

# **DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY**

**City of Los Altos**

**April, 1987**

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## INTRODUCTION

## I. INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this study is to develop an action plan for improving parking and traffic circulation conditions in downtown Los Altos. The action plan has been divided into two phases; a short range action plan to implement specific programs and improvements within one year and a flexible long range "Standby" action plan for future programs and improvements. The "Standby" approach for the long range plan is necessary due to the current unknowns in future parking and traffic demands in relation to land use in the downtown area. A comprehensive review of the City's General Plan is currently being accomplished which will examine existing and future land uses in the downtown area, and project future parking and traffic demands. In order to avoid duplicating the work of the General Plan Review, the scope of this report does not include future projections. This report provides an analysis of existing parking and traffic circulation conditions and is intended to serve as a "workbook" to provide an inventory of alternative solutions to address existing problems and to meet changing conditions in the future.

## II SUMMARY OF STUDY RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The information presented below is to provide the reader with limited time a quick overview of the major findings of the study.

### A. Parking

The major downtown parking problems occur typically on weekdays from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and generally during the month of December when retail sales peak during the holiday season. During these times, parking occupancy in the public parking plazas exceeds 85% of the capacity which is the level at which most people perceive a parking problem due to congestion and delays. Customers, employees, and employers are all affected by the parking conditions during these periods.

There is no one simple solution to these problems. This report presents a variety of coordinated solutions that are included in a short range action plan recommended for implementation within one year and a long range "standby" action plan with items to be implemented, when and if, needed in the future.

#### "HIGHLIGHTS" OF SHORT RANGE ACTION PLAN - PARKING

- \* Reconfiguration of existing plazas and streets to provide 107 additional public parking stalls (low cost alternatives).
- \* Parking Management measures with operational changes that will make the use of existing parking facilities more efficient.
- \* Consideration of the adoption of zoning and land use controls that will keep parking demand in balance with parking supply.

- \* Detailed land use studies of downtown in relation to parking needs.
- \* Creation of a "Parking Awareness" program to educate customers, employees and employers on parking conditions and availability.
- \* Emphasis on traffic mitigation measures by promoting use of forms of transportation other than the automobile.
- \* Implementation of a special holiday parking program during the month of December.
- \* Creation of a "Parking Development Fund" to finance parking facilities, programs, and services with revenues from new fees.

The implementation of the above short range plan should provide enough improvement to bring parking supply into balance with existing parking demand. The parking demand in the future will be influenced largely by zoning and land use controls and general economic conditions. The long range "Standby" Action Plan is designed to provide flexibility for the future and is basically an inventory of possible solutions that may be implemented when, and if, needed in the future.

#### HIGHLIGHTS OF LONG RANGE "STANDBY" ACTION PLAN - PARKING

- \* Reconfiguration of existing plazas and streets to provide 96 additional public parking stalls (medium and high cost alternatives)
- \* Creation of a "Valet Parking Service" to be used during peak parking times.
- \* Implementation of additional traffic management measures to use existing facilities more effectively.
- \* Consideration of the adoption of additional zoning and land use controls if parking occupancy exceeds the 85% level in the public plazas.

- \* Studies of the feasibility of parking structures with emphasis on visual compatibility with village character of downtown.
- \* Acquisition of additional land to expand parking plazas at surface level.

B. Traffic Circulation

The primary problems regarding traffic circulation are congestion at certain intersections at certain times of the day and poor access from one part of the triangle to another, particularly the crossing of Main Street.

"HIGHLIGHTS" OF SHORT RANGE ACTION PLAN - TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

- \* Conduct traffic engineering studies at the following signalized intersections to improve traffic flow and safety conditions.
  - San Antonio Rd., First St., and Cuesta Drive
  - Main St. and First St.
  - W.Edith Avenue and First St.
- \* Revise loading zones to reduce congestion and delays.
- \* Install additional sidewalk, pedestrian crossing signals, and lighting in selected areas.
- \* Study alternatives to improve access across Main St. at Second St. and Third St.

"HIGHLIGHTS" OF LONG RANGE ACTION PLAN - TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

- \* Complete intersection and signalization improvements recommended by traffic engineering studies at the following intersections.

- San Antonio Rd., First St., and Cuesta Drive
- Main St. and First St.
- W.Edith Avenue and First St.

- \* Implement bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements recommended in new General Plan.
- \* Implement solutions to improve access across Main St. at Second St. and Third St.
- \* Install new traffic signal at intersection of San Antonio Road, Pepper Drive, and Third St.

### III HISTORY OF PARKING IN DOWNTOWN LOS ALTOS

The most significant event in the history of parking improvements in the downtown area occurred in 1958 when the public parking plazas were constructed in a 10 block area. That major project provided over 1,000 parking stalls to serve the properties within the parking plaza assessment district.

The parking plazas functioned essentially as originally designed through the 1960's and 1970's. In 1978, the increasing use of the parking plazas was causing concern and a comprehensive land use/parking study was initiated by a joint effort of the downtown business community and the City. This study was completed in 1980 with the following major conclusions:

- additional parking plazas were not economically feasible (each new parking stall was estimated to cost \$20,000, primarily due to high land values)
- solutions to the immediate parking problems should be based on a parking management system that maximizes the effective use of the existing parking stalls
- land use regulations should be changed to reduce the amount of potential buildable area in order to limit the demand for parking in the future

In 1980 and 1981, several actions were taken to improve parking conditions including:

- the hiring of part-time community service officers for parking enforcement
- the establishment of time limits in certain sections of the parking plazas
- the adoption of land use regulations that reduced the amount of potential buildable area.

In 1983 and 1984, a significant number of regular parking stalls were converted to compact stalls which increased the number of available parking stalls.

Although the actions described above improved parking conditions, increasing plaza usage indicated that additional steps were necessary. In 1986, the City hired a full-time community service officer for increased parking enforcement and management. Time limits were changed in the central plazas from 3 hours to 2 hours, and 20 minute time zones were established for selected street stalls to improve customer parking conditions. In December 1986, a special holiday season parking improvement program was implemented to improve parking conditions during the retail sales peak.

#### IV EVALUATION OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

##### A. PARKING INFORMATION

###### 1. Parking Stall Inventory

There are currently 1,109 parking stalls in the 10 blocks of public parking plazas. The number of stalls by plaza block and time limit are shown below in Table I. The block number system is shown as Exhibit I.

The employee parking areas are located in the middle and outer rows of the North and South plazas and have no time limits. The first two rows of parking stalls adjacent to the buildings in the North and South Plazas are intended for customers and are controlled with a 3 hour time limit. All of the Central Plaza parking is controlled with a 2 hour time limit and is intended for customer parking. Stalls designated for 20 minute time zones are indicated on Exhibit 2.

There are 455 on-street parking stalls within the downtown triangle area. The number of on-street stalls by street and time limit are shown in Table 2.

A recent count of private parking stalls in the downtown triangle, including office uses on the East side of San Antonio Road indicated a total of 2,020 stalls on private property.

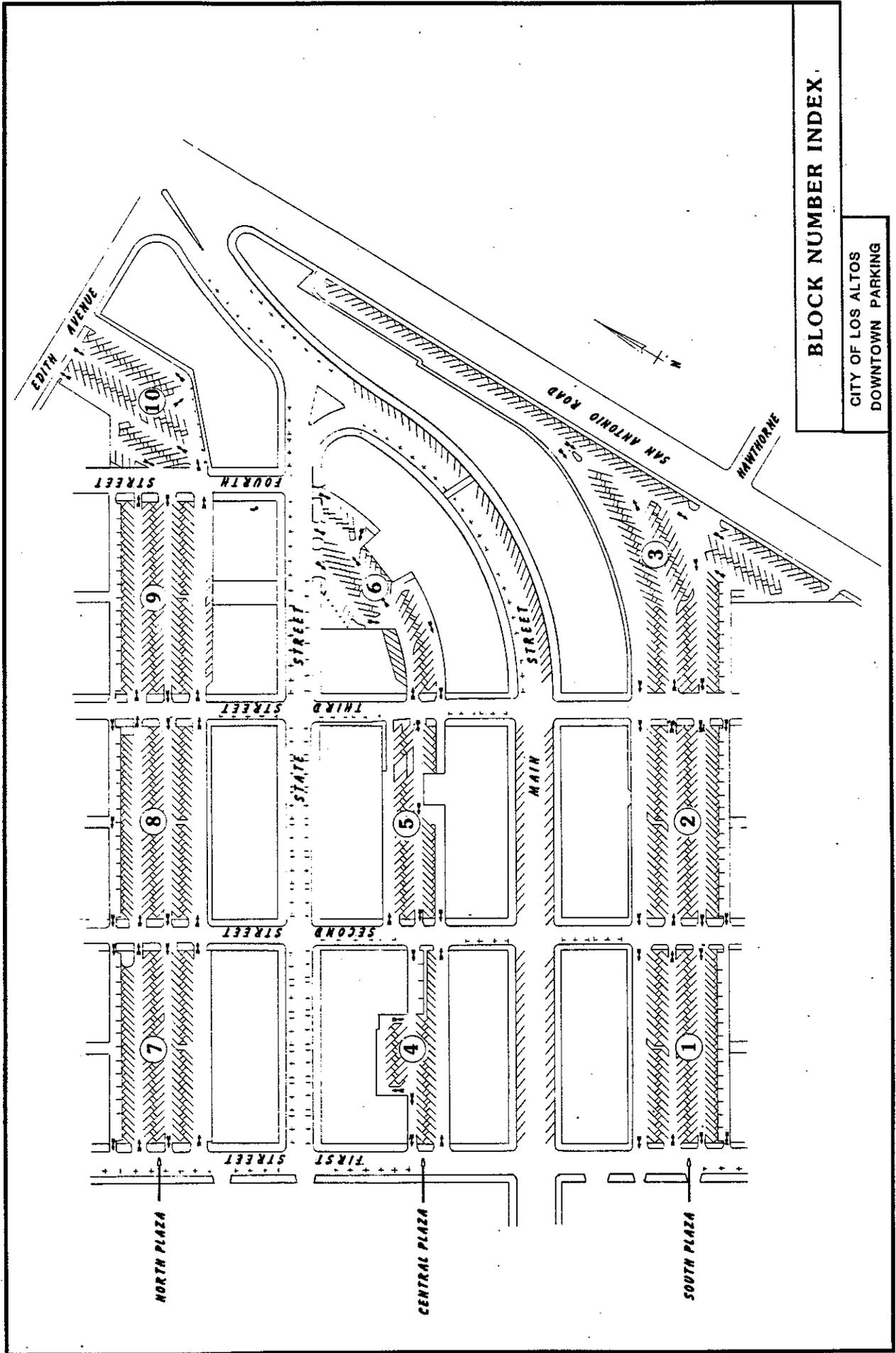
The total number of parking stalls for the entire triangle area, public and private, is 3,584.

