CITY OF FAIRBORN
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
November 3, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.
Fire Training Room

COUNCIL MEMBERS	Present	Absent
Dan Kirkpatrick, Mayor	☒	☐
Clint Allen, Councilman	☒	☐
Sylvia Chess, Councilwoman	☒	☐
Adam Fritzsche, Councilman	☒	☐
Rodney McCubbins, Councilman	☒	☐
Mary Reaster, Deputy Mayor	☒	☐
Tana Stanton, Councilwoman	☒	☐

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Adkins, Halpin, E. Gay, Gebhart, McClure, McNamee, Schell, and Taylor

DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY

Matt Halpin, Downtown Revitalization Manager, reviewed the result of the downtown parking study. The full power point is attached hereto as Exhibit "A" which covered the following topics discussed in his presentation:

- Study Framework and Timeline – data gathered from April to August 2025
- Findings – 595 parking spaces downtown, slightly over the 577 spaces required under zoning.
- Municipal Solutions – improve wayfinding signage, enhance lighting in underused lots, adjust enforcement policies, launch education campaign.
- Private Solutions – Lighting & Activation/Merchant/Employee Parking Policy, Public Information Campaign, Event-Specific Parking Management, Lot-Sharing Agreements
- High Risk/High Cost/Low Reward – Structured parking facility, property acquisitions/conversion/Elimination of Existing Traffic Calming and Visibility Measures (bump-outs)
- Events – regular capacity is adequate but large events create shortages.
- Conclusions – Downtown Fairborn parking is adequate overall, but distribution, visibility, and event management need improvement; Focus should be on better signage, lighting, and communication/partnership; Event-specific solutions can ease peak stress without major construction; Long-term, align parking strategy with downtown revitalization; a walkable, vibrant mixed-use district. **Recommendation**: Implement low to moderate cost improvements now and monitor demand over time before considering large-scale projects.

Mr. Halpin also passed out information regarding the result of the two-minute walking distance study they performed. He provided maps of nearby areas such as Tipp City,

Ohio, Piqua, Ohio, and Van Wert, Ohio. He also provided an overlay of Fairborn's parking in comparison to parking available at the Centerville Costco lot. See attached Exhibit "B."

Deputy Mayor Reaster asked if the parking lot behind Giovanni's is privately owned. Mr. Halpin stated the parking lot, if you are looking at a map of the first two or three rows of cars, that is owned by the property owner. If you are looking at Google maps where the pavement gets darker, that area is owned by the City along the back of the lot by the fence and three rows in are public parking. She stated the parking lot is awful. Mr. Halpin stated it is underutilized. Deputy Mayor Reaster stated probably because it is not striped. Mike Gebhart, City Manager, stated we actually need an updated parking agreement with the owner of the lot. There is no agreement in place. Mr. Gebhart stated he could reach back out to them about an agreement.

Councilman Allen asked if there had been a formal study of this before? Mr. Halpin stated not to his knowledge. He thanked Mr. Halpin for taking on the challenge. Parking is always going to be something that we deal with. He thinks a key piece of it is identifying what public parking is and what is not. Mr. Gebhart stated they do have one public parking signage that fell down and is in need of repair. Emily Gay, Communications Manager, stated private lots usually have towing signs posted. Councilman Allen stated it was interesting he used the two-minute walk piece. He thinks that it is important for people to consider. Business owners would like to be able to have customers park right in front of their business, but communication and making signs more visible would be helpful. Everyone wants convenience. It is always going to be a challenge. He asked if it had been studied before because this is something people always ask about. Mr. Halpin stated it is and from the economic development standpoint looking at it they wanted to have a firm understanding of the scope of everything. If we want to do anything else downtown parking is going to come up.

