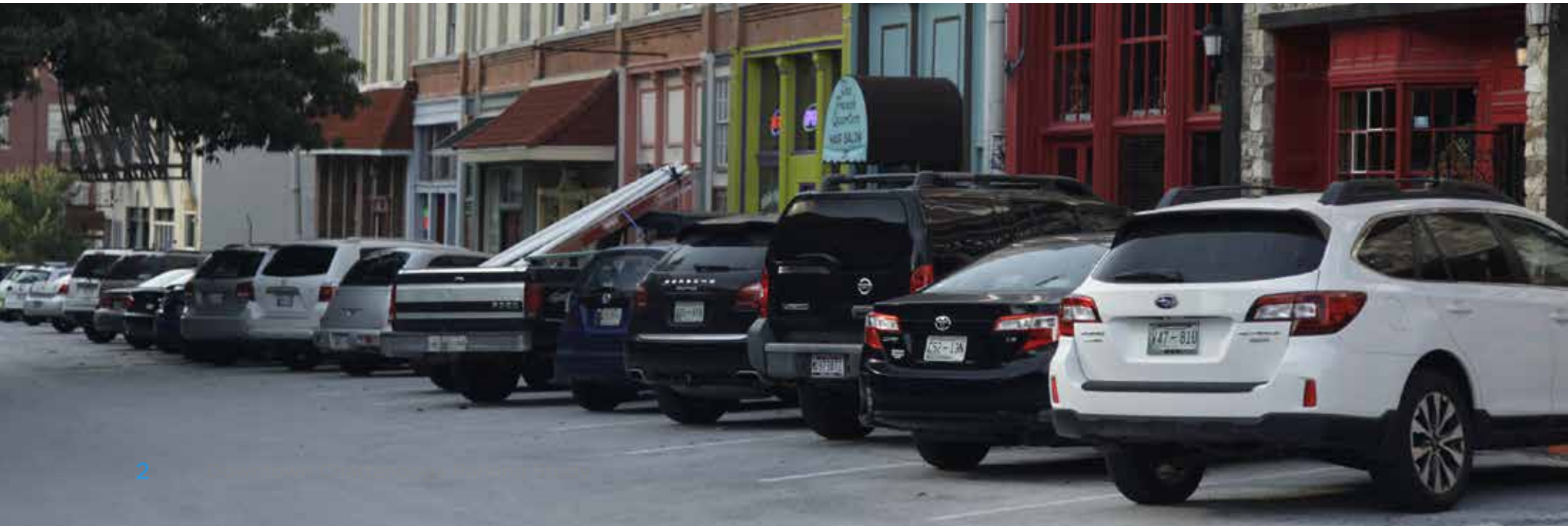
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHY THIS STUDY?

The Chattanooga Area Regional Transportation Authority/ Chattanooga Parking Authority (CARTA/CPA) and River City Company (River City), in partnership with the Lyndhurst and Benwood Foundations the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC), Siskin Hospital, Erlanger Health System, and the City of Chattanooga (CDOT), commissioned this comprehensive study of parking in central Chattanooga to understand challenges and opportunities related to parking as the city's urban core continues to grow and develop. It is intended to capture the current state of parking at a time of ongoing change in downtown and to provide strategic recommendations for addressing and balancing the current parking needs of downtown's diverse set of organizations, businesses, and residents. The study is the first downtown-wide look at parking in over a decade, during which time major changes to downtown such as the relocation of Blue Cross Blue Shield and the addition of new hotels, businesses and residents have changed downtown's parking profile.

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY'S STEPS

The study gathered information on the supply and use of greater downtown Chattanooga's approximately 43,000 parking spaces, which included both on-street and off-street spaces of both public and private access. In addition to counting and classifying spaces by their access and regulation, the study also measured how much these spaces were used on a typical weekday and Saturday to understand normal patterns of parking activity.



This is the most comprehensive such inventory of parking that has been developed for greater downtown Chattanooga and served as the basis for recommendations and decision-making throughout the study. It also allows Chattanooga's various civic organizations and public agencies to continue to update this information in a consistent framework, thus allowing the findings and recommendations of this study to be assessed as downtown grows.

The study's primary analysis compared information on **supply** (the parking inventory), **levels of use** (parking utilization), and **expected demand** (a summary of current land uses and activities in the study area, considering both a present-day snapshot and future growth based on known development potential). This allowed the study team to understand true gaps in parking potential, looking beyond an individual parking facility but considering the needs of the entire district.

The study team augmented this information with local knowledge and insight gained from stakeholder discussions.

FINDINGS: PARKING NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Findings of this analysis guided the study's recommendations, which are based on the principle that Chattanooga has numerous opportunities to better define and execute management strategies, even though adding to parking inventory is a worthwhile strategic investment in key areas.

In general, the study observed that current **parking use tends to be less than what would be expected given the type and amount of land uses in the whole of greater downtown Chattanooga**, but as much as would be expected, if not slightly more, in select areas such as the Health & Ed district and UTC campus area. In addition, even when supply is constrained on weekdays, it is much less heavily used on

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Less than one third of greater downtown's parking spaces are publicly available.

Certain parts of the study area, especially UTC and Erlanger and Siskin hospitals, expect to grow to levels that **will exhaust current parking supply** if they current parking usage increases at the same rate.

