

# Creating a Vision and Plan for Improved Parking And Active Transportation

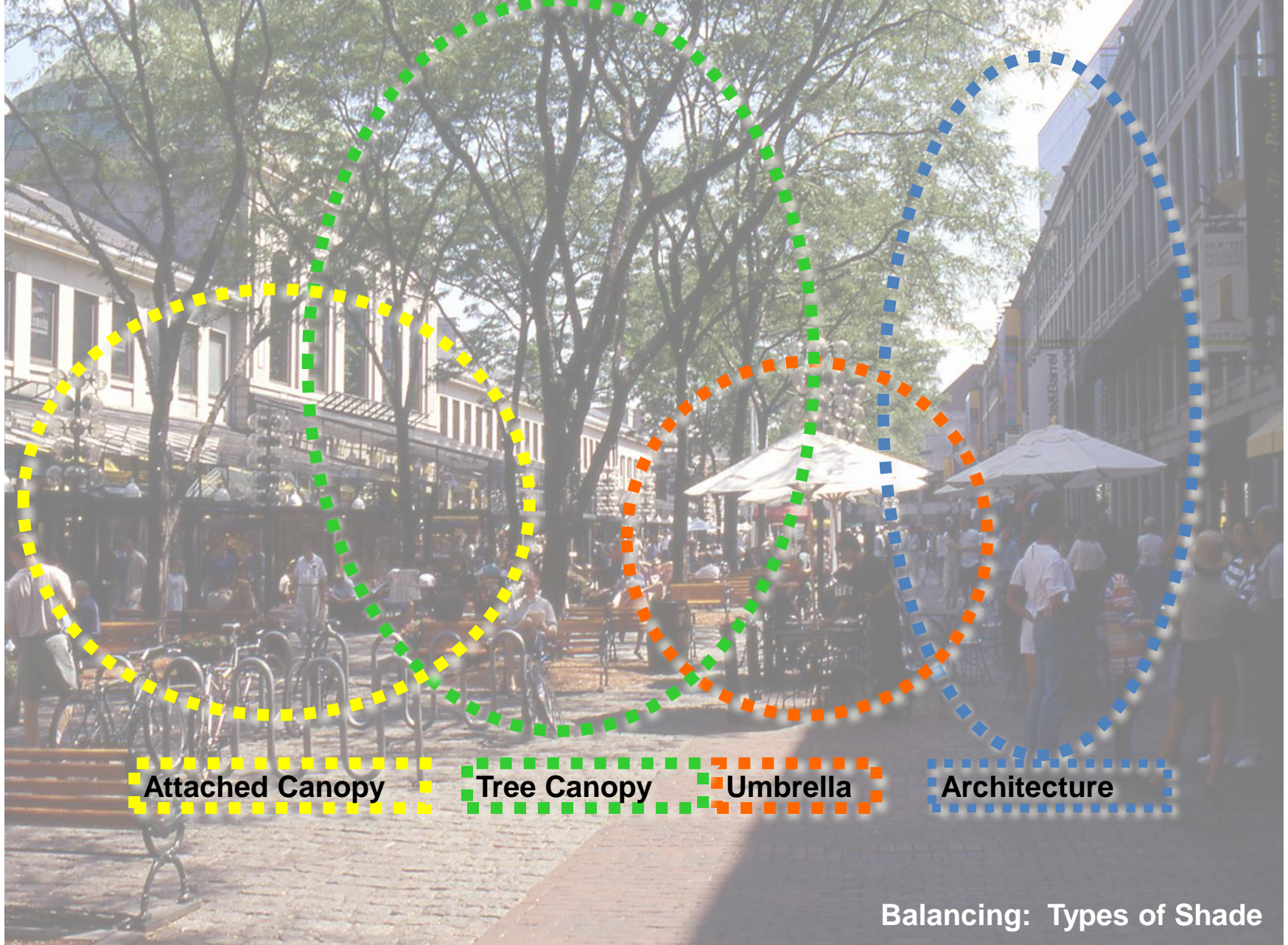
Fairhope, Alabama



# What This Report Covers

Fairhope, Alabama  
*Opportunities for Healthier Built Environments*

1. Existing Conditions and Opportunities Identified
2. Principles of a walkable Fairhope (tools are explained)
3. Parking Deck Location
4. New outdoor food service is offered, providing more “eyes on the court/street”
5. Places are attractive to children, families and elders
6. The parking deck and new spaces work well together, supporting one another
7. Many connections are made
8. FREE parking is well branded and easy to find, and people are drawn to this space as a “Park Once” expectation is met
9. People feel secure night and day
10. Merchants make better use of the parking deck, and are rewarded for doing so
11. Additional parking is identified in existing parking lots
12. Additional parking is identified on street, and especially surrounding the campus
13. Additional bicycling is incentivized with new treatments
14. Walking is rewarded through all design details
15. Motorists are converted into people through all design
16. Walking to the downtown and the waterfront is supported and promoted
17. Intersections are studied for enhanced walkability and speed reductions result
18. Life and vitality abound through collaborative visions and implementation



Attached Canopy

Tree Canopy

Umbrella

Architecture

Balancing: Types of Shade

# Principles and Tools of a Walkable Environment

## Architectural Design:

- Details reflect local character/history
- Variation in massing, façade, bays
- Mix of uses

**Active ground-floor uses:**  
(large display windows, public entrances, Building “fronts” on the street)

**On-street parking**  
(Makes street more pedestrian friendly)

**Parking behind building**  
(With max. standards to limit size and account for shared use)

**Pedestrian amenities:**  
(crosswalks, wide sidewalks, street trees, awnings)

**“Build-to line”**  
(Building built 0’-5’ from ROW)

# What is a Walkable Environment?



**Maximize fun places in the downtown by activating alleys and courts**

**Portions of the alley and the court can attract early morning uses, and others evening uses**

**Find and design locations for morning coffee and afternoon tea or wine. Different outdoor rooms for different times of day.