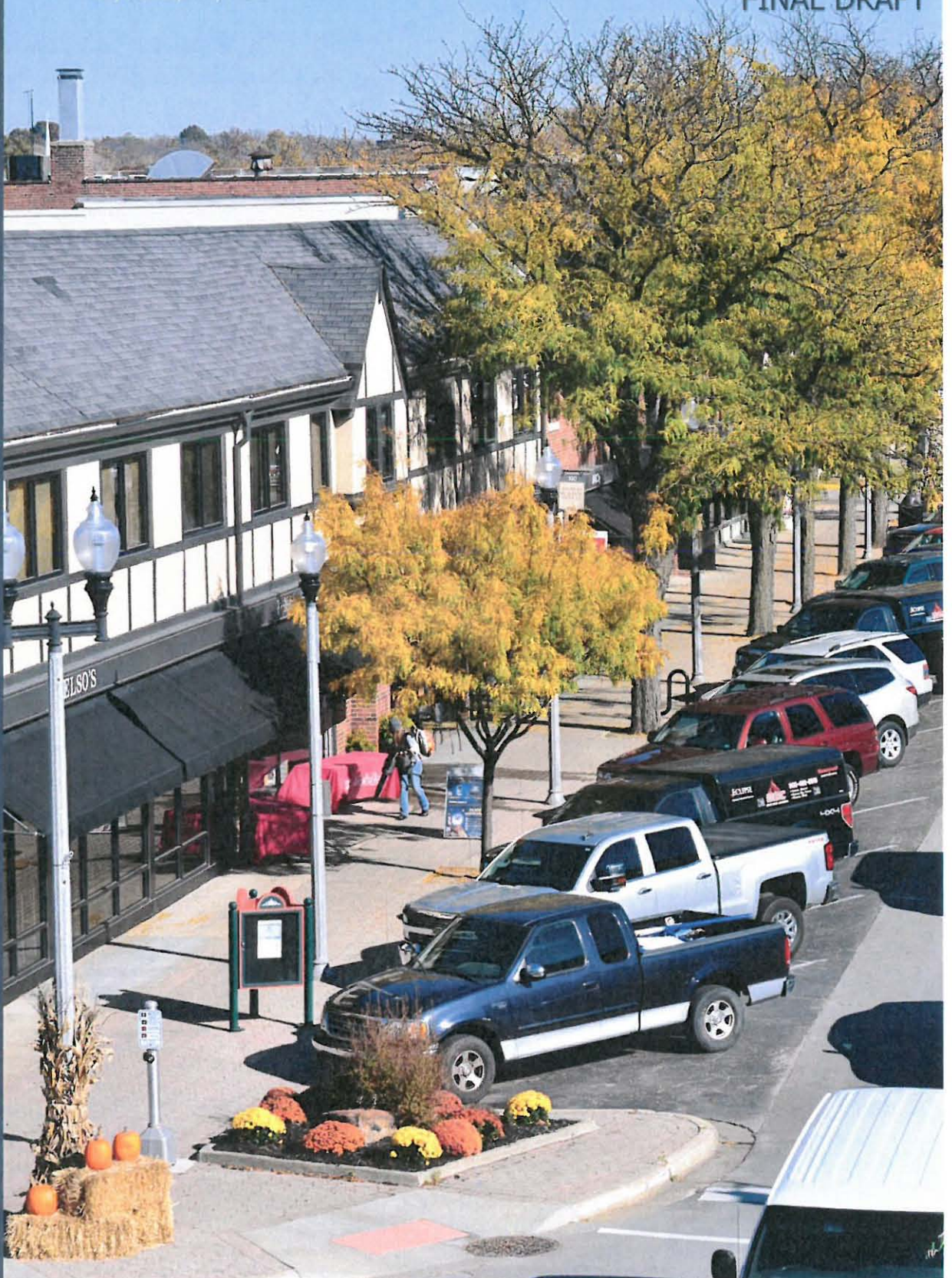


NORTH
KANSAS CITY
Virtually Urban. Supremely Suburban.

Parking Management Plan

FINAL DRAFT



Downtown North Kansas City has a reputation throughout the metro area as an inviting, enjoyable place to visit for business or entertainment.

Previous planning efforts identified parking as both a benefit to downtown – parking is free and plentiful – and a potential challenge, as some areas of downtown have seen increasing demand for parking. The impetus for this planning effort was born out of two complementary concerns: addressing increasing complaints about the need for additional downtown parking and evaluating the impact of potential future developments on downtown parking.

Relationship to Other Plans

The Parking Management Plan is an appendix to the City’s Master Plan, adopted in 2016. The Master Plan establishes the overarching goal for all development in North Kansas City and the overall framework for ongoing planning.

