

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

February 4, 1981

349

FINAL REPORT
1980
DOWNTOWN
PARKING SURVEYS
PRESENTED

Council received the "Final Report 1980 Downtown Parking Surveys" as prepared by the City of Lodi Community Development Department and presented by Ms. Mamie Starr, Assistant Planner. A brief presentation concerning the document was made by Walter Sanborn, Chairman of the CLIC Committee.

FINAL REPORT

1980

DOWNTOWN PARKING SURVEYS

Prepared by

City of Lodi Community Development Department

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to discuss the covering of the downtown parking meters during the 1980 Christmas season and to compare the results of two parking surveys which were conducted in 1979 and 1980.

METER COVERING

At the request of downtown merchants, and the Central Lodi Improvement Committee, the City Council approved covering of the parking meters during the 1980 Christmas season. The merchants obtained 2,000 opaque white plastic bags with drawstrings. The message, handstamped in red at the bottom of the bag (which was the top after putting over the meter) stated, "Two Hour Free Parking - Time Limit Enforced 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. except Sundays - Merry Christmas and Happy New Year." The message was handstamped by the bag company (Accent Paper) representative as there was inadequate time for professional printing.

All meters (700+) were bagged the day after Thanksgiving (November 28, 1980) by the merchants, who also kept bags on the street meters. The City's parking enforcement personnel maintained the lot meters. The bags were removed the Sunday following New Years (January 3, 1981). According to all reports the bags worked well, especially when the strings were cut and tied around the meter post. Apparently securing the bags with drawstrings permitted adequate air circulation to prevent a buildup of potentially harmful moisture inside the bag. No estimate is available as to the number of bags replaced; however, it appeared that vandalism was relatively minor and there were no adverse effects as a result of the weather.

During the period that the meters were covered, all one-hour time zones were enforced as two-hour zones. Parking enforcement personnel chalked tires during regular patrol and tickets were issued to vehicles exceeding the two-hour time. The 12-minute zone, five hour spaces in the lots; and the permit lot were enforced as usual.

The mechanics of enforcement were not difficult, particularly after a few days of experience. It is a fact that it takes longer to make the rounds when chalking as opposed to sighting expired meters.

Question Number 8 in the on-street interview survey for 1980 provides the only quantifiable data on the effect of the two-hour free parking; however, on the basis of informal comments and articles and letters in the newspapers, it appears that the action was positively received by the merchants and the public, and an atmosphere of good-will was created, which was the object.

On the less favorable side, enforcement personnel and other individuals informally reported that there were a number of vehicles which were regularly overparked. This is examined to a certain extent in the Parking Duration Survey, discussed below. In some cases these vehicles belonged to downtown merchants and were parked in front of their own businesses or in front of a neighboring business. There are unsubstantiated reports that this is not unusual. Increased employee parking in the two-hour spaces was also reported.

THE PARKING SURVEYS

The purpose of the parking surveys was to provide the Central Lodi Improvement Committee, downtown merchants and the City of Lodi with parking-related data during the time that the parking meters were covered, that could be compared with the data obtained at the same time in 1979, when the meters were operational.

The first survey concentrated on parking duration and the second involved on-street interviews of individual opinions about downtown parking. Both the 1979 and the 1980 surveys were conducted by Ms. Susan Hughes, during the Christmas shopping season.

The 1979 surveys were organized by Quad Consultants, as part of their studies of Lodi's downtown. The data, which was the basis of a number of parking-related recommendations, is discussed in part in the June, 1980 Final Lodi Downtown Development Plan. Excerpts are provided in this report for comparative purposes.

Parking Duration Survey

The 1979 parking duration survey was conducted on two days during the week of December 16th. The 1980 survey was taken on Tuesday, December 16th and Thursday, December 18th. The methodology was the same each year. Surveyors drove around the assigned blocks approximately every hour, for ten hours, marking the first three digits of each license plate on a form. This information was compiled and analyzed to provide data on parking turnover, occupancy

rate and overtime violation.

Figure A identifies the block numbers, block faces and survey route. Figure B shows the number of spaces in each block face (side). Figure C is a summary of the results of the 1979 and the 1980 parking duration surveys. Figures D and E show the occupancy rate of each block face, for each of the 1980 survey days. Figures F and G show the total violation hours for each of the days surveyed in 1980.

