



# **Downtown Roswell Parking Assessment**

**Summary Report  
April 2021**

## Preface and Acknowledgements

The Mayor and Council of the City of Roswell, in Resolution 2020-03-10, requested that the Roswell Downtown Development Authority (DDA) conduct a parking study for Roswell's central business district. A full copy of Resolution 2020-03-10 is included in the Appendix of this document.

The study was funded by the DDA in the interests of advancing economic growth in the downtown area, and the DDA directly led the study, advertised the study to consultants and interviewed them, and worked with the selected consultant to advance the study's message and recommendations. The DDA also coordinated the participation of multiple stakeholders in downtown's business, real estate, and economic development communities and oversaw the coordination of City of Roswell staff with the consultant team. The input and perspective provided by these participants in the study was invaluable and these individuals and organizations are acknowledged here.

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Source: City of Roswell

# CONTENTS

1	<b>Introduction</b>	2
2	<b>Gathering Data</b>	6
3	<b>The Study Area</b>	10
4	<b>Parking Inventory</b>	18
5	<b>Utilization and Demand</b>	32
6	<b>Recommendations</b>	54
	Appendices	65



# 1 INTRODUCTION

## WHY PERFORM THIS STUDY?

Urban centers across the country are experiencing rapid changes, whether due to economy and the boom of various industries, the decline of retail, shifting demographic patterns, or in technology and the way people move. Roswell's downtown is no exception to this. Its Canton Street core, a traditional main street environment that has evolved over time from retail and business establishments to a multi-use district with a regional draw, especially for high-quality food and beverage destinations, is continuing to evolve with new developments and new transportation needs. However, it has maintained its strong regional presence as a lively destination for local and distant visitors, and this is only expected to continue.

This puts Roswell's downtown, despite a small size relative to major employment and business districts of the Atlanta region, in a class of 'big city' complexity when it comes to parking and transportation. However, Roswell's approaches to managing parking have not comprehensively addressed these challenges and sought to keep up. That is the principal purpose of

this study: to find ways to modernize and streamline Roswell's approach to parking in its downtown so that this district can continue to grow and evolve as a successful and vibrant destination with thriving businesses and a continued attraction throughout metropolitan Atlanta and beyond.

The purpose of this parking assessment is first and foremost to understand the current parking challenges in the overall network: where they are located, when they are occurring, and the factors contributing to the challenges. Through comprehensive data and analysis, this assessment identifies specific opportunities and solutions for Roswell to consider for responding to current parking challenges, as well as preparing for those which may accompany Roswell's ongoing evolution.

This report documents a study to objectively represent and analyze the parking conditions in Downtown Roswell and to develop recommendations and strategies for how to overcome challenges.



Stantec worked closely with the Roswell Downtown Development Authority (DDA) throughout this assessment. DDA staff provided oversight and reviews throughout the entirety of the plan process and during the finalization of its findings and strategy development, and helped the Stantec team to coordinate a stakeholder and community input process, to vet strategic approaches, and to develop the study's themes and message.

## 1.1 DOWNTOWN PARKING ASSESSMENT GOALS

As Roswell considers how recent and anticipated changes will shape the offerings and overall experience of its City for the long-term, this evaluation of the parking system and the custom-tailored parking strategy it has helped to map out is a key step to making parking easier for Downtown's residents, business owners, and many visitors.

This study was structured around four primary goals:

### **Understand the system**

This study set out first and foremost to document the current parking system in downtown Roswell, correctly classify how parking is used, and strengthen the base of knowledge from which decisions are being made. The study team understood at the beginning that Downtown's parking was a mix of publicly-owned spaces, privately owned spaces that are widely publicly available, and privately owned spaces more restricted to specific users, customers, and visitors. However, the study helped to reveal even greater levels of complexity in downtown's parking: that some parking is only available on a public basis at limited times, that prices on parking spaces that have them are set at numerous different rates, and that a significant portion of private, restricted parking is shared among multiple uses, though this is not always immediately apparent to customers not already familiar with downtown.

### **Understand usage patterns and demand**

A key objective of this study was to collect data on parking utilization to understand how and where parking is being used. The study team did this by counting actual parked vehicles in parking spaces at different times of the day and week. It is important in parking studies to do this, and to treat utilization (occupied parking spaces) as distinct from demand (the expected amount of parking use the homes, businesses, and other establishments of an area would generate). They are not interchangeable. Demand is a complex function of how much economic function and area has and the ways that its different land uses (such as residences, office space, restaurants, retail space, and lodging) might jointly meet their transportation needs relative to parking. Utilization is simply the amount of an area's parking supply in use at a given moment. Utilization can also include factors such as how long parked vehicles stay, what types of parking is in use by what users, and other complex indicators, but comparing it to expected parking demand—and not equating the two—is an important way to better understand parking dynamics.

### **Promote availability**

For most parking users, the first concern with parking is that it be available. To be sure, other factors such as convenience (proximity to a desired destination), condition, security, and price also matter, but the plain lack of available (or predictably available) parking is typically what deters or frustrates the average parking user more than anything else. To this end, it is a key objective of this parking study to explore paths to making more parking available.

### **Find the best paths to combining availability, predictability, and user-friendliness**

Overall, this study is intended to offer the Downtown Development Authority and the City of Roswell a strategic approach to improving the downtown parking

experience. This means making more parking available to Downtown's users when and where they would like to have it. However, it also means that this availability can be relied on, and in a way that is not confusing to users. Visit Roswell, the City's economic development agency, has analyzed data from mobile phones and credit card transactions to estimate that two-thirds of visitors to Roswell's downtown are not residents of the City. While some of these visitors are sure to be repeat visitors who may have learned about specific parking options in downtown, many are likely not frequent visitors, and

the complexity of downtown's parking system might be confusing—especially when considering the recent development of new attraction districts in the northern metro Atlanta area such as Avalon and downtown Alpharetta, both of which have featured larger supplies of centralized parking.

It is a major objective of the parking study to blend these together, not only to ensure more availability, but to work toward a system that is more reliable, predictable, and easy to navigate.

## THE FOUR MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THIS PARKING ASSESSMENT

### UNDERSTAND THE SYSTEM

Use a data-driven approach to understand where parking challenges exist (in terms of location and access) in relation to known parking demand, and what factors contribute to parking impacts

### UNDERSTAND PARKING USE AND DEMAND

Roswell's existing parking assets can be more efficiently utilized to meet the needs of various users through an improved parking management approach, more shared opportunities, and other creative solutions

### PROMOTE AVAILABILITY

Do what can be done in the short term to make more parking available to a broad range of users, easing concerns over shortage of supply and difficulty of use

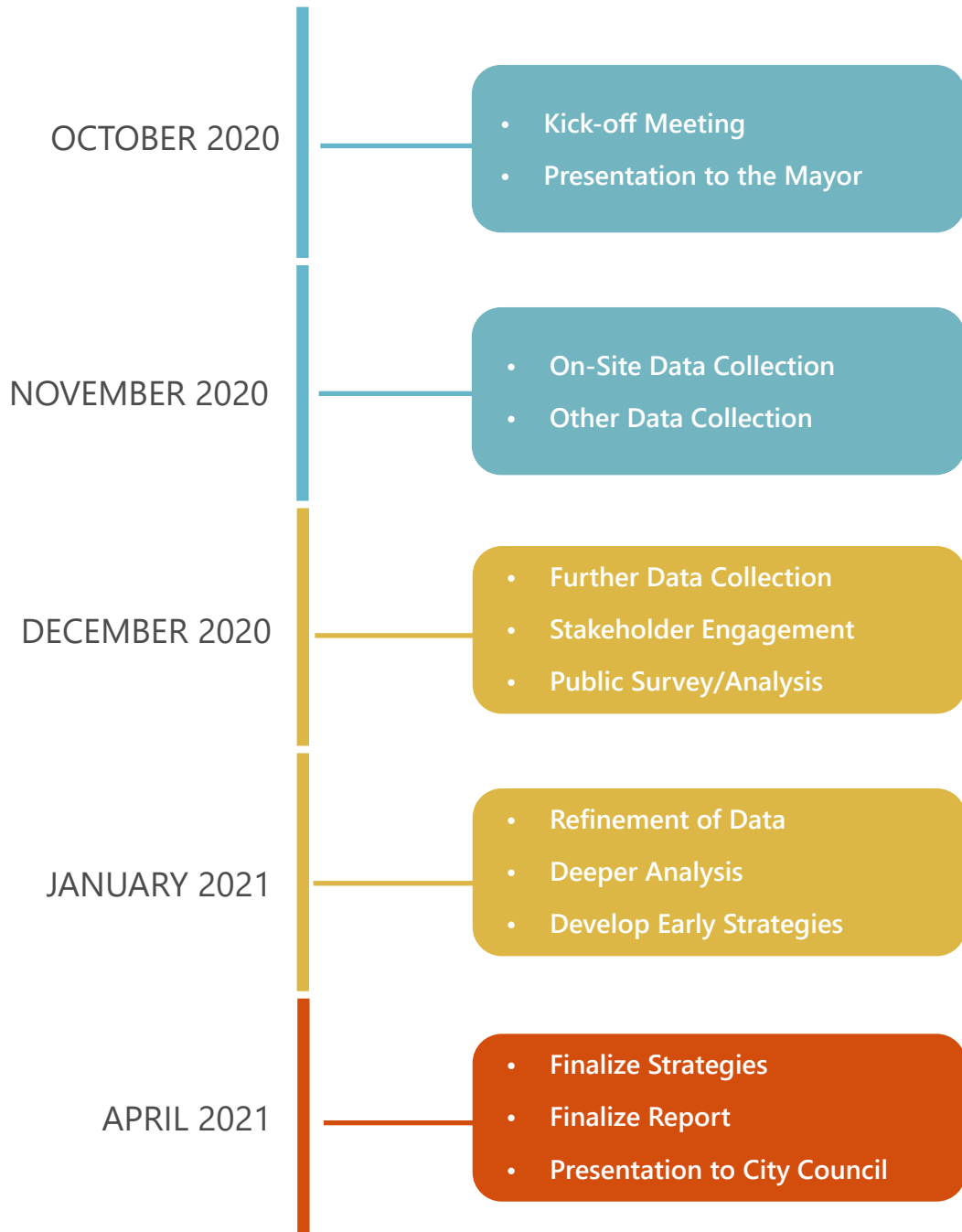
### FIND THE BEST PATHS TO COMBINING AVAILABILITY, PREDICTABILITY, AND USER-FRIENDLINESS

Identify the tools, strategies, and the potential partnerships that the City of Roswell can collaboratively pursue to ensure Downtown's parking is thoughtfully managed

## 1.2 PROJECT TIMELINE

The timeline shown here identifies the major steps in this assessment study. Although the study began in October, the study team worked closely with a variety of stakeholders and partners to understand downtown Roswell's complex and nuanced parking system, and

to adjust for the unforeseen impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic by comparing additional data sources and calibrating parking occupancy data to match more realistic 'normal' conditions.





# 2

## GATHERING DATA

### COMBINING DATA AND USER PERSPECTIVE FOR A COMPREHENSIVE UNDERSTANDING

The process of gathering the data necessary to support the process of this parking assessment is multi-pronged. Many factors contributed to a comprehensive

understanding of parking in Roswell. The intention of data collected was to answer key questions specific to the study area.



#### WHAT THE DATA TELLS US

- Where parking is located and how it is accessed
- How parking is managed or operated
- Who is truly able to use parking in the overall network
- When parking is being used and what factors influence variations in demand

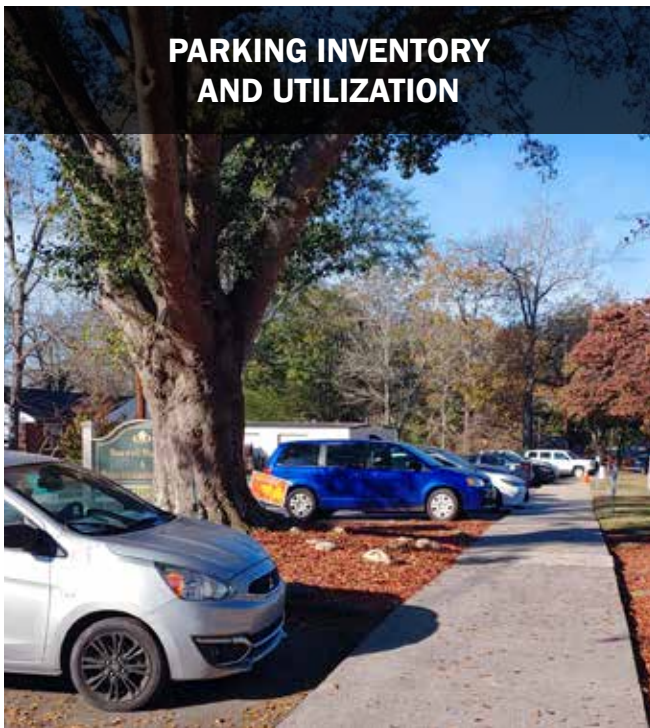
#### 2.1 DATA SOURCES

Data was mined from many sources to paint an accurate representation of Downtown’s overall parking network and the way it functions:

- Numerical data
- Maps/charts
- Policies and regulations
- Local knowledge
- Information from previous studies
- Photos

The following vignettes in this section identify and detail the various resources the study team utilized to support this parking assessment and achieve its overall goals.





## PARKING INVENTORY AND UTILIZATION

The most important step in a parking assessment is to identify current conditions through in-person data gathering. In November 2020 the team visited the defined study area to capture detailed data for the following:

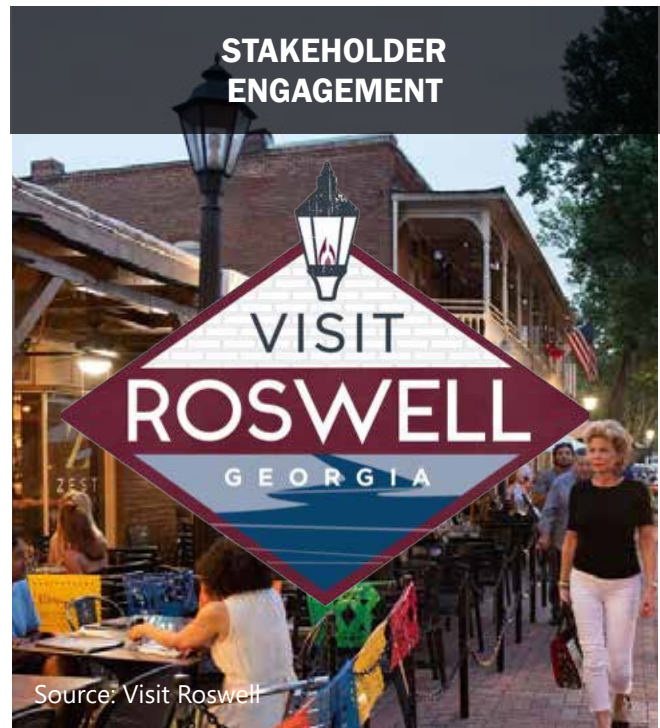
### Parking Inventory

- Identifying all existing parking spaces by location
- Identify how every parking is regulated
- Identify conditions relating to the access of parking inventory, including availability/ location/visibility of parking signage and wayfinding, condition of pedestrian infrastructure, etc.

### Parking Utilization

- Using a methodical approach and defined walking route, identify how many spaces are occupied in a facility (on- or off-street) during 3 defined periods on a typical weekday and 1 defined period on a typical weekend day.

The process and findings relating to this data step are outlined in greater detail later in the report.



## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The parking assessment team held one-on-one and group interviews with eight stakeholder entities, including local business owners, developers, City representatives, Roswell Inc., Visit Roswell, and other parties heavily invested in Roswell and its future.

These discussions provided an important platform for different voices to share their concerns about parking in Downtown Roswell in an objective manner.

The local knowledge and resources shared through these discussions were a crucial component in framing and identifying potential solutions so they are broadly embraced and supported when transforming into real actions.



Between December 7 and 21, 2020, the team conducted an online public survey to understand the following:

- How and when people visit Roswell
- Where people visit and for how long
- What barriers influence the decision to visit downtown
- Where people get parking information
- The perception of availability
- Preferences of potential solutions for improving parking availability downtown

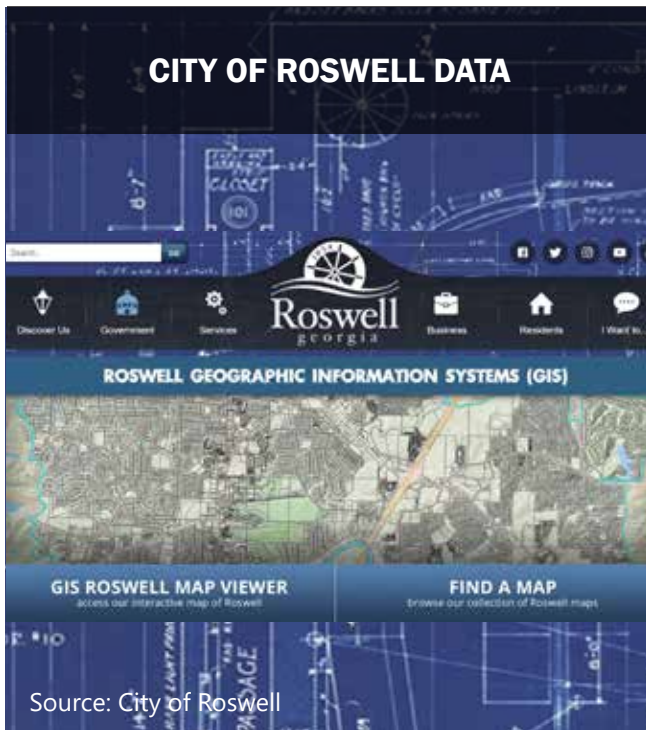
Paper copies advertising the flyer were posted at the entrances of businesses and restaurants in the study area, and digitally shared through the DDA’s website and on various community social media outlets. Survey takers could take the survey through a direct link online or through scanning a QR code on the flyer.

Overall, the survey achieved 498 responses, a relatively high turnout for a short period and with mostly local business and word-of-mouth distribution. Responses to the survey are summarized in the appendix to this report.

Understanding the prominence of self-park/valet opportunities within the study area, the team held a meeting with 12 Oaks Services, LLC who provides these services to downtown Roswell.

The team benefited from tapping into 12 Oaks’ long-term knowledge about the evolution of Downtown Roswell and how its parking needs have also shifted throughout the years.

12 Oaks provided the team with data for a general understanding of demand at the parking facilities that they manage, as well as providing local insight into what factors have likely caused fluctuation in recent demand.



The team coordinated with several departments with the City to secure a wide range of data to support the parking assessment, such as:

- GIS files
- Current parking-related ordinances and policies
- Usage of the downtown parking kiosks
- Financial information relating to the parking kiosks

In addition, the team consulted previous plans and studies, including:

- The City of Roswell 2035 Comprehensive Plan (currently being updated)
- Roswell Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2019)
- Roswell Historic District Master Plan (2019)
- Roswell Transportation Master Plan (2019)
- Roswell Retail Market Analysis (2018)
- Roswell Strategic Development Economic Plan (2017)
- Historic District Parking Analysis (2012)



NextSite is a commercial development marketing firm that specializes in target market analysis. With the support of Roswell, Inc, the team was able to secure data on customer journey analytics in Roswell (captured using cell phone data), including:

- Number of visitors to downtown Roswell (annually, monthly, or on particular days)
- Number of visits per hour on identified days
- Average duration of stay
- General origin prior to visiting Roswell and general destination once leaving Roswell
- Number of visitors by zip code





# 3 CURRENT CONDITIONS

## DOWNTOWN ROSWELL AND THE CANTON STREET CORRIDOR

To effectively measure parking usage across the Downtown, the team defined a study area that emphasizes the vital commercial corridor area including Canton Street and Alpharetta Street, between Woodstock Street (to the north) and Hill Street (to the south). This area was identified as the center of highest parking demand for dining and retail activity, as well as for its proximity to other key destinations, including City Hall, Roswell Cultural Arts Center, Roswell Library, and the Historic Mill Village.

### 3.1 LAND USE

A long and complex list of zoned land uses are identified within the City's Unified Development Code (UDC). For the purposes of this parking assessment, a simplified land use map has been created to help visualize more generally where similar categories are located. These have been defined as:

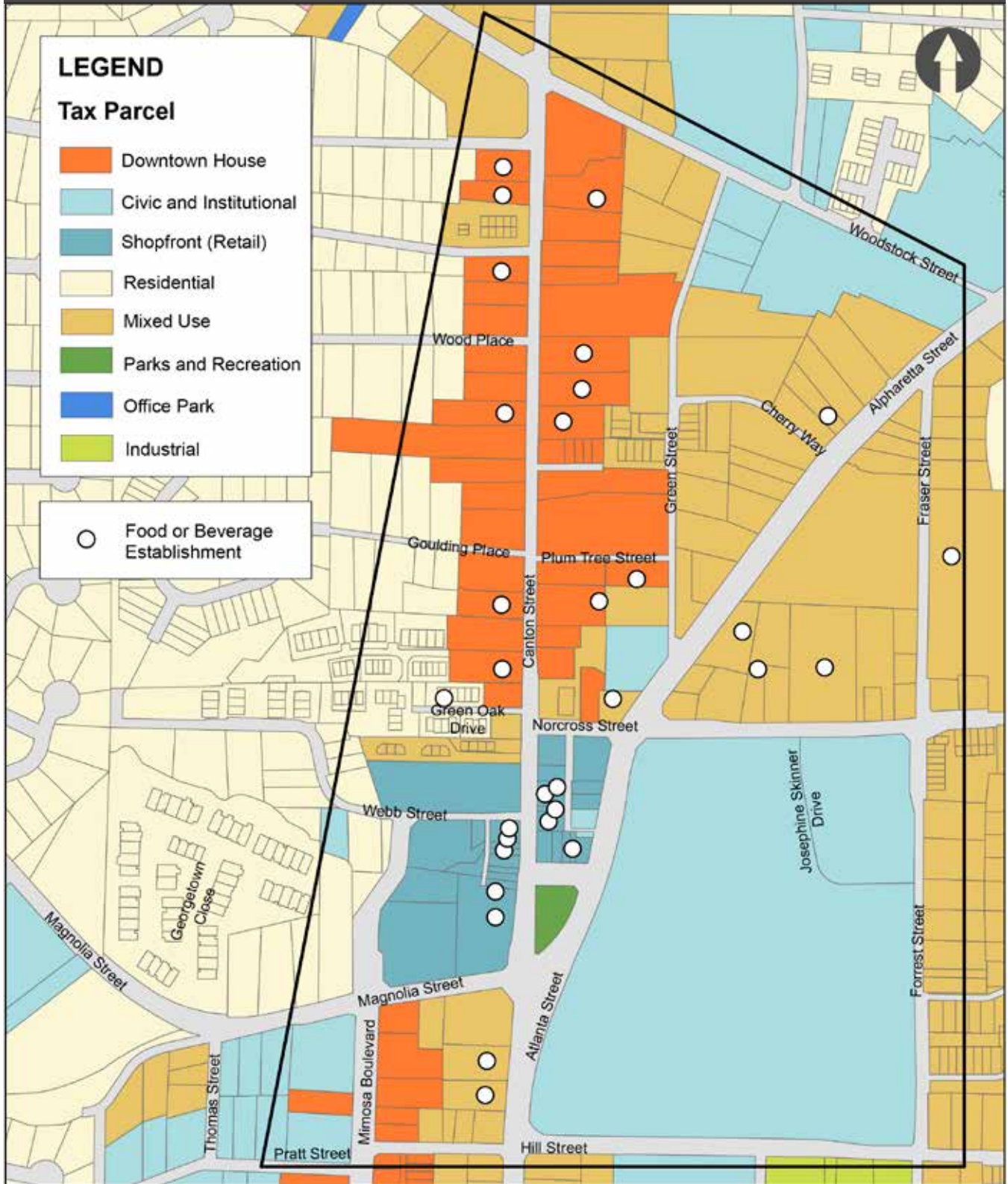
- Downtown House (the majority of Canton Street properties north of Norcross Street,

recognizing the conversion of formerly residential structures to support business uses)

- Civic and Institutional (includes both government and community/church uses)
- Shopfront (the small portion of downtown businesses along lower Canton Street with historic commercial building fabric)
- Residential (the primarily single-family and townhouse development west of the Canton Street corridor)
- Mixed Use
- Parks and Recreation (Heart of Roswell Park)
- Industrial (at the far southeast end of the study area along Hill Street; parking from these uses was largely not included in the study)

Although the majority of land fronting Canton Street between Woodstock Street and Norcross Street is zoned as 'Downtown House', most properties have been converted to support other uses other than residential, particularly for retail and dining. To demonstrate how land uses actually look on the

**FIGURE 1 Major Study Area Land Uses**





ground, the land use map on the following page identifies parcels currently hosting a food or beverage establishment (as an example) which are zoned as 'downtown house' or 'shopfront'.

