



Prepared for the City of St. Joseph, Michigan

Downtown Parking Plan

May 24, 2024



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CONSULTANTS

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01 Intent of the Paid Parking Implementation Plan

How We Got Here and the Intent of the Plan

During the warmer months of the year, high demand for public parking in downtown St. Joseph is a significant issue. Parking spaces on downtown city streets and in the City's off-street parking lots often fill early in the day and remain heavily used late into the evening, particularly later in the week and throughout the weekend. Demand for parking is particularly intense in the area west of Main Street and north of Market Street, where most of St. Joseph's retail, restaurant, and tourism-related businesses are located; this is the same area where most downtown residential units are located. The lack of available parking during this time of year often leads visitors to downtown St. Joseph to circulate downtown looking for a space.


Currently, and for many years, public parking downtown has been provided free of charge, with use of the spaces managed using time limits. No distinction is made between vehicles belonging to employees or downtown residents versus patrons of downtown businesses or visitors to St. Joseph's beaches – anyone can park in any public parking space, so long as they abide by the posted time limits. As a result, much of the all-day parking fills with residents and downtown employees early in the day, leaving fewer spaces available for visitors who arrive later in the day. Additionally, because all public parking is free of charge, there is no financial incentive for drivers to choose spaces based on proximity and price. Everyone is incentivized to park as close to their ultimate destination as possible because the cost is the same.

In the late 1940s, St. Joseph implemented paid parking downtown to help manage demand. However, as competition from suburban shopping centers grew in the late '50s and early '60s, St. Joseph, like many other similarly sized cities, removed their parking meters, eliminating all paid parking downtown in 1965. Since then, there has been periodic debate over whether to reintroduce paid parking to downtown St. Joseph, with that debate intensifying over the past several years.

The *St. Joseph Downtown Vision Master Plan*, adopted January 27, 2020, recommended that "The City should establish a strategy for paid parking in certain areas of Downtown St. Joseph..." with the stated goals being to "...help create parking turnover, better distribute parking, and fund necessary maintenance and improvements." In late 2021, the Downtown Development Authority ("DDA") began discussions around implementing paid parking within the DDA boundaries in alignment with the recommendations from the *Downtown Vision Master Plan*. The DDA developed several recommendations for reintroducing paid parking in downtown St. Joseph and submitted those recommendations to the St. Joseph City Commission in January 2022. At that time, the City Commission wanted the DDA to develop a plan for paid parking. In a special joint meeting of the City Commission and DDA in March 2022, the two groups agreed to form a parking subgroup consisting of two City Commission members, three or four DDA members, and City staff to develop details of the plan to implement paid parking. The subgroup then met and agreed to bring in an expert in this area to recommend the best approach to implementing paid parking. The subgroup solicited competitive proposals, interviewed, and hired Walker Consultants to review parking downtown and develop this Downtown Parking Plan ("Plan").

Walker Consultants reviewed the parking-related materials and recommendations compiled to date and assessed the parking challenges in downtown St. Joseph. Based on the available information, Walker agrees with the recommendations to move forward with paid parking downtown, recognizing the benefits this will offer downtown merchants and visitors.

The following Plan is intended to help facilitate the reintroduction of paid parking in downtown St. Joseph by the City, considering the principles laid out in the adopted St. Joseph Downtown Vision Master Plan and the paid parking recommendations approved by the DDA in January 2022.



02 Existing Downtown Public Parking

Parking System Description

While the geographic area in which the Downtown Development Authority has an interest encompasses nearly all of St. Joseph's downtown business district and the adjacent commercial office district, several public parking areas serving downtown are located just outside the DDA boundary. Because the City recognized the importance of having a unified strategy to manage all public parking serving downtown, the recommendations in this Plan address public parking both within the DDA boundary and immediately adjacent to the boundary.

The figure below presents the DDA boundary overlain by the boundary considered in the formulation of this Plan.

Figure 1 Downtown Parking Plan Study Area



Source: City of St. Joseph

The following section provides an overview of the City's public parking assets that were considered in developing this Plan.

Current Inventory and Parking Time Limits

The DDA provides the map below on the city's website to help guide new visitors and those less familiar with downtown St. Joseph to available public parking locations.

Figure 2 Downtown Area Parking Map



Source: City of St. Joseph

As shown on the map, both on- and off-street public parking locations are identified, with color-coding describing the current time limits. The map also identifies the Berrien County Courthouse parking lot, which public parkers can use during off-hours. Because this parking lot is not owned or controlled by the City, it was not considered a potential paid parking location for this Plan. However, as part of this project, Walker spoke with County representatives who indicated a willingness to continue allowing public parking in County parking facilities downtown outside of the County's regular business hours.

Excluding the County Courthouse parking lot, the remainder of the parking locations depicted on the above map were considered in formulating this Downtown Parking Plan. Additionally, not shown on the map but included in this Plan is an area of on-street parking along the west side of Lake Boulevard from Market Street to Park Street; these spaces are located outside the DDA boundary, so they are excluded from the map. At present, vehicles can remain parked in these on-street spaces all day.

The following tables summarize the existing on- and off-street parking areas considered in formulating this Plan. Each table provides identifying information about the parking area via either a street location or a parking lot number, the current restrictions governing the use of the spaces, and the approximate number of parking spaces in each area. Combined, these parking areas represent the total City-owned parking inventory considered by Walker for inclusion in a paid parking program.

Figure 3 On-Street Parking Included in the Downtown Parking Plan

Street Name	Street Segment	Current Restrictions	Current Inventory
Port Street	Lake Boulevard to State Street	All Day	10
Lake Boulevard	Port Street to Ship Street	All Day	5
Lake Boulevard	Ship Street to Pearl Street	2-Hours: Memorial Day to Labor Day; All Day Labor Day to Memorial Day	87
Lake Boulevard	Pearl Street to Park Street	All Day	11
Market Street	Lake Boulevard to the Alley	2-Hours	10
State Street	Port Street to Ship Street	All Day	15
State Street	Ship Street to Elm Street	2-Hours	51
State Street	Elm Street to Market Street	All Day	10
Ship Street	Lake Boulevard to State Street	30-Minutes & 2-Hours	17
Ship Street	State Street to Main Street	30-Minutes, 2-Hours, & All Day	14
Pleasant Street	Lake Boulevard to Main Street	30-Minutes & 2-Hours	26
Broad Street	Lake Boulevard to Main Street	30-Minutes & 2-Hours	55
Elm Street	Lake Boulevard to State Street	30-Minutes, 2-Hours, & All Day	56
Elm Street	State Street to Main Street	30-Minutes & 2-Hours	17
Main Street	Port Street to Elm Street	2-Hours & All Day	34
Pleasant Street	Main Street to Court Street	30-Minutes & 2-Hours	22
Court Street	Ship Street to Pleasant Street	2-Hours	14
Broad Street	Main Street to Church Street	All Day; 30-Minutes in front of City Hall	21
			475

Source: City of St. Joseph; Walker Consultants

Figure 4 Off-Street Parking Included in the Downtown Parking Plan

Parking Facility	Current Restrictions	Current Inventory
Lot 1	3-Hours: Memorial Day to Labor Day; All Day Labor Day to Memorial Day	58
Lot 3	All Day & 3-Hours: Memorial Day to Labor Day; All Day Labor Day to Memorial Day	82
Lot 4	All Day	87
Lot 5	All Day	27
Lot 6	All Day	30
Lot 7	All Day	56
Lot 8	All Day & 3-Hours: Memorial Day to Labor Day; All Day Labor Day to Memorial Day	54
Lot 9	All Day	25
Lot 10	All Day	42
Lot 11	All Day & 2-Hours	180
Lot 12	All Day	73
		714

Source: City of St. Joseph; Walker Consultants

As shown above, Walker’s recommendations for implementing paid parking in downtown St. Joseph were based on an analysis of approximately 1,189 total public parking spaces – 475 on-street spaces and 714 spaces in surface parking lots. Of the total downtown public parking inventory, **the paid parking system is proposed to include 384 on-street spaces and 436 surface lot spaces (820 spaces total), all located west of Main Street.** Additional details related to paid versus free parking spaces are provided later in this document.



03 Rationale for Implementing Paid Parking

Rationale for Implementing Paid Parking

Municipalities should not implement paid parking if the only goal is to generate revenue. Paid parking is intended to help manage driver behavior to increase parking space availability, reduce traffic congestion, and ensure that the existing parking supply is used efficiently, with revenue generation as a byproduct. This is echoed in the *Downtown Vision Master Plan*, which states that “...paid parking will help create parking turnover, better distribute parking [among available facilities], and fund necessary maintenance and improvements.”

