CITY OF DAHLONEGA
Parking Workshop Agenda

December 08, 2025, 5:00 PM

Gary McCullough Council Chambers, Dahlonega City Hall

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, those requiring accommodation for Council meetings should notify the City Clerk's Office at least 24 hours prior to the meeting at 706-864-6133.

Vision – Dahlonega will be the most welcoming, thriving, and inspiring community in North Georgia

Mission Statement - Dahlonega, a City of Excellence, will provide quality services through ethical leadership and fiscal stability, in full partnership with the people who choose to live, work, and visit. Through this commitment, we respect and uphold our rural Appalachian setting to honor our thriving community of historical significance, academic excellence, and military renown.

CALL TO ORDER

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

PRESENTATIONS

1. 2025 Parking Study Recommendations
   Allison Martin, City Manager

ADJOURNMENT

Guideline Principles - The City of Dahlonega will be an open, honest, and responsive city that balances preservation and growth and delivers quality services fairly and equitably by being good stewards of its resources. To ensure the vibrancy of our community, Dahlonega commits to Transparency and Honesty, Dedication and Responsibility, Preservation and Sustainability, Safety and Welfare …for ALL!

2025 Parking Study Update Workshop

December 8, 2025

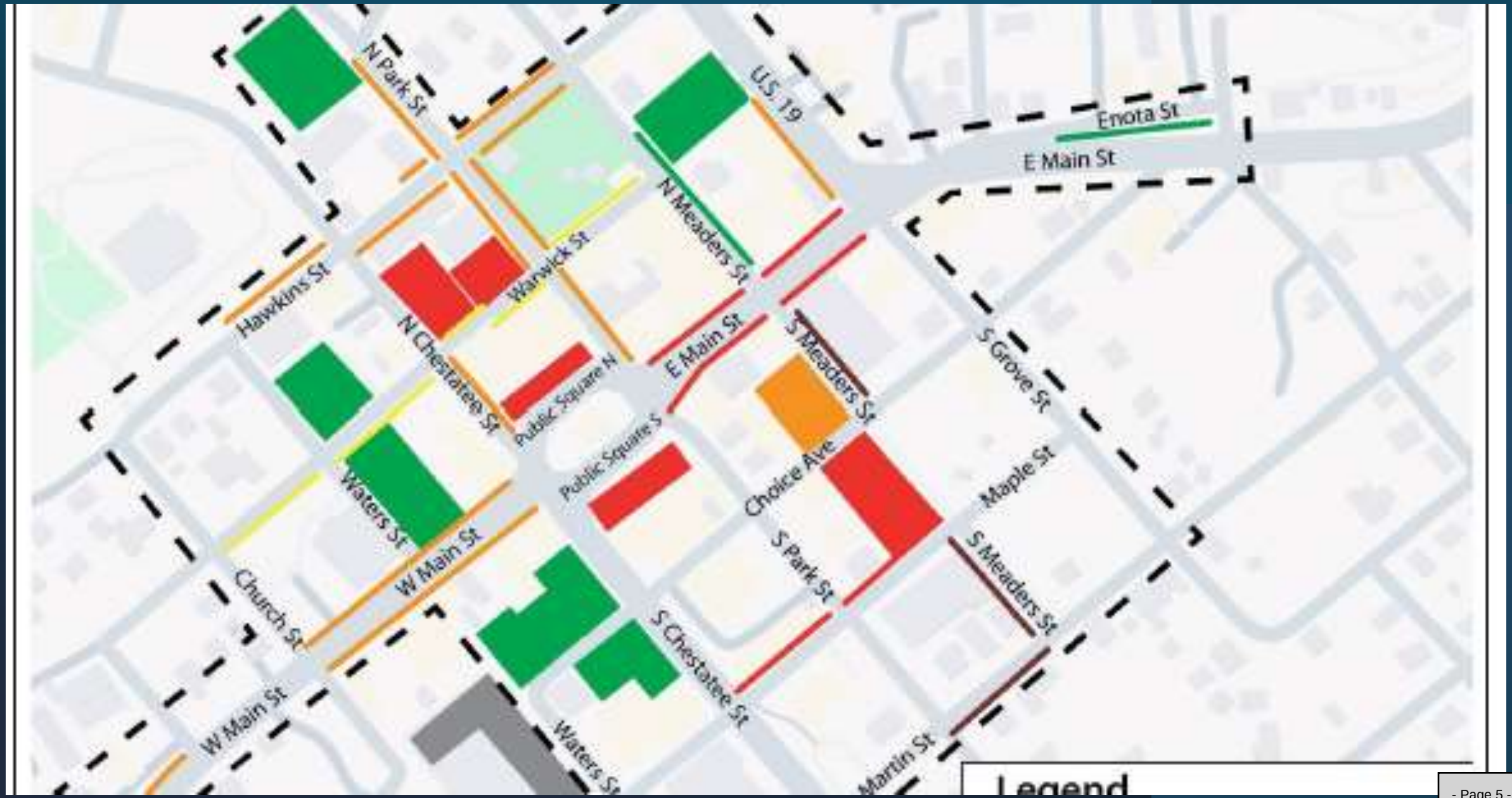
Prior Work

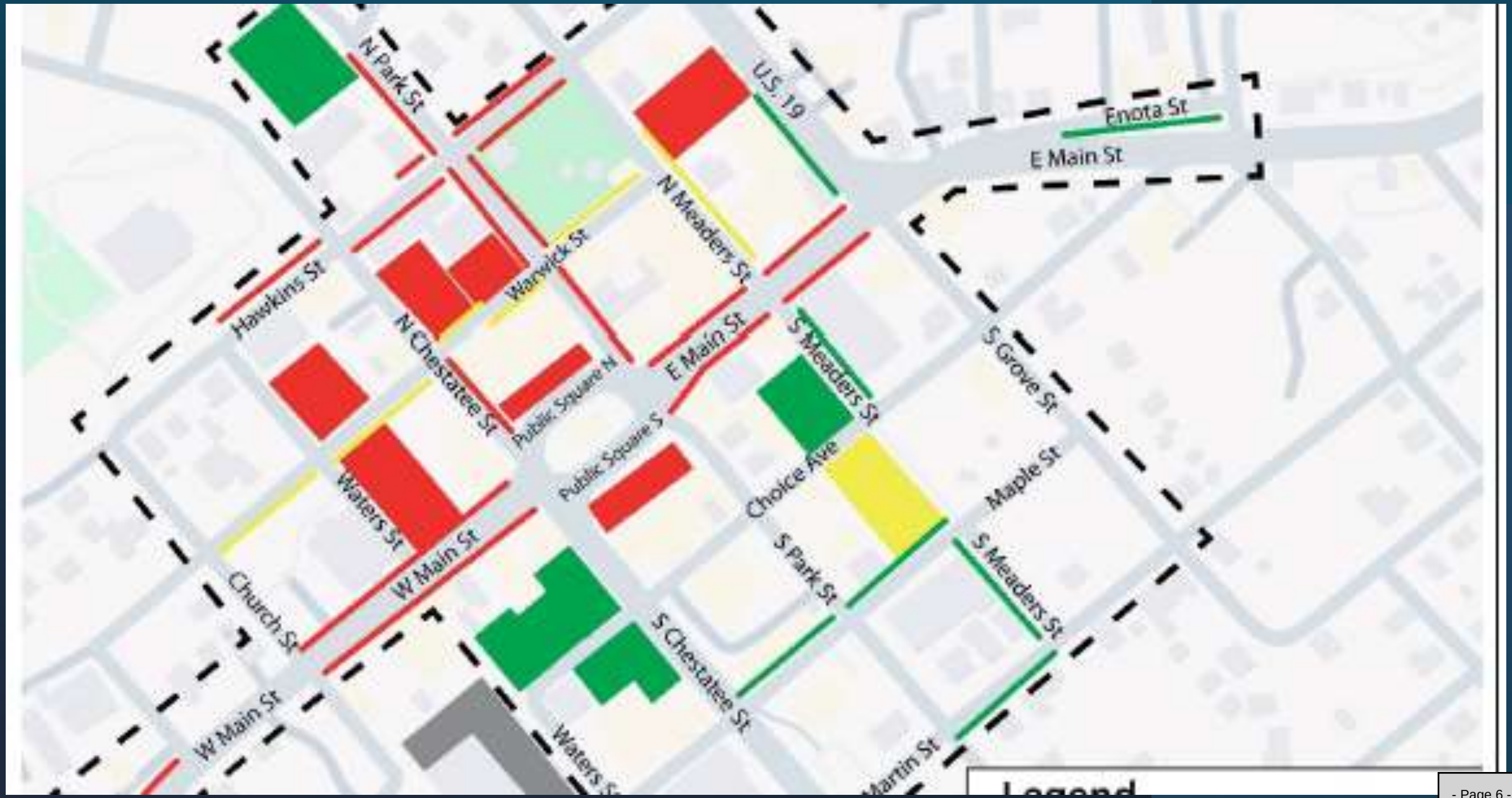
- 2010 Parking Study
  - Recommended full and part-time staff, 147 N Park St. lot, place parking meters in all recommended locations, promote parking system
- 2016 Memorandum regarding parking software
  - Paid parking model
  - Use of 3rd party software to manage
- 2016 Special Event Addendum to 2010 study
  - Use 3rd party to manage
  - Use 3rd party to run shuttle service
  - Improvements to city lots recommended
- 2025 Parking Study Update

THA Consulting performed all work

Figure 1: Dahlonega Study Area

Source: THA Consulting, Inc., 2025


N Park St
U.S. 19
Enota St
E Main St
N Meaders St
Warwick St
Hawkins St
N Chestatee St
Public Square N
E Main St
S Meaders St
S Grove St
Public Square S
Choice Ave
Maple St
Waters St
W Main St
S Park St
S Meaders St
Church St
S Chestatee St
W Main St
Waters St
Martin St
Legend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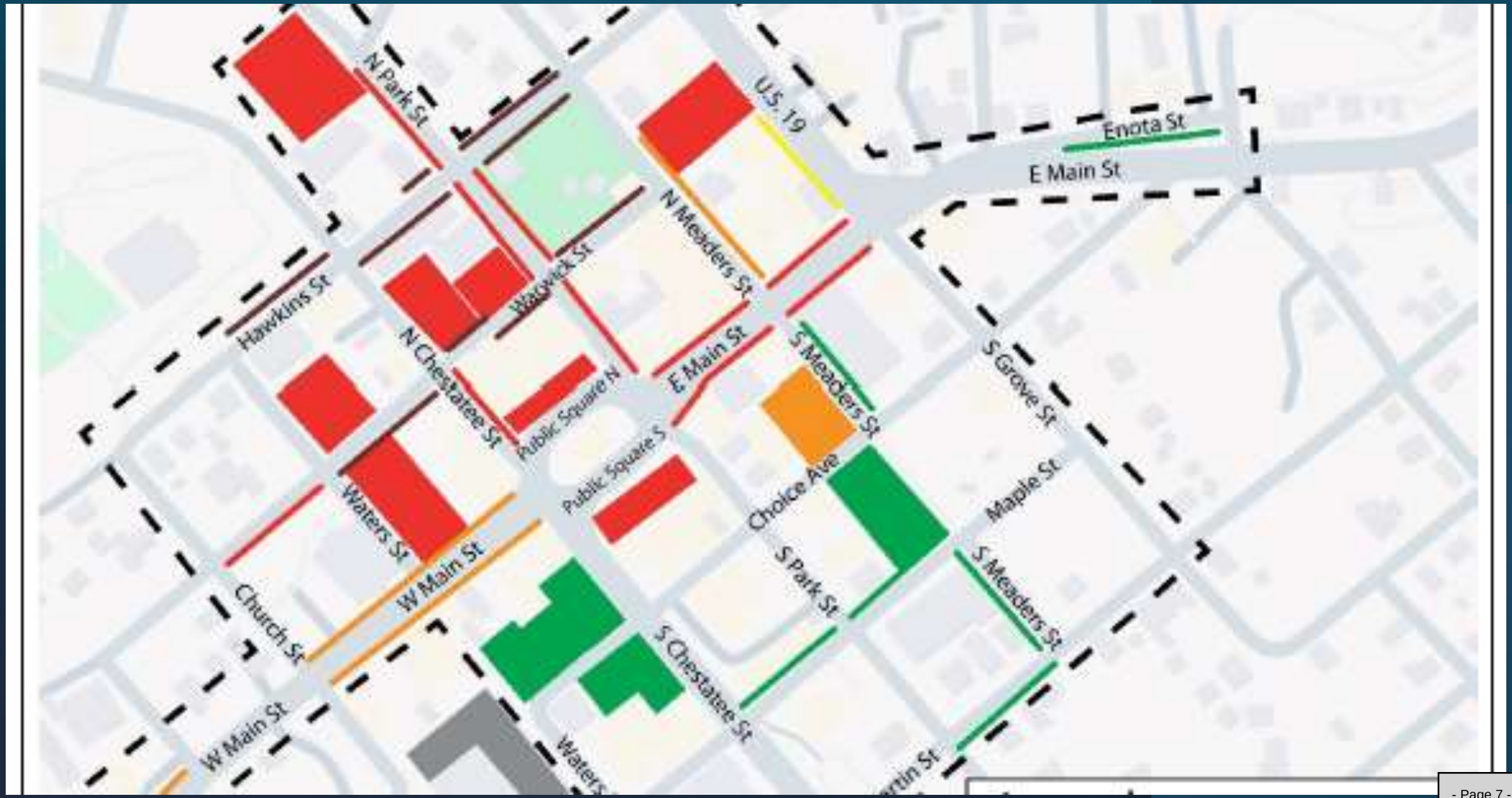
Martin St
Legend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Warwick St
N Chestatee St
Public Square N
E Main St
S Meaders St
S Grove St
Public Square S
Choice Ave
Maple St
Waters St
W Main St
S Park St
S Meaders St
Church St
S Chestatee St
W Main St

Study Recommendations

- Enhance parking management: rates, staff, technology
- Expand 3-hour parking
- Stripe remaining unstriped streets, upgraded way-finding, and color- coded curbs
- Engage private lot owners to lease space
- Develop special event parking plan w/maps, shuttles, communications plan
- Enhanced lighting
- Fee parking
- New parking facility

Parking Committee Recommendations/Thoughts

- New parking deck/facility
- More cohesive and direct signage
- Dahlonega has a walkability and convenience problem, not a parking problem
- Add larger parking symbols like the ones referenced in the study to existing wayfinding signage. – In process
- Parking A-frames were requested to be put out for the Christmas season
- Rec. Deck entrance on South Chestatee Street needs enhancement – street paint/Monument sign
- Beautification projects for Warwick Street: “Gateway to the Square” entrance at the Fred Jones Building
- Enhance lighting at outer parking lots
- Employee parking program. (It was suggested that it be based on license plates rather than distributing decals.)
- Parking Ambassador monitor lots and report to Chief the problem areas rather than citations
- Mark the lot across the street from Dahlonega Square Hotel as 3-Hour parking to deter overnight parking

Staff Recommendations

- Update ordinances to align with council guidance and study recommendations
- Remove IPS meters due to cost of maintenance
- Look at new technology for parking management of spaces/time
- Explore new parking facility
- At conclusion of transportation work, evaluate street markings
- IGA with UNG for shuttle service
- IGA with County/School System regarding use of municipal lots for festivals/events

Discussion

THA CONSULTING

CITY OF DAHLONEGA

PARKING STUDY UPDATE - DRAFT

DRAFT REPORT

October 24, 2025

Dahlonega, GA

Table of Contents

Introduction and Executive Summary

THA Consulting, Inc. (THA) was retained by the City of Dahlonega ("the City") to conduct an updated assessment of the downtown parking system. This effort updates the original study completed in 2010 and its subsequent update in 2016. The objective of the current study is to identify and evaluate strategies to enhance the overall effectiveness of the parking system.

To undertake the study, THA Consulting, Inc. collected pertinent parking data, policies, ordinances, and related documentation from the City of Dahlonega. THA also participated in a stakeholder meeting with City officials and local stakeholders responsible for overseeing the parking initiative. In collaboration with City representatives, THA facilitated the public meeting on June 18, 2025, engaging local business owners, residents, and stakeholders from Dahlonega to gather relevant insights, perspectives, and recommendations concerning existing parking conditions. Additionally, THA conducted a parking demand analysis, which included cataloging current parking assets and performing occupancy counts and observational surveys over a three-day period from June 19–21, 2025. During this time, THA held individual discussions with the City's Parking Enforcement Officer and interviewed several business owners to understand firsthand experiences and perceptions of the downtown parking environment. This multifaceted approach informed THA's evaluation of the parking inventory, its current utilization, and management practices. The resulting assessment includes targeted recommendations to improve downtown parking conditions and operations, with the overarching goal of achieving the following:

- Identifying the current parking supply and demand within the study area, as well as projecting future additional parking demand from the following:
  - Any new development projects planned or under construction
  - Anticipated "normal" growth of the study area and surrounding region
  - Lease-up of vacant retail or commercials spaces in the study area
- Maximizing the utilization of the existing parking assets in the study area by promoting increased turnover and availability of on-street parking
- Identifying opportunities for improving parking management and operations and evaluating on-street and off-street parking fee opportunities
- Developing the parking management plan that illustrates management needs, enforcement requirements, etc. for helping to improve current parking management policies
- Providing increased accessibility and a higher level of parking patron comfort pertaining to the utilization of off-street facilities with enhanced wayfinding and signage
- Reviewing opportunities for shared parking, improved enforcement, and creating off-street parking areas for long term parkers such as employees

The analysis projects that in the near future, population growth, downtown revitalization, lease-up of vacant commercial properties, and seasonal peak demand will place considerable pressure on the existing supply. Absent strategic intervention, downtown parking resources are expected to exceed capacity during key hours and events.

THA's core recommendations include:

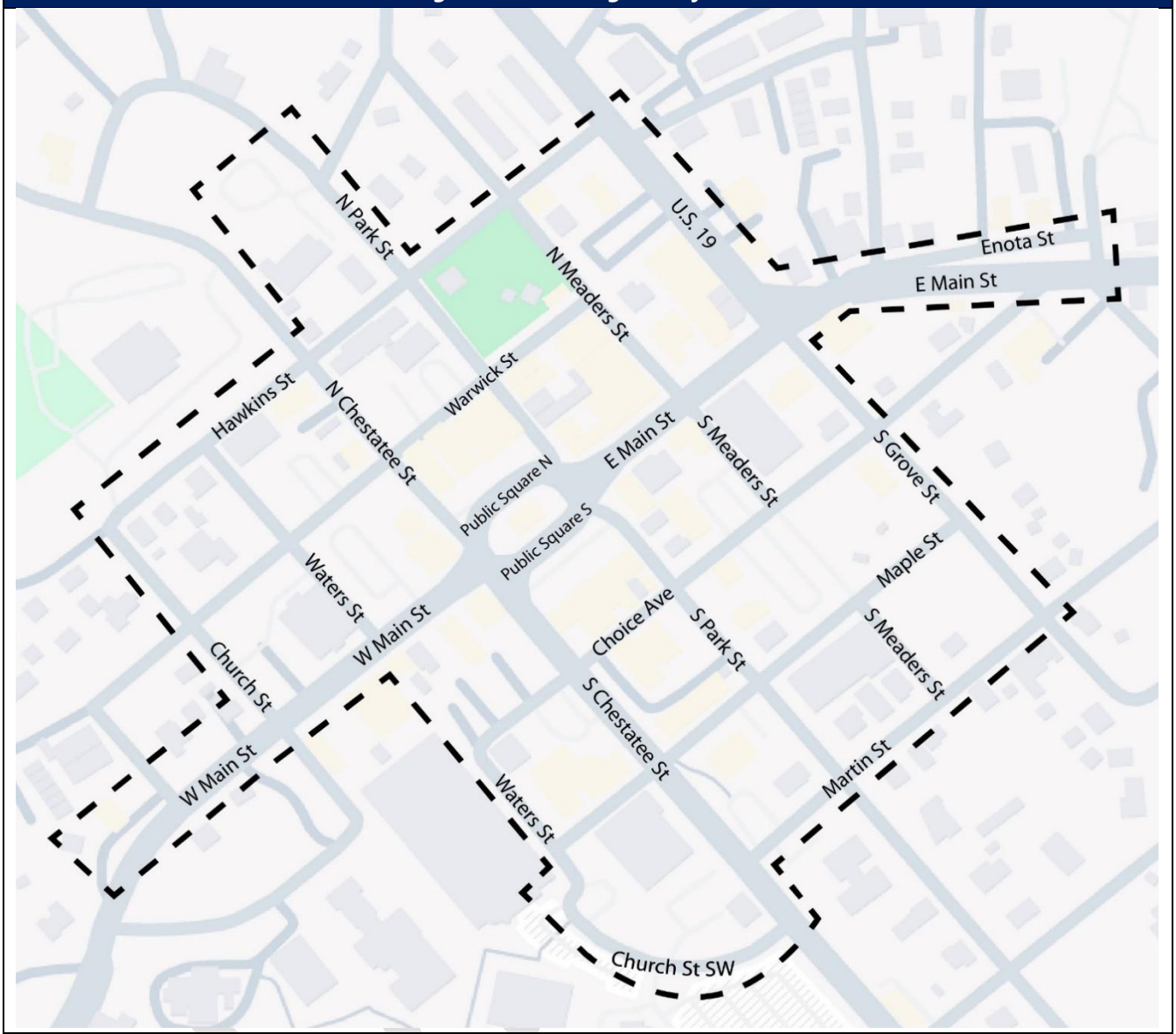
- Parking Management: Create a centralized parking department / division, elevate the Parking Committee to an official entity that meets on a regular basis, and expand the 3-hour time limit to additional streets.
- Parking Enforcement: Hire an additional Parking Enforcement Officer, give warnings to first-time violators, and implement mobile license plate recognition (LPR) to increase efficiency and consistency related to time limit enforcement and promote on-street turnover.
- Asset Optimization: Stripe remaining unstriped streets, upgrade wayfinding signage, and implement color-coded curb striping for parking regulations.
- Shared Use Agreements: Engage private lot owners and the University of North Georgia (UNG) to lease parking spaces for employee use to mitigate employee parking.
- Event Planning & Mobility Enhancements: Develop a Special Event Parking Plan with mapped overflow facilities, event parking public communication, shuttles via services like Circuit, and public-private app-based space rentals.
- Pedestrian Connections and Facility Improvements: improving sidewalk lighting and pedestrian access, and reconfiguring Lot 6 to increase capacity.
- Fee Parking: Consider expanding the on-street fee parking system as a strategy to further redistribute to long-term parkers to off-street locations in the future. If implemented, evaluate the use of mobile pay platforms and multi-space pay stations.
- Funding Mechanisms: Explore the formation of a Community Improvement District (CID) and the use of State of Georgia grants to fund downtown parking enhancements, special event mobility, and long-term infrastructure upgrades.
- New Parking Facility: Based on the site feasibility analysis for a new parking structure included in the report, continue to undertake the necessary planning, financial and property agreements to advance the construction of a new parking facility to support projected parking demand.

