

Downtown Parking Improvements Project

Stakeholder Update

March 10, 2025

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Agenda

- Project Overview
- Parking Study Results
- Parking Management Technology
- Municipal Code Update
- Financial Model
- Public Engagement Process
- Interim Solutions and Next Steps
- Discussion



Project Overview

The Downtown Parking Improvements Project is an update to the City of Ventura's existing downtown public parking program. The project includes:

- System-wide upgrades to the existing pay stations
- A permit program for employees, residents, and special events in the downtown core
- Modifications and/or expansion of lot designated cost and/or lot time limits.



Parking Program Current Conditions

- Pay stations at end of useful life
- City needs a parking “back-office” system
- Enforcement of time limits challenging
- Lack of turnover weekdays on-street – contributes to high utilization
- No comprehensive employee parking program
- 4-hour time limits routinely violated

Current Ways to Park

Park Mobile

2-hours free = 'Park Downtown'

Pay Stations: Card or Coin

Free Parking: See Map



Project Goals

- Improve user experience
- Facilitate current and future needs
- Mitigate a lack of parking availability (high utilization)



Need & Strategies

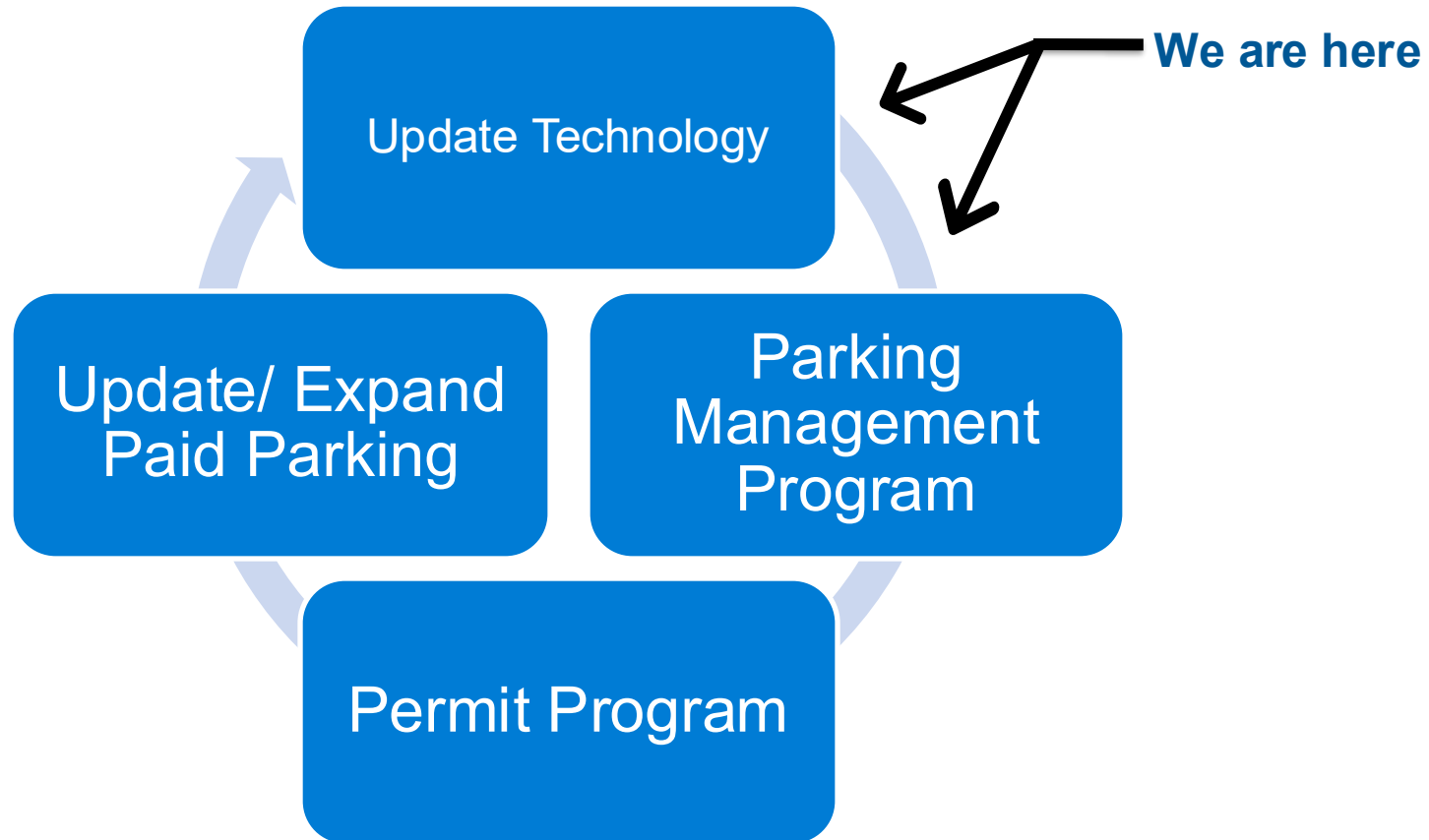
Update downtown parking and address +85% utilization:

Technology Updates and Improvements via new pay stations

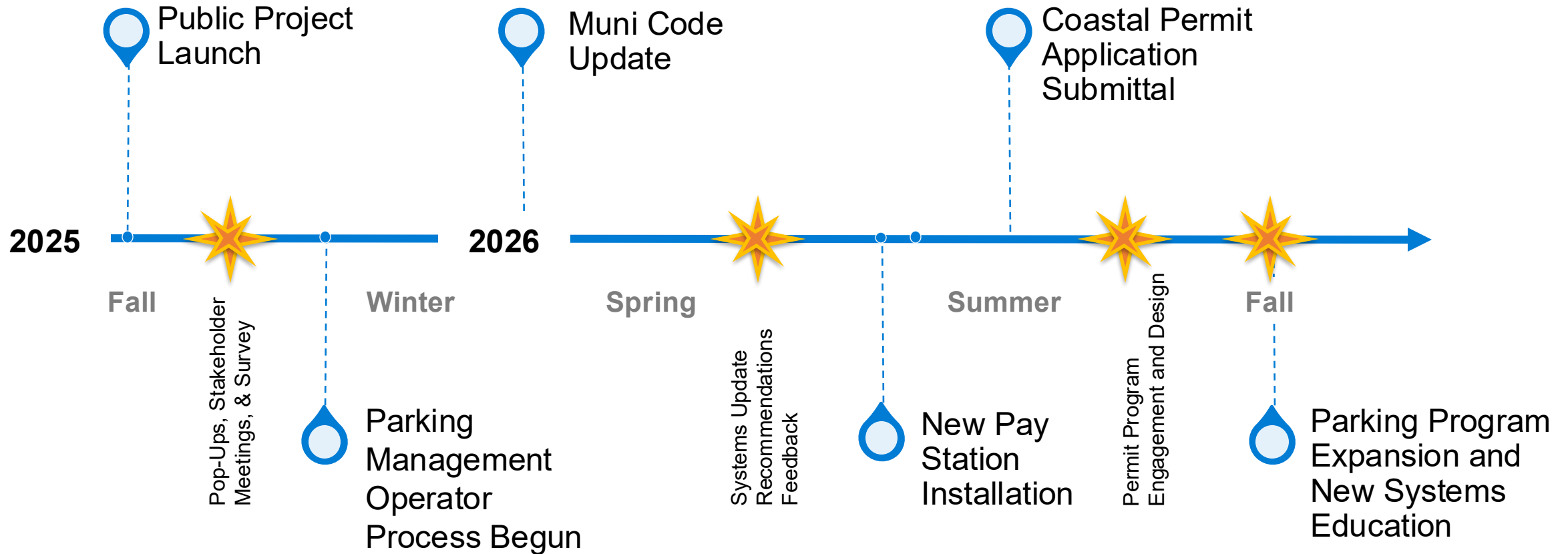
License Plate Recognition (LPR) based enforcement, permitting and validation software and hardware