Mayor Kirkpatrick stated the parking map of downtown Fairborn that Mr. Halpin provided is very helpful, but he would like it made in landscape format and extend it down to Main Street to the funeral home. They have the Block Party, the car show and the marathon. The funeral home works with the Chamber to allow parking in their lot during large events like the Halloween Festival if they don't have any funerals or business schedules on the days of those events. Most of the time the funeral home allows them to use their lot for public parking of 75 spaces. If we could change the map and include them as private parking it would be helpful. Mayor Kirkpatrick also discussed private parking along the south side of the street. He asked Councilwoman Chess if she would allow parking behind her business during events. Councilwoman Chess responded she is not sure she would or not because the last time she did that her parking lot was trashed out. Mayor Kirkpatrick stated that is the very reason the furniture store and Rent A Center were charging for parking during the Halloween Festival.

Councilwoman Chess suggested that coming in from Broad Street all the way to Miller that should be a one-way and also add in handicap spaces because they have handicap people coming into those buildings. She believes they could get an additional 10-15 spaces out of each side and then add handicap parking as well. She suggested also adding a stop sign. She believes this makes sense.

Mayor Kirkpatrick discussed the need to educate the people about taking care of the parking that we have and taking care of litter and not leaving it in the parking lots.

Councilman McCubbins asked if parking comes up because of events or is it an all-year-round complaint. Mr. Halpin stated most conversations he has had with people events come up.

Councilwoman Chess asked if they have considered two-hour parking. Mr. Halpin stated they are taking a look at enforcement.

Councilman McCubbins asked about the feelings of the businesses downtown. Mr. Halpin stated he is trying to improve notification to businesses about events coming up and road closures. Since he has been doing that there has been a little bit less pushback. He also mentioned Fairborn has more events in their downtown than any other city and he does not see an issue with parking. The Troy Strawberry Festival requires much more walking for parking. Mayor Kirkpatrick stated there is a parking issue during large events.

Deputy Mayor Reaster said let's take events out of the equation and go to downtown Centerville, there is no parking in downtown Centerville. People will park anywhere and walk to their destination. So, this is not unique to Fairborn. There is a more affluent community that has the same trouble we have she is with Councilman McCubbins that Fairborn has ample parking and there are going to be times that it is going to be tough to find a parking spot like the Fourth of July parade, Halloween, Bluegrass and Brew, but we are bringing people downtown that are going to check out business. In her opinion it is a small inconvenience for a bigger turnout and bigger opportunity to showcase our community to the people who do not live here.

Mayor Kirkpatrick suggested publicizing the parking map on the City website that Mr. Halpin had designed. Councilwoman Chess continued to discuss her idea of the one-way street. Mike Gebhart, City Manager, stated they would forward that suggestion to Manuel Jacobs, City Engineer.

Mike Gebhart stated he provided Council with a memo about the downtown wi-fi being terminated and the letter letting Alta Fiber know that we are leaving. He also provided a sample letter that would be sent out to businesses. His goal is to have those out by the middle of this month and the letter to Alta Fiber by December 1, 2025. It is $31,0000 that could be used elsewhere in the budget. Wi-fi trending numbers are going down and it is covered in the memo. If you have any questions, please email or call him.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilwoman Chess stated she had already warned her tenants of the wi-fi cancellation. She also thanked Councilman Fritzsche for his time he invested as a Councilmember and stated he would be missed. She hopes that he will run again at some point.

