

City of Madison

DEPARTMENT OF



TRANSPORTATION

On-Street Parking on S. Park Street Staff Memo

February 2024

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1. Base Conditions

In August of 2023 Madison submitted a Small Starts application for the North-South bus rapid transit line. That application proposed dedicated running way (e.g. bus lanes) on Park Street from Badger Road to roughly Spring Street.

The cross section of Park Street is generally consistent between Badger Road and West Washington Avenue with two general purpose travel lanes as well as an auxiliary lane which is generally used for parking or a bus lane. The existing right-of way is mostly 106 feet wide. Park Street is planned to be reconstructed south of Fish Hatchery Road with the North-South BRT project.

Traffic volumes on Park Street are generally 40 percent lower south of Fish Hatchery Road compared to north of Fish Hatchery Road (40K vpd vs 26K vpd). Here the bus lanes can generally be accommodated through already existing bus lanes or reallocating seldom used parking/turn lanes, maintaining three total lanes in each direction.

During the initial public involvement meetings for the North South BRT, business owners from the area on Park St between roughly Fish Hatchery Road and West Washington Avenue expressed concern over the loss of parking. Following a review of parking needs in the area, the need for parking is likely concentrated in two areas. The first section is in the southbound direction from Vilas Ave to Erin St (400, 500, and 600 blocks). The second section is northbound between Olin Ave and Lakeside St (1000 block). In both of these sections, businesses have limited or no off-street parking, and restaurants exist that rely to one degree or another on proximate parking where customers pick up to-go orders. In the northern section, on-street parking on the side streets is further limited by high parking demand in the area from residents and probably hospital visitors. Other sections on Park Street, such as the northbound 400, 500, and 600 blocks, have a much lower density of business and nearly all have adequate off-street parking.

Figure 1-2 illustrates the general types of businesses in these two sections. Many of them are small independent business, run by people of color.

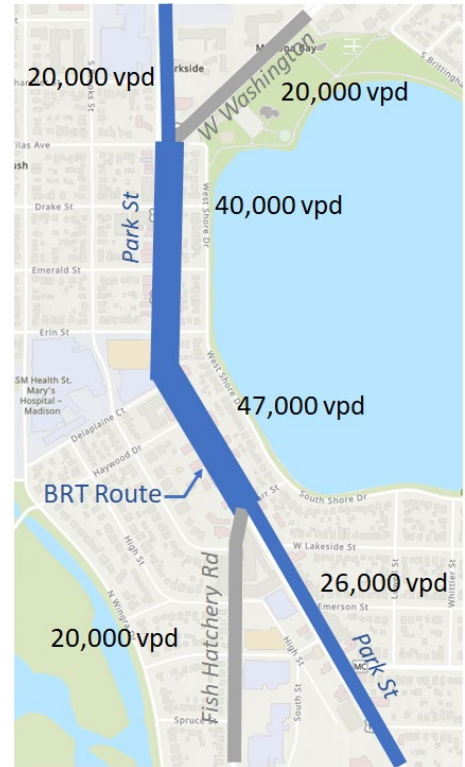


Figure 1-1 Daily Traffic Volumes



Figure 1-2 Types of Businesses Affected

2. On-Street Parking Use Data

A. Park Street Parking

Parking is restricted on this section of Park Street northbound from Emerald St to West Washington Ave and southbound for small segments near intersections, with the main portions of the block supporting parking. Staff collected parking data along the 400-600 southbound blocks of S. Park Street and the 1000 northbound blocks of S. Park Street. Because staff counts were directly after the winter holiday season, when businesses might be experiencing lower volumes, the counts were supplemented with counts from aerial photography taken in the spring/summer. These counts were taken when weather was fair, before the snow storms in mid January.

