







Contents

Introduction	2
Study Objective	
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Study Area	
Existing Conditions	3
Stakeholder Interviews	3
Inventory of Parking Resources	4
Field Data Collection	9
Short-Term Recommendations	20
Parking Management	20
Increases to Parking Supply	23
Wayfinding and Information	25
Pedestrian and Bicycle Recommendations	26
Figure 1: Berlin Mobility and Parking Study Area	
Figure 2: On-Street Parking Inventory in Downtown Berlin	
Figure 3: Quantity of Parkable Spaces by Type in Downtown Berlin	
Figure 4: Off-Street Parking Facilities in Downtown Berlin	
Figure 5: Five, Ten, and Fifteen-Minute Walksheds from the Center of Downtown Berlin	88
Figure 6: Downtown Off-Street Parking Facilities	
Figure 7: Utilization Rates for Downtown On-Street Parking - November 23, 2018	
Figure 8: Peak Downtown Parking Utilization - November 23, 2018	12
Figure 9: Early Downtown Parking Utilization - November 24, 2018	
Figure 10: Final Occupancy and Duration Data Collection for Lot A on November 23 and 24	15
Figure 11: Early Downtown Parking Utilization - December 13, 2018	
Figure 12: Late Downtown Parking Utilization - December 13, 2018	
Figure 13: Occupancy and Duration Data Collection for Lot A - 4:00 PM on December 13, 2018	
Figure 14: Recommended Curbside Spaces for Performance Pricing	
Figure 15: Wayfinding Sign in Downtown Berlin	
Figure 16: Reconfiguration of Lot A to increase the Number of Spaces.	
Figure 17: New Sidewalk and Crosswalk at Bay Street and William Street	26

IntroduLotction

For decades, the character of the Town of Berlin's historic downtown has been its greatest asset, but in recent years development pressures have put stress on the Town's transportation infrastructure. For many years, the Town has not required new development to include any new parking, as the existing supply was more than adequate for all users. Increased awareness of the Town's charming atmosphere as, well as numerous restaurant openings in the downtown area, have greatly increased the number of visitors arriving by automobile during both the primary summer tourism season and the secondary peak season in November and December. As a result, the existing on- and off-street parking facilities have increasingly been insufficient at peak times.

In response to the recent uptick in development. the Town has decided that the time is right to review and update its existing parking supply, to effectively manage existing and expected parking pressures, and to assess the need for potential future additions to the parking supply. Providing too much or poorly-placed parking can be immensely costly, increase vehicle traffic, reduce pedestrian and cyclist safety, and reduce development density. Conversely, supplying too little parking can create its own set of problems including undermining the financial feasibility of development projects. hampering revitalization of commercial districts, and creating parking spillover issues.

The Town solicited a qualified engineering consultant, Sabra & Associates (SAI), to perform a comprehensive assessment of current parking demand and supply that entails developing effective recommendations to ensure parking availability, mitigate parking spillover from commercial areas into neighborhoods, and avoid the negative economic effects of a marked parking shortage.

Study Objective

The study objective is to quantify the issue of parking supply, management and demand in downtown. Berlin through stakeholder engagement and direct field observations, to forecast future parking needs in the Town, and to develop a comprehensive set of recommendations aimed at creating the best possible parking management plan for the Town to serve existing and future needs.

The study has been divided into two phases. This report represents the conclusion of Phase I, which included a stakeholder interview effort, data collection on three days in November and December 2018, and a set of near-term recommendations based on existing conditions.

Town of Berlin



Figure 1: Berlin Mobility and Parking Study Area





Phase II will include additional field observations in the summer peak season, traffic data collection and analysis, future parking demand assessments, and a more in-depth look at pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in the Town. The near-term recommendations will be updated as appropriate based on new data, and a set of long-term recommendations will be delivered.

Study Area

The study area extends from US 113 in the east to the Maryland and Delaware Railroad line in the west, while also including the new Town Library. The northern limit of the study area is Berlin Falls Park, While the southern limit is Buckingham Lane (see Figure 1). The data collection for the study was focused on a more constrained area of downtown roughly bounded by West Street, Washington Street, South Main Street, Tripoli Street, Church Street, Vine Street, and Stevenson Lane.

Existing Conditions

Stakeholder Interviews

Sabra & Associates (SAI) conducted stakeholder interviews in support of the Berlin Parking Study on November 15 and 16, 2018. The list of interviewees included the following representatives of the Town of Berlin, its business community, religious institutions, and stakeholder agencies.

- Mayor William "Gee" Williams Town of Berlin
- Laura Allen, Town Administrator Town of Berlin
- Ivy Wells, Economic & Community Development Director Town of Berlin
- · Dave Engelhart, Planning Director Town of Berlin
- Councilmember (VP) Elroy Brittingham Town of Berlin
- Councilmember Zackery Tyndall Town of Berlin
- · Councilmember Dean Burrell Town of Berlin
- Councilmember Thom Gulyas Town of Berlin
- Larnet St. Amant Berlin Chamber of Commerce
- Cate Nellans Berlin Chamber of Commerce
- Ray Thompson, President Taylor Bank
- John Fager, owner of Atlantic Hotel
- Father Michael Moyer St. Paul's Episcopal Church
- Paul Cook Buckingham Presbyterian Church
- Jack Burbage, downtown property owner and owner of Burbage Funeral Home
- John Barrett, downtown property owner
- Jay Bergey, downtown property owner
- Kate Patton, downtown property owner (The Globe); cycling advocate
- Joseph Moore, Chair Board of Zoning Appeals
- Carol Rose, Chair Berlin Historic District Commission
- Robert Poli, Vice Chair Berlin Historic District Commission
- Chris Denny, Chair Berlin Planning Commission
- Tres Dank, cycling advocate
- · Steve Farr, cycling advocate and Town of Berlin resident





The interviewees had varying perspectives on the issue of parking supply and mobility in the study area. However, among the stakeholders a handful of common themes emerged over the course of the full set of interviews. The following concerns and observations were all expressed by multiple interviewees.