The Armour Road Complete Street Plan identified “Conduct a parking management study & plan” as the third of five implementation steps for implementation of complete street improvements to Armour Road. The planning process for that project identified a lack of consensus around changes impacting parking in downtown, driven by the fact that parking is a high value resource for downtown businesses. The Armour Road Complete Street plan established that any changes impacting existing angled parking on Armour Road must be preceded by an overall parking strategy for downtown.

Community Engagement

Community engagement for this project began in November 2017 with online surveys. Two survey forms were used. One survey asked general questions about parking of anyone who visited downtown North Kansas City and generated 398 responses. A second survey form was targeted to downtown businesses and received 53 responses.

In February 2018, staff conducted three focus group meetings to present the survey data and engage the community in discussion to elicit additional feedback and input on potential parking management strategies. Two focus groups were targeted toward the business community and one targeted city residents.

A community workshop was held on May 31 to present parking management strategies for feedback from the community. Approximately 30 people attended the workshop. An online version of the workshop gained another 32 responses about the draft parking strategies. Of the online respondents, 71 percent identified themselves as North Kansas City residents and 14 percent as NKC business owners or employees.



Goals for Parking Management

Three goals were identified as part of the planning process and were validated by the community at the Community Workshop. These goals were used to evaluate parking strategies and should be used to evaluate future actions regarding parking.



Goal #1: Build on downtown's welcoming and inviting character.

Downtown North Kansas City is known for its wide sidewalks, beautiful tree canopy, and attractive streetscape. Parking management strategies should build on, not detract from, these elements and positively contribute to the downtown character.



Goal #2: Balance needs for parking with vibrant places for people.

Downtown businesses and visitors need parking, but focusing on providing parking to the exclusion of other needs could reach a tipping point where downtown has too much parking and not enough downtown destination attractions. Spaces for cars must be balanced with places for people.



Goal #3: Make it easier for downtown patrons to find a parking space.

It is impossible to guarantee each downtown visitor a parking space immediately in front of their destination. Ease of parking is strongly related to a driver's ability to easily navigate to an available parking space.



The Parking Situation

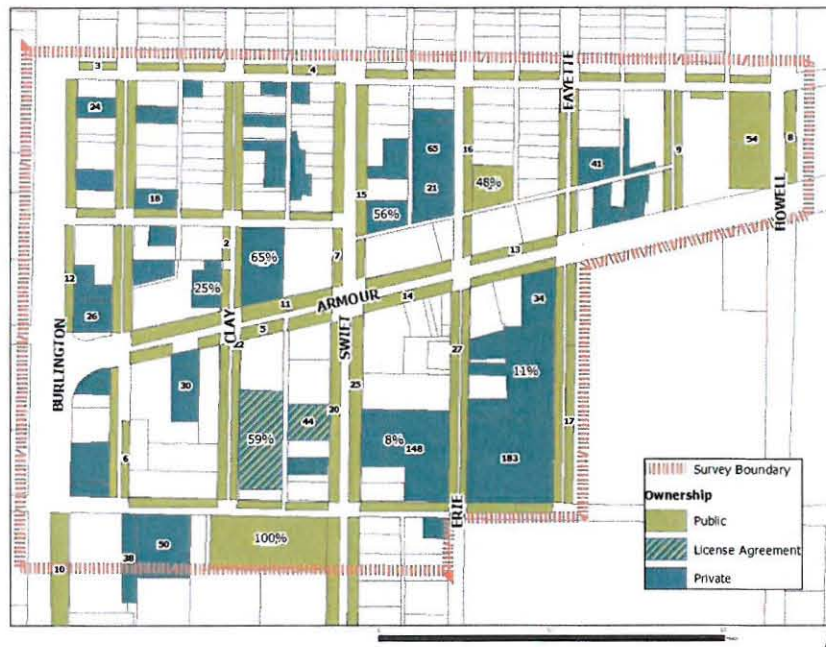
Parking Inventory

For the purposes of this study, downtown was defined as the area between Burlington and Howell, from 21st Avenue south to the property on the south side of 18th Avenue. As city staff began conducting a parking space inventory, the study area was revised to exclude the bowling alley and the block between Fayette and Howell on the south side of Armour. Concerns that the large parking areas in these blocks might skew the overall findings of the study led to their exclusion.

196	Angled, on-street parking spaces
213	Public parking lots
550	Other public parking spaces
144	License Agreement
1,343	Private parking spaces
2,397	Total Parking Spaces

The map below shows the parking inventory by ownership. The inventory included on-street parking areas, public parking lots, and private parking areas. The inventory identified 2,397 total parking spaces.

Parking Inventory by Ownership



Of the total parking spaces in downtown, 959 spaces are public, either in public parking lots or on-street parking. Some of the most desirable parking spaces in downtown are the angled parking spaces along Armour and Swift. There are 196 angled on-street parking spaces. The City has a license agreement with the property owner for 144 privately owned parking spaces to be available to the public on evenings and weekends near 18th & Clay. All other parking spaces in downtown are privately owned.