In communities that do not charge for public parking spaces, taxpayers subsidize the entire cost of providing that parking. This is the case in St. Joseph, where the parking provided downtown is paid for only by St. Joseph taxpayers, as opposed to being paid for by people who visit and park downtown, many of whom are not St. Joseph residents.

In addition to creating an environment where user fees help pay for the cost of providing, managing, and maintaining parking, the benefits of implementing paid parking include:

- Increasing turnover of the most convenient parking spaces, making it easier for drivers to find an available space and facilitating shorter-duration trips.
- Improving access to downtown businesses because of increased parking space turnover, potentially driving additional revenue for these businesses.
- Reducing the number of spaces needed to serve the demand, eliminating or delaying the need to build additional parking spaces, and encouraging new development.
- Encouraging longer-term or all-day parkers to park in less proximate/lower demand/lower cost spaces.
- Encouraging alternative modes of transportation (e.g., walking, biking, etc.) when and where possible.
- Reducing traffic created by drivers searching for an available parking space, reducing congestion, fuel consumption, and vehicle emissions.
- Improving the overall experience of visiting downtown.
- Generating revenue that can be used to fund improvements in the area where paid parking is in effect.

During certain times of the year, finding an available parking space in downtown St. Joseph is not an issue. However, during the warmer months, particularly during the height of summer, much of the public parking in downtown regularly fills and remains highly utilized throughout the day. Additionally, the lack of paid parking and prevalence of all-day parking, mainly west of Main Street, means that some of the most convenient parking spaces downtown are often occupied by non-visitors/non-patrons (i.e., downtown employees, business owners, and residents) before visitors and business patrons arrive. As a result, during the summer months, drivers often circle downtown searching for an available parking space, creating traffic issues. This results in fewer patrons accessing downtown businesses, all while public parking on the east side of Main Street is typically available.

Implementing paid parking in downtown St. Joseph is intended to help alleviate these issues while providing the City with a stream of revenue that can be used to improve downtown.



04 Pricing and Time Limit Recommendations

Proposed Parking Rates and Time Limits

Based on Walker’s understanding of the current dynamics around the various demand drivers in downtown St. Joseph, including retail shops, restaurants, residential dwellings, hotels, senior housing, attractions, the Lake Michigan beaches, and others, as well as our expertise in the realm of municipal parking, the following recommendations were developed to help the City implement a system of paid parking to best manage the existing parking assets serving downtown. These recommendations take into consideration the demands of the various downtown user groups by providing a range of paid and free parking options, along with a mix of time-limited spaces intended to serve high turnover land uses (e.g., restaurants, retail shops, other service businesses, etc.) and all-day parking options. The recommendations also attempt to align with the DDA’s guiding principles, which align with parking industry best practices for efficient and effective parking management. Finally, the recommendations, including the proposed parking rates, consider the context of downtown St. Joseph compared to other southwest Michigan tourist destinations and similar tourist destinations along the Michigan coast of Lake Michigan.

General Pricing Philosophy

As mentioned in the previous section, the *Downtown Vision Master Plan* recommends implementing paid parking to help increase parking space turnover, spread demand among the various public parking facilities, and create a revenue stream to help fund projects downtown. The *Plan* also suggests that the City “...utilize a demand-based pricing model where prices are increased for high-demand facilities and decreased for low-demand facilities.” Walker’s philosophy on parking pricing goes a step further by providing parking options that serve a variety of desired parking durations (i.e., anticipated lengths of stay) and creating price differentials between the various options designed to inspire the desired parking behaviors.

In downtown St. Joseph, the most highly sought-after parking spaces are generally those located west of Main Street. These parking spaces are closest to most commercial activity downtown and the beaches along Lake Michigan. Additionally, parking west of Main Street is seen as more desirable by visitors, downtown employees, residents, and others who do not enjoy the experience of crossing Main Street, also known as Michigan Highway M-63.

These considerations and the understanding that high parking demand is only an issue downtown during the peak tourism months of May to September guided Walker’s recommendations regarding pricing and time limits.

Peer Community Parking Rates

To help inform our recommendations of pricing for public parking in downtown St. Joseph, in addition to the guidance provided by the *Downtown Vision Master Plan*, which was echoed by the recommendations from the DDA to the City Commission, Walker researched current public parking rates in other Michigan municipalities on or near Lake Michigan that are widely considered tourist destinations. The following table presents a summary of this research.

Figure 5 Public Parking Rates and Enforcement Policies in Comparable Michigan Municipalities On or Near Lake Michigan

City	Municipal Paid Parking - Excluding Beaches (Yes/No)	Private Paid Parking (Yes/No)	Municipal Paid Parking Locations	Municipal Parking Rates	Hours of Enforcement	Fines for Parking Violations
St. Joseph	No	Yes	N/A	N/A	8AM-9PM, Memorial Day - Labor Day 8AM-5PM, Labor Day - Memorial Day No Overnight Street Parking Sun.-Thur.	Parking in Excess of Time Limit: \$10.00 if paid within 48 hours; \$25.00 after 48 hours
South Haven	No	Yes	N/A	N/A	Timed Parking: Mon.-Sat. 9AM-5PM; No Overnight Street Parking November 15 - March 15	Parking in Excess of Time Limit: \$20.00 if paid within 7 days; \$40.00 after 7 days; \$60.00 after 60 days
New Buffalo	Yes, overnight parking only	Unknown	Street Parking	\$1.00 for Season: Overnight Street Parking	Timed Parking: Mon.-Sun. 8AM-8PM, Memorial Day - Labor Day	Parking in Excess of Time Limit: \$25.00
Saugatuck	No	Yes	N/A	N/A	Timed Parking: Mon.-Sun. 9AM-6PM; Hours Vary Across Downtown	Parking in Excess of Time Limit: \$25.00
Holland	Yes, overnight parking only	Unknown	Surface Lots & Parking Garages	\$400.00/yr., \$200.00/3-6 mths., \$100.00/1-3 mths., \$20.00/wk.: Surface Lot Downtown Resident Overnight Parking Permit \$575.00/yr.: 9th Street Parking Deck Resident Overnight Parking Permit	No Overnight Street Parking October 15 - May 15	Parking in Excess of Time Limit: \$10.00
Grand Haven	Yes, overnight parking only	Unknown	Surface Lots	\$120.00/yr. or \$10.00/mth.: Downtown Resident Overnight Parking Permit \$20.00/mth.: Downtown Temporary Resident Parking Permit \$5.00/day: Overnight Visitors Permit	No Overnight Street Parking December 1 - April 1	Parking in Excess of Time Limit: \$5.00
Charlevoix	Yes	Unknown	Street Parking & Surface Lots	\$1.50/hr.: May 1 - June 30 & August 16 - October 31 \$2.00/hr.: July 1 - August 15	Mon.-Sat. 8AM-8PM, May 1 - October 31 No Overnight Street Parking, December 1 - April 1	Unpaid Meter or in Excess of Time Limit: \$10.00 if paid within 72 hours; \$30.00 after 72 hours
Petoskey	Yes	Unknown	Street Parking & Surface Lots	\$0.50/hr. or \$1.00/hr.: 3-hour parking; price varies by location \$0.25/hr. or \$0.50/hr.: 10-hour parking; price varies by location	Mon.-Sat. 9AM-6PM, except some holidays No Overnight Street Parking, December 1 - April 1	Unpaid Meter or in Excess of Time Limit: \$25.00 if paid within 72 hours; additional fees added after 72 hours

Source: Walker Consultants; Municipality Websites and Other Online Sources

As shown above, several other comparable cities along the west coast of Michigan currently charge for public parking on-street and in their surface lots and parking structures. In contrast, others do not charge for parking. Of the communities researched, hourly rates for daytime parking ranged from \$0.25/hour to \$2.00/hour, with several municipalities offering daily or monthly permits for overnight parking. A few cities, namely Grand Haven and Holland, do not charge for parking during the day but do offer overnight visitor and resident parking, with some rates as high as \$575/year to park in their downtowns. Conversely, despite their popularity as tourist destinations and the fact that private property owners often charge for public parking, particularly during the busiest times of the year, neither South Haven nor Saugatuck charge for public parking in their downtowns.