**

## **Create Outdoor Rooms**

**Provide a variety of places to sit and be comfortable**

**People coming in and going out**

**Plenty of people passing through**

**What is a Walkable Environment?**



**An opening in a wall, along with picnic tables can become a thriving “coffee house”**



**A cooling piece of street furniture invites additional retail activity**

# **What is a Walkable Environment?**

# Introduction

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*Opportunities for Active Transportation*



Fairhope, Alabama seeks better management of its downtown parking, employing a park-once approach, and improved ways to free up core downtown on-street parking. More trips to the downtown should be on foot, or on bike, adding to the health of the community.

At the heart of downtown sits an underused (40-60% occupancy is common) parking deck surrounded by ugly alleys and courts. People do not want to walk through this area. Overtime, a refreshed parking deck area can serve as a model for improving all alleyways and connectors, focusing on placemaking throughout all of Fairhope.

# Introduction

Fairhope, Alabama  
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## Five Minute Walk

The garage placement is ideal, giving a short 5-7 minute walk to city hall, the civic center, library, the post office, all museums, important parks, the Faulkner Campus, and most downtown retail.

The challenge is to make the walk to and from the garage a pleasant and rewarding experience. This calls for better connections (passageways), improved street crossings (median crossings), and better wayfinding and branding.





Over three (3) days stakeholders came together in a number of activities to define the needs and opportunities to improving the parking deck. Representatives of the city, retailers, building owners, and investors took an active part in identifying and conceptualizing designs that will meet the needs of all.



A common ground was found for making the parking deck area attractive and connecting the spaces.

# Fairhope, Alabama

*Opportunities for Healthier Built Environments*



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Initial concepts were laid out and tested for all spaces in the adjacent alleyways and open courts. Measurements were taken, and all operations and maintenance (sanitation, deliveries and new uses) were carefully considered and vetted as the community “discovery” period was completed. The below approach, and all other approaches, are recommended as two-way operations.