This potential shortage on the east of the study area is mirrored by **general availability in City Center and Riverfront.**

In the MLK district, a lack of publicly available parking is already leading to **parking shortage.** On the Southside, **residential streets face spillover demand** from a growing commercial district.

While the study suggests that downtown Chattanooga does not currently face a critical, district-wide shortage of parking overall, supply and demand dynamics are uneven, and some specific areas currently face parking challenges and feature parking facilities that are fully used at peak times.

There is room for efficiency through different pricing and management techniques, especially adjusting on-street pricing and the times of day that regulations are in effect.

weekends, further suggesting that major additions to parking supply might have limited utility.

However, even in areas with constrained supply today, the cost of new parking construction and uncertainty about its long-term use have led major users of parking to explore other arrangements than building new supply. The study recommends strategies to capture these kinds of opportunities. While some major parking facilities have availability throughout the day, it is important to note that not all are readily shared due to previous arrangements and commitments on parking spaces. These have limited them from their full potential in helping to address parking needs today.

The study was charged with engaging strategies to better manage current supply to optimize its use and to engage downtown's existing and emerging mobility options with parking as part of an integrated system. Any additions to parking supply that the study explored were considered with this larger strategic management- and multimodal approach in mind: specifically how any new parking would serve a broad area as efficiently as possible, how management of price and access could help parking users to make rational choices to consider other options, and how new parking could be poised to serve future development as well as existing development.

RECOMMENDATIONS: MANAGE FIRST, THEN BUILD WITH STRATEGY

As a result of this, the study's recommendations have emphasized management-based opportunities that could increase the overall efficiency and lifespan of current parking. These include a comprehensive look at pricing and regulation adjustments, with some on-street parking spaces recommended for increased pricing, some for decreased pricing, and many for changes to the span of regulations when meters and time limits are in effect. This recognizes that the most valuable parking spaces in downtown—those spaces on street and in surface lots convenient to businesses and downtown attractions—should be priced accordingly in order to provide availability for customers who want to access them.

Set price to create availability. In general, the study has recommended that price is the most effective determinant of a user's willingness to stay in a location. This has led to several recommendations for price adjustments, including extending the hours that parking pricing is in effect. This also includes moving away from time limits on parking and allowing price to be the sole determinant, where it is in effect of how long customers wish to stay in a space. When the pricing of the most desirable spaces—street spaces and surface lots near major destinations—is set appropriately, customers planning longer stays in a parking space may choose less expensive parking if it is available.

Share to take advantage of proximity. Aside from price, the study has found that available parking is almost always nearby, at any given time or location in the study area. This points to further management opportunities to promote both sharing of parking facilities, but also internal efforts, especially among major organizations, to understand true parking demand and how this might be affected through incentives and policies. To this end, the study also recommends strategic use of transportation demand management (TDM) options to help reduce an organization's need for parking spaces.

When demand increases and a need is clearly demonstrated for additional parking, having taken these management steps first will provide a well understood and accepted framework for how to manage new parking assets in the same way, helping to ensure that they are efficiently used and represent a sound investment that provides community benefit.

Treat parking as part of urban mobility. Sharing arrangements may extend beyond a comfortable walking reach for many customers, and for exceptional sharing opportunities there is a need to explore strengthened mobility connections such as transit, bicycling, and improvements to walking. The last of these points is commonly a factor in parking customers' preference for immediate, front-door parking locations, and continued investment in signage, wayfinding and streetscape enhancements can help to unlock the potential of parking facilities that may be close to a location in need of parking but one not yet utilized.

CARTA has long been invested in connecting parking to downtown destinations through its Electric Shuttle, and the parking study identified both broad interest and specific opportunities for other transit connections—whether the Shuttle or another type of vehicle—to play an expanded role in addressing parking needs. However, CARTA does not currently have sufficient resources to provide significantly more service or even to pilot or test the kinds of connections that the study has identified as possibilities. These parking connections represent a pivotal opportunity for CARTA to evolve into a more holistic mobility service provider, and achieving this will need the support of its institutional partners to ensure CARTA's long-term funding and organizational capacity.

Partner to use and add supply efficiently. Strategies for new parking include partnerships to construct facilities that not only serve multiple users but that can also serve future development. One example that the study has explored is a shared parking garage in the Health & Education district that would serve both Erlanger and Siskin Hospitals, but also potentially UTC and the Hamilton County Health Department. Other users might also be able to benefit from such a facility if it is built with additional space or sees the demands of its core users change over time, thus creating availability for new users.

SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Balance parking pricing to meet demonstrated demand. This means exploring higher on-street parking rates in Riverfront and City Center North, introducing paid on-street parking in Southside, and lower rates in City Center South and the Martin Luther King corridor.

Continue to support sharing agreements to address current demand needs.

Monitor and adjust pricing and regulations based on how demand changes.

Increase and optimize mobility options, especially transit services, between high-need and available-supply areas to allow remote parking to be more feasible. **CARTA in particular should be positioned to offer more innovative mobility services** than its resources currently allow.

It is still important to take opportunities to add parking supply in strategic places. Partner with key development projects to **build additional parking supply beyond what those projects need,** making strategic additions to supply in areas where redevelopment on existing parking lots will continue to reduce today's supply.