On-Street Interview Survey

The 1980 on-street interviews were conducted on Friday evening, December 19 for three hours; Saturday, December 20th for four hours; and on Saturday, December 13th for 4½ hours. Individuals were randomly approached on the street in the downtown area (principally along School, Pine, Oak and Walnut Streets) and were asked a series of questions about their parking preferences. The same procedure was used in 1979. A copy of each questionnaire is included in this report as Exhibits H and I. The only difference between the two years was significantly more interviews were obtained in 1980, and the addition of a new question 8 which reads, "Was the free two hour parking a factor in your decision to shop downtown today." A summary of responses to the 1979 and 1980 interviews is found in Figure J. Figure K lists all of the specific suggestions for parking improvements that were obtained in the 1980 survey.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

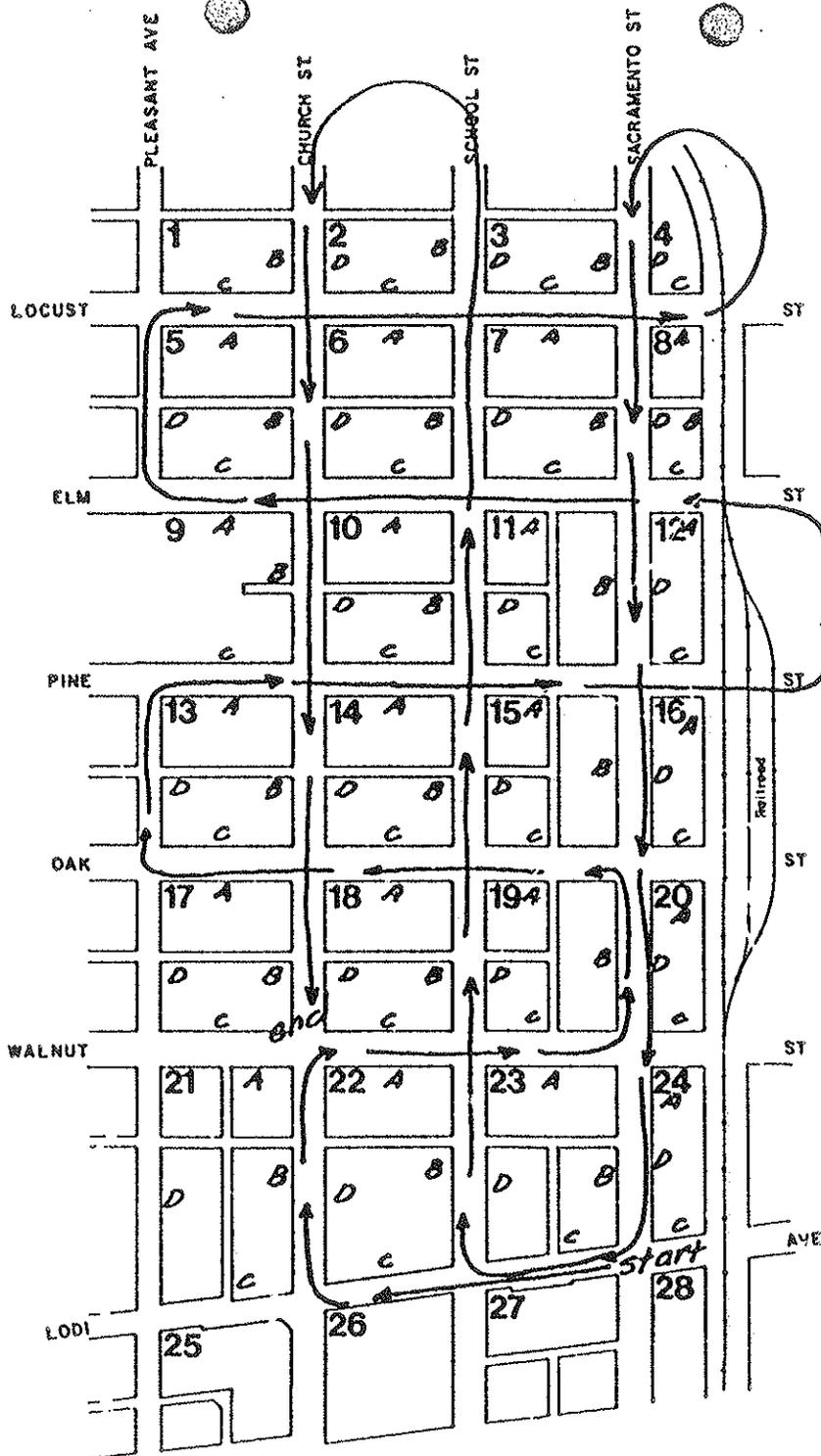
There is no conclusive evidence that hooding the meters had a significant effect on the Christmas shoppers other than already discussed. However, the surveyor and parking enforcement personnel reported that there were undoubtedly more people downtown this year than last. There may be a number of reasons for this. The weather was wet, foggy and cold during the 1979 season, while 1980 was predominantly warm and sunny. Other causes may be economic. The price of gasoline may have forced more people to shop locally, as may have the recessionary trend towards fewer and more conservative gifts, thus decreasing the need or desire to visit large shopping malls.