- a. Recent development trends have placed a strain on local parking supply. Several stakeholders pointed out that parking has historically been plentiful and easy to find in Berlin, but that the recent surge in development and turnover of commercial space to restaurant uses has placed additional strain on that supply.
- b. Employee parking is a large factor. The consensus is that visitors park for a few hours, while employees park for much longer. Every interviewee mentioned seeing employees parking in prime spots, such as on-street spaces directly in front of businesses, all day. Past efforts to get employees to park further away have foundered due to lack of cooperation among businesses. The one exception to the rule are the Town's employees, who park at St. Paul's Church to preserve spaces at Town Hall for those who have business with the Town.
- c. There are widely varying opinions on paid parking and parking enforcement. Opinions varied from the point of view that people would quickly adjust to paid parking to the idea that it would be the death knell of the downtown. Resistance to paid parking or parking enforcement centered on worry over creating a negative perception of the town that visitors might come to think of Berlin as a place where it's a hassle to park or where they got a ticket. Others pointed out that if paid parking opens up some spaces, it would reduce the hassle of parking in downtown.
- d. There are widely varying opinions on the prospect of a parking garage, with the majority of stakeholders wary of the idea due to its expense and the potential negative impacts on the downtown's historic look and feel. Others felt that the time was right for such an investment and that it was the most forward-thinking approach.
- e. Parking supply is already perceived as a drag on business, although there is little data to quantify if or how much the lack of supply is affecting merchants.
- f. Midday and evenings during the summer tourism season are the most critical periods relevant to parking scarcity, driven by the increased restaurant and shopping patronage in the area. Even within these broad time periods, demand can fluctuate wildly (the "cloudy day phenomenon"), although the problem is worsening on "typical" days during the tourist season.
- g. On event days, the problem seems to shift into the neighborhoods surrounding downtown.
- There is no shortage of potential satellite parking locations, both on the outskirts of downtown (park & walk) or further away (park & bike/ride).
- There is general agreement that improving bike access to downtown could help, specifically to link satellite
 parking areas such as Berlin Falls Park with the downtown.
- j. The church parking lots are a critical resource keeping the problem from being worse. While visitors do not generally park there, they provide overflow capacity during events and for the Town's employees on a daily basis. The post office lot is also a critical resource in the evenings when the post office is closed.

Inventory of Parking Resources

Curbside Uses

Curbside parking inventory was collected by SAI in October, 2018 and confirmed in the field in November, 2018. Curbside space was measured and categorized by the following:

- Handicap Permit
- Time-Restricted (2 Hour Limit)





- Unrestricted
- Restricted To Patrons of Certain Businesses
- No Parking

Parallel parking zones in downtown Berlin are not marked as individual spaces, but rather as zones. In order to quantify available spaces, curbside space was measured as follows: end parking spaces were 20 feet long and spaces in between two or more end parking spaces were measured to be 22 feet (as per standards detailed in the 2009 USDOT Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices¹) Figure 2 shows the curbside inventory in the downtown area and Figure 3 details the parkable spaces by type in the downtown.

There are a total of 146 curbside parking spaces available in the downtown area, including 94 unrestricted spaces, 50 two-hour limited spaces, and two handicap-permit spaces. Due to the narrow widths of the downtown streets, the majority of curbside space is signed as no parking.

Downtown On Street Parking Facilities

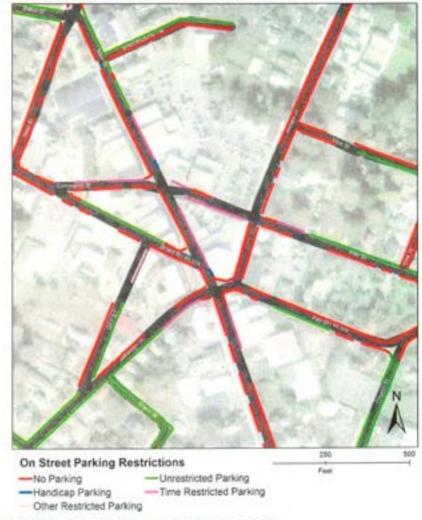


Figure 2: On-Street Parking Inventory in Downtown Berlin

¹ https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/htm/2009/part3/fig3b 21 longdesc.htm





On Street Parking Restrictions Feet -Unrestricted Parking Time Restricted Parking (2 Hours) -Handicap Parking

Downtown On Street Parking Facilities

Figure 3: Quantity of Parkable Spaces by Type in Downtown Berlin





Number of Spaces

Off-Street Parking Lots

Off street parking inventory was collected by SAI in October, 2018 and confirmed in the field in November, 2018.

Public parking is defined as a lot managed by a public institution or local government, and private parking is owned by individuals or businesses. The largest lot in the downtown area, Lot A, is defined as hybrid, since it is actually split among several public and private owners. None of the downtown lots are metered or gated, although a few (Atlantic Hotel lot, Salon lot, Midtown Lot, and the Triangle Lot have spaces marked as reserved for specific businesses. The degree to which those restrictions are enforced varies.

There are a total of 518 off-street parking spaces in the downtown area, including 132 in public lots, 213 in private lots, and 173 in the hybrid Lot A (see Figure 4).

Walkshed Inventory

All of the parking spaces in the downtown area are within a five-minute walk of the center of downtown, defined as the intersection of Main and Broad Streets. A ten-minute walkshed includes satellite parking locations such as the Library and Stephen Decatur Park, and a fifteen-minute walkshed encompasses the closest portion of Berlin Falls Park (see Figure 5).