The density of restaurants, bars, and cafes along the corridor plays a significant factor in the demand of parking at specific times during the day and evening. For new or less frequent visitors, perceptions of parking problems at these times contribute to a perception of parking problems all of the time. Business owners

are directly impacted by parking problems when, at peak periods of their establishment, nearby parking is perceived of as limited or unavailable to potential patrons.

It is important to note that the City does not have a comprehensive inventory of existing businesses, and as such the study team performed manual adjustments to capture the true land uses on each property for later analysis purposes.

**TABLE 1 UDC Parking Requirements and Comparison to Observed Rates**

Roswell UDC Category	Roswell Parking Requirement	Equivalent ITE Category	ITE Observed Parking Use Rate (based on 5th edition)	Comparison to ITE's Observed Use Rates
Residential Multi-family 3+ bedrooms	2.5 per unit + 0.2 per unit for guests	Multi-family Low-rise	1.21 spaces per unit	<b>107% higher</b>
Place of worship	1 per 4 seats in room with greatest seating capacity or 1 per 40 sq. ft in largest assembly area without fixed seating	Church	.88 per 4 seats	<b>12% higher</b>
Restaurant (downtown)	1 per 300 sq. ft G.F.A.	High-turnover Sit-Down Restaurant (Saturday)	1.95 per 300 sq. ft G.F.A.	<b>49% lower</b>
Non-residential (downtown), except for restaurants	1 per 500 sq. ft G.F.A.	Specialty Retail	2.1 per 500 sq. ft G.F.A.	<b>52% lower</b>
Assembly Hall, auditorium, meeting hall	1 per 4 seats in room with greatest capacity or 2 per 40 sq. ft in largest assembly area without fixed seating	Recreational Community Center	2.28 per 40 sq. ft G.F.A.	<b>12% lower</b>
All retail sales	1 per 300 sq. ft + 1 per 1,000 sq. ft of outdoor use area	Retail - Shopping Center	.58 per 300 sq. ft G.F.A.	<b>42% higher</b>

## CITY PARKING REQUIREMENTS

Parking requirements for new development are outlined in the City's Unified Development Code (UDC), as shown below in Table 1. The City's requirement for downtown restaurant parking is significantly lower than the national standard, which has likely contributed to the increased pressure of parking demand along the Canton corridor and its density of restaurants.

Section 5, which addresses modeled parking demand and compares this to the collected parking occupancy data that forms the basis of the study's understanding, describes the Institute for Transportation Engineers (ITE) Parking Generation manual used as a key means of understanding national trends in parking use. However, as noted in Table 1, downtown Roswell's zoning requirements often differ substantially from observed rates of actual use. In the case of restaurants

and business uses, this is often well below observed rates of use. Roswell has developed its UDC to promote downtown's vitality and to recognize the special role that established buildings have in the historic character of the district, and keeping parking requirements low is a key way to ensure adaptive reuse of older buildings and facilitate new uses adding to downtown vibrancy and character. As will be discussed in Section 5, however, the high amount of restaurants and businesses contribute to this parking demand but rely heavily on a limited public supply.

## 3.2 HOW DO PEOPLE TRAVEL TO DOWNTOWN ROSWELL?

The City's development patterns in the late 20th century prioritized vehicular connections, particularly in the downtown area. In addition, Roswell's status has risen as a destination for dining and other special events, and continues to attract people throughout the greater region. As such, the overwhelming majority of people drive to and through Roswell.

Beyond driving, there is some use of alternative (vehicle-centric) modes that currently only marginally reduce the need for driving. Some people carpool in Roswell but there is a lack of concentration of larger employers where a higher level of carpooling might be supported or particularly beneficial to employees. The high concentration of food and beverage establishments along the Canton Street corridor is an ideal setting for smart phone, app-based rideshare services, such as Uber and Lyft. Some people do use these services, and the city has allocated a pick-up/drop-off parking space for rideshare vehicles in the heart of downtown between Norcross Street and Elizabeth Street. While there is potential opportunity for continued growth of rideshare utilization, demand is not yet significant enough to make a perceptible reduction in the presence of cars (and associated need for parking facilities) downtown.



### KEY TAKEAWAYS: LAND USE PATTERNS

- The high concentration of businesses in downtown Roswell, especially restaurants and retail, points to potentially higher parking use than current UDC requirements set for these uses.
- This is best practice for downtowns, where land uses contribute more to vitality and economic function than parking, but does underscore the importance of public parking.

Downtown Roswell also hosts many pedestrians, whether from those walking to or from a parking space and other destination in town, or those arriving from some adjacent residential neighborhoods. From the northern to southern boundary of the study area, the length of Canton Street is approximately 1 mile. However, the core area of restaurant and retail activity on Canton is located generally within a 5-minute “walkable distance”. This area of Canton Street generally offers a pleasant walking atmosphere for visitors, with a good amount of lighting, landscaped features, and many seating options. However, there are some connections lacking sidewalks which may deter walking as a desirable option. The lack of sidewalks on Green Street, in particular, pose a challenge to businesses who want to attract visitors but may not be able to accommodate parking. Walking safety has also been raised as a concern for people trying to cross Alpharetta Street coming either to or from downtown. The busy thoroughfare can seem daunting to cross, particularly for those with mobility challenges.

The next ranked mode for traveling to Roswell was smart phone, app-based rideshare services, such as Uber and Lyft. Since Uber’s inception a little more than a decade ago rideshare has maintained a strong presence, particularly in areas like Roswell with high dining/drinking activity.

Following rideshare, riding a bike was the next ranked mode of travel. Roswell’s road network does not currently feature on-street facilities that accommodate bicyclists nor signage to support the safety of bicyclists, however local and regional plans have identified a series of improvements in this area to be targeted in the coming years. The last mode ranked in the public survey was carpooling. While Downtown Roswell does host some offices, there is not a large concentration of larger employers where a higher level of carpooling might be supported or particularly beneficial.

Two other transportation modes, bicycling or transit are rarely used for travel to downtown. Roswell’s road network does not currently feature on-street facilities that accommodate bicyclists nor signage to support

the safety of bicyclists, however local and regional plans have identified a series of improvements in this area to be targeted in the coming years.

Overall, this also points to driving as a key means of access to downtown and underscores the importance of the district’s parking supply. In particular, the reliance on driving along with the high concentration of visitor-based businesses, especially restaurants focused on meal-time activity, means that parking activity is likely to be concentrated at key periods (a finding that will be explored in more detail in Section 5.)

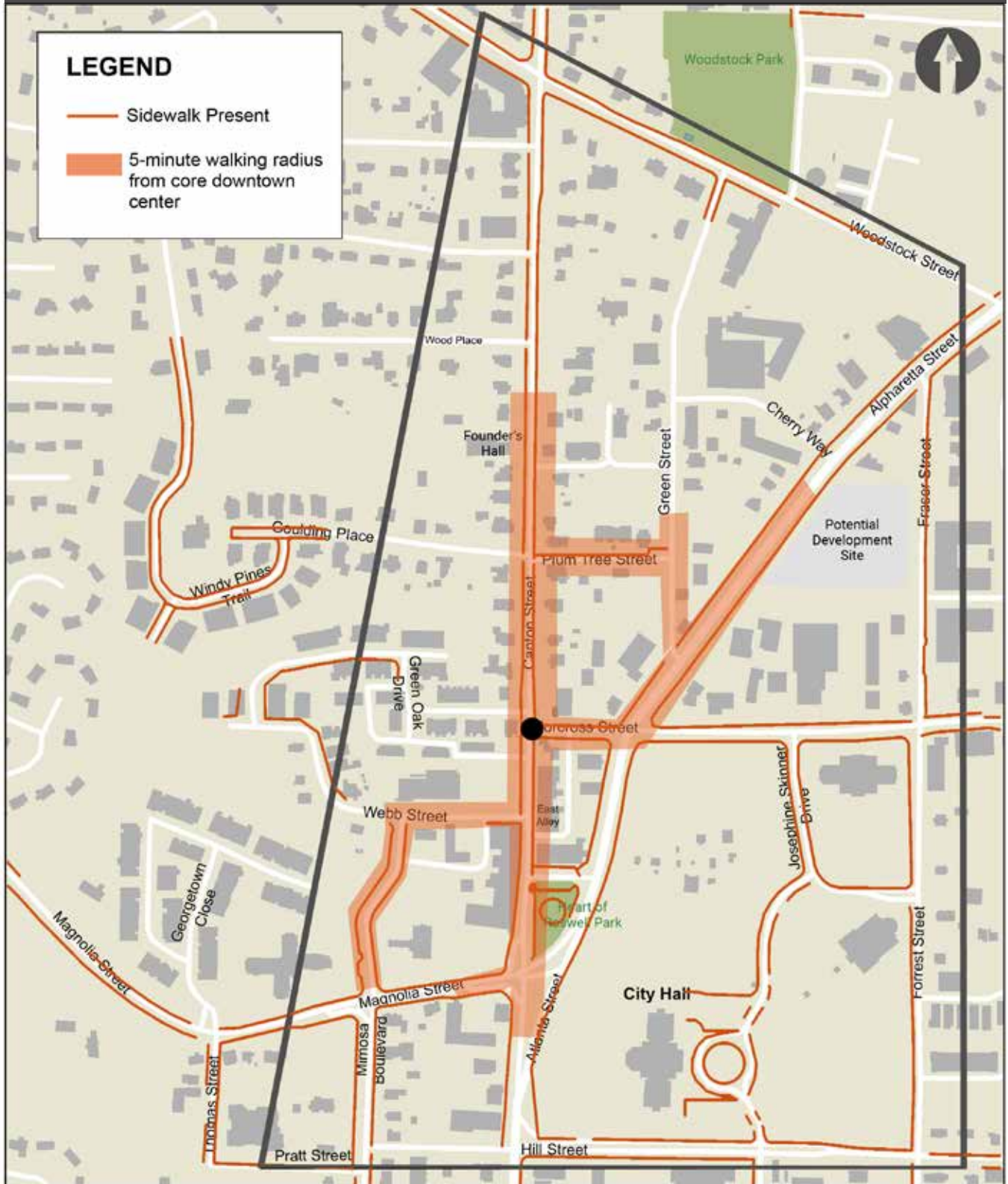
As Map 2 on the following page illustrates, the ‘long’ north-south orientation of Roswell’s downtown along Canton Street also means that some parking facilities are relatively far. The five-minute walk illustrated from the intersection of Canton and Norcross Streets has sidewalks present on both sides of most streets, though it does not reach all of downtown’s parking.



### KEY TAKEAWAYS: GETTING HERE AND AROUND

- Most people drive to/from Roswell and will likely continue to do so for the foreseeable future
- Key driving entry points into the Canton corridor are limited so it is important that people know prior to entering how best to reach available parking
- At any given point, it can be more than a five-minute walk to get through Roswell’s downtown

FIGURE 2 Sidewalks and Walking Areas in Downtown





### 3.3 WHEN AND WHY DO PEOPLE TRAVEL TO ROSWELL?

In addition to key destinations downtown, Roswell hosts a wide offering of themed festivals and special events throughout the year, including races and holiday activities. Events such as Alive after 5 (April through October) contribute to additional energy downtown and parking demand that, at times, pushes the limit of supply. It is the day to day activity however, that generates the biggest concerns of parking availability year-round. The food and beverage options along Canton Street attract a high rate of activity, particularly in the evening. The daytime (lunchtime) dining activity downtown is slightly less intense but still vibrant. Of the public survey respondents 57% said they visit Roswell primarily in the evening.

In line with the concentration of sit-down dining establishments, the majority of visits to Roswell are longer visits. Of the public survey responses, 75% identified their average visit being 1-3 hours, while an additional 11% stay 3 hours or longer. Longer visits have a particularly significant impact on available parking, especially in areas where higher turnover would be more desirable to business owners.

The impact of long-term parking not only affects the immediate area where it is happening but can spread and exacerbate parking problems to adjacent areas. For example, a customer of a specific restaurant might

occupy a designated 'customer only' space, and then visit two other destinations afterward while occupying the same space. During that time, an arriving customer of the same restaurant is unable to find a designated space.

This is important because a mixed-use downtown like Roswell's is typically not a single-purpose destination, and the district's particular success in attracting diners from around the region appears to be based at least in part on the multi-destination experience it offers (something confirmed by numerous stakeholders and survey respondents). Nearly three-quarters (73%) of survey takers said they park once and walk to multiple destinations during a typical visit. This can compound the downtown parking problems of demand exceeding supply in targeted areas during peak periods.



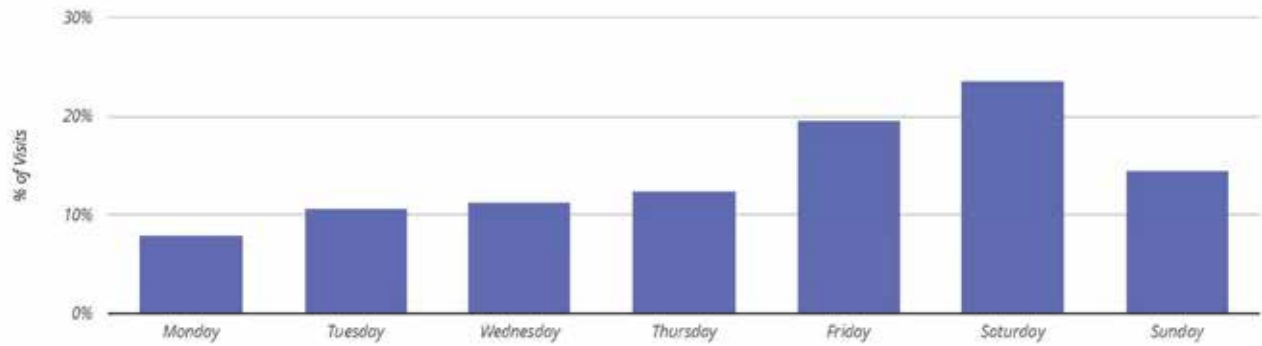
#### KEY TAKEAWAYS: DOWNTOWN VISITOR PATTERNS

- Most visitors to downtown (75%) stay between one and three hours
- Nearly the same amount (73%) of downtown visitors wish to park once and visit multiple destinations
- Around two-thirds of downtown visitors do not live in the City of Roswell
- Over half (57%) visit primarily in the evening

**Disclaimer:** Due to COVID-19 evaluation and analysis of parking demand in relation to particular special events was not feasible as part of this assessment. Future updates to the parking assessment and other future efforts by the Roswell Downtown Development Authority should investigate unique conditions associated with special events around downtown.

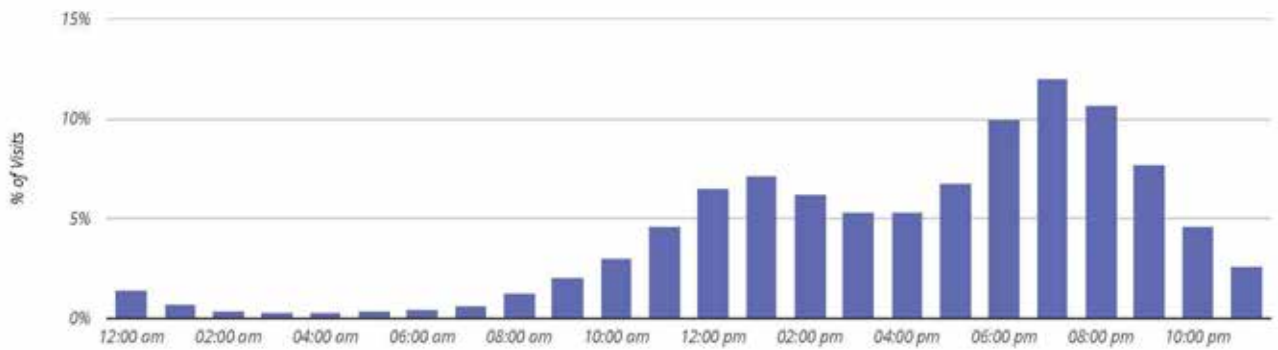


**FIGURE 3** Distribution of Downtown's Visitors by Day of Week



Source: NextSite

**FIGURE 4** Distribution of Downtown's Visitors by Hour of Day



Source: NextSite





# 4

## PARKING INVENTORY

### DOWNTOWN'S PARKING SUPPLY AND HOW IT IS MADE AVAILABLE

#### 4.1 OVERALL PROFILE OF DOWNTOWN'S PARKING

Within the Downtown study area, there is a total of 2,919 parking spaces. Of this inventory, 138 spaces (5%) are on-street and 2,781 spaces (95%) are off-street. As the purpose of this parking assessment is to identify opportunities for improved management, shared parking, or adjustment to regulation of existing parking supporting downtown, some parking spaces are not included as part of this analysis. Generally, these include: parking located at single-family homes, facilities with less than 5 spaces, or the site of potential development along Alpharetta Street.

The study also focused on a core area of downtown's businesses along the southern end of Canton Street (generally from Plum Tree Lane to Magnolia Street). This was selected as a separate focus area because it is the highest concentration of restaurants and businesses and has the most immediate access to downtown's public parking supply.

#### OFF-STREET PARKING

Off-street parking facilities are densely and consistently located throughout the entire study area. The majority of Roswell's parking supply along Canton Street is located at the rear of properties. Because of the built history of downtown Roswell and the level of 1-2 story residential properties converted into other uses, most of the off-street lots are smaller facilities (around 30 parking spaces or less). Only around ten lots hold more than 50 spaces, including Founder's Hall, Roswell United Methodist Church (RUMC), the lot fronting Historic Roswell Antique and Interiors store, the lot on Green Street between Plum Street and Alpharetta Street.

The largest lot in the study area is located at City Hall, with 395 total spaces. Adjacent lots at the Roswell Public Library and Roswell Cultural Center both have 60+ spaces.

The off-street parking inventory along Alpharetta Street and north of Norcross Street primarily features road-facing lots dedicated to specific commercial or office properties.

## ON-STREET PARKING

The primary on-street parking spaces serving the Canton Street corridor are located within 2 blocks between Norcross Street and Magnolia Street.

Other on-street parking in the entire study is limited and inconsistent in its location (e.g., parking on different sides of a street or with a large gap in between the next available space). Spaces can be found along parts of Mimosa Boulevard, one section of Hill Street, and several locations along Forrest Street.

A few other spaces along Canton Street have been identified for other types of parking, such as motorcycle parking.

## LOADING/DELIVERY/RIDESHARE PARKING

One parking space on Canton is reserved for delivery and rideshare vehicles between Norcross Street and Elizabeth Street.

## 4.2 PARKING REGULATIONS

For a visitor unfamiliar with the area, parking regulations in Roswell may appear complex and difficult to navigate. Some spaces are available only to specific users. Some are paid. Some are paid only at certain times. Some spaces have time limits. As mentioned previously, many parking lots on Canton Street are located at the rear of a building, meaning that parkers might not understand how available parking is regulated until they have driven into the lot.

To gather the most accurate understanding of Downtown's existing parking, the team recorded regulations within the study area as they would be viewed by a first-time "visitor" to Downtown Roswell. The study team used these regulations to generally categorize parking spaces as follows.

### PUBLICLY AVAILABLE

These spaces are available to all users regardless of their destination – they are not associated with

a private business. This includes both unregulated parking (with no signage present), as well as free parking.

### RESTRICTED

These spaces are available to users of a particular private business or are publicly available but require payment-

- Customer-Only Parking
- Employee-Only Parking
- Private Parking (e.g. for residential owners)
- Reserved Parking (e.g. for delivery vehicles)
- Paid Parking
- Parking with a time limit (e.g. 15-minute maximum)

There is significant opportunity to improve the clarity and consistency of how parking regulations are displayed in Roswell. Confusion about where and how to park can lead to parkers occupying the closest available space to their destination (regardless of regulation/signage), and potentially displacing other parkers from spaces dedicated for their specific use.



### KEY TAKEAWAYS: BASIC INVENTORY

- Three-quarters of the Downtown inventory is 'restricted' in some form
- Many lots are not visible from the street, meaning some parking is not even easy for visitors to find
- The complex array of use types, permissions, and special arrangements present a complex picture to visitors—especially those new to downtown Roswell



## 4.3 WHO OWNS AND OPERATES PARKING?

Who can use parking is often closely tied to who owns parking, though the key difference is in privately-owned parking, where more nuanced and informal agreements may allow parking facilities to be used among multiple businesses, but not for the general public.

Parking ownership and/or operation of parking in downtown Roswell can be summarized as follows.

### CITY-OWNED

The City owns on-street parking spaces as well as a small number of off-street lots. Two of these are within a 5-minute walk of the downtown core: 1) at the southern end of East Alley, and 2) along Mimosa Boulevard between Webb Street and Magnolia Street (specifically owned by the Roswell Downtown Development Authority). These lots are free and available to the public.

Across SR 9 from the core Canton Street business district, the City Hall parking lot—by far the largest single parking facility in all of downtown—is also free and available to the public at all times, though requires a longer walk to/from Downtown and crossing a major thoroughfare street. Numerous stakeholders, including City staff, expressed doubt or concern that this parking could plausibly serve a large portion of downtown demand because of its distance from the main business center. The City of Roswell is working with the Georgia Department of Transportation to install signal-protected pedestrians crossings of SR 9, although City Hall’s parking is still a considerable distance and not an immediately apparent walking path for many users.

These lots may also not be clearly visible or signposted enough. Of responses to the public survey discussed in Section 2, 62 percent of respondents said they weren’t aware of these parking lots—not only City Hall, but also the City/DDA lots—as an option.

### CITY-LEASED

The City currently leases parking spaces through shared agreements with three Roswell landowners. These facilities include the two large lots within the Canton Street block between Plum Tree Street and Norcross Street, and the large lot part of the Roswell United Methodist Church (RUMC) along Magnolia Street. This approach is beneficial both to Downtown and property owners. Shared agreements allow a landowner to dedicate parking for their specific users during the daytime, while letting the City then offer the same parking spaces to the general public during designated evening/weekend hours. Incentives to the landowner (both monetary and maintenance-related) can be seen in this sample lease:

- City pays a set amount per month for lot to be made available to the public between 6pm-7am, and all weekend
- The Roswell Department of Transportation will perform up to a set amount of normal wear and tear maintenance annually (with a weekly



### KEY TAKEAWAYS: PARKING PERMISSIONS

- The majority of parking in Roswell is privately-owned
- There is considerable variation in how parking is advertised to the public and managed
- City-leased parking is located in areas desirable and walkable to downtown destinations, but in limited supply—or out of desirable walking distance (especially City Hall)

maintenance/cleaning service)

- City maintains responsibility for insurance and signage, advertising usable periods for the public
- Lessee can block off up to x spaces for tenant meetings without notice

This example demonstrates a strong solution for eliminating “wasted” parking spaces that would have otherwise been unusable during periods of particularly higher demand nearby. Currently, three lots in downtown Roswell use this kind of a lease structure, though two of these only for part of the day or week. Signage indicates who may use the lot for public purposes and at what time.

## PRIVATELY-OWNED

The majority of parking lots in Downtown Roswell are privately-owned, by business owners, by developers, etc. These spaces are generally dedicated to users visiting the specific business or property. These facilities allow the owner to define and set regulations. Maintenance of the facility is the responsibility of the owner.