Virtual Permit Program for Residents, Employees and Special Events

Project Process



Project Timeline



Parking Utilization and Occupancy Study Results

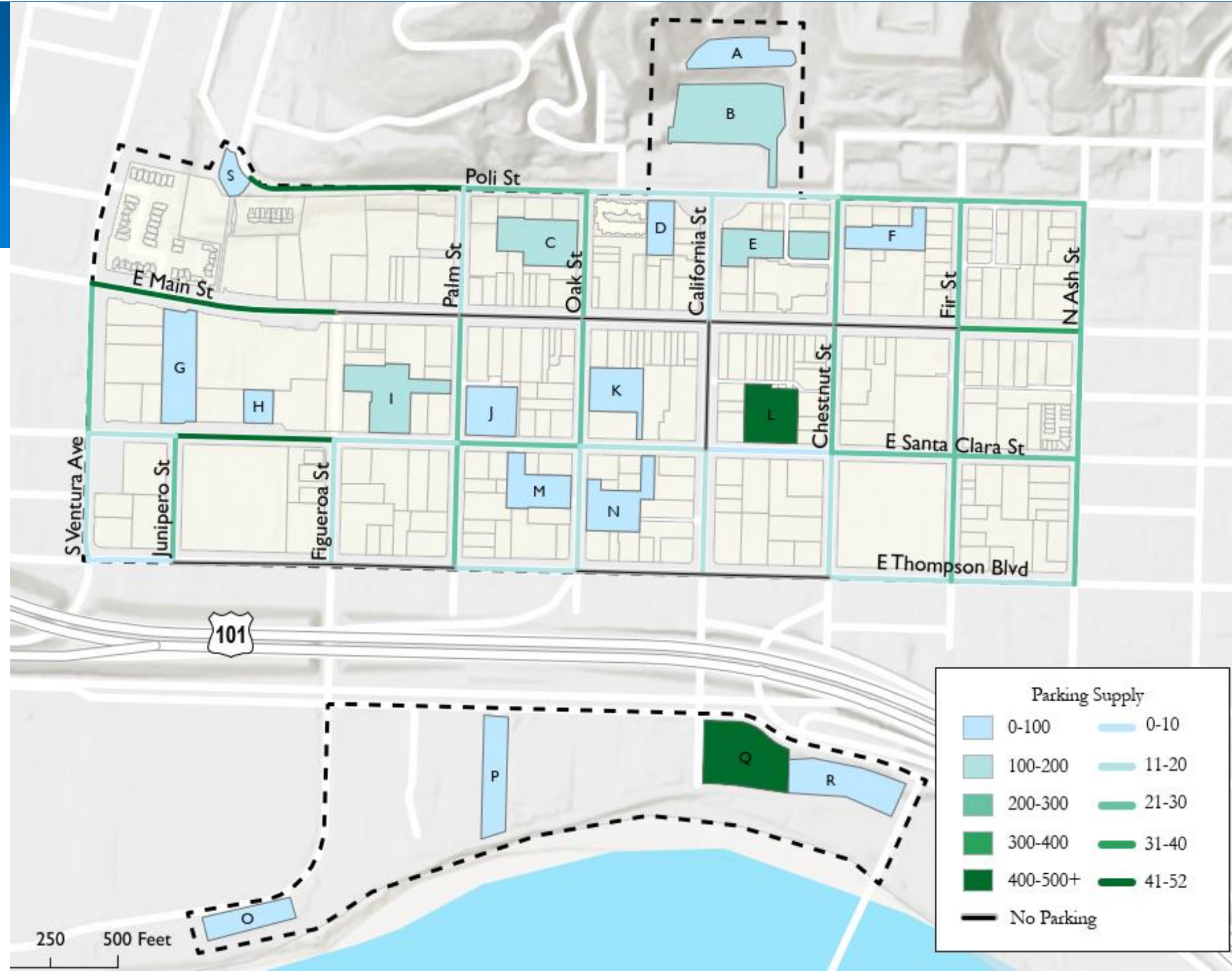
Existing Parking Utilization Goal

- The Downtown Specific Plan's Downtown Parking Management Program states:

“The City’s desired balance for parking supply and demand is achieved when 85% of the parking supply is utilized during peak periods leaving 15% of supply available for use at any given time.”
- **Parking utilization exceeds City goal at peak periods**

Data Collection Methodology & Analysis

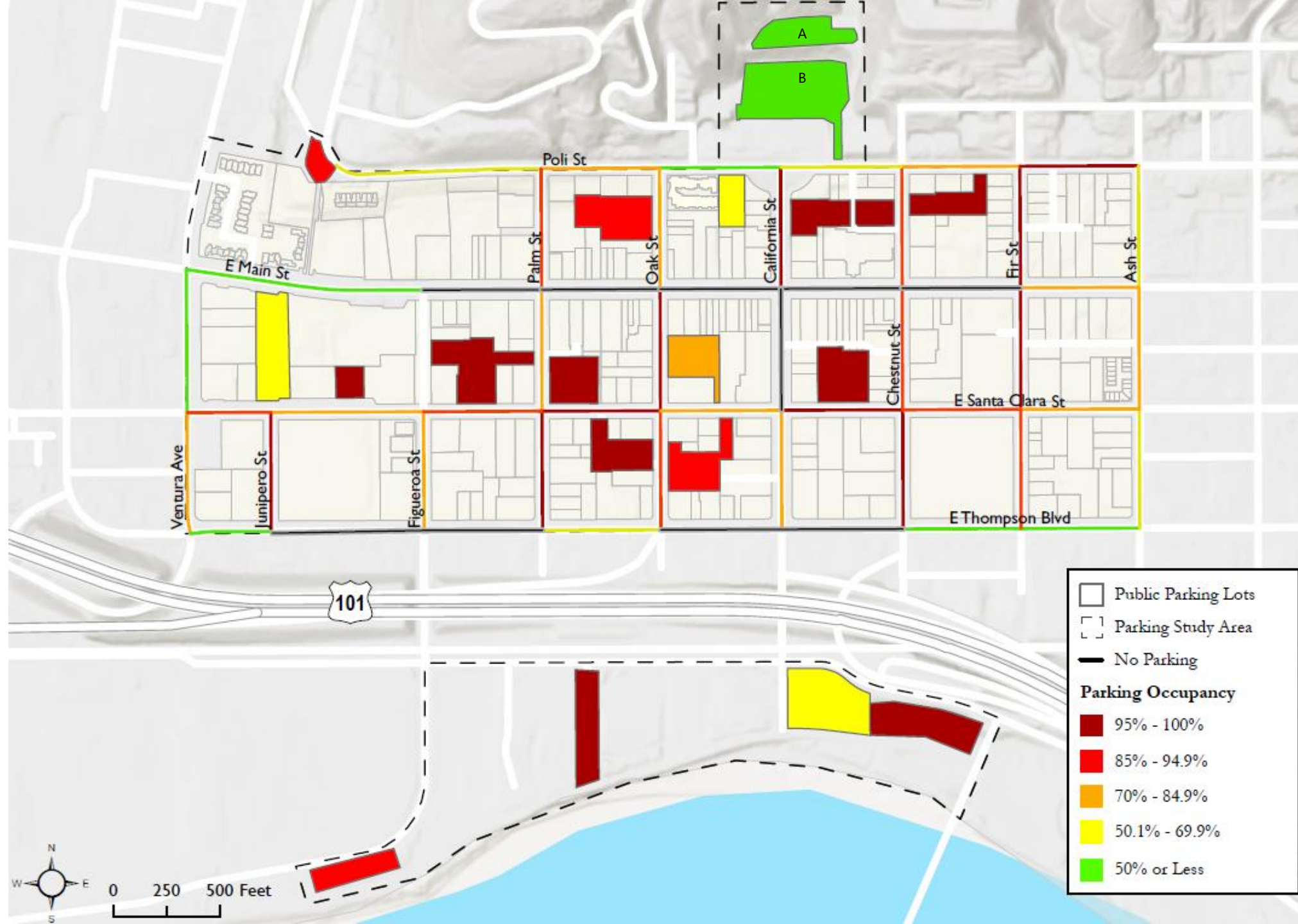
- Hourly and turnover counts conducted during peak season
- Two Data Collection Periods:
 - June and July 2025
 - 9 AM - 10 PM
- Collected on Thursdays and Saturdays
- July utilization and turnover were slightly higher compared to June