Parking Utilization

The “sweet spot” for parking efficiency is 85 percent occupancy. At 85 percent, there are still spaces available for new arrivals to find parking, but parking spaces aren’t wasted by sitting empty.

85%

Usage goal for parking efficiency

52%

Peak hour usage for all downtown parking

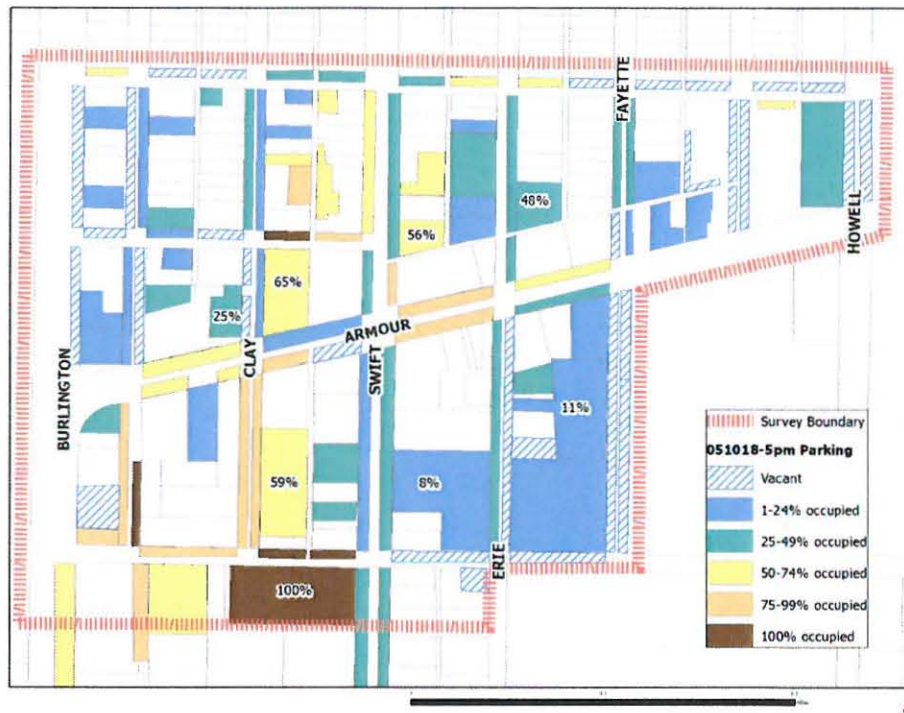
Peak demand for downtown parking occurs at lunch time, between 11am and 1pm. During this time, total downtown parking spaces are 52 percent full. On-street angled spaces are the most in demand at this time. On-street angled spaces are 80 percent full at lunch. Open parking is still available within one block of all downtown businesses during the peak time.

Parking Occupancy, 11am to 1pm



Parking utilization during early evening hours is much lower, perhaps due to office employees leaving the area. Between 5:00 and 7:00 pm, total downtown parking spaces are 33% full. Public parking spaces are on average are 41% full, but with wide variations. On-street angled spaces are 51% full in early evening. Open parking is still available within one block of all downtown businesses during this peak time.