Downtown Off Street Parking Facilities

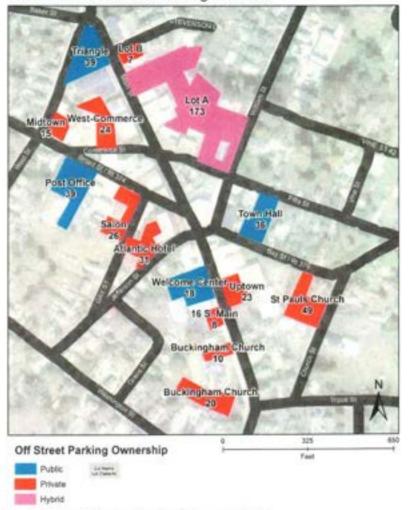


Figure 4: Off-Street Parking Facilities in Downtown Berlin





Town of Berlin

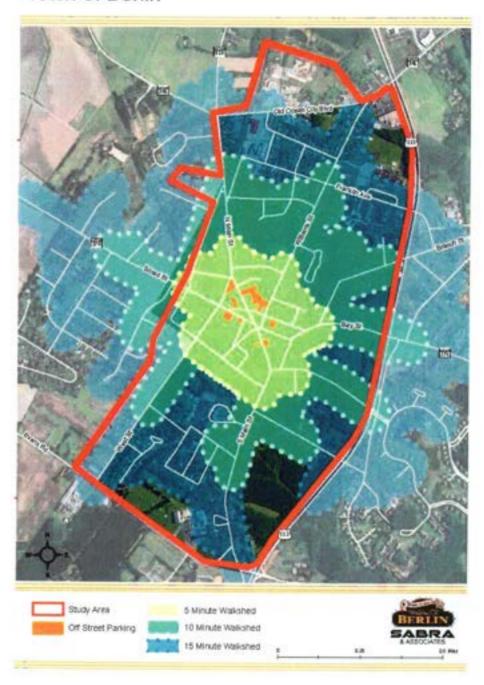


Figure 5: Five, Ten, and Fifteen-Minute Walksheds from the Center of Downtown Berlin.



Field Data Collection

Sabra & Associates (SAI) conducted data collection activities in support of the Berlin Parking Study on November 23 and 24, 2018, and again on December 13, 2018, which were selected as representative dates for the holiday peak season running from Thanksgiving to Christmas. Data collected on each day varied somewhat, as follows:

November 23

This date was selected because it was the date the scheduled town Christmas Tree lighting ceremony, a heavilyattended event. SAI personnel recorded the following data:

- Utilization of 11 parking lots located in downtown Berlin, totaling 408 spaces (see Figure 6) at five time periods. Counts were taken at 9:30 AM and 12:30 PM to document the parking utilization of downtown business employees as well of the buildup of visitors during the day. Counts were taken at 4:00 PM, 5:45 PM, and 6:30 PM to document lot utilization immediately before, during and after the treelighting event.
- Utilization of all on-street parking spaces within the downtown area, totaling approximately 146 spaces, collected at the same times as are noted for off-street parking above. Note that two blocks of Main Street were closed during the 5:45 and 6:30 counts due to the tree-lighting ceremony. At those times, the total count of usable downtown on-street spaces was 127. Parallel parking zones in downtown Berlin are not marked as individual spaces, but rather as zones. In order to quantify

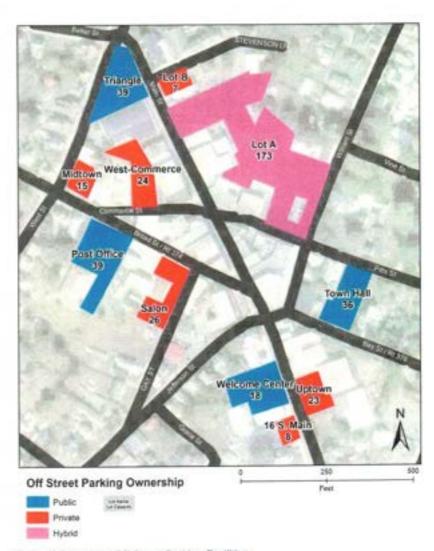


Figure 6: Downtown Off-Street Parking Facilities

available spaces, curbside space was measured as follows: end parking spaces were 20 feet long and spaces in between two or more end parking spaces were measured to be 22 feet (as per standards detailed in the 2009 USDOT Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices²).

https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/htm/2009/part3/fig3b_21_longdesc.htm





9

- Utilization of eight satellite lots where it was anticipated that visitors might park in order to walk or take a free shuttle bus to the tree-lighting event. Counts were only taken in these lots one time, beginning at 4:40 PM, based on the assumption that their use would exclusively be by event attendees.
- Parking duration for vehicles in Lot A, the largest lot in Downtown Berlin (173 marked spaces), at eight time periods over the course of the day, ranging from 9:25 AM to 8:00PM, in order to ascertain what the turnover patterns were in this lot, and to assess how many spaces were likely occupied by downtown business employees.

Results

The observations from November 23 confirm that the downtown parking supply is in fact overextended during major Town events, with the downtown parking lots filled beyond capacity in aggregate immediately before and after the tree lighting (see Table 1). Utilization of the downtown lots built gradually throughout the day leading up to the event, although even two hours prior to the tree-lighting several lots, including the Triangle Lot, the West-Commerce Lot, the Town Hall Lot, and Lot A, were effectively full. During the earliest data collection period, at 9:30 AM, only one lot, the West-Commerce Lot, was full to over 50%. This could be the result of business owners and employees choosing to park in a location that is relatively close to their businesses, while not a prime location for customer parking.

Table 1: Utilization Rates at Downtown Parking Lots - November 23, 2018

Lot	Fri 9:30 AM	Fri 12:30 PM	Fri 4:00 PM	Fri 5:45 PM	Fri 6:30 PM
Lot A	39%	91%	93%	107%	102%
Lot B -	29%	14%	29%	100%	86%
Triangle Lot	18%	64%	100%	100%	100%
West-Commerce Lot	79%	71%	100%	108%	113%
Midtown Lot	27%	33%	53%	113%	107%
Post Office Lot	36%	77%	77%	146%	126%
Salon Lot	4%	50%	73%	96%	81%
Town Hall Lot	6%	58%	97%	106%	100%
Welcome Center Lot	11%	56%	44%	106%	83%
Jptown Lot	22%	43%	43%	52%	100%
16 S. Main Lot	0%	50%	38%	100%	113%
Overall	30%	72%	83%	106%	102%

On-street parking utilization built gradually in a similar pattern (see Figure 7Error! Reference source not found.), but only reached roughly 80% occupancy. Utilization rates varied considerably from street to street. While on-street parking on Main Street, Broad Street, Bay Street and Commerce Street remained quite full, other streets such as Jefferson Street, Gay Street, Pitts Street and Stevenson lane had available space even at the busiest periods (see Figure 8).