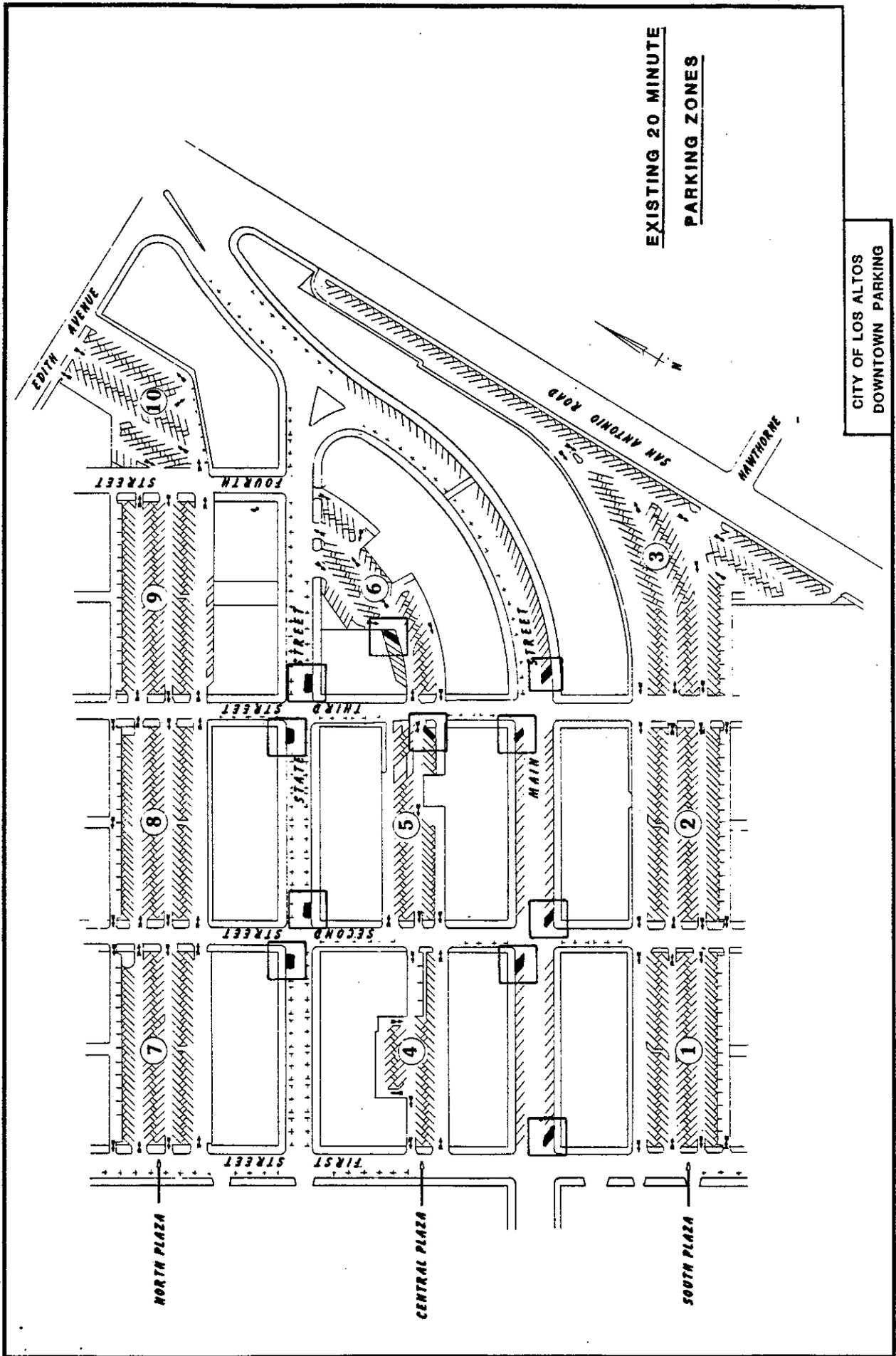
T A B L E 1

Public Plaza Parking Stall Inventory

BLOCK NO.*	ALL DAY NO LIMIT	3 HOUR	2 HOUR	HANDICAPPED	TOTAL STALLS	PERCENT COMPACT
1	86	44			130	22
2	85	43		1	129	21
3	101	103			204	7
4			57		57	16
5			58		58	24
6			65		65	17
7	80	44			124	19
8	83	43		1	127	20
9	93	44			137	11
10	49	29			78	0
TOTAL	577	350	180	2	1109	
% OF TOTAL	52.0	31.6	16.2	0.2	100.0	15

\*Refer to Block Number Index on Page 10.





T A B L E 2

Public Street Parking Stall Inventory

STREET	NO LIMIT ALL DAY	2 HOUR	20 MINS.	TOTAL
Main		136	4	140
State		68	4	72
First	10	89	11	110
Second	11	15		26
Third	10	12		22
Fourth	4			4
Lyell	9			9
Whitney	27	4		31
Shasta	10			10
W.Edith	31			31
TOTAL	112	324	19	455
% OF TOTAL	25	71	4	

## 2. Parking Plaza Occupancy Counts

### a. Total Parking Plaza

Observations of the number of vehicles occupying public plaza parking stalls were made on an hourly basis during the day on three days: May 9, 1986 Friday, November 13, 1986 Thursday and February 27, 1987 Friday. The data was collected separately for all day (employee) parking areas and time zone (customer) parking areas. Exhibit 3 illustrates the average occupancy rate of the total stalls (all day and time zone) in the plazas for the 3 days.

It should be emphasized that this information is for the total plaza and that the occupancy rates of certain individual blocks can vary considerably.

NOTE: The occupancy rate charts in this report include a horizontal line at the 85% occupancy level to help define the "parking problem". An occupancy rate of 85% is the level at which most people perceive a parking problem exists due to congestion and delays in finding a parking stall.

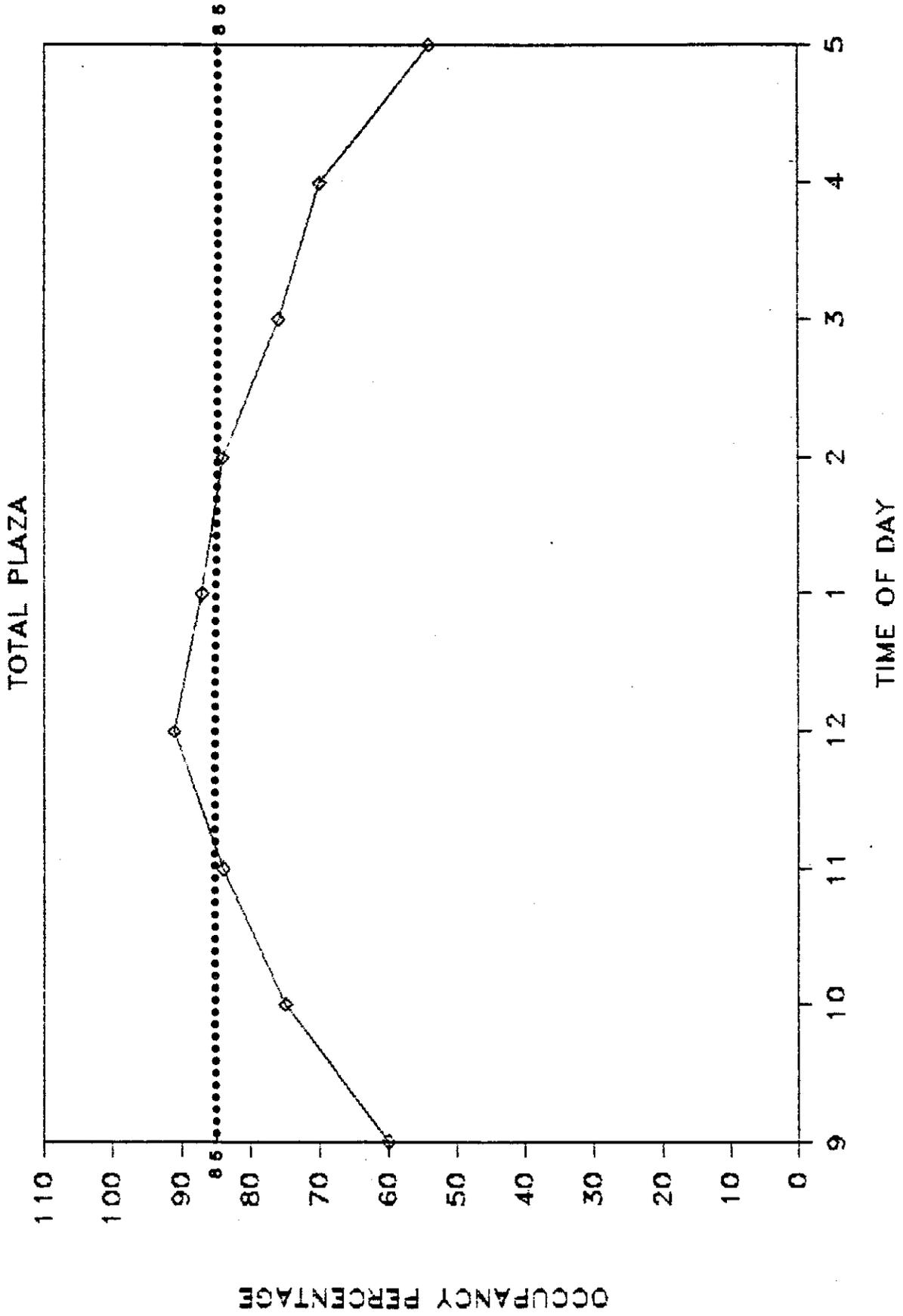
### b. Individual Block Data

The parking occupancy rates of the ten individual plaza blocks indicating employee, customer, and total occupancy are included in Appendix A. To facilitate the presentation of the data in condensed form, the hourly occupancy rates have been averaged for the 3 days of observation.

### c. Comparison to Past Conditions

In 1979, a Downtown Land Use and Parking Study was conducted which included data on parking stall occupancy during the noon hours. Table 3 illustrates the data from that report compared to data collected in 1986 and 1987.

# PARKING OCCUPANCY COUNTS



T A B L E 3  
 PERCENTAGE OF PARKING OCCUPANCY  
Special Noon Counts  
Public Parking Plaza

BLOCK NO.*	FRIDAY 09-15-78	FRIDAY 10-20-78	FRIDAY 05-09-86	FRIDAY 11-14-86	FRIDAY 11-21-86	FRIDAY 02-27-87
1	90	93	96	96	100	99
2	83	78	99	98	100	98
3	68	75	98	100	99	98
4	96	98	100	100	100	93
5	100	100	93	100	100	93
6	96	100	100	82	85	79
7	96	96	94	99	97	90
8	92	94	93	100	98	91
9	84	87	69	87	93	69
10	94	90	76	81	82	67
TOTAL	87	89	91	95	96	89

\*Refer to Block Number Index on Page 10.

### 3. Parking "Turnover" in Public Plazas

The parking observations made on the three dates also included data collected on the turnover of vehicles in the customer parking areas. Tires of parked vehicles were "marked" at specific times and observations were taken at subsequent one hour intervals. The percentage of cars remaining after marking at various time intervals is shown in Table 4.

### 4. On-Street Parking Occupancy

The occupancy percentage of on-street parking stalls is displayed in Table 5 by street and time of day. The data indicates that Main, State and First Streets follow the general mid-day peaking pattern of the plazas. The streets in the North part of the downtown triangle (Second, Third, Fourth and Shasta) are used almost solely for all-day employee or residential parking and occupancy patterns are quite different from the retail core area. The streets with parking in the south part of the triangle (Whitney and Lyell) are generally occupied by long term parkers (assumed to be employees) and the occupancy pattern does not include a mid-day peak.

### 5. Parking "Turnover" on Public Streets

As noted above, the streets in the North and South portion of the triangle have relatively little parking turn-over since the stalls are occupied primarily by employees.

In the retail core area of the triangle, the 2 hour time zones require turn-over. On February 13, 1987 license numbers of cars parked on-street in the triangle were recorded at one hour intervals. On Main Street, the number of cars remaining in their stalls one hour later (after recordation) ranged from 20 to 25 percent during the hours of 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. On State Street during the same time period, the number of cars remaining one hour later (after recordation) varied from 21 to 42 percent. This data indicates that a substantial number of vehicles occupy on-street stalls in the retail core area in excess of 1 hour duration, particularly at the mid-day peak.

T A B L E 4  
PUBLIC PLAZAS - PARKING TURNOVER  
Percentage of Cars Remaining after Marking

NOTE: Time of marking is noted by 100% figure

DATE	TIME ZONE	TIME OF DAY								
		9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5
05-09-86	3 hr						100	41	25	10
11-13-86	3 hr	100	59	28	3	100	52	29	15	
02-20-87	3 hr			100	47	22	9			
11-13-86	2 hr	100	48	11	4	100	47	20	6	
02-20-87	2 hr			100	29	8	4			

Three Hour Zones

Average Percentage remaining one hour after marking = 50  
 Average Percentage remaining two hours after marking = 26  
 Average Percentage remaining three hours after marking = 9

Two Hour Zones

Average Percentage remaining one hour after marking = 41  
 Average Percentage remaining two hours after marking = 26

T A B L E 5  
ON-STREET PUBLIC PARKING  
Percentage of Stalls Occupied  
February 6, 1987

STREET	<u>T I M E</u>						
	10	11	12	1	2	3	4
Main	79	90	97	88	85	84	81
State	57	60	90	85	69	71	65
First	62	51	81	68	63	69	54
Second	77	69	77	73	58	81	58
Third	55	41	64	68	77	77	68
Fourth	25	25	50	50	50	25	25
Shasta	100	100	83	83	91	30	30
Whitney	71	65	55	61	68	58	48
Lyell	100	100	89	78	89	89	78
TOTAL	69	69	85	78	73	73	65

## B. TRAFFIC CIRCULATION INFORMATION

### 1. Traffic Counts

Table 6 indicates current 24 hour and peak hour traffic counts for the busiest streets in and around the downtown triangle.

### 2. Bicycle Facilities Inventory

The location of existing bicycle racks, lockers, and bike routes are indicated on Exhibit 4. It should be noted that the City's General Plan consultant is currently studying possible changes in bike route locations.