## Opportunities and Agreements in Common:

- All parts of the public realm, whether the fronts of buildings, or the backsides, should rise to the Fairhope standard of aesthetic. Overtime, no ugly and unproductive spaces should remain in downtown. In time, all alleys should be addressed, and this parking deck space should become the working model.
- The parking deck will become a key destination for storing cars, especially by staff, retailers and hotel guests, and should approach 100% occupancy during work days.
- All areas around the parking deck will be well maintained, giving it a “Disneyesque” quality.
- Wayfinding and branding are featured in improved use, finding the parking deck--today a mystery for many--will be simple, direct, coherent and welcoming system.



## Opportunities and Agreements in Common:

- The parking deck and its surrounding spaces will feel secure, inviting and comfortable.
- Secure bicycle storage will be added, and a bike share program will be encouraged, run by volunteers. Other attractive convenient bicycle parking stations will be created at the city municipal building, library, post office, Faulkner College and in key retail areas.
- All parking deck elements (solar, nature, edges, interior lighting) will complement existing and planned buildings and uses. The deck will become an attraction.



# Solutions

## Key Findings:

- Placemaking, branding and wayfinding can significantly increase the use of the parking deck. A new entrance location to the deck was discovered during our public engagement process.
- Make the alleys and court a destination. Then use these spaces as a model to clean up all downtown Fairhope alleys. Many are disrespectful of the town and its people.
- Significant added placemaking and land value will result from carrying out many of these principles and recommendations.
- At least 200 more parking spaces can be made available over time at key locations, such as the Faulkner campus perimeter, behind the Fairhope Community Park and French Quarter, and on De La Mare Avenue.
- Other modes of transportation (especially bicycling) can grow 100-500% with appropriate support.

## In the Future ...

- Garage court and alleys are clean and respectful, and well lit
- Place comes first, while still ensuring all operations are supported
- Added outdoor food service is offered, providing more “eyes on the street”
- Places are attractive to children, families and elders. People come here as a destination
- The deck and new spaces work well together, supporting one another
- Many connections are made; FREE parking is well branded and people are drawn to this space, creating a “Park Once” expectation
- People feel secure night and day with ongoing activities taking place here



# Deck-Court Design

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- A new crosswalk is added to Section Street
- Potted trees are used, allowing a flush surface during parades
- The new median island also advertises the FREE parking

# Flat Median Crossing

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# Flat Median Crossing

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**Pennsylvania, Ave in Washington, D.C. is an example of where flat medians exist. In this case, signal poles are pulled out on parade days; large floats have no impediments.**

# Flat Median Crossing

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# Moveable Planters

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# Flat Median Crossing

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Examples of landscape items that can be placed in planters, or removable lamp posts for parade events. The banners shown on this vertical lamp can advertise Free Parking.

Pop up signs and flower baskets can be used to create a visual median midblock crossing.



# Deck-Court Design

Fairhope, Alabama  
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- A new, third, entrance is created on Magnolia, adding a new pedestrian connection
- Driveways are narrow, no wider than 24-28 feet (two-way)

# Deck-Court Design

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**A new entrance off of Magnolia celebrates two new land uses facing the street. This new entrance to the garage is also clean and respectful. The signing here is pleasant and obvious, and the new garage entry and exit supports the new land uses (one built, one planned).**



# Deck-Court Design

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- The driveway entrance from Church Street is narrowed
- Entrance to the parking deck becomes clearly defined and feels secure
- The alley has a new deck (paver stones) adding color, textures, enclosure.
- Public Restrooms, outdoor seating and dining opportunities help to anchor this end

# Deck-Court Design

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**The Church Street entrance offers attractive new buildings (a convenient public restroom), an attractive ledge, a shortened pedestrian crossing, organized outdoor parking (rather than random, discoordinated spaces today), and an inviting gateway feel draws people in.**

# Deck-Court Design

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All elements of this entrance (and all entrances) denote respect and acknowledgement that there all users—people walking, driving, bicycling, and lingering (or hanging out)—are expected here. Strong edges (trees and lamps) define edges of the parking deck and interior alley and court spaces.

