

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON PARKING

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SYNOPSIS

War conditions during the past four years have prevented any extensive amount of research on parking and terminal facilities. The principal subjects being studied by the Committee are parking requirements of central business, parking habits and requirements of auto drivers, adequacy of existing facilities, to design and appraise methods for making these determinations.

The dwelling interview method used in estimating traffic volumes in metropolitan area traffic surveys proved inadequate for parking surveys. Interviews of persons parking cars in the central business district is proving to be more successful. This type of survey includes an inventory or audit of existing facilities, a cordon count of traffic entering and leaving the district. The interview obtains information concerning trip purpose, ultimate destination, and trip origin. Other information obtained in subsequent analysis is length of time parked, distance from parking place to destination, time parked, time left parking place, and kind of parking.

Broader experience is needed in use of data obtained by these methods before any relationships can be definitely stated.

The parking of motor vehicles in the central business districts, which was a problem in many cities before the war, is now of increasing significance with increased traffic volumes on existing streets. It will be of even more significance with the development or improvement of high-volume urban roads and streets as a part of the postwar construction if vehicles with destinations in the central business district are to have adequate terminal facilities. The Committee certainly does not lack a research problem, but it has been difficult during the past three years to accomplish any appreciable amount of work on this phase of highway research because of war conditions.

Discussions among the members of the Committee have recognized several means of studying the parking problem. We have been able to assemble some parking habit information and to observe the effectiveness of some study procedures in a few scattered situations.

The problem of the Committee as summarized from these discussions is stated as follows:

1. Determination of the parking requirements of the central business district.
2. Determination of the parking habits and

requirements of persons with destination in the district.

3. Determination of the adequacy of existing facilities with respect to those requirements.
4. Means and procedures to be used in making these determinations.

In the Proceedings of the Highway Research Board for 1944, Vol. 24, a summary of parking habits was presented for Savannah, Georgia. This was obtained in conjunction with a study of travel habits by means of the dwelling interview method which has been used in more than 30 metropolitan areas. This method proved to be inadequate for parking study purposes since the sample was too small for the limited area under study. Then, too, the additional time taken in the dwelling interview to obtain the parking information prolonged the interview to a point where it appeared that persons being interviewed were cutting the interview short to the detriment of obtaining complete information not only for parking, but also for travel habits—the basic purpose of the metropolitan area surveys. It was also necessary to obtain additional information about the parking facilities. For these

reasons this method in its present form is considered to be undesirable.

We have since had the opportunity to observe another method which has been used in Detroit and in Atlanta. This method and some of the results will be presented in detail by Mr. Lloyd Braff a member of the Committee, in the following paper. A similar method was used in parking studies in Providence and Pawtucket, Rhode Island, and is planned for Baltimore, Maryland.

Briefly, this method consists of three phases:

- 1 An inventory or audit of existing facilities.
2. A cordon count of vehicles entering and leaving the district to determine the load or number of vehicles with destination or origin in the district.
- 3 Interviews with drivers of vehicles parked in the area to obtain information on trip purpose, ultimate destination, trip origin, and other information about parking habits.

From these data it should be possible to show the destinations of each person parking a car, the number of vehicles parked, and the number of available parking spaces for each block in the central business district. The adequacy of existing facilities can thus be expressed in terms of travel under current conditions.

There are other approaches to the study of the parking problem in the central business district, some of which are closely allied to other phases of planning transportation of a community. The following questions suggest investigations, results of which should be of value to city and highway authorities in their planning of transportation.

What is a desirable balance between transit and automobile transportation?

How many trips per day per unit of building area are generated by department stores, office buildings, motion picture theaters, and several types of small retail specialty stores;

by employees, by shoppers, and by persons on business?

What effect does the type of city have on the traffic and parking problem generated by the central business district?

Is the city an independent city, the central city of a metropolitan district, or a suburb?

Is employment in a city predominantly in manufacturing, industry, retail trade, wholesale trade, recreation, mining, or government?

What is the ratio between the number of people who work in the city and the number who live there?

What is the rent level?

Future conditions due to recovery in driving habits from war conditions and due to improved travel facilities will aggravate present parking conditions.

The cumulation of experience in parking studies is essential if the Committee is to be in a position to answer these questions. For some of these problems existing procedures may be used in studies. For other problems it may be necessary to devise new methods.

The Committee would like to obtain broader experience in the use of existing procedures and to develop additional facts on travel habits and their relation to parking. Any study and analysis which is made as a part of a traffic program in a metropolitan area should have elements of value to increase the scope and results of the work of the Committee.

Results of parking studies and methods used will be available through releases of the highway research correlation service which the Highway Research Board is providing as part of its program of activity. The success of this service is dependent no less upon agencies using the service than upon agencies contributing reports or summaries of studies on current work.

The work of the Committee will be continued during 1946 to appraise methods used in making parking studies to bring them to the attention of the Highway Research Board and its members.