THA thanks the City of Dahlonega for providing us with the opportunity to serve the City in this important work and acknowledges the assistance of the City representatives involved in this project. We would like to extend our gratitude to Ms. Allison Martin, City Manager, for providing insight and background information essential to the preparation of this report.

Study Area

THA focused field observations and data collection efforts on the core downtown area immediately surrounding the public square. Our general area of focus was primarily bounded by Hawkins Street, Grove Street, Martin Street, and Church Street, with extensions along North Park Street, West Main Street and Enota Street. **Figure 1** below depicts a map of the focus area for our study.

Figure 1: Dahlonega Study Area



Source: THA Consulting, Inc., 2025

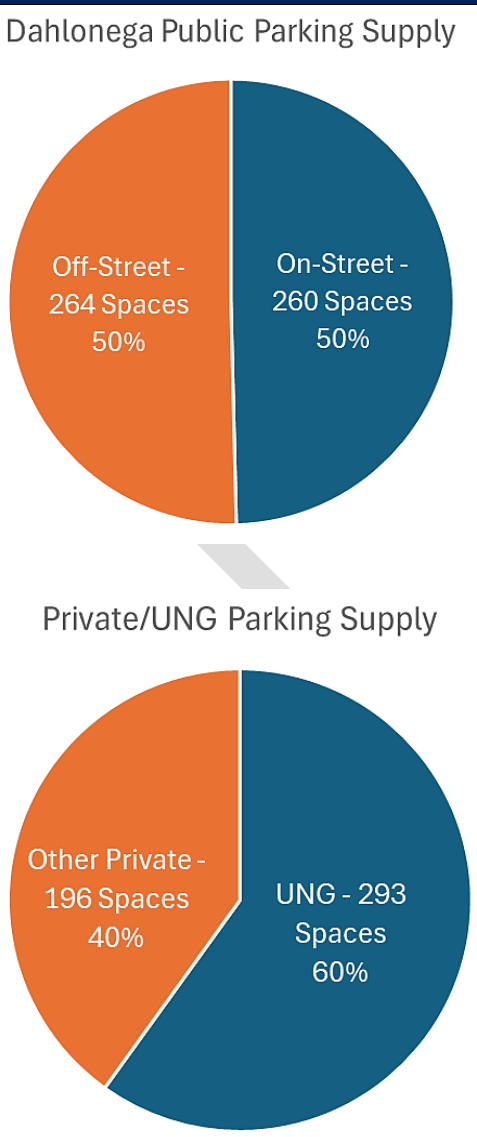
Existing Parking Demand Analysis

Parking Supply

THA conducted a site visit of the study area from Wednesday, June 18, 2025, to Saturday, June 21, 2025, to survey parking facility usage (both on- and off-street). While the focus of the study is the City's public parking resources, THA also surveyed University of Northern Georgia (UNG) parking facilities within the study area that allow for public parking on evenings and weekends, as well as three private parking facilities within the study area that may be suitable for shared parking with the public. **Table 1** summarizes the current parking inventory:

Table 1: Dahlonega Parking Supply

Location	Supply	Time Limits
On-Street		
N Park St	45	15-Minute, 3-Hour
Hawkins St	40	All-Day
Warwick St	21	All-Day
W Main St	27	3-Hour, All-Day
E Main St	41	15-Minute, 3-Hour
Maple St	21	3-Hour, All-Day
Enota St	10	All-Day
N Chestatee St	9	3-Hour
N Meaders St	10	All-Day
S Meaders St	26	3-Hour, All-Day
U.S 19	5	All-Day
Martin St	5	All-Day
On-Street Total	**260**	--
Public Off-Street		
Lot 1	75	3-Hour
Lot 2	27	15-Minute, 3-Hour
Lot 3	15	15-Minute, 3-Hour
Lot 4	50	All-Day
Lot 5	26	All-Day
Lot 6	71	All-Day
Off-Street Total	**264**	--
Total Public	**524**	--
UNG Parking		
Warwick St	17	Evenings & Weekends
19 N Chestatee Lot	44	Evenings & Weekends
87 N Chestatee Lot	32	Evenings & Weekends
Chestatee St Deck	200*	Evenings & Weekends
UNG Total	**293**	--
Private Off-Street		
Choice Ave Lots	69	Private
H&R Block Lot	60	Private
Holiday Inn Garage	67	Private
Private Off-Street Total	**196**	--



Source: THA Consulting, Inc., 2025

**The Chestatee St Deck has 550 total spaces. Since the facility is typically utilized during events, THA assumes that 200 of the spaces would be available to the public.*

As noted in the previous table, the City of Dahlonega currently operates 6 off-street public parking lots with a total capacity of 264 spaces. THA identified approximately 260 on-street parking spaces for a total public parking supply of 524 parking spaces. THA also included UNG facilities within close proximity (300 ft or less) of the Public Square that are open to the public on evenings/weekends, as well as three (3) additional private off-street parking lots that could be optimal for shared parking.

Figure 2: Dahlonega Public Parking Supply

Source: THA Consulting, Inc., 2025

Existing Parking Demand

Parking demand refers to the number of vehicles parked at a given time, while parking occupancy indicates the percentage of available spaces that are in use at that moment. THA Consulting conducted a series of observations and parking counts across the Study Area on Thursday, June 19, 2025 (10:00 AM–8:00 PM), Friday, June 20, 2025 (12:00 PM–8:00 PM), and Saturday, June 21, 2025 (12:00 PM–6:00 PM). It is recognized that demand is typically higher during the spring and fall academic semesters at the University of North Georgia (UNG), and reaches its highest levels during the holiday season, spanning late November through December, so a seasonal demand adjustment was applied in the Existing Parking Adequacy section of the report.

The occupancy analysis encompassed all public parking facilities, the University of North Georgia (UNG) lots and Warwick Street spaces accessible during evenings and weekends, and three private facilities previously identified for evaluation. This inclusive approach enabled an assessment of whether private resources present viable

opportunities for shared use with the City. The UNG Chestatee Street Deck was excluded from the occupancy counts due to minimal observed activity during the summer months; its utility appears to be limited to weekends and special events.

Weekday Parking Demand

Tables 2 and 3 below illustrates the on-street, off-street, and summary parking occupancy in the study area during the weekday counts on Thursday, June 19, 2025, and Friday, June 20, 2025.

Table 2: Study Area Parking Utilization – Thursday, June 19, 2025

Location	Supply	Utilization - Thursday											
		10AM		12PM		2PM		4PM		6PM		8PM	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
On Street													
N Park St	45	20	44%	37	82%	37	82%	27	60%	31	69%	17	38%
Hawkins St	40	13	33%	30	75%	37	93%	26	65%	17	43%	10	25%
Warwick St	21	16	76%	19	90%	18	86%	17	81%	15	71%	11	52%
W Main St	27	11	41%	19	70%	18	67%	14	52%	8	30%	10	37%
E Main St	41	20	49%	37	90%	38	93%	32	78%	25	61%	25	61%
Maple St	21	11	52%	20	95%	9	43%	7	33%	1	5%	1	5%
Enota St	10	4	40%	3	30%	6	60%	5	50%	6	60%	8	80%
N Chestatee St	9	4	44%	7	78%	7	78%	6	67%	5	56%	5	56%
N Meaders St	10	0	0%	1	10%	4	40%	5	50%	2	20%	1	10%
S Meaders St	26	15	58%	27	104%	18	69%	14	54%	2	8%	3	12%
U.S. 19 BUS	5	5	100%	4	80%	5	100%	5	100%	3	60%	1	20%
Martin St	5	4	80%	6	120%	2	40%	3	60%	2	40%	0	0%
On-Street Total	**260**	**123**	**47%**	**210**	**81%**	**199**	**77%**	**161**	**62%**	**117**	**45%**	**92**	**35%**
Public Off-Street													
Lot 1	75	53	71%	75	100%	54	72%	23	31%	18	24%	9	12%
Lot 2	27	25	93%	27	100%	28	104%	27	100%	25	93%	18	67%
Lot 3	15	3	20%	13	87%	15	100%	10	67%	10	67%	10	67%
Lot 4	50	18	36%	46	92%	46	92%	35	70%	27	54%	28	56%
Lot 5	26	10	38%	24	92%	26	100%	21	81%	13	50%	8	31%
Lot 6	71	3	4%	4	6%	12	17%	6	8%	8	11%	6	8%
Public Off-Street Total	**264**	**112**	**42%**	**189**	**72%**	**181**	**69%**	**122**	**46%**	**101**	**38%**	**79**	**30%**
UNG Parking (Available to Public on Evenings-Weekends)													
Warwick St	17	0	0%	3	18%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%
19 N Chestatee Lot	44	2	5%	16	36%	14	32%	13	30%	11	25%	11	25%
87 N Chestatee Lot	32	5	16%	4	13%	15	47%	15	47%	24	75%	29	91%
UNG Parking Total	**93**	**7**	**8%**	**23**	**25%**	**29**	**31%**	**28**	**30%**	**35**	**38%**	**41**	**44%**
Private Off-Street													
Choice Ave Lots	69	14	20%	24	35%	25	36%	14	20%	11	16%	11	16%
Holiday Inn Garage	67	N/A	N/A	54	81%	18	27%	26	39%	34	51%	4	6%
H&R Block Lot	60	15	25%	22	37%	24	40%	20	33%	25	42%	15	25%
Private Off-Street Total	**196**	**29**	**15%**	**100**	**51%**	**67**	**34%**	**60**	**31%**	**70**	**36%**	**30**	**42%**
Grand Total	**813**	**271**	**33%**	**499**	**61%**	**476**	**59%**	**371**	**46%**	**323**	**40%**	**242**	**10%**

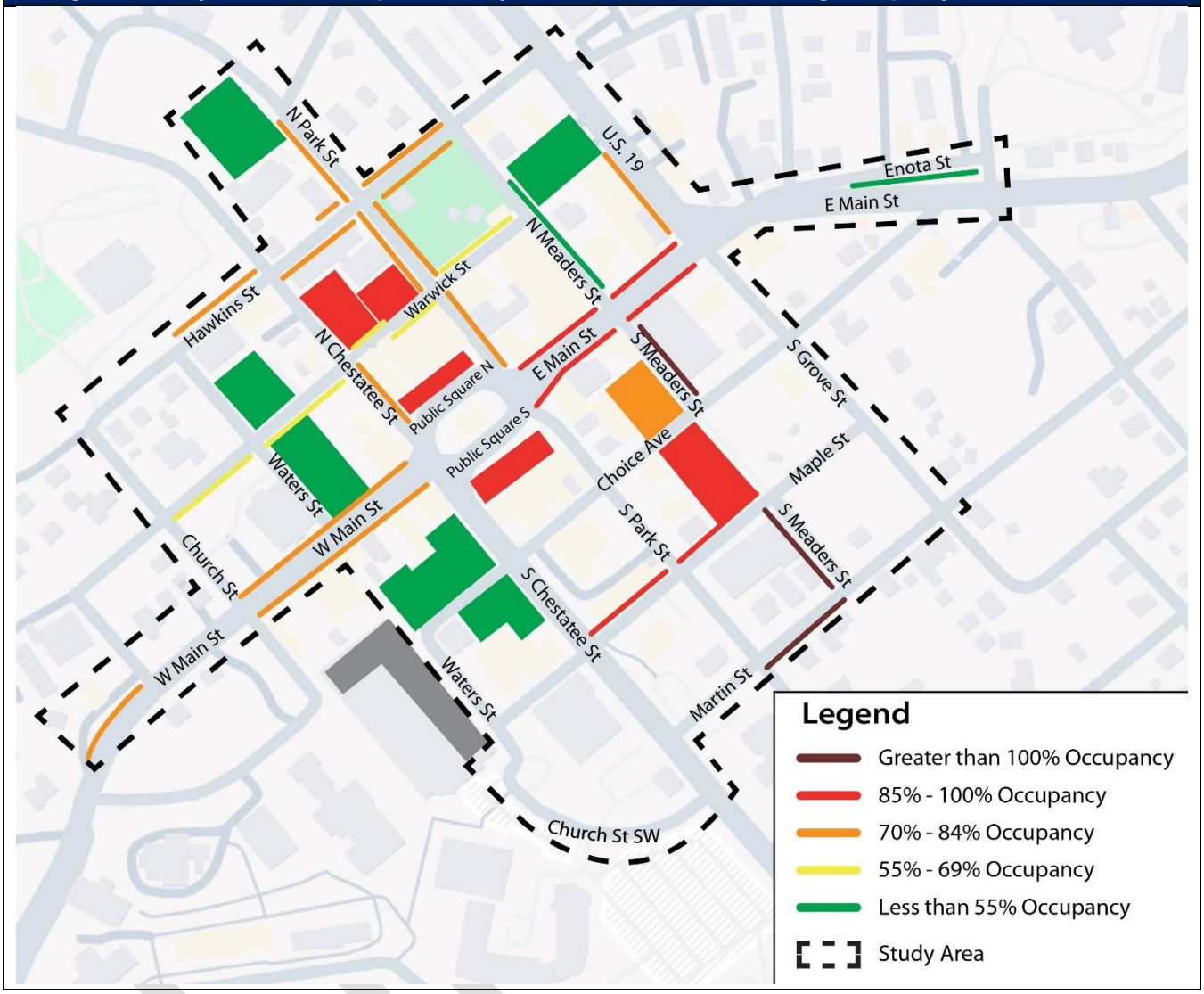
Source: THA Consulting, Inc., 2025

Table 3: Study Area Parking Utilization – Friday, June 20, 2025

Location	Supply	Utilization - Friday									
		12PM		2PM		4PM		6PM		8PM	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
On Street											
N Park St	45	41	91%	36	80%	34	76%	41	91%	26	58%
Hawkins St	40	33	83%	19	48%	26	65%	37	93%	22	55%
Warwick St	21	19	90%	19	90%	20	95%	21	100%	14	67%
W Main St	27	21	78%	17	63%	15	56%	23	85%	23	85%
E Main St	41	35	85%	39	95%	35	85%	36	88%	36	88%
Maple St	21	4	19%	7	33%	2	10%	4	19%	9	43%
Enota St	10	3	30%	4	40%	2	20%	1	10%	1	10%
N Chestatee St	9	8	89%	6	67%	8	89%	8	89%	7	78%
N Meaders St	10	3	30%	3	30%	2	20%	6	60%	6	60%
S Meaders St	26	4	15%	9	35%	4	15%	8	31%	9	35%
U.S. 19 BUS	5	6	120%	4	80%	4	80%	2	40%	1	20%
Martin St	5	4	80%	4	80%	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%
On-Street Total	**260**	**181**	**70%**	**167**	**64%**	**154**	**59%**	**187**	**72%**	**154**	**59%**
Public Off-Street											
Lot 1	75	30	40%	39	52%	26	35%	41	55%	64	85%
Lot 2	27	25	93%	25	93%	24	89%	26	96%	26	96%
Lot 3	15	14	93%	10	67%	13	87%	15	100%	12	80%
Lot 4	50	43	86%	50	100%	42	84%	49	98%	42	84%
Lot 5	26	25	96%	25	96%	23	88%	26	100%	15	58%
Lot 6	71	8	11%	7	10%	7	10%	26	37%	18	25%
Public Off-Street Total	**264**	**145**	**55%**	**156**	**59%**	**135**	**51%**	**183**	**69%**	**177**	**67%**
UNG Parking (Available to Public on Evenings-Weekends)											
Warwick St	17	2	12%	3	18%	1	6%	3	18%	15	88%
19 N Chestatee Lot	44	41	93%	32	73%	25	57%	42	95%	41	93%
87 N Chestatee Lot	32	14	44%	19	59%	16	50%	28	88%	27	84%
UNG Parking Total	**93**	**57**	**61%**	**54**	**58%**	**42**	**45%**	**73**	**78%**	**83**	**89%**
Private Off-Street											
Choice Ave Lots	69	34	49%	27	39%	32	46%	25	36%	30	43%
Holiday Inn Garage	67	22	33%	21	31%	27	40%	35	52%	46	69%
H&R Block Lot	60	32	53%	27	45%	29	48%	49	82%	34	57%
Private Off-Street Total	**196**	**88**	**45%**	**75**	**38%**	**88**	**45%**	**109**	**56%**	**110**	**56%**
Grand Total	**813**	**471**	**58%**	**452**	**56%**	**419**	**52%**	**552**	**68%**	**524**	**64%**

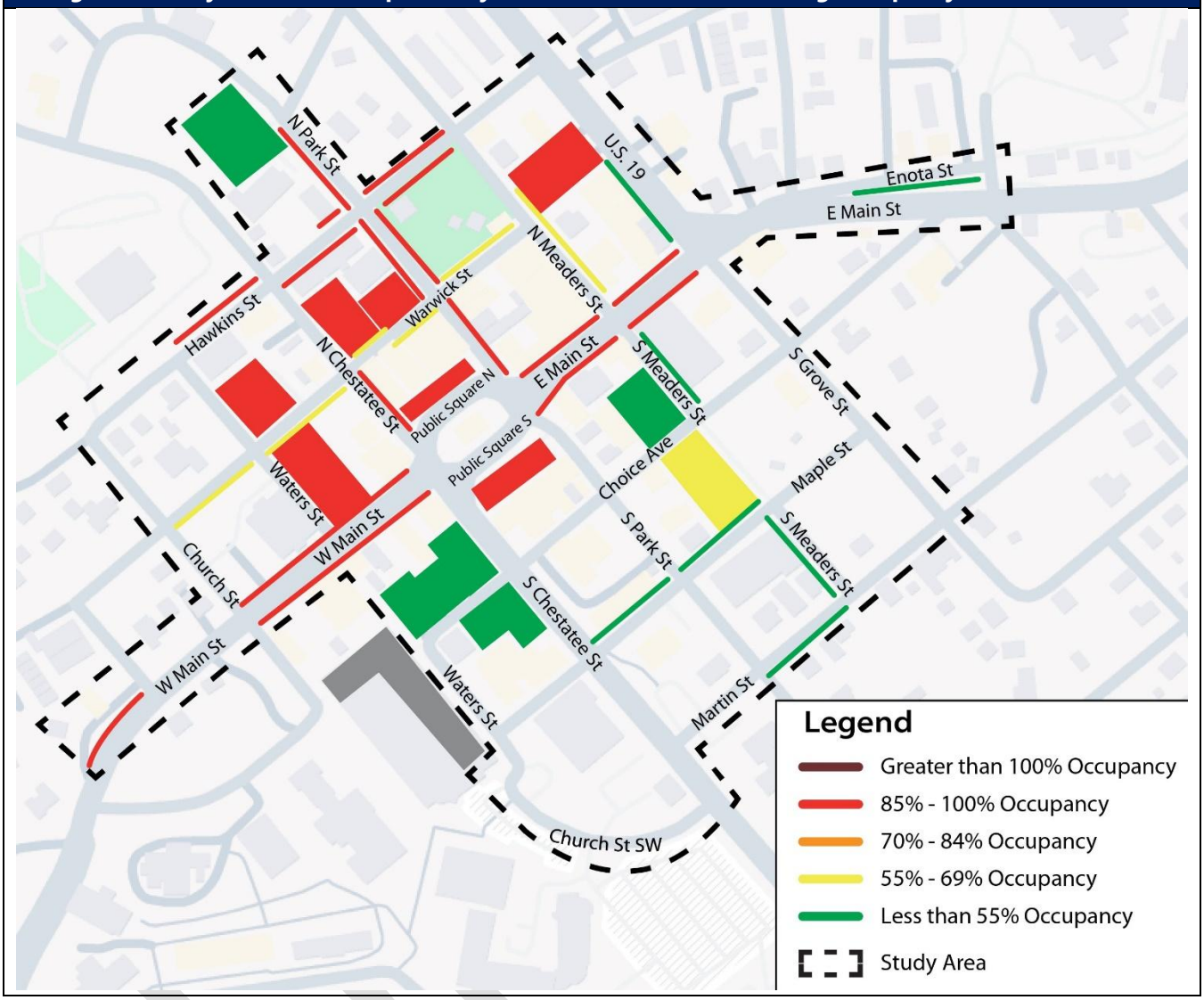
Source: THA Consulting, Inc., 2025

Figure 3: Study Area 'Heat' Map – Thursday, June 19, 2025 – Peak Parking Occupancy Occurred at 12PM



Source: THA Consulting, Inc., 2025

Figure 4: Study Area 'Heat Map' -Friday, June 20, 2025 – Peak Parking Occupancy Occurred at 6PM



Source: THA Consulting, Inc., 2025

Weekday Parking Demand Summary (June 19-20, 2025)

The overall weekday public peak parking occupancy including on-street and off-street was 552 spaces or 68% occupancy, which occurred on Friday at 6PM, as illustrated in Figure 4 above.

On-Street

- **During the weekday counts of this area (Thursday-Friday), the peak on-street parking occupancy was 210 spaces or 81% occupancy, which occurred on Thursday at 12PM.**
- North Park Street, Hawkins Street, West Main Street, East Main Street, and North Chestatee Street were at least 85% occupied at 6pm Friday.
- North Park Street, Hawkins Street and Warwick Street decreased in demand from 6pm to 8pm Friday, reducing from more than 90% occupancy to less than 70% occupancy.

- South Meaders Street and Martin Street exceeded capacity at 12PM on Thursday and US 19 exceeded capacity at 12PM on Friday.
- North Meaders Street did not exceed 58% occupancy at any time.

Public Off-Street

- **During the weekday counts of this area (Thursday-Friday), the peak public off-street parking occupancy was 189 spaces or 72% occupancy, which occurred on Thursday at 12PM.**
- Lot 2 was at least 67% occupied all day Thursday and exceeded capacity at 2PM.
- Both Lot 2 and Lot 4 were at least 84% occupied all day Friday.
- Lots 3 and 5 were at least 58% occupied all day Friday.
- Lot 6 did not exceed 50% occupancy at any time.

UNG Parking

- **During the weekday counts of this area (Thursday-Friday), the peak UNG off-street parking occupancy was 83 spaces or 89% occupancy, which occurred on Friday at 8PM.**
- 19 N. Chestatee Lot and Warwick Street did not exceed 36% occupancy on Thursday.
- 19 N. Chestatee Lot was at least 57% occupied Friday.