# Deck-Court Design

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**This court sets a new high bar standard honoring the Hampton Inn Hotel, and all other land uses. The current parking is moved to the area shown, still allowing all deliveries and sanitation operations. The paver stone surfaces add color and respect. Maintenance and operations honor this new space in the same way that Disney respects the customer experience.**

# Deck-Court Design

Fairhope, Alabama  
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This view offers more design detail. The elevator structure offers a canvas inviting a person in from the street. Art is applied to the right-most wall, and in other surface locations to assure each person that this is a secure and inviting place. Note the striking landscaped edges, as well as the many planned outdoor eating and other attractive functional uses.

# Court Examples

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Fairhope already has two delightful courts for enterprise. Here are several additional examples of how small spaces add to the quality of shopping, entertainment and visitation experiences. Many people go to Disneyworld to experience what most towns no longer have. Fairhope can play off of what they have already created. Courts are the heart of discovery.

# Court Examples

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Interior courts and alleys are one of the best places for discovery of green, public art, ledges, doorways to the best shops. People travel hundreds of miles to track down these remarkable surprises. Our design team located portions of alleys that must provide for deliveries and utilities, and those that do not.  
Victoria, British Columbia Alley

# Deck-Court Design

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Finally, stepping back and upward, this view shows the importance of connecting into the main street and surrounding area. Three well identified and well branded entrances, all transformed to two-way (in and out), to the parking deck helps the downtown better manage parking. A single on-street parking space that turns over 16 times a day generates \$200,000 in new revenue to be shared by the retail merchants. This well-placed garage makes this possible.



# Deck-Court Design

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This top aerial view of the parking deck and courtyard site shows the project in relation to each building street and entryway.

# Deck-Court Design

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## Outcomes of the design:

- Makes an inviting place;
- Helps to attract investment on that block;
- Increases natural surveillance on the interior of the block;
- Beautifies and softens the area;
- Adds uses and flexibility to the area;
- Gives the deck a presence on the adjacent streets at the ends of the two existing access drives;
- Provides a third access drive with presence; and
- Helps the property owner at the third access drive conceive a redevelopment option for her property

## Bike Parking Options:

- Bike Parking will provide a high aesthetic, adding to Fairhope's placemaking and identity
- Bike parking will be convenient and well watched over (by adjacent land uses) and placed in popular routes of travel



**Suggested aesthetic for bike parking**  
Merchants can donate in exchange for a tasteful sign noting their contribution