In November 2023, the City of Grand Haven issued a Request for Proposals seeking "...a vendor who can design, implement, and manage a modern paid parking system..." for the city. The Request for Proposals details 7 potential paid parking zones, including along its beaches and throughout downtown, containing a total of 1,352 parking spaces. The document indicates the City's intent to charge for parking Monday – Sunday, 9 a.m. – 9 p.m., with hourly parking rates of \$1.50/hour in May and October and \$2.50/hour from June thru September.

Like many of these cities, St. Joseph is a highly desirable tourist destination that benefits from its proximity to the Chicagoland area and other large population centers. Additionally, St. Joseph offers a compact and walkable downtown. However, unlike some of these communities, downtown St. Joseph has the advantage of being adjacent to Lake Michigan with many direct pedestrian and vehicular connections to the lakefront and the associated amenities; most of these other downtowns are set back from Lake Michigan and do not have the type of easy access to the lakefront that downtown St. Joseph enjoys.

In addition to this research on peer communities, it is worth mentioning that many visitors who come to downtown St. Joseph come from larger cities where paid parking is common. Cities such as Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids, Detroit, Chicago, and Indianapolis, as well as many other towns where visitors to St. Joseph live, charge for public parking. Many of these visitors to St. Joseph regularly pay to park in their home cities, making it less likely they would view the implementation of paid parking in downtown St. Joseph in a negative light.

Proposed Pricing Structure and Time Limit Changes

Proposed Pricing Structure

Based on the findings of the *Downtown Vision Master Plan*, research into comparable municipalities, our understanding of the dynamics of downtown St. Joseph, and our knowledge and experience related to best practices in municipal parking management, Walker recommends the following pricing structure for public parking in downtown:

May 1st to September 30th

- \$2.00/hour for all on-street parking west of Main Street, 9 a.m. – 9 p.m.
- \$1.00/hour for all off-street parking west of Main Street, 9 a.m. – 9 p.m.
- Free parking in all City-owned public parking east of Main Street, including the spaces on Main Street.

October 1st to April 30th

- Free parking in all City-owned public parking downtown, with time limits enforced 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

The differential pricing between on-street parking and off-street parking west of Main Street is intended to steer longer-term parkers to the City's surface parking lots, freeing up spaces on-street for shorter-duration, higher turnover visits. Charging for parking in the surface lots west of Main should also help discourage beachgoers from parking downtown in large numbers versus in the paid City and Berrien County parking facilities closer to Lake Michigan. Continuing to offer free parking east of Main Street is intended to entice the most cost-conscious visitors, as well as downtown employees and residents, to park farther from the core of downtown while also providing a pool of free parking for the City's employees working at City Hall.

Maintaining free parking across downtown outside of tourist season acknowledges that high parking demand is not an issue during this time of year. This will allow year-round residents of St. Joseph and off-season visitors to downtown to continue to enjoy the services and amenities that the area has to offer in much the same way as they have historically. Additionally, suspending fees for public parking in the off-season will allow the City to maximize the longevity of the parking payment technology, which will be discussed in greater detail later in the Plan.

Proposed Time Limit Changes

In addition to implementing the proposed parking rate structure, Walker recommends adjusting the current time restrictions governing the use of the downtown on-street and off-street parking areas.

Several merchants expressed frustration with the current two-hour time limits at most on-street spaces, arguing that this is often insufficient time for a downtown patron to conduct their business without feeling rushed to move their car. Walker's recent experience in other municipalities has frequently echoed this sentiment. For that reason, Walker recommends extending the time limit for on-street parking from two to three hours in most locations to allow customers and others more time to enjoy downtown. With the implementation of paid parking on-street, turnover of on-street parking spaces is still expected to increase despite the longer time limit.

In the City's surface parking lots, Walker recommends removing all time restrictions and opening these facilities up to all-day parking. During the busy season, people parking in a surface lot west of Main Street must pay for parking, which should prevent these spaces from filling with downtown employees and residents when the spaces are needed to serve visitors. Removing time restrictions in these lots should also reduce visitor confusion resulting from the current mix of two-hour, three-hour, and all-day parking. Maintaining all-day parking in the surface lots east of Main Street will provide downtown employees and residents with a free place to park when paid parking is in effect west of Main Street.

In addition to the time limit changes noted above, Walker also recommends that:

- All existing 30-minute spaces downtown should be maintained – with payment required – to facilitate quick customer trips and pickup/drop-off activity.
- On-street time limits should be adjusted in the off-season, as they are today, to reflect the significantly reduced demand for parking.

- The short-duration spaces on Broad Street in front of City Hall should be maintained to facilitate City business.

For ease of reference, the tables below detail Walker’s recommended time limits for on- and off-street public parking compared with the current time limits in each parking area.

Figure 6 Current and Proposed Parking Time Limits – On-Street

Street Name	Street Segment	Current Restrictions ¹	Proposed Restrictions: Busy Season ²	Proposed Restrictions: Off Season
Port Street	Lake Boulevard to State Street	All Day	3-Hours	All Day
Lake Boulevard	Port Street to Ship Street	All Day	3-Hours	All Day
Lake Boulevard	Ship Street to Pearl Street	2-Hours: Memorial Day to Labor Day; All Day Labor Day to Memorial Day	3-Hours	All Day
Lake Boulevard	Pearl Street to Park Street	All Day	3-Hours	All Day
Market Street	Lake Boulevard to State Street	2-Hours	3-Hours	All Day
State Street	Port Street to Ship Street	All Day	3-Hours	3-Hours
State Street	Ship Street to Elm Street	2-Hours	3-Hours	3-Hours
State Street	Elm Street to Market Street	All Day	3-Hours	3-Hours
Ship Street	Lake Boulevard to State Street	30-Minutes & 2-Hours	30-Minutes & 3-Hours	30-Minutes & 3-Hours
Ship Street	State Street to Main Street	30-Minutes, 2-Hours, & All Day	30-Minutes & 3-Hours	30-Minutes & 3-Hours
Pleasant Street	Lake Boulevard to Main Street	30-Minutes & 2-Hours	30-Minutes & 3-Hours	30-Minutes & 3-Hours
Broad Street	Lake Boulevard to Main Street	30-Minutes & 2-Hours	30-Minutes & 3-Hours	30-Minutes & 3-Hours
Elm Street	Lake Boulevard to State Street	30-Minutes, 2-Hours, & All Day	30-Minutes & 3-Hours	30-Minutes & 3-Hours
Elm Street	State Street to Main Street	30-Minutes & 2-Hours	30-Minutes & 3-Hours	30-Minutes & 3-Hours
Main Street	Port Street to Elm Street	2-Hours & All Day	3-Hours	3-Hours
Pleasant Street	Main Street to Court Street	30-Minutes & 2-Hours	30-Minutes & 3-Hours	30-Minutes & 3-Hours
Court Street	Ship Street to Pleasant Street	2-Hours	3-Hours	3-Hours
Broad Street	Main Street to Church Street	All Day; 30-Minutes in front of City Hall	All Day; 30-Minutes in front of City Hall	All Day; 30-Minutes in front of City Hall

1) There are currently 18 30-minute spaces on-street in downtown.

2) Walker recommends maintaining the existing 30-minute spaces throughout downtown. Payment should be required in these spaces during the busy season.

Source: Walker Consultants; City of St. Joseph

Figure 7 Current and Proposed Parking Time Limits – Off-Street

Parking Facility	Current Restrictions	Proposed Restrictions: Year-Round
Lot 1	3-Hours: Memorial Day to Labor Day; All Day Labor Day to Memorial Day	All Day
Lot 3	All Day & 3-Hours: Memorial Day to Labor Day; All Day Labor Day to Memorial Day	All Day
Lot 4	All Day	All Day
Lot 5	All Day	All Day
Lot 6	All Day	All Day
Lot 7	All Day	All Day
Lot 8	All Day & 3-Hours: Memorial Day to Labor Day; All Day Labor Day to Memorial Day	All Day
Lot 9	All Day	All Day
Lot 10	All Day	All Day
Lot 11	All Day & 2-Hours	All Day & 3-Hours
Lot 12	All Day	All Day

Source: Walker Consultants; City of St. Joseph

Proposed Changes to Parking Citation Fine Amounts and Enforcement Policies

Proposed Changes to Fine Amounts

Under the City's current system of timed parking downtown, vehicles parked violating posted time limits can be issued a citation. Initial fine amounts range from \$10.00 to \$75.00, depending on the number of citations issued to that vehicle in a 14-day period. The table below summarizes the City's current fine schedule for parking in violation of posted time limits.