The parking turnover survey further substantiated what is already known - that there will be repetitive violations of the time zones, especially in the more desirable parking areas. This information, combined with the interview information tends to support the need for ongoing parking enforcement, if the available parking spaces are to be used to the greatest advantage in meeting the customers needs. Although the two hour time zone

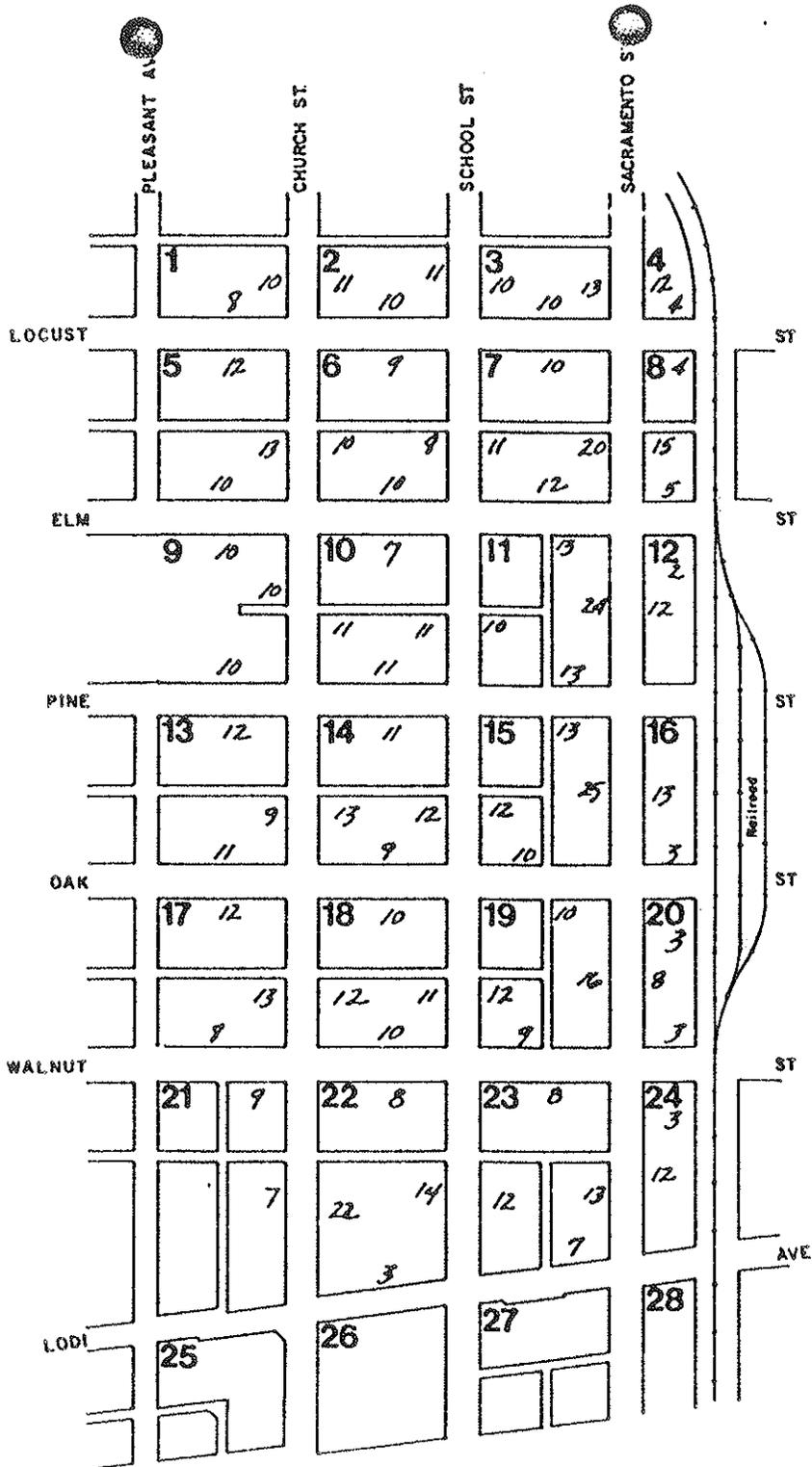
decreased the number of parking space hours, there were hardly any block faces which had 100% occupancy on the survey days, with the average actually between 40% and 50% occupancy. Naturally, not everyone found a parking place where they wanted exactly when they wanted. It is very doubtful that any customer would have had to walk more than three blocks from their car to the stores during crowded times:

Additional information may be gleaned from the on-street interview forms; therefore, they have been retained on file in the Community Development Department in City Hall.

Suggestions for parking improvements, listed in Figure K, indicate an awareness of proposals set forth in the Quad Plan or shoppers are thinking along the same lines as recommended alternatives in the plan (particularly those regarding School Street parking and direction.) The 1979 questionnaires are not available; therefore, it is not possible to compare the responses to determine comparative public awareness regarding proposals for downtown.



1980 PARKING DURATION SURVEY
 City of Lodi Community Development Department



1980 PARKING DURATION SURVEY
 City of Lodi Community Development Department

FIGURE C

PARKING DURATION SURVEY RESULTS

| | 1979 ¹ | 1980 |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|
| One hour zone spaces surveyed | 480 | 0 |
| Equivalent all-day parker occupancy | 96 | 0 |
| Two hour zone spaces surveyed | 223 | 808 |
| Equivalent all-day parker occupancy ² | 48 | uk |
| Percent all-day occupancy | 20% | 9.3% ³ |
| Percent occupancy - surveyed spaces | 71% | 43.3% ⁴ |
| Total number average violation hours/day | n/a | 5.35 ⁵ |

¹Quad Consultants, Lodi Downtown Development Plan. Prepared for the City of Lodi and the Central Lodi Improvement Committee, June 1980. p. 3-3.