**Opportunity for more flower basket with parking?**

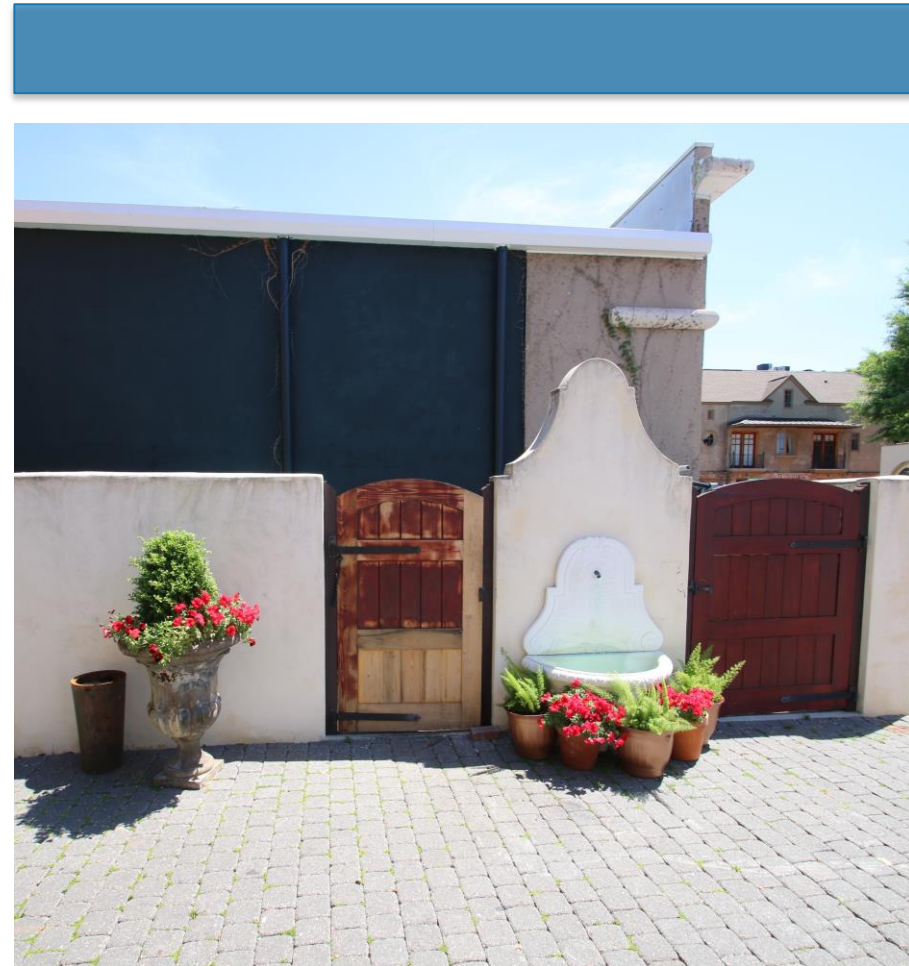


**Suggested aesthetic for bike campus parking**

## Screen all Utility Spaces

All alley spaces in downtown Fairhope have ugly dumpsters, cleaning areas, above ground utility boxes and air conditioners that are detractors.

Set requirements and expectations that all visual and olfactory/noise nuisances will be corrected. Fairhope already has many great model treatments.



## Create Authentic Wayfinding

- Develop an authentic, helpful wayfinding system that encourages walking.
- Downtown Fairhope is compact and inviting to walking, but many people are unaware of how easy it is to walk from place to place.
- Provide signing that explains distances in minute it takes to walk to each destination.

People will “Park Once” when they realize that walking is an easier and healthier option to climbing into a hot car, driving a short distance and searching for a new parking space.



**Park Once – Then Go-By Foot!**



French Quarter/Fairfield Community Park Area

This is an unwelcoming, disorganized, and creates unwanted solar heat gain.

**Parking Lot Options< Make More Inviting and Efficient Use of Space By:**

- Organizing and clearly marking parking, which should produce 20-30% more parking.
- Using 90 degree angle parking with some compact spaces

Make all parking spaces as welcoming as main street. The “B” side of buildings (alleys) should become an attractive and welcoming feature



Suggested aesthetic for backside parking

## Johnson Avenue

Current condition: Moderate parking yield, can be increased, and add new green space

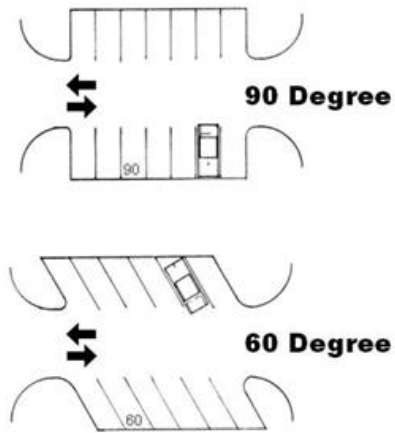
- Change from 60 to 90 degree angled parking
- Increases parking 30% where angle can be changed  
Also, easier to enter from either direction
- This is the most efficient and economical parking configuration because it accommodates the most vehicles per square foot of available parking area.
- Provide more greening of parking area, especially on corners
- Remove centerline marking
- Look for other places where street dimensions allow 90 degree parking.
- Requires 90 feet for a two way street
- This street section is 90 feet



The 60 degree angled parking configuration is ideal for a fast turnover rate or predominantly short term use and may be preferred over 90 degree parking in some situations due to ease of navigation, even though it may be a less efficient use of the available space.



## Faulkner Campus Parking



## Faulkner Campus Parking:

Current condition: low to moderate yield

- Go to 90 degree angled parking, narrow to 8 foot bays (for low turnover parking).
- Provide more greening of parking areas
- Move sidewalk back and inset parking
- Create parking on all four sides of the campus pad.