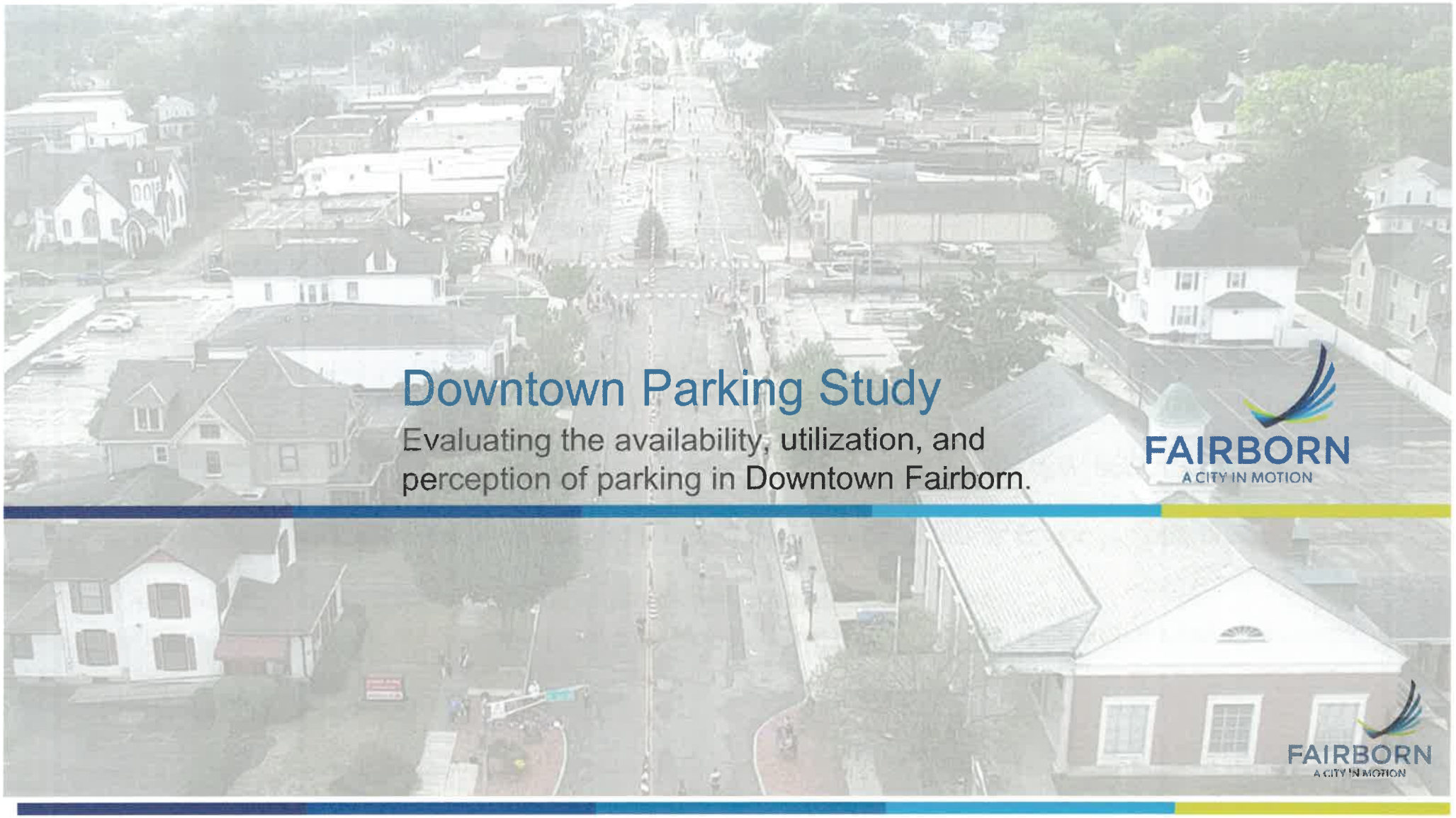
Councilwoman Stanton stated she had some other questions and she would reach out to Mr. Gebhart with those.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilman Fritzsche moved to adjourn the meeting. Deputy Mayor Reaster seconded. Yeas, seven: Fritzsche, Reaster, Allen, Chess, McCubbins, Stanton and Kirkpatrick. Nays, none. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:56 p.m.

MAYOR

CLERK, CITY OF FAIRBORN



Downtown Parking Study

Evaluating the availability, utilization, and perception of parking in Downtown Fairborn.

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Study Framework & Timeline

The study was conducted between April and August 2025, with supplemental data and survey responses collected through the summer and early fall. Multiple approaches were used:

- **Parking Inventory & Capacity Analysis**: A complete count of on-street, public lot, and private spaces.
- **Utilization Data Collection**: Regular observations, broken down by zone, day, and time of day, including weekday vs. weekend comparisons.
- **Surveys**: Distributed to visitors, residents, and business owners to capture perceptions, experiences, and priorities.
- **Comparative & Demographic Review**: Consideration of Fairborn's aging population, event-driven activity, and downtown zoning standards that reduce required parking.
- **Comparative Analysis**: Looking at similar sized downtown areas and how their availability and inventory of parking compares.