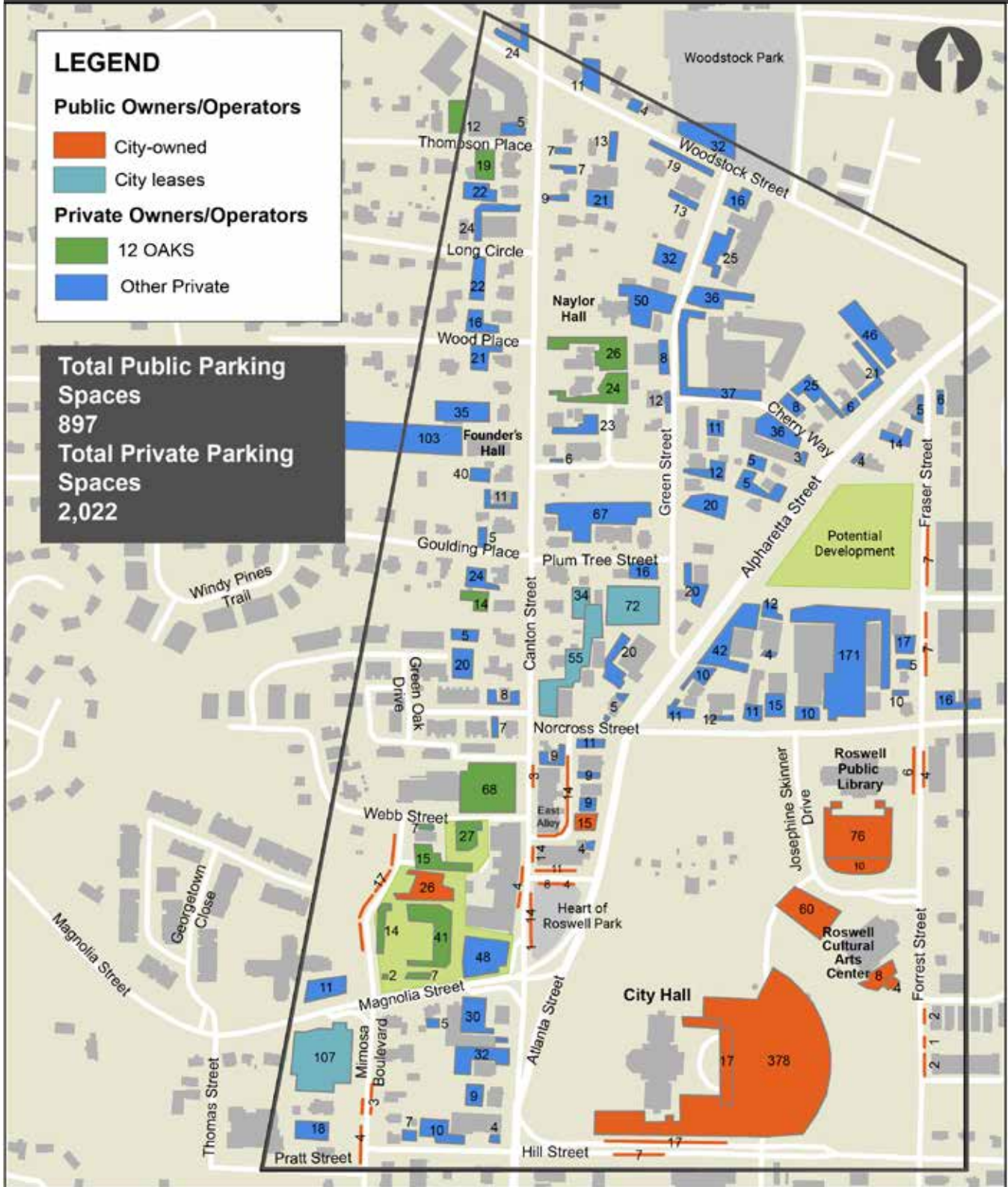
## PRIVATELY-MANAGED

Ten parking lots along Canton Street are owned privately but managed/operated through a private third-party (12 Oaks, LLC) to provide either paid self-park or valet services. Some of these lots are managed by 12 Oaks all day, while some are only managed at particular times (e.g., evenings and special events). This arrangement allows 12 Oaks to define and enforce regulations and/or prices associated with the parking lot.

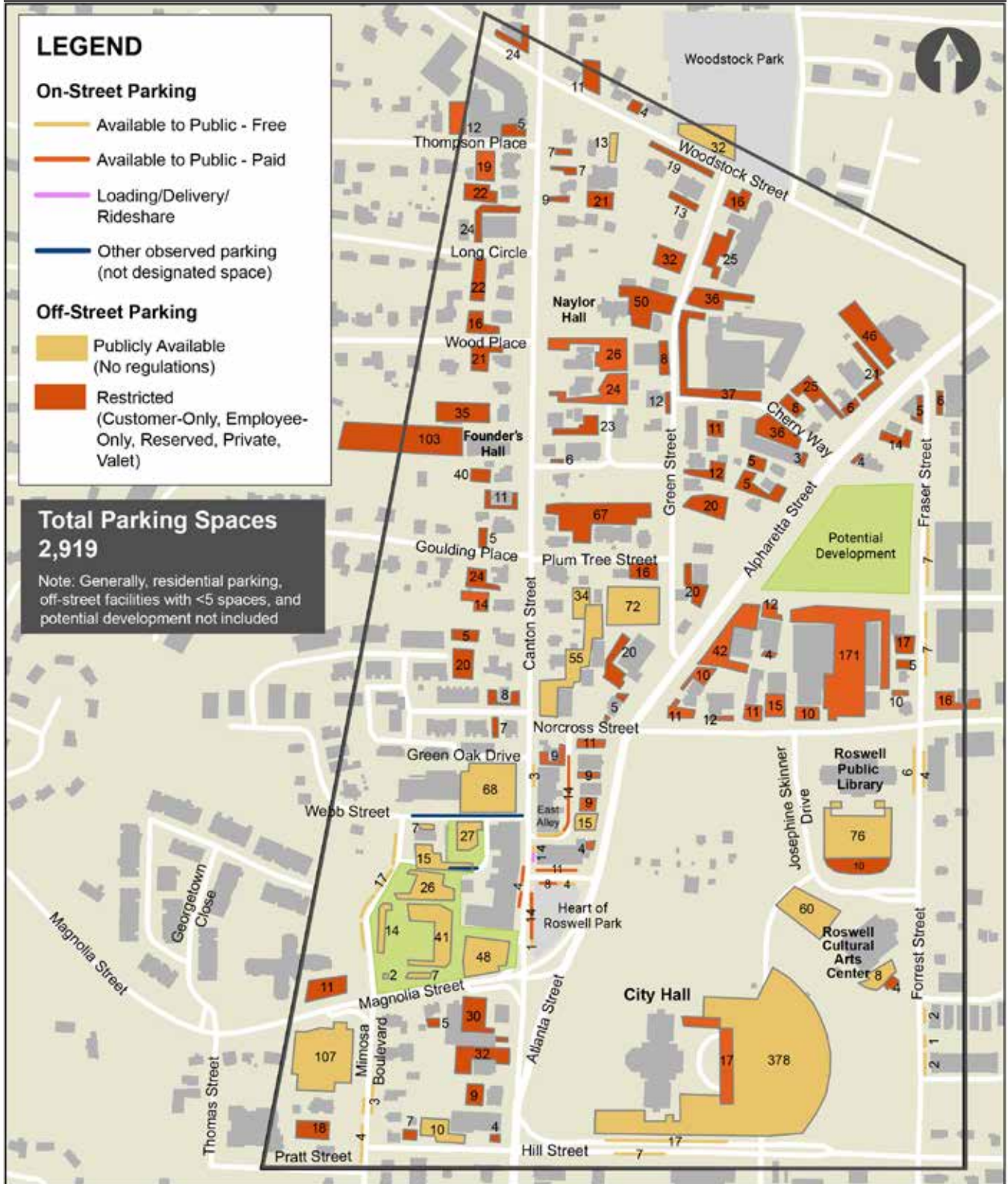




**FIGURE 5 Parking Generalized by Classification**



**FIGURE 6 Parking Generalized by Classification**





**TABLE 2 Parking Inventory by Major Classification**

Parking Type	Number of Spaces within Overall Inventory	Percentage (%) of Overall Inventory
On-Street		
Available to Public ( <b>Free</b> )	102	4%
Available to Public ( <b>Paid</b> )	37	1%
Loading/Delivery/Rideshare	1	-
Off-Street		
Publicly Available (Full or Part Time)	730	25%
Restricted (Customer-Only, Employee-Only, Private, Reserved)	2,049	70%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,919</b>	<b>100%</b>

As Tables 2 and 3 above and on the following page illustrate, Downtown’s parking is distributed among a complex array of categories and user permissions. Some parking has a price, where other parking is free but available to the public only limited times. Overall, around half of downtown’s parking is reserved entirely for customers (and presumably employees) of the business or establishment with which the parking is associated. Only around a quarter of this parking is available to the public, but even then this does not always apply.

As noted previously, and especially as shown in the map on Figure 6, a large amount of the public supply is located at Roswell City Hall, separated from the core of downtown’s business district by SR 9.

**TABLE 3 Parking Inventory by Permissions and Regulations**

Parking Type	Number of Spaces within Overall Inventory	Percentage (%) of Overall Inventory
On-Street		
Publicly Available <b>(No Regulations and Free of Charge)</b>	102	4%
Publicly Available <b>(Paid)</b>	37	1%
Restricted (Reserved for Delivery and Rideshare Vehicles)	1	-
Off-Street		
Public or Virtual Public (may include price, but no other limits on use)	741	25%
Restricted for Customers Only (May include shared spaces between multiple businesses)	1,383	47.5%
Restricted for Employees Only	14	0.5%
Restricted for Reserved Users	120	4%
Restricted with Time Limits	2	-
Restricted for Other Purposes (generally for associated business or establishment only)	518	18%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,919</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 4.4 HOW DO CUSTOMERS PAY FOR PARKING?

The purpose of paid parking in Roswell is to help manage areas in the core of downtown where demand exceeds available supply. Priced parking encourages some parkers to select a free parking space available slightly farther away from their destination. The lower a parking price, or free parking increases its attraction and may cause more demand than available spaces.

Just as parking demand is more intense at different times of the day or locations than others, parking prices should also be adjusted to respond to the specific context of time and location. This guarantees a reasonable level of supply is available at all times while still maintaining the flexibility to accommodate atypical peaks of demand. Currently, Roswell kiosks replace the first 2-hours free option after 6pm to \$1.

Currently, there are two ways of paying for parking in Downtown Roswell: at pay-station kiosks used for on-street spaces, and payments at each individual lot where prices are charged.

### KIOSK STATION

Downtown Roswell has two parking kiosks- Kiosk #1 was installed in 2018 within the small lot adjacent to East Alley. Kiosk #2 was installed in January 2020 at the corner of Canton Street and Elizabeth Street. Visitors have two options for paying at a kiosk:

- Enter a vehicle license plate number into the kiosk station and pay with a credit card
- Pay for parking at kiosk-designated spaces through downloading and using the ParkMobile smartphone app

The integration of this service with smartphones and credit cards, especially using the City's arrangement with ParkMobile, is consistent with national trends toward automated and cashless parking payment and puts Roswell in a league with other best-practice cities.

TABLE 4 On-Street Parking Prices

Duration	Cost (\$0.35 per use charge if using app to pay)
0-2 Hours	Free
2-3 Hours	\$4
3-4 Hours	\$6
4-5 Hours	\$8
5+ Hours	\$16 (Daily Maximum)

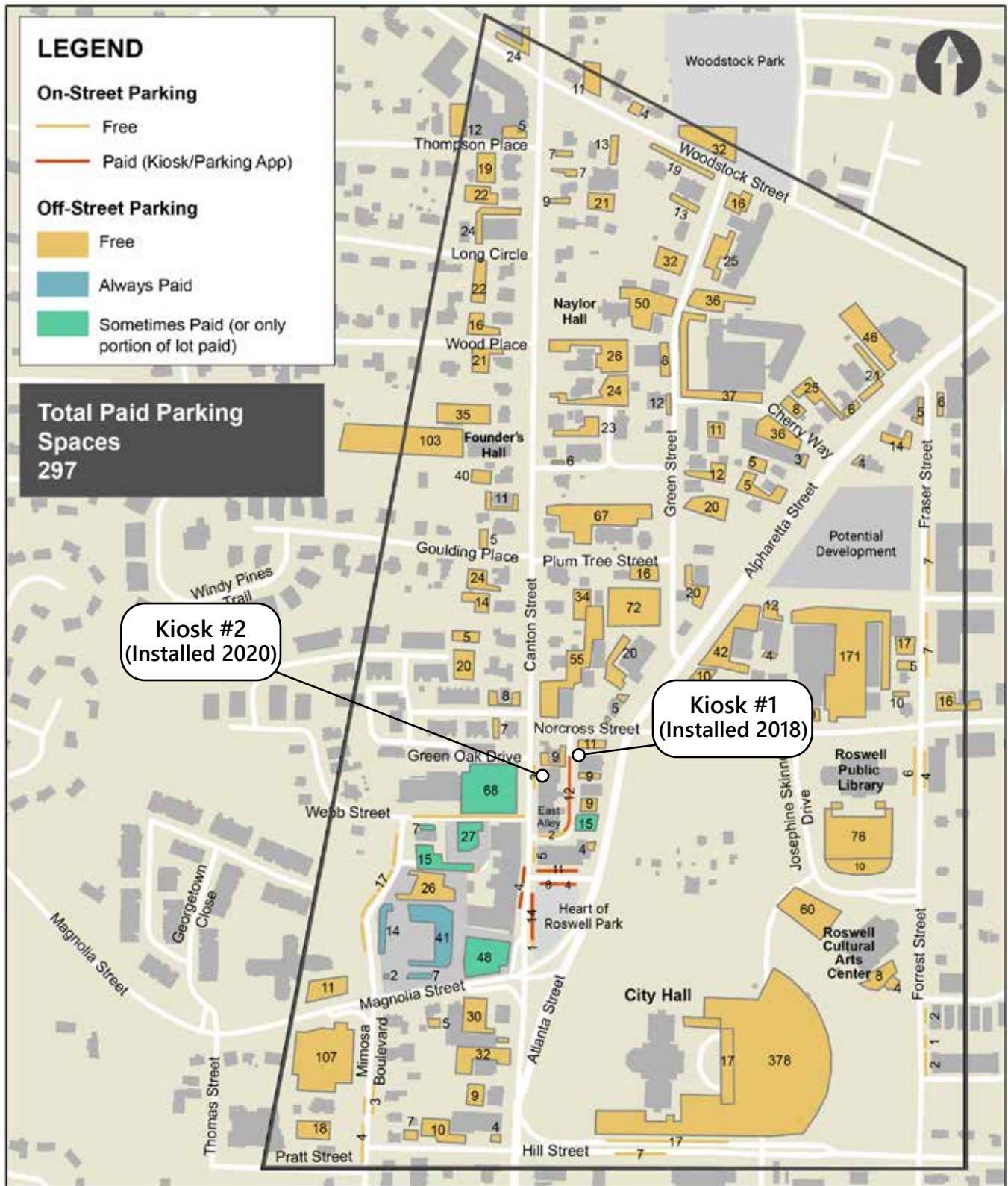


### KEY TAKEAWAYS: PARKING PAYMENT

- Most parking in downtown Roswell has no price (it is free to use).
- Paid parking is the locations where the concentration of demand, as a function of land uses driving parking use, is highest.
- Even though paid parking is always near free parking, location is a factor more than price in who is using what parking (as will be discussed in Section 5)



**FIGURE 7 Parking Inventory by Major Classification**



## SELF-PARKING OR VALET ATTENDANT

12 Oaks provides services at a selection of lots throughout downtown, operating both self-parking lots where customers park and pay, or valet facilities where valet staff move cars to a parking location (with some of these on-site relative to a business or establishment and some off-site).

In the case of self-parking facilities, 12 Oaks manages the parking lot for a building owner, but customers who utilize the lot must pay to park there. There are exceptions for customers of a business who utilize 'customer only' designated spaces within a lot (such as the Historic Roswell Antiques lot) and are then validated by the business. The self-park service cost is also only required at certain times of the day for some lots (for instance, paid during evening only at the Rock N' Taco lot). Payment for self-park can be made directly to an attendant by cash or card.

For establishments using full valet service, 12 Oaks may manage or operate the parking lot for a building owner and provide full valet service to patrons of the business. While some locations provide this as a complimentary service, others may require a payment by cash or card to the parking attendant.

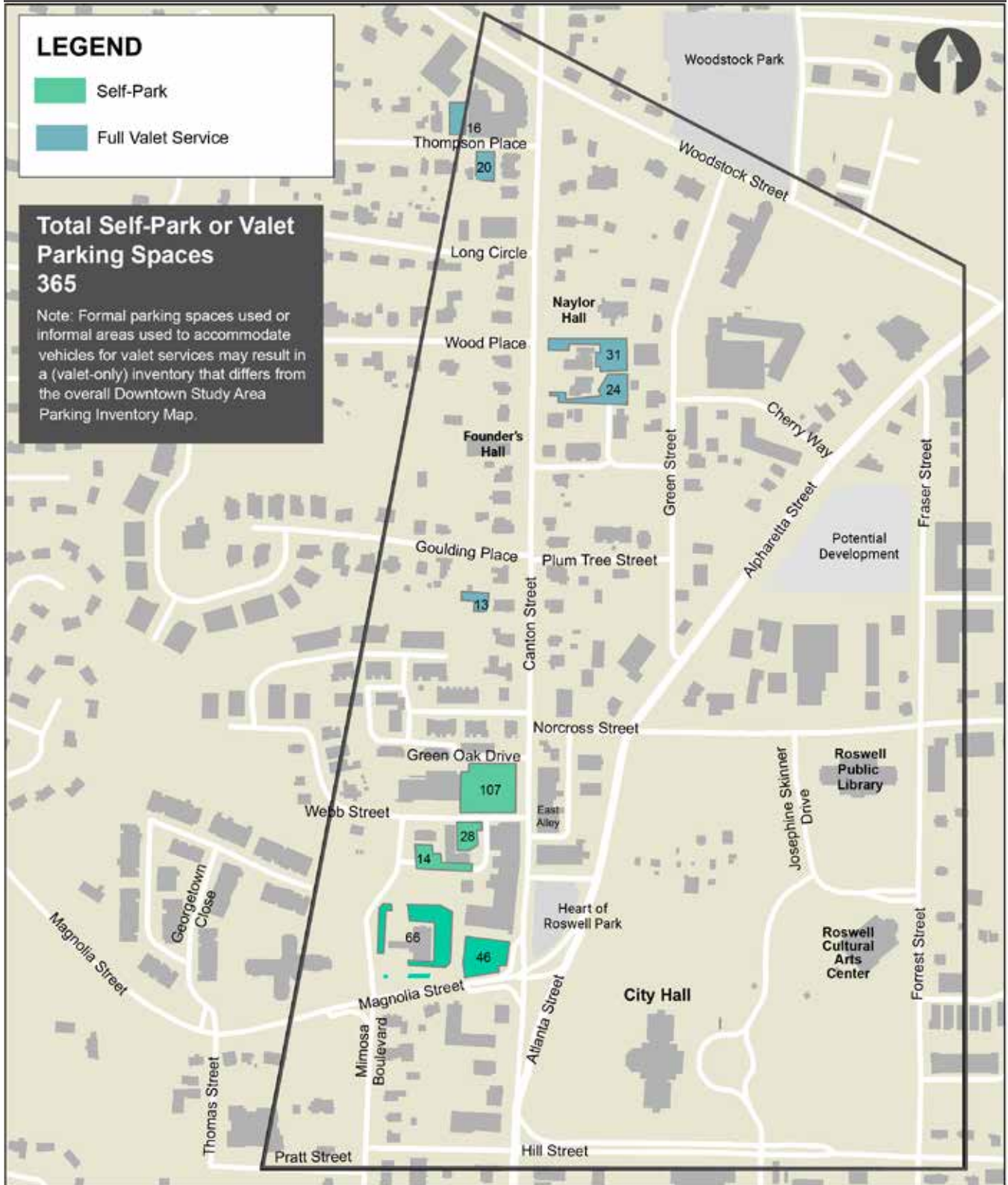
The purpose of paid parking in any setting is to help manage areas in the core of downtown where demand exceeds available supply. A higher parking price will encourage some parkers to select a cheaper or free parking space available slightly farther away, while a lower parking price will increase the attraction of a space for a larger number of people. Just as parking demand is more intense at different times of the day or locations than others, parking prices should also be adjusted to respond to the specific context of time and location. This guarantees a reasonable level of supply is available at all times while still maintaining the flexibility to accommodate atypical peaks of demand.

**TABLE 5 Privately Managed Parking Facilities**

Parking Location Name	Map ID	Number of Spaces	Typical Cost	Special Event Cost	Type of Service
Gate City Lot	1	46	\$5	-	Self-Park
Wells Fargo Lot	2	66	\$5	-	Self-Park
Canton Place Lot	3	14	\$5	-	Self-Park
34 Webb Street Lot	4	28	\$5	\$10	Self-Park
970 Canton Street Lot (Historic Roswell Antiques)	5	107	\$5	\$10	Self-Park
Table & Main Lot	6	13	-	-	Full Service
Osteria Mattone Lot	7	24	-	-	Full Service
Uncle Jack's Lot	8	31	-	-	Full Service
Noca Lot	9	20	-	-	Full Service
Vickers Lot	10	16	-	-	Full Service

Total Spaces = 365

**FIGURE 8 Parking Inventory by Major Classification**





## 4.5 COMPLEXITY OF DOWNTOWN'S PARKING SUPPLY

The preceding sections illustrate how complex Roswell's parking system is. For fewer than 3,000 spaces, roughly 15 percent of which are included in the City Hall parking lot that lies across SR 9 from the core business district where the most dynamic demand for parking is generated (to be discussed in the following chapter), Roswell's parking inventory includes a large number of categories. These can be summarized as follows.

### TRUE PUBLIC PARKING

Parking that is truly available to the public and does not have restrictions other than pricing or time limits is located throughout the overall study area, although the bulk of it is associated with Roswell City Hall, located east of the building and across SR 9 from the Canton Street corridor. This includes all on-street spaces, all of which are in the public right-of-way, and any parking off-street that is owned by the City of Roswell. While other government-related parking lies in this study area, such as what is associated with the Roswell Fire Station, this is generally not considered to be public parking in the same way that street parking is. Roswell's City Hall parking, along with the adjacent cultural facilities parking to its north, have no apparent restrictions on use and could conceivably be used by Canton Street customers or other visitors to non-City Hall destinations. However, as discussed in the following section on utilization, this use appears to be uncommon.

### VIRTUAL PUBLIC PARKING

Although the public may use some parking without restrictions (other than payment), this is owned by private entities and made available either through a lease agreement with the City of Roswell or through private third-party management agreements that cover enforcement, signage, and collection of any payment. This assessment is using the term 'virtual public'

parking to refer to this part of the inventory because it is not parking the City has had to construct or acquire, but serves a similar purpose.

### RESTRICTED PARKING

The vast majority of downtown Roswell's parking supply is restricted to certain users, most commonly employees or customers of a particular business or establishment. However, even parking that is restricted operates in reality with a range of nuanced options and permissions, some formal and some not.

Figure 9 on the following page illustrates this complexity in the form of a matrix between permissions (who can use parking for their visits) and pricing. Although this study's inventory did not identify precise numbers of spaces that fit into these classes, Figure 9 estimates how inventory is distributed. This only underscores the complexity of parking, and the large amount of parking that falls into some form of restricted use means that the 'park once' desire of the majority of downtown's visitors may be hard to achieve.

All of this points to a need for more parking that is publicly available regardless of destination or intended use. Evaluating entirely from the inventory, this does not necessarily mean that downtown needs more parking overall. The dynamics of parking utilization and demand, which are discussed in the following section, help to illustrate more clearly where the parking system's deficiencies are and under what circumstances. But the inventory does still underscore that visitors to downtown—who make up a sizable portion of downtown's economic activity—could potentially have an easier, more streamlined system to use.

As shown in Figure 9 on the following page, the overall supply of downtown's parking can be broken down into different classes and different times when payment would be required. But that such a small supply is divided into as many as 25 price-permission combinations further underscores downtown's parking complexity.