At least 30-40% more parking can be arranged around the campus. Much good parking space is not being well used. Here is an example where the sidewalk can be moved back and 60 degree back in angled parking can be inserted.





# Replace Signals with Roundells

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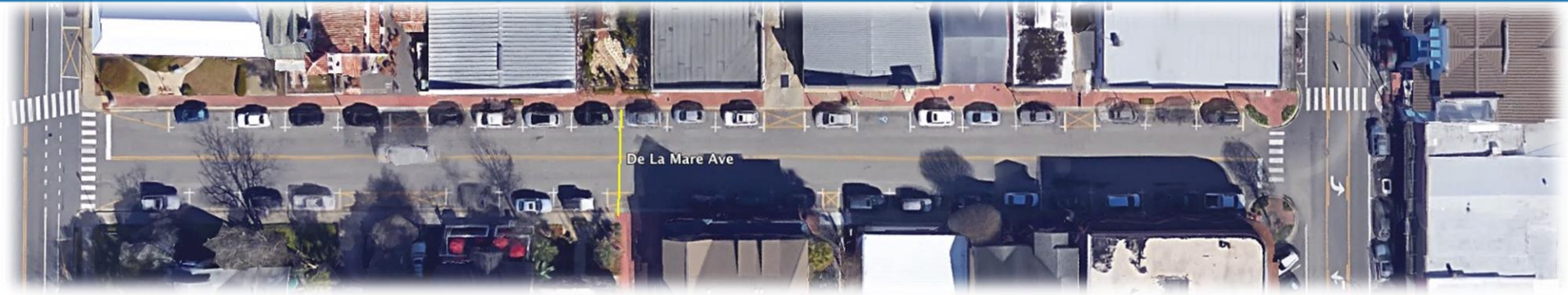
## Replace Signals with Roundells:

Today motorists and pedestrians face delay, while starting and stopping creates noise.

- Conduct an engineering study, and if roundells are accepted, replace signals at intersections that warrant.
- Advantages include, greater aesthetics and operations. Less delay for pedestrians and motorists.



Example roundel in Jacksonville Beach, Florida



## Del la Mare:

Current condition: 44 feet curb-to-curb

- Consider 60 degree angled parking on one side, 7 foot parallel parking on the other
- This creates a low speed 18 foot two way operation
- A chicane is created in the center of the block and parking is switched midblock.