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Findings

- **Supply vs. Demand**: Downtown Fairborn has the equivalent of 595 parking spaces, slightly above the 577 required under zoning. Average utilization across all spaces ranged 25–40%, with only certain curbside zones (particularly near Central Avenue and Spark) regularly reaching higher occupancy. Several public lots, including the Commons and Giovanni's, remained consistently underused.

- **Event Impact**: Regular weekday and weekend demand rarely exceeded available capacity. Perceived shortages occurred primarily during festivals, parades, or the Air Force Marathon, when both closures and visitor influx strain the system.

- **Visitor Perspectives**: Many visitors reported difficulty finding parking, citing lack of signage, event congestion, safety concerns in lots at night, and frustration with bump-outs or angled parking. Most are willing to walk 1–2 blocks but prefer spaces immediately adjacent to destinations.

- **Business Perspectives**: Owners emphasized management issues over supply—employees parking in front of stores, poor wayfinding to existing lots, and time limits that discourage longer visits. Some called for structural solutions such as a garage or additional lots, but most agreed that better enforcement and visibility of current spaces should come first.

- **Consensus Issues**: Both groups identified event congestion, poor signage, and safety/lighting as the highest shared priorities.

- **Comparable Downtown Areas:** Inventory and availability on par with Downtown Fairborn. Cities with larger designated parking areas also have other factors that contribute to higher demand and available space for parking.

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Municipal Solutions

- **Low-Cost / Short-Term**: Improve wayfinding signage for drivers, enhance lighting in underused lots, adjust enforcement policies, and launch a public education campaign.
- **Moderate to High-Cost / Short Term**: Redesign problematic intersections, re-stripe or upgrade underused lots, and explore technology tools (apps, sensors, real-time digital signs).
- **High-Cost / Long-Term:** Comprehensive Streetscape Redesign of Main Street comparable to Broad St improvements (e.g., pedestrian-first blocks, one-way conversions, reconfigured parking).

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Private Solutions

- **Lighting & Activation:** Upgrade lighting on commercial spaces. Activate vacant and underutilized storefronts according to Permitted and Conditional Uses.
- **Merchant/Employee Parking Policy:** Encourage or require employees to park in less-demanded lots.
- **Public Information Campaign:** Educate residents and visitors on available parking options
- **Event-Specific Parking Management:** Partner with Event Organizers to find creative solutions (See Potential Solutions to Event Parking Challenges in Downtown Fairborn); add temporary event signage to direct overflow.
- **Lot-Sharing Agreements:** Partner with churches, banks, and private owners for shared use.

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High Risk / High Cost / Low Reward

- **Structured Parking Facility (Cost/Need):** Explore feasibility of a garage near high-demand zones (Central/Main).
- **Property Acquisition/Conversion (Cost/Need/Detrimental):** Purchase underutilized parcels for additional parking supply.
- **Elimination of Existing Traffic Calming and Visibility Measures (Safety/Cost/Detrimental):** Removal of bump-outs to add parking along streets.

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Events

Challenge: Regular capacity is adequate, but large events (festivals, parades, Air Force Marathon) create temporary shortages.

Events drive foot traffic but displace regular customers. Coordination between organizers and businesses is essential to maximize benefits while minimizing disruptions.

- Event Organizer
  - Incorporate parking mitigation plans into event planning.
  - Partner with Private Lot owners for use during events.
  - Provide clear wayfinding signage and communication before and during events.
  - Partner with organizers to help with logistics and planning.

- Private Solution
  - Property owners may charge for event parking, creating incentives for private lots to open while preserving control of the lot.
  - Communication with the Event Organizer is critical.