July Weekend Peak Hour (6PM)

Occupancy*

- On-street: 87%
- Off-street: 97%

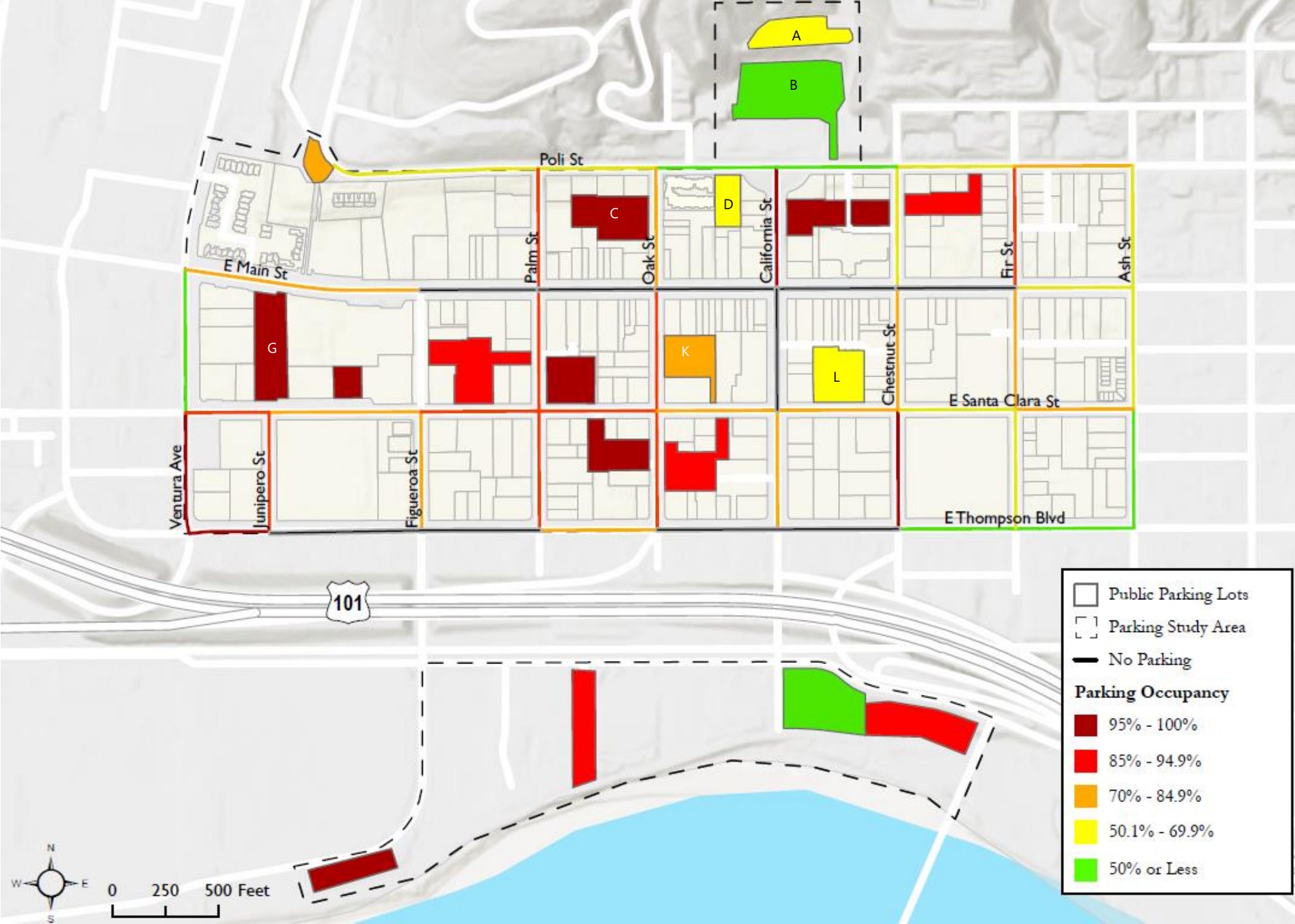


*Occupancy shown is for
the Downtown Core

July Weekday Peak Hour (6PM)

Occupancy*:

- On-street: 80%
- Off-street: 83%



*Occupancy shown is for the Downtown Core

Data Collection Methodology & Analysis

On-Street Turnover Review

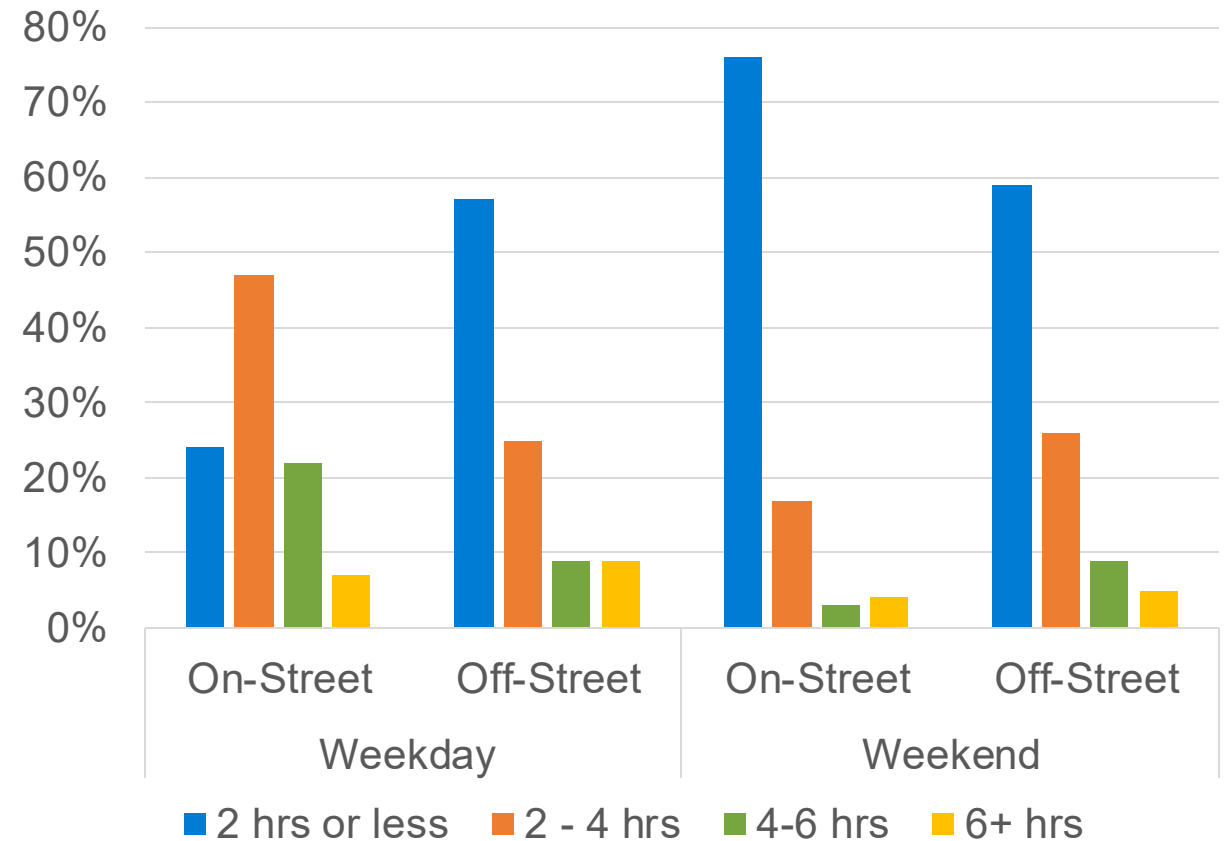
Total % parking for 2+ hours*:

- Weekday:
 - On-Street: 76%
 - Off-Street: 43%
- Weekend
 - On-Street: 24%
 - Off-street: 40%

Takeaways:

- During the weekends, most people downtown are staying less than 2 hours. Those who stay longer typically park off-street.
- On weekdays, longer stays (>2 hours) are occurring on-street, while shorter stays (<2 hours) are pushed off-street—opposite of efficient parking management.

July Turnover Data*



*Turnover shown is for the Downtown Core

Key Findings From Chen Ryan Report

On-Street

Consistently High Utilization

- Corridors like California, Palm, and Fir maintain occupancy between **75–100%** throughout the day.

Increasing Weekday Activity

- From June to July, Palm, Oak, and California exceed **85%** demand due to combined employee, visitor, and customer parking.

Off-Street

Consistently High Peak Occupancy

- Peak usage at 6 PM remains high from June to July, with most lots reaching **90–100%** capacity on weekends.

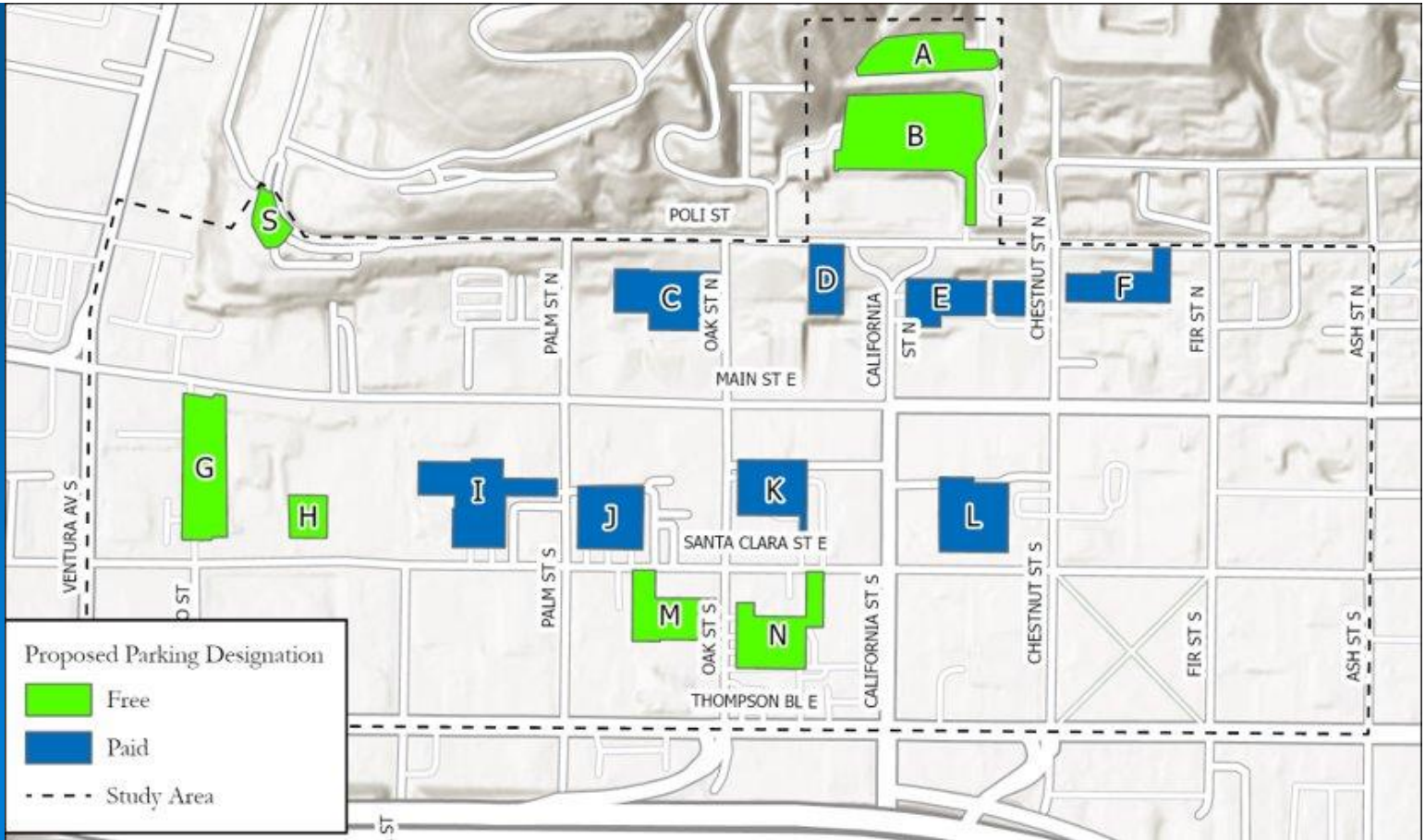
Weekday and Weekend Saturation

- Almost all lots exceed 90% occupancy on weekdays and **95%** on weekends, reducing availability in prime locations.

High weekend saturation and increased weekday use strain the system, highlighting the need for better user management, navigation, and parking solutions.

Initial Recommendations for Parking Updates

- Free parking would remain available within a 10-minute walk to Main Street
- All ADA parking in Ventura is free on and off street
- Future weekday permit spaces could be paid hourly after work hours and weekends



Parking Management Technology

Why New Parking Management Technology?

Why?