The satellite parking lots that are closest to downtown, specifically the St. Paul's and Buckingham Church lots, were also filled to capacity at 4:40 PM, while all of the other satellite lots were barely used. Only four vehicles were counted between the Library lot, Firehouse lot, Berlin Intermediate School, and Stephen Decatur Park.





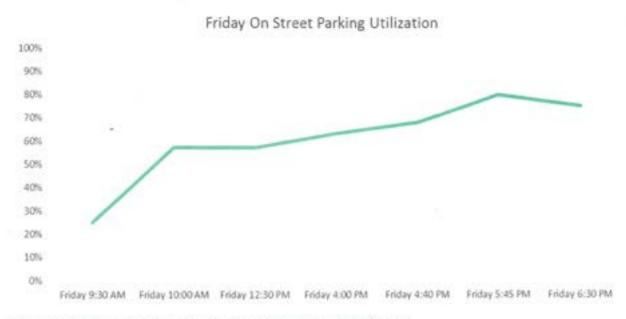


Figure 7: Utilization Rates for Downtown On-Street Parking - November 23, 2018







Figure 8: Peak Downtown Parking Utilization - November 23, 2018





November 24

This date was selected because it was "Small Business Saturday," anticipated to be a heavy shopping day in downtown Berlin. SAI personnel recorded the following data:

- Utilization of 11 parking lots located in downtown Berlin at four time periods in order to capture the overall pattern of utilization throughout the day.
- Utilization of all on-street parking spaces within the downtown area, collected at the same times as are noted for off-street parking above.
- Parking duration for vehicles in Lot A, the largest lot in Downtown Berlin, at eight time periods over the course of the day, ranging from 9:25 AM to 8:00PM, in order to ascertain what the turnover patterns were in this lot, and to assess how many spaces were likely occupied by downtown business employees.

Table 2: Downtown Parking Lot Occupancy - November 24, 2018

Results

The observations on November 24 may have been curtailed by the fact that heavy rains moved into the area in the early afternoon. In the morning and mid-day, however, parking occupancy built in a similar pattern to November 23, albeit earlier in the day. Several lots were at or near capacity by 12:15 PM, as were the on-street parking spaces on Main Street, Broad Street, and Commerce Street. The southern end of downtown showed significantly less occupancy on November 24 than on the previous day (see Table 2).

Similarly to Friday, the West-Commerce Lot filled up much earlier than the other lots, as did the curbside parking on Broad Street (see Figure 9). This could be the result of business owners and employees choosing to park in a location that is relatively close to their businesses, while not a prime location for customer parking.

Lot	Sat 10:00 AM	Sat 12:15 PM	Sat 3:30 PM	Sat 5:15 PM
Lot A	42%	99%	69%	46%
Fins Lot	0%	100%	0%	0%
Triangle Lot	26%	100%	59%	44%
West-Commerce Lot	83%	104%	75%	63%
Midtown Lot	7%	47%	27%	7%
Post Office Lot	38%	69%	51%	33%
Salon Lot	31%	54%	27%	38%
Town Hall Lot	44%	86%	58%	56%
Chamber Lot	28%	44%	22%	11%
Uptown Lot	17%	52%	43%	0%
16 S. Main Lot	50%	50%	50%	13%
Overall	38%	85%	57%	39%

The duration data collected for Lot A

shows that a considerable portion of the vehicles parked in that lot are staying for an extended period of time. The average parking duration for the lot was 3.78 hours over the course of November 23-24, with ten vehicles observed in the same space over the entire two day period. The portions of the lot where vehicles are left in place the longest include the areas behind 3, 5, and 6 Pitts Street and the area around the J&M Meat Market.

It cannot be said that on the whole the lot does not turn over, as 697 unique vehicles were observed in Lot A over the twoday period. The portions of Lot A that seem to turn over the most are the rectangular portion closest to Fins and World of Toys, and the central section of the lot in front of the Go Organic Market. Figure 10 show the last occupancy and duration counts for November 23 and 24.





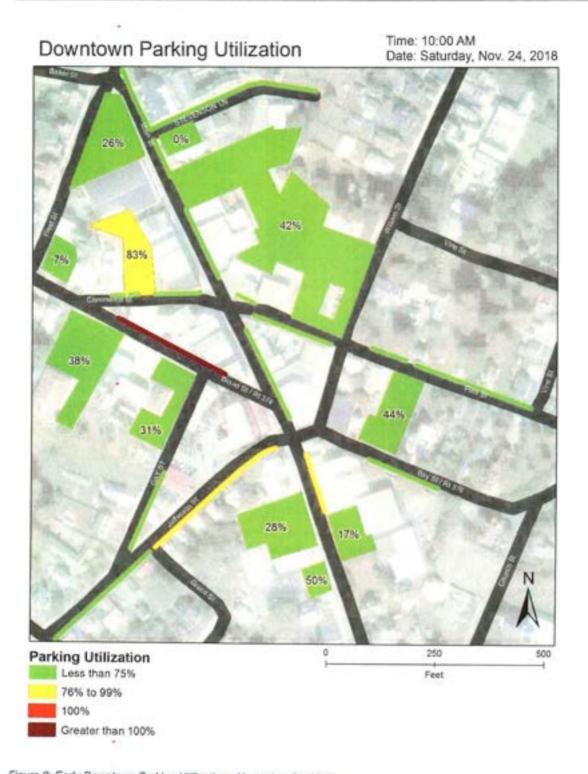


Figure 9: Early Downtown Parking Utilization - November 24, 2018





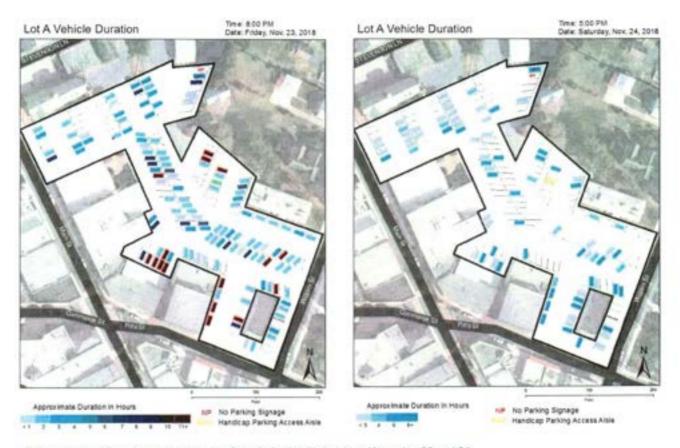


Figure 10: Final Occupancy and Duration Data Collection for Lot A on November 23 and 24