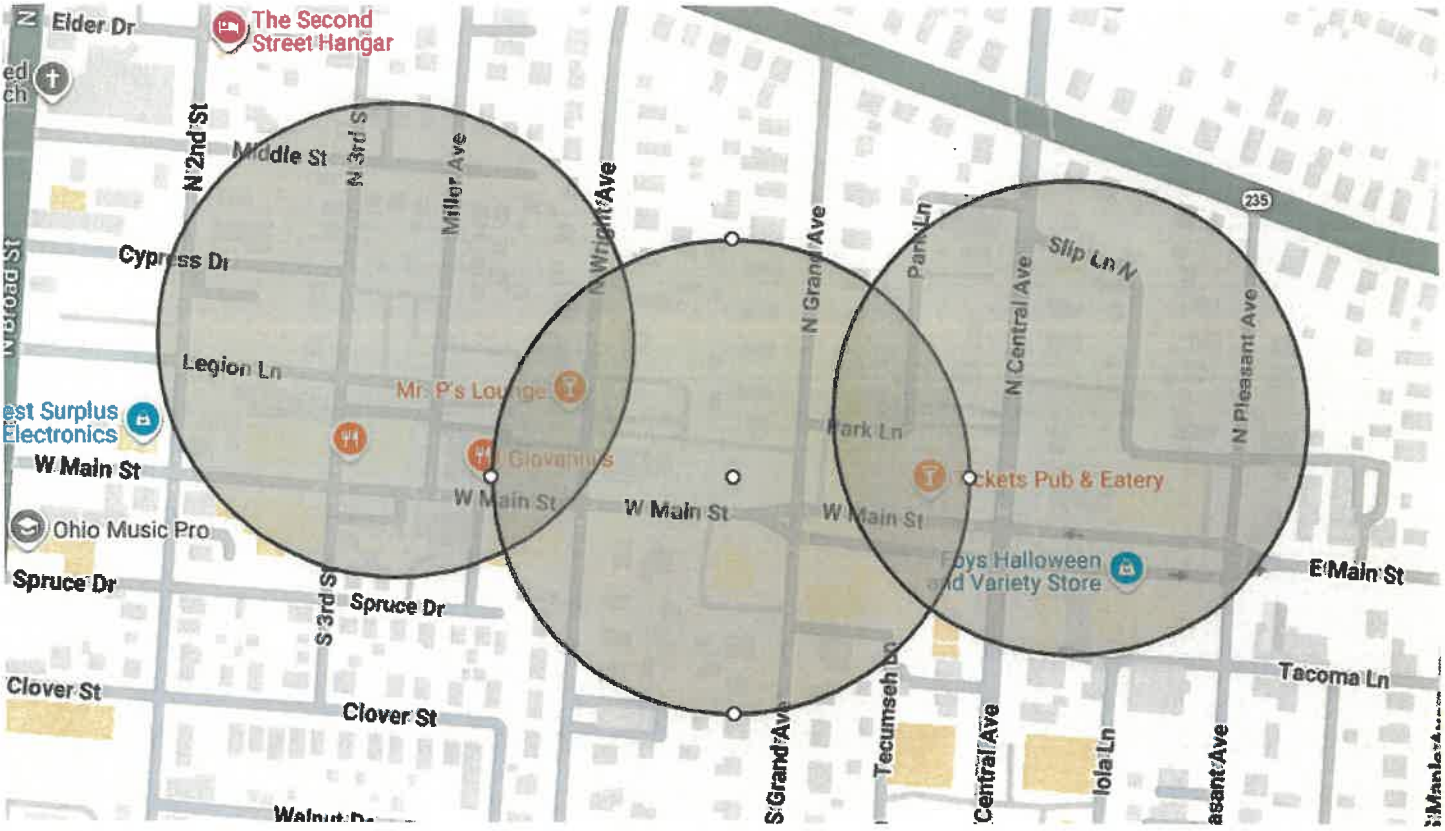
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Conclusions

- Downtown Fairborn parking is adequate overall, but distribution, visibility, and event management need improvement.
- Focus should be on better signage, lighting, and communication/partnerships.
- Event-specific solutions can ease peak stress without major construction.
- Long-term, align parking strategy with downtown revitalization: a walkable, vibrant, mixed-use district.
- Recommendation: Implement low- to moderate-cost improvements now and monitor demand over time before considering large-scale projects.