Figure 8 Current Fine Schedule for Hourly Parking Violations

Hourly Parking Violations 1st and 2nd Citation (within 14 days)	\$10	Within 48 Hours
	\$25	3 to 15 Days
	\$35	16 to 30 Days
	\$45	30+ Days
Hourly Parking Violations 3rd Citation (within 14 days)	\$50	Within 48 Hours
	\$75	3 to 15 Days
	\$100	16 to 30 Days
	\$125	30+ Days
Hourly Parking Violations 4th Citation (within 14 days)	\$75	Within 48 Hours
	\$100	3 to 15 Days
	\$125	16 to 30 Days
	\$150	30+ Days

Source: City of St. Joseph

As shown above, a driver who receives a citation for parking beyond the posted time limit pays a lower fee if the citation is paid within 48 hours. The cost of the citation then escalates as time passes without payment. It is common practice for municipalities to graduate fines for parking-related violations the longer the citation remains unpaid.

If paid parking is implemented downtown, Walker recommends updating this fine schedule to include violations for non-payment of parking fees. It is best practice in the parking industry to set the fine amount for non-payment in an hourly parking space at 10-15x the hourly cost of parking. Based on the \$2.00/hour parking rate recommended in this Plan, Walker recommends the fine for non-payment be increased from \$10.00 for the first and second citations to \$20.00 - \$30.00. This differential between the cost of a citation and the hourly cost to park is intended to encourage as many people as possible to pay for their parked time without being overly punitive; **the goal is to promote payment compliance and not to issue citations.**

Beyond the first and second citations, Walker recommends the City continue to impose escalated fine amounts for additional citations received within a 14-day period. If the City elects to increase the initial fine amount for a first and second violation to \$20.00, Walker recommends the third citation carry a fine of \$60.00, the fourth \$80.00, and each additional citation increasing in cost by \$20.00. Walker also recommends the City continue to escalate the fine amount the longer a citation remains unpaid. However, given the higher recommended base fine amounts, Walker also recommends extending the period when a citation can be paid before the cost escalates from 48 hours to 7 days. This should provide the citation recipient ample time to pay the fine before the cost increases.

Proposed Changes to Enforcement Policies

In addition to establishing a fine for non-payment of the required parking fees, it is also recommended that the City update its current policy on the number of outstanding citations on a vehicle before it is eligible to be towed. Currently, if a car has six unpaid citations of any type, that vehicle can be towed by the Public Safety Department. However, if that vehicle's owner pays one of those citations (leaving five unpaid citations remaining on that vehicle), the vehicle is removed from the City's list of tow-eligible vehicles. Under the City's current policy, only when a car has six or more unpaid citations associated with it can it be towed.

To discourage persistent parking violators from taking advantage of this policy, Walker recommends that the City update the policy to require vehicle owners to pay all outstanding parking-related fines to have their vehicles removed from the tow list once they become tow-eligible. If this change were implemented, a car with six outstanding parking citations would not be removed from the tow list until all citations and associated fines are paid – not just one of those citations. This policy change should hopefully encourage persistent violators to abide by posted parking restrictions.

In addition to the above policy change, the City should explore other options for encouraging payment of parking citations, including issuing civil infraction violations to persistent violators.

Overnight and Short-Term Rental Parking

Downtown Resident Parking

Per Section 29-37 of the City Code, parking a vehicle overnight in any public parking lot is prohibited except for particular residents living in the downtown zoning district. While the proposed implementation of paid parking would still allow for this limited overnight parking, these resident parkers would now be required to pay to park between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. in facilities where they can currently park for free all day. These residents would continue to have the ability to park overnight and into the paid parking period in the City's free all-day parking lots east of Main Street if paid parking is implemented. However, to better track the overnight use of City parking lots, to ensure that unauthorized vehicles are not parking overnight, and to prevent long-term storage of vehicles, Walker recommends that the City establish a license plate-based credential (i.e., parking permit) allowing the City to monitor overnight parking use by downtown residents.

Providing parking credentials to authorized downtown residents will formalize a process that, according to the City, is administered and monitored on an informal basis. Additionally, the City's existing LPR enforcement system can monitor and track this type of parking credential, allowing the City to understand how and when residents use the parking lots for overnight parking. This data could become valuable if downtown resident parking demand increases significantly and begins to strain the City's existing public parking resources. Additionally, there is the option to charge for overnight parking permits in the future if so desired.

If fees are assessed for overnight parking permits, special exceptions could be made to allow for continued free parking based on a user's income, physical mobility limitations, or other factors, as determined by the City. However, if the City offers this free access to particular downtown residents, Walker recommends limiting the

number of free permits issued to prevent the most desirable parking locations downtown from being used for long-term vehicle storage.

Short-Term Rental Parking

Walker understands that the City recently approved the use of residential units downtown as short-term rental properties as a conditional use without requiring that parking be provided by properties containing six or fewer units. A similar license plate-based credential proposed for downtown residents or a City-issued hangtag permit could also be used to help address concerns about where the guests of short-term rentals will park. Like residents, these guests could register their license plates with the City and use the free all-day parking lots east of Main Street for overnight parking. Alternatively, the owners of the short-term rental properties could be provided with City-issued reusable hangtag permits for distribution to their guests. While a system of hangtag permits would make managing guest parking more straightforward for the rental property owners, it would require some extra enforcement effort on the part of the City, compared to enforcing using LPR cameras.

Identifying short-term rental guest vehicles with a credential would also allow the City to restrict these vehicles from parking overnight in the parking lots west of Main Street or limit their parking to only certain lots east of Main Street if desired.

Preventing Long-Term Vehicle Storage

Implementing paid parking in the currently free all-day parking lots west of Main Street should naturally prevent downtown residents and others from using these lots for long-term vehicle storage during the busy season. Because these parkers would be required to pay for parking daily from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. or receive a ticket, they will be motivated to find another place to store any vehicle they use infrequently.

To help prevent long-term vehicle storage in the City's parking lots during the off-season when paid parking is not active and in the free all-day lots east of Main Street, Walker recommends the City consider implementing a rule preventing any vehicle from parking for more than 48 or 72 consecutive hours in these facilities. While challenging to enforce and perhaps only periodically an issue, cities often use this restriction to prevent residents and others from storing unused or infrequently used vehicles on city streets and in public parking lots.


Again, the City's LPR enforcement system can help monitor the parking activity of credentialed residents and short-term rental users to ensure that these users are not monopolizing the City's free public parking resources.

Potential Impact on Residential Neighborhoods Bordering Downtown

During the busiest months and days of the year, the residential neighborhoods bordering downtown, both above and below the bluff, often experience an influx of vehicles parking on neighborhood streets. Based on conversations with City staff, these vehicles belong to a combination of visitors to downtown, beachgoers, vacationers renting properties in the neighborhoods, and guests of the neighborhood's residents. Because there are no time limits or other restrictions on the streets in these areas, aside from no parking from 2:30 a.m. to 6:00

a.m. on weekdays, people are currently allowed to park on these streets most times of day and for extended periods.

With the reintroduction of paid parking downtown, there is the potential that additional parking demand could spill over onto the streets in these areas. Drivers looking to avoid paying for parking west of Main Street or those who do not know about or do not want to park in the free parking areas east of Main Street may decide that parking on the street in one of these neighborhoods is preferable to these other parking options. The DDA also has a wayfinding effort already underway to provide more explicit directions to downtown destinations, including parking, which may reduce some of this activity. However, it is recommended that the City monitor spillover parking demand in these neighborhoods if paid parking is reintroduced downtown so that solutions can be implemented to help manage this demand, if necessary.



05 Parking Payment Technology and Cost

Technology Deployment

St. Joseph currently employs units commonly referred to as “multi-space parking meters,” “parking payment kiosks,” or “pay stations” to manage seasonal paid parking at Tiscornia Beach, Lions Park, Kiwanis Park, and at the Whirlpool Centennial Fountain lot. The type of pay stations the City uses to manage these parking areas are modern equivalents of traditional parking meters, and their use is considered best practice in the parking industry. Before this Plan was developed, the City requested information from its current pay station vendor to understand the potential cost of installing similar equipment downtown if it decided to implement paid parking. The vendor provided the City with a cost quote and identified potential pay station locations on a map of downtown.

During the formulation of this Downtown Parking Plan, Walker reviewed the cost quote and suggested equipment locations provided by the City’s pay station vendor, asked the vendor clarifying questions about the quote and then developed the recommended equipment locations below based on our own experience. Walker was not asked to evaluate other potential payment technologies as part of this Plan. Additionally, the anticipated implementation costs that follow were developed based on the information provided by the vendor and were not determined through a competitive bid process.