December 13

This date was selected to represent a typical shopping day during the holiday peak season. SAI personnel recorded the following data:

- Utilization of 11 parking lots located in downtown Berlin at five time periods in order to capture the overall pattern of utilization throughout the day.
- Utilization of all on-street parking spaces within the downtown area, collected at the same times as are noted for off-street parking above.
- Parking duration for vehicles in Lot A, the largest lot in Downtown Berlin, at eight time periods over the course of the day, ranging from 9:30 AM to 6:00PM, in order to ascertain what the turnover patterns were in this lot, and to assess how many spaces were likely occupied by downtown business employees.

Results

The data collected on December 13 showed a somewhat different pattern than the holiday weekend of November 23-24. The busiest point in the day was the midday data collection at 12:00 PM, with five lots above 80% occupancy. Overall





occupancy dips slightly in the mid-afternoon before returning to mid-day levels at 4:00 PM and dropping off thereafter (see Table 3).

Curbside parking utilization on December 13 was significantly lower than on the holiday weekend, remaining generally less than half-full throughout the day. Again, the West-Commerce Lot filled up much earlier than the other lots (see Figure 11), as did the curbside parking on Broad Street, possibly reinforcing the idea that these locations are favored by business owners and employees. These areas also remained full after occupancy rates had dropped off in the 6:00PM timeframe (see Figure 12).

Table 3: Downtown Parking Lot Utilization - December 13, 2018

Lot	Thurs 9:30 AM	Thurs 12:00 PM	Thurs 2:00 PM	Thurs 4:00 PM	Thurs 6:00 PM
Lot A	52%	88%	85%	87%	47%
Fins Lot	29%	14%	14%	29%	14%
Triangle Lot	44%	72%	85%	92%	59%
West-Commerce Lot	100%	100%	104%	100%	88%
Midtown Lot	80%	67%	100%	93%	13%
Post Office Lot	54%	87%	87%	95%	33%
Salon Lot	62%	73%	62%	58%	54%
Town Hall Lot	81%	92%	67%	61%	53%
Chamber Lot	22%	44%	44%	39%	17%
Uptown Lot	39%	52%	48%	43%	13%
16 S. Main Lot	88%	88%	50%	88%	63%
Overall	57%	81%	78%	79%	45%



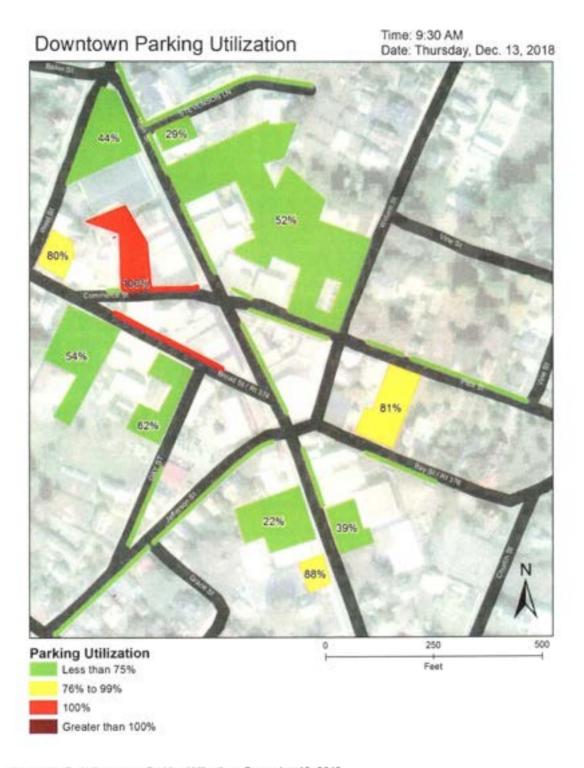


Figure 11: Early Downtown Parking Utilization - December 13, 2018



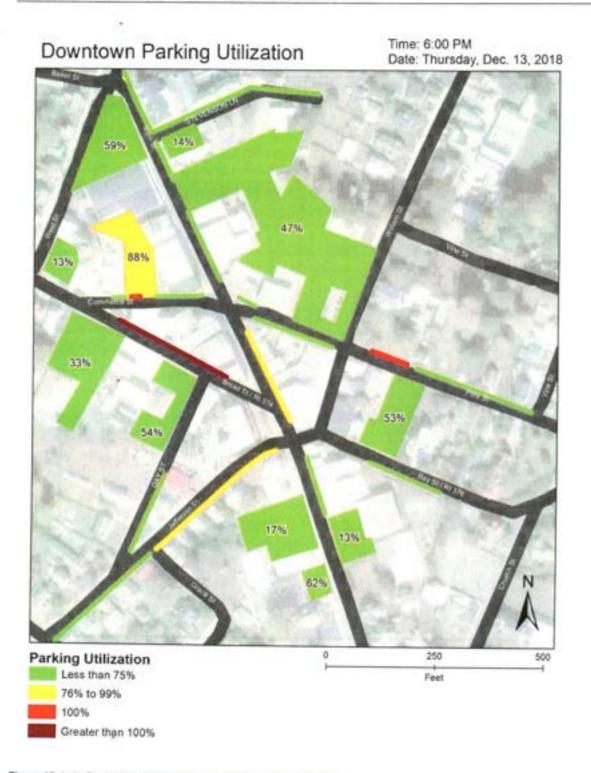


Figure 12: Late Downtown Parking Utilization - December 13, 2018



The duration data collected for Lot A on December 13 shows that a considerable portion of the vehicles parked in that lot are staying for an extended period of time. The average parking duration for the lot was 3.67 hours, with nine vehicles observed in the same space over the entire day and 331 unique vehicles counted. While the average duration of stay was similar to November 23-24, there did seem to be a larger number of vehicles staying in the same place throughout the first four data collection periods (9:30 AM, 12:00 PM, 2:00 PM, and 4:00PM), which could indicate use of the lot by more employees of downtown businesses and offices (see Figure 13). The lot emptied out precipitously by the 6:00PM data collection.