- Allows for various pricing options
- Facilitates License Plate Recognition, Pay-By-Plate, Virtual Permits, Validations
- Fastest path forward – contract with parking management firm

Underway

- Ordering new pay stations
- Reviewing proposal for parking management operator, to Council April 2026 for approval



Farmers Market Pop-Up/ Art Walk
9-27-2025

Parking Management Operator

RFP for Parking Management Operator to:

- Enforce paid parking areas
- Facilitate employee permit issuance
- Collect revenue from pay stations
- Provide a back-end dashboard to track real-time data from the above operations

Parking Management Operator *Selection Process*

Selection Process



Selection Criteria

- Presentation Quality and Clarity
- Qualifications and Relevant Experience
- Technical Understanding and approach
- Department Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement
- Schedule and Project Management
- Price to Value

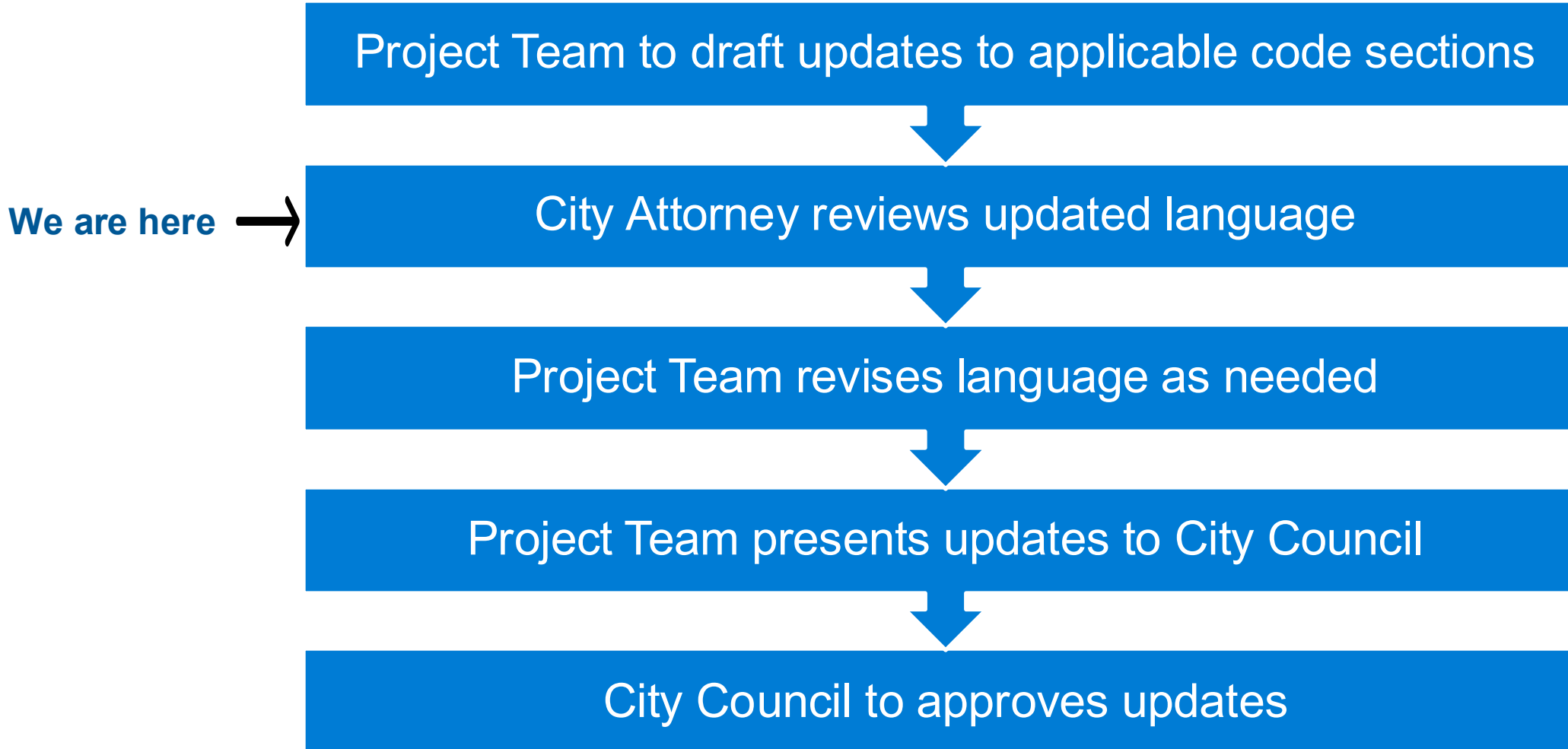
Municipal Code Update

Muni Code Update

Updates to Municipal (Muni) Code regarding:

- Establishment of paid parking and associated revenue collection equipment in off-street facilities
- Codifies use of a mobile app to pay for parking
- Distinction between “reserved spaces” and “permits” for the Downtown Business Vehicle Permit Parking program
 - To allow for two reserved spaces per business, but does not cap employee permits associated with that business

Muni Code Update Timeline



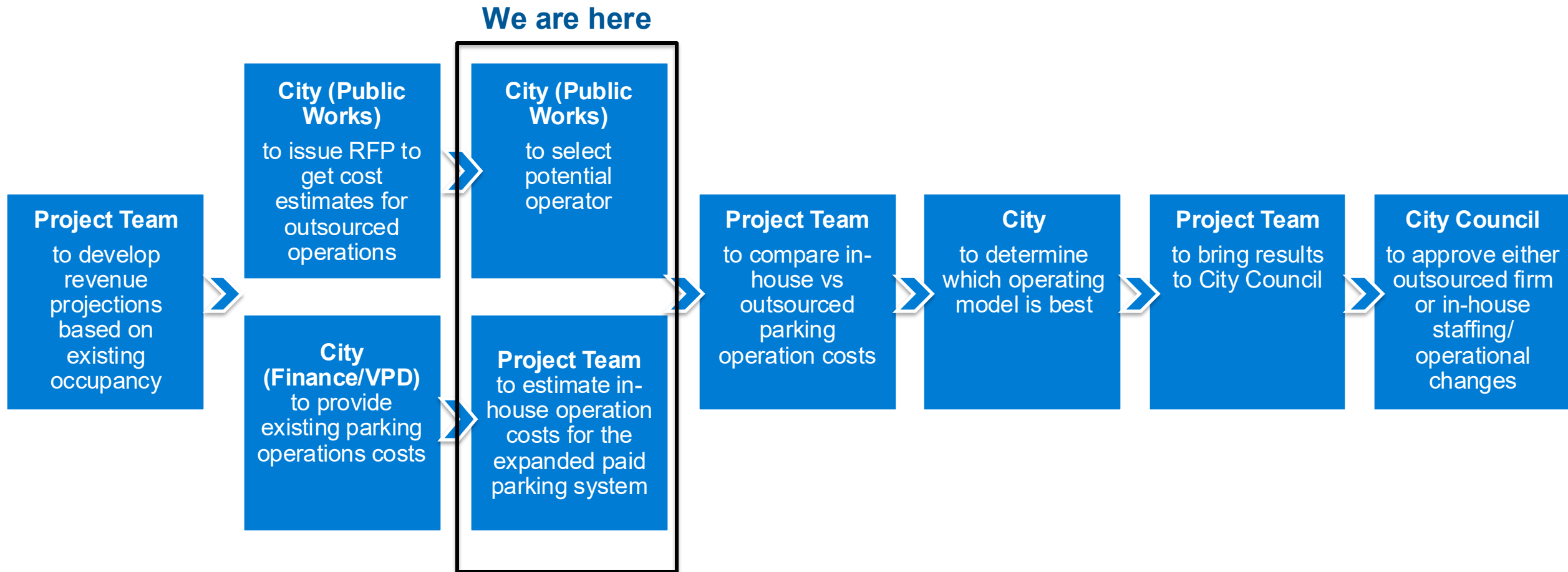
Financial Model

Financial Model

Developing a financial model to evaluate:

- Expected revenue generation based on proposed pricing and existing parking occupancy
- Compare in-house vs outsourced operation costs
- Ensure the financial sustainability of the parking program without overcharging for parking