Private Off-Street

- **During the weekday counts of this area (Thursday-Friday), the peak private off-street parking occupancy was 109 spaces or 56% occupancy, which occurred on Friday at 6PM.**
- The Choice Ave Lots and the H&R Block lot did not exceed 40% occupancy at any time on Thursday.
- The Choice Ave Lots did not exceed 50% occupancy at any time on Friday.

Key Observations:

- South Meaders Street between Maple Street and Martin Street spaces are signed as Permit Only Monday-Friday and leased by the Methodist Church. This street, as well as Martin Street and the grass lot along Maple Street, were fully occupied by parkers for a church event on Thursday. However, these spaces were unoccupied on Friday and Saturday.
- Metered streets (North Meaders Street, South Meaders Street, Maple Street) were the last streets to reach capacity.
- Cars on Warwick Street and Hawkins Street were parked all day on Thursday.
- The law enforcement vehicle space on East Main St next to traffic circle consistently unoccupied Thursday-Friday.

Weekend Parking Demand

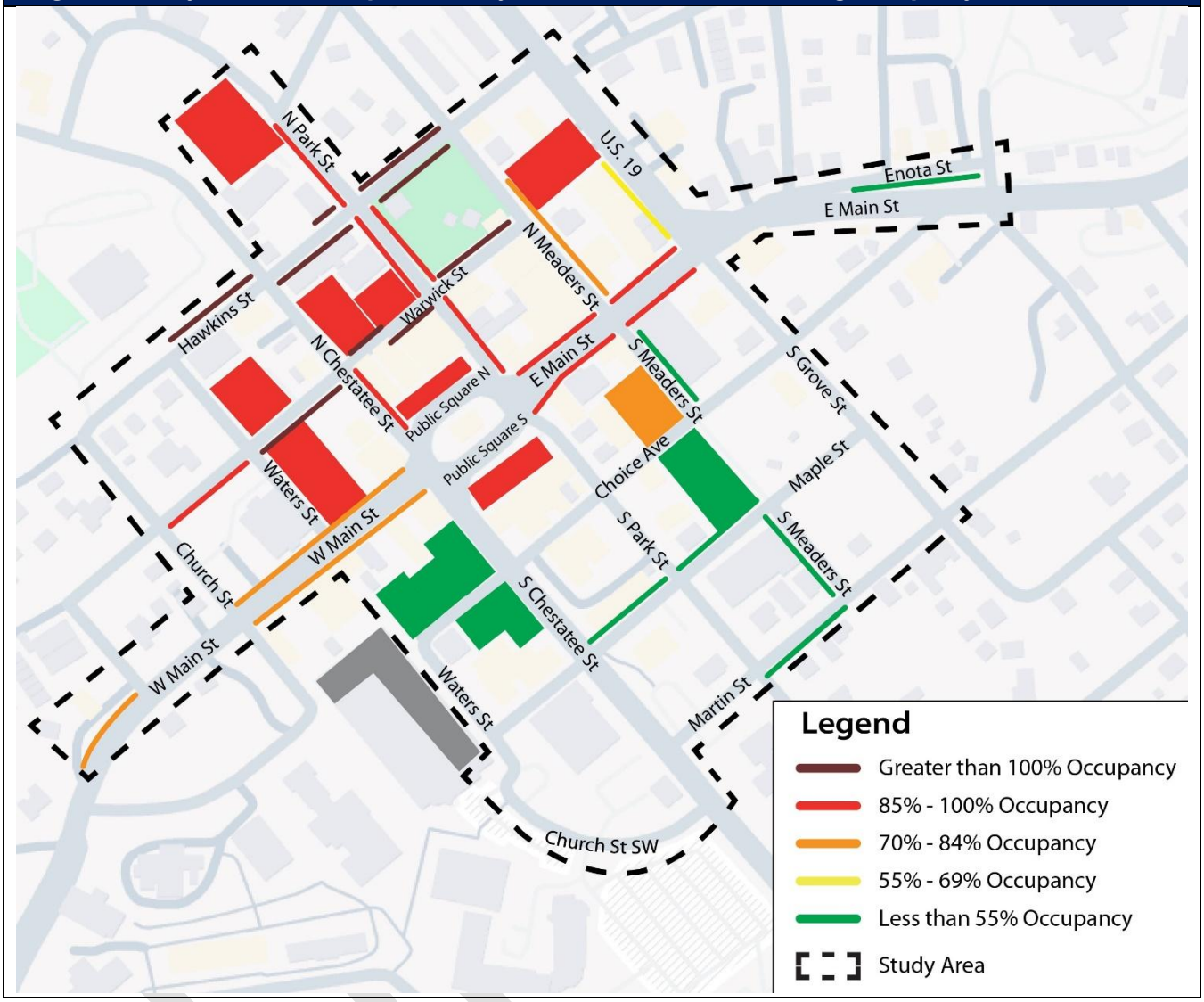
Table 4 below illustrates the on-street, off-street, and summary parking occupancy in the study area during the weekend counts on Saturday, June 21, 2025.

Table 4: Study Area Parking Utilization – Saturday, June 21, 2025

Location	Supply	Utilization - Saturday							
		12PM		2PM		4PM		6PM	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
On Street									
N Park St	45	42	93%	45	100%	44	98%	41	91%
Hawkins St	40	31	78%	34	85%	42	105%	42	105%
Warwick St	21	14	67%	22	105%	23	110%	23	110%
W Main St	27	22	81%	19	70%	17	63%	21	78%
E Main St	41	38	93%	38	93%	36	88%	39	95%
Maple St	21	4	19%	10	48%	7	33%	1	5%
Enota St	10	7	70%	3	30%	0	0%	1	10%
N Chestatee St	9	8	89%	8	89%	9	100%	9	100%
N Meaders St	10	9	90%	8	80%	5	50%	7	70%
S Meaders St	26	11	42%	12	46%	9	35%	9	35%
U.S. 19 BUS	5	5	100%	3	60%	2	40%	3	60%
Martin St	5	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
On-Street Total	**260**	**191**	**73%**	**202**	**78%**	**194**	**75%**	**196**	**75%**
Public Off-Street									
Lot 1	75	74	99%	70	93%	53	71%	38	51%
Lot 2	27	26	96%	27	100%	27	100%	25	93%
Lot 3	15	15	100%	13	87%	14	93%	13	87%
Lot 4	50	49	98%	50	100%	46	92%	48	96%
Lot 5	26	N/A	N/A	23	88%	24	92%	25	96%
Lot 6	71	28	39%	32	45%	40	56%	71	100%
Public Off-Street Total	**264**	**192**	**73%**	**215**	**81%**	**204**	**77%**	**220**	**83%**
UNG Parking (Available to Public on Evenings-Weekends)									
Warwick St	17	0	0%	9	53%	9	53%	12	71%
19 N Chestatee Lot	44	38	86%	44	100%	40	91%	44	100%
87 N Chestatee Lot	32	22	69%	31	97%	33	103%	32	100%
UNG Parking Total	**93**	**60**	**65%**	**84**	**90%**	**82**	**88%**	**88**	**95%**
Private Off-Street									
Choice Ave Lots	69	32	46%	45	65%	38	55%	36	52%
Holiday Inn Garage	67	43	64%	33	49%	38	57%	48	72%
H&R Block Lot	60	42	70%	42	70%	42	70%	51	85%
Private Off-Street Total	**196**	**117**	**60%**	**120**	**61%**	**118**	**60%**	**135**	**69%**
Grand Total	**813**	**560**	**69%**	**621**	**76%**	**598**	**74%**	**639**	**79%**

Source: THA Consulting, Inc., 2025

Figure 5: Study Area 'Heat Map' - Saturday, June 21, 2025 – Peak Parking Occupancy Occurred at 6PM



Source: THA Consulting, Inc., 2025

Weekend Parking Demand Summary

The overall weekend peak parking occupancy was 639 spaces or 79% occupancy, which occurred on Saturday at 6PM, as illustrated in Figure 5 above.

On-Street

- **During the weekend count of this area (Saturday), the peak on-street parking occupancy was 202 spaces or 78% occupancy, which occurred at 2PM.**
- North Park Street, East Main Street, and North Chestatee Street were at least 88% occupied at all times.
- Maple Street, South Meaders Street, and Martin Street did not exceed 50% occupancy.
- Warwick Street exceeded capacity from 2PM to 6PM on Saturday.
- No cars were parked on Martin Street on Saturday.

Public Off-Street

- **During the weekend count of this area (Saturday), the peak public off-street parking occupancy was 220 spaces or 83% occupancy, which occurred at 6PM.**
- Lot 2, Lot 3, Lot 4, Lot 5 were at least 85% occupied at all times on Saturday.

UNG Off-Street

- **During the weekend count of this area (Saturday), the peak UNG off-street parking occupancy was 88 spaces or 95% occupancy, which occurred at 6PM.**
- 19 N. Chestatee Lot was at least 86% occupied all day Saturday.
- 87 N. Chestatee Lot exceeded capacity at 4PM on Saturday.

Private Off-Street

- **During the weekend count of this area (Saturday), the peak private off-street parking occupancy was 135 spaces or 69% occupancy, which occurred at 6PM.**
- The H&R Block Lot was at least 70% occupied all day Saturday.

Key Observations:

- Lot 6 reached full capacity in the evening due to an event, with several cars parking in the unpaved / grass area.
- Parking spaces could be restriped on North Park and Hawkins Street to accommodate more parking spaces. These areas were parked beyond the amount of spaces currently striped.

Existing Parking Adequacy

Effective Parking Supply Reduction

In evaluating future parking adequacy, it is important to account for the concept of "effective" parking supply—a calibrated measure that reflects real-world conditions affecting availability. This adjustment recognizes that certain factors, such as mis-parked vehicles, ongoing construction, navigation challenges, and the continuous circulation of vehicles, can reduce the practical supply of parking spaces. Industry standards suggest that optimal functionality occurs when occupancy remains below 95%; once that threshold is exceeded, drivers often encounter difficulty locating spaces, resulting in frustration and a perception of scarcity, even if some spaces remain technically available. To reflect these operational dynamics within the study area, a 5% reduction factor was applied to all on- and off-street public parking spaces, yielding an effective supply of 514 spaces—27 fewer than the total available inventory.

Seasonal Adjustment

Due to the timing of the parking study, THA Consulting conducted parking occupancy counts between June 19 and 21—a period that does not align with the region's peak visitor activity. Based on conversations with local business owners and employees, it was determined that demand is typically higher during the spring and fall academic semesters at the University of North Georgia (UNG), and reaches its highest levels during the holiday season, spanning late November through December. To more accurately reflect these peak conditions, THA applied a **5%** upward adjustment to the June demand figures. This calibration resulted in projected increases of 20 spaces for weekday peak demand, 22 spaces for weekday evening peak demand, and 25 spaces for weekend peak demand.

Existing Parking Adequacy Summary

As noted earlier, the occupancy data was collected in June—a period that does not reflect peak parking demand due to the absence of University of North Georgia (UNG) students. Based on academic calendar trends, increased parking activity is anticipated during the spring and fall semesters. In evaluating current weekday parking adequacy, only publicly accessible parking spaces were considered. For weekday evenings (after 6:00 PM) and weekends, the analysis incorporated both public parking and UNG lots, as these facilities are available to the public during those times. To better capture operational realities, the study applied a 5% reduction to account for effective supply constraints, along with a 5% seasonal adjustment to reflect higher anticipated demand across all three observed periods.

Weekday

On-Street Parking

- 95% effective parking supply ratio (247 parking spaces).
- Peak on-street parking occupancy: 210 spaces
- Seasonal adjustment of 5% (11 parking spaces).
- **Surplus of 27 spaces during peak utilization at 12PM.**

Off-Street Parking

- 95% effective parking supply ratio (251 parking spaces).
- Peak off-street parking occupancy: 189 spaces
- Seasonal adjustment of 5% (9 parking spaces).
- **Surplus of 52 spaces during peak utilization at 12PM.**

Table 5 below illustrates the parking adequacy during the overall weekday peak, Thursday 12PM:

Table 5: Parking Adequacy During Overall Weekday Peak (Thursday 12PM)					
	Existing Supply	**Effective Supply (5% Reduction)**	**Existing Demand**	**Seasonal Demand Adjustment (5% Increase)**	**Existing Adequacy**
On-Street	260	247	210	221	27
Off-Street	264	251	189	198	52
Total	**524**	**498**	**399**	**419**	**79**

Source: THA Consulting, Inc., 2025

While this is a notable surplus, the supply includes the 71 spaces in Lot 6, which is the currently observed capacity. This lot is the last publicly available facility to be significantly utilized by the public due to its location on a hill farther away from the Public Square than other lots. Without this facility, the current parking surplus is 21 spaces during weekdays, which is not significant considering the potential for growth in the study area.

Weekday Evening

On-Street Parking

- 95% effective parking supply ratio (247 parking spaces).
- Peak on-street parking occupancy: 187 spaces
- Seasonal adjustment of 5% (9 parking spaces).
- **Surplus of 51 spaces during peak utilization at 6PM.**

Off-Street Parking

- 95% effective parking supply ratio (251 parking spaces).
- Peak off-street parking occupancy: 183 spaces
- Seasonal adjustment of 5% (9 parking spaces).
- **Surplus of 59 spaces during peak utilization at 6PM.**

UNG Parking

- 95% effective parking supply ratio (88 parking spaces).
- Peak off-street parking occupancy: 73 spaces
- Seasonal adjustment of 5% (4 parking spaces).
- **Surplus of 12 spaces during peak utilization at 6PM.**

Table 6 below illustrates the parking adequacy during the overall weeknight peak, Friday 6PM:

Table 6: Parking Adequacy During Overall Weekday Evening Peak (Friday 6PM)					
	Existing Supply	**Effective Supply (5% Reduction)**	**Existing Demand**	**Seasonal Demand Adjustment (5% Increase)**	**Existing Adequacy**
On-Street	260	247	187	196	51
Off-Street	264	251	183	192	59
UNG Parking	93	88	73	77	12
Total	**617**	**586**	**443**	**465**	**121**

As previously stated, much of the potential parking surplus above is represented by the 71 spaces identified in Lot 6. Additionally, a large portion of the demand observed at 6pm Friday was parked in the UNG Lots, which may have more limited availability during the semesters for public parking.

Weekend

On-Street Parking

- 95% effective parking supply ratio (247 parking spaces).
- Peak on-street parking occupancy: 196 spaces
- Seasonal adjustment of 5% (10 parking spaces).
- **Surplus of 41 spaces during peak utilization at 2PM.**

Off-Street Parking

- 95% effective parking supply ratio (251 parking spaces).
- Peak off-street parking occupancy: 220 spaces
- Seasonal adjustment of 5% (11 parking spaces).
- **Surplus of 20 spaces during peak utilization at 6PM.**

UNG Parking

- 95% effective parking supply ratio (88 parking spaces).
- Peak off-street parking occupancy: 88 spaces
- Seasonal adjustment of 5% (4 parking spaces).
- **Deficit of 4 spaces during peak utilization at 6PM.**

Table 7 below illustrates the parking adequacy during the overall weekend peak, Saturday 6PM:

Table 7: Parking Adequacy During Overall Weekend Peak (Saturday 6PM)

	Existing Supply	Effective Supply (5% Reduction)	Existing Demand	Seasonal Demand Adjustment (5% Increase)	Existing Adequacy
On-Street	260	247	196	206	41
Off-Street	264	251	220	231	20
UNG Parking	93	88	88	92	(4)
Total	**617**	**586**	**504**	**529**	**57**

Source: THA Consulting, Inc., 2025

As with the weekday evening adequacy, the weekend parking surplus of 57 is largely dependent upon the availability of Lot 6 and the extent to which a downtown event is taking place. If a significant event is taking place, the parking surplus may be reduced or eliminated.

Overall, it was observed and projected that while there is parking availability in peripheral on-street and off-street areas during weekdays, all of the publicly available parking resources reach capacity during weekends and events. The ability of the City to account for weekend and event demand largely depends on whether the parking supply in Lot 6 can be maximized, and whether additional areas such as UNG Lots and private lots can be shared with employees and during events.

Future Parking Demand Analysis

The intent of THA's Future Parking Demand Analysis is to project future parking demand to determine the extent to which there will be adequate parking resources or an anticipated deficit. To project future parking adequacy in the study area over the next 5 years, THA projected the following future growth scenarios:

1. Parking demand from potential development projects in or immediately adjacent to the Study Area
2. Parking demand from anticipated normal population growth in Dahlonega and Lumpkin County
3. Parking demand from Lease Up of Vacant Commercial Properties in the Study Area

Development Growth

Development projects with residential and commercial projects can have a major impact on parking demand in the surrounding area. While no major developments are planned in Dahlonega at this time, the City identified the property located at 125 E. Main Street, currently a vacant storefront featuring a loading dock and a modest rear parking area, as a potential site for residential or mixed-use redevelopment. This assessment considers that any prospective development will comply with current zoning regulations and satisfy parking requirements according to relevant standards. Despite this, the site's proximity to the Public Square suggests it may contribute to increased traffic and vehicular presence downtown. As a result, higher utilization of public parking resources is anticipated, particularly along nearby on-street spaces. Since there is not a proposed plan for a project here in place, any anticipated growth from the project is factored into the Normal Growth section of the future demand analysis.

Normal Growth

To determine the increase in parking demand from changes in population growth and increased economic activity in the study and surrounding areas, THA used study area census tract data to assess anticipated population growth in Lumpkin County and the City of Dahlonega.

- From 2019 to 2023, the population of Lumpkin County increased at an average rate of 1.2% annually.
- From 2019 to 2023, the population of Dahlonega increased by an average rate of 1.7% annually, and 6.8% overall.

Table 8: Population Trends from 2019 to 2023

Year	Lumpkin County		City of Dahlonega	
	Total	Change %	Total	Change %
2019	32,402		6,773	
2020	33,009	2%	7,004	3%
2021	33,188	1%	6,471	-8%
2022	33,405	1%	7,083	9%
2023	33,931	2%	7,194	2%
5 Year Annual Avg Change (2019-2023)		**1.2%**		**1.7%**
Cumulative 5-Year Change		**4.6%**		**6.8%**

Source: US Census, ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates 5-Year Estimates, Table DP05 2019-2023

To estimate the increase in parking demand from changes in future population growth and increased economic activity in the study area, we applied a **1.5% annual increase** on the existing peak weekday and weekend parking demand. As a result, the total parking demand increase over the next five (5) years attributed to normal growth is estimated at 32 spaces on weekdays, 36 spaces on weekday evenings, and 41 spaces on weekends.

Table 9: Estimated Future Parking Demand from Normal Growth

Peak Demand	2025 (Baseline)	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Total Increase
Weekday	419	425	432	438	445	451	**32**
Weekday Evening	465	472	479	486	494	501	**36**
Weekend	529	537	545	553	561	570	**41**

Source: THA Consulting, Inc., 2025

Lease Up of Vacant Commercial Properties

To estimate the parking requirements associated with projected lease-up demand within the study area, THA applied the shared parking methodology—an industry-recognized planning tool supported by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and the American Planning Association (APA). This approach is particularly relevant in mixed-use downtown environments, where parking assets can be strategically utilized by multiple user groups without overlap or conflict, due to the differing peak demand periods associated with each use type. Three vacant properties within the study area were identified, collectively comprising approximately 47,000 square feet. Based on this, the following lease-up assumptions were developed to inform demand projections.

- 50% lease-up of the present vacancies over the next 5 years (23,500 SF)
- 15,000 SF of retail space
- 8,500 SF of restaurant space
- 10 parking spaces would be provided on-site between the properties

Currently there are no parking requirements for retail or restaurant uses within the City's Central Business District (CBD) in which the vacant properties are located. To project the future parking demand associated with these properties, THA applied the following parking ratios based on the parking standards set forth by the Urban Land Institute (ULI), Institute for Transportation Engineers (ITE) and THA's experience with similar downtown development projects:

- **Retail:** 3 spaces per 1,000 SF of retail use.
- **Restaurant:** 8 spaces per 1,000 SF of retail use.

Table 10 below summarizes THA's shared parking analysis for the projected lease up of vacant commercial space in the study area:

Table 10: Dahlonega Vacancy Lease Up – Shared Parking Analysis				
Dahlonega Study Area Vacancy Lease Up			**Recommended Parking Requirements**	**Parking Spaces Required**
Retail	15,000	SF	3.00/1000 SF	**45**
Restaurant	8,500	SF	8.00/1000 SF	**68**
Total Parking				**113**
Parking Provided On-Site				**(10)**
Parking Required On-Street				**103**
Peak Parking Required with Shared Parking Analysis (Weekday 12PM)			**(2.9% Reduction)**	**100**
Peak Parking Required with Shared Parking Analysis (Weekday 6PM)			**(11.7% Reduction)**	**91**
Peak Parking Required with Shared Parking Analysis (Weekend 6PM)			**(30.1% Reduction)**	**72**

Allowing for shared parking, we project that the parking demand will increase by 100 spaces at 12PM on weekdays, 91 spaces at 6PM on weekday evenings, and 72 spaces at 6PM on weekends.

Future Parking Adequacy Summary

Table 11 below illustrates the projected parking adequacy for weekdays, weekday evenings, and weekends, based on the growth factors and supply reduction outlined herein. Please note that the parking supply for weekday evenings and weekends includes the UNG parking supply without the Chestatee Street Deck.

Table 11: Future Parking Demand and Adequacy

Weekday

Demand	
Current Peak Demand (with Seasonal Adjustment)	419
Future Normal Growth	32
Vacant Space Lease Up	100
Future Demand	**551**
Supply	
Existing Supply (with Effective Supply Reduction)	498
Total Supply	**498**
Future Parking Adequacy (Surplus/Deficit)	**(53)**

Weekday Evening

Demand	
Current Peak Demand (with Seasonal Adjustment)	465
Future Normal Growth	36
Vacant Space Lease Up	91
Future Demand	**592**
Supply	
Existing Supply (with Effective Supply Reduction)	586
Total Supply	**586**
Future Parking Adequacy (Surplus/Deficit)	**(6)**

Weekend

Demand	
Current Peak Demand (with Seasonal Adjustment)	529
Future Normal Growth	41
Vacant Space Lease Up	82
Future Demand	**652**
Supply	
Existing Supply (with Effective Supply Reduction)	586
Total Supply	**586**
Future Parking Adequacy (Surplus/Deficit)	**(66)**

Source: THA Consulting, Inc., 2025

In summary, the combined on-street and off-street parking inventory—inclusive of University of North Georgia (UNG) lots available to the public during evenings and weekends—is projected to operate at or over capacity based on the preceding analysis. Although the UNG Chestatee Street Deck was not incorporated into the supply

calculations, it presents a significant resource during evenings and weekends, especially for event and holiday parking. Nonetheless, a shortfall of available parking is expected during weekday business hours.

