



MEMO

TO: **Amar Mohite, AICP**, Harris County Precinct 1
 CC: **Andrea Ranft, PE**, Jones & Carter/Harris County Engineering Department
Michael E. Turner, PE, Harris County Engineering Department
 FROM: **Geoff Carleton, AICP**, Traffic Engineers, Inc.
 DATE: December 6, 2018
 RE: **Austin Corridor Parking Assessment**

This technical memo summarizes utilization of existing on-street parking along Austin Street, and availability of alternate on-street parking on adjacent blocks in the corridor. This memo was developed in support of the design of a two-way protected bike lane along Austin Street, which will require modifications to the existing parking on the corridor. This study was conducted from October 29 to November 4, 2018.

Austin Corridor Parking Inventory

The study area included approximately 90 block faces along and adjacent to Austin Street and La Branch Street from Bremond Street to Holman Street (refer to **Figure 1** on the following page). The team measured existing curb space between driveways and estimated the number of on-street parking spots available, assuming 20 feet of curb space per parking spot. These estimates also incorporated considerations for parking restrictions based on assumed compliance with Texas statutory clearances, although real parking behavior may vary:

- 30' from traffic control devices,
- 20' from crosswalks, and
- 15' from fire hydrants.

Parking spots were categorized as free, metered, disabled, or commercial/truck. There are 447 available parking spots in the study area, of which 121 (27%) are located along Austin Street (refer to **Table 1**).

Table 1. Existing On-Street Parking Inventory

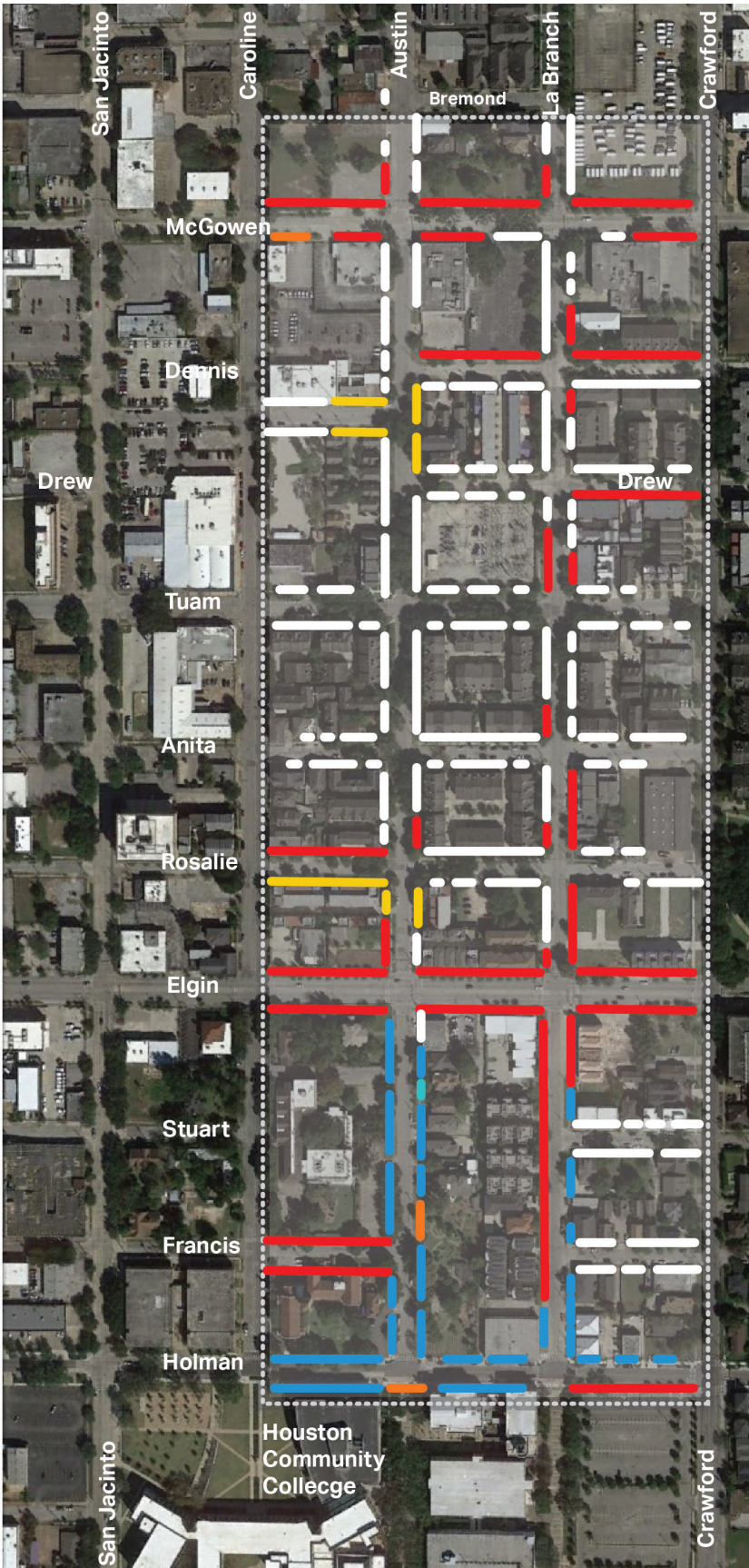
On-street parking spots	Total	Free	Metered	Disabled	Commercial
Study area	447	368	71	2	6
Austin Street	121	72	45	2	2