Parking Occupancy, 5pm to 7pm

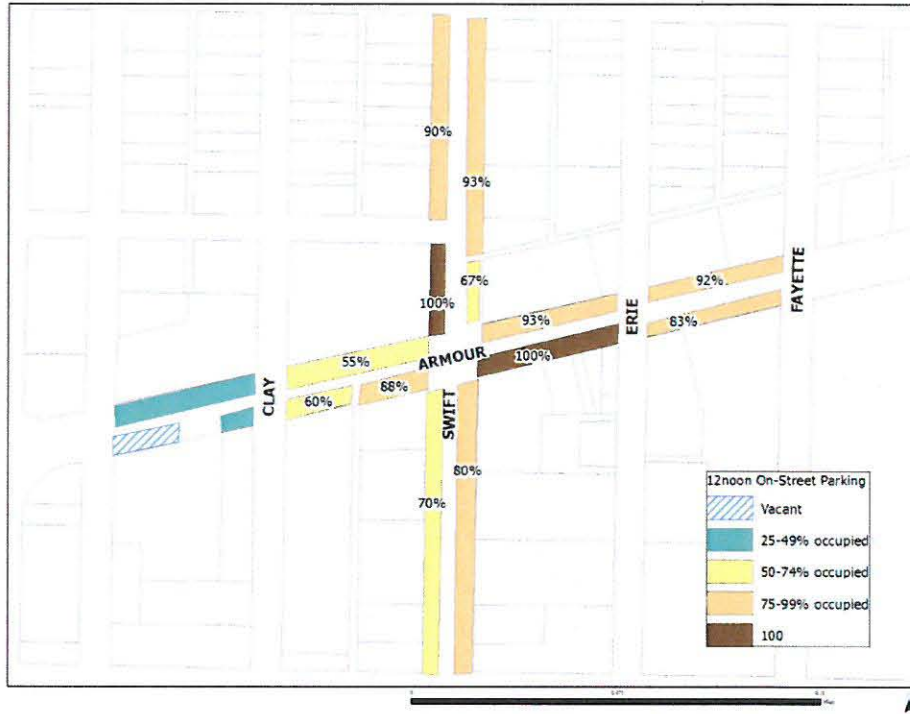


Today, downtown is home to over 500,000 square feet of commercial building floor area and over 630,000 square feet of total building floor area. At peak hours, parking utilization of 52 percent indicates that every 1,000 of floor area in downtown NKC generates approximately 2 parked cars. At this rate, existing empty parking spaces could accommodate the doubling of downtown building area without the need to add more parking spaces.

The most desirable parking spaces in downtown are the angled on-street spaces along Swift and Armour. These parking spaces are consistently among the most used in downtown. These spaces are desirable because they are close to downtown businesses' front doors, they are highly visible, and they offer short walks to destinations.

The parking inventory found that the peak time for usage of these on-street spaces, on an hourly basis, is the hour between 12 noon and 1:00 pm. However, even during this hour, these spaces are not completely full; spaces furthest to the west are still available at the peak hour, likely due to current vacancies in immediately adjacent buildings.

On-Street Parking Occupancy, 12 Noon (Peak Hour)



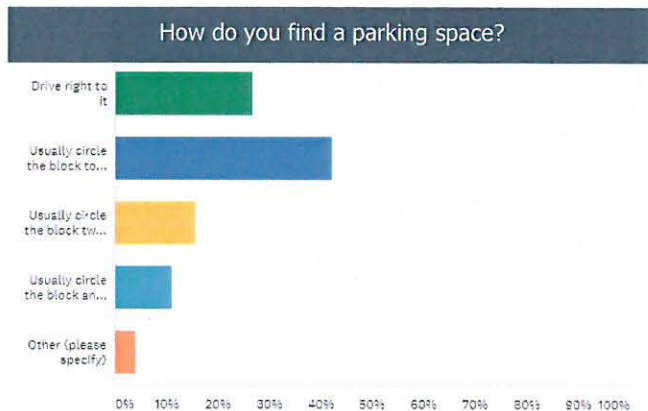
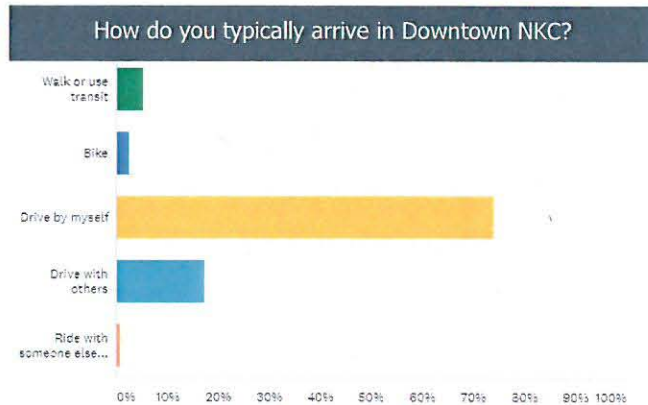
Parking Survey

An opinion survey regarding downtown parking was conducted in November and December 2017. The survey received a total of 398 responses; approximately 75 percent of responses were from people who visit downtown daily or several times per week.

Over 75 percent of respondents drive alone when visiting downtown. Only eight percent reach downtown by walking, biking, or using transit. This response suggests that small increases in visitors using other modes to visit downtown could have benefits in reducing the amount of parking needed.

Respondents overwhelmingly find downtown parking to be at least somewhat convenient. Nearly half of all respondents said downtown parking was "Less convenient than some areas, but not bad" and another quarter found parking "Convenient and easy to find." Only three percent of respondents said parking was "A deterrent to visiting the area altogether." Nearly 70 percent of survey respondents find a parking either by driving right to it or by circling the block once.

In a separate survey, business owners were asked to choose improvements that would benefit their business. Of the top responses, 43 percent selected more off-street parking, 30 percent selected improved signage, 23 percent selected more turnover of parking spaces, and 21 percent stated no changes are necessary.