To alleviate pressure on the existing inventory and maintain accessible parking options for both visitors and residents, the City should consider strategies to expand overall capacity. These strategies, as further outlined in this report, include reconfiguring and enhancing Lot 6 to increase space availability, pursuing shared-use agreements with private lot owners to accommodate Downtown employees, and implementing additional parking management recommendations. However, in recent discussions with the City, it was communicated that Lot 6 may be developed in the future. Should Lot 6 be developed and an equivalent amount of public parking is included in the project, the projected parking deficit outlined in this report will be exacerbated.

Additionally, to determine if there is an opportunity to provide public or employee permit parking in the UNG Chestatee Street Deck during the weekdays from 3pm-5pm versus after 5pm and on weekends only, the City should perform parking occupancy counts of the facility at these times (weekdays from 3pm-5pm) (see **page 31**).

Stakeholder Engagement Feedback

A public workshop was held on Wednesday, June 18 at 5:30 PM in the Lumpkin County Library in order to allow business owners, employees and residents to provide feedback regarding parking in Dahlonega. The workshop focused on identifying the existing strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement. Below is a summary of the feedback received during the workshop:

<u>Strengths:</u>

- Free parking for the first 3 hours
- Parking enforcement officers make sure students do not park downtown during their classes.
- The city has a great relationship with UNG Dahlonega
- Different private facilities in addition to UNG lots have the ability for shared parking on evenings & weekends
- City partnering with church for parking; occasionally share parking for festivals and/or events during weekends
- Handicap parkers do not receive tickets for daily parking
- Dahlonega has a small-town feel that brings visitors from across the region

<u>Weaknesses:</u>

- Employee parking is a major issue
- Student influx during the fall and spring months creates parking demand that conflicts with residents / patrons
- Abusing the ADA required/handicap parking

- The fear of being ticketed hurts retail
- Tickets for customers parking beyond the time limit dissuade visitors
- Methodist church is having issues with parking due to growth in youth ministry, preschool, & significant challenges for parking on Sundays
- Locals have a disconnect with parking and utilizing Downtown during weekends
- Thanksgiving weekend, Christmas & New Year season generates high parking demand; last year around 300k tourists came to Dahlonega
- Tradeoffs between a reasonable number of elderly & ADA requirements (vs) available parking
- Parking meters are antique, have maintenance issues, high cost to operate, and nobody uses them
- Parking tickets primarily affect longer-term/overtime parkers and can disincentivize first-time visitors
- Signage is needed at UNG shared lots, garages, & public lots
- Parkers avoid parking on metered streets (more demand for non-metered streets)
- Remote and/or external parking options should be sensitive to the topography of the walk to Downtown

<u>Opportunities:</u>

- Further study the requirements for parking during festivals, weekends, peak tourist season, etc.
- Make Hawkins Street one-way for additional parking spaces
- Give a warning to first time customers violating the 3-hr parking limit instead of ticket (potentially with the use of license-plate recognition)
- Connect with Dahlonega Downtown Business Organization
- Use the UNG parking during weekends, festivals
    - More shared parking opportunities with UNG lots/decks
- Opportunity for signage & wayfinding to UNG parking deck
- Utilize Main St, Chester St, Vickery Drive parking lots
- Shuttle opportunity – ½ mile radius to alleviate Downtown parking, & to employees from UNG parking decks
- Public-private partnership with the Methodist Church for parking; in 2018 they considered building a deck through a financial partnership with Dahlonega
- Empty lot at First Baptist Church (147 N Park St)
- Peer comparison in the study to understand parking needs
- Look at walkability in regard to topography within the report
- Potential for bicycle parking, golf cars & motor scooters
- Dahlonega needs sidewalk requirements
- Lighting in area for safety especially during the winter when it gets dark after 6 PM
- Keep in mind the demographics of the area; do not want to modernize too fast
- Potentially add pay stations, meters, credit card payments, parking operations, wayfinding & signage
- Provide parking permits to workers/employees
- Allow Main St center parking for senior citizens and parents with kids

- Old hospital has a lot of parking available
- More daily parking or longer than 3-hour parking options would benefit patrons and visitors
- Affordable and free parking options are needed for the long term
- Expand lot or build deck at Park/Chestatee & Hawkins ST (~200 potential spaces)

Additionally, THA spoke to several business owners individually regarding their personal experiences with employee, patron, and event parking throughout the fieldwork visit in June 2025, including employees at the Dahlonega Visitors Center, Grateful Days, Tea Rabbit's Teas, Gustavo's Scratch Kitchen, Shenanigans and the Dahlonega Tasting Room. These interactions provided THA with a broader understanding of parking conditions and opportunities in the City, especially during holiday events, and THA thanks all individuals spoken to for their unique input.

Parking Management

Given current conditions and future projections for parking demand, it is increasingly critical for the City to take deliberate steps to support the thriving downtown core with effective parking management. Effective parking management enhances user convenience, increases space turnover for a broader range of users, alleviates congestion, and has the potential to generate revenue. Parking funds can be reinvested into improvements downtown, including enhancements to mobility infrastructure, aesthetic upgrades, and support for alternative modes of transportation.

Moreover, thoughtful parking planning contributes to more efficient land use, which in turn bolsters long-term economic growth. However, many municipalities underestimate the importance of operating public parking within an integrated framework. In Dahlonega, key components of the parking function remain decentralized, with responsibilities dispersed across departments and individuals, resulting in a somewhat fragmented system-wide oversight.

Single-Responsibility Center

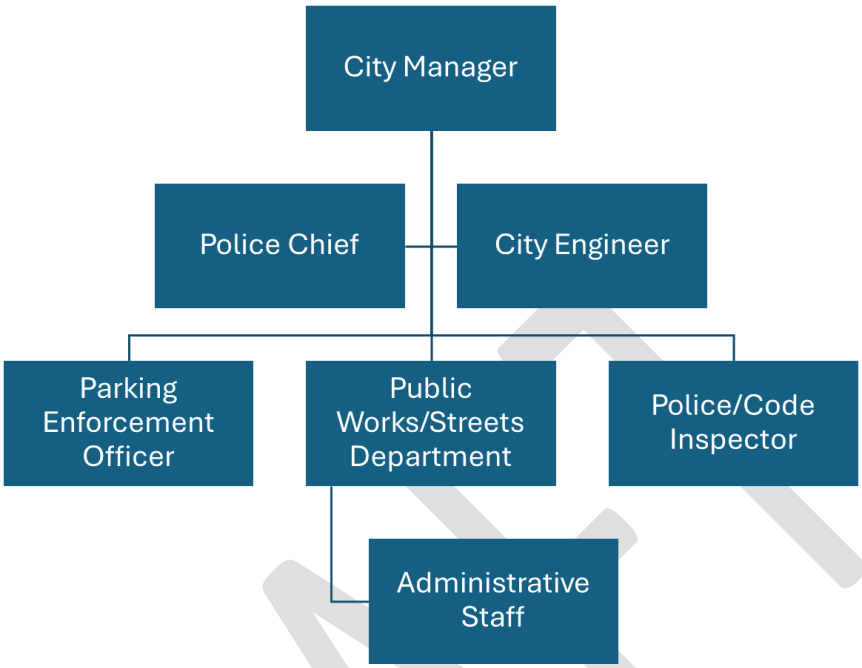
In the absence of a centralized authority overseeing municipal parking, no single department or manager currently holds the responsibility to plan, supervise, and operate all related services. This fragmented structure limits the City's ability to effectively analyze performance, implement cohesive planning efforts, and enhance operations. The most effective model for administering municipal parking is a unified program or system, wherein a designated department or individual is entrusted with planning, managing, and operating on- and off-street parking services. Current and projected levels of demand, student and visitor activity, and downtown dynamics will increasingly necessitate a strategic and coordinated response regarding parking operations.

A parking department / division can stand alone and be on par with other municipal departments, or it can be a subsidiary of a larger department such as Police, Public Works, Community Development, or Finance. The advantage of a parking department/division is the direct control over operations exercised by City leadership.

Staffing

Figure 6 below illustrates the present organizational chart for parking operations in Dahlonega, including staff that currently have responsibilities related to public parking management.

Figure 6: Dahlonega Parking Operations Organizational Chart



Source: City of Dahlonega, 2025

Currently, major decisions regarding the parking system are carried out by City Manager with the Parking Specialist/Parking Enforcement Officer conducting enforcement under the supervision of the Police Department. While the Police Chief has an input on parking enforcement strategy, they do not have direct input on parking policies in the City. The Public Works Department provides public parking maintenance services and the Police/Code Inspector conducts backup parking enforcement.

Parking Advisory Committee

A valuable resource in the management, oversight, and public engagement related to municipal parking is the establishment of a Parking Advisory Committee (PAC). Currently, Dahlonega has a Parking Committee that meets as needed to make parking policy decisions, however this committee is not listed as an official entity on its website. PACs typically include following participants: the parking department / division director, the Police Chief, local merchants, downtown residents, landlords, etc. The purpose of the committee is to review, discuss, and identify parking issues or concerns with the intent of addressing problems and making recommendations to the City parking department / division or City Council for the adoption of updated or revised parking policies and ordinances. PACs can be an excellent forum for coordinating the necessary communication between stakeholders and parking management personnel and would provide the City with a resource to identify and field parking issues and complaints, thereby reducing the amount of City Council meeting time dedicated to parking problems. The City should elevate the current Parking Committee to an official entity that meets on a regular basis, say quarterly.

Parking Enforcement

Parking enforcement plays a critical role in the overall management of municipal parking systems. When properly executed, enforcement ensures adherence to established regulations, promotes equitable use of parking resources, mitigates safety risks, and helps reduce vehicular incidents. In commercial districts, effective enforcement is particularly valuable in encouraging turnover among on-street spaces, which supports retail vitality. A key factor in maintaining public trust and effectiveness is that enforcement must be viewed as consistent, impartial, and transparent.

Currently, parking enforcement within the City of Dahlonega is carried out by a single part-time Parking Enforcement Officer (PEO) who reports directly to the City's Chief of Police. The PEO typically operates from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Supplemental enforcement support is provided by a Code Enforcement Officer who assists with parking meter compliance; however, this role is secondary and performed only as needed, with no designated schedule. Maintenance and monitoring of parking meters fall under the responsibility of the Dahlonega Public Works Department. When a meter is flagged for repair, the PEO bags the meter to prevent payment during its downtime.

The PEO conducts enforcement primarily on foot, utilizing a handheld license plate recognition application, while using a City vehicle solely for transportation between enforcement zones. The principal regulation enforced is the three-hour parking limit applied to most on-street spaces and Lot 1. In calendar year 2024, the City issued a total of 443 parking citations, as outlined in **Table 12** below with 63% resulting from violations of posted time limits. During a discussion with THA Consulting on June 21, 2025, the PEO noted an informal grace period of approximately 15 minutes following the end of a parking session or time limit, although this is not codified in official policy.

Table 12: Total Parking Citations in the City in 2024

2024	Meter Violation / Other	Parking Beyond Time Limit	Loading Zone	Handicapped Zone	Fire Lane	Fire Hydrant	Wrong Side of Street	Parking On Sidewalk	Total
Total	95	278	14	10	2	2	1	41	**443**

Source: City of Dahlonega, 2025

Observations also indicate that loading zones are frequently utilized by personal vehicles during evenings and weekends. While citations are issued during standard business hours for improper use of these spaces, there is an unofficial understanding that such parking is generally tolerated on weekends. Additionally, during THA's June 2025 fieldwork, parking safety violations such as parking in front of fire lanes, near hydrants, within crosswalks, or on sidewalks were observed to be infrequent, suggesting that users of the downtown parking system exhibit a heightened awareness of pedestrian and traffic safety considerations.

To improve the consistency of enforcement, the City should consider the following recommendations:

- Hire an additional part-time or full-time PEO to ensure that enforcement is present and visible on weekends, especially Saturdays.
- Evaluate enforcement routes to ensure regular enforcement of all areas, thereby reducing complaints that enforcement is arbitrary, irregular, and capricious. In general, PEO patrol routes should be established and scheduled consistently in all time limit areas to effectively dissuade overtime parking, double parking, and other traffic/pedestrian safety violations and to promote turnover of the parking spaces to accommodate more users throughout a typical day.

- Given the high volume of tourists downtown, warnings can be issued as a preliminary step to first-time violators prior to increased enforcement to educate the parkers as to the need for consistent enforcement of time limit and transient parking.

Mobile License Plate Recognition Enforcement

To strengthen municipal parking enforcement and operational efficiency, the City should consider implementing a mobile license plate recognition (LPR) system. LPR technology leverages specialized cameras and automated analytics to capture, read, and cross-reference license plate data with a live database in real time. This system offers high-impact capabilities for enforcing time-limit and permit-based parking by instantly notifying enforcement officers of violations.

The adoption of mobile LPR would significantly increase enforcement coverage and consistency across the study area. Given the legal limitations associated with manual "chalking," LPR ensures modern, compliant monitoring practices and drives measurable improvements in compliance. With greater efficiency, enforcement staff would have additional capacity to support other operational functions—such as serving as a parking ambassador, community engagement and pedestrian assistance in the downtown district.

Key advantages of LPR technology include:

- Real-time identification of vehicles associated with outstanding violations or legal warrants
- Enhanced time-limit enforcement, including tracking vehicles that shift into adjacent spaces
- Expanded geographic enforcement coverage with fewer personnel

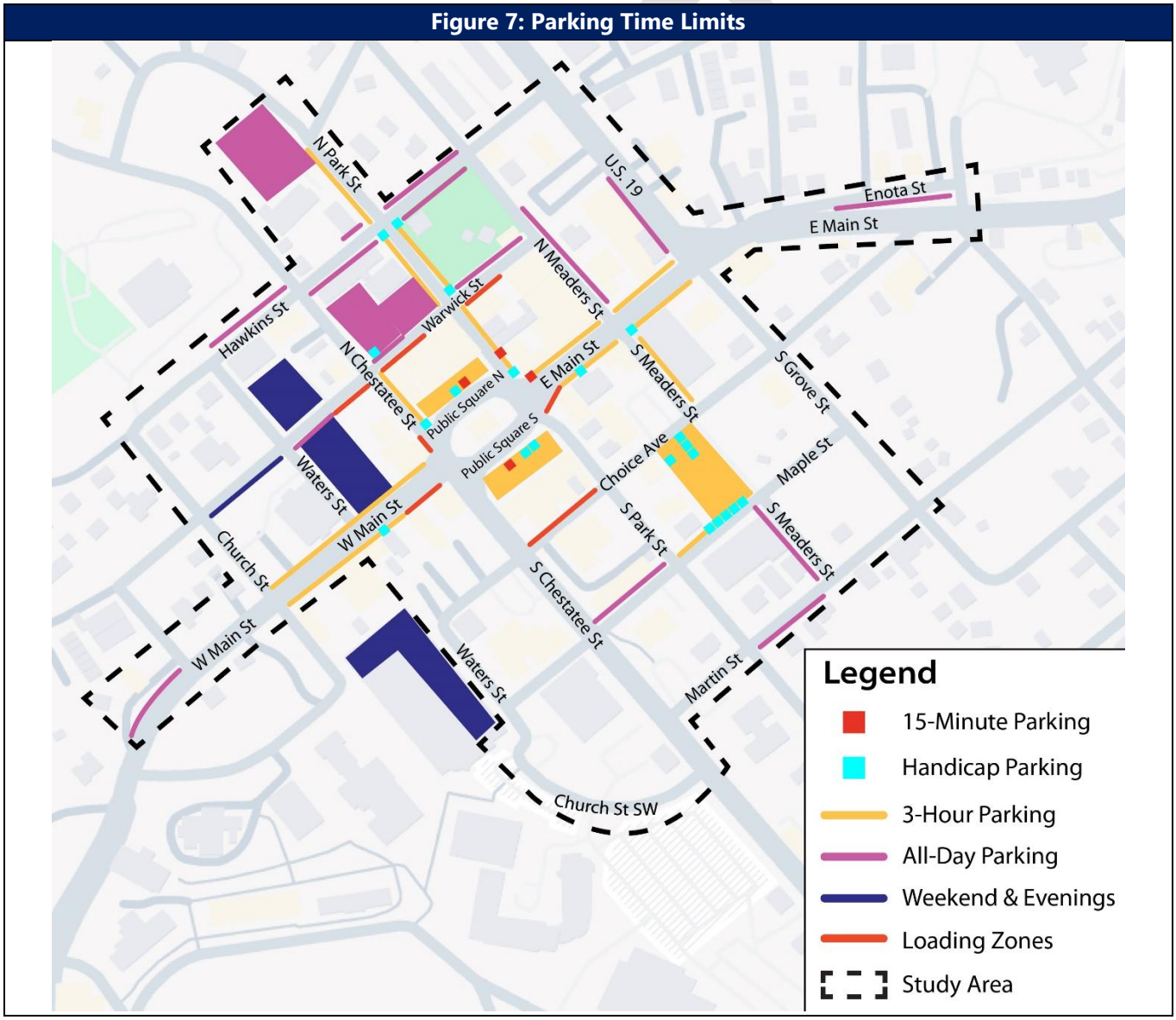
In addition to its enforcement capabilities, mobile LPR can facilitate periodic collection of parking occupancy data, enabling City staff or a parking program administrator to analyze usage patterns and adapt operations accordingly. This analytical insight is critical for informed policy decisions and long-range planning.

The cost of mobile LPR systems has become increasingly accessible. A complete package—including a vehicle-mounted LPR unit, permit management software, associated warranties, and necessary hardware—is currently estimated at approximately $40,000 per vehicle, with an annual maintenance expense around $5,000. The City or its designated operator should solicit proposals from vendors to secure a comprehensive budget estimate and implementation plan.

Posted Time Limits

Currently, most of the time-limited parking in the City is 3-hour parking, which is mostly concentrated within one block of the Public Square. The lots on Warwick Street and Park Street, as well as several streets in the study area, allow for all-day parking. There are also several loading zones and 15-minute spaces that are utilized by vehicles. **Figure 7** illustrates the parking limits for on- and off-street parking:

Figure 7: Parking Time Limits



Source: THA Consulting, Inc., 2025

The time limits listed above have been proven to improve downtown parking conditions for all types of customers and visitors without deterring these users from staying longer. Based on our observations, many customers and visitors have an average length of stay under 3 hours with many of the vehicles parked longer likely owned by a merchant or downtown employee. To provide additional short-term parking on-street to support visitor parking, the non-time-limited parking spaces on Warwick Street, Hawkins Street, and North Meaders Street should become 3-hour limited parking spaces. Understanding that these spaces are likely used by employees, longer-term parkers on this street would be reallocated to Lot 6 if it remains available to the public.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not require on-street handicap spots, but the Public Rights of Way Accessibility Guidelines issued by the United States Access Board recommends that for every 25 parking spaces on a block perimeter up to 100 spaces, 1 parking space should be made handicap accessible. THA recommends the addition of a handicap space on North Meaders Street to provide additional handicap accessible parking near the public square.

Parking Fines

Table 13 outlines citation rates at other similar destination towns to serve as a benchmark comparison for Dahlonega.

Table 13: Peer Cities Citation Rates

Municipality	Meter Violation	Overtime Violation	Parking Prohibited	Loading Zone	Handicap Space
Rome, GA	$15.00	$15.00	$25.00	$25.00	$200.00
Greenville, SC	$5.00	$15.00	$25.00	$15.00	$200.00
Clemson, SC	N/A	$30.00	$30.00	$30.00	$100.00
Blue Ridge, GA	N/A	$50.00	$50.00	$50.00	N/A
Average	**$10.00**	**$27.50**	**$32.50**	**$30.00**	**$166.67**
Dahlonega	**$25.00**	**$25.00**	**$35.00**	**$25.00**	**$250.00**
UNG Dahlonega	**N/A**	**$25.00**	**$25.00**	**$25.00**	**$100.00**

Source: THA Consulting, Inc., 2025

The current parking citation rates in Dahlonega are mostly at the same rate or higher than average for peer communities and UNG's Dahlonega campus. While the loading zone violation for Dahlonega was below the average for peer communities, personal vehicles were observed to only utilize loading zones outside of enforcement hours and on weekends when they are permitted to park there, so due to compliance, increasing this rate is not necessary.

Maximizing Existing Assets

Wayfinding and Signage

Wayfinding is a comprehensive signage system that clearly communicates the location of parking and various destinations. A wayfinding system in Dahlonega will help reduce vehicle traffic and extraneous vehicular circulation. An ineffective parking wayfinding signage system may contribute to the perception that there is a lack of convenient public parking when in fact there are multiple lots located to serve downtown businesses.

To be effective, signage and wayfinding must be clear, concise and simple, and consist of the following:

- ***Wayfinding signs*** located on streets leading to the downtowns: these signs show where parking can be found.
- ***Site signs*** located at the parking lots: these signs describe the type of parking available (permit, daily, etc.).
- ***Parking rate signs*** located in proximity to the parking space: these signs provide hourly, daily, and monthly rates.

An important aspect of signage is the use of graphic design. Effective signage programs combine aesthetics with information. Choice of color, typeface, character size, weight and spacing, and the use of uppercase and lowercase text all influence readability. A well designed and implemented wayfinding and signage system will not only make finding and using Dahlonega's parking more convenient, but it can also help enhance the image of the downtown and create a "branding" opportunity for the City and its parking system. Some best practices for the design and placement of signage are as follows:

- Signs directing vehicles and pedestrians would ideally only display the universal "P" for parking with a directional arrow, and a background that aesthetically compliments Dahlonega's downtown.
- Wayfinding signage for vehicles must be continuous (i.e. repeated at each point of choice) until the destination is reached.
- A sign should be placed at points where a driver or pedestrian must decide.

Currently, parking wayfinding signage in Dahlonega exists at some key locations, however the lettering is small and indistinct from signage for businesses and can be easily missed by moving vehicles. After discussions with the City, it was determined that signs such as that in **Figure 8** best exemplify the proper signage for directing visitors towards Dahlonega's parking resources.

