



# City of Gresham Downtown Area Parking Use Assessment

Prepared For:

CITY OF  
GRESHAM  
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## 1.0 Introduction and Background

The City of Gresham is interested in assembling parking data and analyzing parking management strategies related to Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities (CFEC) rules passed by the Department of Land Conservation and Development. The City has three centers, Downtown, Civic, and Rockwood, recognized under Metro as Regional and Town Centers. These centers are a focal point for businesses, and public parking occurs on-street and in public lots. There is no time-enforced parking, paid parking, or a parking enforcement program for public parking.



Previous parking studies in 2002 and 2010 focused on the Downtown area, where most small businesses rely on public parking for employee and customer needs. It is in the Downtown where, historically, most concerns related to parking have been raised. These past studies also did not find that parking used/demand exceeded 85% occupancy<sup>1</sup> across enough of the parking supply in the area to warrant more active parking management at that time. Recent redevelopment in Gresham, with reduced private parking, has again raised the question of how much parking is available in Downtown Gresham and the other commercial centers and the possible impacts on the public supply if the City needs more parking management.

***This data summary provides findings for the Downtown only, excerpting from the larger three center study. <sup>2</sup> This report is the first step in creating an accurate parking usage database for the Gresham Downtown and a source of information for strategy discussions with the City, the Downtown Parking Work Group, and other affected stakeholders.***

<sup>1</sup> The 85% occupancy threshold is a parking industry standard that is used to assess whether a parking supply or parking area is constrained. Sustained parking occupancies above 85% would then suggest a constraint that needs to be managed with a range of strategy tools to bring use of the supply below 85%.

<sup>2</sup> The three center data report summary can be found in Rick Williams Consulting, *City of Gresham Downtown, Civic District, Rockwood Area Parking Use Assessment (June 2023)*.

## 2.0 Executive Summary

RWC analyzed parking use data collected for each of three centers in Gresham, as defined by Metro. These included Downtown, Civic, and Rockwood. Study area boundaries were provided to the consultant by the City of Gresham.

*When viewed as a combined supply of parking serving an area (Downtown, Civic, Rockwood), there is no indication that parking constraints adversely affect users' access. Simple parking management strategies could be implemented over time, but only when occupancies become constrained for sustained periods of time. Current occupancy demand would not be conducive to paid parking alternatives.*

For the analysis, on-street occupancy data was collected on a typical weekday in June 2023. At the same time, occupancy data was collected for the eight publicly owned off-street lots in the Downtown. Survey hours were 9 AM to 6 PM (ten consecutive hours).

Though this summary provides only findings for the Downtown, the following summarizes findings for each of the study areas included. Again, the full three-center data report is available from the City of Gresham:

### *Downtown*

- On-street demand is low, averaging 35% across the survey day, peaking at 40% between 6 PM and 7 PM.
- The downtown study area had 513 empty on-street parking stalls at the peak hour.
- Off-street demand is moderate, averaging 67% over the survey day, peaking at 74.4% between 11 AM and 12 PM.
- Four of the eight public lots reach occupancies of 85% or greater, which is considered constrained by industry standards. However, each lot has a different peak hour, and access to available on-street supply is generally convenient.
- Higher use of both the on and off-street supplies is concentrated west of NE Roberts Avenue. Still, any destination downtown has available public supply proximate and within a short walking distance.

### *Civic District*

- On-street demand is low, averaging 54% across the survey day, peaking at 58% between 5 PM and 6 PM.
- Over 40% of the on-street parking supply is empty at the peak hour (267 stalls).
- Given the clustering of constrained block faces in the northwest quadrant, access to on-street supply is likely difficult and inconvenient for those accessing the area. However, this could be mitigated if there were more opportunities for parking in private off-street facilities.
- Access in the lower southern portion of the study area has no parking issues that could not be addressed within a short walk. However, there are numerous block faces in this area where parking is not allowed, which could be evaluated for transition to parkable blocks in the future should occupancies significantly increase.

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### *Rockwood*

- On-street demand is low, averaging 47% across the survey day, peaking at 57% between 11 AM and 12 PM.
- As in Civic, over 40% of the on-street parking supply is empty at the peak hour (267 stalls).
- Though combined occupancies within the study area are generally low per industry standards, the configuration of streets and long blocks can create real and/or perceived constraints for users in sectors of the Rockwood Center, particularly during the peak hour.