Existing On-Street Parking Utilization








The team counted vehicles parked in the study area, in order to assess existing utilization of on-street parking. Vehicles were counted during each of three time periods on two different days during the week of October 29 to November 4, 2018:

- Weekday midday (11AM – 12PM),
- Weekday evening (6PM – 7PM), and
- Weekend midday (11AM – 12PM).

Figure 1. Study Area



**Austin Corridor
Parking Legend**

- Parking Study Area 
- Free curbside parking 
- Metered parking 
- Disabled 
- Commercial 
- Construction closure 
- No parking 

Parking use within the study area on weekday evenings and weekend middays was very similar, consistent with anticipated residential parking behavior. As summarized in **Figure 2** below, less than one third of available parking was occupied during evenings and weekends (30% Tuesday evening, 29% Thursday evening, 30% Saturday midday, and 28% Sunday midday).

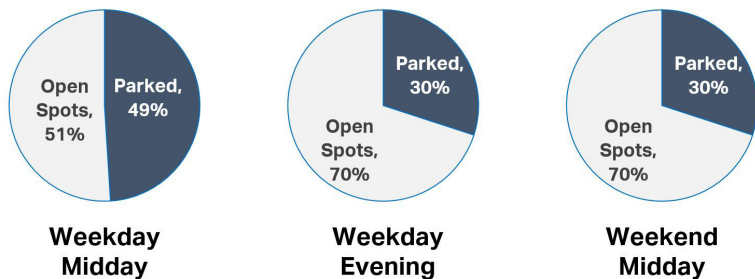
Parking use within the study area was greater during weekday middays, with approximately half (49% Tuesday midday, and 43% Thursday midday) of area parking spots in use. Some weekday midday parking was clustered adjacent to major institutions, including:

- Houston Community College (HCC) along Holman,
- the Harris Center for Mental Health/IDD Bristow Center on Caroline, and
- United States Postal Service (USPS) office on La Branch between McGowen and Hadley.

Several clusters of weekday midday parking appeared to be construction worker trucks/vehicles parking near three shorter-term job sites, including:

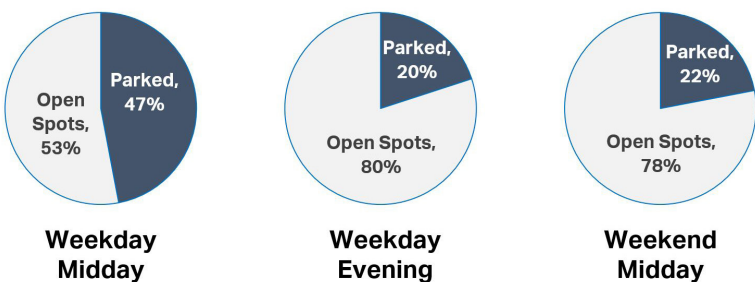
- Caroline Street drainage and reconstruction project between McGowen and Elgin,
- Caydon's "2850" luxury apartment tower at 2850 Fannin between Drew & Tuam, and
- 216-unit apartment midrise at 1300 Webster between Austin and Crawford.