### 3. Special Facilities for Handicapped

The City has allocated an annual amount in the Capital Improvement Program budget for Handicapped Access Improvements. The downtown area currently has handicapped ramps at 10 of 19 intersections under the on-going improvement program. There are currently two handicapped parking stalls, one in the North Plaza and one in the South Plaza. There are currently ten 20 minute parking stalls that may be used by the handicapped for unlimited duration parking in the retail core area.

### 4. Transit Service

Exhibit 5 illustrates the locations of existing bus routes, bus stops, benches, and shelters in and around the downtown triangle area.

### 5. Pedestrian Facilities

Sidewalks exist on both sides of all streets within the triangle except the following:

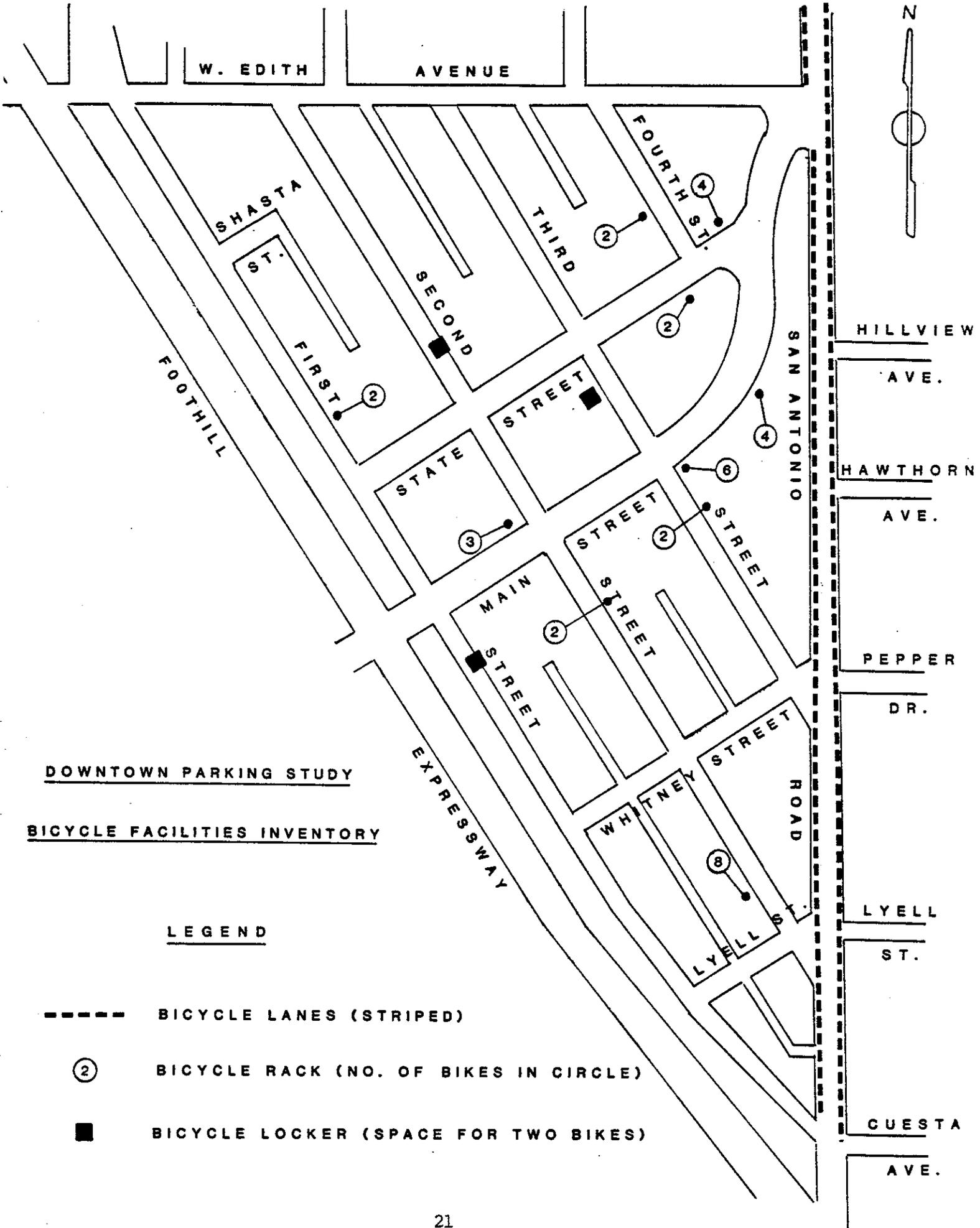
W. Edith Ave. (South side), Foothill Expressway to First St.

Lyell Street (portions)

Whitney Street (portions)

T A B L E 6  
Existing Traffic Count Information

LOCATION	DATE	24 HR COUNT	PEAK HOUR	PEAK HOUR COUNT
Main, btwn State & W.Edith	02-04-87	8,617	12:00-1:00pm	807
Main, at 3rd	11-19-86	7,646	11:00am-1200	742
Main, btwn First & Foothill	11-18-86	10,115	11:00am-12:00	969
State, btwn 2nd & 3rd	11-19-86	3,910	2:00-3:00pm	373
First, btwn Lyell & San Antonio	11-20-86	6,411	12:00-1:00pm	553
First, South of Main	11-20-86	8,115	12:00-1:00pm	781
First, btwn Main & State	11-20-86	7,570	12:00-1:00pm	700
First, at Post Office	11-19-86	7,866	11:00am-12:00	683
W.Edith, btwn 3rd & View	03-24-87	6,987	5:00-6:00pm	670
San Antonio, btwn Pepper & Hawthorne	11-12-86	18,476	5:00-6:00pm	1,730



DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY

BICYCLE FACILITIES INVENTORY

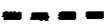
LEGEND

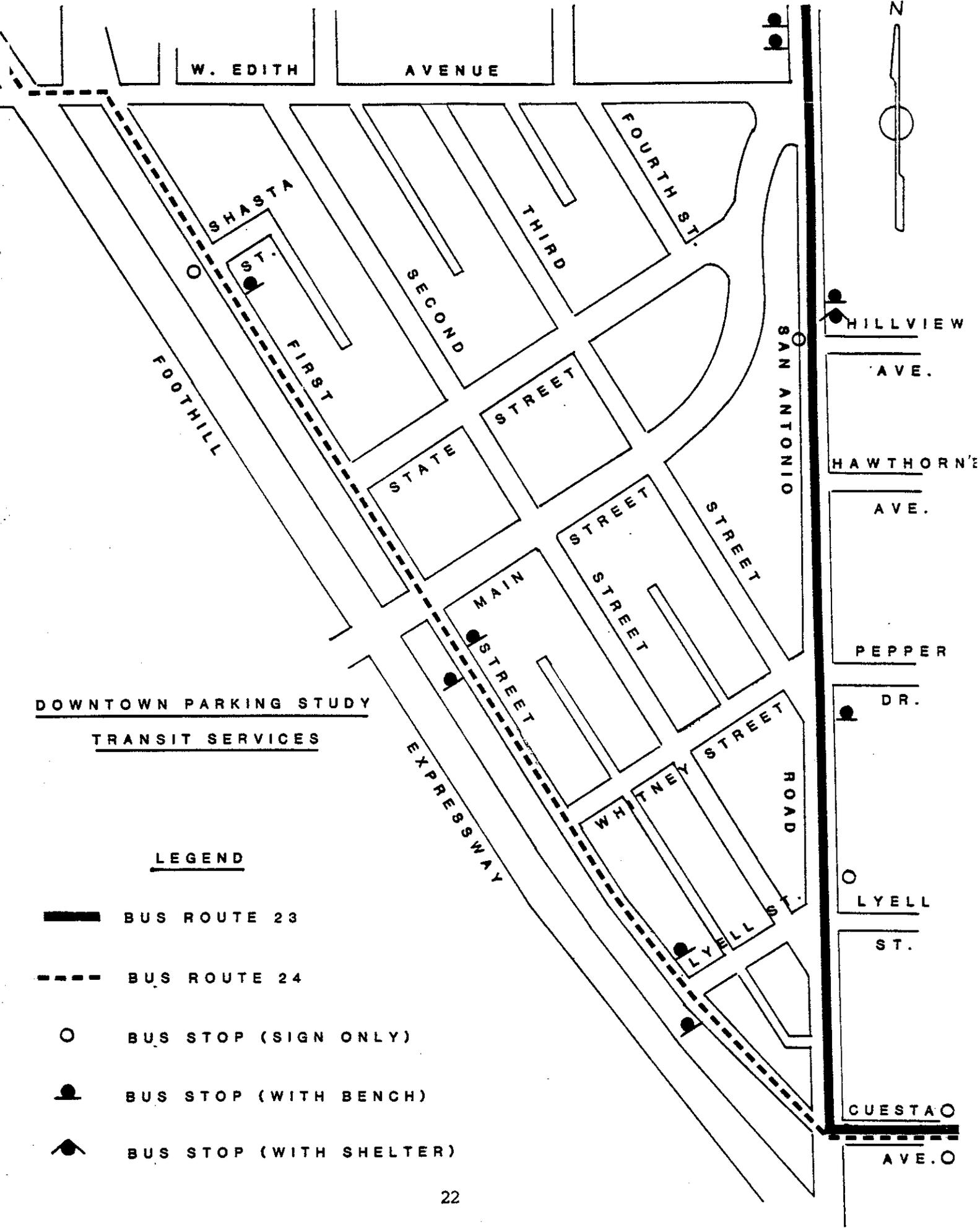
- BICYCLE LANES (STRIPED)
- ② BICYCLE RACK (NO. OF BIKES IN CIRCLE)
- BICYCLE LOCKER (SPACE FOR TWO BIKES)



DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY  
TRANSIT SERVICES

LEGEND

-  BUS ROUTE 23
-  BUS ROUTE 24
-  BUS STOP (SIGN ONLY)
-  BUS STOP (WITH BENCH)
-  BUS STOP (WITH SHELTER)



Pedestrian signals exist at all signalized intersections except the crossing of Foothill Expressway at West Edith Ave. (South side).

6. Accident History within the Downtown Triangle

Table 7 illustrates the number of traffic accidents by location within the downtown area for the years 1983 through 1986.

7. Loading Zones

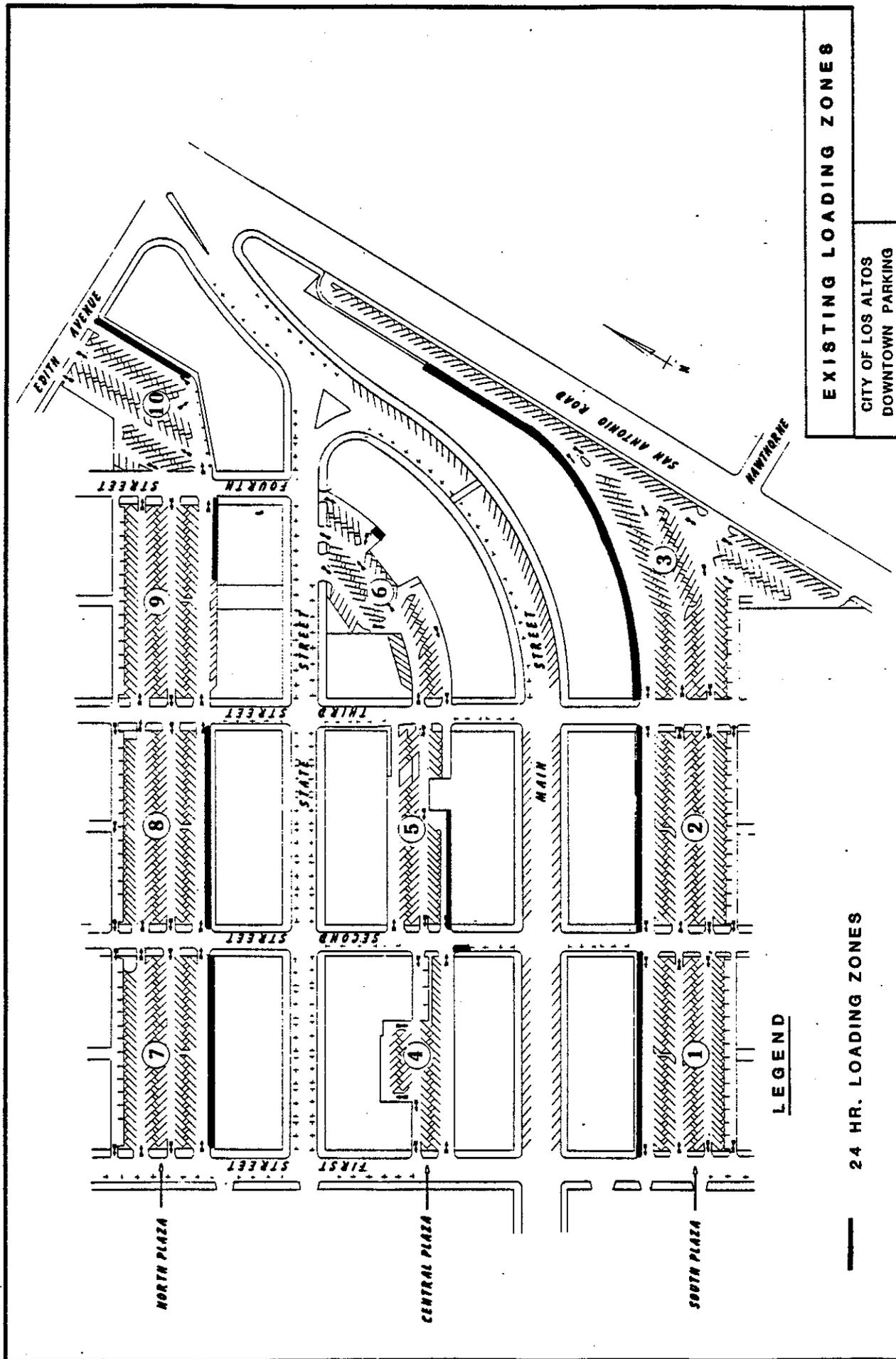
Exhibit 6 indicates the location of all loading zones in public streets and plazas.