### *General Observations*

- When viewed as a combined supply of parking serving an area (Downtown, Civic, Rockwood), there is no indication that parking constraints adversely affect users' access.
- Because most parking is free, on and off-street, and few time limitations are in place, simple actions could be implemented over time, like time limits and enforcement, but only when occupancies become constrained for sustained periods of time.
- Current occupancy demand would not be conducive to paid parking alternatives, as demand for parking would not generate the revenue necessary to cover operating costs associated with pay-to-park alternatives.
- In Civic and Rockwood, the number of block faces that do not allow parking contributes more to pockets of a constraint than the observed demand for access to the study area.
- In Rockwood, long super block faces and disconnects between street systems are a factor that creates some localized constraints.

## 3.0 Methodology

### 3.1. INVENTORY ASSEMBLY

Prior to data collection, RWC staff completed an on-the-ground inventory of the available on-street parking within each center study area boundary. Striped parking stalls were counted. Otherwise, unstriped stalls were physically measured to ensure an accurate parking inventory.<sup>3</sup> Available parking supply within the inventory accounted for curb cuts (e.g., driveways/alleyways), fire hydrants, and other parking restrictions along the right-of-way.

The on-street supply was assessed for the number of stalls per block face and by “use type,” quantifying the number of stalls by specific time limit designation (e.g., 15-minute, 1-Hour, No Limit<sup>4</sup>, etc.). Additionally, the Downtown public off-street supply was assessed by the location of the facility and the number of stalls physically striped on the lot. Each Downtown lot was assigned a Lot ID number in the Consultant’s database and on the Downtown study area map (see **Section 3.0**). The breakout of inventory for each study area is summarized below in **Section 3.0** (Downtown), **Section 4.0** (Civic District), and **Section 5.0** (Rockwood).



All inventory data was collected between June 9<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

### 3.2. DATA COLLECTION DATE

Surveyors were in the field collecting parking occupancy data on Wednesday, June 14, 2023. This date was selected with input from City staff to represent a typical weekday for parking activity.

### 3.3. DATA COLLECTION HOURS

Occupancy data was recorded every hour over ten hours. In other words, the number of parked vehicles parked along each block face in the three study areas. Similar hourly occupancy counts were collected for the Downtown public off-street lots. Hours of data collection were 9 AM through 7 PM.

### 3.4. MEASURING PERFORMANCE

The 85% Occupancy Standard is the most common approach for assessing a parking supply's performance in the parking industry. The 85% Occupancy Standard is a flexible measure for evaluating parking supply, whether as a facility-by-facility measure, at a district level, sub-area, or block-face by block face.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> RWC surveyors use a measuring well wheel and a 23-foot standard to allow for quantifying a reasonable and conveniently useable on-street parallel parking space. Surveyors also account for sight lines, distance from curb cuts, intersections, fire hydrants, and other obstructions that might prevent “creating” a usable parking space.

<sup>4</sup> “No Limit” parking stalls are parking spaces on-street that are unregulated, allowing unlimited parking duration. This contrasts with parking stalls that are time-limited, restricting the duration of use and requiring some level of corollary enforcement to facilitate compliance.

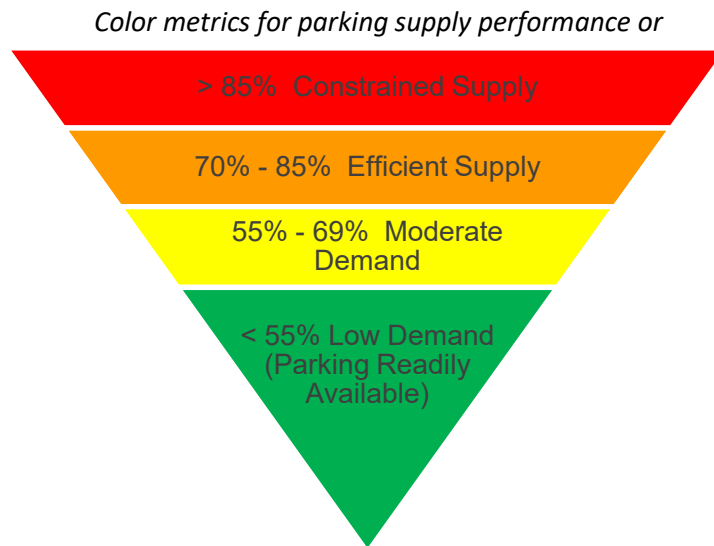
<sup>5</sup> Some may be aware of parking analyses presented by Donald Shoup in his book *The High Cost of Free Parking*. Dr. Shoup is strongly in favor of linking parking management strategies to the 85% Occupancy Standard.

It is considered constrained when 85% or more of an available parking supply is occupied for sustained periods (red on the graphic, top right on the next page). In a constrained system, finding an open spot is difficult, especially for infrequent users such as customers and visitors. This can cause frustration and negatively affect perceptions of an area or district. Continued constraints can make it difficult to absorb and attract new growth or to manage fluctuations in demand—for example, seasonal or event-based spikes.