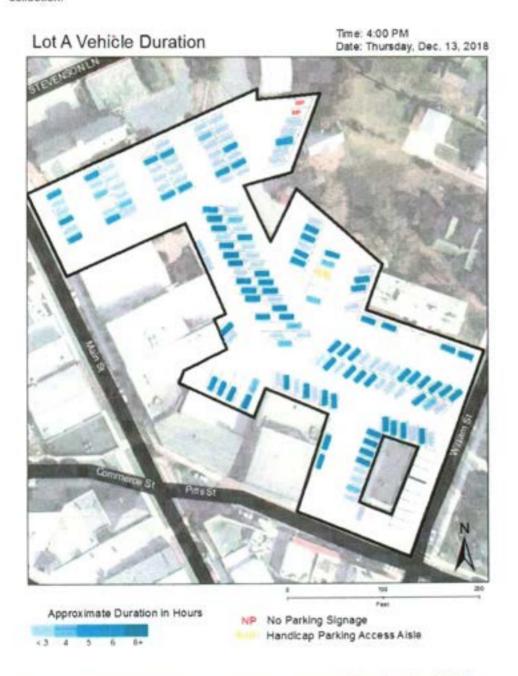


Figure 13: Occupancy and Duration Data Collection for Lot A - 4:00 PM on December 13, 2018.



Short-Term Recommendations

The parking shortage in Berlin requires a multi-faceted approach that includes both actions to better manage the existing parking resources, increase the available supply of parking, and relieve some of the pressure on the system by improving information available to visitors and continuing to improve the pedestrian and bicycle network within Berlin. The following section includes a palette of near-term actions in those areas to address the existing conditions. Longer-term actions, based on future parking needs, will be included in the Phase II report.

Parking Management

In light of the significant expense associated with increasing parking supply, improved management of existing parking in the area is essential to address the existing parking shortage. Before considering any addition to the parking supply in downtown Berlin, it is incumbent on the Town and their partners in the business community to first maximize the utility of the existing parking resources. The near-term approach to parking management involves implementing a variety of small changes aimed at maximizing the utility of existing parking supply. The recommendations included here focus on meeting the study objectives through the following approaches:

- Curbside Management
 - Designate Curbside Space for Rideshare Vehicles
 - Designate Early-Morning Loading Zones
- Pricing/Enforcement Strategies
 - Institute Performance Pricing for Highest Demand Curbside Spaces
 - Enforcement of Two-Hour Parking Restrictions
- Expand Shared Use Agreements to "Recycle" Spaces
- · Shared Valet Parking

A common component of these strategies is an emphasis on integrating greater flexibility into the management of the overall parking supply. While the demand for parking fluctuates over the course of a day and/or a week, the parking supply remains largely static. Implementing flexibility into the parking supply through better management equates to a system that better meets the needs of all users and stakeholders.

Curbside Management

The goal of curbside management is to ensure the most efficient use of the most valuable curb space by maximizing vehicle turnover and passenger activity per space. If a single space can be used multiple times throughout the day, that provides the best overall benefit to the downtown businesses. Likewise, if there are always a few spaces available, the best possible image of accessibility is created for residents and visitors alike.

Designate Curbside Space for Non-Private Vehicles

Ridesharing services Uber and Lyft have begun operating in Ocean City and other beach towns during peak season. These services potentially offer some relief for the parking shortage in Berlin by providing a way for vacationers to patronize Berlin's restaurants in the evenings without driving.

Encouraging trip sharing reduces parking demand. It is recommended to specifically designate two to four spaces for ride share in the restaurant corridor. These spaces would be designated for rideshare in the evening period when vacationers from Ocean City would be most likely to take a rideshare service to Berlin in order to patronize the downtown restaurants and shops (4:00PM-10:00PM, Monday through Saturday) At all other times these spots would return to either unlimited parking or two-hour restricted, as signed. Possible locations for these spaces could include:

- The first two spaces on northbound Main Street to the north of the Lot A entrance from Main Street
- The last spot on eastbound Jefferson Street before the intersection with Main Street
- The two spots on westbound Pitts Street between William Street and Main Street
- The portion of Lot A in front of Go Organic Grocery (only after 6:00PM, when the store closes).





An important accompaniment to designated rideshare spaces in downtown would be an information campaign to inform visitors that they can, in fact take a rideshare service to Berlin, Distribution of "Next time take Uber/Lyft" flyers in downtown businesses would alert customers to the possibility.

Designate Early-Morning Loading Zones

Defining loading zone times is an efficient management of valuable curb space reserving space when it is needed for loading, and restrictions can be lifted when it is not. For example, restricted loading only parking can be in effect when business more frequently receive their shipments such as between 5:00 AM -11:00 AM Specified loading only times open up parking spaces during prime demand times.

Pricing/Enforcement Strategies

Institute Performance Pricing for Highest Demand Spaces

Pricing is an effective tool to manage parking by increasing turn over during high demand times or in high demand areas. Peak parking demand hours in the study area are between 12:00PM and 5:00 PM. It is recommended to institute a pilot program charging minimal rates of no more than \$1.00 per hour, with a two-hour limit, in the spaces currently designated

as two-hour limited along Main Street, Pitts Street, Commerce Street, and Jefferson Street. The four unlimited spaces on Main Street just to the south of Stevenson Lane would be included as well (see Figure 14). These spaces represent the most prime parking locations that are directly in front of downtown restaurants and shops. Other curbside parking, as well as off-street parking, would remain free for the time being, unless and until further analysis shows that additional pricing is necessary.

Recognizing that the Town has no intention of installing parking meters for aesthetic reasons, the paid parking pilot would need to be set up with a pay-by phone parking application. Several systems are available commercially, including ParkMobile, which is used by Ocean City. The Town may be able to piggy-back on Ocean City's contract for pay-by-phone services. Utilizing a pay-by phone service would also allow the town to ease the two-hour limit somewhat by enabling users to extend their time through the app up to an additional two hours.