**FIGURE 9 Parking Inventory by Different Ownership and Price Combinations**

	Unpaid Always	Paid Part Time	Paid Special Events	Valet (Paid or Unpaid)	Paid Always
<b>TRUE PUBLIC</b> Anyone can use	<b>570</b>	<b>40</b>			
<b>VIRTUAL PUBLIC</b> Anyone can use when open	<b>195</b>				<b>70</b>
<b>RESTRICTED BUT SHARED</b>		<b>300</b>			<b>50</b>
<b>RESTRICTED AND UNSHARED</b>	<b>1320</b>			<b>80</b>	
<b>RESTRICTED AND UNENFORCED</b>	<b>300</b>				







# 5

## UTILIZATION AND DEMAND

### HOW DOWNTOWN'S PARKING IS BEING USED, AND HOW MUCH USE SHOULD BE EXPECTED

As stated in the introduction, a primary objective of this parking assessment was to provide a data-centered baseline for understanding parking trends and making informed decisions for addressing challenges. To this end, the assessment's primary activities included collecting occupancy data, analyzing it relative to the inventory of parking discussed in Section 4, and understanding trends.

The assessment also compares this utilization of parking to expected levels of demand that are a function of downtown's land uses and the businesses, establishments, and activities they represent. The relationship between utilization and demand is key, as it illustrates how and where specific challenges may be happening and points to options for addressing these.

It is important to note that this parking assessment was initiated in October 2020. The unexpected impact of COVID-19 meant that utilization counts taken during 2020 would likely not represent true typical conditions during times of full economic performance, especially with the concentration of food-and-beverage-based

businesses in downtown Roswell and the general public health restrictions under which many such businesses had to operate during this time. The assessment therefore pursued a customized utilization methodology, incorporating a combination of data sources to calibrate the raw counts of occupied parking spaces and to develop an accurate understanding of current demand. The methodology steps for the data approach can be found in the diagram on the following page.

## 5.1 UTILIZATION DATA SOURCES

This assessment used an approach widely employed in parking management studies: it collected data on occupancy through in-person field counts. This is the most fundamental form of occupancy data collection, and although more advanced methods of collection are possible (such as monitoring how long cars stay

in their spaces, analyzing license plate information to understand vehicle origins, and other factors), these add a significant amount of effort and cost to studies. For a first effort to understand parking, especially during the unprecedented conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, simply counting occupancy at different time points representing a range of activity levels and economic patterns is a descriptive level of data that is highly useful for illustrating key trends.

## **IN-PERSON PARKING COUNTS**

Anecdotal observations shared with the team had identified parking activity at the initiation of this study as appearing “nearly back to normal” pre-COVID-19 levels. The team pursued conducting in-person counts to establish a current-day utilization baseline. The team worked to identify three specific time periods for gathering utilization data to paint an overall picture of Downtown’s parking demand during a typical *weekday*: 8-10am (typical morning demand), 12-2pm (typical mid-day/lunch demand), and 7-9pm (typical evening/dinner demand).

The team also gathered utilization data on a *weekend* to understand how parking is being used at the peak levels of demand, counting at 7-9pm on a Saturday (typical evening/dinner demand).

## **AERIAL IMAGERY**

For historical context of the in-person counts, the team consulted aerial imagery and counted utilization of the same parking spaces. The most recent aerial imagery available (pre-COVID-19) dated to spring 2019, during a weekday, mid-day. One of the limitations in using aerial imagery is its infrequency in being captured, meaning that parking utilization cannot be captured at multiple time periods on one, single day, or during a weekend. Additionally, other variations from present-day conditions, such as development, zoning revisions, and changes in building use, can also impact parking demand.

With the baseline 2020 parking counts as a reference, it was confirmed that the parking counts reflected in the 2019 imagery did not fully reflect the most recent typical demand as seen prior to COVID-19 impacts.

The utilization of the overall network in the aerial was 6% greater than the overall utilization of counts taken during 2020 between 12pm and 2pm. **Counts for all weekday daytime time periods were therefore calibrated with a 6 percent increase.** In instances where this adjustment caused utilization of a parking lot or space to exceed 100%, the utilization number was capped to match the total inventory of spaces available.

## NEXTSITE

As the aerial imagery was based on daytime counts on a weekday, an additional data source was required to inform appropriate calibration levels of the in-person counts taken during the weekend period.

The team secured customer journey analytics data from NextSite to understand number of visits per day, by hour, and the duration of visits in the general downtown Roswell area. The data is captured through cell-phone data so had a high level of accuracy. Data was analyzed from two time periods, both from the exact days of the in-person counts, from similar days (with similar conditions) a month prior to the in-person counts. Annual aggregated data from 2019 and 2020 also allowed the team to compare trends pre-pandemic and during the pandemic.

The overall number of visits on a Saturday was 91% greater than the overall number of visits on a weekday. **In-person counts for the Thursday and Saturday 7pm-9pm period were therefore calibrated with a 91% increase.** In instances where this adjustment caused utilization of a parking lot or space to exceed 100%, the utilization number was capped to match the total inventory of spaces available.

## SUPPLEMENTAL DATA FROM OTHER SOURCES

Review of previous studies and other information helped to generally validate the calibration levels, including the Historic District Parking Analysis from 2012. Generally, that study illustrated similar patterns of

utilization to this assessment, however the team did not directly compare them for analysis purposes due to the number of years passed and the changes in downtown that have occurred since then.

12 Oaks provided aggregated data on percentage of annual cars (by month) that utilized the facilities they manage. This provided a comparison that helped to validate clear patterns of both high and low usage, including the impact of regulations.

Daily total counts of 12 Oaks facilities were also provided for the following periods:

- Similar weekday/weekend dates to the in-person counts for 2019 and 2018
- Weekday/weekend dates for a typical fall non-peak month (September) for 2019 and 2018
- Weekday/weekend dates for a typical peak month (July) for 2019 and 2018
- Weekday/weekend dates for a typical springtime non-peak month (May) for 2019 and 2018

## 5.2 UTILIZATION PROFILES FOR DOWNTOWN

To ensure efficient parking management operations, it is ideal to maintain at least one empty space on each block of street parking to ensure easy customer access to businesses. This typically equates to about 1 out of 8 spaces free, or a target of 15% vacant per block. Similarly, a goal of at least 10% vacancy is considered ideal in off-street lots. If any facility has less availability than this, it is usually the case that users arrive to a full lot or have significant trouble finding space. However, if a facility has substantially more availability, especially in high-demand areas, this points to conditions or regulation that may be keeping desired parking from being more available.

The following series of tables and graphics over the

following pages illustrates the result of the three analysis tasks described above.

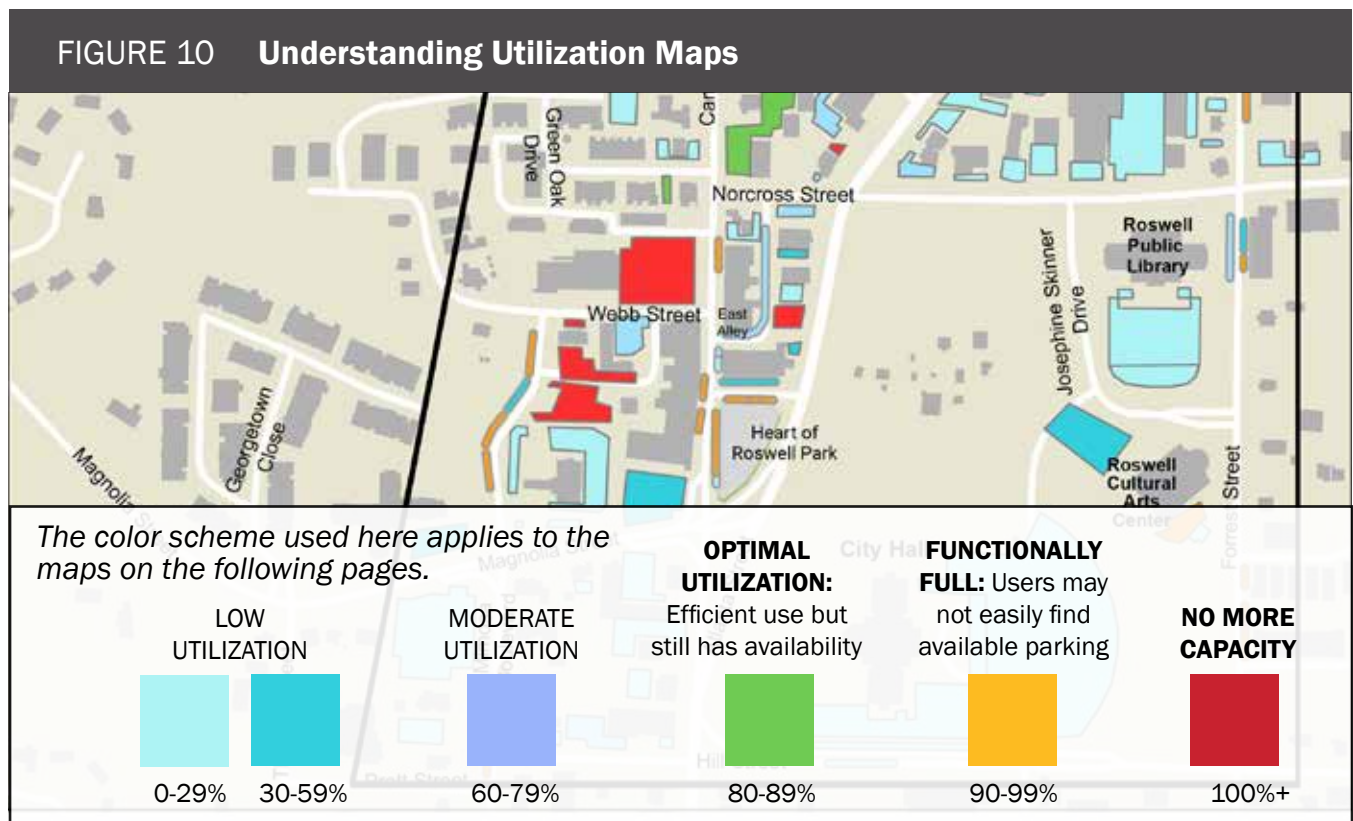
Overall, while it appears from the summary table that downtown’s parking is not always heavily utilized, focusing on specific parking types and locations shows that utilization is highly uneven. On-street parking, for instance, is always at least half full throughout the day, but in the core commercial district of downtown, especially along Canton Street, these spaces are at times over 90 percent used—an amount that the parking practice considers to be functionally full for a given facility and a condition where motorists may not be able to find an available space in a given cluster of spaces.

Regulated and priced spaces, or those spaces with time limits or payments currently imposed, include these core business district on-street spaces as well as a number of the spaces in private lots that allow public

access. These see the highest amount of use of any in the study area, and some are 100 percent full in the evening.

In general, downtown Roswell has a large amount of parking that is regularly underutilized throughout a typical weekday, although most of this parking is privately owned and supports only a single land use or organization.

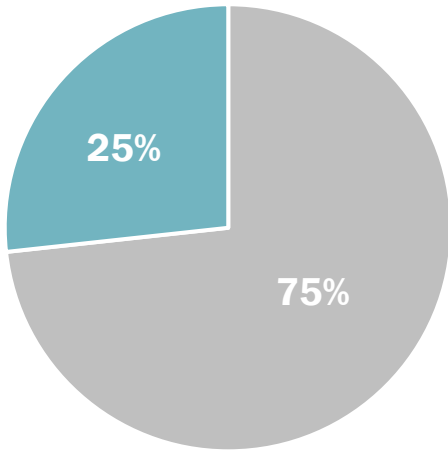
By contrast, Canton Street’s on-street parking, which serves as the front door parking for downtown’s historic retail district, is heavily utilized, as are select off-street parking facilities near it.





# PARKING UTILIZATION THURSDAY 8AM - 10AM

## OVERALL UTILIZATION

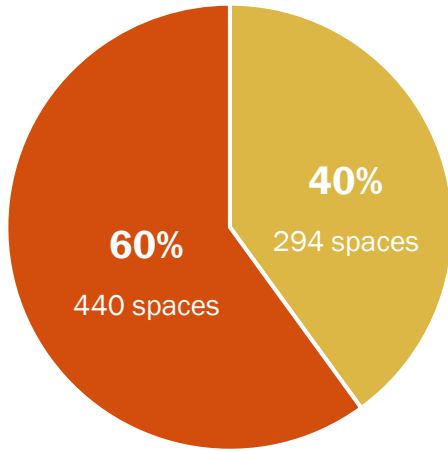


■ Vacant ■ Occupied

## KEY OBSERVATIONS

- A** The City lot near East Alley is the only facility at ideal utilization
- B** Within the greater study area, two 'private parking' lots are the only off-street facilities at capacity
- C** Within the core of Canton Street, the block between Webb Street and Magnolia Street is starting to see the highest concentration of off-street demand

## UTILIZATION BY REGULATION (OF OCCUPIED SPACES)



■ Public ■ Restricted

## UTILIZATION COMPARISON BETWEEN TIME PERIODS

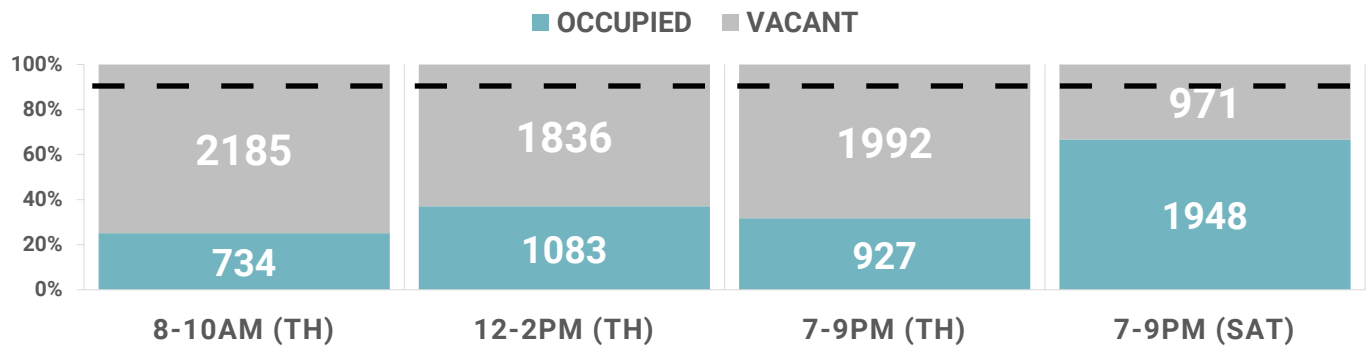
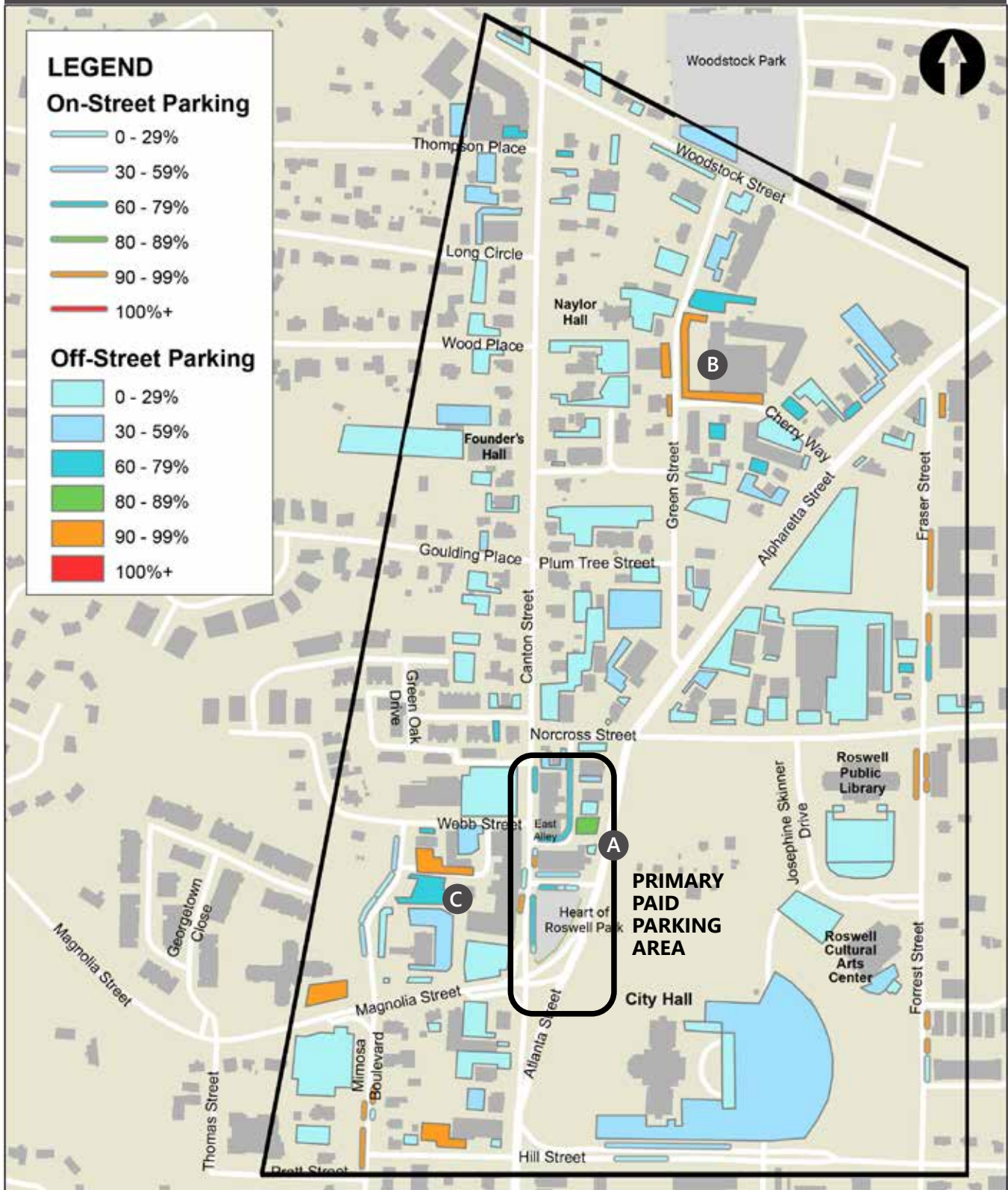
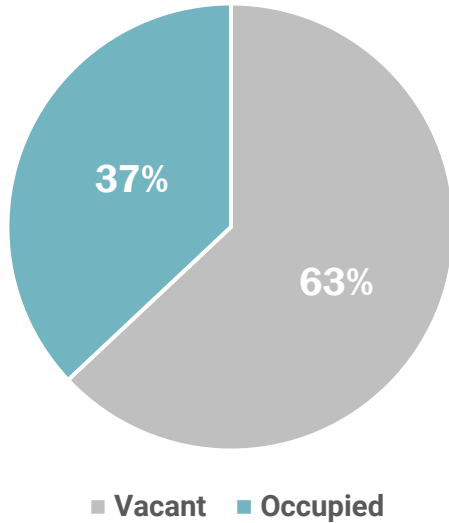


FIGURE 11 Parking Utilization, Thursday 8AM - 10AM



# PARKING UTILIZATION THURSDAY 12PM - 2PM

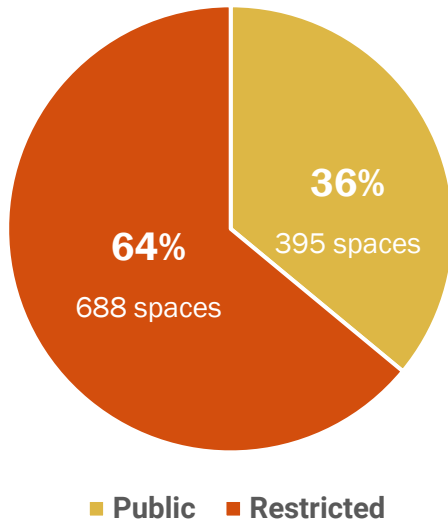
## OVERALL UTILIZATION



## KEY OBSERVATIONS

- A** Since the morning period, 'Private parking' has reduced in demand to an ideal level of utilization from the morning period
- B** Some valet/self-park lots are seeing a jump in utilization
- C** The free lot in the core block of activity is at capacity
- D** On-street paid areas along Canton Street and Elizabeth Street are full
- E** The City Hall lot has significant capacity available during business hours
- F** Several lots along Canton Street are near or at capacity as they absorb some of the lunch demand
- G** A few small lots along Alpharetta Street are near/at capacity

## UTILIZATION BY REGULATION (OF OCCUPIED SPACES)



## UTILIZATION COMPARISON BETWEEN TIME PERIODS

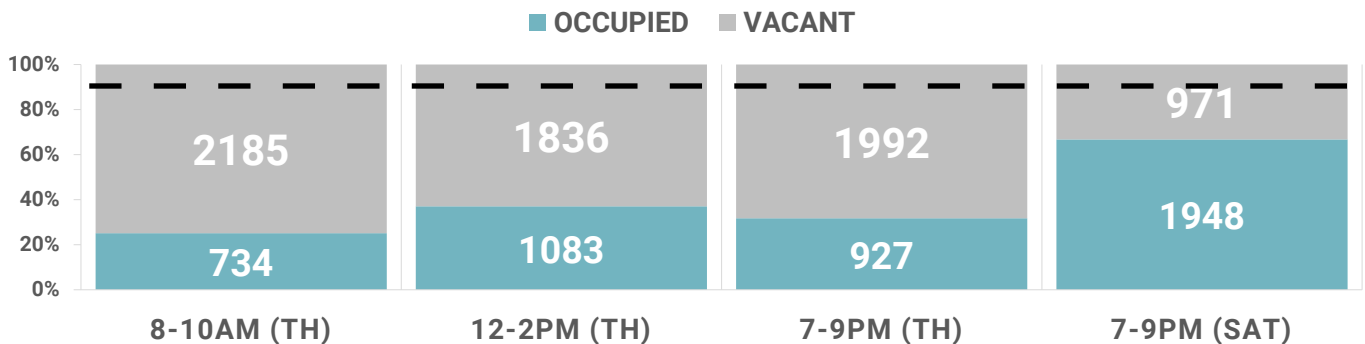
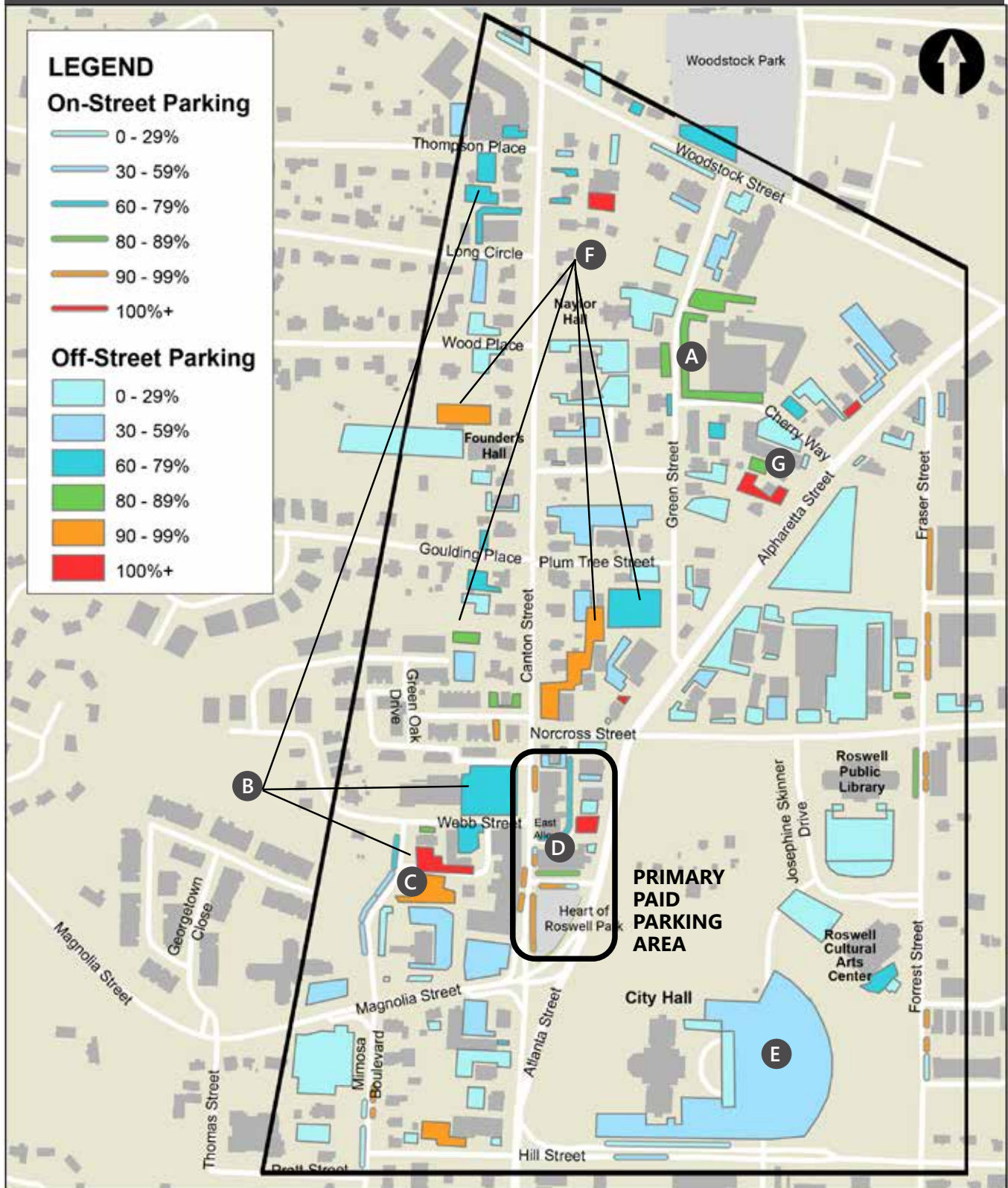