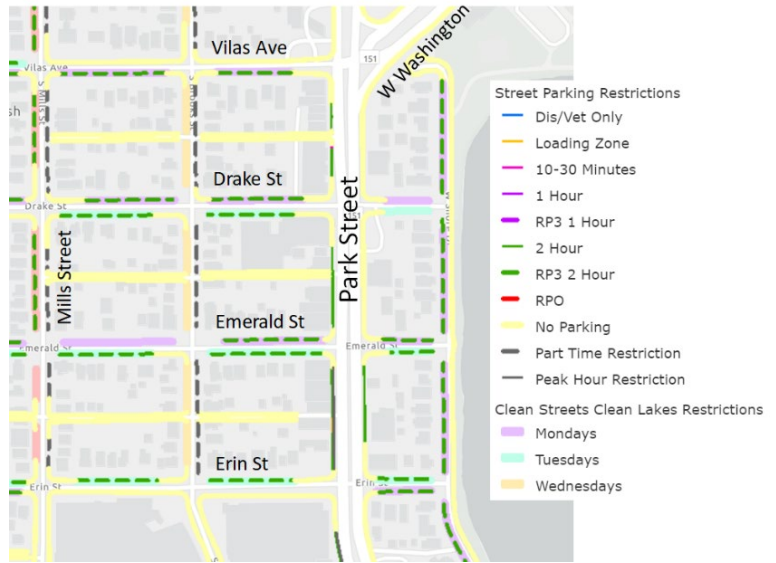
DATE / TIME	SB 400	SB 500	SB 600	SB 700	SB 1000 *	NB 1000	SOURCE
Thurs 4/14/22, mid-day	4	3	4	7	13	4	City aerial photo
Thurs 7/13/23, mid day	6	5	3	1	12	7	Google aerial photo
Tues 1/2/24, 7:00 pm	7	5	7	0	Unknown	Unknown	Manual count
Thurs 1/4/24, 12:15 pm	1	4	5	4	9	6	Manual count
Thurs 1/4/24, 12:45 pm	1	2	3	5	8	3	Manual count
Thurs 1/4/24, 6:20 pm	3	10	1	0	9	4	Manual count
Thurs 1/4/24, 7:00 pm	1	6	3	0	9	7	Manual count
Thurs 1/4/24, 7:50 pm	2	2	4	0	14	5	Manual count
Fri 1/5/24, 6:35 pm	9	10	5	0	6	9	Manual count
Fri 1/5/24, 7:10 pm	7	10	7	0	6	7	Manual count
Estimated capacity	9	10	7	7	20	10	

* SB 1000 block includes block face from Fish to Emerson and technically includes the 900 block.

General observations suggest that parking is not well used during the day, but fills in the evening after 6 pm. Although some blocks were filled to capacity at times, the 500 block was more likely to be filled to capacity, with the 400, 600, and 1000 blocks normally seeing use, but rarely being filled. In addition, a significant amount of turnover was observed during these counts. Other blocks, such as the northbound 500 and 600 blocks of Park Street, were observed to have few or no parked cars.

B. Side Street Parking

Figure 2-1 illustrates the parking designation for the side streets from Vilas/West Washington to Erin St. Most of the side streets are designated RP3/2-hour parking. This designation allows zone residents to park on the street for up to two days if they have a permit. All others may park for up to two hours.¹ During the evening there are no time restrictions. Although no parking counts were conducted on the side streets, staff observed that parking is generally well used.



Side streets adjacent to the northbound 1000 block does not have RP3/2-hour parking and generally have parking available.

Figure 2-2 portrays some google street view images of parking on the side streets.



Figure 2-2

C. Off-street parking

Off-street parking is limited on these four blocks. Generally, buildings were built in the traditional method with no setbacks from the sidewalk, no drive aprons, and no parking on small lots. In some cases, a small amount of on-site parking has been retrofitted, but it is generally in poor condition, has poor visibility for customers, used primarily by employees, and has poor access to front doors. The following table summarizes the off-street parking available.

¹ Note 2-hour parking is difficult to enforce throughout the City because it requires two passes from a Parking Enforcement vehicle.