²How these figures were derived is not known; therefore, a comparative figure for 1980 is not given.

³It is not known how the percent all day occupancy was calculated in 1979. In 1980, the following method was used: Cars parked in the same block-face for more than four hours were considered to be there $\frac{1}{2}$ day. Cars parked for 8 or more hours were considered to be there all day. The number of all day and $\frac{1}{2}$ day figures were added together and equated to spaces. Combining the $\frac{1}{2}$ day and whole days equaled 66 spaces used for all day parking on one day and 84 for the other day. These figures were added together and taken as a percentage of 1616 total spaces (808 + 808). It is important to note that cars moved around the block, or to another block were not counted as all-day parkers unless the time in any block-face exceeded four hours. Therefore, the number of spaces used for all-day parking is probably higher than the figures would indicate as it is known that a number of people move the vehicle throughout the day.

⁴It is not known exactly how the occupancy rate was calculated in 1979. The 1980 figure was derived in the following manner. First, the occupancy rate was obtained for each block face:

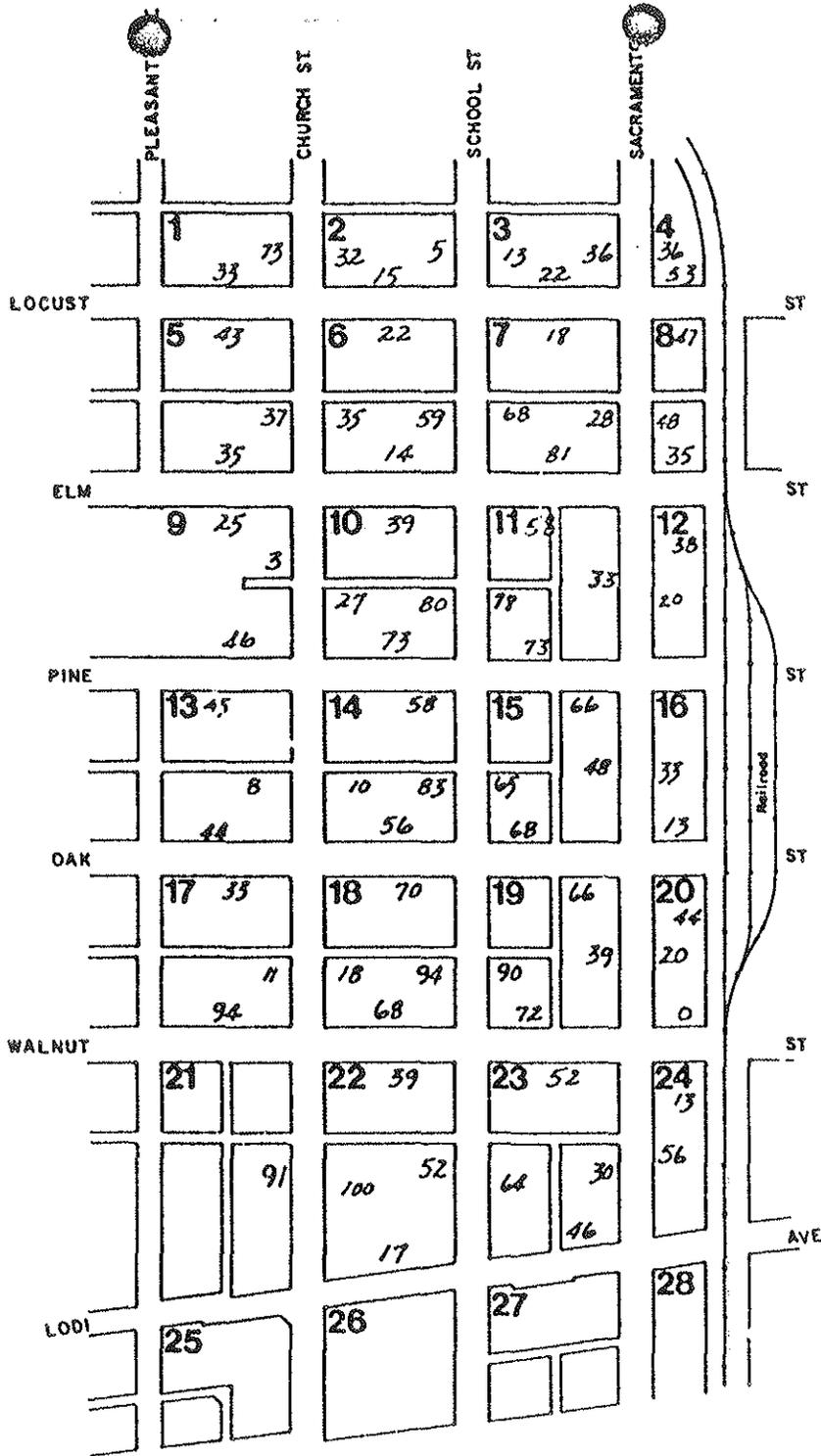
$$OR = \frac{\#spaces\ occupied/hour \div two\ hour\ time\ limit}{(\#spaces/block\ face \times 10\ hours) \div 2\ hour\ time\ limit} \times 100\%$$

These percentages are then added together and divided by the number of block faces to obtain the average over the two days.