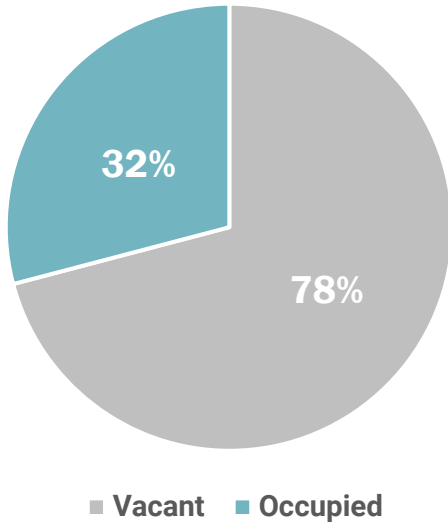
FIGURE 12 Parking Utilization, Thursday 12PM - 2PM





# PARKING UTILIZATION THURSDAY 7PM - 9PM

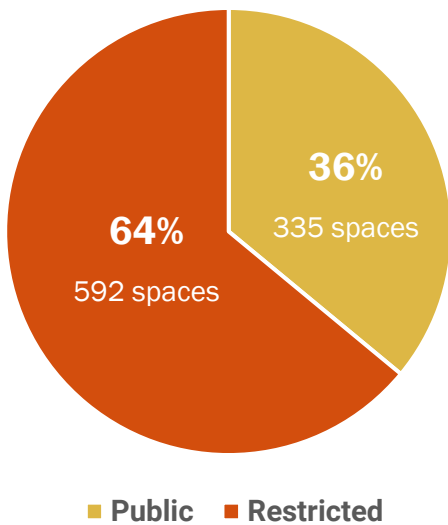
## OVERALL UTILIZATION



## KEY OBSERVATIONS

- A** Most self-park/valet lots are at or beyond functional capacity
- B** The two lots between Plum Tree Street and Norcross Street (which are leased by the City for free public parking in the evening) are approaching or at capacity
- C** The lot at the Roswell United Methodist Church (also leased by the City for free public parking in the evening) has significant capacity
- D** The free lot above the Wells Fargo property is full
- E** The only parking lot with kiosk-paid parking is full

## UTILIZATION BY REGULATION (OF OCCUPIED SPACES)



## UTILIZATION COMPARISON BETWEEN TIME PERIODS

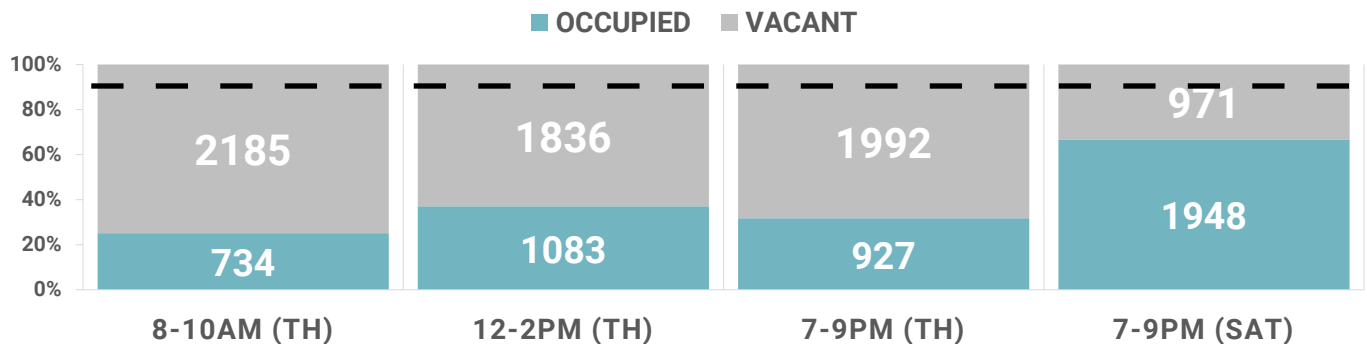
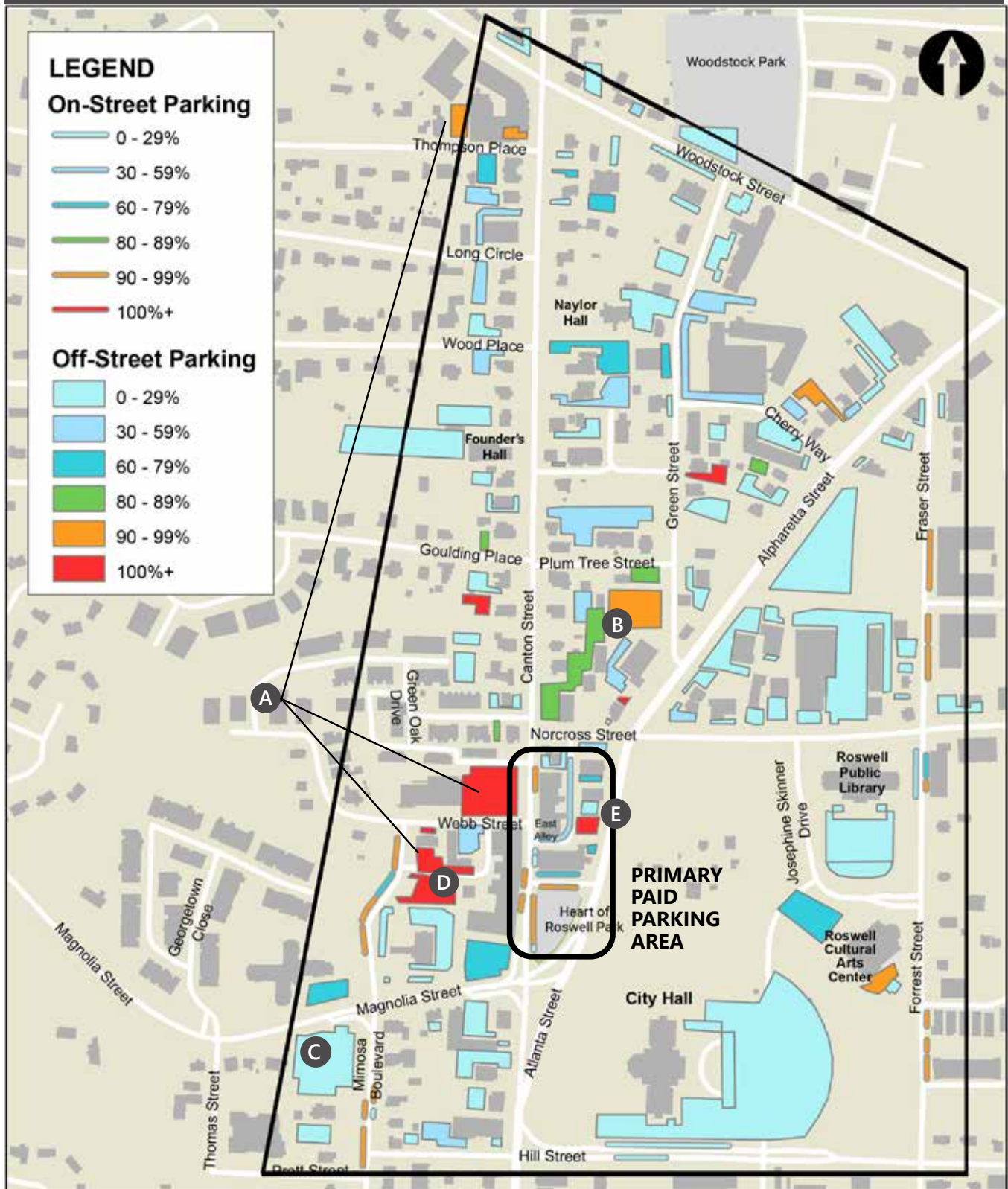
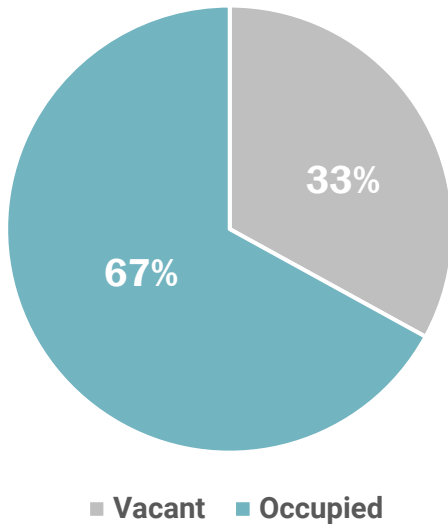


FIGURE 13 Parking Utilization, Thursday 7PM - 9PM



# PARKING UTILIZATION SATURDAY 7PM - 9PM

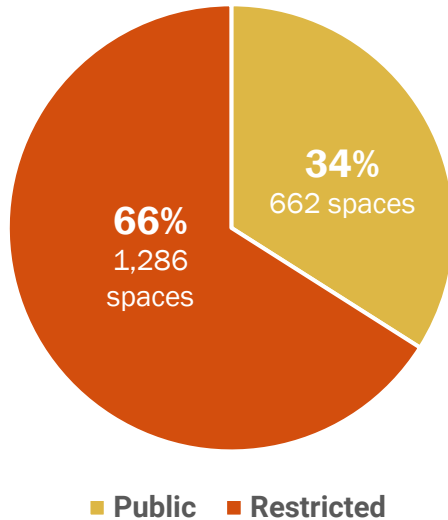
## OVERALL UTILIZATION



## KEY OBSERVATIONS

- A** Lots with self-park or valet services are completely full
- B** Central lots with shared agreements with the City are completely full
- C** The only lots at optimal utilization are small
- D** The East Alley parking area continues to have availability
- E** The majority of on-street spaces are full
- F** Founder’s Hall and adjacent lots could support additional demand
- G** Large free lots near the core, such as RUMC and City Hall have significant availability

## UTILIZATION BY REGULATION (OF OCCUPIED SPACES)



## UTILIZATION COMPARISON BETWEEN TIME PERIODS

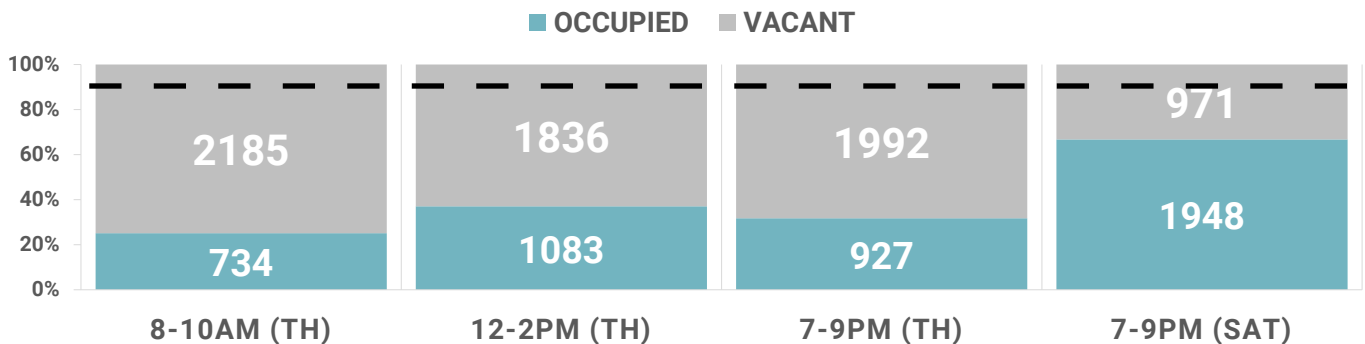
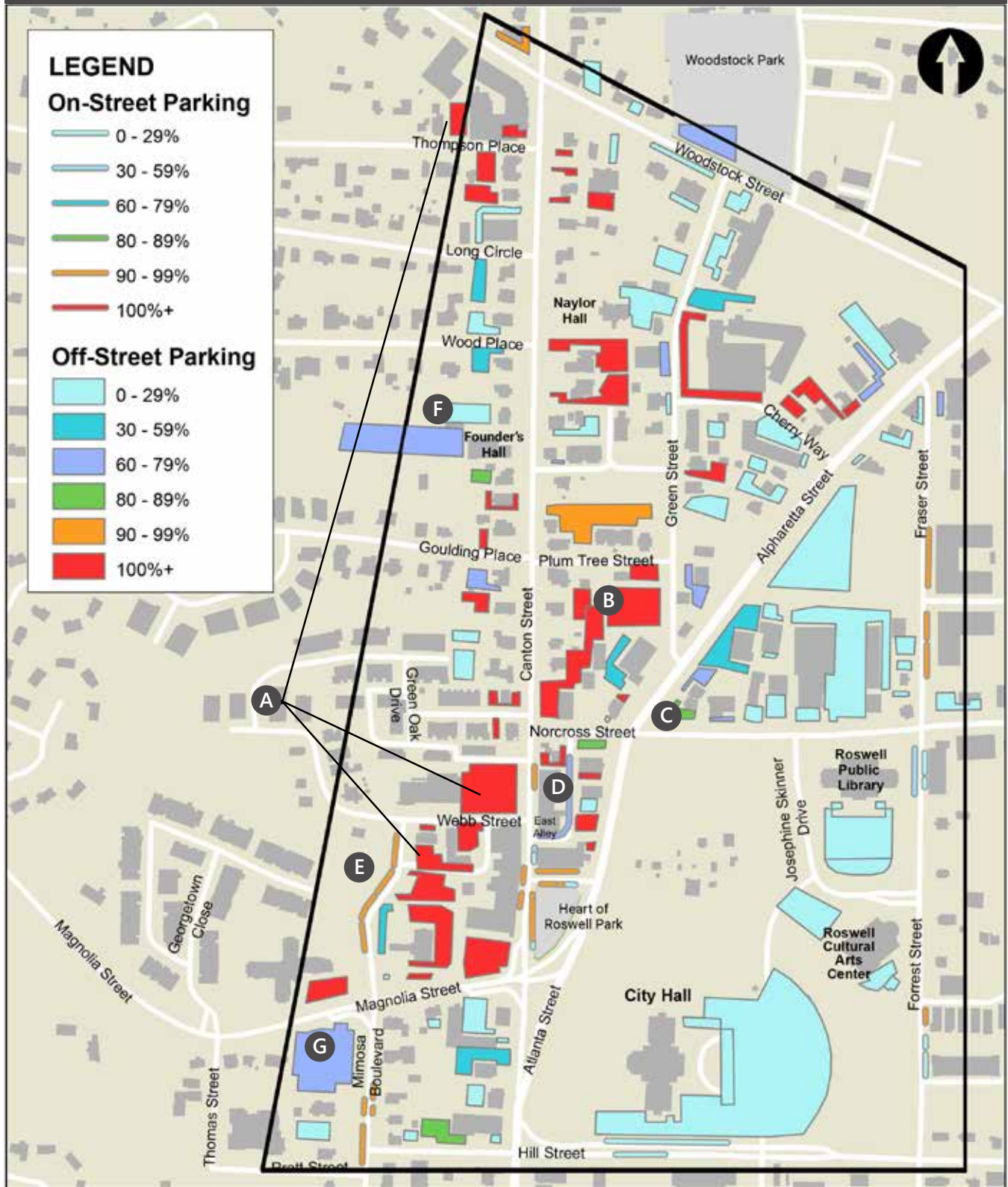




FIGURE 14 Parking Utilization, Saturday 7PM - 9PM





## 5.1 ESTIMATING PARKING DEMAND

It is important to understand the difference between parking utilization and demand. The two are related but not interchangeable, and there are many factors that drive each. For example:

- **Parking utilization tends to follow high-demand locations** when parking is made available to users who make up that demand. There may be—and in Roswell’s case, is—parking in areas of high demand that is underutilized, due to policies, regulations, or permissions on that parking.
- **Utilization is also, by necessity, tied to inventory.** Although parking facilities are sometimes observed to have more parked cars than their actual capacity (the number of formally designated spaces), **actual demand for the parking may be much higher.**
- Likewise, demand for parking is a function of the land uses that parking users are trying to reach. It follows the times of day that those land uses are active, and therefore is not truly expressed in how much parking is built or used. It is based on the dynamics of how multiple land uses in the same district operate throughout a given day.

The study is based on planning ahead for ongoing and continued future growth in downtown so that decisions may be made to manage downtown’s parking supply appropriately. To do this, the study has considered both current parking demand and future parking demand.

The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Parking Generation manual, 5th Edition, is the current national standard in determining parking demand. ITE

standards are based on national site-survey data, and a typical analysis takes the size of the development and multiplies it with a “standard” peak parking generation rate - for example, 3 spaces per 1,000 square feet of office or 2 spaces per residential unit. A typical analysis also assumes that each use or building needs its own spaces and that those spaces are utilized at a constant rate throughout the day.

ITE parking rates and methodologies, however, often do not reflect the actual parking behavior or demand, especially in mixed-use downtown areas. In Roswell, the findings of the utilization counting effort suggest that parking can be “shared” amongst



### KEY TAKEAWAYS: UTILIZATION AND DEMAND

- High utilization tends to occur in desirable locations where parking demand is also high. However, demand may actually be much greater.
- When supply is not set up to meet this demand easily, parking customers sense that there is not enough parking (the ‘perceived problem’ concept discussed previously).
- **As the estimated demand is compared with utilization, a mismatch between supply and demand is clear. There is plenty of parking, but it is not all suited to serving demand at given points of the day.**

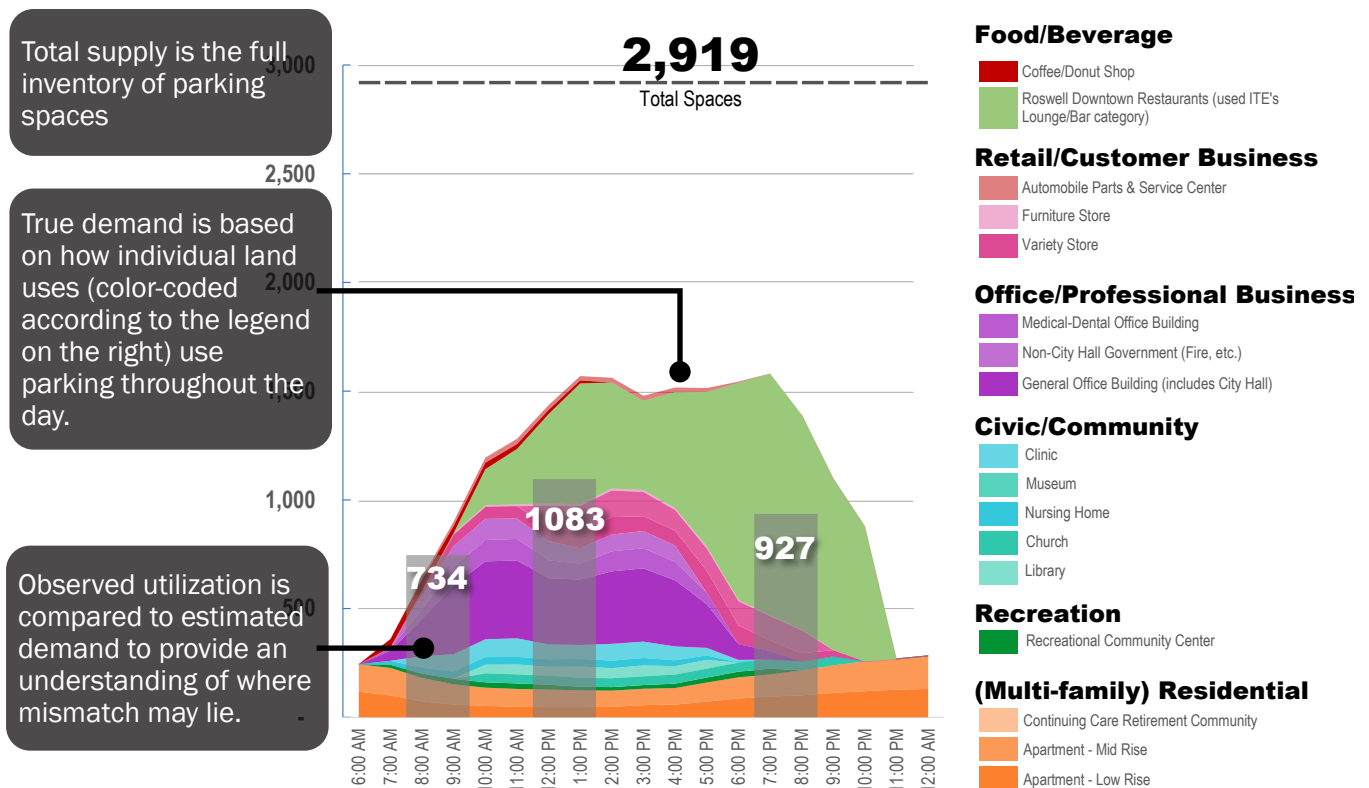
different uses—even without formal agreements between property owners—simply by virtue of the high amount of availability throughout the day. However, as the inventory discussion in Section 4 emphasizes, many businesses and establishments already share parking, either in a single lot common to multiple establishments active at the same time, or between establishments each active at different times. For example, an office may have a high demand until 5 p.m., while a restaurant may open for dinner only after 5 p.m. The peak periods of activity between these two uses thus do not overlap, and point to the possibility of both using the same supply.

Other factors make parking in downtown Roswell different. Customers, employees, and visitors can visit multiple destinations on foot and only park once, a concept known in the transportation planning practice as internal capture. For example, an employee who

walks to get a cup of coffee while at the office is an “internally captured” trip—and does not require his or her own parking space. Indeed, as noted in the results to the parking study’s public survey, 75 percent of respondents want to be able to do this. As Roswell’s downtown becomes more walkable through ongoing streetscape and pedestrian enhancement projects, there is less and less need for every trip to be made by car, even if downtown visitors continue to arrive that way. The ability to park once and visit multiple locations on foot can reduce parking demand just as it can reduce traffic.

DDA Board members worked with the study team to estimate an amount of new growth and development to be included in the study’s representation of future demand. However, this continued to evolve over the course of the study’s progress, and the study team incorporated new levels of future growth. The DDA

**FIGURE 15 Understanding the Study’s Demand Estimate Graphs**



emphasized that the relatively compact study area meant that future growth and development would not be continuous and ongoing, and that the relative scarcity of downtown sites meant that a total amount of redevelopment could be reasonably estimated.

## ESTIMATING DEMAND: THE SHARED PARKING MODEL

The study also distinguishes between the unshared demand that results from all parking facilities exclusively supporting a single use and the real demand that reflects when different land uses truly demand their full range of parking—a dynamic influenced by operating hours and when the full range of parking users is at work, visiting businesses, or at home.

The figures on the following pages illustrate these estimated demand levels and how they compare, not only to one another but also to actual observed parking counts.

However, in reality, each of these uses only experiences peak parking demand at certain times of the day – and other times demand might be substantially reduced. For example, office parking demand peaks during the work day and drops off almost completely at night. Conversely, housing parking demand peaks at night and drops during the day. These uses and their parking demands are thus complementary such that they should share some parking spaces within the overall downtown supply and not impact satisfaction of their respective demand at peak times.

The parking demand model is built based on the total built floor area by land use according to national average demand rates from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). Reduction factors were used to simulate building vacancies. These were derived from past national studies, the U.S. Census, and assumptions from knowledge of the study area.