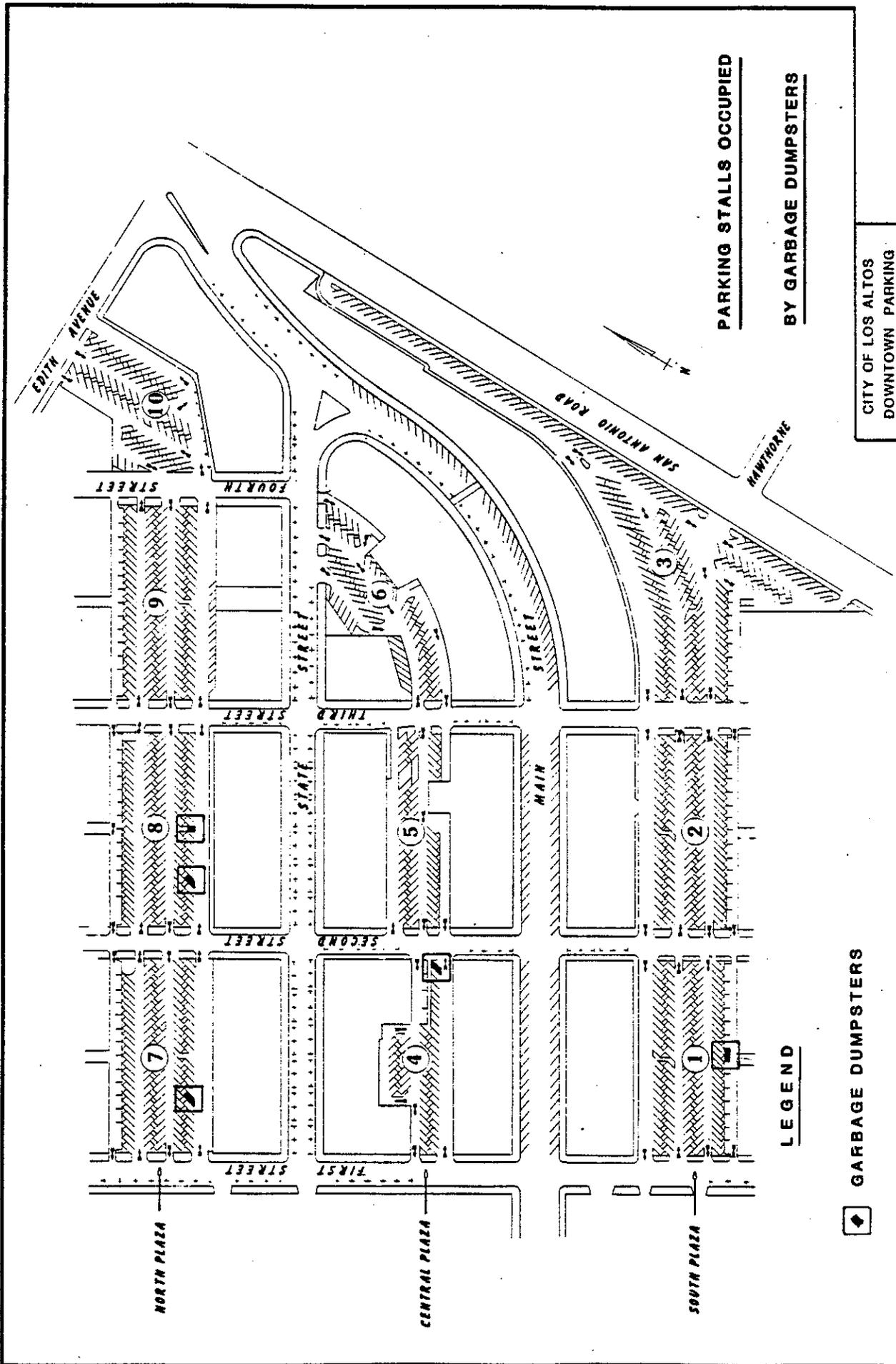
8. Parking Stalls Occupied by Garbage Dumpsters

Exhibit 7 indicates the locations of parking stalls occupied by garbage dumpsters.

T A B L E 7  
Traffic Accident History  
Number of Accidents

INTERSECTION	1983	1984	1985	1986	TOTAL
Main - First	9	14	12	4	39
Main - Second	8	7	6	6	27
Main - Third	3	11	8	7	29
Main - State	3	1	4	2	10
State - First	6	4	8	4	22
State - Second	6	5	5	5	21
State - Third	8	5	4	8	25
State - Fourth	1	0	2	4	7
First - Shasta	3	6	5	5	19
First - Whitney	6	3	1	1	11
First - Lyell	2	4	5	1	12
Second - Whitney	1	0	3	3	7
Second - Lyell	0	0	1	2	3





C. HOLIDAY SEASON INFORMATION

1. Parking Occupancy - Total Plazas

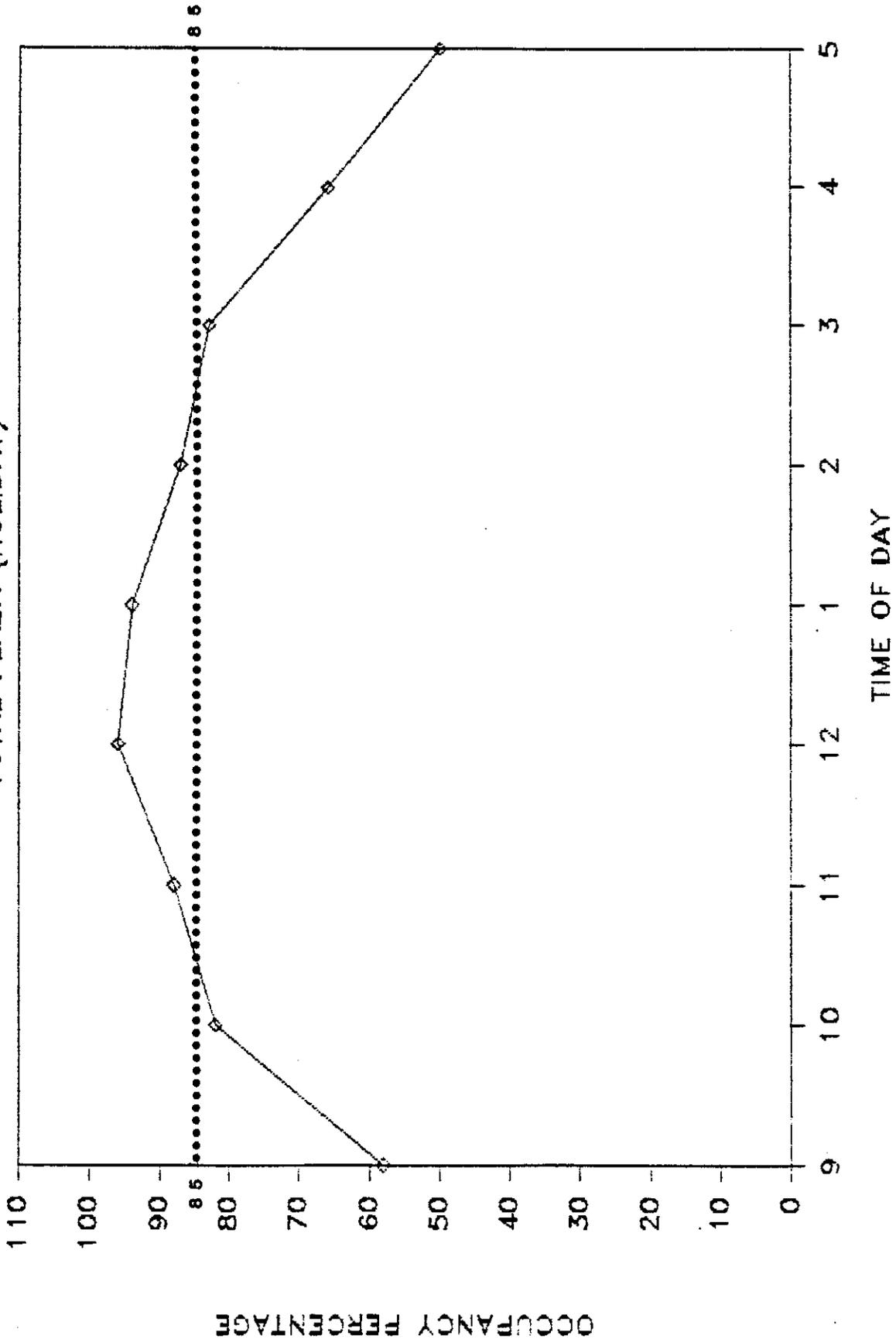
Exhibit 8 illustrates parking occupancy in the total public plazas on December 19, 1986.

2. 1986 Program

A summary report of the 1986 Holiday Parking Program is included in Appendix B.

# PARKING OCCUPANCY COUNTS

TOTAL PLAZA (HOLIDAY)



## V ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS

The analysis of existing conditions in the downtown area has indicated that significant parking and circulation improvements are needed for a healthy downtown economic climate and the convenient use and enjoyment of Los Altos residents.

A set of general needs are listed below. Specific parking and circulation problems are listed in this report in section VI "Special Problems and Alternative Solutions".

### General Needs

#### 1. IMPROVE MIDDAY PARKING CONDITIONS FOR CUSTOMERS OF BUSINESSES ON PARKING PLAZA AREA.

The results of plaza parking stall occupancy counts indicate that the prime parking problem for customers occurs on weekdays from approximately 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Customer parking opportunities are generally good prior to 11:00 a.m. and after 2:00 p.m. on weekdays and all day Saturday and Sunday except for special events. The midday peak problem on weekdays is illustrated on Exhibit 3 (page (14)) which indicates parking occupancy rates at various times of the day for the total parking plaza area. An occupancy rate of 85% is the level at which most people perceive a parking problem exists due to congestion and delays in finding a parking stall.

The typical total plaza occupancy rate exceeds the 85% level from approximately 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and reaches a peak near noon in excess of 90%. It is important to keep in mind that this is the total plaza consisting of 10 blocks. Some individual blocks are at or near 100% occupancy (i.e. North and South Plazas, between First St. and Second St.) near noon and others are occupied

to a significantly lesser degree (i.e. North Plaza between Fourth St. and West Edith Ave.). Graphs indicating the occupancy rates of all individual blocks are included in Appendix A.

When public parking in individual blocks is above 85% occupancy, drivers search for public parking in adjacent blocks and streets which compounds the congestion levels in plaza aisles and the streets. When occupancy nears 100%, some illegal parking in loading zones and pedestrian areas occurs and there is some "spill-over" into adjacent private parking areas if they are not fully utilized.

How many drivers give-up and leave in frustration cannot be documented. However, there is some evidence to suggest that some customers do not return in the future if they experience considerable difficulty in parking. This is based on customer comments to merchants and a few comments of residents in the November 1986 City services survey.

In summary, there is currently a need to improve parking conditions for customers at midday on typical weekdays.

## 2. IMPROVE ALL DAY PARKING CONDITIONS FOR EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS IN PARKING PLAZA AREA.

At present, there are 577 all day parking stalls in the total plazas for employee use. This includes 305 in the North Plaza, none in the Central Plaza, and 272 in the South Plaza. On a typical weekday morning, some of the all day employee areas are 100% occupied by 9:00 a.m. (i.e. the two blocks of the North Plaza between First and Third Streets). By 10:00 a.m., the employee areas in the blocks of the South Plaza are typically nearly fully occupied. Employees arriving between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. experience more difficult problems since they must compete with customers during the midday peak for the few remaining all day stalls available.