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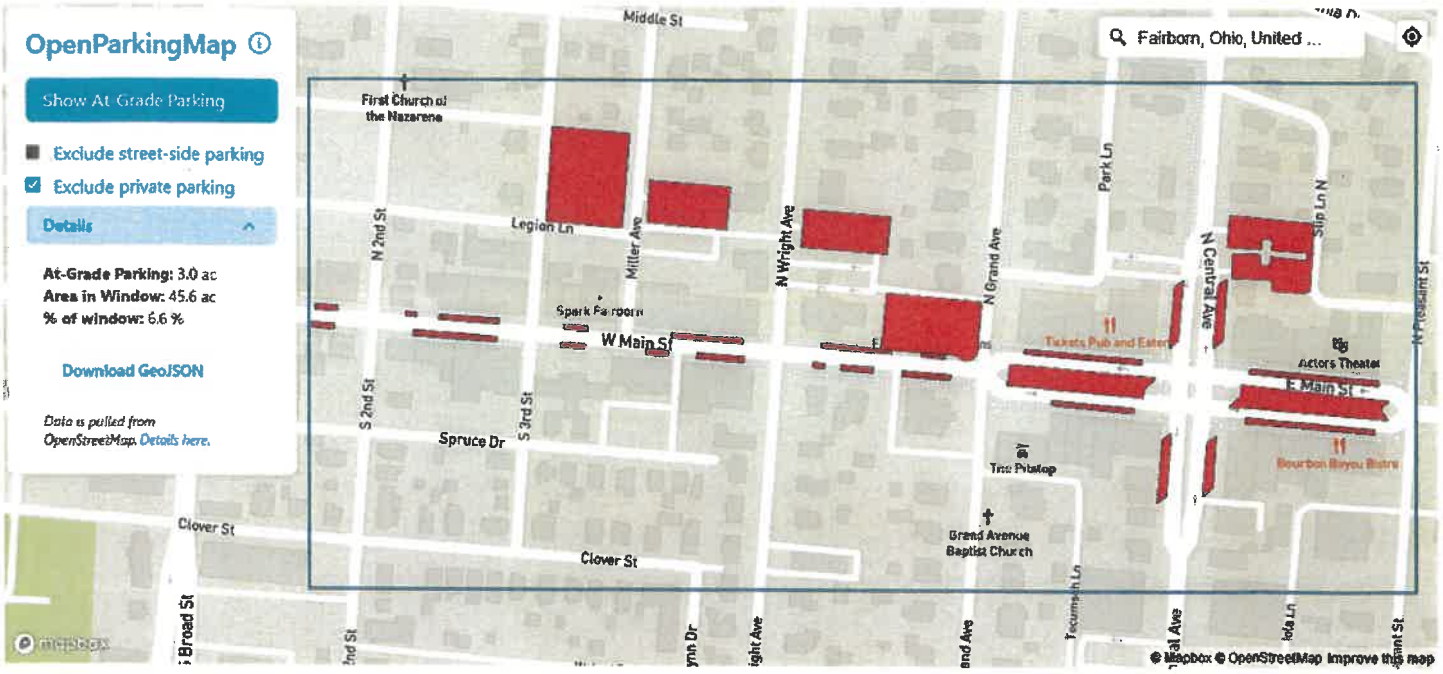
Two Minute Walking Distance



This map shows the two minute walking distance from the center of three public lots: Spark Lot, Commons Lot, and Library Lot.

This map shows that the majority of downtown businesses are within two minutes walking distance of a public lot. Street Parking along Main Street and Central, unmarked side street parking and free public lots behind Giovani's and across from Mr. P's that are available as well.