In addition to the estimated cost of the pay stations themselves, the following section of the Plan describes other capital costs that would need to be incurred to implement this type of paid parking technology. Finally, a few other critical technological deployment considerations are also discussed.

Description of Equipment and Recommended Configuration

Before initiating this project, the City conducted its own analysis of paid parking downtown, assuming that the equipment currently used to monitor its beach parking, Luke II parking pay stations manufactured by T2 Systems Canada, would be installed throughout downtown to accept payment from parking customers. Unlike traditional parking meters, which serve one or two adjacent parking spaces, these pay stations typically serve eight or more parking spaces and are strategically located so that no parking space is more than 200 feet from the nearest pay station; the system can also be designed so that users can pay for parking at any pay station, not just the closest pay station to their vehicle. The units can be hardwired to electrical service or powered via integrated solar panels and configured to accept coins, bills, credit cards, mobile payments, or any combination of these payment types. The units can also be configured to associate payment with a parking space number or a vehicle’s license plate.

Since the City’s initial assessment of paid parking, T2 has developed a newer pay station called the Luke Cosmo, which has functionality similar to that of the Luke II but with components housed in a smaller unit. Assuming this type of pay station is employed by the City to manage paid parking downtown, Walker recommends that the units be solar-powered, accept credit cards and mobile payments only (no coins or paper money), and be configured to associate the payment with a vehicle’s license plate. Municipalities often use solar-powered parking pay stations, even in environments like St. Joseph. Accepting multiple forms of payment, excluding coins and paper money, provides users flexibility in how they pay but eliminates issues associated with collecting, tracking, and securing physical currency, along with the additional equipment maintenance that can result from accepting these payments at the pay station. Finally, tying payments to vehicle license plates will allow the City to conduct

enforcement with its existing license plate recognition (“LPR”) system while eliminating the need to paint numbers or post signs at each parking space.

In addition to the physical pay stations, Walker recommends that the City extend its mobile payment platform, currently provided by Passport Parking, to the new paid parking spaces downtown. This form of payment allows users to avoid walking to a pay station, can provide an alert when a paid parking session is about to expire, offers real-time information about remaining paid time, and allows users to extend their parking session remotely without having to return to the pay station nearest their vehicle.

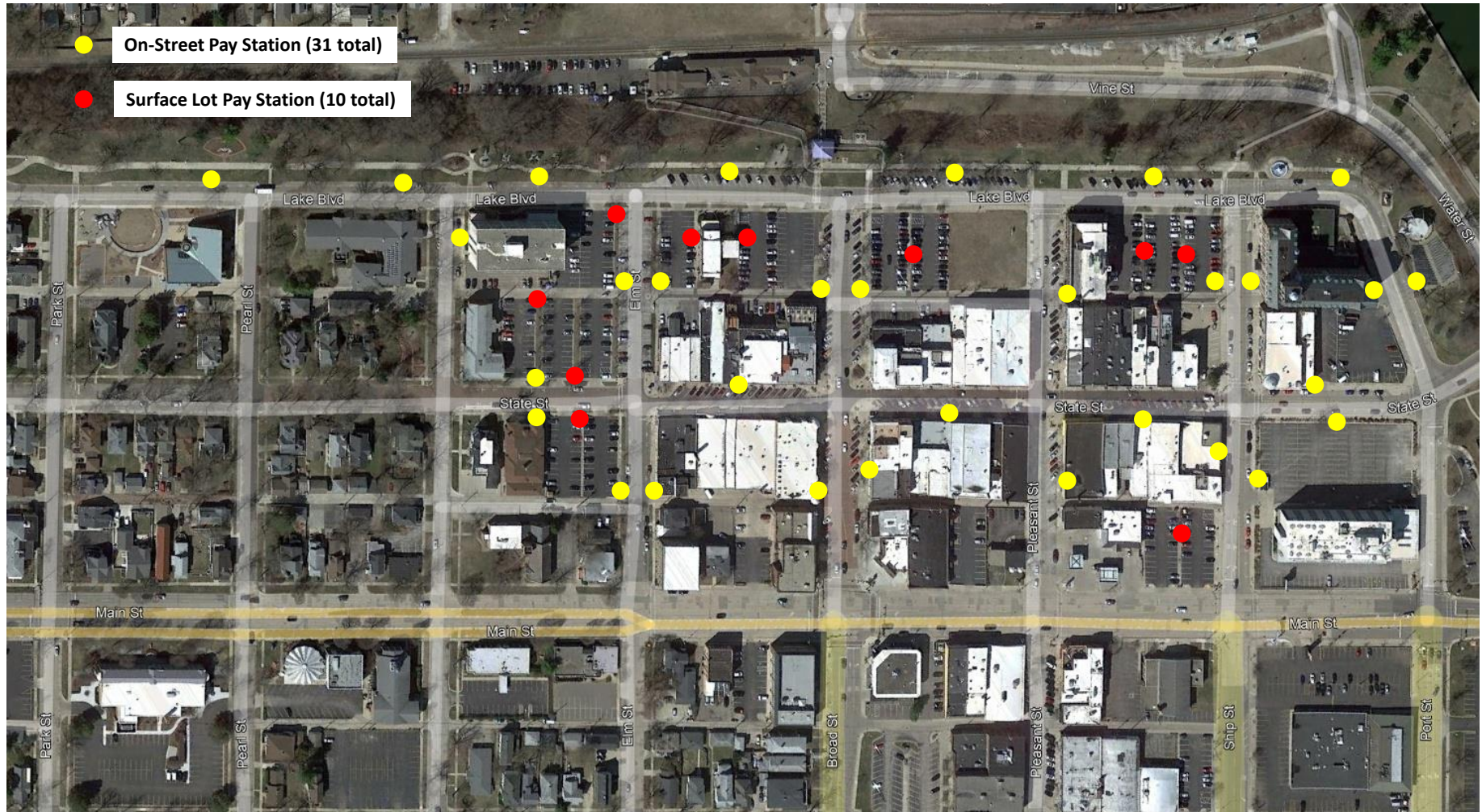
Pay Station Placement Recommendations

Based on the assumption that the City will implement seasonal paid parking downtown for all on- and off-street parking spaces west of Main Street, as recommended by this Plan, Walker recommends pay stations be installed as indicated in the figure on the following page. The proposed equipment locations are intended to provide sufficient coverage of downtown with pay stations while considering the anticipated prevalence of mobile payment and limiting the City’s capital investment in equipment. The physical equipment should also be supplemented with payment signage indicating the availability of a mobile payment option.

It is important to note that proposed pay station locations can be adjusted on each block and within the parking lots to account for actual conditions on the ground, including the physical limitations of the proposed locations.

As shown below, Walker estimates that 31 pay stations will be needed to adequately service the on-street parking spaces west of Main Street, and an additional 10 pay stations will be needed to serve the City’s public parking lots.

Figure 9 Recommended Pay Station Locations



Source: Walker Consultants; Google Earth

Estimated Equipment Cost

Based on the recommended equipment placements shown above, Walker anticipates the need for approximately 41 pay stations to serve the recommended paid parking areas west of Main Street in downtown St. Joseph. This assumes full implementation of on- and off-street paid parking, as this Plan recommends. Based on the cost quote provided by the City's current pay station vendor in January 2024 and the recommended configuration described above (i.e., solar-powered units that accept credit card and mobile payment only), each pay station is estimated to cost approximately \$9,200 installed. The total cost for all 41 pay stations is roughly \$377,000.

A few items of note related to the equipment cost estimate:

- The cost assumes pay stations with contactless credit card payment technology ("EMV").
- The cost includes starting supplies to operate the units, a 12-month warranty, and City staff training on the use and maintenance of the pay stations.
- The cost estimate does not include the concrete work required to provide a base for installing the pay stations (approximately 2-foot square concrete pads).

Other Related Upfront Costs

Signage

Along with the pay stations' cost, other upfront investments will be necessary to help ensure the success of the proposed paid parking technology. In addition to the concrete work needed to mount the equipment mentioned above, signage is the other significant upfront cost. Multiple types of signs will be necessary, including signage notifying parkers that they must pay for parking with the location of the nearest pay station, plus signage providing information on the option to pay via mobile application. A few examples of these signs in another municipality are shown below.

While the cost of installing new signage will depend on the quantity, types, and materials of the signs installed in St. Joseph, Walker has seen the associated signage cost in the range of \$15,000-\$20,000 for similarly sized parking systems and the number of pay stations installed. This cost is for vendor-provided and installed signage. There may be an opportunity for cost savings if the City purchases the signs from the vendor or creates them internally and uses City personnel to install them.