⁵The total average violation hours per day was obtained in the following manner. First, the number of violation hours per day was calculated for each block face:

$$\# repeat\ license\ plates \times 8\ hours\ (adjusted\ for\ 2\ hour\ zone)$$

An average of these numbers was taken for each day and then these numbers were averaged.



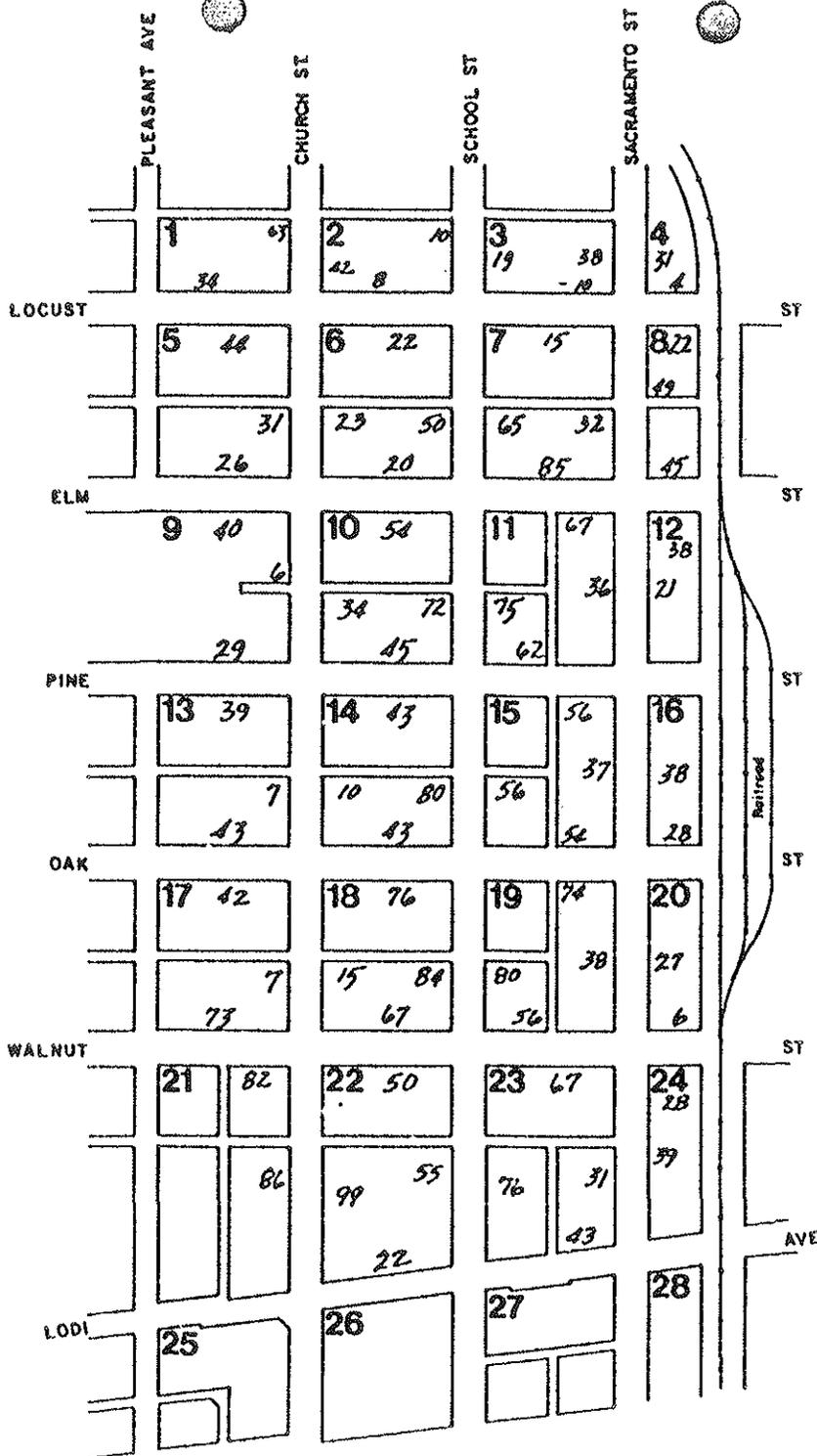
1980 PARKING DURATION SURVEY
 City of Lodi Community Development Department