Figure 8: Current and Proposed Parking Wayfinding Signage

Current Wayfinding Signage

Proposed Signage Enhancement

The upgrading of this signage will be increasingly necessary in rerouting vehicles away from the highest demand locations to more remote facilities, especially Lot 6. THA also recommends that additional signage locations are established for public off-street parking facilities as shown in **Figure 9** below:

Figure 9: Existing and Potential Parking Lot Signage and Wayfinding Locations

Source: THA Consulting, Inc., 2025

It was noted during THA's fieldwork that the UNG parking facilities open to the public on evenings and weekends were not identified as open to the public using signage. The lots at 19 N. Waters Street and 87 N. Waters Street were highly occupied at peak times, so it was presumed that employees, residents, and visitors familiar with the City recognize these locations as public parking after hours. However, these locations may be unknown to new visitors. The City can indicate that these locations are available for public parking in the evening using the same style of signage as proposed in Figure 8. The image to the right depicts this signage directing vehicles towards the UNG Garage on Chestatee Street.

Additionally, the on-street spaces on South Meaders Street between Maple Street and Martin Street are leased by the adjacent Methodist Church for church activities and are signed as being Permit Only Monday-Friday. However, these spaces are available to the public after 2PM on weekdays and on weekends. During the parking occupancy counts in June 2025, these spaces were less than 50% occupied during every count except for Thursday at 10am and 12pm. The City should upgrade this signage to indicate that these spaces are available after 2pm on weekdays and on weekends.

Parking Space Striping

It was observed that many of the on-street spaces throughout the study area were well-marked, with clear delineation of parking space boundaries. However, a few on-street locations, could be improved and restriped to add additional parking spaces to the City's parking inventory, including the following:

- Lot 6 (see concept plan on **page 37**)
- North Park Street, west side, between Jones Street and Hawkins Street
- Hawkins Street, north side, between North Chestatee street and Waters Street
- Martin Street, south side, between South Meaders Street and South Grove Street

Alternative to Parking Regulation Signage

In some design-sensitive communities, vertical regulatory signs are minimized in favor of curb-coloring, pavement stencils, and striping to reduce sign clutter. This approach maintains the visual aesthetic while communicating parking regulations. Beverly Hills, CA, Laguna Beach, CA, and Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA are three communities that use these strategies. Each employs curb-color systems, painted markings, or stencils to communicate parking rules clearly yet unobtrusively. Dahlonega can adopt the following strategies:

1. Codify a curb-color standard. The following schedule reflects common curb color provisions:

a. Red: No stopping at any time (except designated bus stops)
b. Yellow: Commercial or passenger loading zones (up to 30 minutes)
c. White: Passenger loading or mail drop-off (5-15 minutes)
d. Green: Short-term parking (1-3 hours)
e. Blue: ADA Parking

2. Use curb/pavement stenciling with durations (e.g., "15 MIN 8 AM–6 PM") to eliminate reliance on pole signs.

By weaving these elements into its municipal code, Dahlonega can preserve its historic aesthetic while maintaining clear, enforceable parking regulations.

Leveraging Shared UNG and Private Parking Assets

Downtown Dahlonega's diverse land use presents opportunities to enhance parking efficiency through shared-use arrangements. Allowing the same parking spaces to serve daytime users such as business and office employees, and evening users such as restaurant staff optimizes capacity and helps alleviate pressure on the on-street inventory. To secure additional parking resources, the City or its designated agent should engage property owners with underutilized off-peak parking assets and initiate lease agreements enabling use by downtown employees. These agreements would include insurance coverage, enforcement coordination, and property maintenance provisions, along with flexible termination clauses (e.g., 30 to 60 days without cause) to ensure owners retain control in the event that the property's parking is needed for primary use.

Under this structure, the City would hold leasehold access to these assets during defined periods, enabling it to administer permit programs for employees, install appropriate signage, and maintain enforcement protocols. Revenues generated through permit sales and user fees would offset the costs associated with leasing and administration.

During THA's parking occupancy counts conducted in June 2025, THA counted some private off-street parking facilities in the study area were identified as having additional capacity. Outlined below are the referenced facilities and the amount of parking capacity that was available during peak hours. While the UNG parking lots approached full capacity, there may be availability in the Chestatee Street Deck, so a limited number of permits could still be provided there during the week. The ability to secure 40 or so spaces for weekday use to provide to downtown employees at the referenced conditions would be highly beneficial.

- Holiday Inn Garage (Lower Level) – 13 spaces
- Choice Ave Lower Lot – approximately 24 spaces
- H&R Block Lot – 9 spaces
- UNG 19 N. Waters St Lot – 5 spaces
- UNG 87 N. Waters St Lot – 5 spaces

H&R Block Lot

Choice Ave Lower Lot

As previously stated, the UNG Chestatee Street Deck is currently open to the public after 5:30pm on weekdays and on weekdays. While this facility was observed to be underutilized during THA's parking occupancy counts from June 19-21, 2025, the City should work with UNG to determine the feasibility of providing a limited number of permits to downtown employees during weekdays in the fall and spring.

On-Demand Shuttle

As parking utilization continues to increase downtown, the City may benefit from implementing a targeted shuttle service to accommodate demand during peak periods. One such service is Circuit, an electric vehicle-based transit provider that has successfully launched services in communities such as Palm Beach, Miami, Orlando, and Hollywood, Florida.

Circuit offers a range of vehicle options, including compact electric cars seating 4–6 passengers and larger vans accommodating up to 15 riders. The platform supports dynamic route adjustments and flexible fare structures. Fares may be offered at no cost or at a nominal rate, with opportunities to offset operational expenses through rider volume and local advertising partnerships.

Visit Circuit's website for an overview of their service: https://www.ridecircuit.com/.

Should the City pursue this model, initial deployment is recommended during evenings, weekends—particularly Saturdays—and throughout the holiday season to align with peak visitation patterns. The program would offer added value to senior residents and visitors utilizing perimeter lots such as Lot 6 and the UNG Chestatee Street Deck, providing direct access to key destinations and reducing strain on core parking assets.

Special Event Parking Management

In tourist-driven municipalities like Dahlonega, the effective coordination of special event parking is essential to supporting economic growth, driving foot traffic to local businesses, and cultivating a vibrant, welcoming atmosphere. Community events not only activate the local economy—they often serve as an initial touchpoint for prospective customers, investors, and residents. For this reason, a seamless and positive parking experience plays a pivotal role in encouraging repeat visits and long-term engagement with the City.

Each year, five to six major events necessitate the full or partial closure of the Public Square—including Lots 2 and 3—as well as additional blocks throughout the downtown core. Signature events such as the Fourth of July

Celebration, Bear on the Square, Gold Rush Days, Dahlonega Trailfest, the Christmas Celebration, and the Lighting of the Square draw thousands of attendees, placing considerable strain on the area's parking supply.

To mitigate these pressures and better accommodate visitor demand, the City currently utilizes several private parking facilities for event operations, including the Dahlonega Baptist Church, Pinetree Recreation Center, and the University of North Georgia lots and Chestatee Street Deck. As festivals continue, it is imperative that the City formalize a comprehensive special events parking management plan. This plan should clearly outline designated event parking facilities, staffing levels, and shuttle or transit service to and from remote parking locations with seamless access to the Public Square. Coordination with the Parking Advisory Committee is recommended to ensure operational consistency, stakeholder engagement, and public-facing transparency.

Key components of the plan may include:

- Define special events in the City that would necessitate a significant change in the normal parking and traffic patterns
- Require all sponsors of special events to proactively request parking and transportation arrangements
- Establish the Parking Department/Division as the entity responsible for special events parking
- Identify remote parking facilities for special events parking and overflow areas
- Develop a special events parking plan outlining the necessary facilities, manpower, supervision, signage, traffic control, and standard operating procedures event parking
- Communicate the event parking plan and details to event attendees through event promotional material, websites, and social media
- Install temporary parking wayfinding signage at the entrance of event parking locations
- Operate a parking shuttle bus during major events to transport attendees between event parking locations and the Public Square, as outlined below

During major festivals, as well as smaller events and busy weekends during the December holiday season, it would be beneficial to implement a downtown shuttle service. **Figure 10** below identifies potential locations for event parking around the City, including both privately-owned facilities and City/County government lots that were observed to have low utilization in June 2025. Additionally, a proposed shuttle route that stopped at all locations was outlined. Individually, each of these locations is a 1-5 min drive from the Public Square. If a singular shuttle route is established, all locations could be covered within 15-20 minutes.

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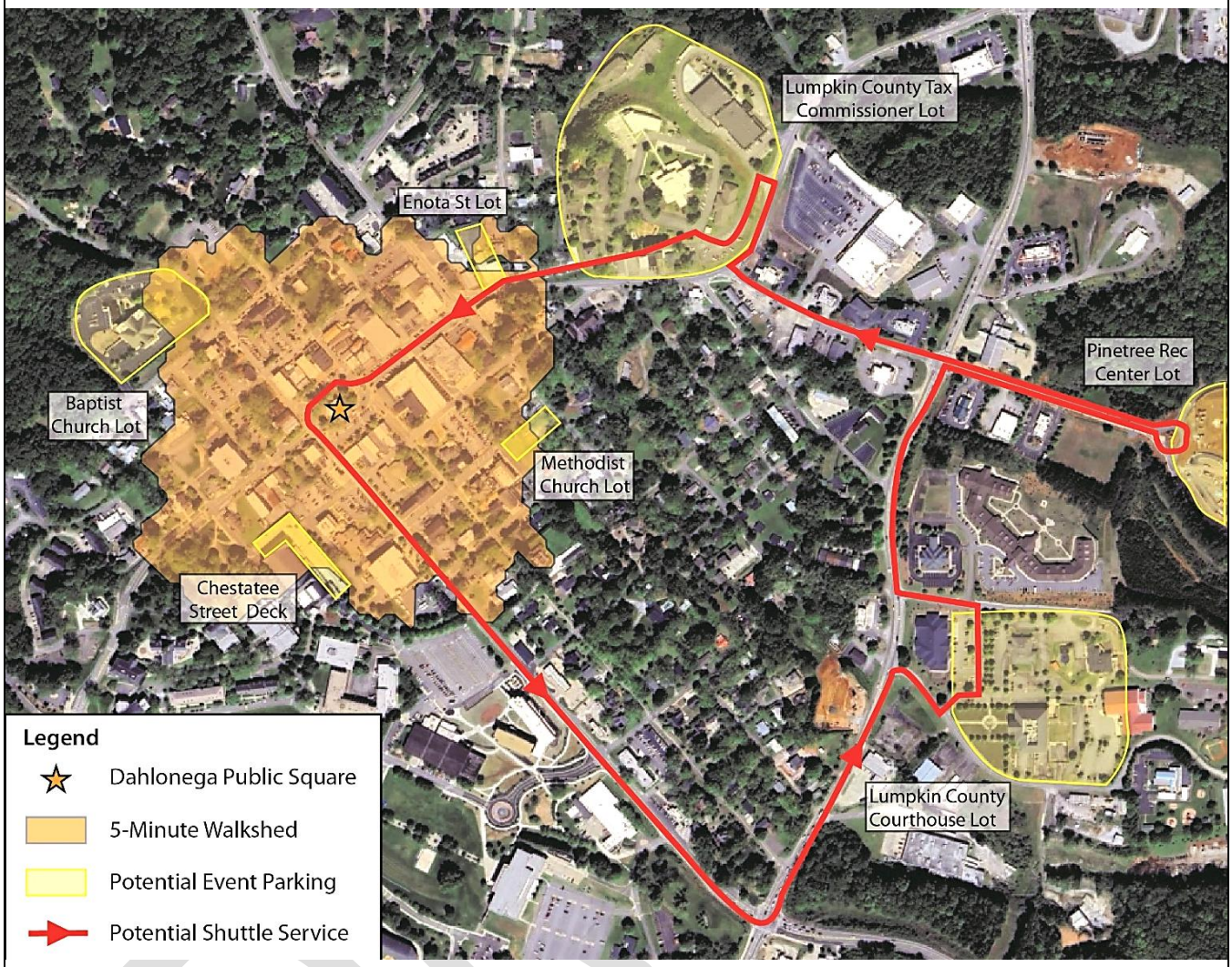
Figure 10: Dahlonega Event Parking Locations and Shuttle Routes



Source: THA Consulting, Inc., 2025

Promoting the Parking System

A common problem experienced by municipal parking systems is that there are often missed opportunities to promote the mission, assets, and functions of the parking system. The City should enhance its program to inform its residents, downtown merchants, employees, shoppers, and the general public of how the entire parking system operates. The communications program should coordinate all parking information under a single "brand" and address the need for consistent enforcement and the value of limited parking assets. The objective of promoting a parking system is to transform what can often be perceived as a negative image into a positive one.

The City's parking webpage (https://www.dahlonega.gov/community/downtown-parking/) currently offers an interactive map showing on-street and off-street parking locations, parking time limits and contact information, however this information does not include all public on-street locations in the City. The city's tourism website, Discover Dahlonega, (https://www.dahlonega.org/), includes a stylized map with detailed parking information pertaining to 15-min spaces, ADA spaces, and parking time limits. The City parking webpage should add information pertaining to the benefits and rationale of parking enforcement, parking meter locations/rate information, event

parking information, and frequently asked questions (FAQ's) related to parking rules in the City. Additionally, the interactive map on the webpage should be updated to include all on-street parking areas as well as event parking locations, and a link to the Discover Dahlonega parking map should be provided.

The Downtown Dahlonega Development Authority (DDA) is an organization that is dedicated to stimulating and sustaining economic development in the downtown area, improving the appearance of downtown, and promoting Dahlonega as an exciting place to live, shop, and invest. Their website (https://dahlonegadda.org/) is a valuable resource in promoting Downtown events and businesses, with webpages for tourist information, business directories, and special event programming. The City should work with the DDA to link their parking webpage to the DDA website.

Another strategy that the City can consider to promote its parking system is to create a promotional video or brochure/e-brochure that introduces the City's parking options to visitors as well as valuable parking information such as parking rates, evening/weekend parking locations and time limitations, for residents, downtown customers, and visitors. Melbourne, FL produced a promotional parking video in 2024 following changes to their parking system (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ArlmdWIq4vA). One major benefit of creating a video or brochure is that it allows municipalities to address the most common parking issues or questions that first-time visitors as well as newer residents and employees experience. Brochures can include an FAQ section with instructions, definitions of parking policies, permit information, paying and contesting parking tickets, etc. See the following municipalities' parking websites for more examples of the strategies offered herein:

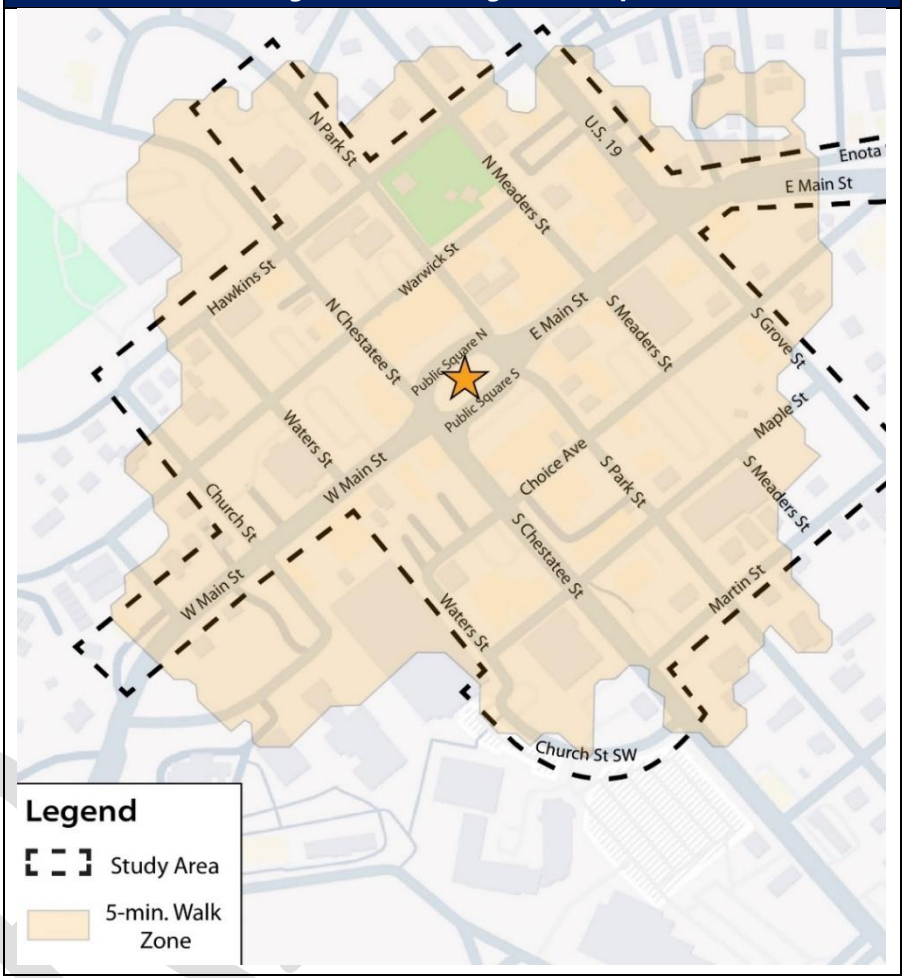
- Miami Parking Authority's website (https://www.miamiparking.com/)
- Hollywood, Florida's parking webpage (https://hollywoodfl.org/96/Parking)
- Norwalk Parking Authority's website (www.norwalkpark.org/)
- New Brunswick Parking Authority's website (www.njnbpa.org)
- Keene, New Hampshire's parking services page (https://keenenh.gov/parking-services)

In addition, utilizing social media outlets such as Facebook and Instagram are also a cost-free strategy to connect with the public and convey information and updates related to Dahlonega's parking.

Pedestrian Connectivity, Lighting and Security

In small downtown environments like Dahlonega, there is often an issue where some of the most important parking resources have low utilization due to being farther than what most parkers are willing to walk. While Dahlonega's downtown area is concentrated within a small, walkable radius, the area's topography makes it difficult for older visitors and residents to park at peripheral locations, especially Lot 6, which was identified as a major asset that will be increasingly utilized in the future, unless it is developed. Accordingly, while parking spaces around the Public Square should continue to be available for all users, employees and patrons staying for longer periods of time should use Lot 6 and shared off-street facilities as discussed previously. Strategies outlined herein such as improving wayfinding and providing an on-demand shuttle would make these facilities more accessible and ensuring that the paths between Lot 6 and businesses are well lit and easily traversable for all users will encourage its utilization. Nearly all the on-street and off-street parking resources in the study area are located within a reasonable 5-minute walk of the Public Square, as indicated in **Figure 11.**

Figure 11: Walking Shed Map



Source: THA Consulting, Inc., 2025

Pedestrian conditions in and around the public square are favorable, with several features such as crosswalks, sidewalk bump-outs, street trees, benches, and streetlamps. These features also serve as traffic calming measures that allow vehicles to park, exit, and pass through the square without having unsafe interactions with pedestrians. However, it was indicated by some residents at the stakeholder engagement meeting on June 18, 2025, that some of the sidewalk connections to Lot 6 needed improvement. Sidewalks on Warwick and Hawkins Street were observed to be notably narrower and less consistent than sidewalks within a block of the Public Square and along Main Street. THA recommends that the City considers improving sidewalk conditions on these streets in conjunction with the restriping of parking spaces and loading zones as previously discussed.

During THA's fieldwork in June 2025, it was noted that some surface lots and sidewalks connecting them to the Public Square had inconsistent lighting at night.

Lot 4 from Warwick Street

Lot 6

Lot 4 from N. Chestatee Street

Hawkins Street next to Hancock Park

Good street lighting can improve not only safety but also management of parking demand. People will walk further to a more remote parking option if the walking path and pedestrian setting feels safe, which includes adequate lighting at night. To promote the utilization of off-street and more remote on-street parking, the City should regularly check the lighting levels at, to, and from public parking facilities to promote user comfort.

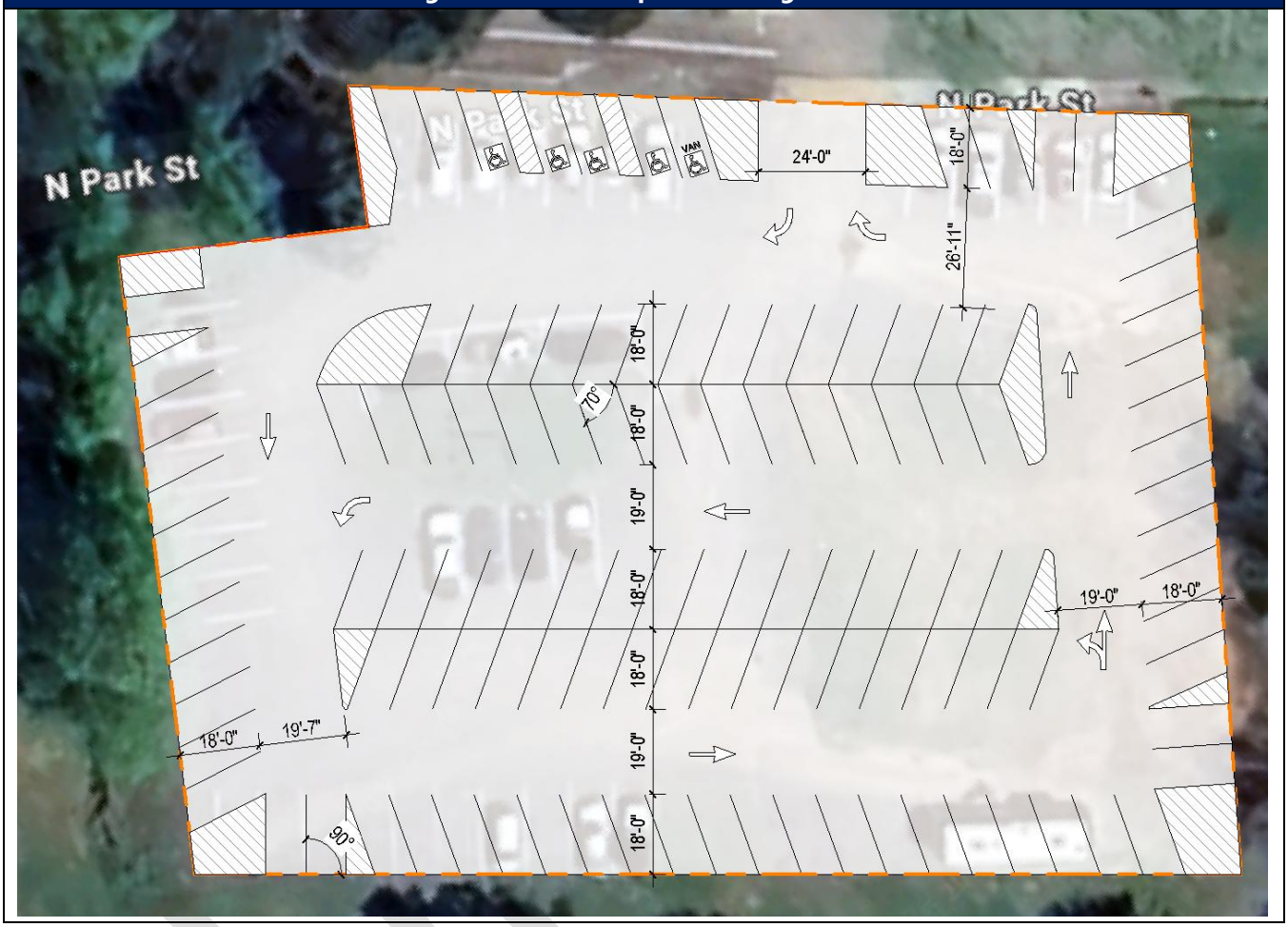
Additionally, the presence of a police vehicle during the evening and on event days in Lot 6, may improve the perception of the lot's safety by residents and employees that return to their cars in the evening. A police vehicle or another City vehicle could also occasionally patrol the other off-street facilities in the evening with orange flashing lights to serve as parking ambassadors.