Additional Enforcement Equipment

As mentioned previously, the City currently uses a camera-based LPR system to monitor vehicle length of stay in its timed parking areas and seasonal paid parking along Lake Michigan. This same equipment can also monitor the proposed paid parking areas identified in this Plan. However, the City currently only has one vehicle equipped with this enforcement technology, which could create issues if this equipment malfunctions for any length of time and potentially limit the frequency with which enforcement can be conducted.

For this reason, Walker recommends the City procure a second LPR equipment package from its current LPR system manufacturer. While not critical to begin paid parking, adding this will provide the City with redundancy should one of the systems become temporarily unavailable or inoperable. Additionally, having a second LPR-equipped vehicle will allow the City to conduct enforcement more frequently than today, which may be necessary with the implementation of paid parking (more detail on this subject is provided in Section 5 of this Plan).

Recent pricing for this type of system puts the cost at approximately \$65,000-\$75,000, not including the price of the vehicle on which the equipment is mounted. Like the pay stations, this type of technology has recurring costs, which will be discussed in the following section.

The table below summarizes the estimated initial cost of procuring and installing the pay stations and other equipment necessary to implement paid parking in downtown St. Joseph.

Figure 10 Breakdown of Estimated Initial Cost to Procure and Install Equipment

Pay Stations (41 units)	\$ 377,000
Payment Signage	\$ 20,000
LPR Enforcement Unit	\$ 75,000
Additional Enforcement Vehicle (if necessary) ¹	\$ 48,000
Site Preparation Work ²	\$ 21,000
Estimated Upfront System Cost	\$ 541,000

1) If the City has an available vehicle on which to mount the LPR, this cost is not applicable.

2) Assumed to be done in house by Public Works at a cost of \$500/unit.

Source: City of St. Joseph; Walker Consultants

Procurement and Installation Schedule

If the City can directly procure new pay stations from its current vendor without a competitive bid process, the vendor indicated that the new equipment could be installed within four to six weeks. Because the equipment is manufactured outside the United States, per the vendor, this timeline could be elongated by up to a few weeks if U.S. Customs flags the shipment.

If the procurement of new parking pay stations must be done through a competitive bidding process, the process to prepare a request for proposals ("RFP"), solicit responses, review responses, interview potential vendors, select a vendor, then purchase, and install the equipment could take four to six months to complete.



06 Potential Financial Impact of Paid Parking and Project Implementation Timeline

Potential Financial Performance of the System

While the primary goals of reintroducing paid parking to downtown St. Joseph are to increase turnover and the availability of parking spaces and better manage the needs of the various parking user groups, this change will also result in revenue generated by the parking system. In addition to paying for the cost of new parking payment technology and ongoing operating costs for the system, this new revenue stream will also help the City defray other expenses currently borne primarily by the City's taxpayers. Long-term parking lot maintenance, enhanced wayfinding signage, streetscape improvements, and other infrastructure and aesthetic improvements are just a few of the areas where revenue generated by the parking system could be deployed. As mentioned in the DDA's recommendations to the City Commission, establishing a Parking Benefits District would help ensure that a certain percentage of the revenue generated by the paid parking system is spent on needs within that district.

Walker developed the following operating revenue and expense projections to give the City a sense of the financial impact of implementing a system of paid parking downtown.

Revenue Assumptions and Estimated Annual Revenue

Walker needed to make several assumptions to project the anticipated revenue that could be generated by reintroducing paid parking as outlined in this Plan. These assumptions mainly center around variations in the expected use of the paid parking spaces by hour of the day, day of the week, and month of the year. While Walker was provided with some historical parking occupancy data gathered during past planning efforts, most insights into historical demand for parking downtown were gleaned from conversations with City staff and downtown business owners, as well as limited observations made by Walker staff during the development of this Plan and personal visits to St. Joseph before this project. Without detailed quantitative demand data, Walker often relies on a mix of limited quantitative and qualitative data and experience from similar projects to develop these types of revenue projections.

To develop estimates of the revenue that could be generated by a system of paid parking in downtown St. Joseph, Walker made the following assumptions:

- The paid parking system will comprise 384 on-street spaces and 436 surface lot spaces, all located west of Main Street.
- Payment will be required from May 1st – September 30th, equivalent to 153 days per year.
- Payment will be required seven days a week from 9 a.m. – 9 p.m.
- On-street parking will cost \$2.00/hour.
- Surface lot parking will cost \$1.00/hour.
- Parking demand will peak in July and August, with slightly lower demand in June and significantly lower demand in May and September.
- Parking demand will peak on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, with somewhat lower demand on the remaining days of the week.
- On any given day, parking demand will grow towards a daily peak around the lunch hour, dipping slightly in the mid-afternoon, then peaking again during the dinner and evening hours.

- Parking payment compliance (or the proportion of parked time that is paid for) will average 80 percent; in other words, 20 percent of the time when a vehicle is parked and payment is required, the driver will not pay. This is considered a high level of payment compliance in the parking industry.

Based on the above assumptions, Walker estimates that the proposed paid parking system, as described in this Plan, has the potential to generate approximately \$1.0 million per year in gross revenue. This figure does not account for the ongoing costs associated with operating and maintaining the system, nor the payback of the initial investment in equipment and other infrastructure.

It is also important to note that this projected revenue figure is based on the current count of public parking spaces west of Main Street. Walker is aware that the City is currently undertaking a planning process related to the streetscapes downtown and that several proposed alternatives would remove existing parking spaces. Additionally, the City has expressed a desire to develop existing surface parking lots downtown into new residential units and commercial space. If these or other physical changes that remove public parking spaces occur downtown, the revenue-generating potential of the described paid parking system could be impacted.

Annual Operating Expenses

In addition to the upfront cost of the parking pay stations and associated signage and the infrastructure necessary to install the equipment, operating, maintaining, and enforcing the new system effectively will result in additional ongoing costs to the City. Although reliable, the equipment will require routine maintenance and periodic repairs, as will the associated signage. The technology provider also charges recurring fees as part of the regular operation of the equipment. Increased staffing and an additional LPR enforcement unit will also likely be necessary to ensure adequate enforcement of the new paid parking areas.

The sections below briefly describe and quantify the additional ongoing costs the City will likely incur with implementing paid parking downtown.

Recurring Fees and Regular Maintenance Costs

The parking pay stations described in this Plan require cellular service to process payments and connect with the enforcement technology. Additionally, the equipment manufacturer charges ongoing fees for data storage, reporting, and regular software upgrades. Based on information provided by the City's current equipment vendor, these recurring fees will cost approximately \$122/pay station/month. However, per the vendor, these monthly fees can be suspended in the off-season when the machines are not being used to process payments. When the equipment is purchased, these fees can also be negotiated with the vendor (or any vendor).

Assuming 41 pay stations operate five months per year, with recurring costs of \$122/month/unit, the annual cost of these recurring fees is estimated to be approximately \$25,000.

From a maintenance perspective, Walker recommends allocating approximately \$100/unit/month for routine maintenance, replacement components, ongoing sign maintenance, and other maintenance-related items. This allowance should cover the ongoing maintenance needs of the payment technology and associated signage. Additionally, protecting the pay stations during the off-season when they are not in use should help reduce needed maintenance.

Based on the above assumption, Walker estimates the total maintenance costs incurred by the City related to parking payment equipment and associated signage to be approximately \$20,000 annually.

Additional Enforcement Personnel

Without regular, effective enforcement, implementing paid parking in downtown St. Joseph is unlikely to increase parking space turnover, manage the behaviors of the various user groups, or generate revenue to support downtown. If drivers know that parking enforcement is lax or nonexistent, they will quickly realize that they do not need to pay the posted parking rates or abide by the posted time limits.

At present, Reserve Officers of the Department of Public Safety are responsible for enforcing parking time limits throughout downtown, as well as seasonal paid parking along Lake Michigan, and they do so effectively. Walker does not see any reason to alter this structure. However, with the implementation of paid parking in a portion of downtown, increasing the frequency with which parking regulations are enforced will be necessary. The current system of free timed and all-day parking allows Public Safety personnel to conduct enforcement patrols of timed parking areas every few hours, with all-day parking areas monitored only periodically to prevent illegal or dangerous parking behaviors. If paid parking is implemented, it will be necessary for Public Safety personnel to enforce the paid parking areas more frequently to ensure that parkers have paid the appropriate fees. There will also likely be a need for periods of more targeted enforcement in the highest demand and highest turnover spaces to ensure sufficient payment compliance.