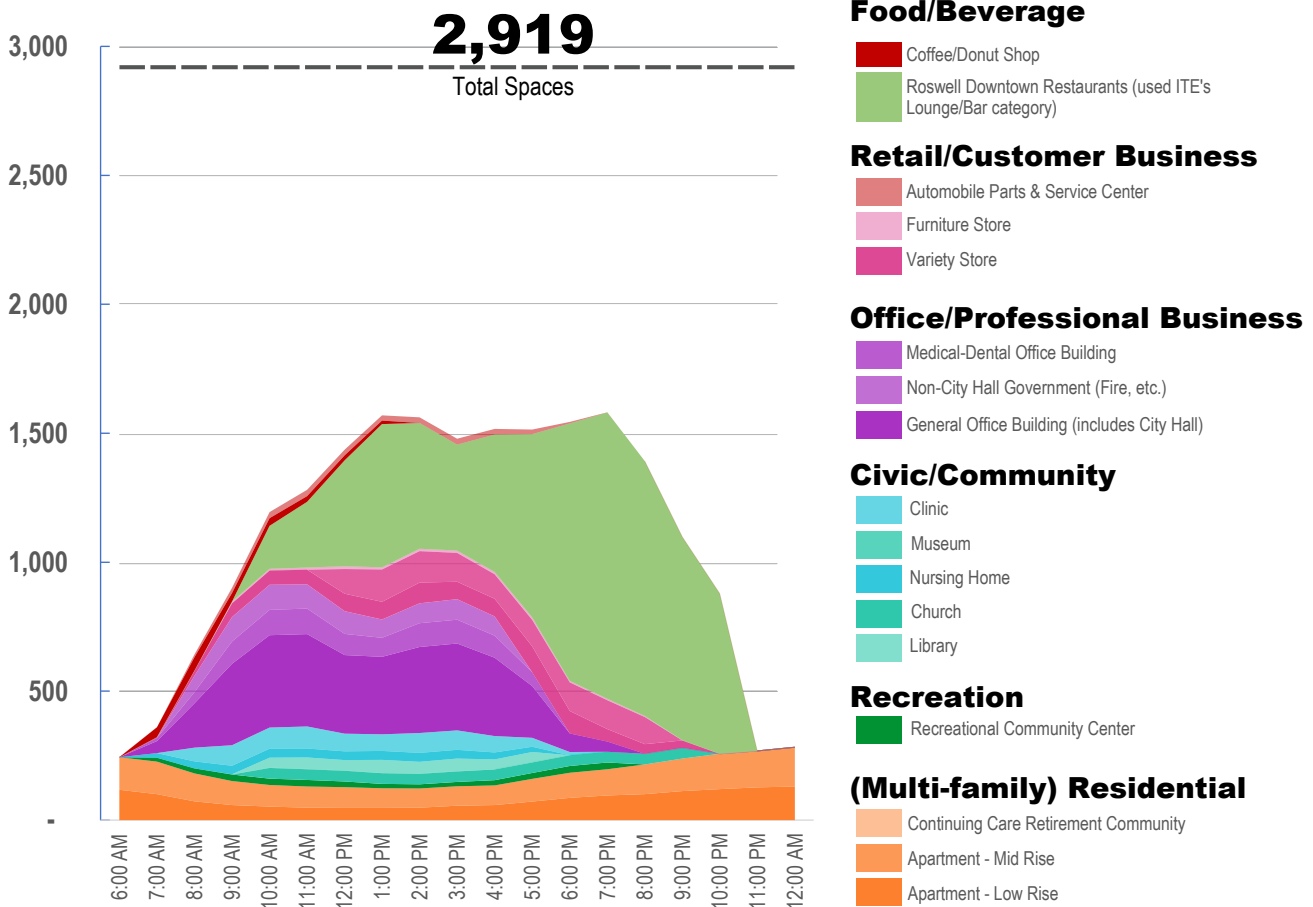
While the models demonstrate, in theory, which land uses might be able to share parking supply, **where** the shared supply could be located is dependent upon existing regulations, ownership, the proximity of the

type of potentially usable spaces to the destinations they should support, and other factors.

The graphs shown on the following pages depict parking demand according to Roswell’s land uses (and potential parking availability throughout the day) in the context of both current requirements and future scenarios. These are organized as follows.

- Overall Shared Parking Model, Full Study Area (Figure 16): explains how the modeled demand compares to overall supply
- Overall Model with Utilization (Figure 17): compares modeled demand with actual counted utilization
- Overall Model with Inventory Detail (Figure 18): compares modeled demand with the specific types of parking available in the inventory
- Core Focus Area Model with Utilization (Figure 19): compares the core focus area with observed utilization in that area
- Core Focus Area Model with Inventory Detail (Figure 20): compares the core focus area modeled demand with the breakdown of types of parking available in the inventory
- Core Focus Area Model with West Alley Development (Figure 21): augments inventory and demand with what will be added (for both) from the West Alley development
- Core Focus Area Model with Choice Gateway Development (Figure 22): augments inventory and demand with what will be added (for both) from the Choice Gateway development

**FIGURE 16 Estimated Parking Demand for the Full Study Area, Typical Weekday**



### CURRENT OVERALL STUDY CONDITIONS: FULL STUDY AREA

As shown above, the current downtown study area land-use mix means that the current parking supply holds considerable excess capacity both during and after work hours. However, this total study area supply (and assumed demand) includes a series of land uses that do not generate high amounts of parking, and it is based on the larger aggregated study area. For information specific to the downtown core, refer to Figure 19.

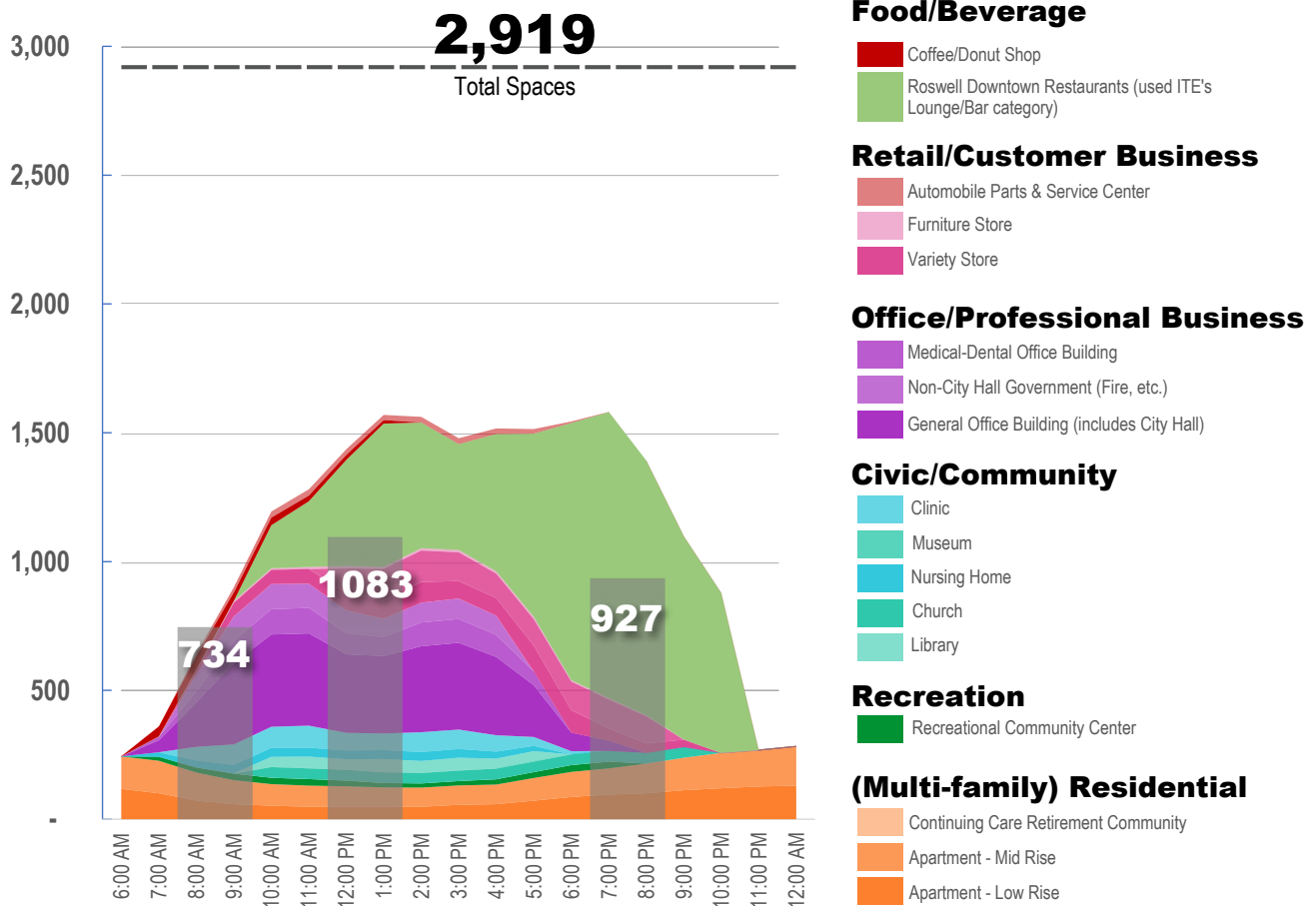
Figures 17 and 18 on the following pages provide more detail on how this estimated demand compares to observed parking utilization, and to the more nuanced breakdown of parking supply by major use types (as discussed in Section 4).

### Assumptions for this Model

- The study team for this parking assessment translated available zoning and existing land use data from the City of Roswell into an estimate of leasable square footage for a variety of land uses.
- For restaurants, the study used an ITE land use category that reflected the emphasis on evening dinner hours in restaurants (Lounge/Bar), as opposed to other restaurant types heavier on lunchtime uses.
- Most apartments have their own parking and their related demand is likely met through supply not captured in the 2,919 spaces in the total model supply.



**FIGURE 17 Estimated Parking Demand for the Full Study Area, Typical Weekday**



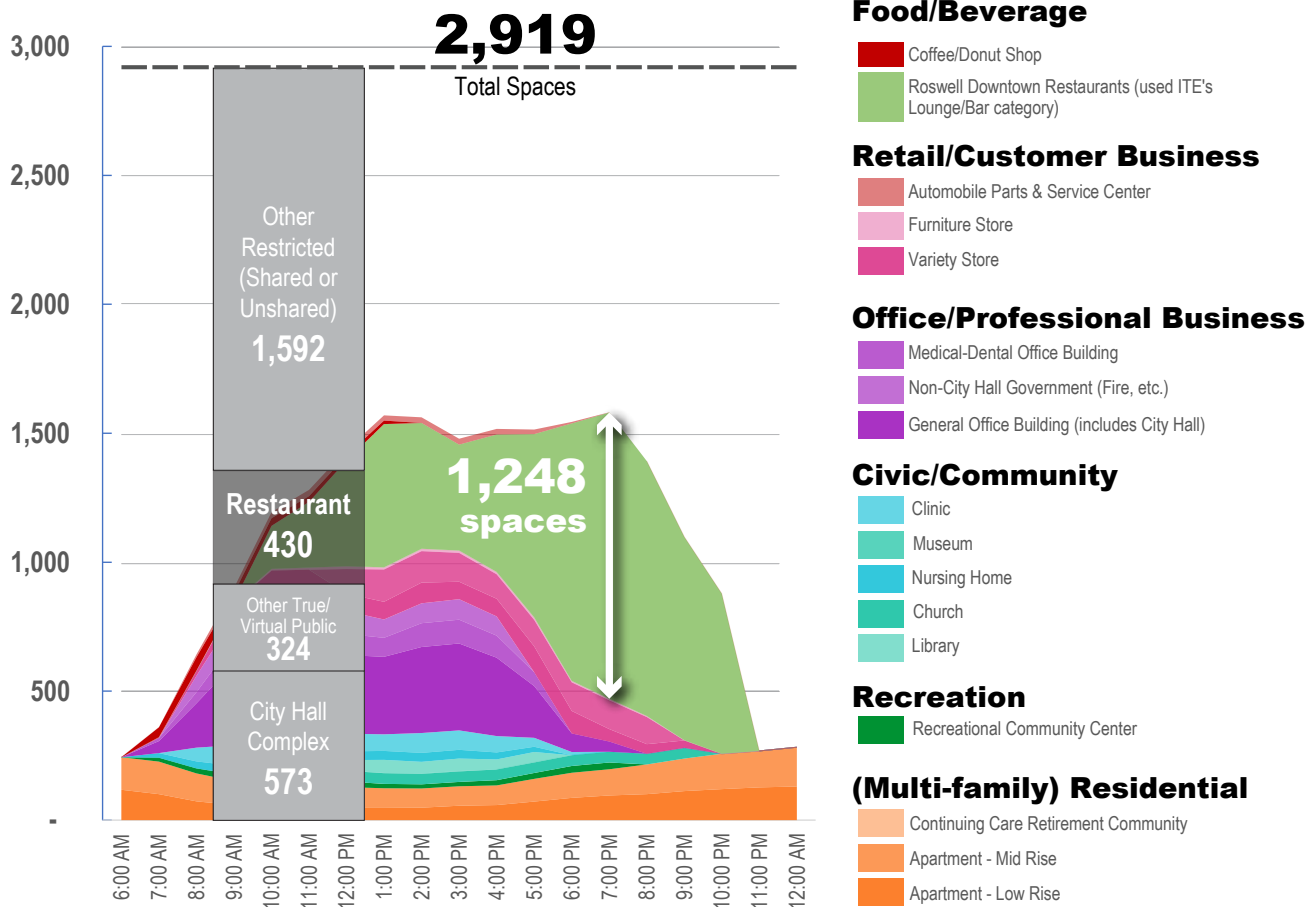
## MODELED CURRENT DEMAND COMPARED WITH UTILIZATION

This graph depicts the modeled demand from Figure 16 and compares it to actual observed utilization. What is notable in this graph is that observed utilization is generally consistent with the model for the morning period of occupancy counting, but less in the mid-day and evening periods. This may be due to numerous factors such as the prevalence of Uber/Lyft use for traveling to downtown (revealed in the parking assessment's public survey as the second-most common method of travel to downtown after driving oneself) and the use of parking between multiple uses, especially since the close proximity of many downtown Roswell restaurants to one another might replace the need for driving and parking with other means of travel.

## Assumptions for this Model

- As detailed earlier in this section of the report, the utilization numbers reflect a calibration approach used to adjust for reductions in economic activity due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Actual observed parking, as noted by the bars overlaying the graph above, is just that—a simple aggregate of cars parked in spaces. It does not attempt to understand what factors may be influencing demand, such as ride-hail (Uber/Lyft) travel, nearby residents walking to parking, or other factors. If those factors have reduced parking demand below the levels supposed in the ITE-based model methodology, *then there is less demand.*

**FIGURE 18 Estimated Parking Demand for the Full Study Area, Typical Weekday**



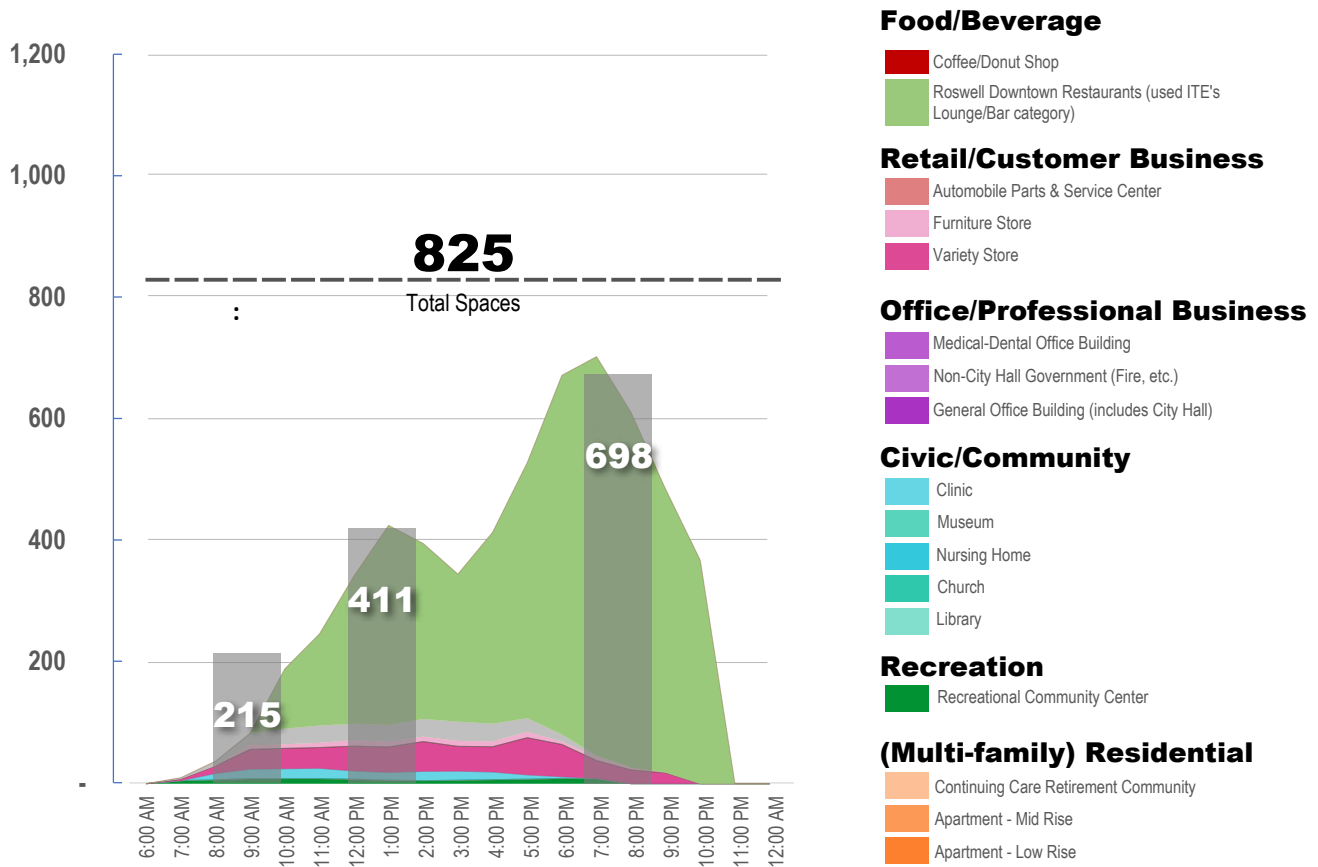
## UNDERSTANDING RESTAURANTS: THE LARGEST DRIVER OF DEMAND

At the time period where estimated restaurant demand is greatest, these restaurants would drive demand for over 1,200 parking spaces. The restaurant properties themselves only control 430 spaces, but the intricate network of sharing arrangements, valet parking contracts, use of public parking, and demand-reducing measures such as Uber and Lyft do not mean that restaurants are not meeting their visitor demand—this simply means that restaurants are reliant on the complex system of Roswell’s parking, with little extra room for overflow or special events.

## Assumptions for this Model

- The ‘Other Restricted’ parking spaces shown in this graph include many restaurants who use parking owned by other properties and businesses, but through a special arrangement that may not always be immediately apparent to visitors.
- The ‘Restaurant’ parking refers to parking specifically on restaurant properties. This is not the only parking that restaurant customers may use, but it represents less than the levels of demand the restaurants are estimated to generate.
- City Hall parking is identified separately because of its geographic location away from other parking and businesses.

**FIGURE 19 Estimated Demand and Utilization in the Core Focus Area**



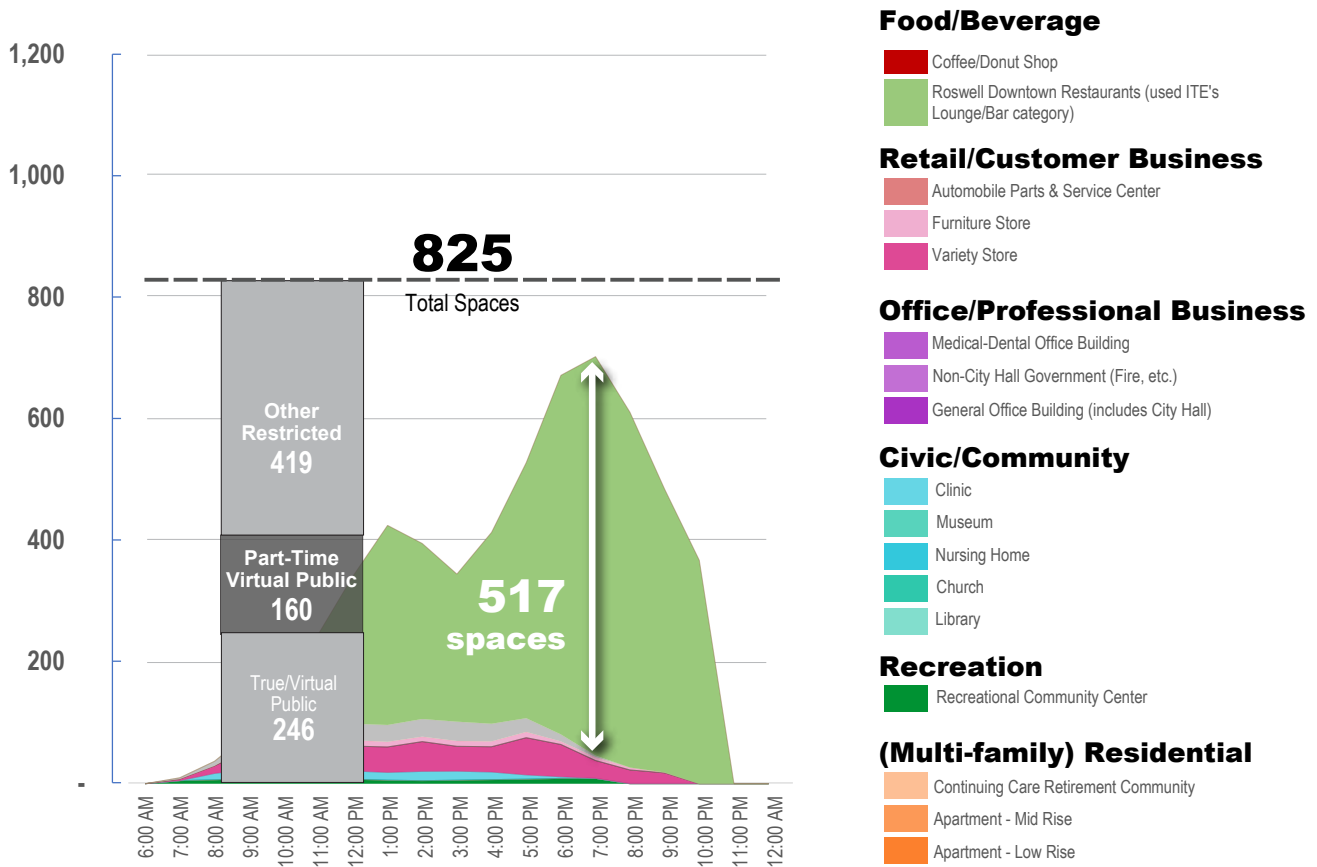
### THE CORE FOCUS AREA

Within the core focus area described in previous sections, restaurants are the primary land use but also far and away the dominant driver of parking demand. This core area offers a useful example of understanding how the dynamics of Roswell’s complex parking inventory work. First of all, demand and observed utilization (calibrated to account for COVID-19 irregularities) are notably consistent with one another, reflecting the high evening level of use. But perhaps more importantly, the observed demand is generally at the 85 percent level of occupancy considered to be optimal.

### Assumptions for this Model

- Core focus area is as delineated in Section 4. It is intended to incorporate the core area of lower Canton Street (generally consistent with the Shopfront land use category as designated by the City) and the parking that supports it.
- Restaurants are the primary drivers of demand in this area.

**FIGURE 20 Estimated Demand and Supply Detail in the Core Focus Area**



## THE CORE FOCUS AREA

Restaurant demand is met in this area by a mix of public or virtual public parking, although 160 of these virtual public spaces only operate on a part-time basis and may not always be available should restaurants host other events. And while the area includes over 200 spaces that are available for public use all of the time, this is less than half of the total demand that restaurants generate. As with the full downtown model shown in Figure 16, this suggests that restaurants are meeting demand by use of their own parking or more complex arrangements that share other restricted parking for particular purposes.