Utilizing a pay-by-phone service would enable the Town to adjust parking rates up or down until an equilibrium of approximately 90% occupancy is achieved during peak times. At that rate of occupancy, there will generally be at least one or two spaces available per block (although block lengths vary considerably in the study area), creating a perception that there are always "a few" open spaces. The



Figure 14: Recommended Curbside Spaces for Performance Pricing





overall goal is to ensure that the most desirable parking locations are well used, but that visitors can also find parking at all times without needing to search for a long time to find it. Slowly cruising downtown streets in search of curbside parking adds significantly to overall traffic congestion in commercial areas around the country. Reducing the rates along the side streets during the same time period encourages patrons parking for longer durations to park there, leaving spaces in front of businesses open for patrons parking for shorter durations. The Town can effectively utilize in-house staff to audit occupancy on a monthly or quarterly basis in order to reset prices.

Enforcement of Two-Hour Parking Restrictions

If the Town chooses not to implement targeted pricing of prime curbside spaces, the minimum fallback position should be to begin enforcement of the existing signed two-hour limit spaces. In an effort to appear tourist-friendly, the Town has made a conscious decision not to enforce the existing two-hour restrictions. Enforcement of this restriction is critical, however, because not doing so carries with it negative consequences. From the standpoint of establishing the Town's authority to proactively manage the parking shortage issue in the future, lack of enforcement of a posted restriction is more limiting than if the peak spaces in down town were not restricted at all, because it sends a signal to residents and business owners that they can expect to ignore future parking regulations put in place by the Mayor and Council.

More specifically, the lack of enforcement of a posted restriction effectively turns the priority for prime spaces on its head. The most desired spaces directly in front of storefronts should be prioritized for customers of those businesses, the majority of whom are out-of-town visitors. Local residents, especially the owners and employees of downtown businesses know that the posted restriction is not enforced, whereas visitors do not, and thus are much more likely to honor the restriction in order to avoid being ticketed. Visitors also are less likely to know where alternative parking opportunities are located. In effect, local residents, specifically downtown business owners and employees, are given priority over prime parking spaces at the expense of the visitors that are crucial for the Town's tourism industry.

Currently the two-flour restriction is posted as lasting from 8:00AM to 6:00PM. Given the observations indicating that the downtown parking supply does not begin to fill up until mid-day, it would be reasonable to cut back the hours of the restriction to begin at 11:00AM.

Expand Shared Use Agreements to "Recycle" Spaces

Shared use agreements can make the most use of existing parking supply by connecting parking needs of distinct generators that have peak demands at different times during the day. In downtown Berlin, the primary opportunity for a single parking space to be "recycled" (i.e. used by distinct sets of users at different times of day), is presented by the downtown Churches. The parking lots owned by St. Paul's Episcopal Church and Buckingham Presbyterian Church are a critical relief valve in the face of the Town's parking shortage. Both churches' lots are used during Town events as satellite parking, and Town employees park every day at the St. Paul's lot. The positive impact of these important facilities could be expanded by allowing employees of other downtown businesses to park in the lots and walk the short distance to their places of work. Such an arrangement would need to be operated on a permit-basis, with permits displayed either as window stickers or placards on dashboards. Establishing a permit system would enable the churches to control the overall volume of vehicles parking on their property, and to revoke the privilege from any employees who fail to respect church property.

Shared Valet Parking

In recognition of the fact that continuous "space-hunting" adds significantly to traffic congestion in downtown areas, numerous cities and towns are implementing shared valet services to provide parking for the increased number of vehicles and limited parking spots in their downtown areas. Valet services effectively increase the number of available parking spaces by making better use of those spaces that are off of main streets and which may go unnoticed by restaurant patrons and other casual visitors.





Examples of valet fees include similar rates to the local meter parking spots. Auburn, Alabama implemented a valet parking service in 2017 which offered a broad range of operating hours every day of the week, priced similarly to metered parking. After running the program for approximately six months, the city changed the program to be available only three days a week during lunch and evening hours where valet service was most in demand. Other downtown and city center parking

services programs offer valet for free, in partnership with downtown authorities or a number of restaurants. One regional example of a location that is considering a shared valet service is Lewes, Delaware, which is mulling the use of two downtown lots as valet parking.

If implemented in Berlin, a valet service should be a joint offering of the Town and the Chamber of Commerce. If local businesses, through the Chamber, are willing to subsidize the valet operation, rates could be kept to a nominal fee or even free. The dropoff location should be in the heart of downtown, either a short stretch of curbside parking blocked off on main Street or a small portion of Lot A or the Triangle Lot.

As noted in the field observations section of this report, there are locations within a short walk of the center of downtown Berlin where parking is available even at the busiest times, yet which may go unused by visitors who simply don't know where the available spaces are. The valet service could make use of these spaces, or potentially satellite locations. Valet operators could use any legal parking location within a 6-7 minute walk of the dropoff location, in order to allow the valet driver to return in a timely fashion. Depending on the location of the dropoff area, such a radius could include either Stephen Decatur Park or the Berlin firehouse.

Increases to Parking Supply

The Town should explore possibilities to add to the existing parking supply that can reasonably be accomplished in the near-term period (within two to three years), while simultaneously considering a long-term parking supply plan that establishes a future parking supply target number and lays out investments necessary to reach that goal.

suggested where the Town could conceivably develop new surface parking lots. It

walking distance of downtown shops, in the neighborhood of a few dozen spaces, could significantly improve the current situation and buy time while the town develops a long-term strategy to address parking supply. The following locations were suggested by one or more stakeholders as potential sites for new parking facilities.