SPACES OCCUPIED/BLOCK FACE Thurs 12/16

FIGURE

D



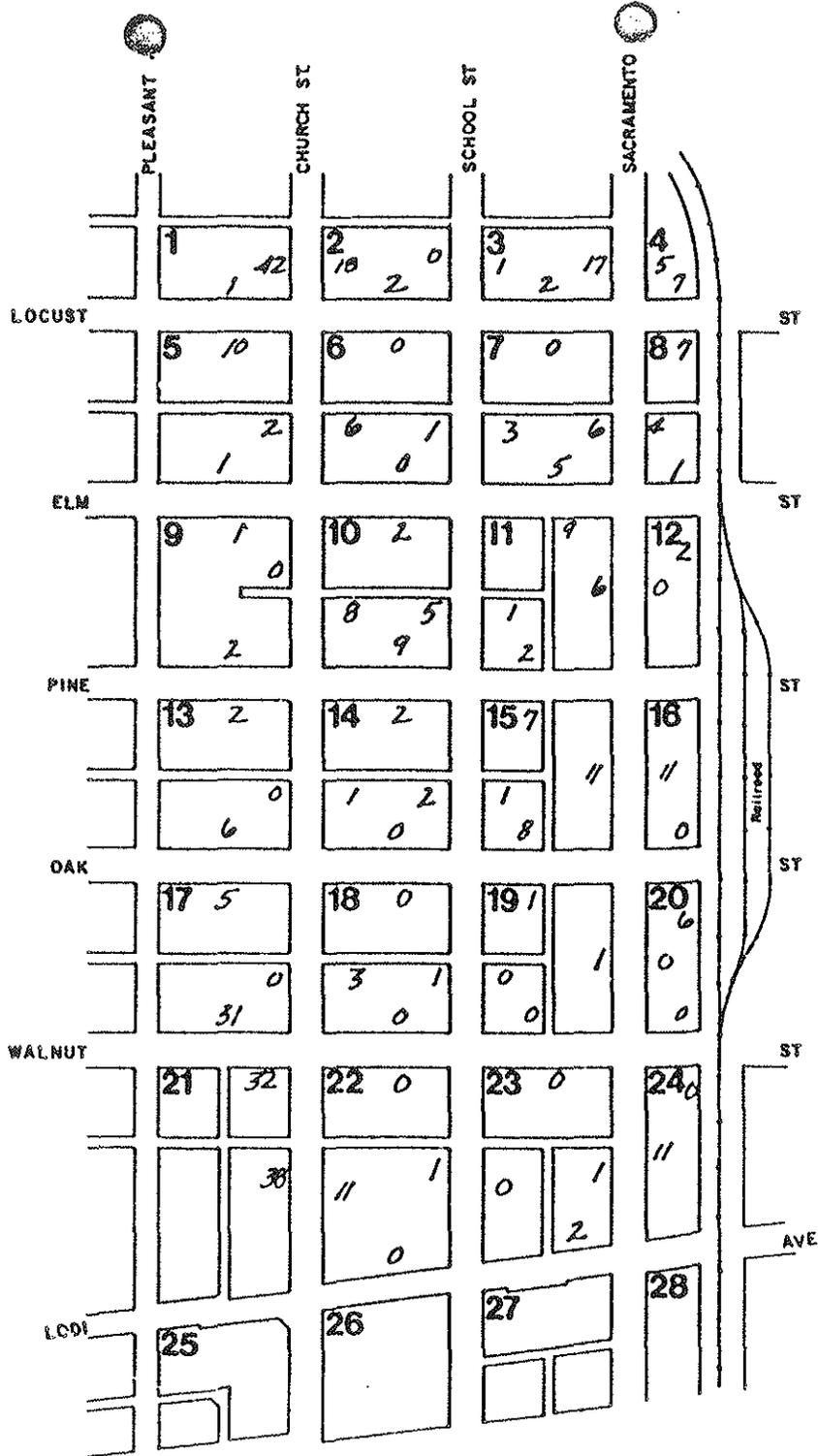
1980 PARKING DURATION SURVEY
 City of Lodi Community Development Department