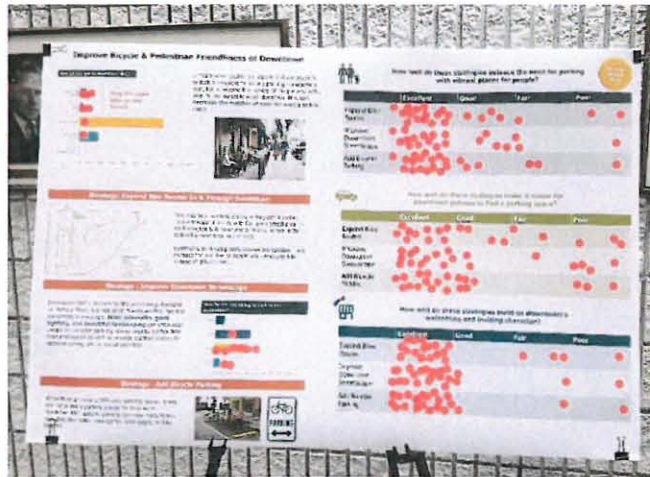


What parking improvements would benefit your business?

- 43%** More off-street parking
- 30%** Improved signage
- 23%** More turnover
- 21%** No changes are necessary

Parking Management Recommendations

A series of potential parking strategies were identified by staff with input from focus group participants. These strategies can be divided into four broad categories: Signage, Enforcement, Parking Inventory, and Transportation Alternatives. Strategies were presented to the public at a Community Workshop to evaluate how well each strategy addressed the three parking management goals and to assist with prioritizing future action by the City.



Based on feedback from the community, four potential strategies were removed from consideration:

- **Build a public parking garage** – Reaction to this strategy by the community was largely negative. The community rated this strategy as the lowest priority. Coupled with the high cost of structured parking and the relatively low utilization of existing surface parking lots, this strategy is not recommended. However, the City may have future opportunities to support structured parking as part of other development projects. See “Parking & Development Policies.”
- **Parking meters** –Meters come in many varieties, including multi-space, pay-and-display, pay-by-space, or pay-by-plate, and modern meters can accept payment by coins, credit cards, tokens, smartphones, or paper currency. Meters generate revenue, but also have initial capital costs and require ongoing operations & maintenance. There was not support for investigating parking meters, but the City may want to explore this option in the future if utilization rates increase or parking enforcement becomes more difficult.
- **More parking enforcement** – There was no interest in adding staff for parking enforcement.
- **Apps & Maps** – While providing information about parking could help drivers find a place to park, this strategy did not resonate with the community. During the planning process, both River North and the NKC Business Council have developed new maps and other information sources focused on downtown. Collaborating with these organizations to ensure that the most accurate and up-to-date parking information is disseminated in their products provides a key opportunity for sharing parking information widely.

Recommended strategies are presented in the order in which they were prioritized by the community. The Priority Score for each recommendation is based on how many community members rated the strategy as a high priority versus how many rated it as a low priority.

Wayfinding Signage

Wayfinding signs help people navigate through an area to find their destination. The City’s Signage Master Plan includes a design for new wayfinding signage and the City plans to begin installing new signs in 2018. A secondary benefit of wayfinding signage is the ability to direct visitors to other key destinations in and around downtown.



The Gateway Signage Plan Appendix identified ten proposed destinations to be identified on signage, one of which is “Public Parking.” While the appendix did not identify locations for new signage, it did note existing signage locations to be replaced or updated.

The recommendation for new wayfinding signage was overwhelmingly popular with the community and was rated highest against the plan’s goals.

Priority	Timeframe	Resources
High Priority Score = 22	2018-2019	Budgeted in 2018 for Phase 1 installation (8 signs) and planned for 2019 for Phase 2 installation (7 signs)

Public Parking Lot Signage

Public parking lot signs identify public parking lots. The City’s Signage Master Plan includes a design for monument signage at public parking lots. These signs coordinate with the general wayfinding signs.



The purpose of these signs is to assist visitors in locating public parking, but they can also be designed to provide information and make downtown more welcoming. These signs are designed to also carry maps or graphic insets on the non-street side of the sign.

Priority	Timeframe	Resources
High Priority Score = 21	2018-2019	Budgeted for installation as part of wayfinding project

Expand Public-Private Partnerships

The City Council has approved one agreement with a private property owner that allows the public to park in a privately-owned parking lot on evenings and weekends. This type of public-private partnership could expand the inventory of available parking without requiring acquisition of property or costly capital investments.



The pilot agreement currently in place does require a nominal cost to the City. Expanding partnerships of this nature is dependent on the ability to reach agreements with property owners who may have their own priorities. The City should carefully consider where partnerships would provide public benefit, rather than enter agreements with any interested property owner. Future agreements should also require property owners to erect any standardized parking signs developed by the City so that drivers know a parking lot is available for public parking.

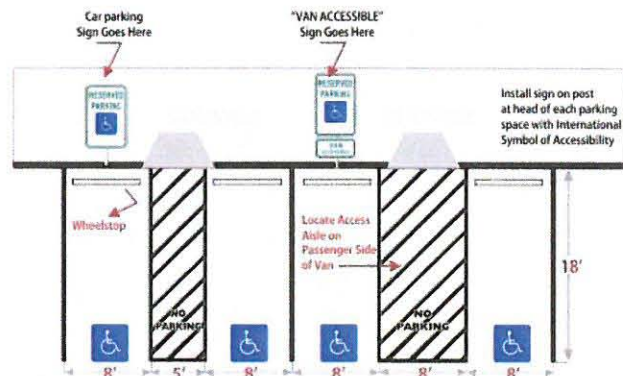
Priority	Timeframe	Resources
High Priority Score = 13	2018 Future partnerships based on property owner interest	City Council approval required. Administration facilitates development of agreements based on property owner interest.

