnover**
- 3) Community Attitude Survey (through the Spokesman)**