Location	Ownership	Approximate Area (sq. ft.)	Approximate Spaces ¹	Walking Distance to Downtown (ft.) ²
A. West & Washington Streets parcel	Private	80,000	240	960
B. Donaway Furniture Lot	Private	18,0002	55	400
C. Parcel between Vine and Pitts Streets	Private	16,000	49	550
D. Stephen Decatur Park	Public	varies	varies	1,500
E. Burbage Funeral Home Property	Private	8,5003	26	370
F. Worchester County Health	Public	7,000	21	530
Department G. Wainwright's Auto Service	Private	20,000	61	250







- ¹ Assumes 325 sq. ft. per space, including access, drainage, landscaping.
- ² Distances measured to the intersection of Main and Broad Streets
- 3 Includes demolition of unused warehouse
- 4 Unoccupied corner of property at William & Pitts Streets

The largest of these sites, the West and Washington Street, could be developed in combination with other complementary uses, such as a park adjoining the planned Berlin rail bike trail, or new housing parcels facing Washington and/or West

It should be noted that numerous questions would need to be answered before any of these parcels could be re-developed as parking lots, most importantly whether the private landowners are willing to sell and/or lease the land to the Town for such a use. The next step for the Town in this area is to conduct a detailed assessment of these and any other properties that are available and feasible within 1/4-mile of downtown that could conceivably be redeveloped. Such a study would need to estimate the cost of each potential project and develop concept-level designs to more accurately estimate the number of spaces that could be yielded.

Lot A serves as the single largest parking resource in downtown Berlin, and as such it is important to maximize its utility. Reconfiguration of Lot A The lot's unusual shape limits the potential to create additional spaces through restriping due to the need to preserve circulation, but a preliminary analysis shows there is at least the potential to create approximately seven more spaces in the portion of the lot adjacent to Fins by narrowing the width of the spaces (A in Figure 16), three more spaces adjacent to Go Organic Grocery (B), and four additional spaces in the portion between J&M Meat Market and 8 Pitts Street by making that lot entrance in-only and shifting existing parking to diagonal (C).





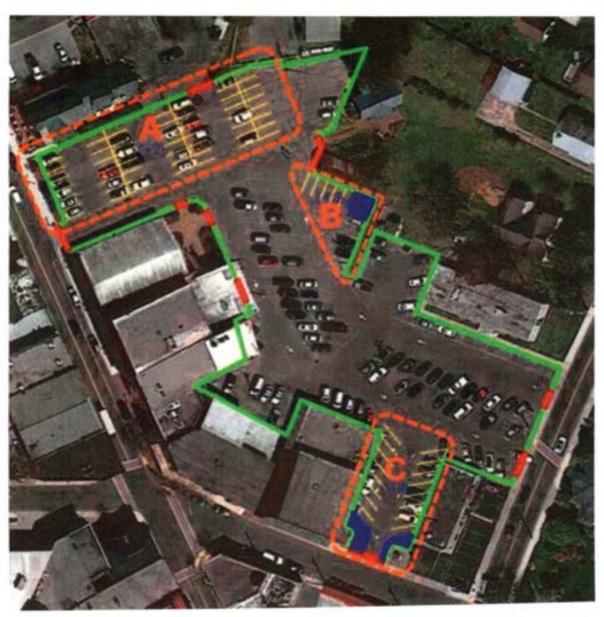


Figure 16: Reconfiguration of Lot A to increase the Number of Spaces.

Wayfinding and Information

Establish a Mobile-Friendly Parking Information Website

Websites are one of the most effective methods to communicate information to the general public. A parking website can contain an interactive map showing curbside and off-street parking locations as well as parking rates and permit times of each location. It is recommended to update at least quarterly, but monthly is preferred. To encourage alternative modes of transportaition, it is also recommended to include information on bicycle and/or transit options on the website.

Additional Wayfinding Signage for Event Days





Communicating parking locations to visitors and patrons is a key element to achieving a high utilization rate of existing parking supply. Berlin already has posted wayfinding signage in the downtown area (see Figure 15), but these signs are by necessity relatively small in order to be in keeping with the architectural standards of the historic downtown area. As such, the signs are more appropriate to the pedestrian scale than to the automobile driver who may be simultaneously searching for both available parking and a specific store or restaurant.

On event days, supplementing the permanent signs with larger sandwich-board signs or roadside electronic message boards that direct drivers to less-used parking areas and satellite parking locations would help to divert some of the vehicles away from the most congested and over-parked portions of downtown. Supplemental signs should be posted along the natural routes into Berlin, such as North and South Main Street, Bay Street, and William Street, at opportune points to affect the decisions of visitors whether to utilize satellite parking. Additional signs could be posted in downtown, directing drivers back out to satellite parking areas, with reassuring information such as "five minute walk to downtown."

Such a wayfinding signage program could be implemented through a partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, Maryland SHA and local businesses, who can be encouraged to produce eye-catching event day signs that meet a common design standard established by the Town.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Recommendations

While not the primary focus of this study, any increase in pedestrian and bicycle connectivity in Berlin holds the promise of improving the parking situation by encouraging more visitors to access the downtown without driving.

Complete Berlin Rail Trail

The planned multi-use path planned to extend the north-south length of Berlin is a critical element in establishing meaningfully connectivity between downtown, the Library/Firehouse area, and the Berlin Falls Park area. Implementing the planned trail, and eventually connecting it to other recreational bike corridors in the region, should be a high priority. An important feature to make the trail as accessible as possible to downtown would be an improved bike-friendly route between

the trail and downtown either along Baker Street or Broad Street. in the form of either a bike lane or paved side path. Baker Street appears to have sufficient width to accommodate a bicycle lane if parking were removed from one side of the street, and Broad Street west of West Street has available space to construct a multiuse path.

Park and Bike from Satellite Locations

One way to reduce the pressure on parking is to encourage visitors to park at satellite locations and pedal to downtown from satellite locations such as Berlin Falls Park, the Library, and Stephen Decatur Park. The Town should explore agreements with existing bike shops that can provide 50 to 100 bikes for rent on event days for a nominal fee, perhaps subsidized by the Town or downtown businesses. Each rental could be accompanied by a voucher up to the cost of the rental to redeem at downtown businesses if someone parks and bikes. An advertising campaign would obviously be necessary to build awareness of the park and bike program, as well as any other options, such as pedicab rides, offered from the same locations.



Figure 17: New Sidewalk and Crosswalk at Bay Street and William Street

Add Sidewalk and Crosswalk to Bay Street in Front of Town Hall

There are very few gaps in the pedestrian network in downtown Berlin, but one that exists is the lack of a sidewalk in front of the former drive-through of the closed PNC Bank on Bay Street. We recommend a sidewalk extension from the current end-point to the corner of the former bank building, with a new crosswalk across Bay Street in front of the existing stop bar