Accessible Parking

Accessible parking is parking set aside for people using wheelchairs, with mobility limitations, health challenges, or otherwise meeting criteria set by state law. The November/December 2017 parking opinion survey asked some questions specifically about accessible parking in downtown NKC. Of survey respondents who currently use or have used accessible parking, only 14 percent found accessible parking in downtown NKC to be convenient and easy to find, compared to 25 percent who found general downtown parking convenient and easy to find. 40 percent of respondents who currently use or have used accessible parking said that it was inconvenient and difficult to find accessible parking or that it is a deterrent to visiting the area.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires local governments to provide public facilities and services that are accessible to those with disabilities, but does not explicitly address on-street parking spaces. The Access Board, a federal agency that develops accessibility standards for the Department of Justice, has drafted guidelines for accessible on-street parking, but these guidelines have not yet been finalized and adopted by the Department of Justice. In September 2014, the Ninth Circuit found that local governments are required under the ADA to provide accessible on-street parking.

General standards for accessible parking spaces call for a minimum of one accessible parking space for every 25 total parking spaces. In addition, one out of four accessible spaces should be van accessible. In general, recommendations for on-street accessible spaces emphasize a central location and the provision of curb ramps to provide access to the sidewalk without entering vehicle traffic. For on-street parking, the draft guidelines from the Access Board require a curb ramp adjacent to the access aisle to provide a connection to the sidewalk. Two accessible spaces may share a common access aisle.



Accessible parking could be added to each block of angled on-street parking on Armour between Clay and Fayette and on Swift from 18th to 20th, to provide a total of eight accessible parking spaces through downtown, including the existing accessible space on Swift. Two of these spaces could be provided through re-striping, without requiring the construction of new curb ramps, while five would require the installation of new curb ramps to provide accessible sidewalk access. The addition of these seven accessible spaces will require the net loss of only two parking spaces to provide required access aisles.

Priority	Timeframe	Resources
High	In coordination with downtown streetscape improvements	Streetscape updates are planned in the NKC budget.

Improve the Downtown Streetscape

Downtown NKC is known for the welcoming character on Armour Road, but not all of downtown NKC has this welcoming streetscape. Wide sidewalks, good lighting, shady trees, and attractive landscaping can encourage people to consider parking spaces slightly further from their destination by providing a safe and comfortable walk. Attractive streetscapes also provide outdoor spaces for sidewalk dining, art, or social activities.

In addition, there are blocks within the downtown study area that do not have complete sidewalks. Portions of Erie and Fayette south of Armour Road and 18th Avenue east of Swift do not have continuous sidewalk. Some sidewalk improvements, such as those along 18th Avenue between Fayette and Howell, might be deferred until there is adjacent redevelopment. Others may be phased in incrementally as future budgets allow.



Priority	Timeframe	Resources
High Priority Score = 12	Phased implementation	Streetscape updates are planned in the NKC budget.

Add Bike Parking

It might seem counter-intuitive to include bicycle and pedestrian improvements in a parking management plan, but increasing the number of people who walk, bike, or use transit to reach downtown NKC can decrease the number of cars that need a parking space. Currently, only eight percent of survey respondents use these three modes to reach downtown, indicating that there may be opportunities to reduce parking demand.

While there are nearly 2,400 auto parking spaces, there are not as many parking places for bicycles in downtown NKC. Bicycle parking can take many forms, including bike racks, bike corrals, bike cages, or bike lockers.



In the downtown C-2 zoning district, where on-site parking is not required, the City should work to include bike parking throughout the area, particularly in proximity to key destinations. This parking may be located in areas that cannot be used for on-street parking, due to size or site triangle concerns.

Priority	Timeframe	Resources
Medium Priority Score = 10	2019	Require bike parking as part of general parking requirements in the Zoning Ordinance update. Evaluate bike parking in downtown as part of Bike Master Plan.