Block	Summary
Southbound 400 block	A small parking lot is available behind most businesses with about 35 total spaces. Parking appears to be shared
Southbound 500 block	Small parking lots with about 20 spaces is accessible from an alley. Parking appears to be shared.
Southbound 600 block	The business on the south end of the block has a parking lot. The north portion of the block has no parking
Northbound 1000 block	Most lots have space for two or three vehicles accessible from a gravel alley that is accessed from Olin Avenue, not suitable for customers



Figure 2-3 Example of off-street parking, not visible from Park St

D. Loading

Load zones generally do not exist on Park Street with the exception of a short freight loading zone on the northbound 1000 block and a short 15-minute zone on the southbound 400 block. However it is likely that some freight loading occurs on Park Street since the parking is generally lightly used, especially during the day, and outside these four blocks.

3. Pedestrian Environment

Park Street has standard five-foot wide sidewalks on both sides for the length of the corridor. However most of the corridor has very narrow terraces (area between the curb and sidewalk) that are about three feet. The terrace is an important part of the street cross section. It serves as a buffer between the sidewalk and street as well as space for signs, driveway aprons, trees, curb ramps, and other street features. Most terraces are between six and 8 feet. The overall width of the sidewalk and terrace balance the width of the travel lanes on an arterial street. Wide, fast streets can be better pedestrian environments if they have wider areas for pedestrians.

Some stakeholders have mentioned that the presence of parked cars which physically separate traffic from the sidewalk and terrace compensate for the very narrow terrace and high volumes of vehicles. With a removal of on-street parking, traffic would be located about 11 feet closer to the sidewalk, with only the three foot terrace separating the two.

4. Business Owner Feedback

Staff met with several businesses along this area of S. Park Street to learn more about how they see on-street parking being used. Focus was listening and gathering feedback. Questions generally included the following: Do your customers use on-street parking? In what location? What times of day are most important? What

about parking on side streets? Are there opportunities to add more parking to your site? Do your customers walk or use transit? Below is a summary of feedback received.

402, 406, 416 S. Park Street
Property Owner - University Audio, Falbo Bros
Pizza, Mason Lounge, Apartments



Feedback:

- Concerns about safety issues at W. Wash and Vilas intersection—parked cars provide buffer for pedestrians
- Parking is needed for on-street deliveries and to support “stop and go” customers
- Currently has one vacant storefront—limited parking has made it difficult to lease

420 S. Park Street
Business Owner - Wayne’s Barbershop



Feedback:

- Street parking is the only customer parking available—would go out of business without parking
- Rear parking for employees only
- Side streets are parked up
- Concerns about traffic volumes and speeds during afternoon rush hour
- Parking provides buffer for pedestrians

**528 S. Park Street
Business Owner - Movin' Shoes**



Feedback:

- "Will do everything I can to protect my business and my family's livelihood - removing parking would shut down my business"
- Concern about losing property value
- Concern about existing parking challenges during Badger games and side streets being parked up
- No off-street parking available—employees use residential streets which is an issue
- Movin' Shoes is a "destination store" - retaining parking is only solution

**620 S. Park Street
Madison Black Chamber of Commerce**



Feedback:

- Would prefer not to have parking eliminated along Park Street - office hosts training sessions and mentorship meetings for entrepreneurs/business owners
- Inquired about non-resident parking permits for side streets if parking were to be eliminated

**1023 and 1025 S. Park Street
Property Owner**

Personal training gym, real estate development firm, apartments



Feedback:

- Concerned about all of Park Street that would potentially lose parking
- "Park Street is an extreme loser if you make this happen"
- "[City] has to decide if it wants to make Park Street a transportation corridor or a neighborhood for businesses"
- Removing residential parking in favor of 2-hour parking on Lakeside and Emerson could be a solution

**1029 S. Park Street
Business and Property Owner - Oriental Shop**



Feedback:

- Street parking used for customers and deliveries
- Some customer parking available in rear
- Would like to retain some parking but would be open to parking limits for peak hours
- Majority of business is in mid-day and afternoon

**1033 S. Park Street
Business and Property Owner - Taqueria
Guadalajara**



Feedback:

- Business depends on street parking for customers and deliveries - much prefer to keep it
- Some customers walk from neighborhood
- Parking needed between 10 am - 10 pm
- Take-out is a large part of business but not concerned about providing loading zones for delivery drivers - "they can find their own parking"

**1206 S. Park Street
Business and Property Owner - Oriental Food
Mart**



Feedback:

- Street parking is "only customer parking"
- Depends on street parking for deliveries
- Would like to stay involved with project

**1201 S. Park Street
Business and Property Owner - Quality Hardware**



Feedback:

- Business depends on street parking for customers and deliveries
- Some off-street parking, but it isn't enough and grades/geometry make deliveries off-street impossible
- Parking is needed between 8a - 5p during week and 8a - 4p on Saturdays
- Customers also use side streets
- Unhappy that existing bus stop on Olin prevents additional on-street parking

5. Alternatives

A. Wingra to Olin Avenue

South of Olin Avenue there are roughly 80 spaces on-street parking that are seldom used. Adjacent land uses tend to be residential, or businesses less dependent on on-street parking. With the exception of one loading zone and four northbound parking spaces, all of the parking in this section will be repurposed to provide dedicated bus lanes, as they exist south of Wingra Drive. The following graphic illustrates the location of the parking, along with the occupancy from one survey.

B. Olin Ave to West Washington

Staff developed two concepts for this section of Park Street - one that removes parking and has a bus lane, and one that maintains parking without a bus lane.

It is possible to reconstruct Park Street from Fish Hatchery Road to West Washington in a way that accommodates both the parking and a dedicated bus way. Preliminary estimates indicate the reconstruction would cost roughly \$20.5 million. This concept would further narrow the already narrow terraces. The project budget is not able to support this reconstruction, and there is limited desire to further constrain the pedestrian environment in this section of Park St. Consequently this memo focuses on the Parking/No-Parking concepts.



Figure 5-1 Parking Occupancy South of Olin Ave

1. North of Olin Ave - Removal of On-Street Parking Concept

Figure 5-1 schematically illustrates the lane configuration with the removal of all on-street parking. Note that with the schematic the lane routing looks abrupt, yet scale drawings reflect the gradual routing of the travel lanes and bus way. Attachment 1 provides scale drawing of this alternative. With the dedicated center running lane, all parking is removed. The same number of thru travel lanes are maintained, limiting WisDOT concerns.