Most parking managers strive to maintain a supply in the 70% to 85% occupancy range (orange), deemed an “efficient” parking supply. An efficient parking supply shows active use but minimizes constraints that would create difficulty for users.

Efficient use supports vital ground-level businesses and business growth, is attractive to new users, and can respond to routine fluctuations - resulting in a supply that is robust and accessible. Occupancy rates of 69% or less (yellow and green) indicate moderate to low demand for parking, leaving greater percentages of supply empty with the potential to absorb parking demand. In other words, this indicates a potential opportunity to maximize and/or share with other uses.

The consultant’s analysis of the public parking supply in Gresham uses these categories to evaluate the performance of the surveyed parking areas.

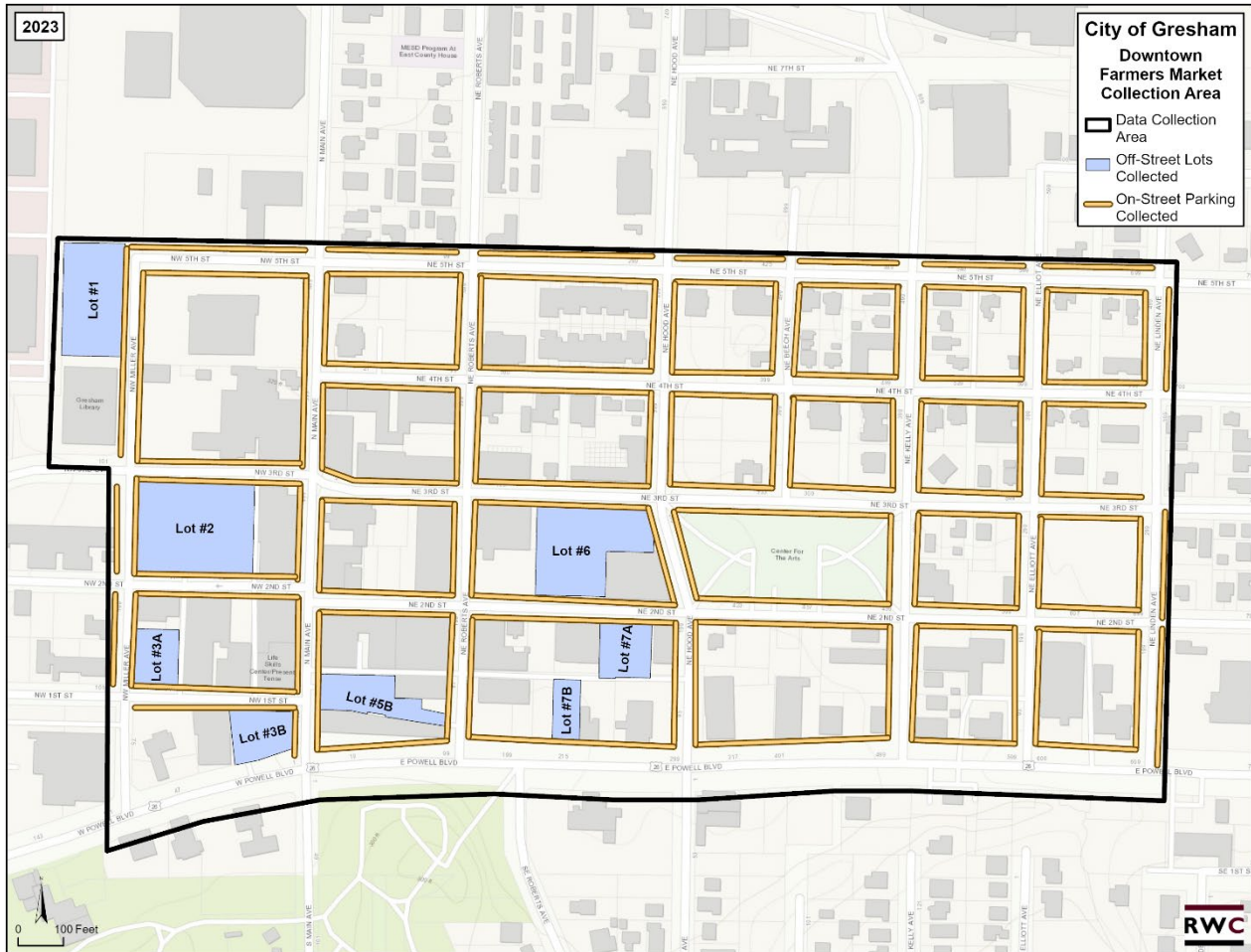




## 4.0 Downtown - Data Findings

### 4.1. STUDY AREA

Figure A: Downtown Study Boundary



### 4.2. FORMAT OF THE INVENTORY

#### *Downtown (on -street)*

**Table 1** summarizes the breakout of the on-street parking supply in Downtown. As shown in the table, there are 854 on-street spaces located in the 26 City block area that is Downtown.