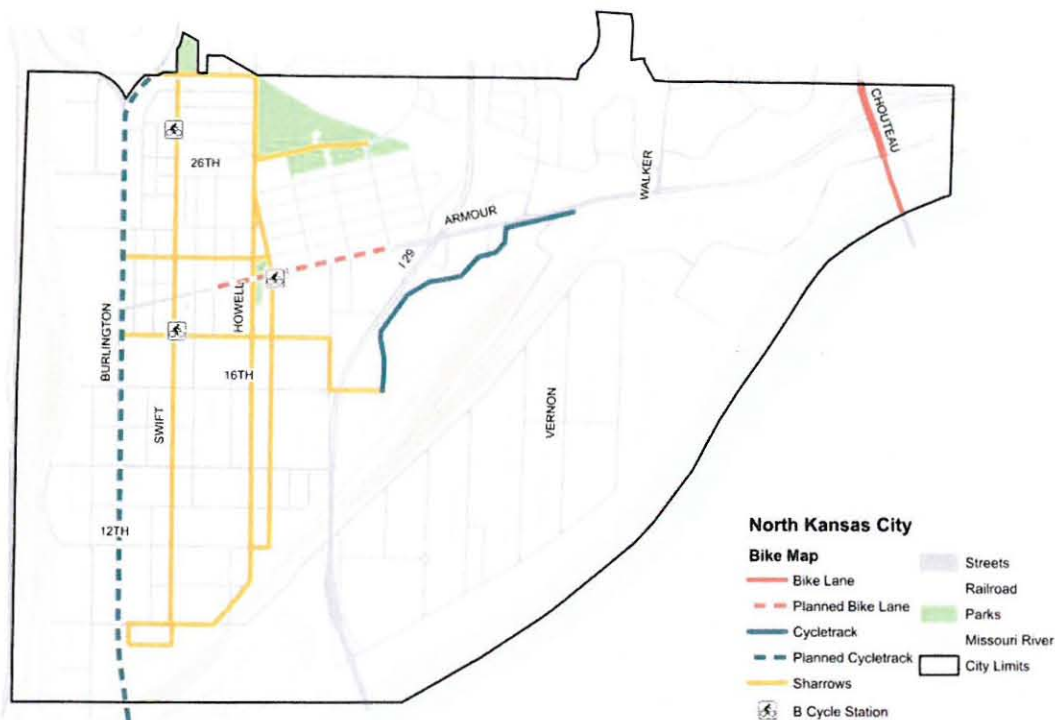
Expand Bike Routes

NKC has been working on expanding safe bicycling routes through the City with Complete Street projects on Burlington & Armour and a new cycletrack in the redevelopment area east of I-35. The 2019 Bike Master Plan is expected to identify supportive infrastructure needs as well as identify future additions to the bicycle network through North Kansas City.

Continuing to develop safe routes for cyclists could increase the number of people who choose to bike instead of drive to NKC. Currently, only eight percent of survey respondents say that they get to downtown NKC by walking, using transit, or biking. Increasing this percentage, even a small amount, provides an opportunity to decrease the number of cars that require a parking space.

The addition of parking protected bicycle lanes on Armour between Fayette and Knox will add 58 new parallel parking spaces on Armour Road.

Priority	Timeframe	Resources
Medium Priority Score = 8	2019	The 2019 budget includes bike lanes for Armour Road and 16 th Avenue. NKC Bike Master Plan is planned for 2019.



Standard Signage for Private Lots

Because there are so many privately-owned parking areas in downtown NKC, a standard design for parking lot signs may be useful. Private owners might use these signs to show when parking lots are available for visitors, or whether they are restricted to employees or tenants. A standard design could help visitors find information. This design may be coordinated with the wayfinding signs to ensure a consistent design theme.