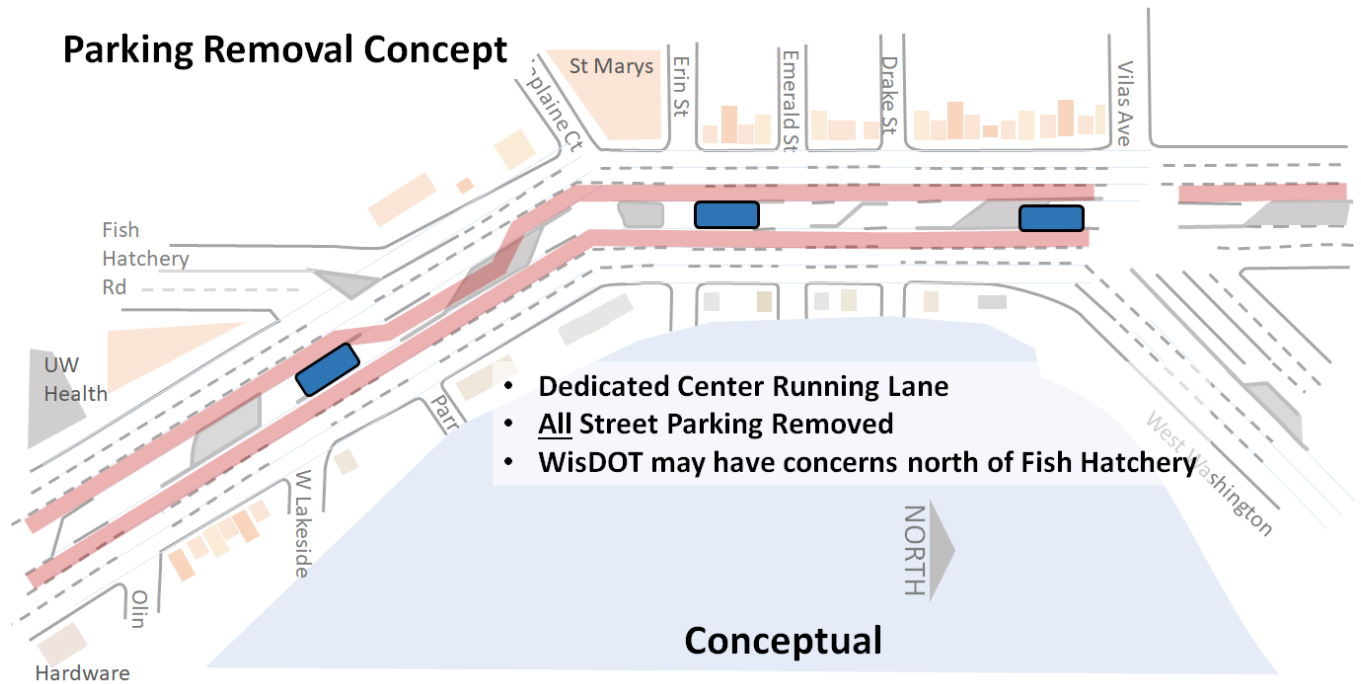


Figure 5-2 Parking Removal Concept

At the West Washington Ave intersection, it is likely the station would be located on the south approach of the intersection. A northbound bus would receive a queue jump as it travels onto a northbound roadway section in mixed traffic. Southbound bus traffic has dedicated bus lanes both north and south of the intersection. See Figure 5-3.

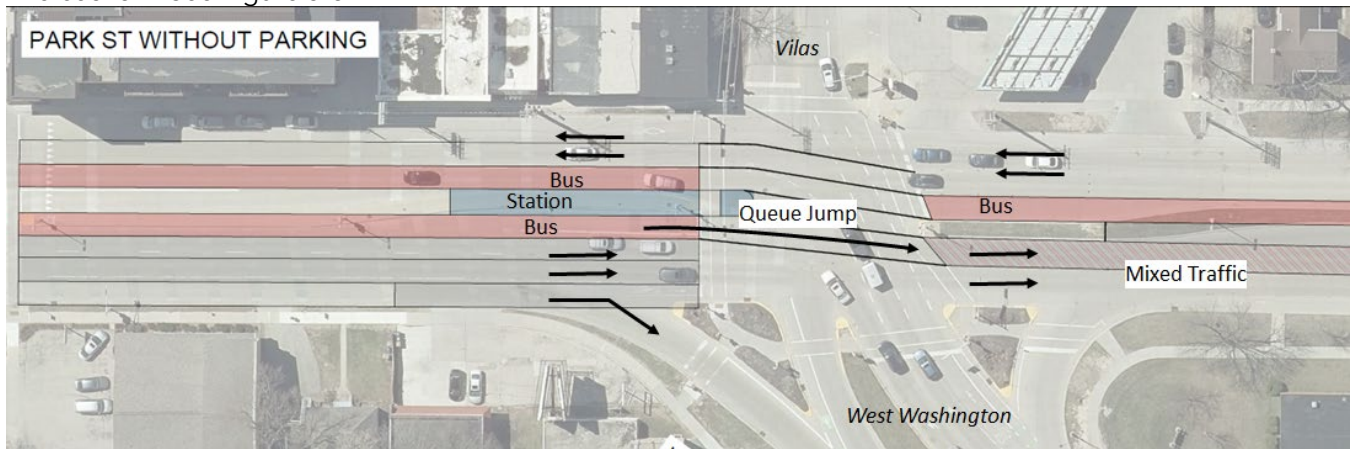


Figure 5-3 Park at West Washington - Without Parking Concept

2. Maintenance of On-Street Parking Concept

Figure 5-4 schematically illustrates the maintain parking option. The concept is selective in that parking is maintained only high need areas. Of the 10 spaces of parking in this direction, about 5 are maintained in the northbound direction between Emerson and Lakeside. These parking spaces are preserved by removing the left turn into Emerson (between Olin and Lakeside - not shown in the schematic). Figure 5-5 illustrates parking maintained in the northbound direction.