Some employees continue to use the two or three hour time zone stalls that are designed for customers by moving their cars periodically to avoid enforcement. It appears that some employees do this to be nearer their place of employment and others may have no choice if all the all day stalls are occupied.

By 3:00 p.m., there is generally adequate parking available in the all day section for employees in all areas.

Parking occupancy rates for all day areas for individual blocks are illustrated by graphs in Appendix A.

When more employees are added to the total work force in the plaza area, there will be increasing competition with customers for available stalls (an exception to this would be a situation where the owner is providing additional underground parking for employees).

In summary, there is currently a need for improvement in all day parking opportunities for employees in certain blocks between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. on weekdays. There is also a need to develop additional parking facilities for employees at some point in the near future.

3. PROVIDE SPECIAL HOLIDAY SEASON PARKING PROGRAM IN DECEMBER TO ACCOMMODATE RETAIL SALES PEAK PARKING DEMAND.

The month of December provides a special set of problems when retail sales activity is at its peak for the year. The mid-day parking peak during the holiday season is longer in duration (approximately one hour) with a higher peak (96% occupancy of the total plaza) compared to typical weekdays. A special holiday parking program was initiated in December, 1986 that increased the parking capacity of the plazas by about 6%. Observations indicate that a

severe parking problem would have occurred if the special program had not been in effect. Individual blocks were at or near 100% capacity during the midday peak. Individual drivers were noted looking for stalls in the public plaza and when finding none, they parked wherever a stall was available in private lots even though they were not doing business with that particular business.

A summary report and evaluation of the 1986 special holiday program is included in Appendix B. There is a definite need for the special holiday program to be continued in 1987 and beyond until significant permanent parking facilities are added.

4. DEVELOP PROGRAM TO PROVIDE ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE TO NON-PLAZA PROPERTIES IN ORDER TO MAXIMIZE THE EFFICIENT USE OF PRIVATE PARKING FACILITIES.

Although the primary focus of this study was to examine public parking facilities, part of the "downtown parking problem" can be attributed to inadequate or inefficient parking facilities that have existed for many years on individual private properties. Many of these private facilities do not meet current standards or suffer from poor design. In some cases, additional stalls could be achieved by converting a portion of the stalls to compact car standards. In other cases, the sharing of land for joint parking could benefit adjacent land owners by increasing the total number of available stalls.

Although the City cannot presently require these changes (unless redevelopment occurs), it would be highly desirable to have the City be a "catalyst" in achieving these private facility improvements. This could be done with the City furnishing technical advice to property owners interested in redesigning their lots to increase parking capacity. The City could also function as a "broker" to encourage and coordinate the joint use of private facilities.

5. DEVELOP PROGRAM TO INSURE THAT PRIVATE PROPERTIES WITH PARKING DEFICIENCIES WILL MEET CITY STANDARDS.

As noted in the above discussion of private parking facilities, there are several business that have existed for many years with parking facilities that do not meet City standards. Although redevelopment has corrected the deficiencies on some properties, others continue to exist. A program is needed that will eventually bring all private property parking up to City standards.

Prior to the adoption of the 100% single story build-out maximum in the plazas, there was one 3 story building and several 2 story buildings constructed. This results in certain inequities of the use of the parking plazas since some parcels may have 2 or 3 times as much floor area as another similar sized parcel. Although the 2 and 3 story buildings are currently not deficient in parking facilities, this inequity should be addressed in the future when deriving assessment formulas for future parking improvement projects.

6. ADOPT ZONING AND LAND USE CONTROLS THAT WILL KEEP PARKING DEMAND IN REASONABLE BALANCE WITH THE AVAILABLE PARKING SUPPLY.

This study focuses primarily on parking issues, but the land use relationship to parking must also be considered. The General Plan Review currently being accomplished will examine current and future land use in the downtown area. It is too early in the process to predict what land use changes may be recommended in the new General Plan. Particular attention should be directed at those types of land uses that will have an impact on the midday (11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.) customer peak parking demand and the impact on employee parking.

The need for a detailed specific land use study in the downtown area should be evaluated upon completion of the new General Plan.

7. EMPHASIZE TRAFFIC MITIGATION MEASURES THAT WILL ENCOURAGE RESIDENTS AND EMPLOYEES TO USE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS OTHER THAN THE AUTOMOBILE TO VISIT THE DOWNTOWN AREA.

The available automobile parking supply, will be positively affected by each trip made on an alternate mode of transportation or each instance of car pooling. Although traffic mitigation measures are not likely to produce a major impact, the implementation of such a program should yield positive results that warrant the effort.

Bicycle riding could be encouraged for both customers and employees. There may be some potential for increases in pedestrian activity from nearby neighborhoods if pedestrian access to the downtown triangle is improved. Transit opportunities could be suggested to employees. A car pooling coordination service could be established.

8. DEVELOP PROGRAM TO IMPROVE THE APPEARANCE OF THE PARKING PLAZAS AND OTHER PUBLIC SPACES.

Although appearance improvement would not, in itself, impact parking capacity, it does have an affect on the pedestrian. In an attractive enjoyable atmosphere, customers and employees may be more willing to walk greater distances from parking locations to destinations, and from point to point without moving their vehicle. This could increase the usability of the more remote parking facilities and reduce the number of vehicles on the street. There are many opportunities for appearance and landscape beautification improvements in the plaza areas and in certain street areas. This would need to be a coordinated public and private effort for maximum results.

9. IMPROVE TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION CONDITIONS  
IN AND AROUND THE DOWNTOWN TRIANGLE.

In general, the streets within the downtown area have sufficient capacity to carry current and anticipated future traffic volumes. There are, however, capacity problems at certain intersections in and around the downtown triangle that create congestion and delays. A need exists to improve the efficiency and traffic carrying capacity of these intersections. Pedestrian access needs to be improved at selected locations. Loading zones need to be added in certain areas to avoid delivery trucks blocking streets or plaza aisles. Vehicular access to and within the triangle needs to be improved (i.e. it is very difficult to cross San Antonio Road or cross Main Street at Second or Third Streets). In summary, the street and plaza areas within the triangle need a variety of selected improvements to alleviate existing traffic congestion, improve safety conditions, and improve access for the convenience of downtown customers.

10. ESTABLISH AN ON-GOING "PARKING AWARENESS" PROGRAM TO  
EDUCATE CUSTOMERS, EMPLOYEES, AND EMPLOYERS REGARDING PARKING  
INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA.

Certain major parking problems discussed earlier in this report could be greatly diminished if customers and employees can be educated or influenced to change their habits. It was pointed out that the primary problem for customer parking was from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on weekdays. A program could be developed to educate customers on the "best times to shop" with the objective of diminishing the mid-day peak and spreading the shopping activity to other times and days. An educational program could point out areas of the public parking plazas that are not heavily used. Employees need to be aware of the parking regulations and the objectives of their employers and the City. New business owners also need to be informed of agreed upon parking practices and objectives.

This needed "parking awareness" program could be just one element of a larger promotional and educational program to provide information to customers, employees, and employers.

11. DEVELOP A PROGRAM OF FUNDING OPTIONS TO FINANCE NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS AND PROGRAMS

Almost all of the needs described above will require funding to implement programs to address the needs. Many of the problems described in this report exist due to a historical lack of funding capability.

All needed projects and programs should be carefully prioritized and alternative funding options developed. Considerable care needs to be given to the equitable spreading of costs among the benefitting businesses and properties. It is expected that the initiation and support of the needed funding options will come from the business community. The City will need to be responsive in working with the business community in achieving its goals by cooperating whenever possible in providing information, support services, and where needed, legislative action to implement funding mechanisms that are requested by the business community. The City should consider budgeting whatever funds are available for downtown parking and circulation improvements in the City's Five Year Capital Improvement Program.

12. CONTINUE TO MONITOR AND EVALUATE PARKING AND CIRCULATION CONDITIONS IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA.

Parking and circulation conditions in downtown Los Altos are not static. As economic conditions and businesses change, traffic patterns and parking conditions will also change. When the needed improvements and programs are agreed upon and implemented, there will be an on-going need to periodically evaluate and monitor conditions to insure the maintenance of a healthy vital downtown area that meets the needs of the business owners and the residents of the community.

## VI SPECIFIC PROBLEMS AND ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

The problems listed in this section were accumulated from a variety of sources including the following:

- Comments (recent and historical) from individual citizens, merchants and employees.
- Comments in the November 1986 City Services Survey
- Information in the 1979 land use/parking study
- Observations of Staff Study Team
- Comments from the Study Advisory Committee
- Conclusions reached through analysis of data in this study

These problems are not listed in order of priority.

It should be noted that the alternative solutions shown are not recommendations, but are listed as possible answers to the stated problems. A complete summary of the study recommendations are listed in the Action Plan in Chapter XI.

### A. PARKING PROBLEMS AND ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

#### 1. THERE IS CURRENTLY A SHORTAGE OF PARKING STALLS FOR CUSTOMERS IN THE PUBLIC PLAZAS.

There are a variety of alternatives that could be applied either alone or in various combinations to increase parking opportunities for customers.

##### a. Parking Management Alternatives

1). Convert more all-day parking in the plazas to 2 hour or 3 hour customer stalls (this would need to be accompanied by an increase in employee parking facilities).

2). Convert all existing on-street 2 hour parking to 1 hour in the "retail core" area (i.e., in vicinity of Main Street and State Street).

3). Provide additional 20 Minute zones adjacent to businesses with short customer service times.

4). Adopt regulations to prohibit re-entry into 2 or 3 hour zones for a specified period of time (i.e. 5 hours) in plazas to prevent employees from using 2 or 3 hour time zones for all day parking.

5). Use additional parking enforcement techniques (i.e. license number recording) to prevent employees from using 2 or 3 hour time zones for all day parking.

6). Adopt regulations to prohibit storage of garbage dumpsters in parking stalls.

7). Revise City encroachment permit procedures for construction activities affecting plazas and streets to minimize use of parking stalls by construction employees, equipment, and materials.

8). Develop program to educate customers on the "best times to shop" in downtown Los Altos (to reduce parking demand during mid-day peak).

9). Install signs at plaza entrances indicating "CUSTOMER PARKING" for the aisles with time zones and "EMPLOYEE PARKING" in the aisles with all day parking.

10). Schedule street and landscape maintenance operations to avoid the 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. mid-day parking peak.

11). Develop a sign/directory system that will inform customers and employees of locations of shops and services available in downtown Los Altos.

12). Initiate a "Valet Parking Service" for customers during the mid-day parking peak (11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.) with vehicles stored in Lincoln Park (drop-off points could be near major restaurants or other central locations).

b. Traffic Mitigation Alternatives

1). Develop program to encourage customers to visit downtown by walking, bicycling, or using transit service.

2). Provide facilities to improve pedestrian and bicycling access and convenience (i.e. sidewalk on South side of Edith from expressway to First Street, traffic signal on San Antonio Road at Third-Whitney-Pepper intersection).

3). Provide additional bus shelters to encourage transit usage.

4). Consider the initiation of a "Local Community Transit Service" that would use a leased van for a shopping shuttle service.

c. Parking Facility Reconfiguration Alternatives to Provide Additional Customer Parking Stalls.

1). Provide additional stalls on public streets by installing "duck-out" spaces where possible (typically these are widened street areas between trees).

2). Re-stripe existing parking stall layout on public streets for maximum parking space yield.

3). Re-stripe certain areas of parking plazas to gain parking stalls by using "compact" design standards where feasible (maximum of 40% in an individual block).

4). Convert significant lengths of loading zones to 20 minute customer parking in North and South plazas.

5). Convert pedestrian walk-through areas in mid-plazas to customer parking stalls.

6). Redesign and reconstruct certain plazas to increase number of parking stalls.

7). Develop program to assist private property owners to reconfigure private lots for maximum parking yield and encourage joint parking facilities on adjacent lots.

d. Land Use and Zoning Alternatives

1). Consider further restrictions or limits regarding additional building in the parking plaza area.

2). Consider limiting the number and seating capacity of restaurant or other types of business that contribute significantly to the mid-day peak parking problem.

3). Consider requiring all new buildings to furnish additional public parking beyond current requirements or contribute funds to the city to accomplish same.

4). Develop stringent criteria for the granting of parking variances in the downtown area.

5). Adopt regulations that would require private properties (plaza and non-plaza) with existing deficient parking to conform to current city standards.