- 93.6% of the Downtown on-street parking supply is No-Limit parking, which allows an unlimited time stay by any user (visitor, resident, employee).
- Less than 6% of the inventory (49 stalls) is time-limited for visitor stays: 1 Hour (3), 2 Hour (31), and 3 Hour (16) stalls.
- A total of 5 stalls are designated for high turnover users: 15-minute (2) and 30-minute (3).
- One stall is provided for ADA-accessible use.
- At this time, there are no fees or charges related to on-street parking (e.g., meters).



**Table 1: Downtown On-Street Inventory by Use Type**

Use Type	Stalls	% Total
<b>On-Street Supply Studied</b>	<b>854</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
15 Minute	2	< 1%
30 Minute	3	< 1%
1 Hour	2	< 1%
2 Hour	31	3.6%
3 Hours	16	1.9%
ADA accessible	1	< 1%
No Limit	799	93.6%

***Downtown (off-street)***

There are eight public off-street lots located in the Downtown Study area. Combined, they total 375 parking stalls. **Table 2** summarizes supply by unique lot.

**Table 2: Downtown Off-Street Inventory by Public Lot**

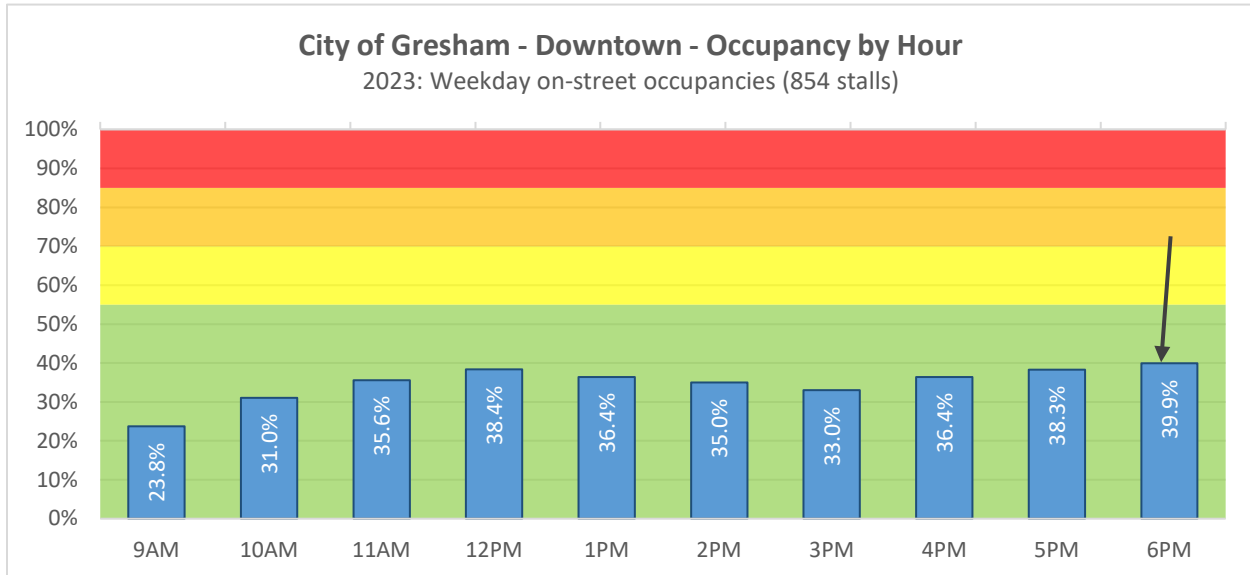
Lot ID	Facility	Stalls	% Total
	<b>Off-Street Supply Studied</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Lot #1	Gresham Multnomah County Library	71	18.9%
Lot #2	Gresham Free Public Parking #2	110	29.3%
Lot #3A	Gresham Free Public Parking #3A	24	6.4%
Lot #3B	Gresham Free Public Parking #3B	29	7.7%
Lot #5B	Gresham Free Public Parking #5B	31	8.3%
Lot #6	Gresham Free Public Parking #6	66	17.6%
Lot #7A	Gresham Free Public Parking #7A	32	8.5%
Lot #7B	Gresham Free Public Parking #7B	12	3.2%

- The largest public lot is Lot #2, between NW 2<sup>nd</sup> and NW 3<sup>rd</sup> Streets, and NW Miller and NW Main Avenues. This lot has 110 stalls, representing about 30% of all off-street parking in public control.
- The smallest lot is Lot #7B, just north of E. Powell Blvd, between NE Hood and NE Roberts Avenues. This lot has 12 stalls and represents about 3.0% of all off-street parking in public control.
- The average lot size is about 47 stalls.
- At this time, there are no fees or charges related to off-street parking (e.g., meters or permits).