Financial Model Timeline



Employee Parking Inventory Survey & Permit Program Development

Public Engagement

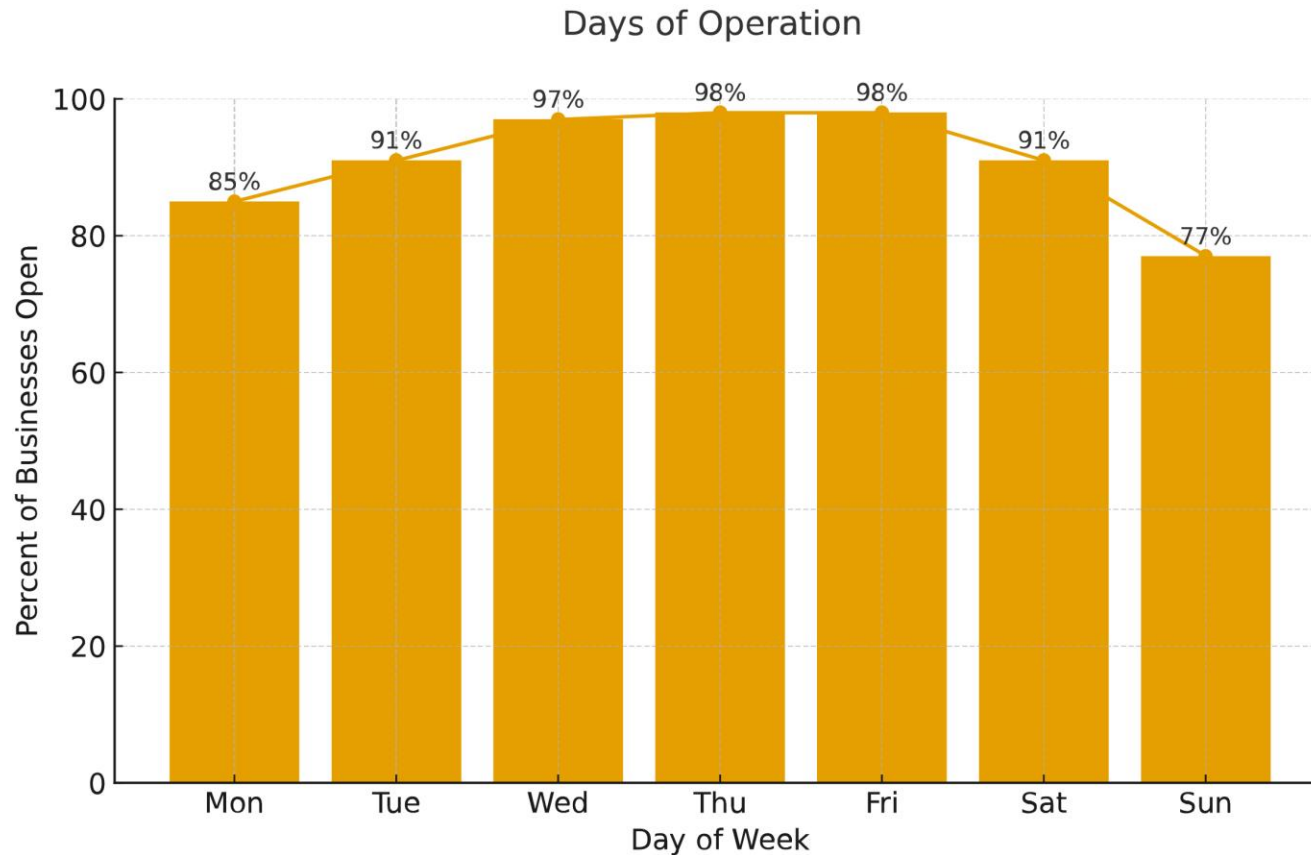


- **Business Stakeholder Engagement**
 - DVP & DVO Monthly Meetings
 - 1x1 Stakeholder Conversations
- **Public Education on Existing System & Project**
 - Project Website, Newsletter, Social Media, Pop-Ups
- **Feedback on Program Development**
 - Pop-Up Events
 - Surveys
 - Workshops & Special Meetings

Initial Public Feedback

- Need for data-driven solutions: Past, Current, and Targets
- Need for precedent studies and peer city examples
- Improve communications and share data
- Collaborative and transparent decision-making process
- Focus on impacts to businesses in how they function (employee operations) and downtown visitors (revenue)
- Focused solutions on specific businesses: Majestic Ventura Theater & Reardon Funeral Home