6). Consider changing parking standards for private parking facilities (number of stalls required per square feet of building floor area).

e. Provide Additional Facilities For Customer Parking

1). Expand parking plazas in areas or triangle where feasible (see Chapter VIII for details).

2). Construct multi-level (not exceeding current downtown height limit) parking structures in selected existing parking plaza areas (see Chapter VIII for details).

2. There is Currently A Shortage Of Parking Stalls For Employees In The Public Plazas

Many of the alternative solutions outlined above can also be applied to the employee parking shortage problem. Rather than repeat the entire alternative in this section they will be abbreviated and referenced to the previous section, if applicable.

a. Parking Management Alternatives

1). Convert selected areas of 2 and 3 hour time zones to all day parking for employees. This could be done without too much impact on customer parking if "reconfiguration" alternatives are implemented to increase customer parking as outlined in section I-c.

- 2). Prohibit garbage dumpsters in plazas (same as 1-a-6).
- 3). Revise encroachment permit procedures (same as 1-a-7).
- 4). Develop "parking awareness program" to educate employees and employers on parking availability.
- 5). Install signs indicating "EMPLOYEE PARKING" (Same as 1-a-9).
- 6). Eradicate the word "Customer" painted on some plaza parking curbs in all-day parking areas.
- 7). Initiate program to prevent non-plaza employees from using the plazas for all day parking (i.e. post office employees in west section of North Plaza). This could be accomplished with early morning parking restriction (i.e. no parking in that plaza from 2:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m.).
- 8). Implement a permit system if it is determined that customers are using employee parking areas to a significant degree.
- 9). Implement a permit system that requires a fee to use the all-day employee areas in plazas. Provide Lincoln Park as "free employee parking."

b. Traffic Mitigation Alternatives

- 1). Develop program to encourage walking, bicycling and transit (same as 1-b-1).
- 2). Improve pedestrian and bicycle access (same as 1-b-2).
- 3). Provide additional bus shelters (same as 1-c-2).
- 4). Consider implementing local "Community Transit Service" (same as 1-b-4).
- 5). Develop plan to encourage and coordinate ride sharing and van pooling among downtown employees.

c. Parking Facility Reconfiguration Alternatives

- 1). Convert pedestrian walk-through areas in mid-plazas to all day parking for employees.
- 2). Develop program to reconfigure private lots (same as 1-c-7).

d. Land Use and Zoning Alternatives

(Same as entire section 1-d)

e. Provide Additional Facilities For Employees Parking

- 1). Construct multi-level parking structures (same as 1-e-2).
- 2). Construct "employee parking garage" on periphery of parking plaza area (could be underground on adjacent private lot or public land).

3. Some Non-Plaza Properties Have Inadequate Parking Which Creates Additional Parking Demand in Public Parking Areas

a. Parking Management Alternatives

- 1). Initiate early morning parking restriction (same as 2-a-7).
- 2). Implement a permit system that would preclude use by a non-plaza employee.

b. Land Use Alternatives

- 1). Adopt regulations requiring private properties to conform to city parking standards (same as 1-d-5).

c. Reconfiguration Alternatives

- 1). Develop program to assist private owners to reconfigure private lots for additional parking (same as 1-c-7).

4. The City Does Not Have Sufficient Funds To Finance Major Capital Improvements That Would Provide Additional Parking

There are a variety of funding methods that can be employed to provide project or program financing in which the benefitting land owners or business persons pay for the project or program. These are outlined in Chapter IX.

5. There Are Too Many Restaurants In Relation To The Parking Available Which Is A Major Factor In The Noon Time Problem

This perceived problem needs further detailed investigation that is beyond the scope of this study to determine the extent of the problem. If further analysis indicates restaurants are a major factor in the mid-day parking peak (i.e. user surveys indicate a special trip to downtown solely for lunch), then the following alternatives could be considered to reduce the impact on the mid-day parking peak.

a. Land Use Alternatives

1). Freeze the number of restaurants and the number of restaurant authorized seats. Reduce the number of restaurants and seats by attrition.

2). Permit additional restaurants or restaurant seating increases only in areas without parking problems.

3). Require new restaurants in plazas to provide additional parking facilities on periphery of plaza or contribute funds for program for City to accomplish same.

6. Downtown Businesses Lose Customers Due To Inadequate Parking

a. Parking Management Alternatives

1). Develop program to educate customers on parking availability in downtown areas

2). Conduct consumer and merchant surveys to determine extent of problem.

7. The Lack Of Adequate Parking Facilities May Restrict Future Development In The Downtown Area

If the supply of parking remains limited and demand for parking increases, congestion and parking difficulties may increase to the point that property owners may be discouraged from additional building. All of the alternatives to increase customer and employee parking will help alleviate this potential problem.

8. Underground Parking In New Buildings May Not Be Fully Utilized Which Will Result In Additional Cars Parking On-Street And In Public Areas

If this perceived future problem becomes a reality, then the following actions could be considered:

a. Parking Management Alternatives

1). Initiate new time zones to discourage employees from parking all-day in street areas.

2). Implement a permit system in the plazas that would prevent use by non-plaza employees.

3). Require signs indicating customer parking for underground garages.

b. Land Use Alternatives

1). Adopt new regulations that require more surface level parking in future development and redevelopment.

9. Plaza Parking Will Be Significantly Impacted Further When The Following Buildings Are Occupied:

a. Third and Main Building - (impact on South Plaza)

b. First and State Building - (impact on Central Plaza)

c. Second and Main - (impact on Central Plaza)

d. State and Fourth Street Addition - (impact on North Plaza)

The implementation of the alternatives outlined earlier in this report to increase parking capacity for customers and employees will reduce the extent of these problems.

10. The Major Problem Occurs During Noon Time, Approximately 11:00a.m. To 2:00p.m.

All of the alternatives for increasing customer parking opportunities (parking management, traffic mitigation, facility reconfiguration, land use controls and additional facilities) would have a direct positive impact on reducing the magnitude of the mid-day parking peak.

11. Employees of Businesses Not Part Of The Public Parking Plaza Occupy Parking Stalls In The Public Parking Plaza

The alternatives outlined in section 3 address this problem.

12. When Public Parking Plazas Are 100% Occupied, Some Customers Of Plaza Businesses Will Use Private Parking On Adjacent Properties

The alternatives outlined in section 1 to improve customer parking opportunities address this problem.

13. Some Employees Continue To Park All Day In The Two Or Three Hour Time Zones By Either Moving Their Car, Erasing Chalk Mark, Etc.

It is assumed that some employees use the 2 or 3 hour time zones to be nearer their place of business. There is however, some evidence to suggest that some employees who arrive late in the morning (after the all day areas are filled in some plazas) use the 2 or 3 hour zones out of necessity rather than choice.

a. Parking Management Alternatives

1). Adopt regulations to prohibit re-entry into 2 or 3 hour time zones for specified periods of time (same as 1-a-4).

2). Use additional enforcement techniques (i.e. license number recordation) to prevent employees from using 2 or 3 hour time zones (same as 1-a-5).

3). Change some 3 hour zones to 2 hour to further discourage employee use.

14. Some People Misuse Compact Stalls By Straddling Lines, Parking Large Full-Size Cars, Etc. Which Reduces Available Stalls

a. Parking Management Alternatives

1). Adopt regulations to provide additional enforcement opportunities.

2). Promote proper use of compact stalls within a "parking awareness" program for employees (same as 2-a-4).

15. Some Customers Park In All Day Stalls Which Creates A Shortage of Employee Stalls

a. Parking Management Alternatives

1). Install signs at entrances to all day stall areas indicating "EMPLOYEE PARKING." (same as 1-a-9).

2). Eradicate the word "Customer" painted on some parking curbs in all day parking areas in plazas (same as 2-a-6).

3). Encourage proper customer use in "parking awareness" program (same as 1-a-8).

16. Too Many Compacts Use The Regular Size Stalls In The Employee Areas Instead Of Using The Compact Stalls Available - No Places Left For Regular Size Cars

a. Parking Management Alternatives

1). Encourage proper use in "Parking Awareness" program for employees (same as 2-a-4).

17. Garbage Dumpsters Occupy A Few Parking Stalls In The Plazas Which Prevents Parking Usage

a. Parking Management Alternatives

1). Adopt regulations prohibiting dumpsters in public plaza stalls (same as 1-a-6).

2). Consolidate existing dumpsters behind enclosures to minimize problem.

3). Allow dumpsters to continue - but charge rental fee for privilege of use, with fees going to a "parking development fund" for additional facilities.

18. Adequate Facilities Do Not Exist For Bicycle Parking

a. Provide additional bike racks in public areas.

b. Encourage private owners to provide bike racks and storage.

c. Continue to require bicycle parking facilities when private properties develop or redevelop.

19. Adequate Facilities Do Not Exist for Parking For The Handicapped

a. Convert some existing stalls to special handicapped stalls.

b. Provide additional 20 minute parking zones which also serve as long term parking for the handicapped.

20. The Holiday Season (Month of December) Creates Special Parking Demands Due To Peak Retail Sales

a. Parking Management Alternatives

1). Implement a special holiday parking program to encourage employees to park in Lincoln Park and other peripheral areas.

2). Implement a special holiday parking program to lease private stalls for public use (customers and employees).

Suggestions to implement these two programs are outlined in a summary report of the 1986 special program which is included in Appendix B.

21. Time Zone Limits On Streets May Be Too Long In Some Areas

a. Parking Management Alternatives

1). Provide additional 20 minute zones.

2). Convert time zones from 2 hour to 1 hour in "retail core" (Main and State Street areas).

22. Shortage Of Employee Parking May Create On-Street Problems In Adjacent Residential Neighborhoods In The Future

a. Develop additional facilities for employee parking as described in section 2.

b. Establish time zones in affected residential areas to preclude employee all day use.

c. If necessary, establish permit system in affected residential areas to prohibit "non-residential" use of on-street parking.

23. The Current Mix Of Land Use In The Downtown Area May Be Contributing To The Parking Problem

This potential problem needs to be examined in a detailed land use study of downtown.

24. Some Customers Do Not Know Where Certain Plazas Exist Due To Lack Of Directional Signs

a. Parking Management Alternatives

1). Develop new signing program for improved access to plazas.

2). Include plaza location information in "parking awareness" program for customers.

B. TRAFFIC CIRCULATION PROBLEMS AND ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

1. Lack Of Loading Zones In Central Plazas Create Congestion, Delays And Enforcement Conflicts With Merchants
  - a. Provide additional loading zones where necessary (also eliminate unnecessary loading zones).
  - b. Provide additional 20 minute zones which can also function as short term loading areas for customers and employers.
  
2. Drivers On Main Street Create Unsafe Conditions By Making U-Turns In Mid-Block To Park Diagonally On Opposite Side.
  - a. Provide additional enforcement and cite drivers making illegal turns.
  - b. Include educational information on illegal turns in "Parking Awareness" program.
  
3. Delivery Truck Drivers Are Not Cooperative In Seeking Alternatives To Immediate Backdoor Delivery
  - a. Provide additional loading zones where needed.
  - b. Initiate communications program with UPS and other delivery services regarding parking objectives.
  
4. Some Pedestrians Feel Unsafe At Night When Walking To The Remote Parking Areas
  - a. Study "incident" history to define problems.
  - b. Study need for additional street lights and provide additional lights where needed.
  
5. Pedestrians Are Crossing San Antonio Road In An Unsafe Manner By Using Random Mid-Block Crossing Points
  - a. Increase enforcement and cite offenders.

- b. Include safety information in "Parking Awareness" program.
  - c. Install new traffic signal at central San Antonio Road location (i.e. intersection at Pepper Drive - Third Street)
  - d. Redesign median landscaping to prohibit pedestrian crossings.
6. It Is Not Convenient To Cross The Expressway At West Edith Since There Is No Sidewalk On The South Side Of West Edith Between The Expressway and First Street. There Is Also No Pedestrian Signal Crossing On The South Side Of The West Edith-Expressway Intersection
- a. Construct new sidewalk adjacent to Ramsey property between Foothill Expressway and First Street.
  - b. Install new pedestrian crossing signal heads and push buttons on South side of Foothill Expressway - W. Edith Intersection.
7. It Is Difficult To Cross San Antonio, As A Pedestrian Or Bicyclist, Due To High Traffic Volumes
- a. Install new traffic signal at San Antonio - Pepper - Third Street. intersection.
8. It Is Difficult, As A Driver, To Cross Main Street At Either Second Or Third Street (May Be Forcing More Traffic To Cross Main At First Street).
- a. Install 4-way stop signs at Main Street-2nd Street intersection.
  - b. Install 4-way stop signs at Main Street-3rd Street intersection.
  - c. Install traffic signal at Main Street - 2nd Street intersection.