### 4.3. ON-STREET PARKING OCCUPANCIES

Figure B illustrates occupancy trends for the Downtown in hourly increments. All surveyed hours fall in the low-demand range for performance metrics described in Section 3.4 (green band).

Figure B: Downtown On-Street Occupancies by Hour



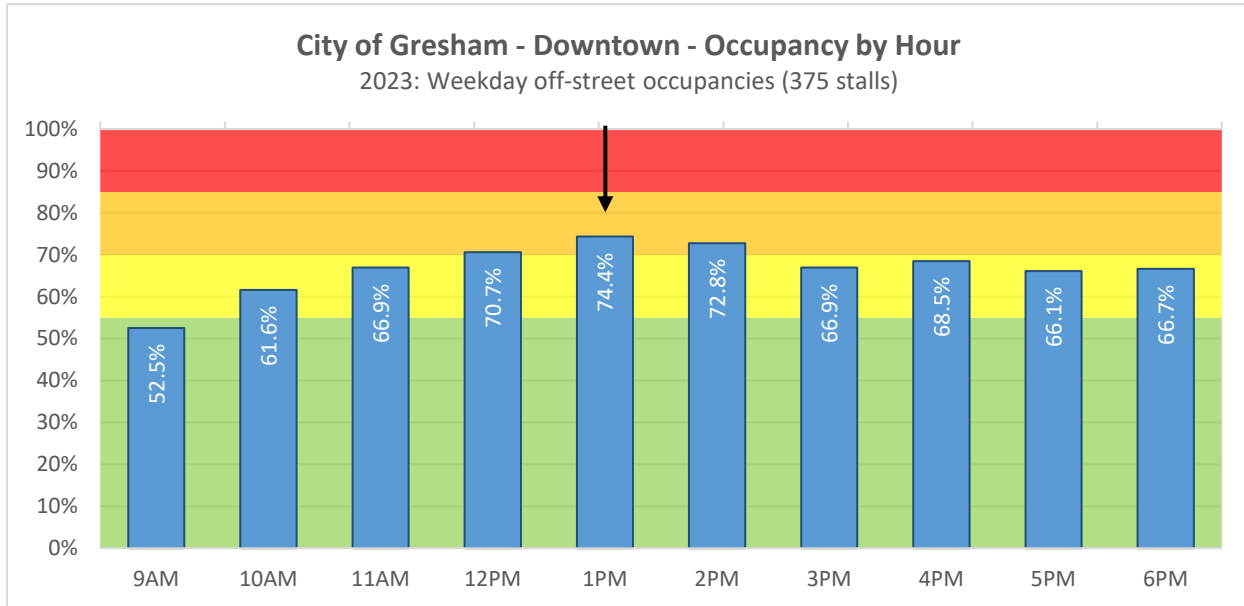
#### Key Findings:

- **Average Occupancy:** Average occupancy is 35% over the ten-hour survey day, indicating low demand.
- **Peak Hour:** Peak occupancy occurs at the 6 PM hour when 39.9% of stalls are occupied.
- **Occupancy Trend:** Occupancies show a slight bell curve between 9 AM and 3 PM, increasing use from 9 AM (23.8%) to 12 PM (38.4%), trending downward until 3 PM. Use increased in the last three hours of the survey day from 4 PM (36.4%) to 6 PM (39.9%). This late afternoon trend may represent a transition from retail users (midday) to more restaurant and entertainment-oriented users moving toward the early evening. Nonetheless, overall demand for parking is very low throughout the operating day.
- **Empty Stalls:** Overall, there is a high percentage of empty on-street stalls during the weekday. At the peak hour (6 PM), 513 empty parking stalls are on-street in the Downtown study area.

### 4.4. OFF-STREET PARKING OCCUPANCIES

Figure C illustrates occupancy trends for the Downtown public off-street supply in hourly increments. Six of the ten surveyed hours fall in the moderate demand range for performance metrics described in Section 3.4 (yellow band). Also, three of the ten surveyed hours fall within the efficient demand range (orange band). Only the 9 AM morning hour shows low demand.