Expansion of Existing Lot

As mentioned in the Future Adequacy Summary, there is potential for parking resources in the City to approach full utilization in the future due to increased demand from population growth, new development, and vacancy lease up. During THA's fieldwork in June 2025, it was observed that Lot 6 was relatively underutilized except for Saturday evening, when it had an occupancy of 71 cars. Currently, approximately 35-40 spaces are striped in the lot, with much of the remaining area taken up by grass or unmarked pavement. As previously discussed, the ability of the City to provide adequate public parking during peak demand periods is highly dependent on the capacity of this

facility, since it only approached an occupancy of 71 at 6PM Saturday, and had 40 or less vehicles parked all other times. From our assessment of this site, THA estimates that this location could provide parking for up to **120 parking spaces** if fully cleared and restriped, as illustrated in **Figure 12** below.

Figure 12: Lot 6 Proposed Configuration



Source: THA Consulting, Inc., 2025

Paid Parking Expansion

As public parking demand continues to rise—as outlined in the Future Parking Demand Analysis—the availability of conveniently located spaces will diminish, elevating the importance of turnover in high-demand zones. The City currently operates 29 metered spaces along North and South Meaders Streets and Maple Street. While the meters have successfully improved turnover and availability among paying patrons, these spaces are situated over 300 feet from the Public Square, where prime on-street parking remains free. This configuration diverges from practices observed in comparably dense downtowns, where central, high-demand locations typically feature metered parking, and peripheral areas offer limited-time or no-cost parking options.

During discussions with City representatives and stakeholders, it was suggested that having fee parking expanded throughout its on-street inventory would have negative effects on the City, possibly impacting visitor activity. As

previously discussed, the current metered streets were some of the last streets to be fully occupied during peak times. However, fee parking on-street may be an effective strategy to further redistribute to long-term parkers to off-street locations in the future.

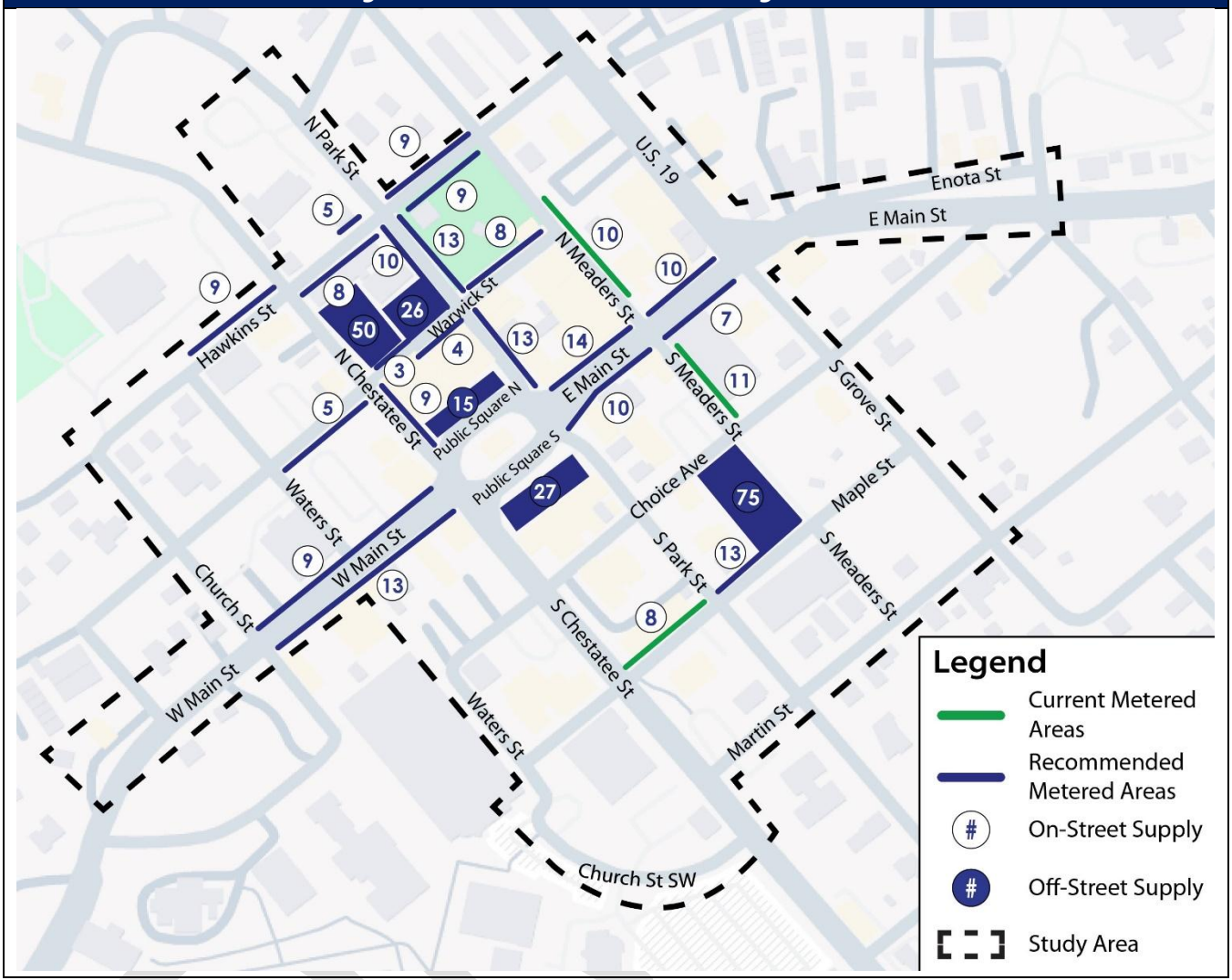
Paid parking serves as an effective regulatory tool to ensure space availability for priority users, namely downtown visitors and patrons. Today, the inability to secure a parking space often deters commerce as strongly as parking fees themselves. While concerns exist that pricing may discourage business activity, a thoughtfully implemented fee system enhances turnover, supports equitable access, and generates revenue for future parking and mobility improvements.

When paired with time-limited enforcement, paid parking encourages behavioral shifts: long-term users, such as employees and merchants, are incentivized to relocate to off-street facilities or underutilized curbside locations. Strategic pricing offers the following benefits:

- Promotes turnover and availability in high-demand zones
- Redirects long-term parkers to appropriate areas
- Generates sustainable funding for reinvestment in downtown infrastructure and mobility solutions
- Better regulates on-street parking availability for the intended users: patrons of local businesses.
- Reduces parking violations, which results in fewer negative experiences for visitors, residents and employees.
- Encourages employees to use longer-term off-street facilities.
- Generates revenue to manage, administer, maintain, and improve the parking system.
- Generates revenue to support the regular and capital maintenance of existing parking facilities.
- Generates revenue to support the development of new parking facilities.
- Generates revenue to support alternative mobility improvements, such as shuttles, and other downtown improvements.

Any future expansion of paid parking should prioritize a broader implementation across on-street inventory throughout the study area. A formal evaluation of such a program should be conducted 8 to 12 months following the adoption of the operational recommendations contained in this report. If the recommendations implemented are effective in mitigating peak parking demand, the City can consider removing parking meters at the current locations. However, if they do not have the desired effect of managing parking demand, the City should follow through with expanding the fee parking system. An expanded fee parking system should encompass the Public Square, the Choice Ave and Warwick Street Lots, as well as all public on-street parking locations within 500 ft of the Public Square. The only areas to remain free would be Lot 6, as well as the spaces on Enota Street, Martin Street, U.S. 19, and West Main Street west of Church Street. **Figure 13** below outlines proposed locations for fee parking if expanded:

Figure 13: Recommended Fee Parking Locations



Source: THA Consulting, Inc., 2025

In total, this would add approximately **374 spaces** to the City's paid parking inventory.

Parking Rate Benchmark

Most municipalities in Northern Georgia do NOT charge for parking, including nearby communities such as Helen, Blue Ridge, Blairsville, Ellijay, Cleveland, Clayton, and Dalton. Given Dahlonega's unique position as an increasingly popular tourist destination with a college campus, it is necessary to compare parking rates for the City to other tourist destinations and college towns. **Table 14** outlines the on-street, lot, garage and event parking rates for similar municipalities in Northen Georgia and the surrounding regions.

Table 14: Peer Cities Parking Rates								
Municipality	**Population**	**On-Street**	**Lot**			**Garage**		
		Hourly	**Hourly**	**Daily**	**Monthly Permit**	**Hourly**	**Daily**	**Monthly Permit**
Rome, GA	37,713	N/A	$1.00	$8.00	$20.00	$1.00	$8.00	$10-45
Greenville, SC	70,720	N/A	$1.00	$7.00	$36-72	$1.00-2.00	$7.00	$36-72
Clemson, SC	17,681	$0.75	N/A	N/A	30.00	$1.00	$4.00	$40.00
Average		**$0.75**	**$1.00**	**$7.50**	**$34.67**	**$1.17**	**$6.33**	**$40.50**
Dahlonega	**7,194**	**$1.00**	**N/A**	**N/A**	**N/A**	**N/A**	**N/A**	**N/A**

Source: THA Consulting, Inc., 2025

As shown above, on-street parking in the region is typically free, with Clemson, SC charging $0.75 per hour. The average hourly rate for transient parking in the peer municipalities is $1.00 per hour in lots and $1.17 per hour in garages. THA recommends that if fee-parking is expanded to other streets in Dahlonega, the hourly parking rate does not increase, as it is already above the average rate of peer municipalities. While other communities charge for parking in off-street facilities, it is not recommended that the City implements fee parking off-street in the near future.

Parking Revenue Fee Collection

As previously noted, a critical factor in the successful implementation of parking fees is the ease and convenience with which users can remit payment. Public acceptance of paid parking is markedly higher when payment methods are intuitive, reliable, and readily accessible. When introducing parking fees—particularly in areas transitioning from free parking—three pillars underpin a successful rollout: user convenience, operational dependability, and revenue management.

A broad array of parking payment technologies now exist to support these objectives. Solutions currently in use across thousands of municipalities nationwide offer proven reliability, adaptable configurations, and seamless user interfaces. These systems range from traditional single-space meters to multi-space pay stations, mobile payment platforms, license plate-enabled pay stations, and mobile app integrations.

At present, metered parking within the City is limited to street segments on North Meaders Street, South Meaders Street, and Maple Street. This narrow footprint presents a strategic opportunity to evaluate expanded payment infrastructure aligned with broader parking management goals. The implementation of contemporary payment technologies in additional areas—particularly those identified as high-demand zones—should be included with any future expansion of paid parking recommendations outlined herein.

Pay-By-Cell

To enhance cost-effectiveness and convenience for parking payments, Dahlonega should adopt a pay-by-cell system in conjunction with an expansion of fee parking locations. These systems involve the user downloading a mobile payment app, inputting the license plate of their vehicle, and uploading their debit or credit card information. When parking, the user enters the zone number posted on signs or stickers at the parking location in the app and selects their parking duration, extending the time in the app if needed. For users that prefer to pay via a website link without downloading an app, most mobile payment apps have a text-to-pay option that allows them to text a code indicated on the signage and receive a link to complete their transaction. In addition to increased convenience, mobile payment apps provide municipalities with parking utilization data that can be analyzed to help improve curb

management. Information that can be gathered includes how much one pays to park, methods of payment, length of stay, high-demand and low-demand areas, etc. Access to this data can provide the City with a better understanding of its parking utilization in order to better manage its parking resource.

The convenience of paying for parking by phone and the ability to remotely activate and reactivate the parking session is a significant benefit to downtown users, including retail or restaurant patrons. Merchants can establish accounts to pay for or discount customer parking via cell phone should they desire to do so. Because pay-by-cell systems are dependent on a debit/credit card payment, there are credit card transaction fees that are either borne by the municipality or transferred to the user. Pensacola, Florida has implemented a Merchant Validation system through ParkMobile, as outlined on their website: https://parkpensacola.com/parking-permits/

Pay-By-Cell systems are also a financially appealing option for the City as they require minimal capital investment. Typically the municipality incurs little cost to implement the Pay-By-Cell system because the service provider sets up the operating program, provides necessary stickers and signage, and markets the service. In addition, the cost to use the Pay-By-Cell service is typically covered by the user. The Pay-By-Cell vendor negotiates with the City an appropriate convenience fee to be added to individual parking transactions (usually approximately $0.50 per transaction). Because Pay-By-Cell systems are dependent on a debit / credit card payment, there are also debit / credit card fees associated with this service that are either borne by the City or transferred to the user.

Multi-Space Pay Stations

While mobile app payment is convenient, some patrons and visitors may prefer to pay with coins, cash or use a credit card manually. Parking pay stations are commonly used to regulate on-street and off-street parking spaces and are all capable of accepting coin, bill and debit / credit card payments, provide real-time reporting, and reduce the clutter associated with on-street single / dual-headed meters. Pay stations are typically used to regulate up to 10-12 parking spaces on the same side of the street. Benefits of pay stations vs single space meters include:

- Reduction of Sidewalk Clutter – Each pay station can manage approximately 10-12 parking spaces.
- Reduced Maintenance – Less service than individual meters and consolidated.
- Text / Email Messaging Alerts – Alerts can be sent to the City's Parking Bureau or parking enforcement officers when the machine is malfunctioning.
- Printed Receipts – The time a parking session expires is listed on the receipt.
- Rate Flexibility – Multiple rates can be programmed into the units for peak period, events, etc.
- Transaction Tracking – If the parker loses receipt or receives ticket in error, transaction details can be retrieved from database.

The cost of a solar powered pay station is approximately $7,500-$9,000 with only debit / credit card and coin acceptor. The cost of pay stations with the ability to accept debit / credit cards, coins, and bills is approximately $8,000-$10,000 per machine. The pay stations with bill acceptors do offer an additional payment option, but they

are more expensive, and often require more maintenance, because paper bills sometimes get jammed in the bill acceptors.

Resident Discount Parking Program

Resident Discount Parking Programs are a valuable tool that municipalities can implement through mobile parking or license plate-enabled pay stations. When using the mobile app or pay stations to pay for parking, residents who have registered with the City have their vehicle's license plate recognized and are offered a discounted parking fee. To participate in the Resident Discount Program, residents provide the City with the required residency information and their vehicle's license plate number. The license plate data is then integrated with the pay-by-plate mobile app service or pay station. When the resident parks, either citywide or in specific areas offering the Resident Discount Program, the resident uses the app or pay station, enters their license plate, and the service recognizes them as a resident and offers the discounted rate. Details regarding resident discount parking programs are available on the parking websites for Hollywood (https://hollywoodfl.org/1043/Resident-Parking-Rate) and Miami Beach (https://www.miamibeachfl.gov/city-hall/parking/residents-only/resident-parking-discounts/).

Improvement District Designation

Should the City not wish to expand free parking, or even eliminate the existing fee parking, a strategy commonly used to fund parking operations as well as other improvements in downtown environments is the establishment of Business or Special Improvement Districts (BIDs/SIDs).

Georgia law enables municipalities and counties to create Special Improvement Districts - known locally as Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) - to fund and manage local infrastructure, public space, security, and economic development projects within defined non-residential areas. Districts are managed by a board of directors, typically including both property owners, business owners, and local officials. All activities must follow the adopted district plan and be transparent to both property owners and the public.

CIDs in Georgia are authorized under Article IX, Section VII of the Georgia Constitution and governed by O.C.G.A. Title 36, Chapter 43. Districts may levy special assessments or taxes (up to 2.5% of assessed value) on commercial and industrial properties only in the designated district. Residential and agricultural properties are excluded. **Outlined below is the legal process for creating a CID in Georgia:**

- **Enabling Local Legislation:** The Georgia General Assembly must pass a local law authorizing the creation of a CID/BID within the municipality or county.
- **Local Government Resolution:** The city or county adopts a resolution consenting to the study and establishment of a CID/BID.
- **Property Owner Petition:** A petition signed by more than 50% of property owners (by number) representing at least 75% of the taxable value in the proposed district.
- **Develop and File District Plan:** Plan includes boundaries, services, duration, estimated budget, and structure.
- **Verification and Public Notice:** Local government verifies petition and provides public notice, holding public hearing(s) for input.
- **Adoption by Ordinance:** City/county formally creates the district by ordinance, adopts the plan, and appoints the board.

- **Assessments and Funding:** Assessments apply to non-residential property only; up to 2.5% of assessed value of commercial properties in the district; collected by local tax office.
- **Governance and Operations:** Board oversees administration, budget, and programs.
- **Renewal or Dissolution:** Upon plan expiration or by petition/resolution, the district may be renewed or dissolved.

Below are two examples of CIDs established in Georgia:

- Cumberland CID (Cobb County, est. 1988): https://www.cumberlandcid.org/
- Town Center CID (Cobb County, est. 1997): https://www.towncentercid.com/

Georgia's SID/BID/CID structure provides municipalities and property owners with an operational framework for funding targeted improvements such as parking management improvements, shuttles, and potentially new facilities. Success depends on careful planning, strong property owner consensus, and compliance with statutory requirements at each step.

New Parking Facility Feasibility Study

THA conducted a preliminary assessment of four (4) sites in the City for the construction of a municipal parking garage. Upon review with City representatives, it was determined that Site 4, located on the existing UNG lots at the intersection of Waters Street and Warwick Street, would be the most appropriate location for a new structured parking facility. This new 2-tiered structured facility would displace 90 existing spaces and provide a total of 202 spaces, with a net gain of 112 parking spaces. **Please refer to the assessment of the four sites starting on the following page.**

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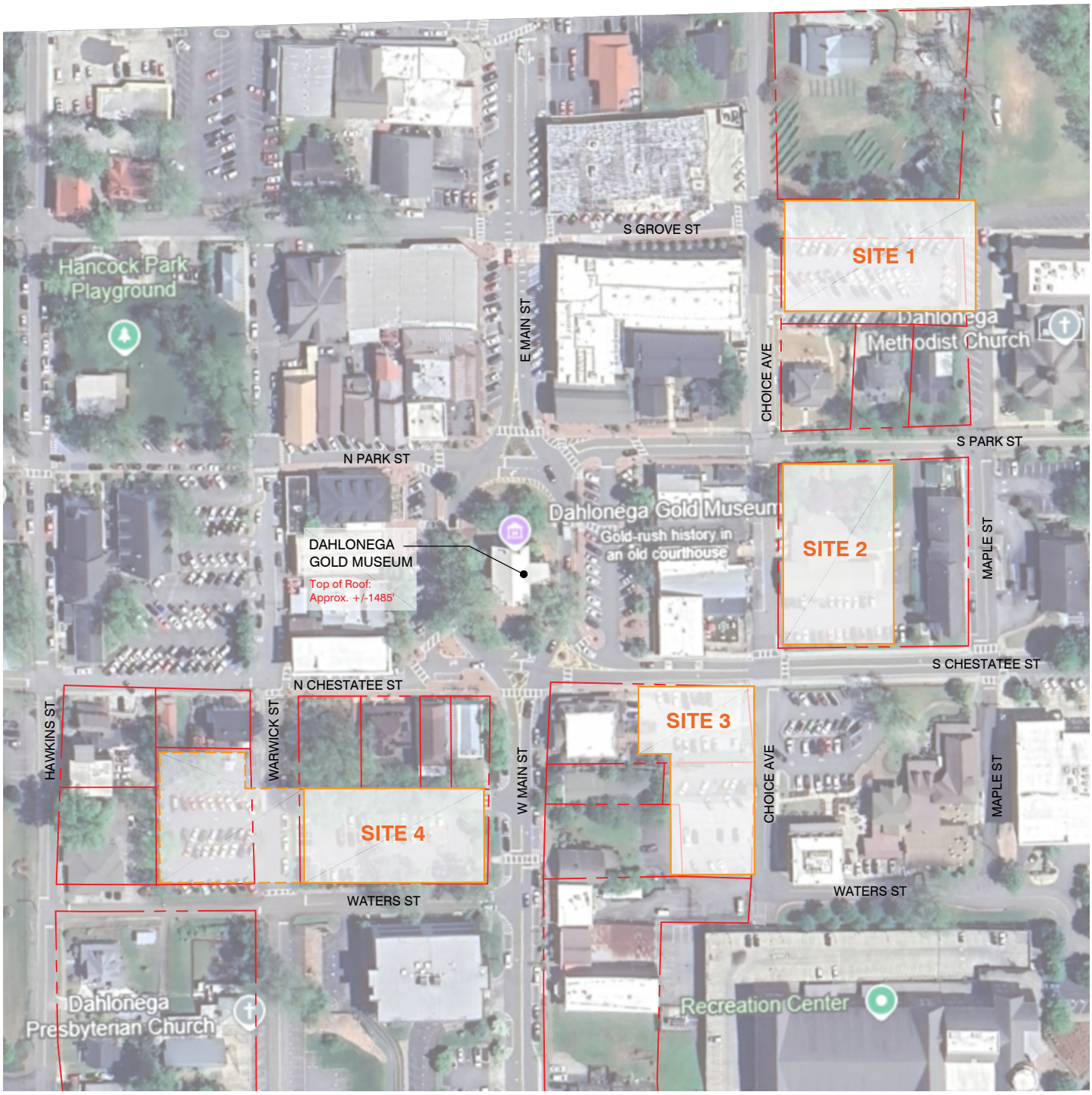
OVERALL SITE MAP



Dahlonega, GA Code of Ordinances (Sec. 703. - Height limitations.)