- d. Install traffic signal at Main Street - 3rd Street intersection.
- e. Prohibit U-turns on Main Street

NOTE: Any of the above actions (a thru d) may reduce the amount of traffic on First Street which would lessen the congestion at the Main Street - First Street intersection.

9. Significant Congestion Occurs At The Main Street-First Street Intersection At Some Times Of The Day

- a. Conduct study of signal functioning and timing.
- b. Consider changing signal phasing and lane usage.
- c. Review signal coordination alternatives (between Main Street-First Street and Main Street-Foothill Expressway intersections).
- d. Explore possibility of turn restrictions to increase capacity.
- e. Explore adding additional lanes (may require parking removal).
- f. Study options for new traffic signal controller.

10. Traffic Circulation Is Impacted By Lack Of Adequate Parking Facilities Since Drivers Wait In Street Areas For Parking Stalls

- a. Provide additional parking improvements by implementing alternatives described in parking section.

11. Traffic Congestion Occurs At The First Street-West Edith Intersection At Certain times Of The Day

(Same alternative as Main-Street-First Street intersection listed above in No. 9.).

12. Access To The Main Street-State Street Area Can Seem Rather Awkward To Drivers On North Bound San Antonio Road

- a. Develop signing program on San Antonio Road to improve access to "retail core".

13. The Intersection Of San Antonio Road - Cuesta Drive - First Street Is Congested At Certain Times Of The Day

(Same alternatives as Main Street-First Street intersection listed above in No. 9).

14. Access To The Downtown Area Is Difficult On A Bicycle

- a. Install signs on bike routes leading to downtown area.
- b. Install new traffic signal at intersection of San Antonio Road and Pepper Drive-Third Street to improve access from neighborhoods on East Side of San Antonio Road.

15. It Is Difficult To Ride A Bicycle In The Downtown Area

- a. Install signs on downtown bike routes.
- b. Include bicycle safety information in "Parking Awareness" program.

16. Vehicles Speeding On Main Street Is A Problem At Certain Times Of The Day

- a. Provide additional traffic enforcement and cite law violators.

## VII RECONFIGURATION OPTIONS FOR PLAZAS AND STREETS

The term "Reconfiguration" as used in this report refers to the redesign, or reconstruction or re-use of the existing space in the public plazas and streets with the objective of achieving additional parking stalls. In its' simplest form, reconfiguration could be restriping of parking stalls on the pavement. In its' most extensive form, reconfiguration can involve complete reconstruction of curbs, pavement, relocation of trees, etc.

### A. PARKING PLAZAS

NOTE: Items 1 through 4 below are illustrated on Exhibit 9.

#### 1. Conversion of Mid-Plaza Pedestrian Walk-Thru Areas to Parking.

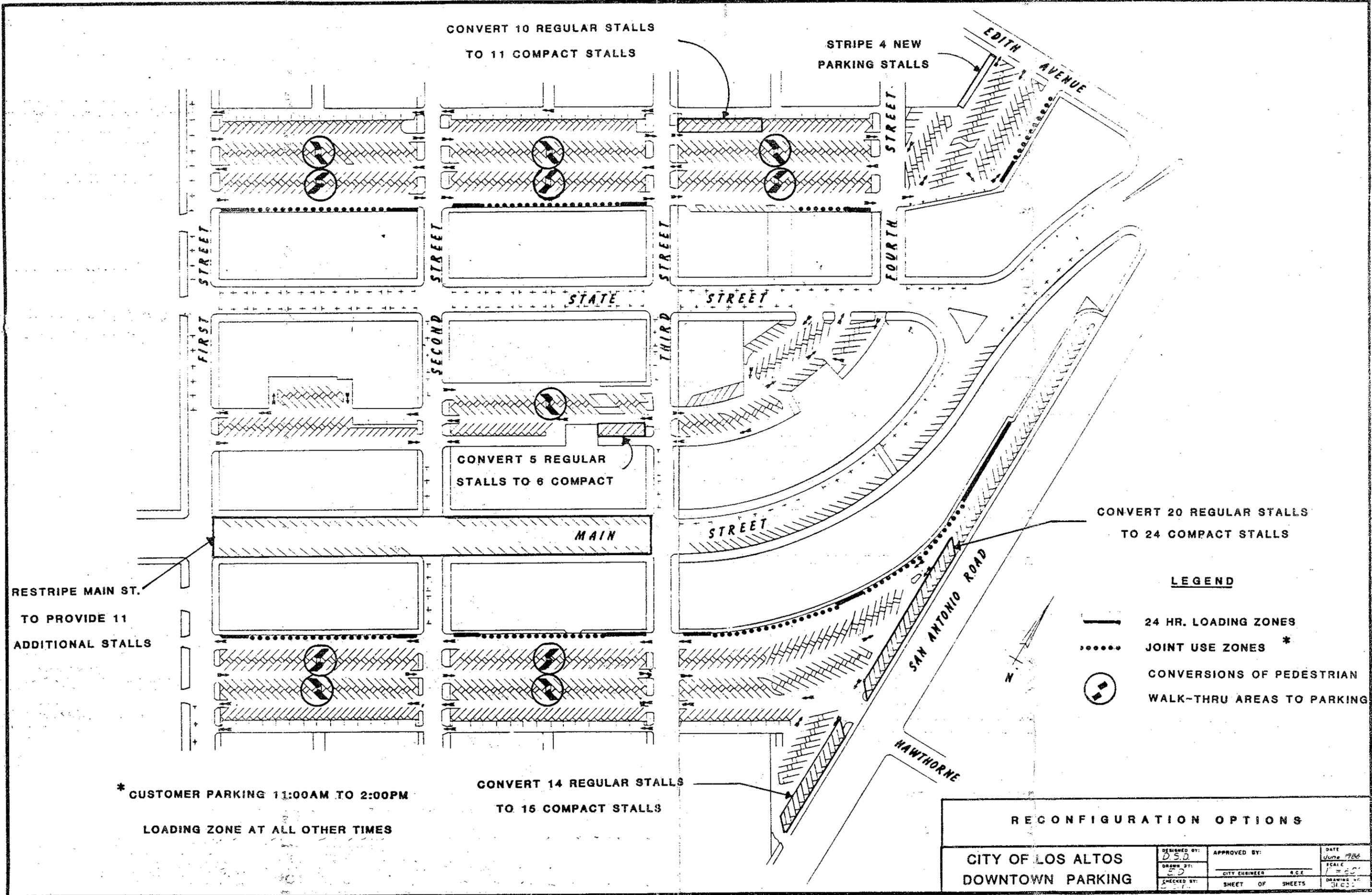
Observations and discussions with parking plaza users indicate that virtually no one uses the pedestrian areas that exist in the middle of most of the plazas. People walk between the cars to the adjacent businesses or down the plaza aisle to the nearest sidewalk. If the unused pedestrian areas are converted to parking, 24 additional parking stalls could be provided.

#### 2. Conversion of Regular Stalls to Compact Car Standards.

Approximately 15 percent of the total plaza is now designated for compact stalls. Although this percentage could be significantly increased, it would involve considerable disruption to the plazas and relocation of large numbers of mature trees. There are, however, some areas that could be converted at minimal expense to provide 7 additional stalls.

#### 3. Current Unused Space.

Studies indicate that currently unused space in plaza block No.10 could be striped to provide 4 additional parking stalls.



CONVERT 10 REGULAR STALLS TO 11 COMPACT STALLS

STRIPE 4 NEW PARKING STALLS

CONVERT 5 REGULAR STALLS TO 6 COMPACT

CONVERT 20 REGULAR STALLS TO 24 COMPACT STALLS

CONVERT 14 REGULAR STALLS TO 15 COMPACT STALLS

RESTRIPE MAIN ST. TO PROVIDE 11 ADDITIONAL STALLS

\* CUSTOMER PARKING 11:00AM TO 2:00PM  
LOADING ZONE AT ALL OTHER TIMES

LEGEND

- 24 HR. LOADING ZONES
- ..... JOINT USE ZONES \*
- ⊙ CONVERSIONS OF PEDESTRIAN WALK-THRU AREAS TO PARKING



<b>RECONFIGURATION OPTIONS</b>		
<b>CITY OF LOS ALTOS DOWNTOWN PARKING</b>		DESIGNED BY: D.S.D. DRAWN BY: E.D. CHECKED BY: DATE: June 1986 SCALE: 1" = 60' DRAWING NO.: 31.03
APPROVED BY:	CITY ENGINEER	R.C.E.
SHEET	OF	SHEETS

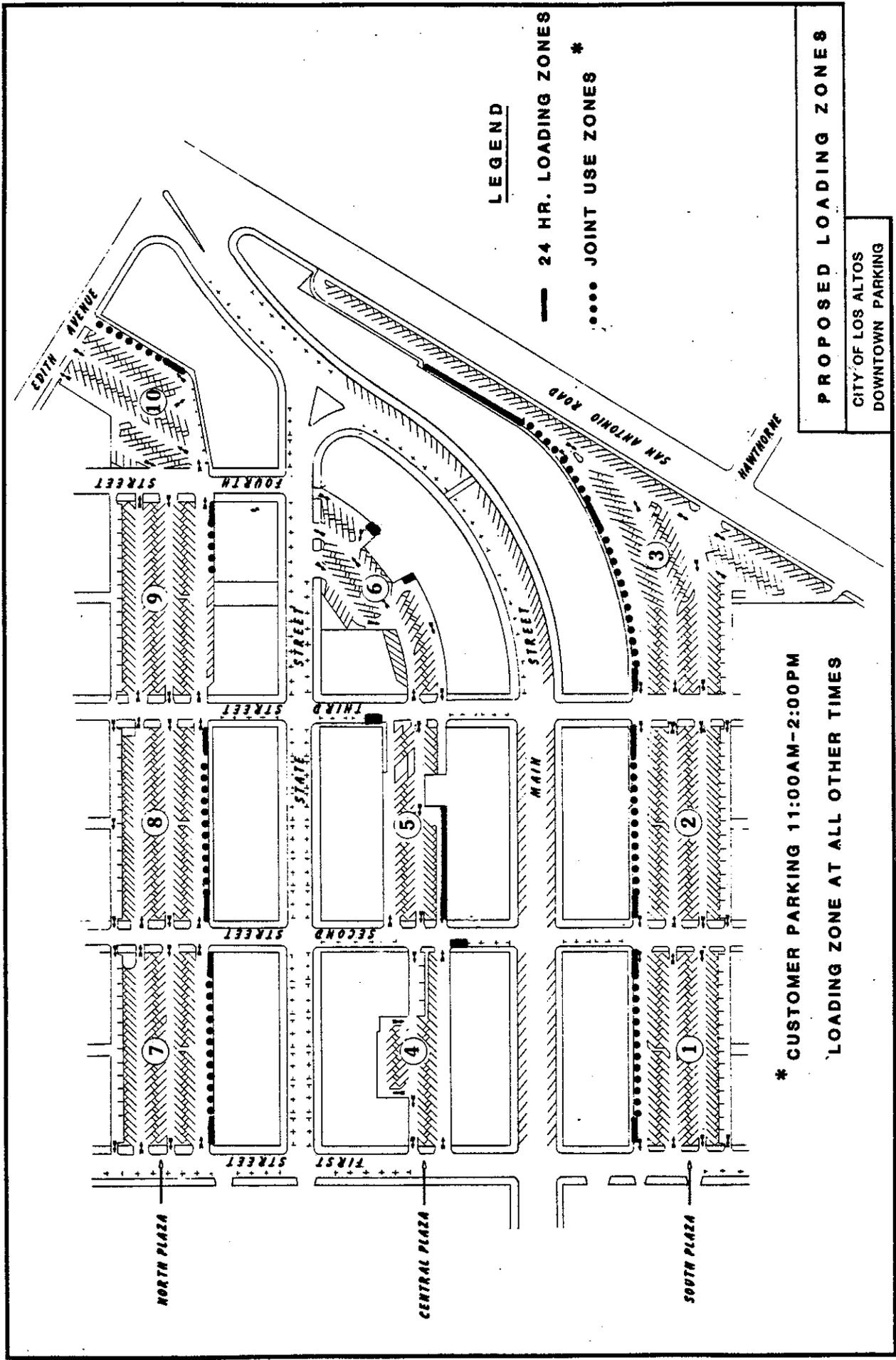
#### 4. Joint Use of Loading Zones.