Employee Parking Survey Results

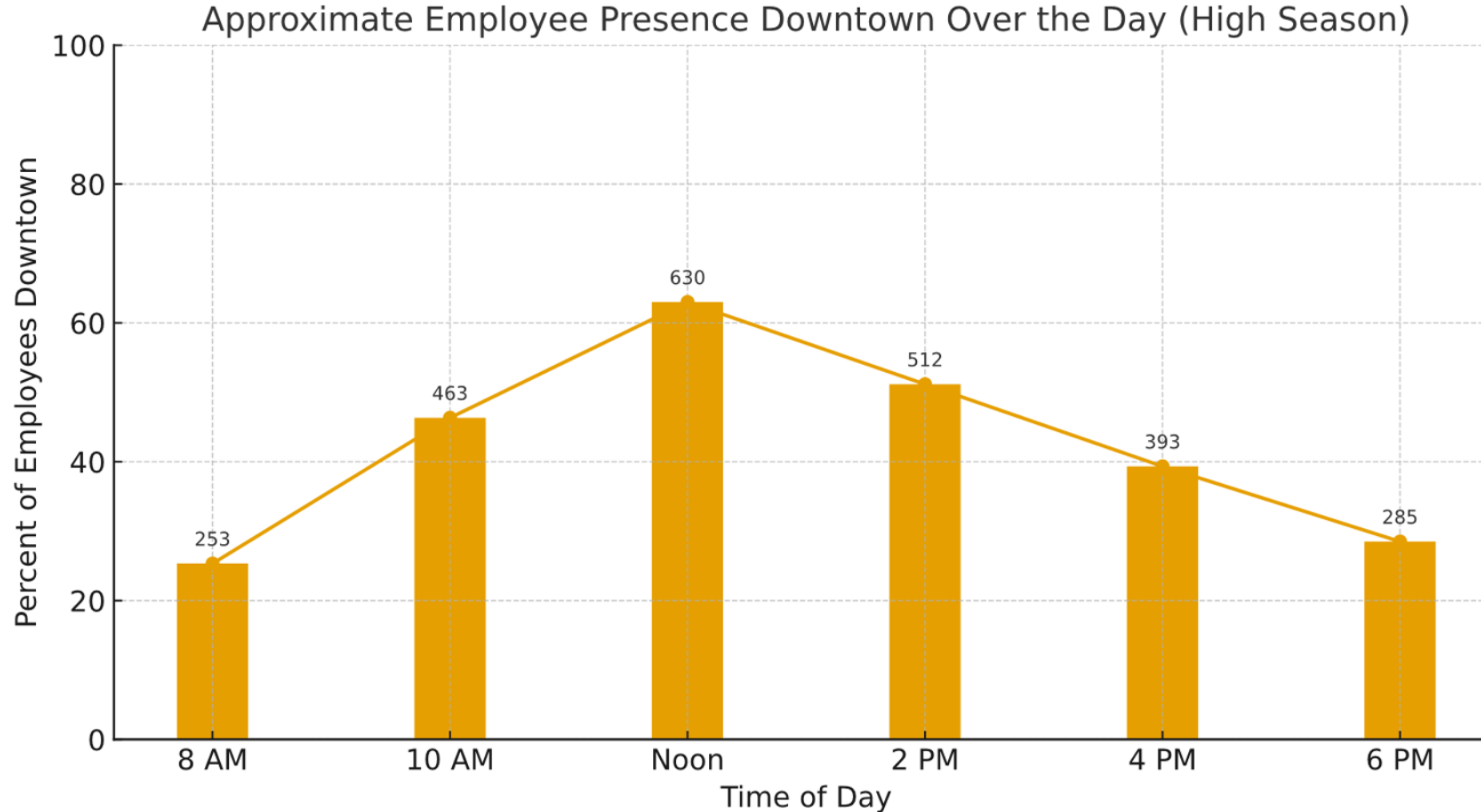


65 completed survey responses

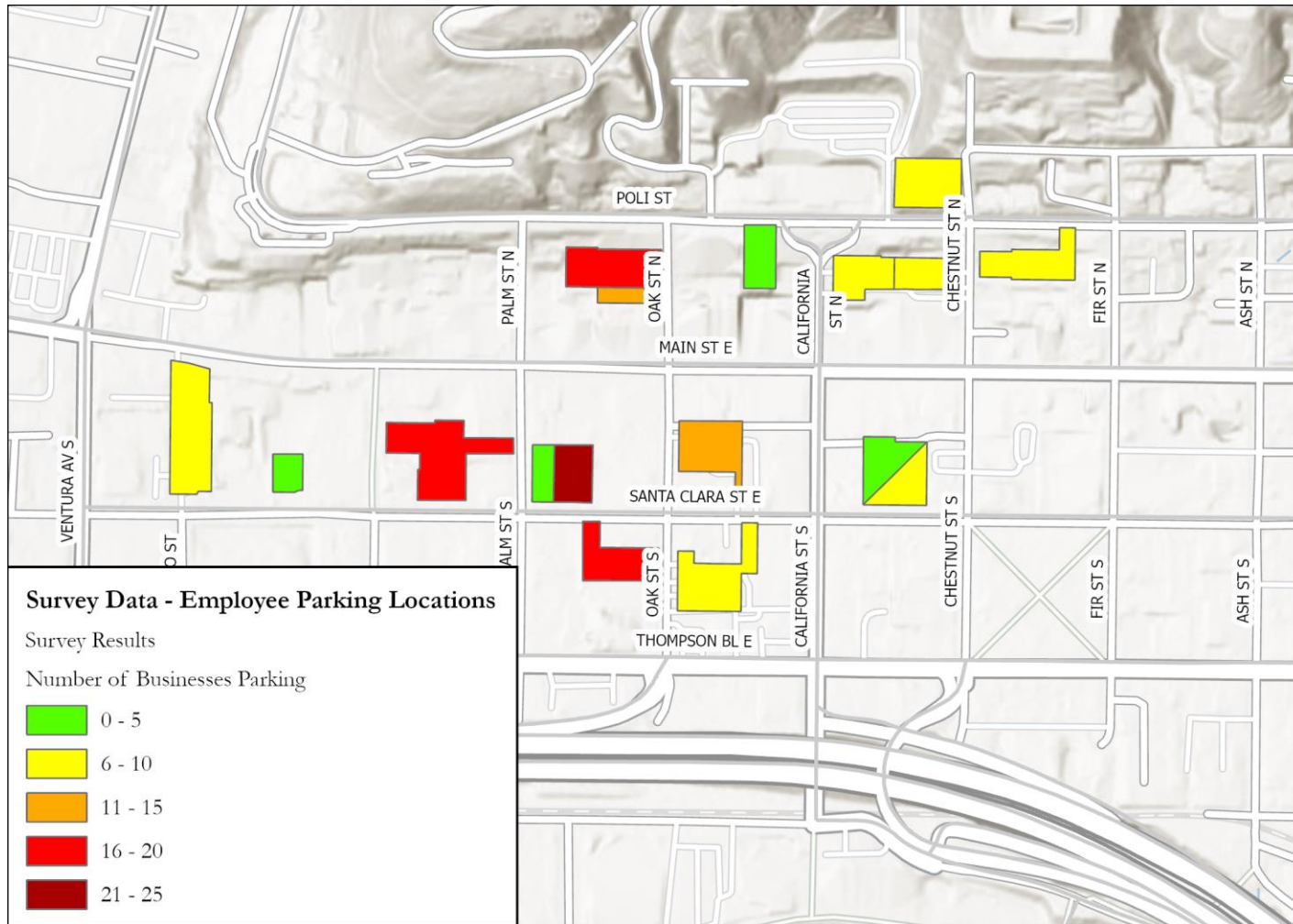
- 63 business owners & managers representing a total of **984 employees** in the Downtown core.
- 2 owners of a vacant property

Business Types	
Retail	27
Restaurants	15
Offices	4
Other	19

Employee Parking Survey Results



Density of Employee Parking



- Employee parking concentrated along Palm and Oak Streets
- Lots have mix of 4-hour and all-day spaces
 - More 4-hour spaces at lots along Oak
 - More all-day spaces at lots along Palm

Employee Parking Survey Results

Key needs expressed by businesses and property owners

- Reliable all-day parking that covers full work shifts without the need to move vehicles.
- Need for designated employee parking areas or lots located reasonably close to workplaces and perceived as safe at night.
- Free or low-cost employee permits, with options for a set number of free permits per business, and discounted rates if paid.
- Clear communication and grace periods before new ticketing or parking rule changes.
- Policies that recognize the difference between employees and visitors so that working downtown is not financially or logistically punitive for staff.

Permit Program

Parking Permit Program Development

Complete:

- Program + Peer Review Conversations
- Business (Employee) needs assessment survey
- Special Stakeholder 1x1's

In-Progress

- On-going coordination with downtown businesses
- Attendance of board meetings, and presentations as needed



Downtown Ventura Organization Monthly Meeting, 8-14-2025

Employee & Residential Permit Program

- Will use outsource firm's parking permit program
- Will be a virtual permit
 - User's license plate is the credential
- Option to require supporting documentation
 - Proof of downtown employment
 - Proof of downtown residency
- Employee permits available by the day or month
- Rates are TBD
- Likely lower rate for garage, higher for flat lots
- Options for discounts, self pay, employer paid
- Not intended for use on-street parking
- Need these spaces to turnover
- Except where necessary for downtown residents