SITE 1 AND 4: Shall ***not exceed a building height of 35 feet.***

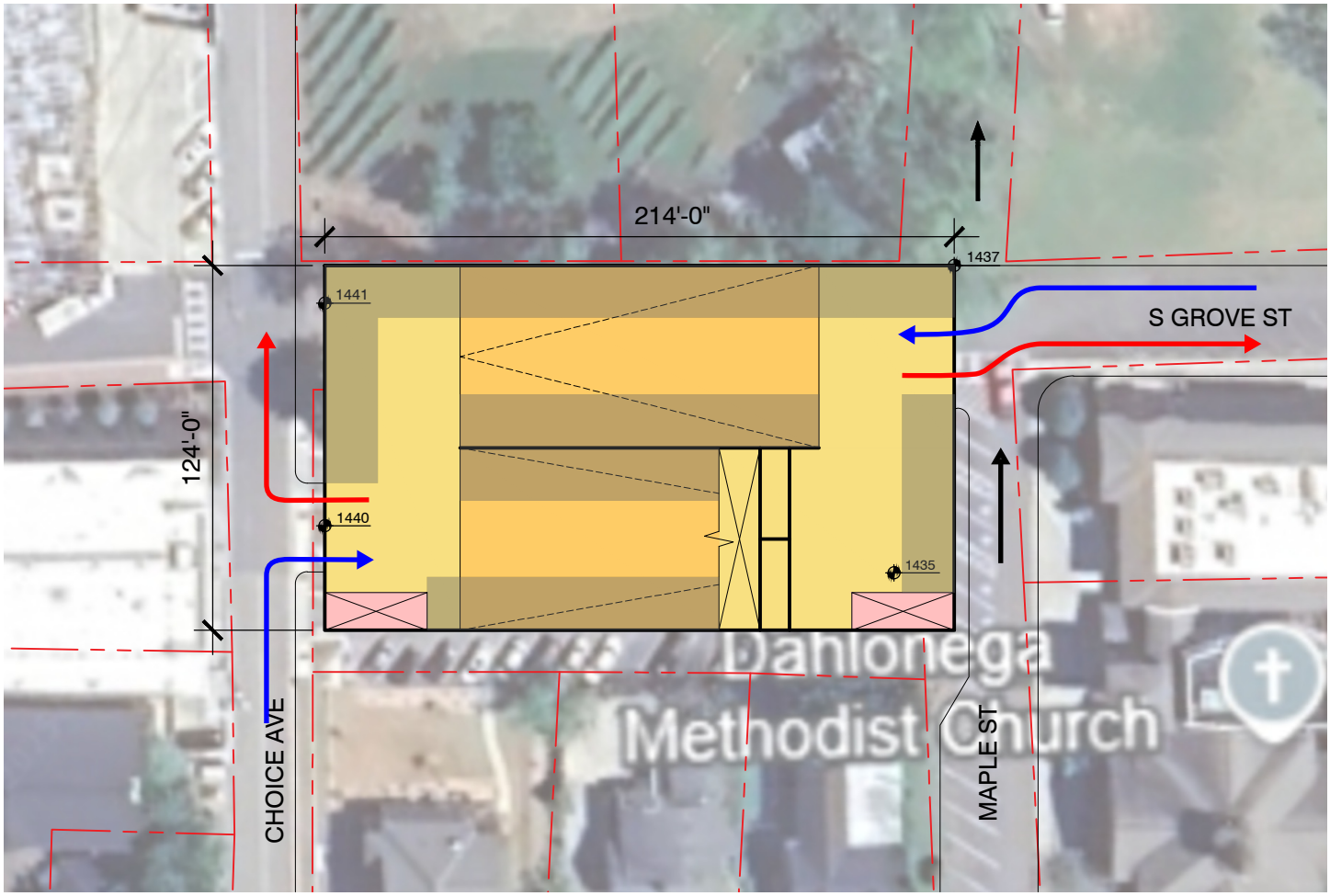
SITE 2: Shall not exceed a height of 55 feet tall with the exception of South Park Street and Chestatee Street, which shall ***not exceed a building height of 35 feet.***

SITE 3: No building or structure shall be erected to a height which is greater than the height of the existing building or structure with the greatest height within said district.

FEASIBILITY STUDY

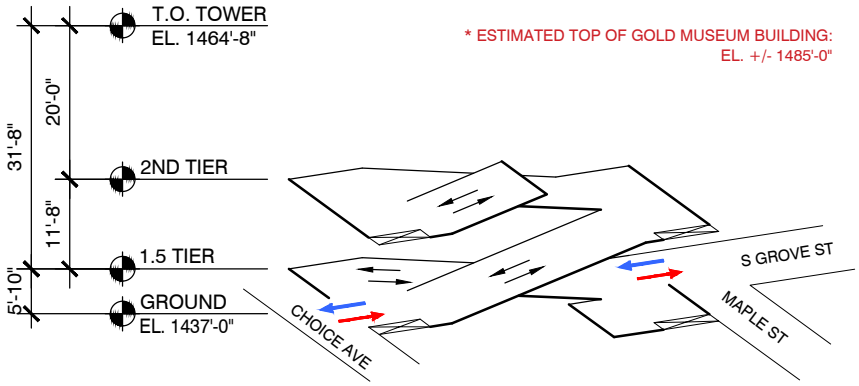
SITE 1

SITE SIZE: 128' X 214'



DESIGN SUMMARY

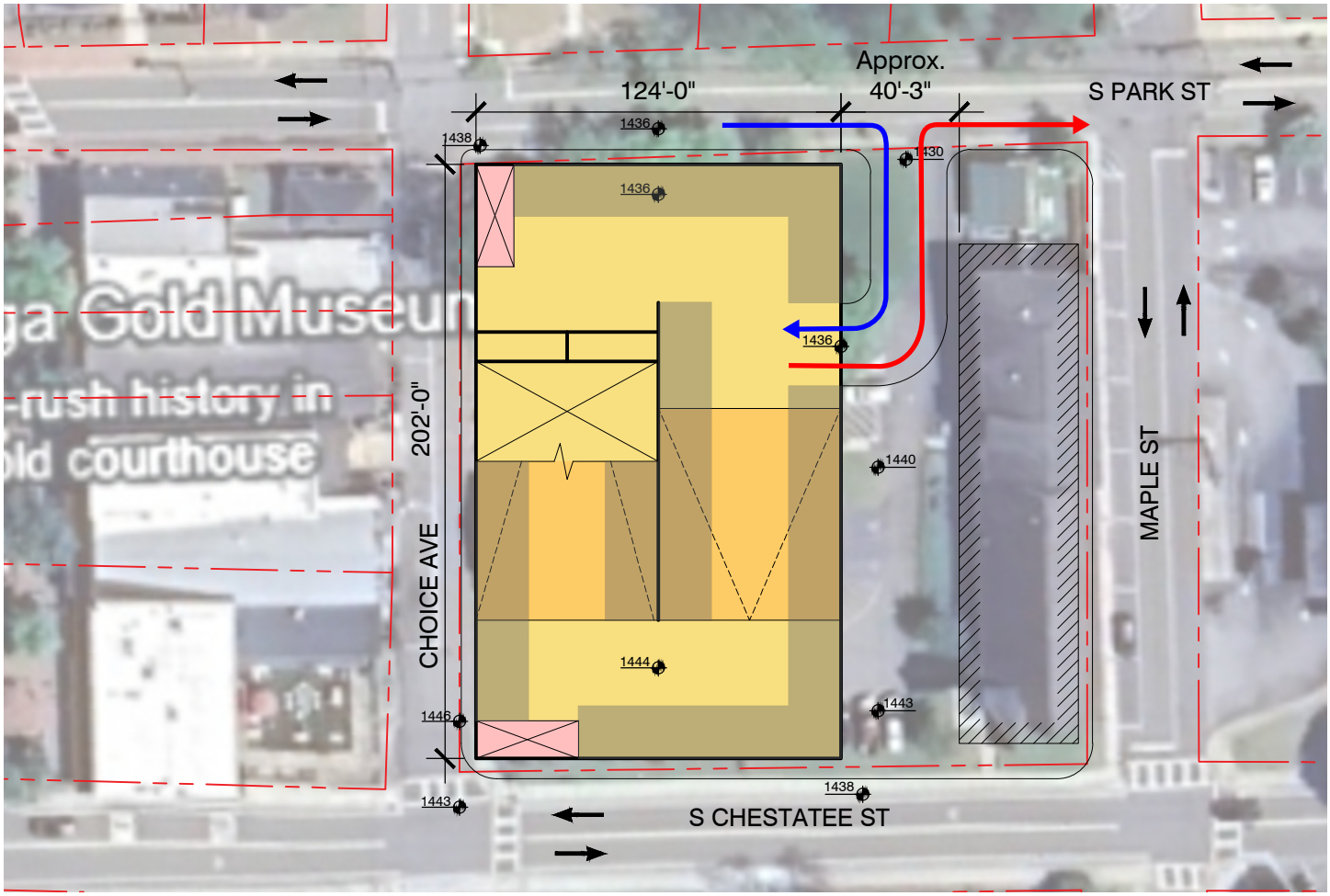
- 2 TIERS (GROUND + 1 SUPPORTED LEVELS)
- SINGLE THREAD HELIX RAMP SYSTEM
- TYPICAL PARKING SPACE SIZE 8'-6"W x 18-0"L
- 90° PARKING + TWO WAY TRAFFIC, TYP.
- ESTIMATED TYPICAL TIER PARKING: 81 SPACES
- ESTIMATED TOTAL PARKING: 148 SPACES
- EXISTING SURFACE PARKING: 82 SPACES
- ESTIMATED NET GAIN: 66 SPACES



FEASIBILITY STUDY

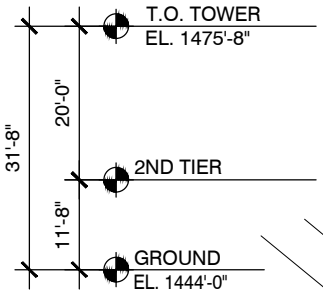
SITE 2

SITE SIZE: 128' X 202'

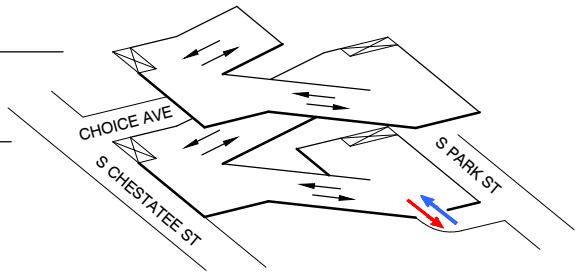


DESIGN SUMMARY

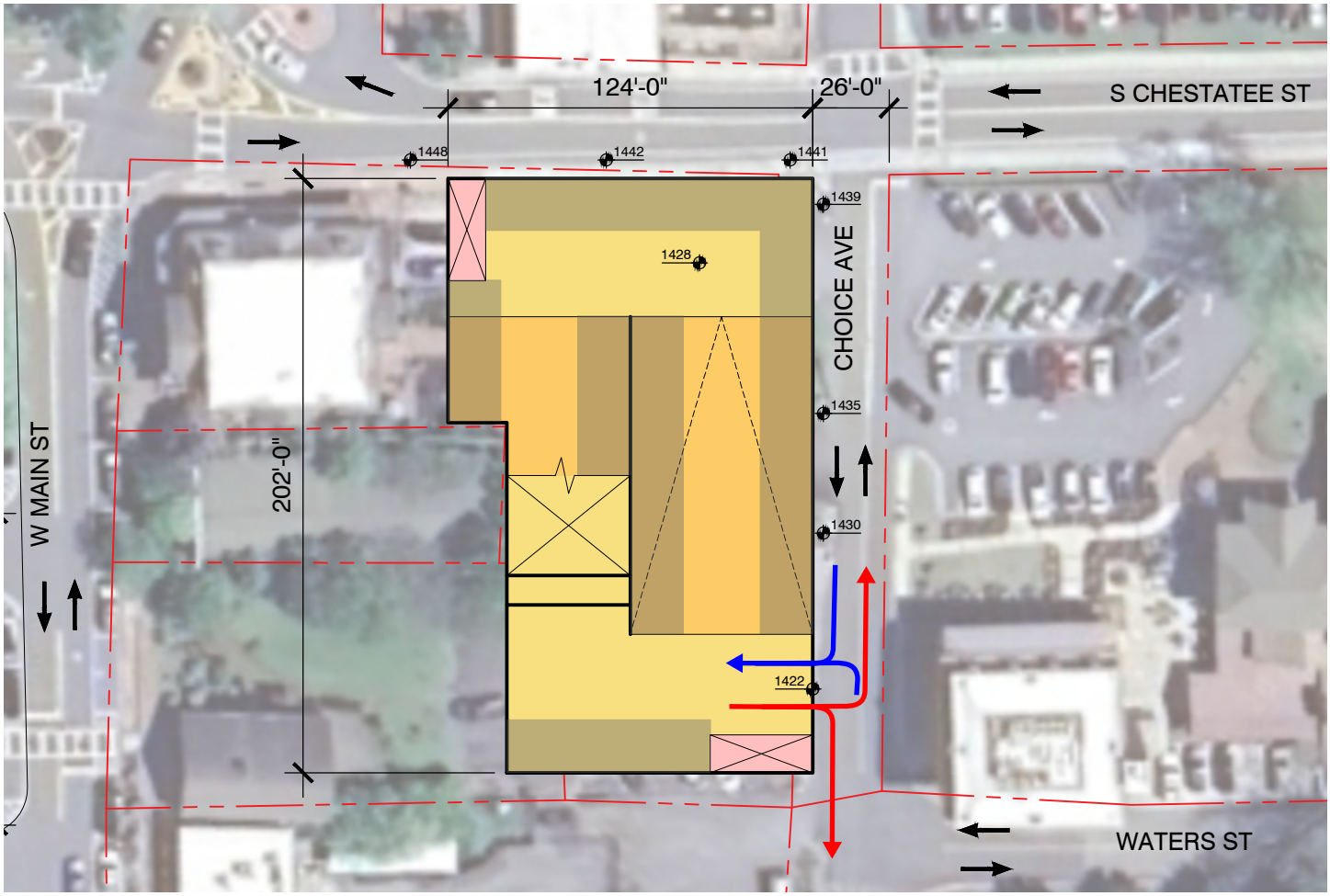
- 2 TIERS (GROUND + 1 SUPPORTED LEVELS)
- SINGLE THREAD HELIX RAMP SYSTEM
- TYPICAL PARKING SPACE SIZE 8'-6"W x 18-0"L
- 90° PARKING + TWO WAY TRAFFIC, TYP.
- ESTIMATED TYPICAL TIER PARKING: 74 SPACES
- ESTIMATED TOTAL PARKING: 133 SPACES
- EXISTING SURFACE PARKING: +/- 30 SPACES
- ESTIMATED NET GAIN: +/- 103 SPACES



* ESTIMATED TOP OF GOLD MUSEUM BUILDING: EL. +/- 1485'-0"

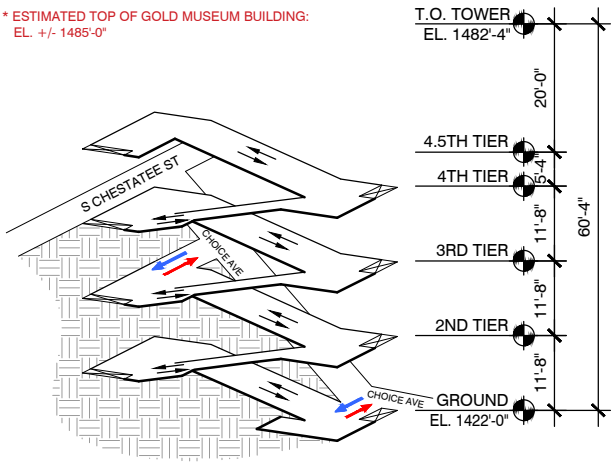


SITE SIZE: 124' X 202'



DESIGN SUMMARY

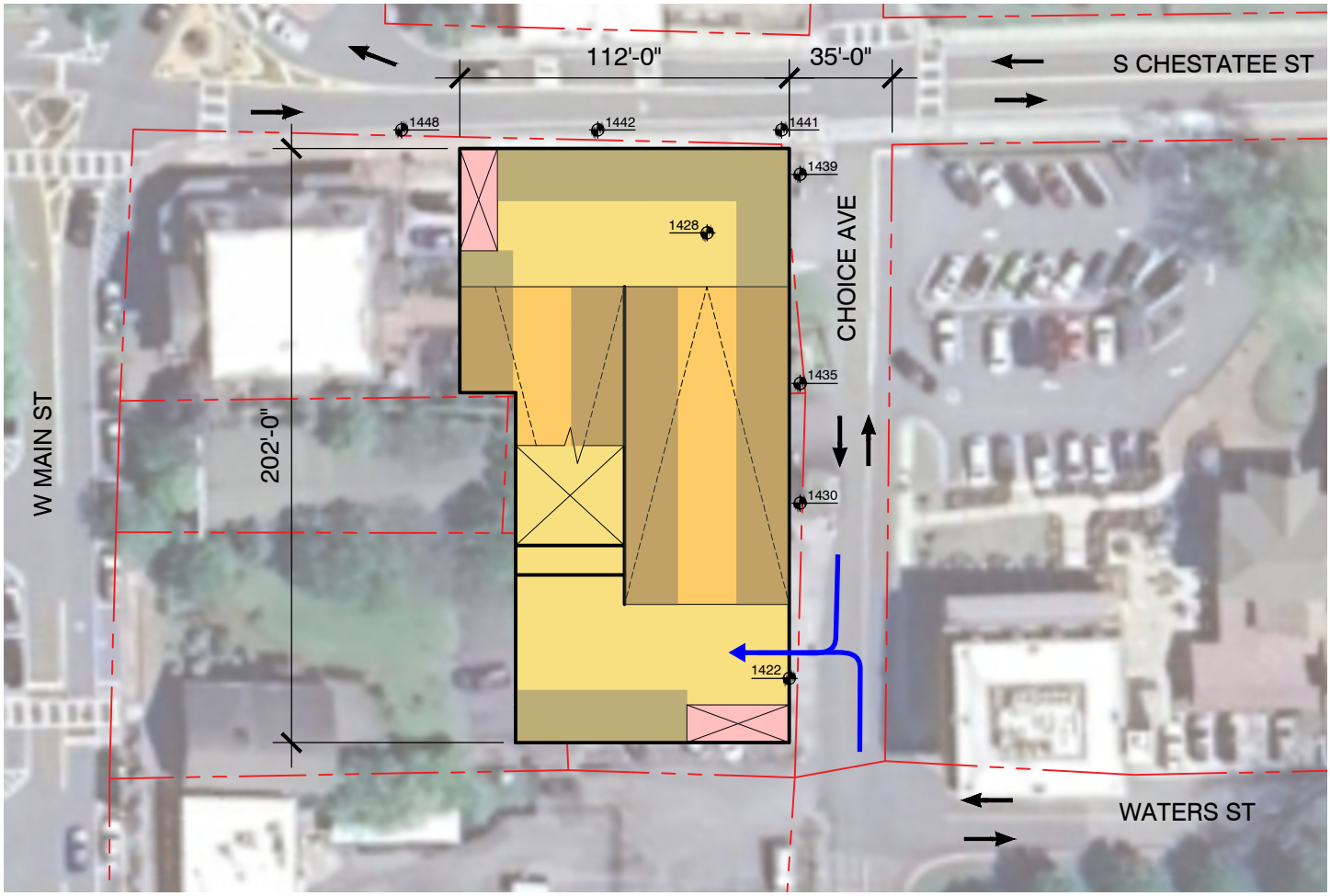
- 3 TIERS (GROUND + 2 SUPPORTED LEVELS)
- SINGLE THREAD HELIX RAMP SYSTEM
- TYPICAL PARKING SPACE SIZE 8'-6"W x 18-0"L
- 90° PARKING + TWO WAY TRAFFIC, TYP.
- ESTIMATED TYPICAL TIER PARKING: 64 SPACES
- ESTIMATED TOTAL PARKING: 244 SPACES
- EXISTING SURFACE PARKING: +/- 40 SPACES
- ESTIMATED NET GAIN: +/- 204 SPACES



FEASIBILITY STUDY

SITE 3 _ OPTION B

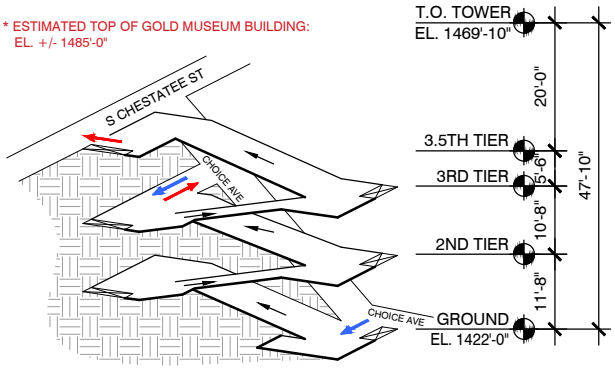
SITE SIZE: 112' X 202'