Figure 2. Maximum Utilization of Study Area On-Street Parking by Time of Day



Parking use along Austin Street was similar to parking across the broader study area. Parking use was greatest during weekday middays, with just under half (47% Tuesday and 39% Thursday) of Austin Street spots in use. During weekday evenings and weekend middays, parking use along Austin Street was lower than across the broader study area. As summarized in **Figure 3** below, only one fifth of parking on Austin Street was utilized during evenings and weekends (20% Tuesday evening, 19% Thursday evening, 19% Saturday midday, and 22% Sunday midday).

Figure 3. Maximum Utilization of Austin Street Parking by Time of Day



The photos below show existing conditions in the study area during the timeframe of the study.

Figure 4 shows the 2850 Fannin apartment tower, one of several new buildings under construction nearby. The figure also shows vehicles parked along La Branch Street, just south of new mid-rise apartments under construction at 1300 Webster.

Figure 5 shows closures for street construction within the study area, including Caroline Street and Elgin Street. Both of these projects appeared to be associated with clusters of vehicles parked nearby.

Figure 6 shows locations where existing on-street parking was temporarily unavailable during the timeframe of the parking study, including Austin Street between Elgin Street and Rosalie Street, and along Dennis Street between Austin Street and Caroline Street. These locations were not counted as available parking capacity.

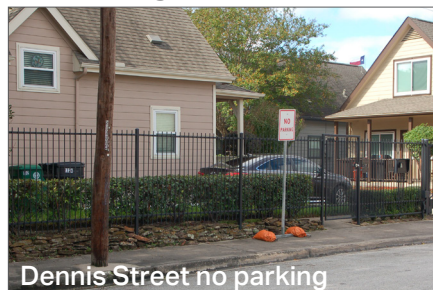
Figure 4. Some Weekday Parking is Clustered Near Construction Sites for New Buildings



Figure 5. Temporary Street Construction with Worker Vehicles Clustered Nearby



Figure 6. Some Existing On-Street Parking is Closed Temporarily for Street Construction



Capacity to Absorb Parking from Austin Street

The addition of a high-comfort bikeway on Austin Street may prompt removal of existing on-street parking. The team counted vehicles parked on Austin Street, and assessed availability of alternate on-street parking on adjacent streets nearby.

During all time periods, there were sufficient empty parking spots available along each side of Austin Street to absorb all vehicles from the other side of the street. Additionally, there were sufficient available spots nearby in the study area nearby to absorb all vehicles from both sides of Austin Street (Table 2).

Table 2. Capacity to Absorb Parking from Austin Street by Time of Day

	Weekday midday	Weekday evening	Weekend midday
Study area (447 parking spots)			
Study area max parked	217	132	134
Study area max utilization	49%	30%	30%
Study area empty spots	230	315	313
Austin Street (121 parking spots; 27% of study area parking)			
Austin Street max parked	57	24	27
Austin Street max utilization	47%	20%	22%
Austin Street west side (60 parking spots; 13% of study area parking)			
Austin Street west max parked	33	13	13
Austin Street west max utilization	55%	22%	22%
Austin Street east side (61 parking spots; 14% of study area parking)			
Austin Street east max parked	24	12	14
Austin Street east max utilization	40%	20%	23%

Conclusion

The study area has sufficient on-street parking to absorb any changes to parking availability on Austin Street that would result from implementation of a protected bikeway. Key observations of this study included:

- At peak parking times (midday weekday), at most half (49%) of available on-street parking was utilized in the study area, and only half (47%) of available spaces along Austin Street were utilized.
- Some parking utilization during the weekday peak was caused by temporary workers clustered near sites for new buildings under construction near the study area.
- Some existing on-street parking was temporarily unavailable due to street construction.