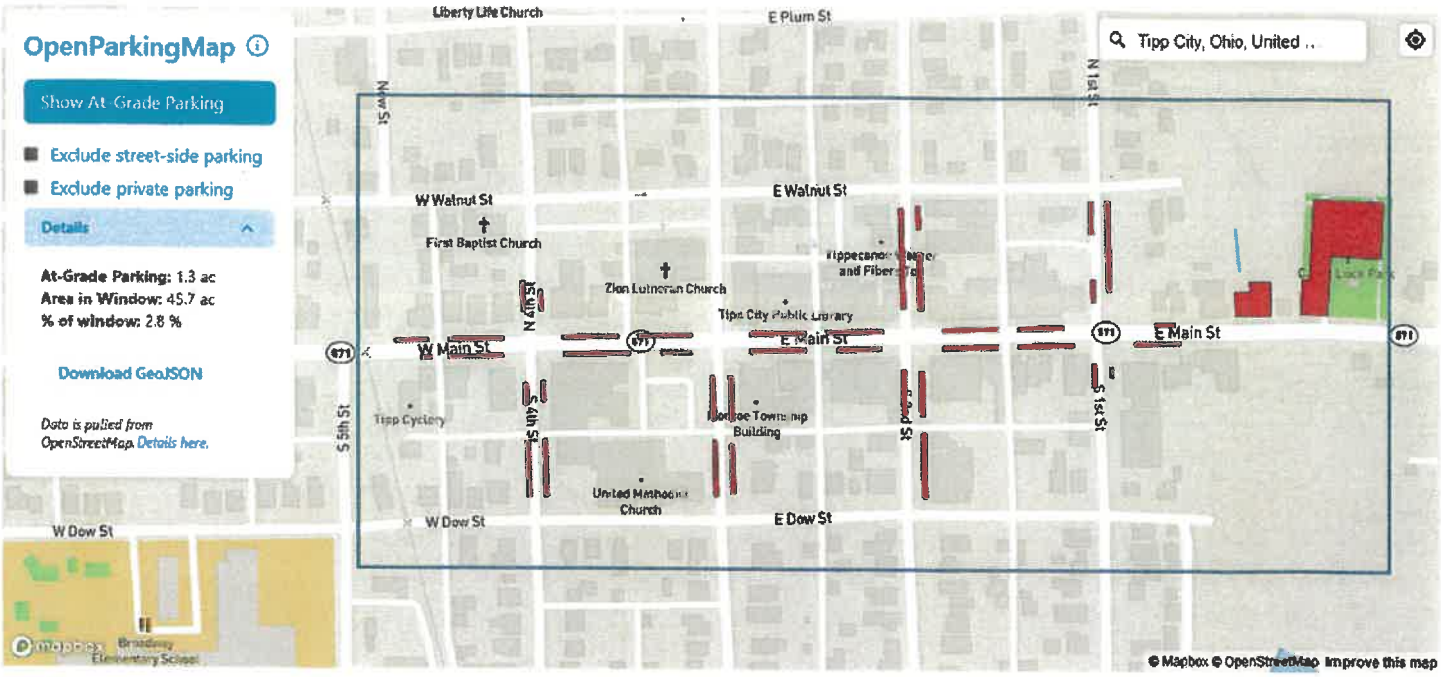
Open Parking Map - Fairborn, OH



By using Open Parking to map the locations and areas of of Public parking in Downtown Fairborn, the total area can be calculated and compared to similar Downtown areas in other Ohio cities.

This map shows that 3.0 acres of at-grade parking – which includes public lots and marked street parking – is available in the downtown. These types of parking areas have been mapped in comparable cities.

Open Parking Map - Tipp City, OH



Tipp City is a smaller city as a whole than Fairborn, the area of its Historic Downtown is almost identical. Tipp City free public parking is made up, almost entirely, of street parking with a public lot located at a nearby Park. There are lots present in the downtown but they are privately owned.

This map shows that 1.3 acres of at-grade parking is available in the downtown. This is 1.7 acres less than Downtown Fairborn.

