

Parking and Transportation Study

Downtown Walnut Creek, California, is one of the most vibrant small downtowns in the state, competing successfully for retail tenants and shoppers against more established districts such as Union Square in San Francisco. Walnut Creek's success, however, has also brought complaints of traffic congestion and parking scarcity. To allow for continued economic development downtown, while at the same time improving local quality of life, Nelson\Nygaard led a team of planners to address three aspects of the downtown.

First, the team proposed a restructuring of the existing free downtown shuttle, streamlining it to provide faster, more frequent service within the existing budget.

Next, the team recommended the city change its parking policies in order to spread parking demand from over-occupied spaces in the core, to half-empty facilities around the edges. This would be done almost entirely through a parking meter price gradient and the implementation of pay-and-display machines that accept credit and debit cards. The result of the parking pricing changes would mean there would be no need to build new parking to accommodate future growth.

Finally, the plan provides detailed recommendations for improving the walkability of downtown, allowing shoppers and employees to comfortably walk a block or two farther from their shuttle stop or parking space.

Walnut Creek began implementing the recommended transit changes in 2006, and adopted the parking management changes in 2007. The city's Downtown Chamber of Commerce strongly supported high parking fees and longer hours of enforcement in order to create more parking availability.



Project Duration: 2005-2006

Total Budget: \$120,000

For more information:

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