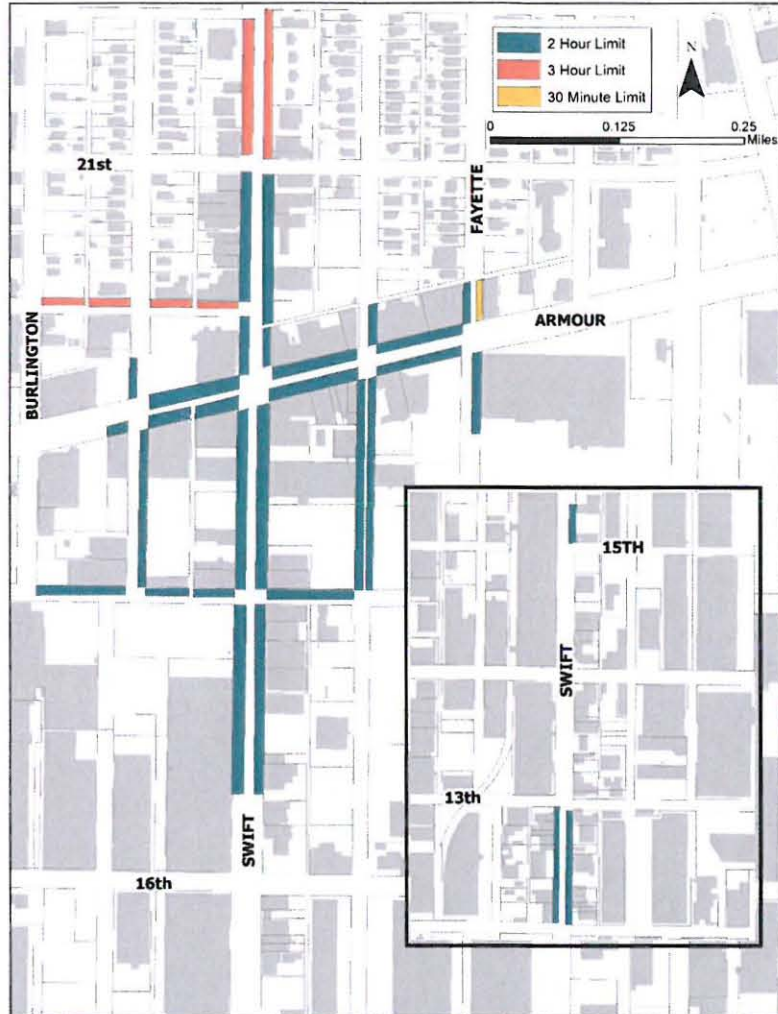


Priority	Timeframe	Resources
Medium Priority Score = 7	2019	Design should be coordinated with Wayfinding signage

Modify Parking Time Limits

Some on-street parking spaces in downtown are limited to 2-hour parking. Others are 3 hours, or 30 minutes, or have no time limit. Time restrictions support turnover of parking spaces, which is important to retail and commercial businesses whose visitors might stay for shorter time periods. Downtown business owners identified turnover as an important consideration for downtown parking management.

Consistent time limits offer two benefits: clarity for drivers and focus for enforcement. Eliminating time limits where turnover is not an issue could streamline enforcement by better focusing staff attention in places where turnover is most desired.



Priority	Timeframe	Resources
Low Priority Score = -3		Partnership between Community Development (mapping, data, outreach), Police (ordinance, enforcement), and Public Works (signage)

Increase Overtime Parking Fines

Parking spaces on Armour & Swift are predominately limited to two-hour parking. The fine for a parking ticket in NKC is much lower than in nearby cities. Increasing fines and beefing up enforcement measures could encourage long-term parkers to find off-street parking spaces, freeing up spaces in front of downtown businesses for customers.

In 2017, NKC officers wrote 1,115 parking tickets. Of those, 754 tickets were paid and 361 were unpaid. Parking tickets are an important step in stimulating turnover of time restricted parking spaces. Without enforcement, drivers have no incentive to obey the time restriction. Business owners ranked "More turnover" as the third most popular improvement that would benefit their business.

City	Parking Ticket Fine
North Kansas City	\$15
Liberty	\$25
Kansas City Kansas	\$30
Gladstone	\$50.50
Kansas City MO	\$72.50
Parkville	\$80

Parking ticket enforcement is hampered by the fact that the City does not issue warrants based on parking tickets. Staff does not recommend doing so, for a variety of reasons, including a lack of personal identifiers. Staff recommends exploring alternatives for enforcing parking tickets to improve compliance, such as immobilizing or impounding vehicles after a certain number of unpaid parking tickets.

Priority	Timeframe	Resources
Low Priority Score = -16		Partnership between Community Development (mapping, data, outreach) and Police Departments (ordinance, enforcement) & Municipal Court (for establishing fine – done by the Municipal Judge)

Parking & Development Policies

Community input also suggested a series of development policies related to parking:

1. Private development that requests public incentives related to the construction of structured parking should be required to provide public parking.
2. Parking should be located behind buildings or otherwise screened to reduce its impact on the streetscape. This policy is already addressed by the design guidelines of the C-2 zoning district.
3. The City should minimize curb cuts and driveways that would impact the pedestrian experience and create access management concerns along main thoroughfares such as Armour and Swift.
4. The City should add sidewalk where it is missing downtown. Blocks without sidewalks include portions of Erie, Fayette, and 18th Avenue. The City should plan sidewalk installation in future budgets and require the installation of missing sidewalk segments as part of private development proposals.
5. Updates to the parking regulations contained in the Zoning Ordinance should include requirements to provide bicycle parking.



Next Steps

Step #1: Update parking enforcement measures.

Review time restrictions to provide more consistent and focused restrictions. Adjust overtime parking fines to improve turnover of parking spaces to support retail spaces in downtown.

Step #2: Improve signage.

Add new signage to downtown to assist drivers in identifying available parking.

Step #3: Update downtown streetscape.

Refresh the downtown streetscape and incorporate accessible parking improvements. Consider filling downtown sidewalk gaps.

Step #4: Partner with private property owners.

Strategically expand public-private partnerships to provide off-street parking. Communicate to the public where private parking is available to the public through signage, mapping, and collaborating with downtown partners such as River North and the Business Council. Monitor usage of areas covered by license agreements.

Step #5: Support transportation alternatives.

Add bicycle parking downtown and evaluate bicycle routes in and around downtown.