PARKING GARAGE
RAMP
STAIR/ELEVATOR TOWER
TRAFFIC FLOW (IN/OUT)
PROPERTY LINE

DESIGN SUMMARY

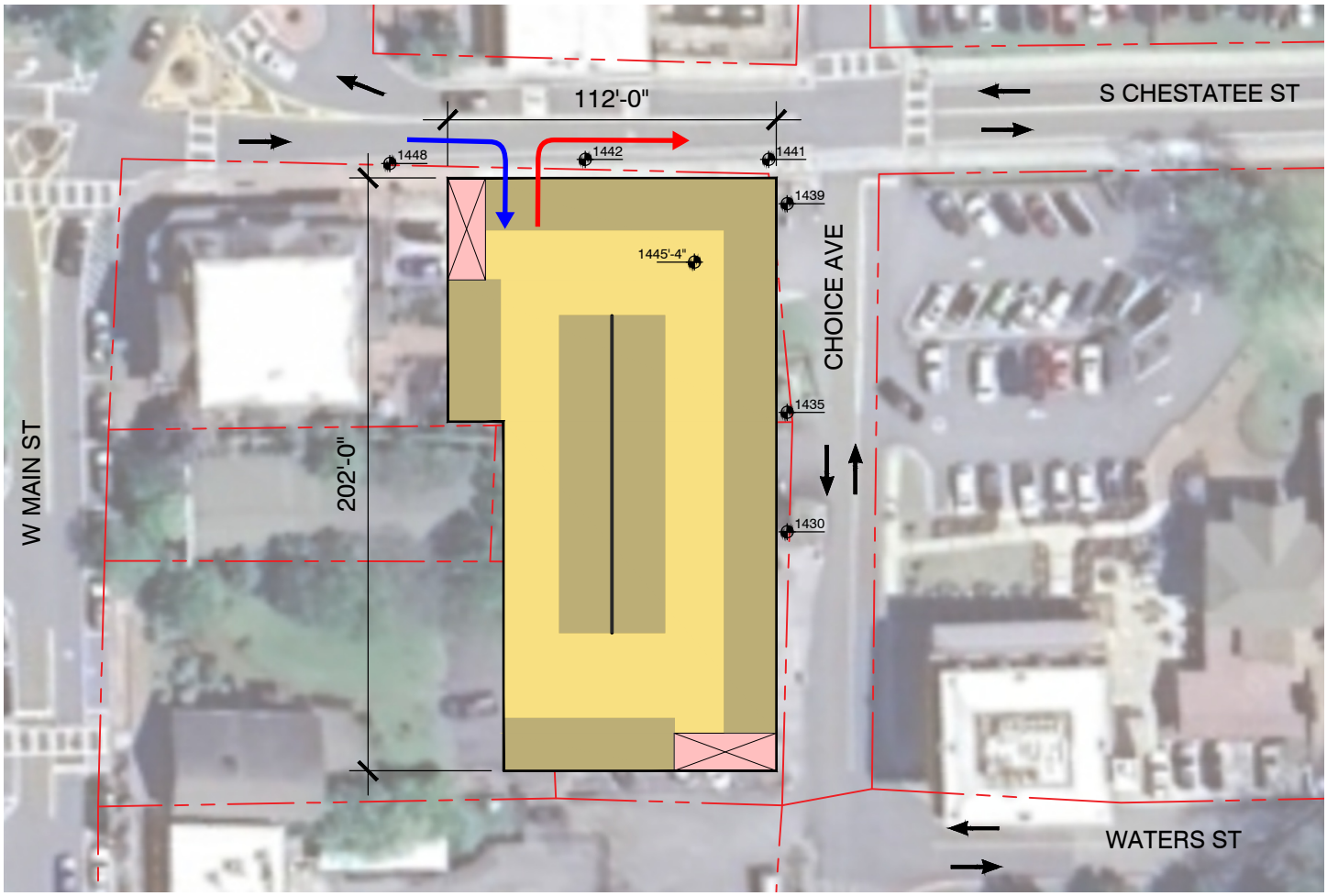
- 3 TIERS (GROUND + 2 SUPPORTED LEVELS)
- SINGLE THREAD HELIX RAMP SYSTEM
- TYPICAL PARKING SPACE SIZE 8'-6"W x 18-0"L
- 75° PARKING + ONE WAY TRAFFIC, TYP.
- ESTIMATED TYPICAL TIER PARKING: 56 SPACES
- ESTIMATED TOTAL PARKING: 153 SPACES
- EXISTING SURFACE PARKING: +/- 40 SPACES
- ESTIMATED NET GAIN: +/- 113 SPACES



FEASIBILITY STUDY

SITE 3 _ OPTION C

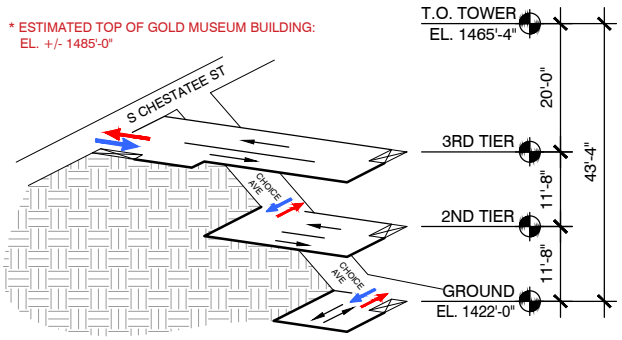
SITE SIZE: 112' X 202'



PARKING GARAGE
RAMP
STAIR/ELEVATOR TOWER
TRAFFIC FLOW (IN/OUT)
PROPERTY LINE

DESIGN SUMMARY

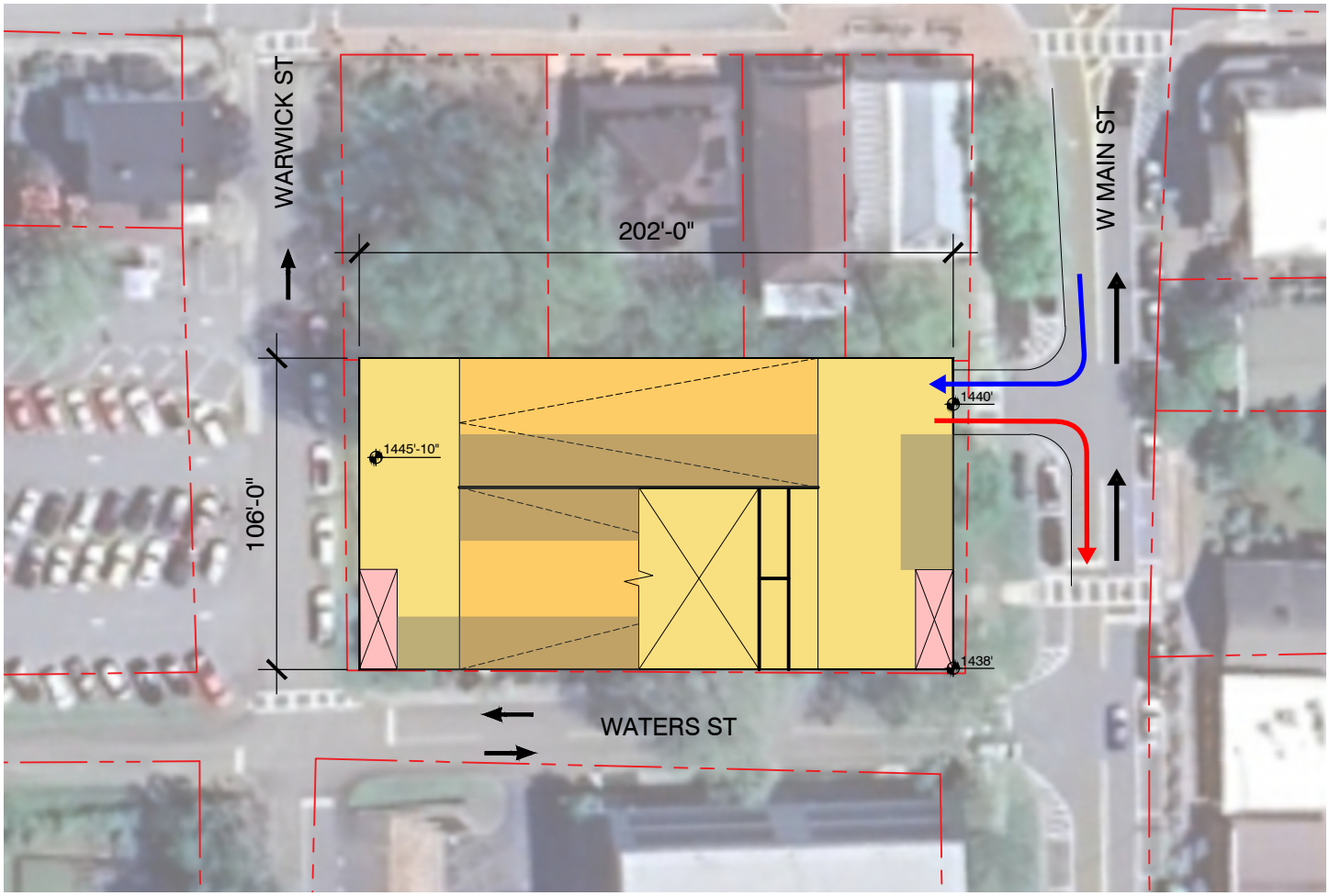
- 3 TIERS (GROUND + 2 SUPPORTED LEVELS)
- NO RAMP SYSTEM IN THE GARAGE
- TYPICAL PARKING SPACE SIZE 8'-6"W x 18-0"L
- 75° PARKING + ONE WAY TRAFFIC, TYP.
- ESTIMATED TOP TIER PARKING: 56 SPACES
- ESTIMATED TOTAL PARKING: 90 SPACES
- EXISTING SURFACE PARKING: +/- 40 SPACES
- ESTIMATED NET GAIN: +/- 50 SPACES



FEASIBILITY STUDY

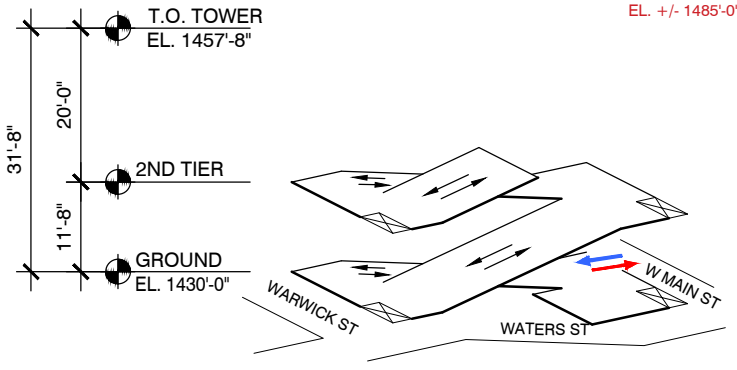
SITE 4 _ OPTION A

SITE SIZE: 106' X 202'



DESIGN SUMMARY

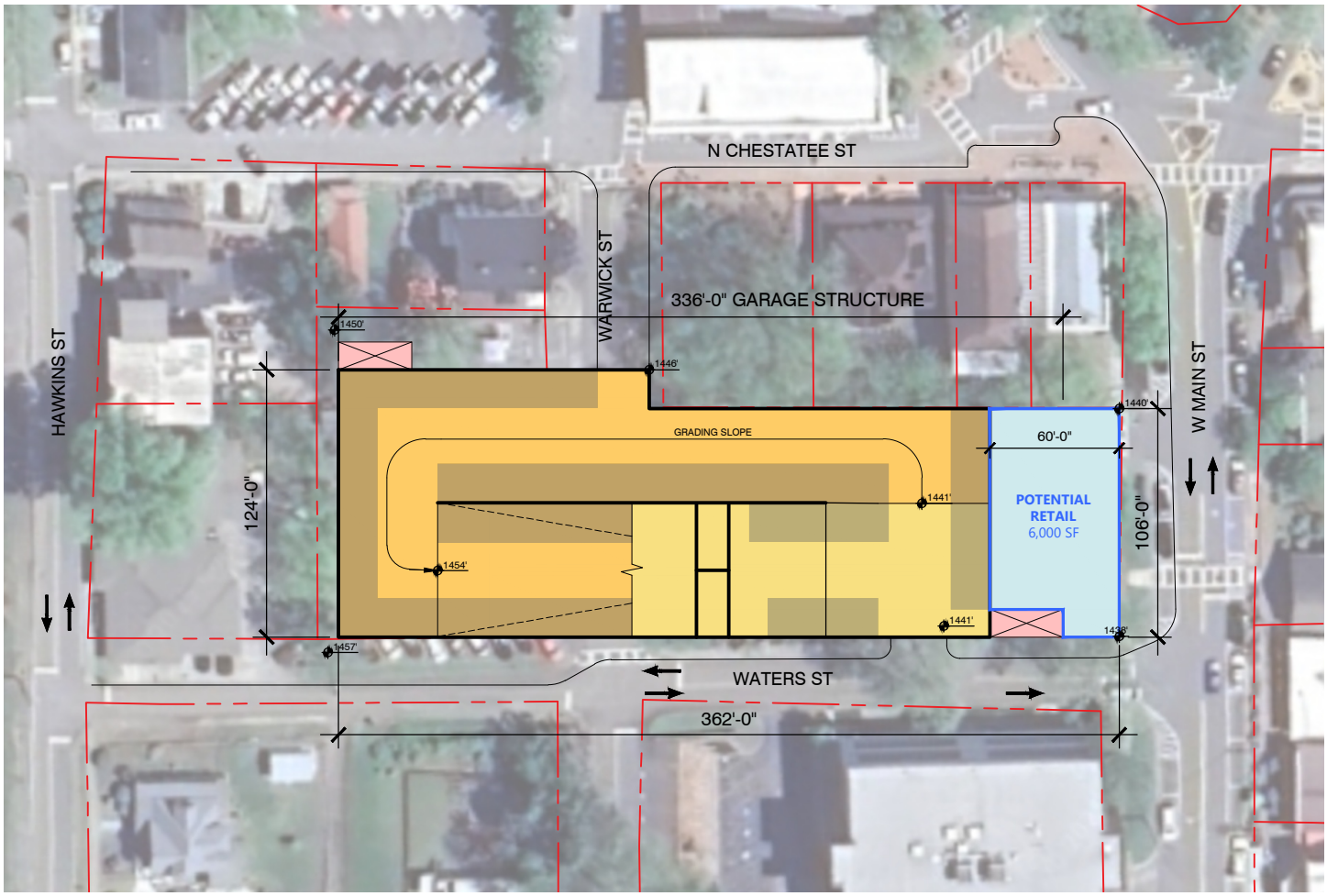
- 2 TIERS (GROUND + 1 SUPPORTED LEVELS)
- SINGLE THREAD HELIX RAMP SYSTEM
- TYPICAL PARKING SPACE SIZE 8'-6"W x 18-0"L
- 90° PARKING + TWO WAY TRAFFIC, TYP.
- ESTIMATED TYPICAL TIER PARKING: 52 SPACES
- ESTIMATED TOTAL PARKING: 92 SPACES
- EXISTING SURFACE PARKING: 44 SPACES
- ESTIMATED NET GAIN: 48 SPACES



FEASIBILITY STUDY

SITE 4 _ OPTION B

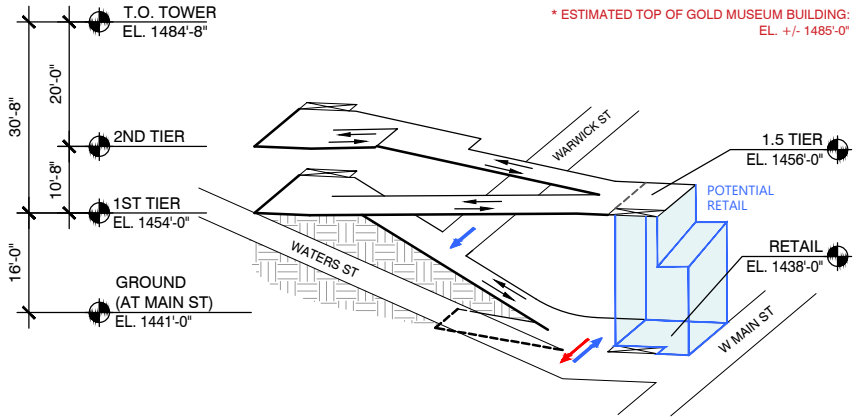
SITE SIZE: 106' X 202'



PARKING GARAGE
RAMP
STAIR/ELEVATOR TOWER
TRAFFIC FLOW (IN/OUT)
PROPERTY LINE

DESIGN SUMMARY

- 2 TIERS (GROUND + 1 SUPPORTED LEVELS)
- SINGLE THREAD HELIX RAMP SYSTEM
- TYPICAL PARKING SPACE SIZE 8'-6"W x 18-0"L
- 90° PARKING + TWO WAY TRAFFIC, TYP.
- ESTIMATED TYPICAL TIER PARKING: 111 SPACES
- ESTIMATED TOTAL PARKING: 202 SPACES
- EXISTING SURFACE PARKING: 90 SPACES
- ESTIMATED NET GAIN: 112 SPACES



PRELIMINARY ORDER OF MAGNITUDE COST ESTIMATE

City of Dahlonega - Site 4 Option B		
Parking Inventory	**202**	**Spaces**
Construction Costs		
Site work - enhanced sidewalk, materials, landscaping		$800,000
Pre-Cast Garage		$6,242,000
Architectural Treatment		$285,000
Retail / Commercial gray shell space (no fit-out)		$300,000
10 Electric Vehicle Charging Spaces		$125,000
CCTV Security Cameras		$180,000
Total Construction Costs		**$7,932,000**
Construction Contingency	7.50%	$594,900
General Conditions	10.00%	$794,000
Total Construction Costs with Contingency		**$9,320,900**
Cost Per Space with Contingency		**$46,143**
Add alternate -Automatic Sprinklers		$252,500
Soft Costs		
Design, Survey, Geotech, Traffic, Environmental Assessment, Testing	7.50%	$700,000
Total Soft Costs		**$700,000**
Total Construction and Soft Costs		**$10,020,900**

QUALIFICATIONS & ASSUMPTIONS

- •Order of Magnitude cost estimate is based on 2025 dollars
- •Any utility relocation costs are excluded
- •All subsurface environmental conditions are excluded
- •Assumes shallow foundations and no unusual geotechnical conditions
- •On site storm water retention or detention is excluded
- •Exclude Parking Access and Revenue Control
- •Retail space provided as a gray shell space (no fit-out)
- •This order of magnitude estimate may vary due to time of construction, project delivery method, local economy and other market factors

Potential Parking Garage Funding Sources

To help potentially fund a new parking facility, THA identified several grant and loan programs that may be available through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and the State Road and Tollway Authority (SRTA) that cities can use to finance a municipal parking garage, as listed below:

- **Georgia Transportation Infrastructure Bank (GTIB):** a competitive grant and low interest loan program administered by SRTA. It funds transportation projects that enhance mobility and spur economic development. Website: https://srta.ga.gov/gtib
- **Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund (DD RLF):** operated by the DCA to help small cities (less than 100,000 residents), counties and development authorities revitalize and enhance historic downtowns. The program offers below market rate loans for capital projects, including real estate acquisition, development, redevelopment and new construction, and rehabilitation of public or private infrastructure. Website: https://dca.georgia.gov/financing-tools/small-business/downtown-development-revolving-loan-fund-ddrlf
- **Redevelopment Fund (RDF):** a flexible financing program within Georgia's non-entitlement Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) set-asides to provide grants or loans to local governments for public–private partnerships that support redevelopment projects. Website: https://dca.georgia.gov/financing-tools/infrastructure/community-development-block-grants-cdbg/redevelopment-fund
- **Employment Incentive Program (EIP):** a flexible financing program within Georgia's non-entitlement Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) set-asides to provide up to $1 million in grants or loans for projects that create or retain jobs for low- and moderate-income persons. A municipal parking garage could qualify if the project results in job creation or retention, particularly benefiting low- and moderate-income residents. Website: https://dca.georgia.gov/financing-tools/infrastructure/community-development-block-grants-cdbg/employment-incentive-program
- **EDGE Fund (Economic Development, Growth and Expansion Fund):** administered by the One Georgia Authority (part of DCA), this fund offers grants for projects that help communities attract or retain large employers. Eligible activities must assist the local government in carrying out its responsibilities under state law and the program should be used only when other funding sources are unavailable. Website: https://dca.georgia.gov/financing-tools/infrastructure/onegeorgia-authority/edge-fund

These programs do not fund parking garages directly; however, they provide financing for transportation, downtown revitalization or economic development infrastructure projects that can include a public parking structure. When a city can demonstrate that a parking structure enhances mobility, supports downtown redevelopment or spurs job creation, these programs may be appropriate funding sources. Local governments should review each program's guidelines and application cycles and consult with the administering agencies for guidance.

Summary of Recommendations

#	Parking Recommendations Summary
Parking Management	
1	Centralize the provision of parking services under the supervision of a parking department or division as a stand-alone entity or a subsidiary of a larger department.
2	Elevate the current Parking Committee to an official entity that meets on a regular basis.
3	Hire an additional part-time or full-time PEO to ensure that enforcement is present and visible on weekends, especially Saturdays.
4	Review enforcement routes to ensure regular and consistent enforcement of all areas.
5	Warnings should be issued as a preliminary step to first-time violators.
6	Utilize mobile LPR enforcement to improve parking enforcement efficiency.
7	Modify parking time limit on Warwick Street, Hawkins Street, and North Meaders Street to a 3-hour time limit.
Maximizing Existing Assets	
1	Restripe areas on North Park Street, Hawkins Street, and Martin Street to add additional on-street parking supply.
2	Implement color-coded curb striping to communicate parking regulations as an alternative to installing new regulatory signage.
3	Expand the City's parking wayfinding system by adding parking signs that indicate the nearest public parking. Implement site signage at the entrances of parking facilities displaying the name of the facility with common branding.
4	Upgrade the signage at the Methodist Church permit spaces on South Meaders Street to indicate that they are available to the public after 2pm on weekdays and on weekends.
5	Engage downtown property owners with meaningful parking facilities to lease a limited number of spaces / permits to downtown employees during weekdays.
6	Engage UNG to determine the feasibility of leasing a limited number of spaces / permits in the UNG Lots and Chestatee Street Deck to downtown employees during weekdays.
7	Implement a community-wide shuttle service in the evenings, on Saturdays, and during the holiday season. The on-demand shuttle would primarily assist older residents and visitors parking in Lot 6 and UNG lots.
8	Develop a special events parking plan outlining the necessary facilities, staffing, supervision, signage, traffic control, and standard operating procedures for event parking.
9	Implement a special event shuttle to help alleviate downtown parking demand during events.
10	Add information to the City's parking webpage pertaining to the benefits and rationale of parking enforcement, parking meter locations/rate information, event parking information, and frequently asked questions (FAQ's) related to parking rules in the City. Update the interactive map with this information.
11	Work with the DDA to connect parking information between their website and the City's website.
12	Create a promotional video or brochure/e-brochure that introduces the City's parking options to visitors.
Pedestrian Connectivity, Lighting and Security	
1	Improve sidewalk conditions between the Public Square and Lot 6, and upgrade sidewalk lighting where necessary.

2	Regularly check the lighting levels at all public parking facilities to promote user comfort.
3	Station a police vehicle in Lot 6 in the evening and during events to provide security. A police or municipal vehicle can also patrol the other off-street lots in the evenings with orange flashing lights.
4	Clear, repave and restripe Lot 6 to provide up to approximately 120 parking spaces.
Paid Parking Expansion	
1	Implement recommendations outlined herein. After 8-12 months, evaluate whether fee parking expansion is needed to further manage parking demand.
2	Remove parking meters from current streets; or expand fee parking to all areas except remote streets and Lot 6.
3	Adopt a pay-by-cell system for paid parking collection and evaluate the feasibility of multi-space pay stations.
4	Work with pay-by-cell app provider to establish a resident discount parking program at fee parking locations.
5	Designate a Community Improvement District (CID) in downtown Dahlonega to fund parking management efforts if fee parking is not expanded.
New Parking Facility Feasibility Study	
1	Undertake the necessary planning, financial and property agreements to advance the construction of a new parking facility to support the projected parking demand.
2	Evaluate the use of State of Georgia grants in the funding of a new parking structure.