

CITY OF MANITOU SPRINGS

Transportation Mobility Master Plan

White Paper

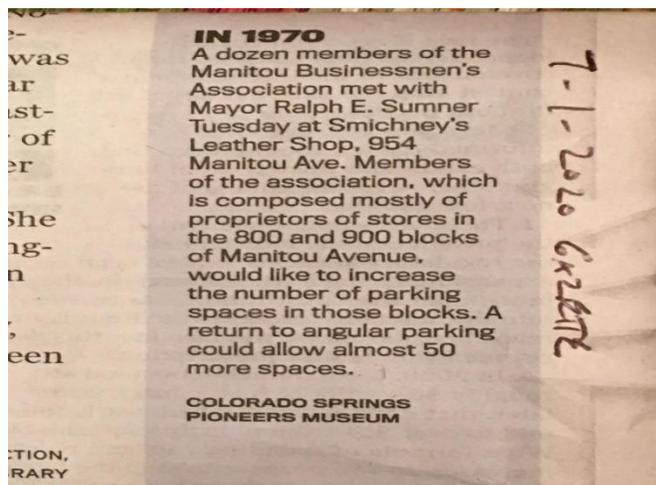
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Introduction / Background

Parking and Mobility are one of the most challenging problems facing Manitou Springs and has been for years (see below). As with any problem, however, comes a new opportunity, to develop solutions for current and near-term parking/mobility issues. With the global population at 7.8 billion in 2020 and predicted to be approximately 8.6 billion by 2030, more and more visitors from around the world want to experience this wonderful little town for what it has to offer. This includes all the alluring shops, beautiful parks, the Incline and soon, the return of the Pikes Peak Cog Railway.

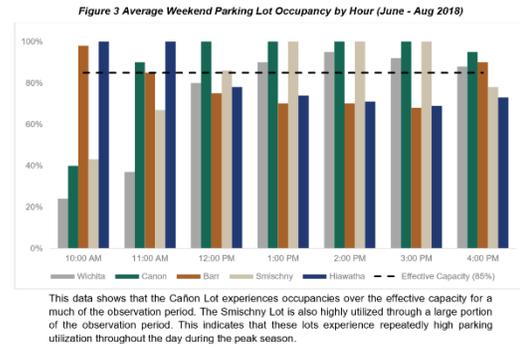
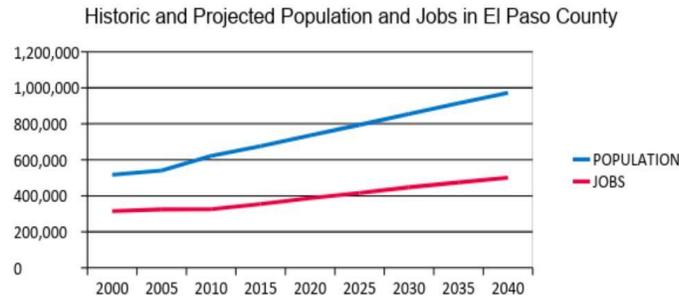
In 2019, the Manitou Springs City Council approved the Transportation Mobility Master Plan (TMMP) (<https://www.manitouspringsgov.com/466/Transportation-Mobility-Master-Plan-Stu>) and set in motion staff development of a plan to reduce congestion and improve overall mobility in the City. With a population of approximately 5350 residents and 450,000+ visitors a year, the City faces a challenge to reduce the transportation network overload and preserve/improve the quality of life for its citizens while balancing business owner's needs, improve non-vehicle capabilities like walking, biking, micro transit and shuttle use and continue to plan for the future of mobility and transportation.

Also, the City and Transportation Parking Board made the decision, based on the Kimley-Horn Parking study to bring the Parking Department in-house to increase its effectiveness with better oversight through city management.



Abstract / Business Case

Manitou Springs has been facing parking issues for decades. However, in the past several years, the traffic congestion is reaching record levels due to El Paso county experiencing tremendous growth.



There are many different aspects of the parking situation to look at, particularly, paid parking for tourists, shoppers and visitors, residential parking, bus and oversized vehicles, and employee parking. There needs to be an understanding that the more parking that gets built, the more congestion will be created. For some people, this is counter-intuitive, believing that if you don't build parking you will flood the streets with circling cars. Studies show that increased parking increases demand for parking. A good example are highways. As more lanes are added to reduce congestion, more driving occurs and as a result, congestion increases. Bloomberg Parking article: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-01-12/study-the-strongest-evidence-yet-that-abundant-parking-causes-more-driving>

With the re-opening of the incline and opening of the Pikes Peak Cog Railway in 2021, it has become a primary focus of city leaders that a solution to the traffic congestion, parking, enforcement, noise, environmental protection, trail impacts and sanitation are brought to the forefront of the city's management concerns.

With the current Free Incline Reservation System (FIRS) implemented at the Incline, the amount of traffic has been metered to meet the available infrastructure (parking spots) provided to incline users. By doing this, it has drastically reduced congestion and 'cruising' traffic because enough parking spots are provided for the incliners. Many of the lessons learned from developing and implementing FIRS are being applied to the Cog and other traffic management concepts.