Interim Solutions and Next Steps

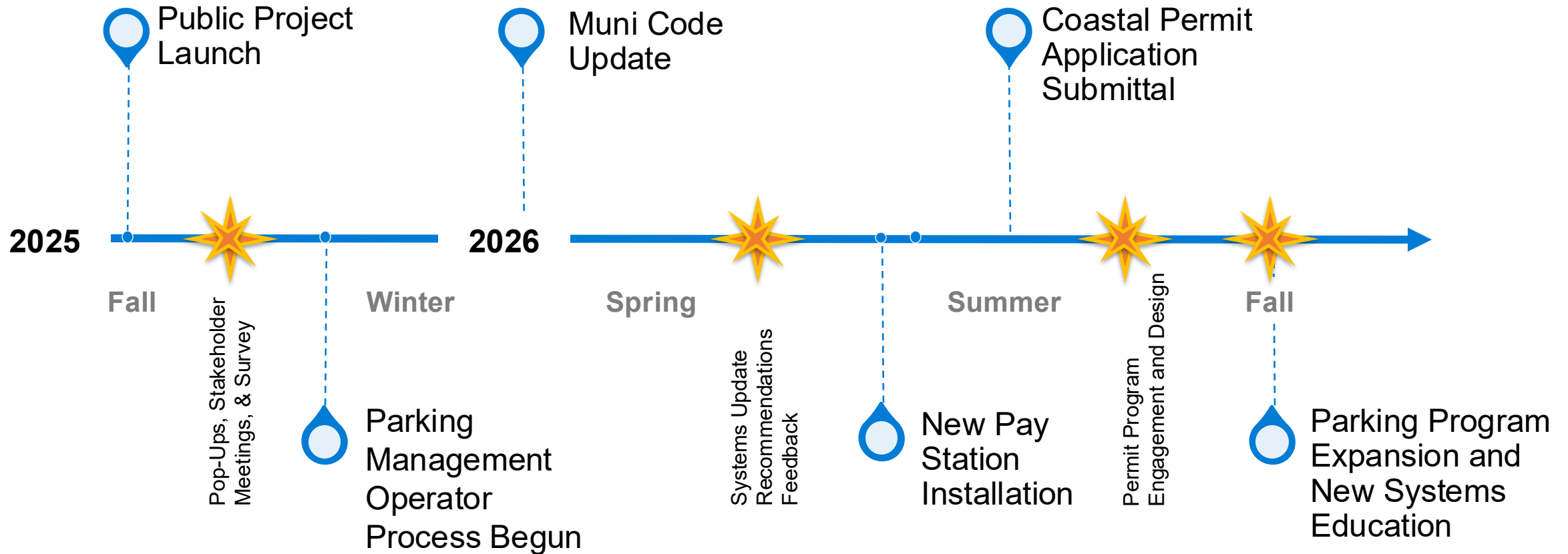
Interim Solutions

- Requesting a recommendation at March 2026 Parking Commission meeting to **restore all-day parking in off street lots** that were changed in 2025 from all day parking back to 4-hour parking limits.
- Park Mobile 2hrs Free Parking. Code = "Park Downtown"
- Pay Station Maintenance
- Regular business stakeholder meetings and newsletters for project updates (A parking permit workshop targeted for late Spring).
- Parking map to be updated and can provide paper copies for in your business if requested.
- Parking in all spaces remains free for ADA drivers.

Longer Range Proposed Solutions

- Move from PD to outside enforcement/ parking management
- Updated Pay Station equipment, technology, and layout (Target May 2026)
- No penalty for moving (reparking) their vehicle during a given day
- Continue free parking options for visitors and employees
- Permit program development in partnership with downtown businesses, the new operator = accessible and affordable system. Targeted implementation September 2026

Project Timeline



Expanding Paid Parking

- **Council Action April-June 2026:**
 - Anticipated approval of required update of Municipal Code
 - Anticipated approval of new fee structure for paid off-street parking
- **Coastal Commission feedback and approval Summer 2026**
 - Public Feedback & Education during this process
- **Target for expanded paid parking September 2026**

Questions & Comments

Project Website

cityofventura.ca.gov/ParkDowntown

Project Contact

Parking@cityofventura.ca.gov



Data Collection Methodology & Analysis

Utilization Review

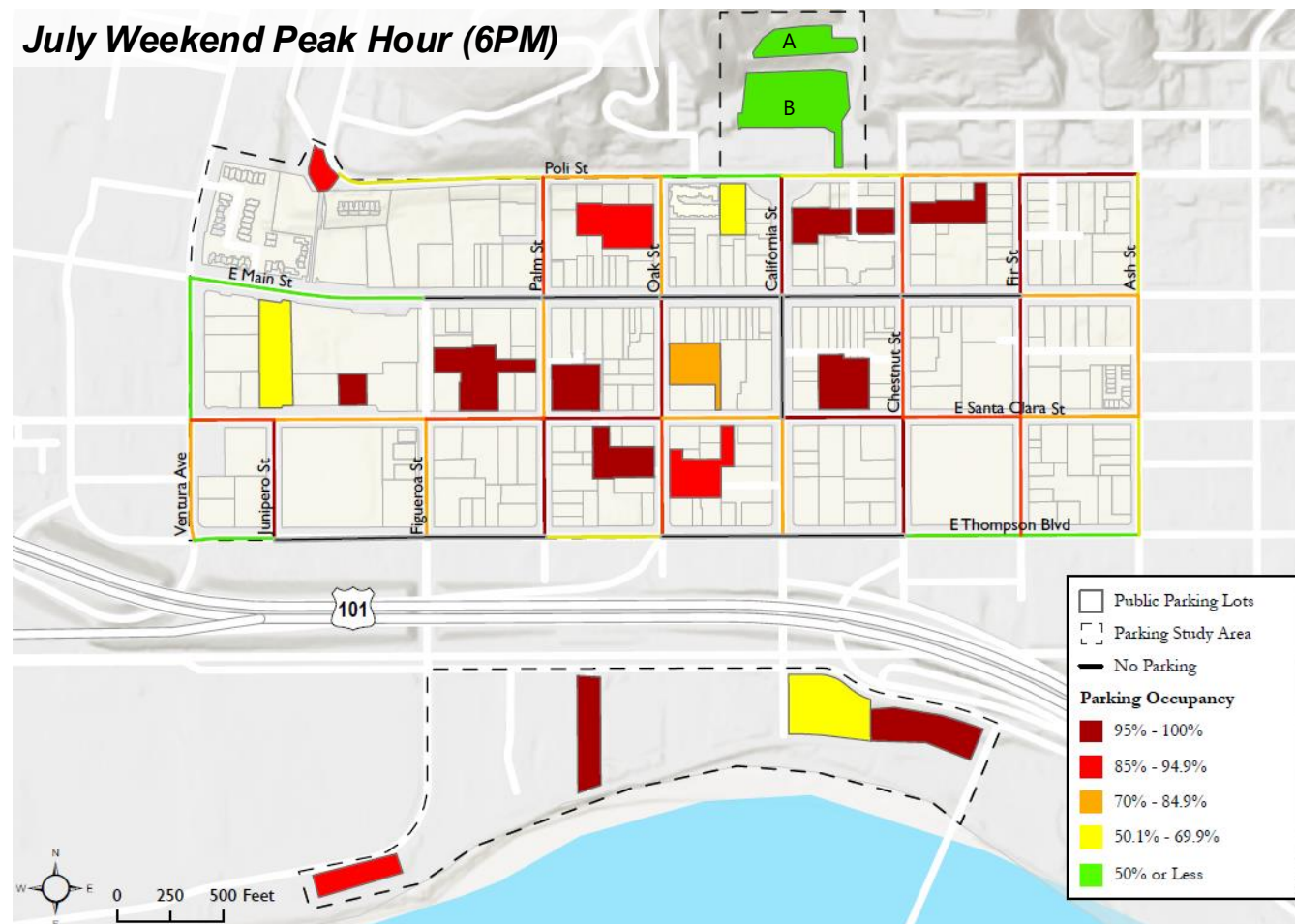
Weekend Peak Hour Occupancy*

- On-street: 87%
- Off-street: 97%

Takeaways

- Downtown parking is nearly full, exceeding the 85% threshold for rate increases.
- Free off-street parking is preferred over paid on-street spots, even if less convenient.
- Additional free parking is available farther from Main Street closure at Lots A and B, Thompson Blvd, and Main St at Valdez Alley.

July Weekend Peak Hour (6PM)



*Occupancy shown is for the Downtown Core

Data Collection Methodology & Analysis

Utilization Review

Weekday Peak Hour Occupancy*:

- On-street: 80%
- Off-street: 83%

Takeaways:

- Weekday occupancy nears 85%, slightly less than weekends, due to capacity within Lots D, K and L.
 - However, many lots in the core remain over 85% threshold
- Lots A, C, and G show higher weekday use, possibly due to employee parking.
- On-street parking remains less utilized than off-street.

