



Smart Growth America

Improving lives by improving communities

Kansas City, Missouri – River Market

Parking Audit

Report and Next Steps

Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program
September 20 and 21, 2016

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Background

The City of Kansas City, Missouri, applied to Smart Growth America (SGA) for a parking audit workshop to facilitate a dispassionate discussion about a parking policy that would encourage redevelopment and infill without threatening current business and residents. The parking audit is a workshop SGA provides through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's *Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities* program. Using a tool provided by SGA and guidance from the project consultant, City staff and volunteers conducted a parking audit to evaluate current parking utilization and availability in the River Market neighborhood. After reviewing the results with City staff, the project consultant traveled to Kansas City to conduct the parking audit workshop on September 20 and 21, 2016.

Kansas City's River Market district, located next to downtown, has seen exceptional growth over the last five years, making this a vibrant, walkable neighborhood for residents businesses and visitors. River Market was the earliest part of Kansas City to be developed and until recently was still a 19th-century warehouse district. Now, the area has seen the arrival of residential lofts, restaurants, bars, shops, and ethnic markets, along with several major employers. Complicating the parking equation, City Market is a popular farmers' market/retail site located in River Market and serves as a major regional destination, especially on summer Saturdays. In May 2016, the Kansas City streetcar line began service, connecting River Market to Crown Center and Union Station in downtown.

The parking audit workshop was designed as an opportunity to facilitate consideration of how the City might effectively partner with the neighborhood, local businesses and other entities to manage parking in River Market. Following an evening public forum, the project consultant conducted a day-long stakeholder workshop for elected officials, city staff, business owners, residents, civic

association leadership and neighborhood representatives. The workshop provided a neutral setting where attendees could evaluate local policies and practices and receive advice based on the state of modern parking practice, with an emphasis on what works well and what should be avoided.

The intent of the workshop was neither for SGA to create a plan nor to bind the community to any particular course of action, but rather to facilitate a discussion within the community about how best to manage parking in River Market. The purpose of this memo is to document the outcomes of the technical assistance, including the “next steps” developed by the workshop attendees with the assistance of the project consultant.

1. Key issues addressed during the workshop

This workshop was focused on the River Market, an urban neighborhood in Downtown Kansas City that includes the historically significant City Market, as well as residential buildings, commercial businesses, office buildings and other similar land uses. Kansas City has a population of about 470,000 and is located in a metro region of about 2.2 million people.

The River Market is a riverfront neighborhood that is the first and oldest incorporated district in Kansas City. The historic City Market, founded in 1857, continues to be one of the largest and most enduring public farmers' markets in the Midwest, linking growers and small businesses to the Kansas City community. In addition, there are more than 40 full-time tenants that are open year round and offering an eclectic mix of independently owned shops and dining.

Specific topics addressed at the public forum and stakeholder workshop included:

- Results of the parking audit conducted by the City using tools provided by SGA;
- Overall trends in travel demand in the US and in Missouri;
- Implications of technological advances for future parking demand; and,
- Principles and techniques of modern, strategic parking management, including:
 - shifting transportation mode share away from single occupant vehicles;
 - supporting shared parking and joint parking and unbundling residential parking ownership;
 - providing for fee-in-lieu payments;
 - grandfathering small, storefront parking arrangements;
 - updating enforcement approaches and technologies;
 - strategically timing development of new parking supply;
 - integrating parking with good urban design;
 - providing a system of permit parking;
 - setting and enforcing parking time limits;
 - setting the stage for parking pricing; and,
 - investigating parking districts and integrated parking management systems.

2. Target policies/ideas/strategies discussed during the workshops

Discussion at the evening public forum (35 attendees) set the stage for more specific analysis and debate at the stakeholder workshop the next morning. That workshop culminated in development of priority action items, derived from the work of break-out teams of local stakeholders, facilitated by SGA, its consultant and city staff.

Stakeholder discussions centered around several key issues:

- The need for accurate, real-time metrics about parking demand and supply;
- How to use that data to address key policy issues, including when and whether additional investment in parking supply is warranted;
- How to address downtown commuter parking demand related to the streetcar line;
- How to provide equitable parking for employees of businesses in River Market;
- How to meet the parking needs of River Market residents;
- How to accommodate the influx of visitors on City Market event days;
- How to further the City's objectives for a balanced multimodal transportation system;
- How to set the stage for on-street and off-street paid parking;
- How the City could manage public parking as an enterprise that returns parking revenues directly to parking management, enforcement and supply; and,
- How to use leading edge technologies to improve parking management.

3. Actions to address policies/strategies

The stakeholders developed the following list of consensus priority actions. All of these action items will be advanced through the City's Parking and Transportation Committee:

a. Develop a strategic communication program for River Market access and circulation.