Just like the incline, Manitou Springs and stakeholders have invested much time and effort including many studies concerning parking, mobility, and attraction use. The Cog and Metro District Parking have also provided required studies of Manitou Avenue and Ruxton Corridor. What is evident with all these studies and meetings is that most of the problems and opportunities have been discussed over the past years with similar results. Besides tweaks here and there based on new technology or other changes that have occurred in the city (roads

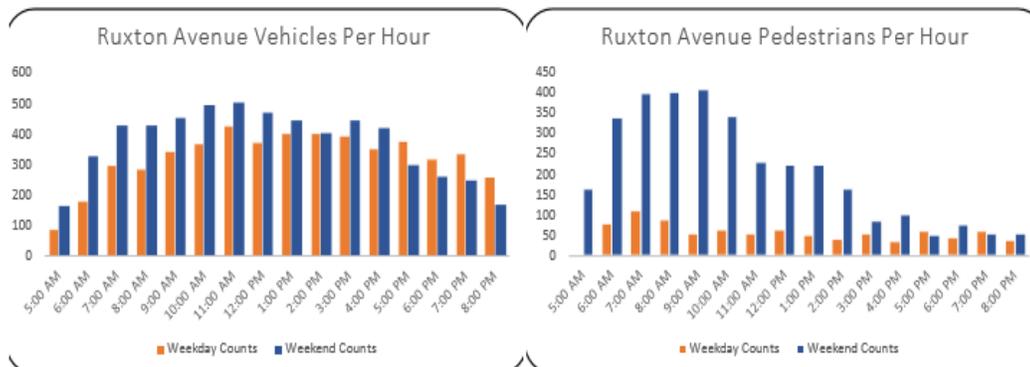
repaired or replaced, roundabout, parking, etc.) most of the recommended solutions are still valid today.

Based on the Kimley-Horn report, areas to focus are:



Problem Statement / Introduction

Manitou Springs can no longer support 5000+ vehicle trips up and down Manitou Avenue and Ruxton causing congestion every day. As a result, what mobility and transportation improvements can Manitou Springs put in place to reduce downtown congestion, improve the visitor/resident experience and minimize the past traffic issues influenced by the Incline and future return of the Cog Railway?



Source: 2015 Ruxton Avenue Use and Impact Study

“Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.” – Pablo Picasso

Proposed Solution – One solution does not solve our mobility and parking issues. The ultimate solution will be a combination of several different improvements as shown on the chart below:

Tier One (1-2 years) – Easier to implement

- Parking Fees/Fines Increase and expansion
- COG parking reservation system

- Barr lot reservation system
- Real-time communications
- Increase transit service
- Continue to work to improve the management of the incline
- Crosswalks/Pedestrian signage
- Rear diagonal parking on Manitou Avenue, El Paso-Deerpath to Chamber – adds approximately 70 spaces to the city’s parking inventory.
- Determine other parking opportunities or locations (COG staff)
- Regional coordination between Colorado Springs, Woodland Park and others

Tier Two (3-4 years) – Requires more planning and effort to implement

- Mobility Hubs (Hiawatha, COG, Mini hubs)
- Parking Benefit Districts
- Additional Surface lot
- Monitor Black Canyon and other trails that may require future parking needs

Tier Three (5+ years) – Significant investment in both time and money required

- Parking garage
- Increased Transit service (bus, van, rail, trolley)

Application of Solution

Tier One:

- **Parking Fees/Fines Increase and expansion** – parking fees and fines need to be increased as needed to discourage “cruising” and violations that interfere with the law-abiding resident or visitor from enjoying this city. Sixteen studies from 1927-2001 found that, on average, 30% of cars in congested traffic were cruising for parking spots like “hawks searching for prey.” (*The high cost of free parking-Donald Shoup*) Performance Parking is setting prices to produce one or two open curb spaces on every block. This is done by an 85% parking capacity rate. One to two open spaces on every block will always be available to drivers. Transportation system will be more efficient reducing cruise time which reduces congestion, wasted fuel, pollution, and wasting drivers shopping time. Economy will perform efficiently by allowing drivers to park and buy and open the spot to another customer. The fee structure will be continued to be evaluated and adjusted as needed.
- **COG parking reservation system** – The COG is working on a reservation system for 2021. Plans are to limit parking at the COG for only those who have made reservations and limit the parking availability time to only 30 minutes before and after the reservation. This will be posted on their website and the city can help get that message out as well.
- **Barr lot reservation system** – A return of the reservation system at Barr Lot remains under consideration. With a past failure of this system, there is hesitation to implement a

second time. The past failure could be attributed to poor implementation, messaging and implementation by our past parking management provider. A failure to enforce the reserved spots contributed to these spots being taken by others. With proper enforcement and new technology, there is an opportunity to provide better service. Reservations can help reduce cruising traffic over time.