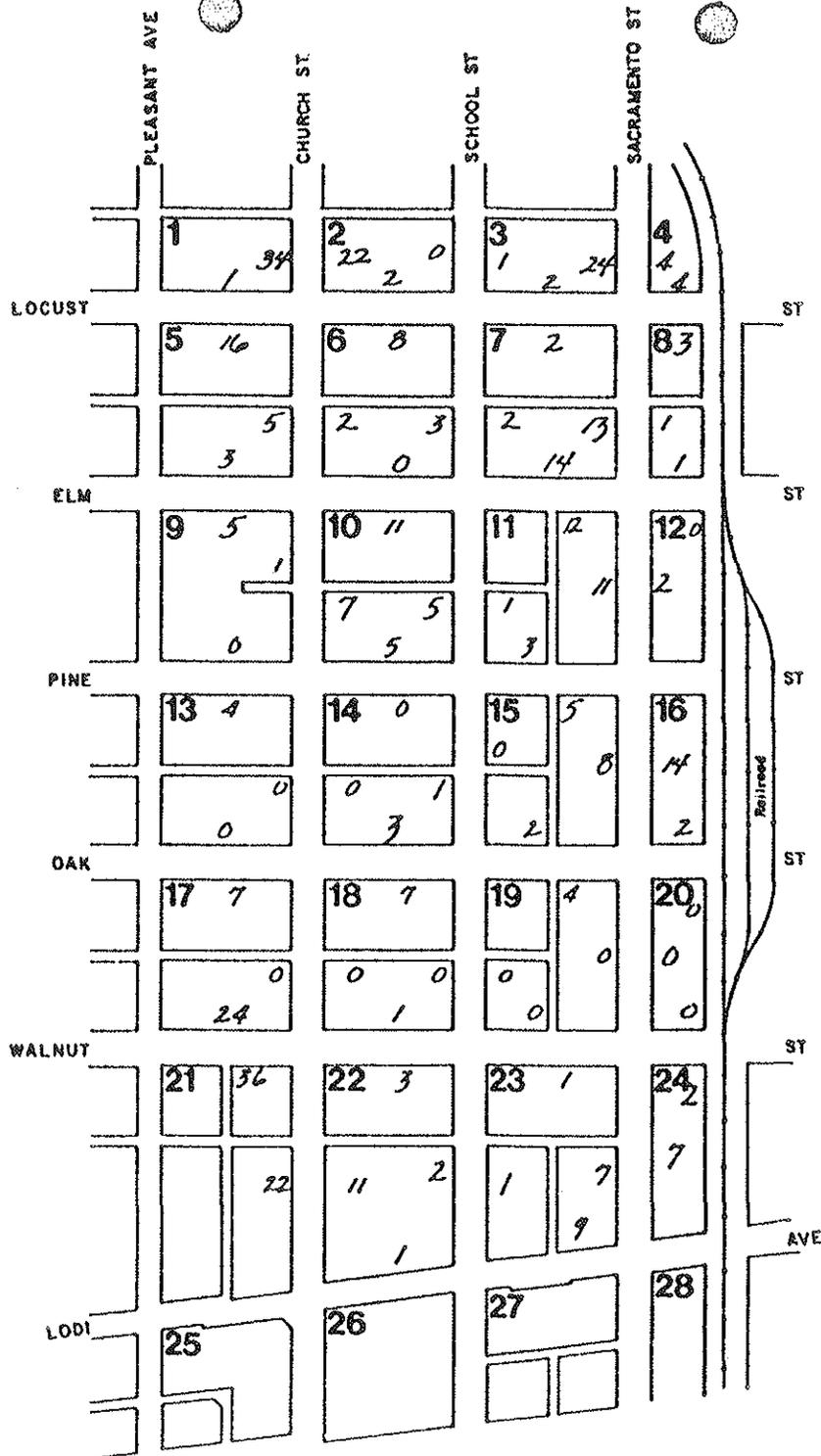
8 SPACES OCCUPIED/BLOCK FACE Thurs. 12/18

FIGURE

E



1980 PARKING DURATION SURVEY
 City of Lodi Community Development Department



1980 PARKING DURATION SURVEY
 City of Lodi Community Development Department

FIGURE H
1979

STANDARD INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

I'm conducting a downtown parking survey for the City of Lodi and the Central Lodi Improvement Committee. Could I ask you a few brief questions?

1. Did you drive to downtown? _____; _____.

2. Are you here to work, shop, or? _____.

3. Where are you shopping or working? (or your destination) _____

4. Where did you park? _____

5. Was this where you prefer to park/Is it a satisfactory parking choice? _____

6.a. Are parking meters for shopper parking a good idea or a bad one? _____

6.b. (Employees) Would you be willing to pay for a close-in, off-street, parking space? _____

7. Is downtown parking a factor in where you shop, compared to shopping center parking, or are other factors more important?

8. Any suggestions for downtown parking improvement? _____

FIGURE I

1980

STANDARD INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

I'm conducting a downtown parking survey for the City of Lodi and the Central Lodi Improvement Committee; could I ask you a few brief questions?

1. Did you drive to downtown? _____; _____
2. Are you here to work, shop, or? _____
3. Where are you shopping or working? (or your destination)

4. Where did you park? _____
5. Was this where you prefer to park/Is it a satisfactory parking choice? _____
- 6a. Are parking meters for shopper parking a good idea or a bad one? _____
- 6b. (Employees) Would you be willing to pay for a close-in, off-street, parking space? _____
7. Is downtown parking a factor in where you shop, compared to shopping center parking, or are other factors more important?