Due to the need for enhanced enforcement and the proposed hours and days of paid parking, Walker estimates that the City will need to add the equivalent of two full-time staff members on a seasonal basis to aid the parking enforcement effort; there may also be an opportunity to task this staff with light maintenance of the pay stations, in addition to their enforcement duties. Whether these employees are housed in Public Safety or another department is a decision for the City, as is the decision to hire two full-time employees, a combination of full- and part-time employees, or all part-time employees to fill these roles. Regardless of the classification of these employees and in which department they reside, Walker recommends that responsibility for the management of the employees and the overall enforcement program continue to reside within the Department of Public Safety.

Assuming the City adds one full-time and two part-time seasonal staff members to enhance the enforcement program, based on current hourly wage rates paid to Reserve Officers, Walker estimates the wage costs of these employees as shown in the table below.

Figure 11 Estimated Additional Staffing Costs Necessary to Operate Paid Parking System

	Full-Time Staff	Part-Time Staff
Number of Staff	1	2
Hours Worked per Week	40	25
Weeks in Seasonal Paid Parking Period	22	22
Hourly Wage ¹	\$18.00	\$18.00
Annual Wages by Employee Classification	\$15,840	\$19,800
Total Annual Wages & Benefits	\$35,640	

1) Per the City, starting pay for Reserve Officers who conduct parking enforcement is \$18/hour.

Source: Walker Consultants

The above estimates are based on Walker's assumptions of the mix of full- and part-time staff and may vary depending on the City's desired staffing levels and hiring ability.

Recurring Enforcement Equipment Costs

Maintenance and upgrades to the City's existing LPR enforcement system are paid for via a service agreement with the manufacturer. This agreement provides the City with continual maintenance support, regular equipment replacement, regular inspections of the equipment, and numerous other benefits in exchange for a monthly fee. The fee for this type of support is \$1,200/month, paid year-round.

Given this existing relationship and the City's comfort in delegating this support to the equipment manufacturer, Walker recommends that the City enter into a similar agreement covering the second LPR equipment package being recommended for purchase. Assuming a second LPR is purchased, and a similar service arrangement covers it, this will add approximately \$15,000 annually to the cost of operations.

Ongoing Parking System Oversight and Planning

The City of St. Joseph does not currently have staff dedicated to higher-level oversight and planning around public parking. As such, it will be necessary to identify City staff with the interest and capacity to take on this role or for a new staff person to be hired. Given the proposed seasonal nature of paid parking, Walker has assumed that this role could be fulfilled by a full-time person working from May through October; if this is a year-round, full-time staff member, this person could take on additional duties during the off-season.

The individual in this role should be tasked with:

- Monitoring and reporting on public parking utilization monthly or more frequently.

- Tracking and reporting on the financial performance of the system.
- Recommending future parking rates and policy changes.
- Helping to identify and prioritize parking-related capital projects.
- Coordinating with Public Safety on matters related to the paid parking system.
- Contributing to developing and disseminating informational materials about parking and alternative transportation options downtown.
- Assisting with other public parking matters in the downtown and adjacent areas.

For the purposes of this analysis, Walker has assumed that the person in this position would be paid \$25,000 for working from May through October, with an additional 35 percent in benefit costs.

Estimated Annual Financial Impact of Paid Parking

Based on the recommendations described in the preceding Plan, the following figure summarizes the estimated stabilized annual financial impact of implementing paid parking in downtown St. Joseph.

Figure 12 Estimated Annual Net Financial Impact of Seasonal Paid Parking

Estimated Revenue	
On-Street Parking	\$ 663,000
Surface Lot Parking	\$ 339,000
Gross Parking Revenue	\$ 1,002,000
Credit Card Fees ¹	\$ (35,000)
Net Parking Revenue	\$ 967,000
Estimated Operating Expenses	
Recurring Pay Station Fees	\$ 25,000
Equipment/Signage Maintenance	\$ 20,000
Additional Enforcement Personnel	\$ 36,000
Recurring Enforcement Equipment Costs	\$ 15,000
City Staff Parking System Analyst (if necessary) ²	\$ 34,000
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 130,000
Estimated Annual Net Income	\$ 837,000

1) Assumes the City pays an average of 3.5% in merchant processing fees.

2) Assumes a new seasonal City staff position; this role could be filled by an existing City staff person if they had the capacity and interest. Assumes a 6-month salary of \$25,000, plus benefits of 35% of salary.

Source: Walker Consultants

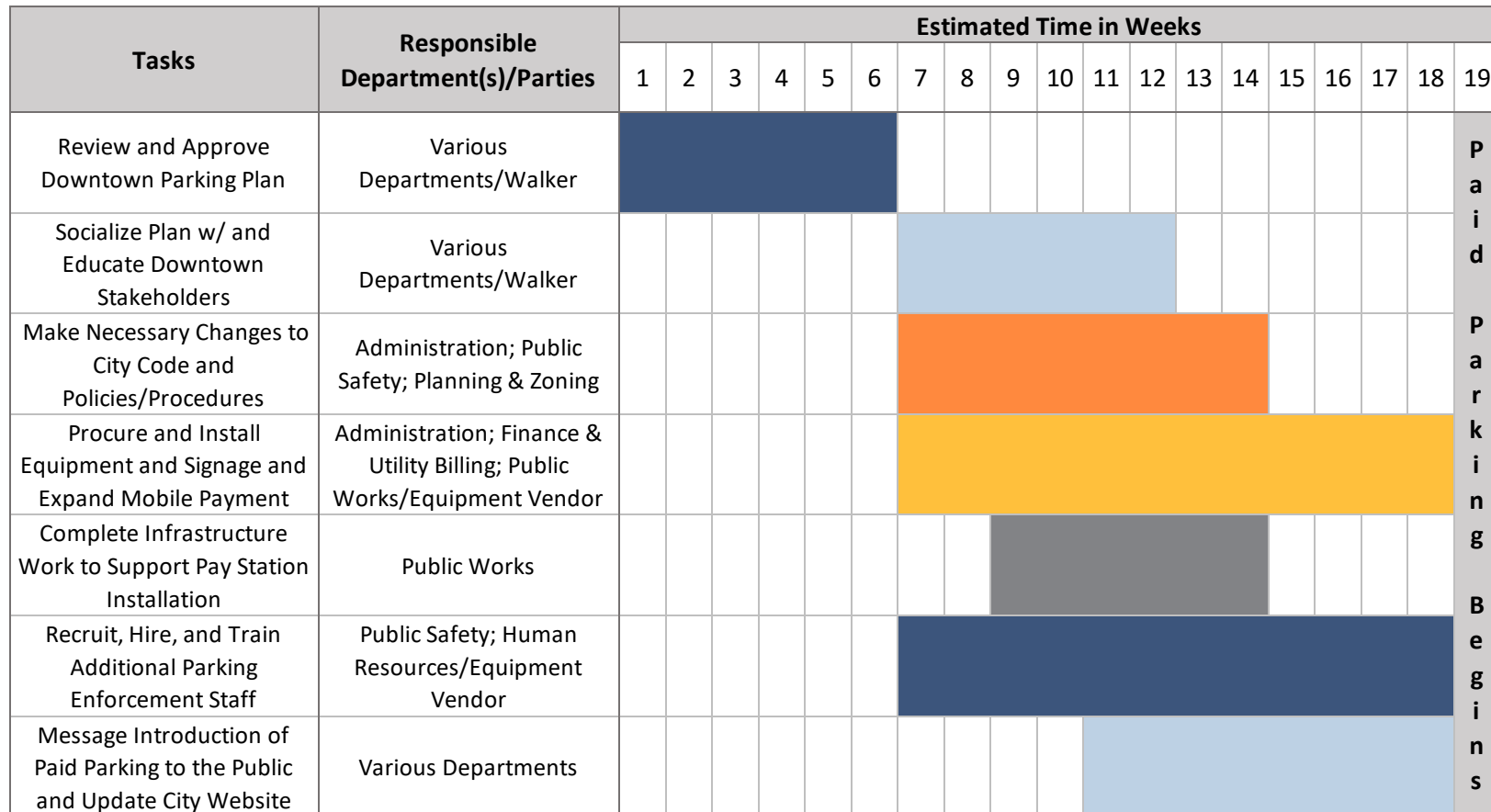
Walker estimates that the City could generate nearly \$837,000 in net income annually by implementing seasonal paid parking in downtown St. Joseph, excluding the initial cost of procuring and installing the payment equipment and associated infrastructure. It should be noted that this figure does not account for any impact the implementation of paid parking may have on revenues currently generated through the issuance of parking tickets.