- **Real-time communications/Wayfinding** – Installation of Parking Logix system is currently underway; a recommendation from the Kimley-Horn mobility and parking study. Half the system has been installed, however, due to the COVID pandemic there have been some delays. Parking Logix will provide real-time parking availability for drivers in the city; a benefit to visitors before they start their trip to Manitou Springs. Wayfinding signs are also being produced to help guide vehicles to lots, direct bike and pedestrian walking paths and provide distances.
- **Crosswalks/Pedestrian signage** – A pilot “button-activated” pedestrian sign is being installed. Once again, the COVID pandemic slowed supply chains, but the City has received the hardware with plans to install it soon near Patsy’s Candy. The City is also installing “state law” crosswalk signs by crosswalks to help notify people to not park too close to the crosswalks.
- **Rear Diagonal Parking** - By converting the parallel parking on Manitou Ave to El Paso-Deer Path to the Chamber to rear diagonal parking, the city could add up to 70 more parking spots. Because of the rather wide roadway width in this area, implementing R-A parking should have a minor impact on the roadway operation. Rear-angle parking has been used by several cities to increase inventory and increase safety. R-A parking allows for better vision, can increase parking density by about 65%, is easier to maneuver and provides for safer access to the vehicle.
- **Parking Enterprise** – The Kimley-Horn study recommended to move the parking department to an enterprise system, which would act similarly as the water enterprise. The parking revenues would go directly into parking improvements and fund staff, equipment and other improvements.
- **Regional Coordination** – Improved regional and best practice coordination with Colorado Springs for parking best practices will increase opportunities to provide efficient strategies within Manitou Springs. Planning is underway to establish a southern Colorado regional parking board meeting that will occur once a year to share parking issues, remedies, and best practices.

Tier Two:

- **Mobility Hubs** (Hiawatha, COG, mini-hubs) – Hubs can improve and encourage other forms of transportation including bikes, walking, micro-mobility and shuttle service. Much is dependent on the Task Force III concerning the future of Hiawatha. Once a plan is determined in the next few months, a decision can be made on the future parking and mobility needs in the area. Discussion is underway of a hub at the COG and possible mini hubs in and around Manitou Springs.

- **Parking Benefit Districts** - Designated parking spots for employee parking or daytime visitor parking and in return a percent of revenues would be used to support that neighborhood or designated parking spots as an incentive. Districts potentially increases downtown parking inventory for visitors/shoppers and supports a positive neighborhood/business connection in turn, supporting the City overall.
- **Additional Surface Lot** – To increase parking capacity, the City could look at purchasing additional property for surface lots. At this time, there none are identified but should be as part of a long-range goal.

Tier Three:

- **Parking Garage** – The City will determine the need for a parking garage. Currently, a new parking garage would be upwards of a \$20 million investment. This would be a tremendous fiscal burden for the city for 30+ years. Since a garage is not likely to be fully utilized year-round and would be underutilized during the off-season, the cost-benefit ratio would not be favorable. In the future, the City may need to consider this option; implementing the other more accessible tiers would provide good feedback and data to determine future need. Other considerations will be SDC (self-driving cars), increased mobility products and other future transportation ideas not yet developed.
- **Increased Transit Service (bus, van, rail, trolley)** – Many studies show that transit services help reduce pollution and congestion. The City will continue to work with Mountain Metro to identify and optimize shuttle and bus service throughout the community.

Results / Conclusion

As Manitou Springs moves forward with the TMMP, other areas of concern will arise such as additional parking requirements with the Black Canyon Recreational site, addition of SDC's, other forms of micro mobility and modes of transportation still being dreamed of.

The Transportation Master Plan City Task Force will continue to meet and implement these tiers and discuss additional components and ideas as they present themselves. As data is obtained from the Parking Logix program, Hiawatha use, COG and incline reports, the Task Force will work on ways to continue progress to improve the transportation and mobility system in the City.

City staff will continue to collaborate with the Manitou City Council, Transportation Parking Board, City of Colorado Springs, the Pikes Peak Cog and Railway, Metro District, Chamber of Commerce, BID, Garden of the Gods Trading Post and other agencies that can help achieve success.

“A Journey of a Thousand Miles Begins with a Single Step.” – Lao Tzu

References

- Laura Neumann Consultant and Project Manager
- Kimley-Horne Parking Study and Ruxton Functionality Study (2019)
- Transportation Parking Board (future Mobility And Parking Board-MAP)
- Ruxton Avenue Study
- Manitou Incline Site Development and Management Plan
- Colorado Springs City Staff
 - Kurt Schroeder– Park Maintenance and Operations Manager (Incline Management)
 - Scott Lee – Parking Director (TMMP Task Force)
- COG Railway parking study and staff
 - Gary Pierson
 - Ted Johnston
- Manitou Springs City Staff TMMP Task Force
 - Christine Lowenberg – Planning Director
 - Denise Howell – City Administrator
 - Dole Grebenik – City Engineer
 - Jeff Jones – Public Works Director
 - Kevin Stevenson – Parking Manager
 - Lynn Johnson – Parks and Recreation Director
- Chamber of Commerce and the BID
- Metro District
- Garden of the Gods Trading Post