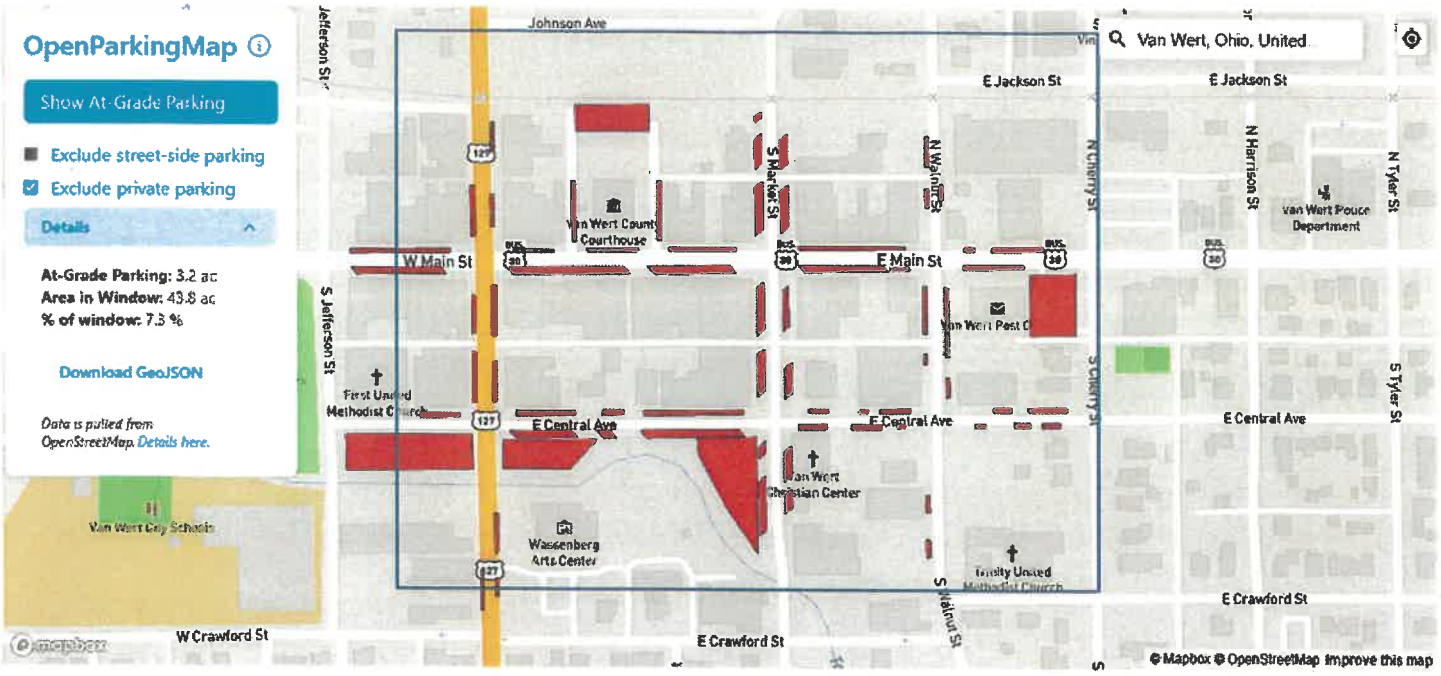
Open Parking Map - Piqua, OH



Piqua has an overall area and population closer to that of Fairborn. Like Tipp City, it's downtown area is a focus of development for the city. Piqua utilizes a mix of on-street parking and public lots. Private lots are also available but are not mapped. Piqua utilizes open areas between commercial properties for larger public lots.

This map shows that Downtown Piqua has a comparable area to that of Downtown Fairborn and has 3.8 acres of parking. This is .8 acres more than Fairborn.

Open Parking Map - Van Wert, OH



Van Wert is a smaller, more rural city, than Fairborn. It is a county seat and its downtown is composed of two major State Routes. Its downtown is also located next to the Public High School and large city park. Even with these features, and a comparable geographical area to Downtown Fairborn, the amount of street parking and public lots is similar.

This map shows that Downtown Van Wert has a comparable area to that of Downtown Fairborn and has 3.2 acres of parking. This is .2 acres more than Fairborn.

Costco Comparison







Costco Comparison