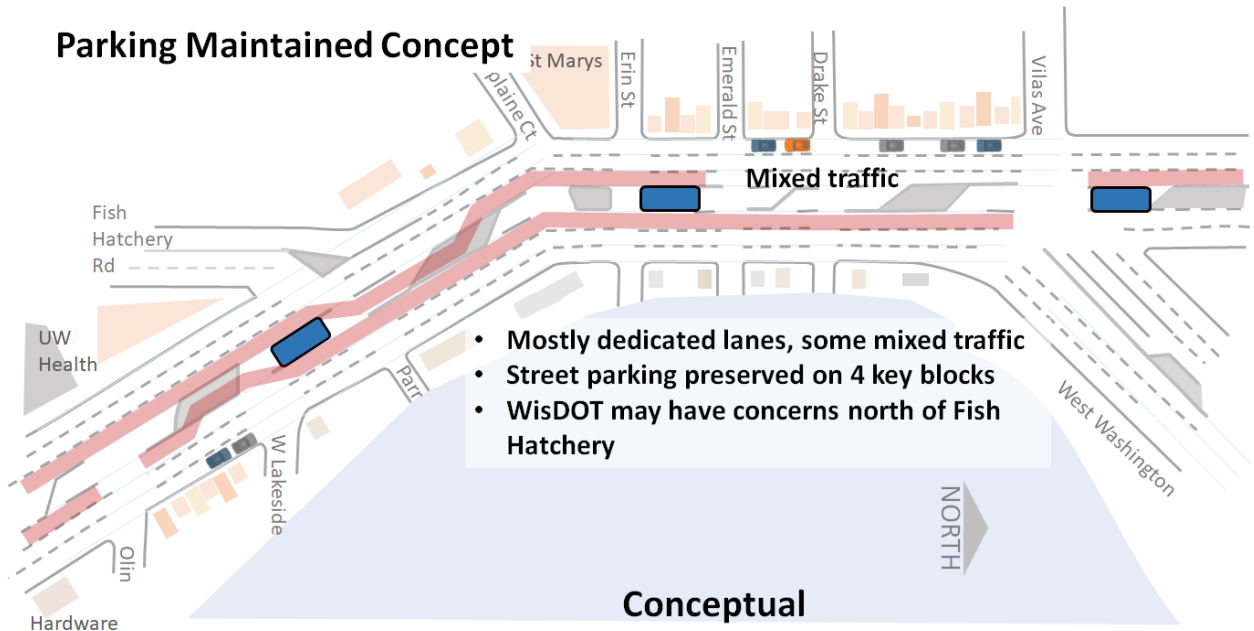


Figure 5-4 Parking Maintained Concept

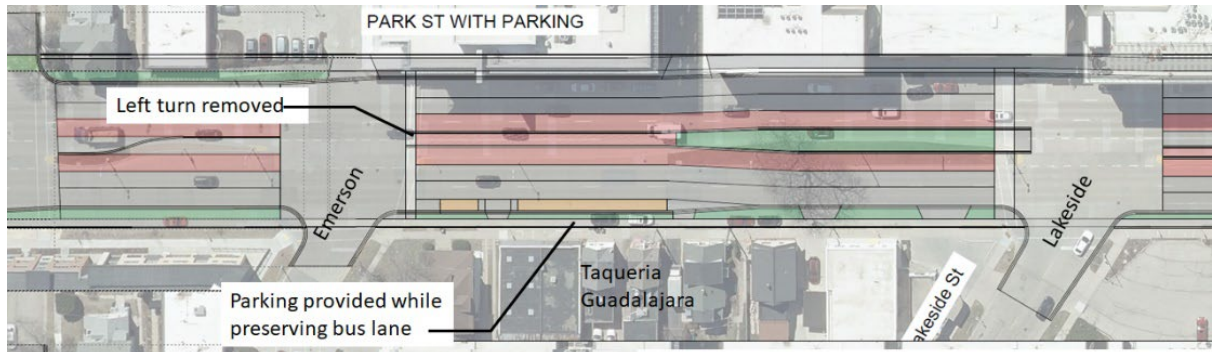


Figure 5-5 Parking Maintained in Northbound Direction

In the southbound direction, all 26 of the existing spaces can be maintained between Vilas and Erin through the removal of the bus lane for 3 blocks. The removal of the bus lane can be somewhat mitigated through the provision of a queue jump in the southbound direction at Vilas/West Washington. With this option, it is likely the station would be on the north approach. As with the previous option, the northbound direction would also have a queue jump to allow a northbound bus priority into the mixed traffic section north of West Washington. (See Figure 5-6)

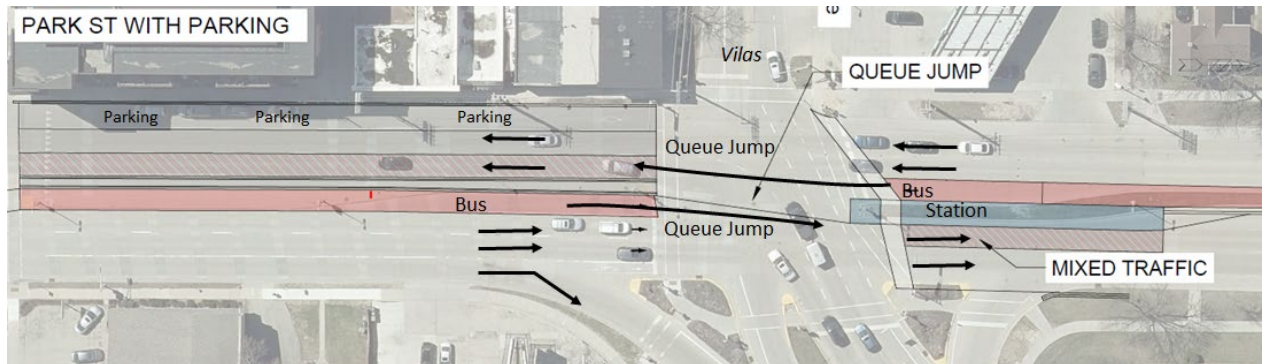


Figure 5-6 Parking Maintained Concept - West Washington Intersection

6. Recommendation

The full removal of parking provides the greatest efficiency and likely would have slightly lower costs. However, the full elimination of parking could adversely affect many of the small businesses concentrated on four blocks of the corridor. Several of these businesses are owned/operated by people of color. Although customers have places to park on side streets or in small off-street lots, it is possible that some may find the search for parking inconvenient enough to dissuade them from coming to the area. While the presence of parking appears to be important, the quantity of parking appears to be more than sufficient.

Possible mitigation measures, such as supplying additional parking on side streets to compensate for the parking removal is challenging. Much of the side street parking is already 2-hr / RP3 restricted. Occupancy on the side streets also appears to be high, potentially due to hospital parking impacts. Elimination of the RP3 status and converting some parking to 2-hour parking to provide more business parking options may be unpopular with the neighborhood who also struggle to find parking. Similar tensions between neighborhood and business parking exist in other neighborhoods

For these reasons, staff currently recommend the Parking Maintained Option. Reasons supporting this recommendation include:

- It provides parking at key locations that support corridor small businesses.
- It requires the elimination of only two to three blocks of bus lane.
- Although this section of Park Street is congested, mixed traffic operations should have a small impact on bus speed and reliability due to the short distance and bus lanes on either end.
- Merging and shifting has been minimized.
- The elimination of the southbound left turn at Emerson Street is likely to have little impact since Emerson is a residential street and people can turn left at Lakeside Street or Olin Avenue with little out-of-direction travel.
- The parking buffer will be maintained along the stretch of businesses with no sidewalk setbacks and higher pedestrian volumes.