Figure C: Downtown Off-Street Occupancies by Hour



**Key Findings:**

- **Average Occupancy:** Average occupancy is 66.7% over the ten-hour survey day when all off-street parking in the eight City lots is combined, indicating moderate demand for the off-street parking system.
- **Peak Hour:** Peak occupancy occurs at 1 PM when 74.4% of stalls are occupied.
- **Occupancy Trend:** Occupancies show a standard bell curve, with occupancies rising each hour between 9 AM (52.5%) and 1 PM (74.4% peak) and generally trending downward until 6 PM (66.7%). Overall demand for parking is consistently moderate throughout the operating day, with very efficient demand performance between 12 PM and 2 PM.
- **Empty Stalls:** A moderate percentage of off-street stalls are available during the weekday. At the peak hour (1 PM), 96 empty parking stalls are off-street in the Downtown public supply.

**Table 3** provides a lot-by-lot breakout of peak hour performance in each of the eight public off-street lots downtown. The top row of this table shows the combined peak hour at the 1 – 2 PM hour (74.4%). All subsequent rows indicate the peak hour occupancy for each unique lot, each with its peak hour. As the table shows, Lot #'s 2, 3A, 3B, and 5B each reach a point of constraint (red) at some point during the operating day. For example, the largest lot (Lot #2), with 110 stalls, reaches 100% occupancy between 1:00 PM and 2:00 PM, while Lot # 5B, with 31 stalls, reaches 100% occupancy at the 6:00 PM - 7 PM hour.

**Table 3: Downtown Off-Street Occupancies by Unique Lot and Peak Hour**

Lot ID	Facility	Stalls	Peak Hour	Peak Occupancy	Empty Stalls
<b>Off-Street Supply Studied (combined peak hour)</b>		<b>375</b>	<b>1:00 PM - 2:00 PM</b>	<b>74.4%</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>Off-Street Supply Studied (by unique parking facility)</b>					
Lot #1	Gresham Multnomah County Library	71	5:00 PM - 6:00 PM	43.7%	40
Lot #2	Gresham Free Public Parking #2	110	1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	99.1%	1
Lot #3A	Gresham Free Public Parking #3A	24	10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	100.0%	0
Lot #3B	Gresham Free Public Parking #3B	29	11:00 AM - 2:00 PM	96.6%	1
Lot #5B	Gresham Free Public Parking #5B	31	6:00 PM - 7:00 PM	100.0%	0
Lot #6	Gresham Free Public Parking #6	66	1:00 PM - 2:00 PM	72.7%	18
Lot #7A	Gresham Free Public Parking #7A	32	10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	62.5%	12
Lot #7B	Gresham Free Public Parking #7B	12	6:00 PM - 7:00 PM	25.0%	9

**4.5. HIGHEST POINT OF OBSERVED USE**

Often, occupancy findings within a large study area boundary can understate performance outcomes, masking possible areas of constraint within a supply. This can be addressed with heat maps that provide visual observation of smaller operating areas and the relationship between parking activity on-street relative to the off-street supply. A heat map uses the same industry color-coded performance categories illustrated in **Section 3.4** to display levels of occupancy (red, orange, yellow, and green).

**Figures D and E** (following pages) summarize occupancy at the highest point of observed use by block face and parking lot, respectively.

**Key Findings:**

The downtown study area has 26 total or partial city blocks. Within those 26 blocks are 115 block faces, 104 allowing vehicle parking.<sup>6</sup> As the maps indicate:

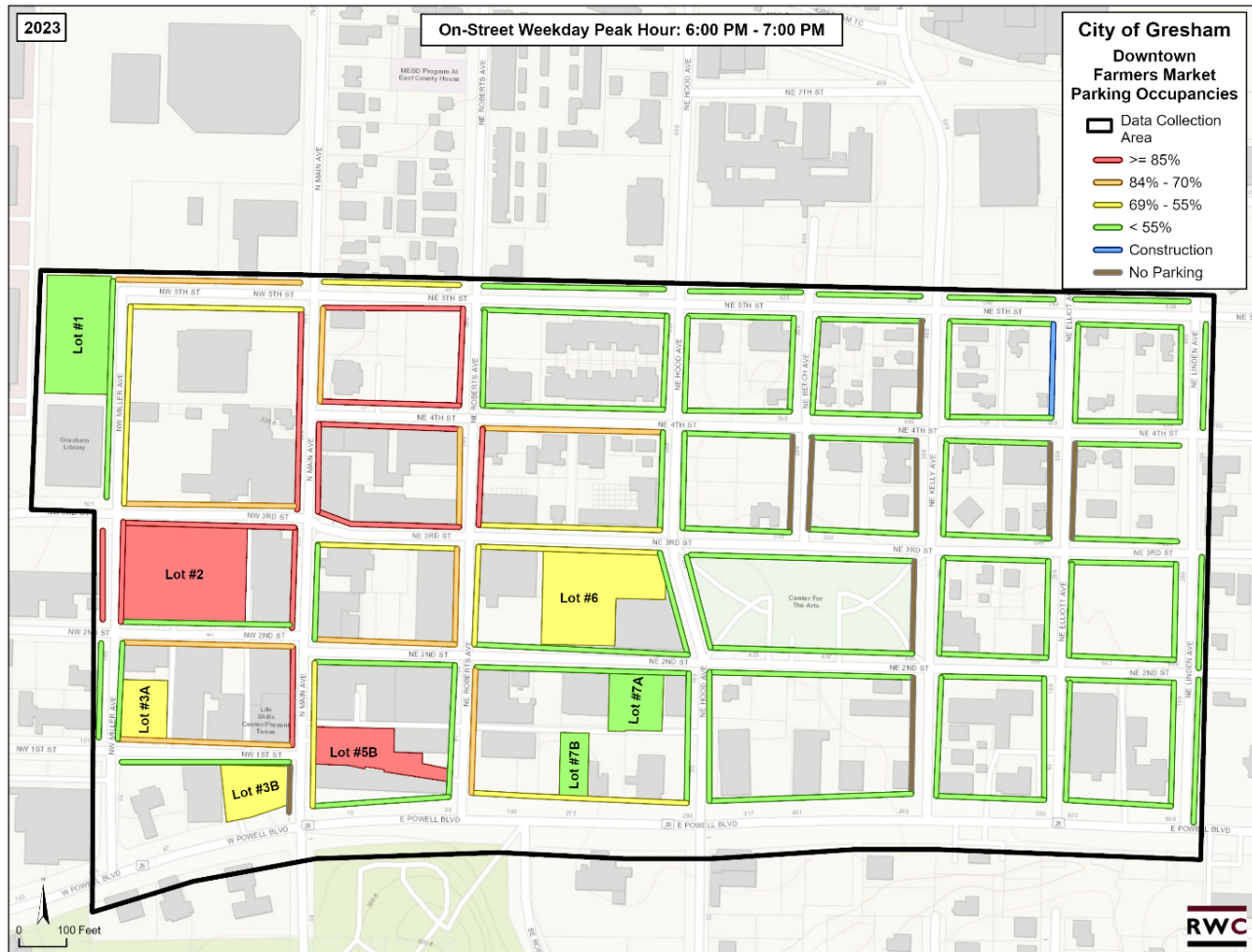
At the on-street peak hour (6:00 PM) – **Figure D**<sup>7</sup>

- At the peak hour, 13 block faces are constrained and are occupied at or above 85% (red). This represents 12% of all parkable block faces.
- All the constrained block faces are clustered on block faces west of NE Roberts Avenue.
- The remaining 91 block faces are either orange (10/10%), yellow (9/9%) with moderate demand, or green with low demand (72/69%).
- At the highest peak hour of on-street use, two surface lots (Lots # 2 and # 5B) are constrained.
- For the most part, even with the clustering of constrained block faces in the western portion of the study, there is abundantly available parking on adjacent blocks and/or lots within a short walking distance.

<sup>6</sup> As a rule, a city “block” is generally comprised of four “block faces.” Of these block faces, some allow the parking of a vehicle. Other block faces (or portions) may not allow parking. Block faces that allow vehicle parking are considered “parkable” for purposes of occupancy and utilization measurement.

<sup>7</sup> The on-street peak hour is that point in the day when the highest number of vehicles are parked in the combined on-street supply.