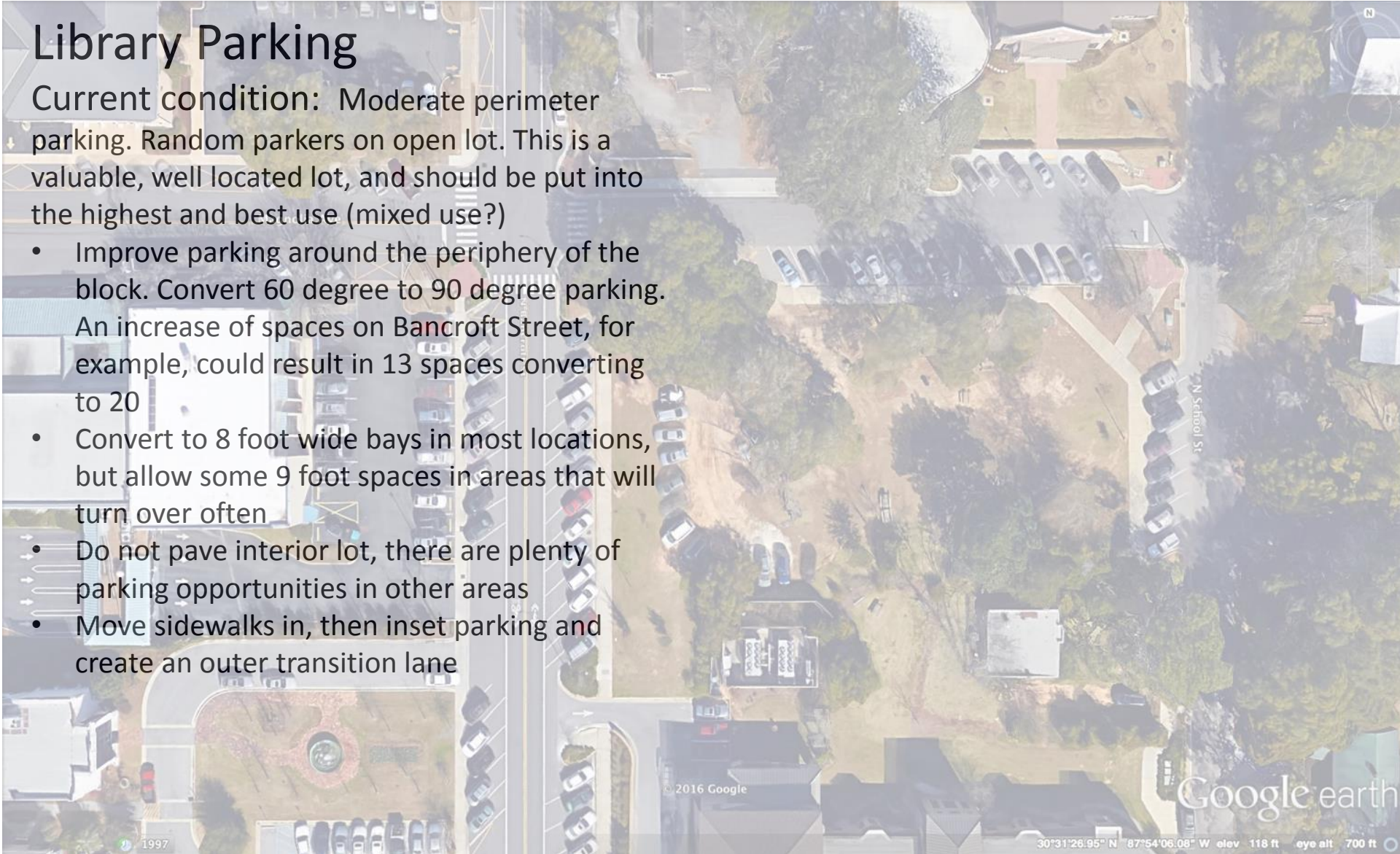


Consideration for this treatment calls for an engineering study, and a demonstration project to learn of its benefits and dis-benefits

## Library Parking

Current condition: Moderate perimeter parking. Random parkers on open lot. This is a valuable, well located lot, and should be put into the highest and best use (mixed use?)

- Improve parking around the periphery of the block. Convert 60 degree to 90 degree parking. An increase of spaces on Bancroft Street, for example, could result in 13 spaces converting to 20
- Convert to 8 foot wide bays in most locations, but allow some 9 foot spaces in areas that will turn over often
- Do not pave interior lot, there are plenty of parking opportunities in other areas
- Move sidewalks in, then inset parking and create an outer transition lane



## Shared Short- to Long-Term Policies & Plans

Based on the workshops, walking audit and other events the following key policies/plans emerged to support (over time) strengthening all spaces in downtown Fairhope.

### **Create and Adopt a Parking Management Plan**

Review this plan and have existing downtown working groups secure support from all business leaders (retail and building owners) to agree to create place out of this alley and court. Top Fairhope leaders already understand the key role of parking to help grow downtown in a meaningful way. Meanwhile, there are distractors who recall a time when parking was in abundance, and they seek a return to these days, where anyone could park anywhere at any time. A successful downtown seeks to have a downtown parking problem. Thriving shops and a vital working downtown require a parking master plan and high level management of parking as a scarce resource. This study was a quick master plan, and over time the ideas presented here, put in motion, will help explore added solutions.

### **Create a workable downtown parking management plan, and gain compliance**

Today many shop owners and staff take up the most convenient parking spaces in front of their own shop, or nearby. Many occupy these spaces many hours each day. Agreement is needed that these convenience parking spaces are to be managed, reserved primarily for shoppers. If spaces can be turned over 4-8 times per day, and especially in key locations 16 times a day, each parking space provides a value of up to \$200,000 per year.