8. Was the free 2 hour parking a factor in your decision to shop downtown today? _____

9. Do you have any suggestions for downtown parking improvements?

FIGURE J

ON-STREET INTERVIEWS 1979 and 1980

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

| | 1979 ¹ | | 1980 | |
|---|-------------------|------|------|------|
| | # | % | # | % |
| Total number of persons surveyed | 158 | | 230 | |
| Persons surveyed who reached downtown by driving | 132 | 83.5 | 218 | 95.0 |
| Persons surveyed who reached downtown by walking | uk | uk | 12 | 5.0 |
| Persons surveyed downtown to shop | 137 | 86.7 | 213 | 92.0 |
| Shoppers going to single store | | | 114 | 53.5 |
| Shoppers going to two stores | | | 15 | 7.0 |
| Shoppers going to several stores | | | 84 | 39.5 |
| Persons surveyed downtown to work | 19 | 12.0 | 14 | 6.0 |
| Persons surveyed downtown for Post Office | | | 3 | 1.0 |
| Persons surveyed who parked on the street | 70 | 53.0 | 148 | 64.0 |
| Persons surveyed who parked in lots | uk | uk | 70 | 30.0 |
| Persons surveyed satisfied with where they parked | 102 | 77.3 | 183 | 80.0 |
| Attitudes of persons surveyed towards meters | | | | |
| Good idea | 36 | 22.8 | 22 | 10.0 |
| Bad idea | 111 | 70.3 | 180 | 78.0 |
| No opinion | 11 | 6.9 | | 12.0 |

| | | | | |
|--|----|------|-----|------|
| Persons surveyed who felt downtown parking an important factor in determining where to shop | 85 | 53.8 | 126 | 55.0 |
| Persons surveyed who felt downtown parking <u>not</u> an important factor in determining where to shop | uk | uk | 97 | 42.0 |
| Persons surveyed who felt two hour free parking a factor in decision to shop downtown (#8) | na | na | 84 | 37.0 |
| Persons surveyed who felt two hour free parking <u>not</u> a factor in decision to shop downtown | | | 142 | 62.0 |
| Number of above who indicated they liked the two hour free parking | | | 22 | |

¹Quad Consultants, Lodi Downtown Development Plan. Prepared for the City of Lodi and the Central Lodi Improvement Committee, June, 1980.

FIGURE K

ON-STREET INTERVIEWS 1979 and 1980

SUMMARY OF SUGGESTED PARKING IMPROVEMENTS

| SUGGESTION/COMMENT | # TIMES SUGGESTED | 1 |
|---|-------------------|---------|
| METERS/TIME ZONES | | |
| Get rid of meters | 90 | (33%) 2 |
| Doesn't like time-limit parking/more time | 4 | |
| Two hour time limit for free parking | 1 | |
| Lots of parking, should be no limit or cost | 1 | |
| Keep bags on meters | 1 | |
| Make shoppers pay for parking | 1 | |
| Don't make shoppers pay for parking | 1 | |
| Like free parking | 1 | |
| LOTS | | |
| More lots (especially centrally located) | 12 | (4%) |
| Lots are a great help/like lots | 3 | |
| Free parking lot | 1 | |
| Validated parking | 2 | |
| Larger lots | 1 | |
| AMOUNT OF PARKING | | |
| More parking | 5 | (1.5%) |
| No place for more spaces | 3 | |
| Not enough spaces | 2 | |
| More parking behind stores | 1 | |
| Usually plenty of places except Christmas | 1 | |
| Most times parking ok | 1 | |
| FACILITIES/DESIGN | | |
| Diagonal parking favored | 8 | (3%) |
| No diagonal parking on Sacramento Street | 2 | |
| Don't like parallel parking | 1 | |
| Diagonal parking on one side | 1 | |
| Better parking | 7 | (2.5%) |
| Make School Street a mall | 1 | |
| Make School Street one-way or a mall | 1 | |
| Make parking easier | 1 | |
| Don't allow parking close to corners | 1 | |
| Make School Street one-way | 3 | |
| Wider Streets | 3 | |
| Larger spaces | 6 | (2%) |
| Places hard to get in and out from | 1 | |
| Do Quad plan | 1 | |
| Trams to stores | 1 | |
| More lighting | 1 | |
| Parking garage (centrally located) | 7 | (2.5%) |

| SUGGESTION/COMMENT | # TIMES SUGGESTED |
|--|-------------------|
| ATMOSPHERE | |
| Downtown is dirty | 1 |
| Need more trees (emphasized) | 1 |
| More unique shops in attractive setting (like Santa Cruz) | 1 |
| RESTRICTIONS | |
| Make people walk more | 1 |
| Do away with cars | 1 |
| Keep employees out of parking places | 2 |
| NO SUGGESTIONS³ | |
| No suggestions | 77 (28%) |
| No suggestions, parking not a problem | 6 (2%) |
| No suggestions, from out of town to shop here | 2 |
| Like it the way it is | 1 |
| Lodi's ok | 1 |
| No suggestions, Lodi's great the way it is | 1 |
| No suggestions - parking always a problem | 1 |
| Could write a book of suggestions | 1 |

¹Many persons made more than one comment. Each suggestion was counted individually.

²Each suggestion counted as one. The percentages are based on the total number of suggestions. Nearly 35% of those interviewed stated, "Get rid of the meters."

³Many who stated, "no suggestions" actually had some comment. These comments are included in the above listing.