Figure D: Downtown On-Street Peak Hour Heat Map – 6:00 PM

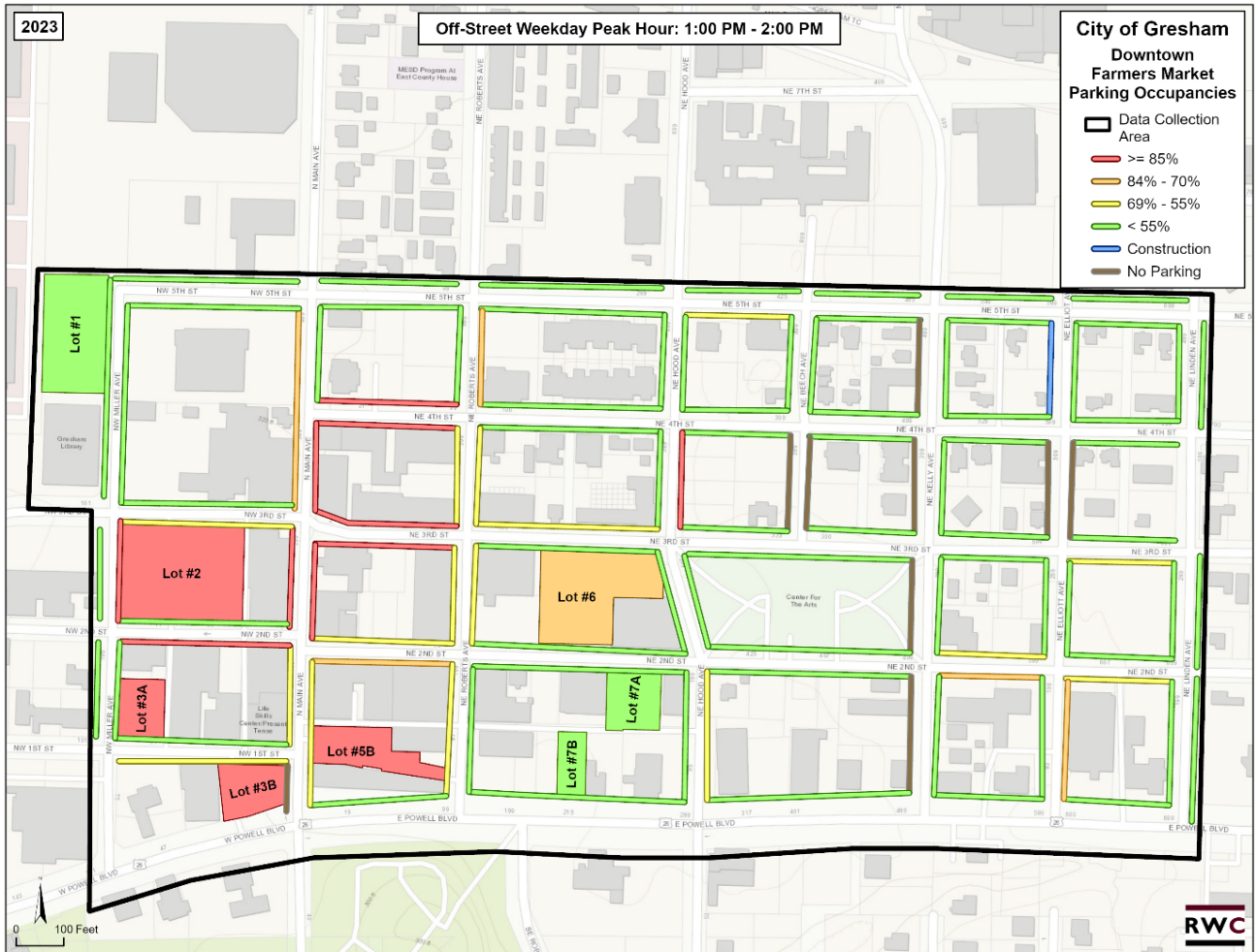


At the off-street peak hour (1:00 PM) – **Figure E<sup>8</sup>**

- At the peak hour, ten block faces are constrained at or above 85% occupied (red). This represents 10% of all parkable block faces.
- As with the on-street peak hour, all but one of the constrained block faces are clustered on block faces west of NE Roberts Avenue.
- The remaining 94 block faces are either orange (5/5%), yellow (16/15%) with moderate demand, or green with low demand (73/70%).
- Four surface lots (Lots # 2, # 3A, # 3B, and # 5B) are constrained at the highest peak hour of off-street use.
- At the off-street peak hour, ample parking is available on adjacent block faces and/or lots within a short walking distance.

<sup>8</sup> The off-street peak hour is that point in the day when the highest number of vehicles are parked in the combined off-street supply.

Figure E: Downtown Off-Street Peak Hour Heat Map – 1:00 PM



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## 5.0 Summary

When parking use/demand is evaluated in the Downtown, parking demand is low by industry standards, with most of the supply averaging less than 55% occupancy throughout the day. The off-street system in the Downtown shows constraints in four of the eight public lots, though the peak hours for each unique lot vary, and there is generally convenient access nearby in either on-street or off-street supply.

When public on and off-street parking is viewed as a combined supply of parking serving the Downtown, there is no indication that parking constraints adversely affect user access. Also, the fact that most parking is free, on and off-street, and few time limitations are in place, there are simple actions that could be implemented over time, like time limits and enforcement, but only when occupancies are constrained for sustained periods. Current occupancy demand would not be conducive to paid parking alternatives, as demand for parking would not generate the revenue necessary to cover operating costs associated with pay-to-park alternatives.