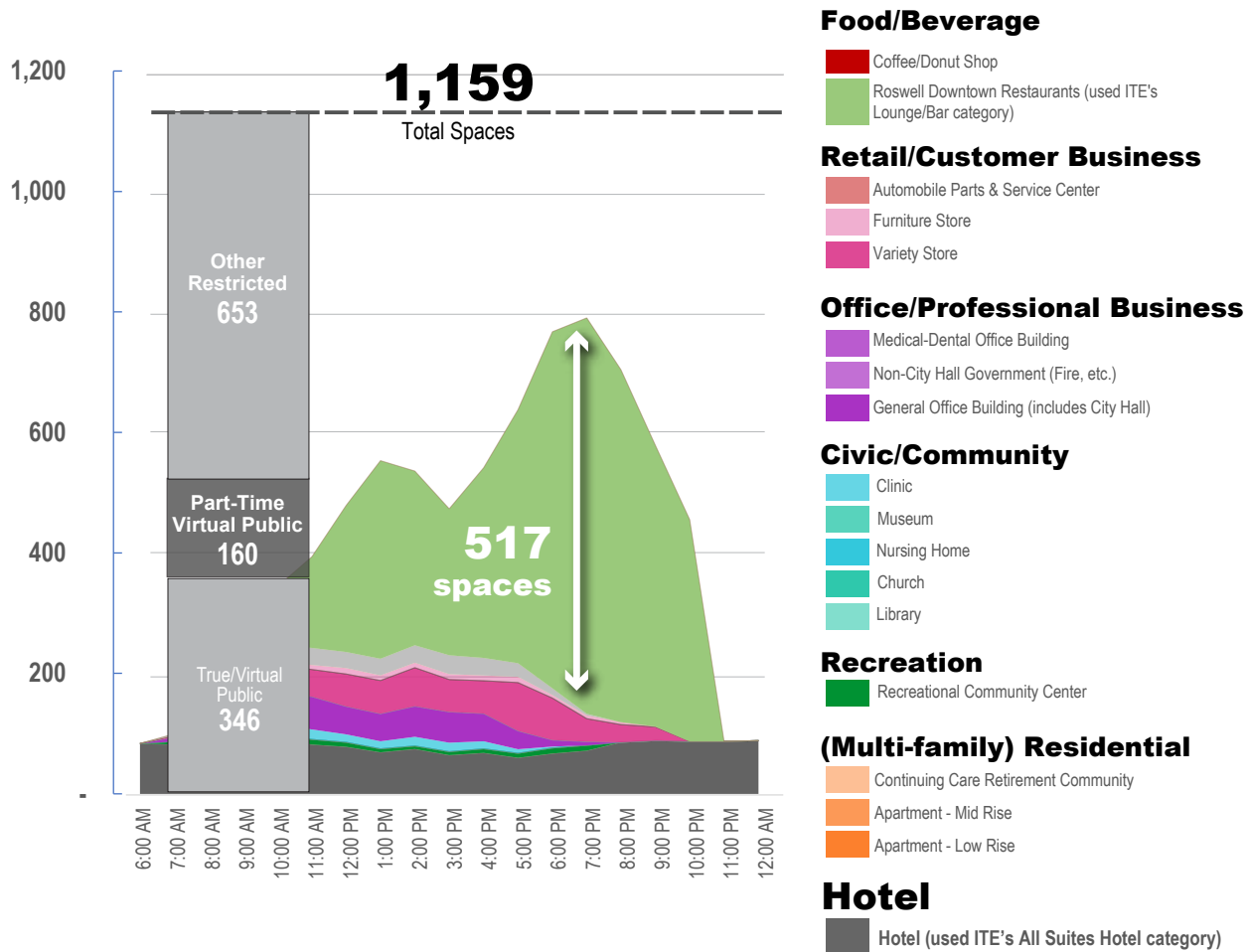
Overall, the system seems to be supporting restaurant demand, but it is not always intuitive to visitors and users. This points to how Roswell's downtown parking might be approached and managed differently.

## Assumptions for this Model

- Core focus area is as delineated in Section 4. It is intended to incorporate the core area of lower Canton Street (generally consistent with the Shopfront land use category as designated by the City) and the parking that supports it.
- Restaurants are the primary drivers of demand in this area.
- As discussed previously, the model used specialized categories from ITE's Parking Generation manual to more closely resembling the daily business patterns of downtown Roswell businesses, especially its restaurants.



**FIGURE 21 Considering Future Development with Parking Provided**



## HOW DEVELOPMENT CHANGES THE DYNAMIC: DEVELOPMENT WITH PARKING

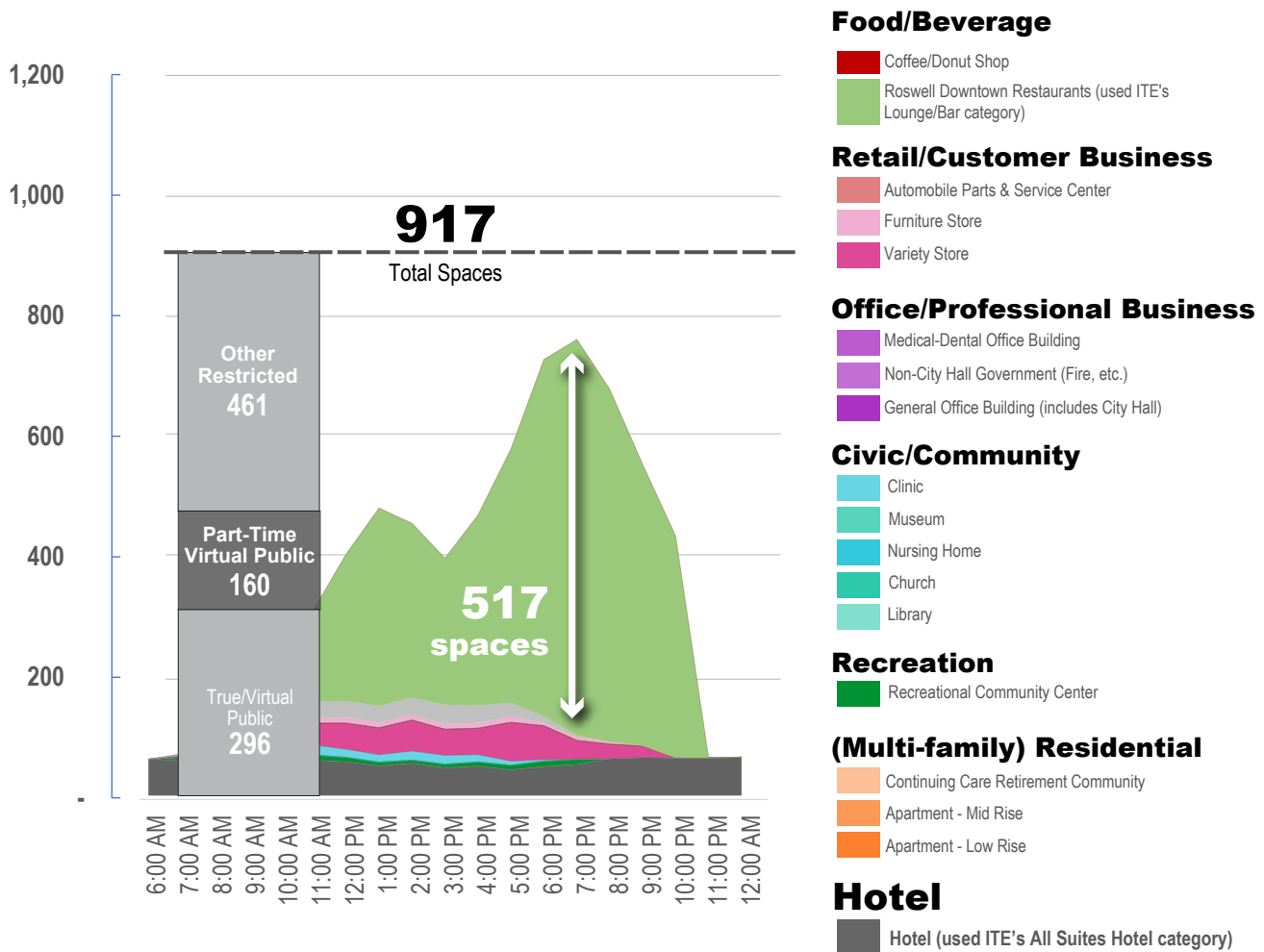
This model scenario looks ahead at future development and considers the West Alley development that come to the DDA for review in 2020 and 2021. It is based on a hotel development at the south end of Canton Street in which on-site parking would be built to serve the hotel and supporting commercial uses.

Adding this parking provides a much greater supply of restricted parking in the core focus area, but also greatly extends the gap between estimated demand at its peak and total supply.

## Assumptions for this Model

- The added future development in this scenario is focused on a hotel with supporting commercial (office and retail) space added. It adds UDC-required parking (324 spaces) based on the following:
  - 125 rooms
  - 16,100 SF retail space
  - 22,500 SF office space
- Development is also providing 100 spaces to the City for public use.
- The development removed approximately 90 existing spaces from surface lots on which it was constructed, for a net gain of 334 spaces.

**FIGURE 22 Considering Future Development with Minimal Parking Provided**



### HOW DEVELOPMENT CHANGES THE DYNAMIC: DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT PARKING

The study also considered the Choice Gateway proposal with a smaller development footprint that adds substantially less parking on-site, but also adds fewer daytime-based uses and parking associated with those.

While the net addition of parking from this development scenario increases total supply, it does not leave a large gap between estimated demand at its peak and the total supply amount.

This suggests that adding land uses that drive overall demand without considering parking supply will continue to add stress to the current parking system.

### Assumptions for this Model

- The added future development in this scenario is focused on a hotel with supporting retail space added. It adds 90 parking spaces based on the following:
  - 90 rooms
  - 3,200 SF retail space
- Development is also providing 50 spaces to the City for public use.
- The development removed approximately 48 existing spaces from surface lots on which it was constructed, for a net gain of 92 spaces



# 6

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### HOW DOWNTOWN ROSWELL CAN ADDRESS ITS PARKING CHALLENGES

This study's key finding is that Downtown Roswell's current mix of land uses would be better served by a greater supply of publicly-available parking during the times when its demand is highest. This does not necessarily mean that more parking must be constructed, but it does mean that more parking must be made available to the general public and not restricted only to users of a certain business or establishment.

#### 6.1 MAJOR CHALLENGES TO DOWNTOWN'S PARKING

The analysis presented in the previous section on parking utilization helps to demonstrate that although the parking system may be satisfying parking demand today, this appears to be based on several overlapping circumstances, and some of these are tenuous. The City and DDA should begin taking steps to add certainty to how the parking system operates and is available to users.

#### PARKING IS FRAGMENTED

Roswell's greater downtown area, as explored in this study, features 2,919 spaces over 120 parking lots and street blocks, an average of around 22 spaces per lot. However, this ranges from the City Hall parking lot that was included in the study area, with over 400 spaces total, to specific business parking as small as four spaces. This is a large number of specific parking facilities relative to the total supply of parking in downtown, and adds to a perception among consumers that the parking system is disjointed and inadequate.

Adding to this is the separate issue of physical separation. Although the downtown study area included a large area east of Alpharetta Street (Georgia State Route 9), including Roswell's City Hall and Library parking lot system, the hub of economic activity and the greatest concentration of demand-driving parking uses is west of SR 9 along Canton Street. The physical separation that this presents was reflected in parking utilization—despite such a large supply of parking at

City Hall with no price or limits on time a customer can stay, this parking remained largely unused after business hours (and never even reached 75% levels of use during business hours).

## **PARKING IS COMPLEX**

In addition to physical separation of downtown's parking into many small lots and facilities, the system is remarkably complex, with multiple different 'classes' of parking use based on ownership, permissions to users, and pricing. For purposes of this study, there are at least five primary types of parking facility, though these could be defined differently based on a reader's perspective—something that only affirms how complex and non-uniform the parking system really is.

## **DEMAND IS CONCENTRATED**

Roswell's parking demand, as noted previously, is the function of many land uses that make up downtown's existing development. However, what is notable about its downtown is the prevalence of food and beverage-based businesses (mostly restaurants, although this broader term is meant to encompass wine bars, cafes, and other establishments that might not use the term restaurant first and foremost). This concentration is a primary reason for downtown Roswell's popularity, and has been for many years—its restaurants have achieved regional acclaim throughout and beyond the Atlanta metropolitan area and attract clientele from much more than the immediate neighborhood. However, food and beverage businesses are among the greatest generators of parking demand as a function of their leasable space—considerably more than office or even retail land uses—and this demand tends to be concentrated around typical meal times. In addition, several Roswell restaurants operate on a limited service basis, such as dinner-only.

An observer of downtown Roswell's downtown could easily articulate other challenges specific to a business or establishment, and the stakeholder outreach conversations that the study led broached

many focused challenges related to a particular supply of parking or challenge. But most of these particular challenges can be tied back to these three major concepts.

## **6.2 STRATEGY APPROACHES FOR DOWNTOWN ROSWELL**

This section lays out three potential approaches for how this may be accomplished. The three principal strategy approaches this study recommends are detailed on the following pages.



### **KEY TAKEAWAYS: STUDY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **Downtown Roswell needs more parking that is publicly available.**
- Adding parking, whether through development, more 'virtual public' supply, or simply constructing new supply can help as long as the system is making parking permissions clear, simple, and consistent.
- **The City and DDA should adopt a more focused strategy on addressing this public supply need, and take on the supporting efforts discussed in this section needed to add to downtown's public supply.**



## USE MORE EXISTING PARKING AS 'VIRTUAL PUBLIC' PARKING

The first approach option that this study recommends is that the City replicate the model currently in place with the Green Street lot north of the Roswell Fire Station, entering into an agreement with a property owner to make the land available for public parking use. This is a useful system in that it takes advantage of existing parking supply and does not require costly construction, though the City will need to reserve funds for the program and set goals for how much parking to achieve.

Based on current lease agreements, the virtual public parking currently made available in this manner is leased for a wide range of costs, and each leased

facility has different time periods associated with the parking becoming 'virtual public'.

Critically, none of these parking leases is permanent, with the Green Street Lot lease contract operating on a month-to-month basis and the other two facility leases due to expire within one year of this study's completion. Taking this approach would also entail entering into longer-term leases that allow more certainty in the parking system that these spaces will be available. The City should prioritize searching out new candidate facilities that will allow longer-term options, although in the absence of these candidates should engage in a more regular discussion with property owners

FIGURE 23 Adding Parking to the Virtual Public Supply



to understand potential changes to leases. Although the virtual public parking-based approach may represent a lower cost to the City from year to year, its trade-off is that parking supply in the City may move around, creating challenges to building long-term user familiarity and requiring more regular updates to parking inventory information.

This study recommends that in addition to the parking, the City develop a more formal classification system for parking facilities that helps users to understand what is available and when. A concept as simple as a color-coding with accompanying signage could be used and would allow the City to make updates as needed. This recommendation is closely related to signage, wayfinding, and information as recommended in later parts of this section. With more public parking

spread over a larger number of parking facilities, having a standard system of classifying parking and letting customers know what parking they may use will be critically important.

It is also important to reiterate that the City will need to devote staff resources to this position not only to administer it, but also to proactively promote it. Reaching a goal of 100 spaces per year in the virtual public supply will require ongoing coordination, partnership, and selling of the program to attract potential participants. This may be as simple as publicizing the City's decision to expand this program and a reserved budget for it.

### Why Would the City Choose This Approach?

- It is relatively low-cost and allows the City to add parking supply more 'nimble' throughout Downtown in relatively small increments.
- It takes advantage of existing parking and allows the City to use an existing contract structure that has proven successful.
- It can be more easily tailored to take advantage of 'down periods' where parking demand at a given facility declines along with its associated land use's activity ending for the day (as opposed to a development-based approach where new parking must be built and is always present).
- It is set up on a limited-term lease basis where parking is most needed, and the City may choose to end or not to renew leases should spot concentrations of demand in that area ebb over time.

### Roles/Actions for the City with this Strategic Approach

- Determine a fixed price to offer to potential lease partners. Existing virtual public leases have covered a broad range of payment terms, perhaps depending on tax-exempt status of property (such as RUMC) or proximity to high demand locations (Hagan property). The City should set a price schedule so that fair and consistent offers can be made.
- Establish an annual budget for the leasing and maintenance based on a target of at least 100 new spaces brought into virtual public parking per year.
- At a minimum these should allow parking after 6pm, Wednesday through Sunday.
- Set a goal of preserving at least 400 virtual-public spaces over a five-year period.
- Dedicate staff resources to administer this program.
- Set a goal for an ultimate total of 800 virtual public spaces to be available during peak periods.

**STRATEGY  
APPROACH 2**

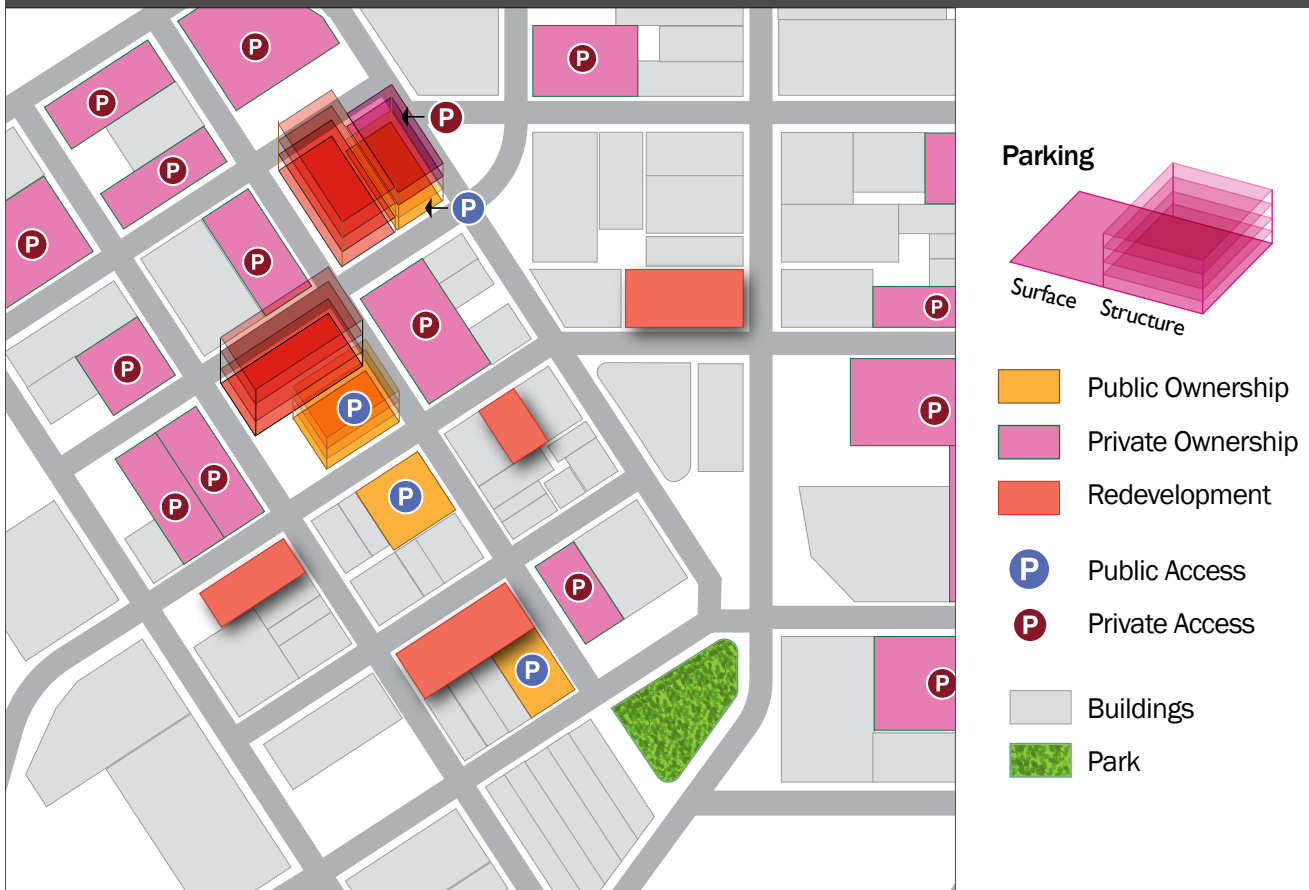
**ADD NEW PARKING FACILITIES IN TARGET LOCATIONS**

The second approach to adding more parking is to construct it, though this is not as simple as building new dedicated parking facilities—especially free-standing ones. This concept draws on the development scenarios discussed in the preceding section on future parking demand and recognizes that redevelopment opportunities in downtown are likely to be the most appropriate ways to add new parking. Downtown Roswell’s historic character is a key part of its appeal as a destination, and the City’s Unified Development Ordinance and other similar regulations have long protected this with development and building design standards. Parking garages would be limited in their height and massing, would require special treatments

to bring them into conformity with the general look and feel of downtown, and would likely require acquisition of new properties in downtown to be dedicated solely to parking.

This approach to adding parking is tied more to the idea that privately-constructed parking provided to support development projects could be made available, at least in part, to support downtown’s greater supply of uses, functioning as virtual public parking or even true public parking (should the City want to lease, purchase, or reserve a portion of the new parking supply). As the development scenarios in Section 5 illustrate, this becomes easier when development projects are adding

**FIGURE 24 Adding Parking through Joint Development Opportunities**



parking primarily tied to daytime uses, as the demand from these uses declines into the evening when downtown's food-and-beverage based demand is at its highest.

However, achieving this kind of parking addition is a longer-term strategy involving a much greater degree of planning, coordination with developers and property owners, and potentially even City- and DDA-led positioning of sites for development. This study does not explore the specific channels by which the City and DDA could advance sites for private development, nor does it identify sites that may serve as acquisitions purely to support parking, though it does outline the areas of parking demand where a nearby facility is likely to have the greatest utility.

### **Why Would the City Choose This Approach?**

- Development adds parking based on zoning requirements; City may have options to partner with developers to provide additional parking at the time of construction.
- This approach is likely to add larger increments of parking to downtown's supply, and at focused 'hub' locations.
- It is easier to manage parking between land uses in larger facilities.
- A structured approach to selecting, acquiring, and positioning sites for development allows the City more influence in how development (and parking supporting it) fits into downtown's built environment.
- More development in downtown helps to balance City tax base burden overall and bring relief to residential property owners

### **Roles/Actions for the City with this Strategic Approach**

- Identify a minimum of three sites to position for future development
- Establish funding, through bonds, TAD, or other potential public finance mechanism, to acquire sites and/or allow DDA to acquire sites to position for joint development
- Assemble properties as necessary
- Engage developers to understand interest and willingness to partner
- Perform a basic feasibility study on sites to determine suitability for parking facilities
- Perform a real estate market study/assessment to identify potential development projects
- Amend UDC site development standards as needed to allow additional parking to be added to support public use



## HYBRID APPROACH: VIRTUAL AND NEW SUPPLY

In addition to the two approaches described previously, the City and DDA can always adopt both and pursue a multi-pronged strategy that adds to public parking supply through lease agreements in the short term while identifying parking opportunities in the long term.

This may be the most prudent approach in that it prioritizes the short-term action of recommitting to a virtual public parking model that may be easier to attain in the short term and that can more quickly spread public parking throughout the downtown district. It also keeps a larger focus on making substantial additions to supply.

However, many of the specific factors in Approach 1 should be retained: the City should treat the virtual public supply program as a focused initiative and not simply exercise it on an opportunity basis. The City

should also be deliberate in researching and selecting locations for these agreements, but will need to set prices at standard levels to ensure fairness and to allow budget planning and forecasting to be kept sustainable.

The key strategic approach to both forms of supply is to understand the dynamics of parking demand throughout the day, as documented in Section 5 of this report. It is the recommendation of this study that the City would not be making a good investment in constructing new parking supply simply to serve the concentrated levels of peak demand in downtown Roswell unless it also had a strategic approach for ensuring that parking saw more utilization and served more demand throughout a longer period of the day. Likewise, virtual public leases that will allow publicly available parking only at limited periods may not be the most useful for the City to pursue.