(Lead: City Market staff with support from City departments) This program will be designed to improve public information about means of access and circulation to and within the neighborhood. This will include development of an app (software designed for use on smart phones) specifically for River Market that provides current information about the streetcar and other transit routes, bicycling facilities and bike parking, direct pedestrian routes, and the location and availability of parking – both within River Market and nearby in downtown. Eventually the app and related resources will be capable of providing real-time information about where parking is available (especially on farmers' market days).

The overall communication program will establish a clear narrative about the parking challenges in River Market as well as the larger economic changes that are occurring there (new development, loss of surface parking, location of new parking, etc.). Finally the communication program will be designed to provide advance notification and support for the public as enhanced enforcement (c, below) and paid parking (d, below) are put into effect.

b. Develop a detailed, accurate database for River Market parking supply and utilization.

(Lead: City staff in the Public Works Department with support from other City departments and City Market staff) The parking audit completed by staff leading up to the workshop addressed demand for on-street parking in River Market. It also provided some data on utilization of surface parking lots and turn-over. The City will expand this into a comprehensive database starting with a baseline inventory of existing parking supply, classified by type and ownership. The inventory database will also track the location and type of paid parking.

The database will quantify on-street and off-street (garage and surface lot) parking utilization, violations, and average parking duration. This information will be tagged to specific locations (block faces, surface lots and garages, etc.). Field counts will be conducted to reflect days of the

week, seasons, time of day and trends over time. City Market staff will also survey Saturday market attendees to develop a benchmark profile of their mode of travel, party size, duration of visit, etc. The comprehensive database will be updated regularly to show what is changing over time in comparison to the original benchmark data. Funding for this work may be sought through local grant programs.

c. Develop a prototype enhanced enforcement system through a private contractor.

(Lead: Parking Services staff) The City will upgrade parking enforcement in River Market to achieve a condition in which enforcement is “friendly but inevitable.” This enhanced enforcement program will serve as a pilot for similar programs in other destination urban neighborhoods within Kansas City. As such, the pilot will be designed to not only improve compliance with parking regulations in River Market but also to test and evaluate enforcement techniques and approaches for application in other destination districts.

The City will advertise for and select a private contractor(s) for the pilot, with the expectation that this might be the approach the City will use in other destination districts. The City will move forward with implementation of this enforcement with funds currently available and in future years will work to ensure continuation and adequate funding of the enforcement effort. To manage public expectations and avoid unnecessary backlash from enhanced enforcement, the City will rely on the new strategic communication program (priority action a, above).

d. Implement paid parking in the River Market district.

(Lead: Parking Services) The City will implement paid parking for selected on-street and off-street publicly-owned facilities within River Market, with the long term objective that all public parking in Rivermarket will be paid parking. This will set the stage for the conversion of three publicly-owned surface parking lots (City Market, 3rd and Grand, 5th and Main) that will be lost to construction of new buildings and replaced by one or more parking structures. The City will work with the owners of private parking in River Market to help them anticipate changes in demand associated with paid parking and to help them implement parallel permit parking and paid parking measures for their parking lots and structures.

To manage public expectations and avoid unnecessary backlash from implementation of paid parking, the City will rely on the new strategic communication program (priority action a, above). The City will coordinate with the City Market Oversight Committee to ensure wide awareness of the need for and purpose of paid parking and to establish a strong bridge to elected officials. The City will ensure that revenue from paid parking in River Market is invested in parking supply and parking management measures within River Market, including enforcement and mode shift programs.

4. Timeframe for accomplishing actions

Within 3 months following workshop (by end of 2016)

- Identify and secure source of funding for the parking database, action item b.
- Conduct survey of Saturday market attendees to develop a benchmark profile of their mode of travel, party size, duration of visit, etc.
- Submit budget request (as part of City budget development process) for enhanced parking enforcement in River Market as a prototype for similar enhancements in other areas of the City.

Within 6 months following workshop (by end of March, 2017)

- Complete planning and preparations for 2017 summer counts and monitoring program.
- Implement a demonstration project of meter technologies for on-street paid parking.
- Initiate work on a River Market “how to get here” app and related communication strategies in preparation for summer season, 2017.

Within 9 months following workshop (by end of June, 2017)

- Implement summer counts and monitoring program.
- Advertise for and select a private contractor(s) for the parking enhanced enforcement program.

Within 1 year following workshop (by end of September, 2017)

- Implement a River Market “how to get here” app and related communication strategies.
- Implement paid parking on-street and off-street in River Market.

Within 18 months following workshop (by end of 2017)

- Prepare an assessment of the four action items, including their implementation status, how successful they have been, and strategies for future action.

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