Paid Parking Implementation Timeline

If the City chooses to move forward with seasonal paid parking downtown, successful implementation will require a systematic approach and realistic expectations of the time needed to complete the process. To aid the City in its planning process for moving from approval of this Downtown Parking Plan through the completion of equipment installation and the activation of seasonal paid parking, Walker has devised the illustrative implementation timelines presented below. The first figure presents the timeline assuming new pay stations and other equipment can be procured directly from the City's existing vendors or similar vendors; the second figure presents the timeline assuming a competitive procurement process will be required.

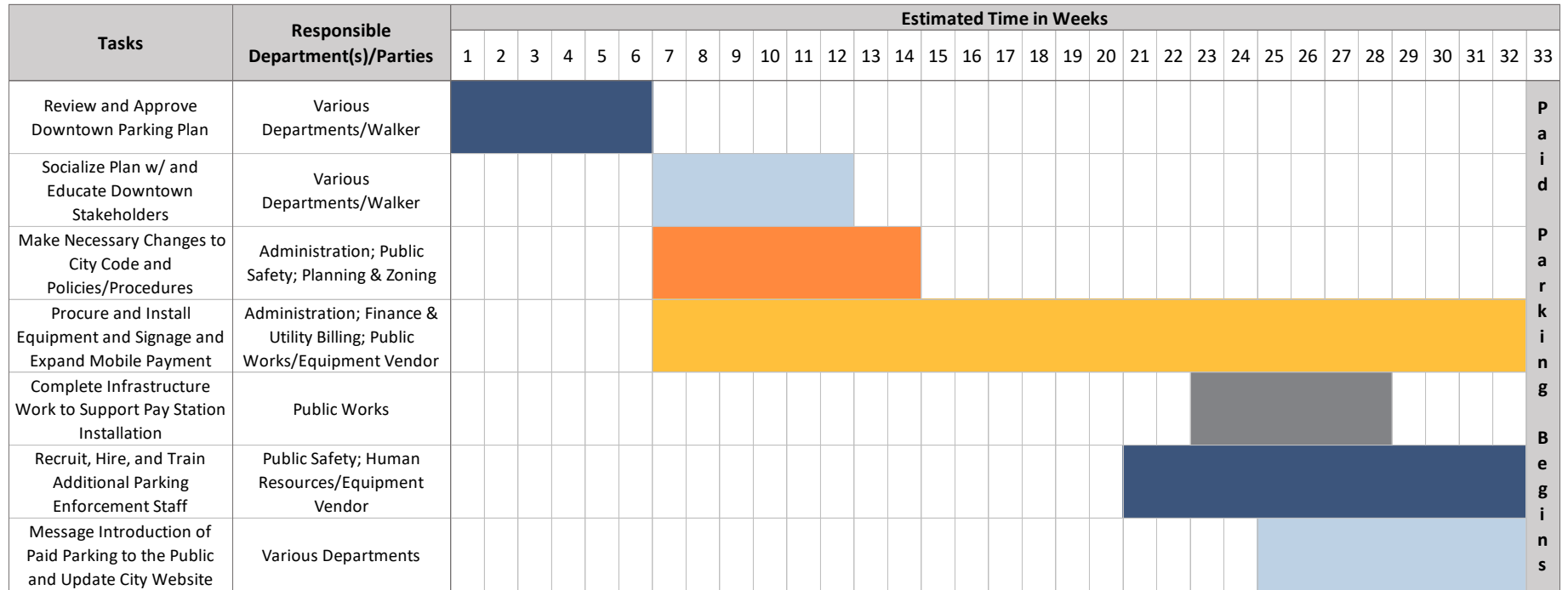
As shown below, implementing paid parking could be significantly expedited if the City is permitted to procure the pay stations and other equipment directly from its existing vendors (~18 weeks) rather than through a competitive procurement process (~32 weeks).

Figure 13 Illustrative Paid Parking Implementation Timeline with Direct Procurement



Source: Walker Consultants

Figure 14 Illustrative Paid Parking Implementation Timeline with Competitive Procurement



Source: Walker Consultants

Communications Strategy

As shown in both implementation timelines, Walker recommends the City spend significant time socializing the plan with downtown stakeholders and informing the public about the upcoming parking changes. In total, approximately three-and-a-half months have been assumed for these processes. However, the more time the City can spend educating downtown stakeholders and the public, the better. The goal is to ensure that as few people as possible are surprised about the switch to paid parking once it is operational.

Communicating the changes in how downtown parking is operated should be done in various ways. The City should engage with downtown business owners via St. Joseph Today and through direct outreach. Informational materials about the Plan, the benefits of paid parking, and highlights of other downtown projects that could be funded through parking revenues should be created and shared with stakeholders and the public. Businesses should be encouraged to update their websites to include relevant parking-related information. Key dates and other pertinent information should be shared on the City's website, as well as via its social media channels and other communication channels.

Development and implementation of a communications strategy can be done in-house by City personnel or be outsourced to a professional marketing/public relations firm, depending on the skill sets and availability of St. Joseph City staff.



07 Uses of Parking Revenue and Future System Changes

Use of Funds Generated from Paid Parking

By implementing paid parking in downtown St. Joseph, the City hopes to increase parking space availability, reduce traffic congestion, and ensure that the existing parking supply is used efficiently. A byproduct of implementing paid parking will be revenue generation. In addition to paying for ongoing operations and maintenance of the City's public parking facilities and payment equipment, this new source of funds could help fund other projects. A sample of potential projects include:

- Signage and wayfinding improvements.
- Parking lot redesign and construction.
- Streetscape improvements and other beautification efforts.
- Resurfacing and maintenance of alleys.
- Enhancements to bike lanes and pedestrian infrastructure.

Revenue generated by the paid parking system can help pay for downtown expenses currently paid out of the City's general fund. It can also act as a revenue source to help fund projects that do not currently have an identified funding stream, resulting in more general fund dollars being available for other purposes.

To ensure that a significant portion of the revenue generated from paid parking downtown is spent on projects or initiatives within downtown, Walker recommends the City create a Parking Benefit District ("PBD") encompassing downtown. This recommendation is echoed in the *Downtown Vision Master Plan*. A Parking Benefit District is a geographic area within which revenue generated from public parking is reinvested. The goal of a PBD is to concentrate most of the financial benefit of paid parking in the area where the parking revenue is generated. This revenue reinvestment will provide tangible benefits to the people living in, working in, and visiting downtown, while reducing reliance on the general fund.

The *Downtown Vision Master Plan* recommended that at least 80 percent of parking revenue be spent in the PBD. Walker agrees with this recommendation. However, it is recommended that all expenses incurred in the operation of the paid parking system be paid from parking revenues first, with the remaining net parking revenue split 80/20 between the PBD and the City's general fund. Additionally, it is recommended that this revenue split be reexamined over time to determine if adjustments are needed based on the need for funds downtown versus the rest of St. Joseph.

The *Plan* also includes a sample boundary for a downtown PBD. Walker's recommended boundary for the PBD, shown in the figure below, generally follows the recommendation from the *Plan* but alters the southern border slightly to reduce the number of residential neighborhoods included in the PBD. The proposed PBD boundary encompasses the areas of downtown where paid parking is being proposed, as well as the City's other existing public parking facilities.

Figure 15 Proposed Downtown Parking Benefit District Boundary



Source: Walker Consultants

Because setting the boundary of a PBD is not an exact science, the City should consider the area most impacted by downtown paid parking and the area in the greatest need of funding when setting the boundary.

Future Changes to the Parking System

As downtown St. Joseph grows and evolves, it is likely that adjustments in how downtown public parking is operated will need to be made. For instance, parking demand patterns may warrant lowering or raising parking rates or changing enforcement hours. Development that replaces the City's surface parking lots may create the need to reallocate free versus paid parking. Additional permit parking programs may be required to properly manage the various downtown user groups. These, and countless other circumstances, may necessitate future changes to the proposed parking system.

To ensure that the parking system is responsive to the needs of downtown and its users, changes to how the system is operated may need to be enacted quickly, without a lengthy political process. For this reason, Walker recommends that approval for future parking system changes be delegated to the City's Parking Subgroup. Because the Parking Subgroup comprises City Commissioners, DDA members, and City staff, this group should be entrusted to act in the best interests of all St. Joseph residents and downtown stakeholders.