### Why Would the City Choose This Approach?

- Offers a way of combining short-term additions with a longer-term focus on reshaping downtown and achieving more parking supply that is publicly accessible
- Should short-term leases expire without renewal, the City is not going in reverse on public parking availability
- Leasing parking for virtual public supply can emphasize enhancements and upgrades to make parking more desirable, which may increase its land value and/or development potential.
- Leasing for virtual public supply can also be a form of land-banking that allows a property owner to position sites for redevelopment (which may then engage the City as a potential joint developer) while generating short-term cash flow.

### Roles/Actions for the City with this Strategic Approach

- Identify a minimum of three sites to position for future development
- Establish funding, through bonds, TAD, or other potential public finance mechanism, to acquire sites and/or allow DDA to acquire sites to position for joint development
- Establish an annual budget for the leasing and maintenance based on a target of at least 50 new spaces brought into virtual public parking per year.
- At a minimum these should allow parking after 6pm, Wednesday through Sunday
- Set a goal of preserving at least 200 virtual-public spaces over a five-year period

## 6.3 BEST-PRACTICE APPROACHES FOR DOWNTOWN ROSWELL

Regardless of the direction the City chooses to take in making more public supply available, there are also best-practice approaches it can take regardless. This study recommends that these alone will not provide a long-term path to a user-friendly, flexible parking system if downtown continues to grow and develop as it has over the last 20 years. However, these are sound policy principles that should be used regardless of any larger approach to adding parking supply. They would help to promote availability and streamline use today.

### MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

The City of Roswell should adopt and implement a performance-based parking program. Performance-based management adjusts rates and regulations to make it as easy as possible to find a parking space, but critically, to provide availability in high-demand locations by a system of incentives and choices. The two primary stages of regulation—time limits and price—should each take effect when downtown facilities reach an appropriate level of use, as described in Table 3 below. Consistent availability, not additional revenue, is the central goal.

Throughout this study, a general rate of 85 percent occupancy has been used as a benchmark for optimum utilization: parking is not largely underused at that rate, but there is also parking available (generally one space in eight) such that an arriving parking customer should always be able to find something.

Tables 6 and 7 to the right illustrate two recommended frameworks for the City to use in managing its public parking. These follow a regular, systematic approach to applying price and regulations based on regularly-observed utilization patterns. When utilization reaches and consistently performs at high levels, it is time to apply management controls (regulations or price) that introduce trade-offs for users who may wish

**TABLE 6** Thresholds for Applying Time Limits and Pricing

Facility Type	Proposed Time Limit Threshold	Proposed Pricing Threshold
On-Street Parking	Utilization on an entire block surpasses 75% for at least 6 hours per day	Utilization on an entire block surpasses 85% for at least 6 hours per day
Off-Street Parking Lots	Utilization on an entire block surpasses 75% for at least 8 hours per day	Utilization on an entire block surpasses 85% for at least 8 hours per day
Off-Street Parking Garages (if constructed in the future)	No threshold: time limits not used	Utilization in public spaces surpasses 85% for at least 8 hours per day

**TABLE 7** Monitoring and Reporting Schedule for Parking Management

Facility Type	Collect Utilization	Revisit Regulations
On-Street Parking	Every 3 months	Every 6 months
Off-Street Parking Lots	Every 3 months	Every 6 months
Off-Street Parking Garages (if constructed in the future)	Every 6 months	Every 12 months

to stay in a space longer, pay less, or both. Parking that is highly utilized tends to reflect high levels of demand in the immediate areas where that parking is located, although it is as important for that high-demand parking to have availability as less desirable parking. Parking customers should not perceive that the convenience they desire is not an option in a downtown's parking system.

## REGULAR MONITORING AND REPORTING

Likewise, the City should commit to a regular monitoring of utilization to ensure these management approaches can work. The City will need to update its data to understand when proposed management thresholds are met and when to apply them. The parking study recommends a regular review of utilization along with ongoing parking enforcement responsibilities to be able to periodically adjust its management schedule. This is detailed in Table 7.

This study recommends that the City collect utilization every three months for on-street and off-street lot parking facilities. This is relatively frequent, but important to allow understanding of seasonal differences and—especially in response to COVID-19's economic impacts, to follow trends in economic performance and recovery. The City should use the utilization counts as a way of seeing whether high utilization is an occasional occurrence or an established pattern; it should implement the right management accordingly.

## SETTING PRICE FOR PARKING

Roswell's downtown has surpassed the 'price barrier' in how it manages user demand, with many facilities and the Canton Street core's on-street spaces charging users for parking. This is politically difficult and reflects the high level of desirability of downtown's businesses and attractions. It also underscores that parking customers are often more motivated by convenience and proximity than cost, especially if payment methods are made simple and clear.

However, where prices should be set is also a part of regulation. The 'right' price is always the lowest price that will achieve an availability target, and when parking remains in consistently high use after a particular price level is set, it is often time to raise that price to reflect the high demand and achieve availability. Adjusting rates over time—up where demand is higher and down where demand is lower—will allow Roswell to better distribute parking demand across its downtown and make more efficient use of existing spaces. In general, the City should treat its on-street spaces as its most valuable, as these provide critical customer access to retail businesses in a manner that is convenient and desirable; off-street parking should provide a cheaper, long-term option for visitors who still want convenience but wish to stay for longer periods.



### KEY TAKEAWAYS: BEST PRACTICES FOR GOOD PARKING MANAGEMENT

- Many of Roswell's current approaches already follow best practices in parking management.
- Not much needs to be 'fixed,' but a larger effort to consolidate and streamline more of the system is important.
- The City's best contributions beyond the major actions outlined in the three strategy approaches should be focused on making the system more legible and sharing information in real-time.

## 6.4 SUPPORTING APPROACHES

In any case, the City can and should take additional supporting steps to facilitate easier parking in downtown and make the overall system better integrated and more user-friendly. These are detailed as follows, with potential example ideas for the City to use to address these ideas.

### CLASSIFICATION AND SIGNAGE

Visitors to downtown Roswell today are met with a complex array of parking options and, unless they are familiar with the parking system and the options they might have within it, may not understand where they are allowed to park. To this end, the City and DDA should work closely with property owners to implement a standard system of signage around parking in the city, with sufficient supporting signage explaining the system.

This assessment recommends that a simple, streamlined parking system be put in place, and this should feature no more than three classes of parking. Public parking should always be available any time of the week. Part-time public parking should be signposted to reflect the variable status and prompt users to check signage to understand whether they can park there and until what times. And reserved parking should be set separately to let visitors know that parking is only for users of a particular business or establishment. It may be used during the time of a visitor's stay, but not to allow park-once visits to other destinations throughout downtown.

The study recommends a simple system of color-coded signage to guide users to facilities they can use. This allows them to understand options and choose other locations with certainty that they are parking where allowed for their purposes.

### ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCES

In addition, it will be important for the City to enhance its current electronic resources providing information to potential parking users. At present, the City operates a website that illustrates locations of select parking facilities intended for public use, along with printed or static materials. However, these are not immediately apparent to many users and not amenable to real-time decision making when visitors are looking for parking locations. This includes two primary approaches:

- **Mobile app.** With ParkMobile introducing apps Roswell's parking payment, users have already grown accustomed to electronic payment and information based on their location. The City had begun development of a mobile app to provide more information on parking options, though at present the only resource for locating parking is a web resource on the City's website. This is not immediately accessible or apparent to users, and in any case does not feature a full inventory of downtown parking to help users understand what is publicly accessible and what is not.
- **Updates to website.** The City should mirror updates to the app on its website and make more regular updates to its GIS inventory of parking data. This study collected and updated inventory and utilization information using GIS, which will now be available for this purpose. Future updates to inventory and utilization can help the City share information on general trends with parking (such as a particular facility's tendencies to be full, lightly used, or full at certain times). This can allow a visitor to downtown to plan a trip based on parking and have the real-time experience support this.

The City may also wish to elevate the prominence of its website placement, making it more accessible (potentially with a front-page link).



## **DOWNTOWN MASTER PLANNING**

As Strategy Approach 2 is focused on addition of parking in partnership with development opportunities, it will be important for the DDA and City to identify opportunities for sites to position for development, joint development partnerships, or other forms of acquisition. This would be true if the City wanted to pursue an approach of building more parking outright, or partnering with development to add more parking in a manner that fits downtown's context and can lessen the impact and footprint of parking supply.

This study recommends that the City undertake a strategic development opportunity master plan to begin identifying these potential sites and resources. This first step could also engage private developers familiar with the Roswell downtown environment to gauge potential interest, understand site constraints and how they could be addressed while continuing to meet community expectations for buildings and development appearance, and identify challenges to shared parking.

As suggested in the estimated demand models, future development scenarios that add more daytime land uses and build parking for it appear to be an ideal fit for the evening- and weekend-focused food and beverage uses in the Canton Street core. One objective of a master planning effort might be developing a more nuanced understanding of the real estate market demand for these daytime uses and what special economic development approaches (such as subsidies, incentives, or other methods of catalyzing development) may need to be used to achieve a balanced land use mix to make efficient use of new parking.

# APPENDICES

1. Roswell City Council Authorizing Resolution
2. Informational Handout
3. Public Survey Flyer
4. Public Survey Responses

STATE OF GEORGIA

March 9, 2020

FULTON COUNTY

**RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROSWELL, GEORGIA REQUESTING THE ROSWELL DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT A DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY TO DETERMINE BEST METHOD TO IMPROVE DOWNTOWN PARKING**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Roswell is a Georgia Municipal corporation; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council are the governing authority of the City of Roswell, Georgia; and


**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Council recognize the need for easily accessible public parking in the downtown (Canton Street and environs) area; and

**WHEREAS**, the City does not currently have funds specifically allocated and/or plans to develop additional parking; and

**WHEREAS**, the Roswell Downtown Development Authority is a state agency whose powers include the ability to assess the best means to achieve more parking in the downtown (Canton Street and environs) area and to implement and fund such parking solution; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Mayor and Council of the City of Roswell, Georgia that the City of Roswell does hereby request that the Roswell Downtown Development Authority conduct a professional parking assessment of the downtown (Canton Street and environs) area as soon as practicable. The Roswell DDA should evaluate solutions based upon the findings, then implement and fund its recommended solution(s) to increase such parking to benefit both the local businesses and Roswell citizens.

The above Resolution was read and approved by the Mayor and Council of the City of Roswell, Georgia on the 9th day of March, 2020.

  
Lori Henry, Mayor

Attest:

  
Marlee Press, City Clerk  
(Seal)





# Parking Best Practices for Roswell

Reduce demand for more parking and make more efficient use of what you already have

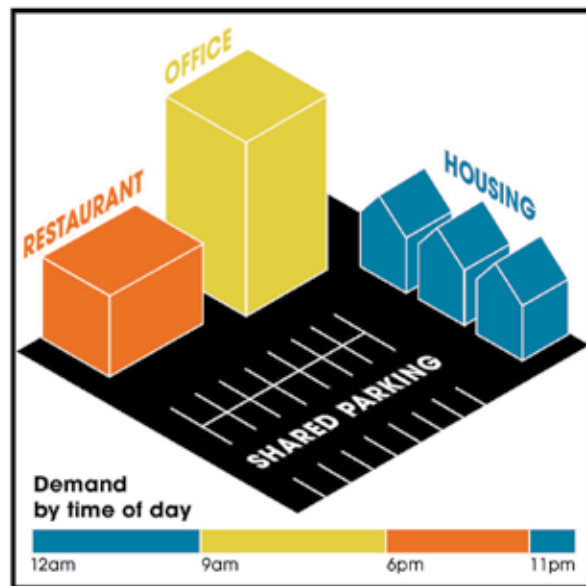
Although our team is just beginning to assess downtown Roswell’s parking, our initial conversations with DDA staff have outlined patterns we have seen in other similar downtown business districts, especially those that balance daytime employment with destination dining and entertainment. These downtowns, including others in the Atlanta region, will see parking serving office uses mostly (or entirely) full by mid-morning, where one block away, the restaurants are closed for business, and until the first shifts arrive in the afternoons to start dinner preparations, they and their adjacent parking remain empty. However, by mid-evening, the restaurant parking will be full as patrons start converging for drinks and dinner. Meanwhile, the offices full during the mid-morning will have emptied, along with their parking. Both sets of parking lots were built to meet the expected demand, and they do. But for almost half of every day, one lot or the other is almost entirely empty.

This suggests that these downtowns might not have a parking problem related to supply—they instead have a parking challenge related to managing supply and demand. Where the former suggests a downtown must build more parking to address its problem, the latter points to more strategic ways to use what parking currently exists.

## SUPPLY (PARKING DEMAND MODELING)

Shared parking is a cost-effective, common sense solution to addressing the parking needs of a new development that

The basic principle of shared parking is to ensure existing parking spaces are being utilized at a healthy level as much as possible.

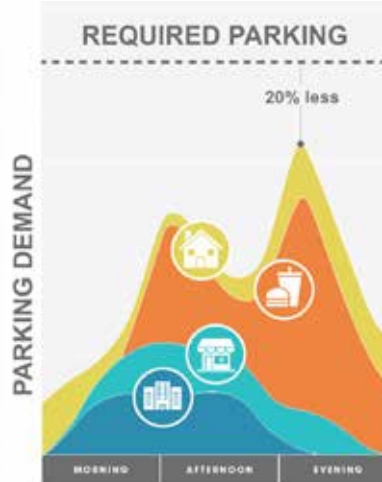




### Parking as Required (by Zoning)



### True Parking Demand



### Demand with Actual Spaces Used



**Perceived parking demand can often be deceptive when looking at how much parking is actually needed.**

uses available space in a more practical, efficient way. Parking demand is usually determined by simple addition, combining the needs of all the tenants in a development. But almost none of those required spaces will be used uniformly, and throughout a given day there will be a significant number of unused spaces—a costly and unnecessary burden on the area. Shared parking creates maximum efficiency by recognizing that different parts of a development have different peak usage times, which means one parking space can serve two or more purposes in a given day.

The diagrams on this page illustrate the parking needs for a hypothetical mixed-use development that includes retail, office, and residential space. The needs are simply stacked together, without regard for the context of daily fluctuations. Retail, for instance, makes up a significant part of the overall need despite the true demand being limited to nights and weekends. This is how Exclusive Parking plans come together, using a simple aggregation of the potential need, regardless of the time of day.

The Urban Land Institute's (ULI) Shared Parking manual uses a model where the overall demand is categorized not just by type of use, but by the time of day when that usage peaks and declines. By combining those factors, we can make a more accurate calculation of how much demand truly exists.

Diagram 2 shows how parking needs in the same hypothetical mixed-use development change throughout the day. Critically, it shows that at the very busiest parking time, the parking supply is still almost double the size of the actual demand.

Stantec uses shared parking as part of a suite of tools for clients to address their unique parking demands. We focus on identifying those nuances and then find opportunities to increase efficiency of available parking spaces while preserving as much of the overall development footprint as possible.

#### WHAT CAN THE SOLUTIONS BE?

Once these dynamics are demonstrated, they point to numerous potential solutions to help utilize existing parking assets more effectively and get more service out of them for downtown's benefit. Our team has experience developing these for small downtowns similar to Roswell's. These include:

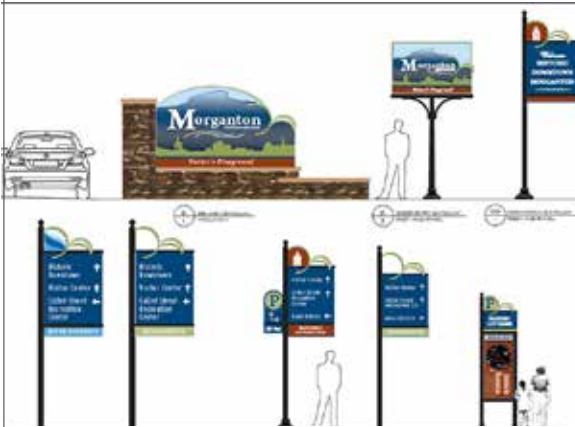
**Using regulations strategically.** Instead of using regulations simply in response to high demand, downtowns can make selective use of these recommendations to encourage use of parking that is not always fully utilized, such as placing pricing on spaces where more reliable availability is desired, leaving parking free in areas not immediately adjacent, and combining lighter-touch regulations like time limits with residential permits so that critical parking needs in select areas can be met. Remember that regulations aren't used to make turnover happen or generate revenue—these are simply the byproducts of good management that seeks to best match supply and demand.

**Creating a single management system.** The City already manages some parking spaces—some of these are on the street in City right-of-way, and others are off the street in lots the City leases from private owners. But small downtowns have found a successful approach in having privately-owned spaces





A tiered pricing structure helps control demand in particular locations and periods in the day



A citywide wayfinding system helps people easily find their parking options



Designating employee/customer spaces can reduce all-day parking in high-demand areas

managed by a single entity such as a local government or parking authority. The presence of Twelve Oaks as a primary operator of management and valet services already points to this happening, and the City's role may simply be to develop a stronger system of coordination.

**Make maintenance a priority.** Maintenance and upkeep of parking lots can sometimes be a lower priority in overall city improvements but parking facilities lacking clear striping, lighting, or which are in need of surface repair can deter people from utilizing them. To reduce the need and cost for building new parking supply, cities should prioritize solutions that encourage utilization of existing facilities.

**Use parking as a productive tool for improving downtown.** While paying for parking typically has a negative connotation, there are some direct benefits that cities can consider. Designated parking benefit districts utilize a portion of parking meter fees to make improvements to encourage non-vehicle modes of travel, such as improved sidewalks or wayfinding systems. Several options for this kind of approach demonstrate that visible benefits of how parking "pays for itself" by also beautifying a downtown can go a long way in educating people about the value, and not just the cost, of parking.

**Keep it simple.** One of the most common complaints heard from business owners, customers, and even managers of parking is that overly complex systems or regulations make it difficult to park, adding to demand-driven perceptions that there isn't enough parking or it isn't available. Removing this opportunity for stress and confusion goes a long way in addressing public opinions that parking is difficult, and doing this can involve approaches like signage, wayfinding, and even technology (such as mobile apps) to clearly communicate a parking customer's choices and how to take them.



A parking meter fund can be used to boost amenities that encourage walking and biking



# Downtown Roswell Parking Assessment

## PUBLIC SURVEY

Whether you come to Downtown Roswell for work, shop, or play, we want to hear about your parking experience as a visitor!

We are conducting a parking assessment in the downtown area with the following goals:

- **Address acute parking demand periods to improve efficiency and availability**
- **Identify parking policies or strategies to help the city better manage existing parking facilities**
  - **Ensure availability of parking for new economic and business growth**

The study involves an in-depth process of data collection, analysis, and meetings with key stakeholders in your community. This is your chance for your voice to also be heard about parking-related needs. Your survey feedback will be used to develop a series of solutions and recommendations to help the City improve Roswell’s current parking system while preparing for its future needs, as well.



### WHEN?

The survey will be open between **December 7th-21st, 2020**



### HOW?

OPTION 1: Use this website link <https://bit.ly/RoswellParkingSurvey>  
OPTION 2: Use your smartphone and scan the QR code to the right



### QUESTIONS?

Learn more at [roswelldda.com/parking](http://roswelldda.com/parking) and follow [@roswelldda](https://twitter.com/roswelldda)

### 3. PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES

#### Q. How often do you visit Downtown Roswell?

- Every day- 39 (8%)
- Multiple times per week- 133 (27%)
- A few times a month- 226 (45%)
- Once a month or less- 100 (20%)

Takeaway- Most visitors to Downtown are not frequent visitors and may not be familiar with available parking.

#### Q. How do you typically travel to Roswell? Select all that apply?

- I drive – 461
- I walk- 92
- I ride a bike- 20
- I use a rideshare app- 56
- I carpool- 17
- Other- 10

Takeaway- The overwhelming majority of Roswell visitors drive.

#### Q. If you utilize rideshare services like Uber and Lyft, how easy is it for you to either find a location to be dropped off or picked up downtown?

- Extremely easy- 46 (9%)
- Somewhat easy- 90 (18%)
- Somewhat difficult- 40 (8%)
- Very difficult- 7 (1%)
- I do not use rideshare services- 315 (63%)

Takeaway- The majority of rideshare users are able to find a pick-up or drop-off location without difficulty.

#### Q. How long is your average visit to Downtown Roswell?

- 15 minutes or less- 14 (3%)
- 15-30 minutes- 8 (2%)
- 30 minutes to 1 hour- 47 (9%)
- 1 hour to 3 hours- 373 (75%)
- Longer than 3 hours- 56 (11%)

Takeaway- Most visitors to Downtown are seeking mid-term (one to three hour) parking spaces.

#### Q. During which time do you typically visit Downtown? Select all that apply.

- Weekday during the day- 186 (18%)
- Weekday during the evening- 262 (26%)
- Weekend during the day- 248 (24%)
- Weekend during the evening- 319 (31%)

Takeaway- Evenings and weekends experience higher visitors, and therefore higher parking demand.

#### Q. On a scale of 1-5, what is the general availability of parking spaces when you visit Downtown?

- Short-term parking-



- There are no available spaces (38%)
- There are some available spaces (53%)
- Parking areas are around half-full (7%)
- Parking areas are nearly empty (2%)
- Parking areas are empty (<1%)
- Long-term parking-
  - There are no available spaces (34%)
  - There are some available spaces (55%)
  - Parking areas are around half-full (9%)
  - Parking areas are nearly empty (2%)
  - Parking areas are empty (<1%)
- Special event parking-
  - There are no available spaces (73%)
  - There are some available spaces (23%)
  - Parking areas are around half-full (2%)
  - Parking areas are nearly empty (1%)
  - Parking areas are empty (<1%)

Takeaway- Evenings and weekends experience higher visitors, and therefore higher parking demand.

**Q. What is the biggest barrier you face when visiting Downtown?**

- Not enough available parking- 211
- Difficulty locating parking spaces- 142
- Parking time limits are too short- 5
- A lack of bike parking options- 7
- Safety concerns when walking- 37
- Traffic and congestion- 89
- Lack of ADA-designated parking- 5

Takeaway- Both the availability of parking and the ability of finding available spaces are the largest challenges people face when visiting Roswell.

**Q. Where do you get information for parking about Downtown?**

- I don't. I hunt for a space- 420 (84%)
- Downtown signage- 60 (12%)
- Downtown businesses- 7 (1%)
- The City's website- 7 (1%)
- The Visit Roswell website- 4 (1%)

Takeaway- 84% of people do not generally consult online resources when looking for parking information, implying that signage plays a more important role.

**Q. If parking wasn't available right in front of your destination, how far would you be willing to walk from another parking location?**

- From next door to my destination- 25 (5%)
- 1-2 minutes- 209 (42%)
- Up to 5 minutes- 229 (46%)
- Other- 35 (7%)

Takeaway- Most people (73%) are willing to walk a short distance from parking to their destination.

**Q. Have you utilized the free City Hall parking lot when visiting destinations along Canton Street?**

- Yes- 111 (22%)
- Yes, but I don't park there because it is too far to walk- 105 (21%)
- Yes, but I do not feel comfortable crossing Alpharetta Street- 105 (21%)
- No. I didn't know I could park there- 108 (22%)
- No, but I will consider parking there- 69 (14%)

Takeaway- People generally don't feel that City Hall is a desirable choice for parking when visiting Downtown.

**Q. Rate your agreement with the following statements:**

- The number of signs directing people to parking is adequate.
  - Strongly disagree- 17%
  - Disagree- 43%
  - Neither Agree or Disagree- 25%
  - Agree- 12%
  - Strongly Agree- 2%
- The location of signs directing people to parking is adequate.
  - Strongly disagree- 16%
  - Disagree- 41%
  - Neither Agree or Disagree- 30%
  - Agree- 11%
  - Strongly Agree- 2%
- The visibility of parking signs is adequate.
  - Strongly disagree- 17%
  - Disagree- 39%
  - Neither Agree or Disagree- 29%
  - Agree- 13%
  - Strongly Agree- 2%

Takeaway- At least half of people believe that the amount, location, and visibility of signage is not adequate, which implies that people hunting for parking may contribute to traffic congestion along Canton Street.

**Q. When you visit downtown, which of the following most applies to your typical visits?**

- I visit one destination only- 110 (22%)
- I visit multiple destinations, and drive to/park at each one- 27 (5%)
- I visit multiple destinations and park once and walk between them- 361 (72%)

Takeaway- 72% park once when visiting multiple destinations downtown, which implies they may be occupying parking spaces designated for other users.

ROSWELL  
DOWNTOWN  
DEVELOPMENT  
AUTHORITY