There are significant continuous loading zones for essentially the entire length of the North and South Plaza. These loading zones are used intermittently by unloading trucks, but seldom are there more than 2 or 3 trucks in any block at any time. Many businesses discourage deliveries around the noon hour. As noted earlier in this report, the prime parking problem occurs between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00p.m. on typical week-days. Significant portions of these existing loading zones could be converted to joint use by permitting customer parking from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and allowing loading at all other times. A study plan has been developed that contains a 35 to 40 foot full time (24 hour) loading zone at the end of each block, and converts essentially all the areas in between to joint use customer parking/loading. The plan provides 60 additional customer stalls during the 11:00 a.m. - 2:00p.m. peak parking periods. The plan is illustrated on Exhibit 10.

#### 5. Reconstruction of Existing Plazas.

All blocks of the plazas were studied to evaluate the potential for increasing parking yield through reconstruction. In general, the 3 blocks of the South Plaza and the 4 blocks of the North Plaza were well designed and have little potential for parking improvement without major impact on trees, landscaping, costs, etc.

The 3 blocks of the Central Plaza are irregular in shape and there is some potential to increase parking yield but at a relatively high cost with major impacts to landscaping and disruption of businesses.



Central Plaza Block no.4. (between 1st St. and 2nd St.) has the best potential for improvement. The northerly section of this plaza could be reconstructed to provide 7 additional stalls at a moderate cost. If a 15 ft. strip of land could be acquired along the southern portion of this block (adjacent to the east bound aisle), a total of 23 additional stalls could be provided. This, however, would be high cost due to the land acquisition.

Block no. 5 (between 2nd and 3rd St.) and Block no. 6 (between 3rd St. and State St.) in the Central Plaza could be reconfigured to provide 5 additional stalls each. Due to major reconstruction costs, this is of doubtful cost effectiveness.

Preliminary design drawings of these concepts in the Central Plaza are available for review in the City Engineer's Office.

## B. PUBLIC STREETS

### 1. Main St. (between First St. and Third St.)

Studies have indicated that 11 additional parking stalls could be provided by restriping and the relocation of certain street hardware (benches and street lights).

### 2. First Street.

One additional parking stall could be provided on First St. on the east side (between the South Plaza and Whitney St.) by restriping.

### 3. Additional Street Delineation for Parking Stalls.

Certain streets in the downtown area have no pavement markings for parking stalls. Parking efficiency could be improved by the proper painting of parking stall limits on all streets in the downtown area.

### 4. Construction of Parking "Duck-Outs".

Note: A "duck-out" is a widened street area of limited length, generally between existing trees, poles, or other obstructions.

A survey of the downtown area indicates that 56 additional parking stalls could be provided by construction of "duck-outs" in street areas. Most of these are located outside the retail core area in the North and South sections of the downtown triangle. The cost of the parking "duck-outs" is moderate, except some that require relocation of utility hardware. A map showing the potential "duck-out" locations is available for review in the City Engineer's Office.

## VIII ADDITIONAL PARKING FACILITY OPTIONS

The purpose of this section is to describe possible options for adding parking facilities in and around the downtown area in the future. The options described below are conceptual only and would need additional detailed study to evaluate their feasibility.

### A. EXPAND PARKING PLAZA CONCEPT TO OTHER DOWNTOWN AREAS.

There appears to be two possibilities to provide additional plazas similar to the existing ones:

1. Portions of the area generally bounded by First St., Second St., Shasta St., and the North Plaza.
2. Portions of the area generally bounded by First St., Second St., Whitney St., and Lyell St.

The first possibility is adjacent to the existing North Plaza and the other is one block removed from the South Plaza.

Both of these areas were included in the parking assessment district study done in 1979 that was dropped due to high costs (primarily due to land values). It is unlikely that the current economic conditions would make either of these areas financially feasible for parking plazas at this time. Even if these areas were converted to plazas, it is doubtful that this would have a significant effect on the existing parking conditions if the building floor area ratio to parking was the same as the existing plazas. In other words, this option does not seem to be a solution to the existing parking problem.

### B. ACQUIRE ADDITIONAL LAND FOR PARKING ON THE PERIPHERY OF THE EXISTING PARKING PLAZA.

The supply of this type of land is extremely limited due to the existing private development surrounding the existing plazas.

A parcel that has been mentioned as a potential parking area is the City owned parcel at the North west corner of W.Edith Avenue and San Antonio Road. This 3/4 acre parcel was purchased by the City several years ago and discussions for its future use have centered around parks/open space or senior housing.

The value of the parcel for parking is questionable since the adjacent plaza across W.Edith Avenue has the lightest parking use of any of the 10 plaza blocks. From a zoning standpoint, W.Edith Avenue has been considered, in the past, to be the dividing line between the commercial/office/multi-family residential use in the triangle and the single family uses on the North side of W. Edith Avenue. The use of the subject lot for parking for commercial/office uses would be in conflict with this past zoning policy.

In the future, if other parcels of land adjacent to the plaza come on the market for sale, their potential for acquisition for parking could be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

C. CONSTRUCT UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE FOR EMPLOYEES.

This conceptual option could be accomplished under the plazas or under future private development if underground rights were purchased.

If this could be done on a fairly large scale, significant sections of the existing surface level parking used for employee parking could be converted to customer parking.

Additional detailed study would be needed to evaluate the economic feasibility of this option.

D. CONSTRUCT MULTI-LEVEL PARKING STRUCTURES IN SELECTED AREAS OF THE EXISTING PARKING PLAZAS.

This option would likely provide customer parking at ground level with employee parking on other levels. There is no doubt

that this option could be used to solve the parking capacity problem. The biggest question is that of community acceptance of the additional height and bulk of the structures in comparison to the existing low profile surface level parking.

The "scale" and low profile of the downtown area are major factors in the "village feeling" that is so important. The proposed structure(s), if they are to be seriously considered, would need great attention paid to their design, height, overall appearance, and how they "fit visually" with neighboring properties and the downtown as a whole.

The Central Plazas would not be good candidates for structures due to their irregular and inefficient shapes. The areas along San Antonio Road and First St. are highly visible to the public and additional structures would be very conspicuous. The plazas with the greatest potential for visual acceptability would seem to be the central block of the South Plaza between 2d St. and 3rd St. (Site. A), the similar block in the North Plaza between 2d St. and 3rd St., (Site B), and the block of the North Plaza between 4th St. and W.Edith Avenue (Site C). Sites A & B between 2d and 3rd Streets would be conveniently located for customers and employees near the center of the retail core. Site C would be easy for employees to get to from W.Edith or San Antonio Road and would lessen employee traffic through the triangle itself.

The economics of structure parking appear to be very favorable compared to surface level parking only. This is primarily due to high land costs in downtown Los Altos. The City of Menlo Park has recently done detailed studies of structure parking and the parking plaza designs of Menlo Park and Los Altos are very similar. In their September, 1986 report, the estimated cost per "additional parking space provided" ranged from \$10,000 to \$13,000 depending on the structure location and design. The cost per stall for providing additional surface level parking only in downtown Los Altos is likely

in the \$20,000-\$25,000 range due to high land values. If structures were constructed in the existing parking plaza area in Los Altos, it is expected that the cost would be similar to the Menlo Park estimates.

The future need for parking structures depends primarily on zoning and land use decisions. Since the General Plan Review is still in process, the need for structures at this point is not clear. If structures are to be seriously considered in the future, studies should be authorized to insure that they are compatible visually and architecturally with the character of existing downtown Los Altos.

## IX FINANCING OPTIONS

A variety of alternatives are available for financing parking improvements, programs, and services including the following:

### A. "PARKING DEVELOPMENT FUND"

This would be an enterprise fund that would be accounted for separately from the City's General Fund. The primary benefit of establishing this type of fund would be the centralization and coordination of all parking improvement revenues and expenditures. The "Parking Development Fund" could be used to finance a wide variety of parking improvements, programs, and services. Revenues could flow into the fund from any or all of the options described below.

### B. PARKING STALL RENTAL FEES

Fees could be established for the use of plaza and on-street parking stalls by private parties for non-parking purposes (i.e. garbage dumpsters, construction equipment and materials and special events).

### C. "PARKING DEFICIENCY FEES"

These fees would be paid by property owners with existing parking that does not meet current city standards. It would be necessary for the city to declare the use of the property to be "non-conforming" and the owners would be given a period of time to meet city standards by either providing the needed additional parking facilities or paying the "Parking Deficiency Fee." The fees would be used to provide additional public parking facilities.

### D. PARKING MITIGATION FEES

There are certain land uses that cause parking demand to be at a higher level than most other uses. In the public parking plaza areas, this can cause significant problems. A "Parking Mitigation" fee could be charged to businesses with high parking demands that relates to the

above normal parking use. This could be in the form of a monthly fee per parking stall needed above normal parking use. (i.e. if a parcel's share of the existing plaza is equivalent to 20 parking stalls, and a restaurant use (based on the number of seats) would require 28 stalls, a monthly fee could be charged for the 8 additional stalls that would be used).

E. NEW DEVELOPMENT PARKING FEES

This type of fee could be levied on all new building construction in the downtown area to provide additional public parking facilities. The payment of this fee by the property owner could be considered as a credit to their property in the event an assessment district was formed in the future.

F. EMPLOYEE/EMPLOYER PARKING PERMIT FEES

A parking permit system could be established in the public plazas. Employees and employers would need to pay for a permit to park their vehicles in the "all-day" parking areas. This is a financing method commonly used in nearby cities.

G. CITY CONTRIBUTIONS

The City currently pays for all maintenance, operations, and enforcement of public parking facilities in the downtown area. In the past the City has been financially unable to make major contributions for the construction of new parking facilities from City General Funds and it is expected this will not change in the future.

H. CITY FUND ADVANCES

The City could, if funds were available, advance funds for projects with special timing needs. The City would be reimbursed in the future from other funding sources. This would be accomplished by the establishment of a revolving fund. The Resolution of Intention establishing the revolving fund would describe the purpose of the funding, specify the reimbursement methods, and provide other information on the intent of actions to be taken.

I. ASSESSMENT DISTRICT

This is the most typical method of financing major parking facilities. An assessment district was used to finance the original downtown parking plazas in 1958. The costs of the improvements are spread over the affected properties in relationship to the benefits received. Individual property assessments may be paid in cash or financed over specified period of time, usually 15 or 20 years. A project may be initiated by a petition representing at least 60% of the property owners based on land area.

J. MELLO-ROSS COMMUNITY FACILITIES ACT OF 1982

This act, if used successfully, permits the levy of a special tax on the properties in the district to finance the subject improvements. The Act requires the approval of 2/3 of the registered voters or landowners in the district to be successful. This Act appears to be a longer and more cumbersome process compared to the typical assessment district process described above.

K. MAINTENANCE DISTRICT

This type of district could be formed to finance the on-going maintenance cost of the parking plazas, including landscaping. Maintenance costs are allocated to the benefitting properties and can be paid in cash or placed on the tax roll on an annual basis. As noted earlier, the City is currently paying for this with general funds. One option that might be considered would be to form a Maintenance District and then convert the City funds that would normally be used for maintenance into a City contribution for future parking improvements.

L. PARKING AND BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA LAW OF 1979

This act, also known as AB-1693, authorizes assessments or charges on businesses within a specified area for acquisition, construction, or maintenance of parking facilities or a variety of business improvement practices. The charges are added to the business license tax paid by business owners on an annual basis.

The City of Los Altos used this act to finance the underground electrical system in the plazas for decorative tree lighting.

M. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE GRANTS

Any grant received could be accounted for in the "Parking Development Fund" and used for parking improvements, programs and services.

A financing alternative not mentioned above is the use of parking meters. The business community has been strongly opposed to parking meters in the past. The general feeling seems to be that parking meters do not fit the "village atmosphere" that makes downtown Los Altos attractive.

X     CONCLUSIONS

This report has provided an analysis of the existing parking and traffic circulation conditions and is intended to serve as a "workbook" to provide an inventory of alternative solutions to address existing problems and to meet changing conditions in the future.

A Short Range Action Plan has been prepared to resolve existing parking problems. The items in this plan are recommended for implementation within one year and are generally low in cost and high in benefit (particularly the creation of 107 new parking stalls and the relocation of approximately 25 non-plaza employee vehicles from the parking plaza). The improvements provided by this short range plan should bring the total parking supply into reasonable balance with existing parking demand.

The Long Range "Standby" Action Plan for parking provides a variety of alternative solutions to meet changing needs in the future. The need to implement items in this plan will be influenced primarily by general economic conditions and future zoning and land use decisions that relate to parking demand.

The completion of the Short Range and Long Range Action Plans for traffic circulation should provide relief from traffic congestion and delays at key intersections and improve access within the downtown triangle.

In summary, the implementation of the Action Plans should provide significant improvement in parking and traffic circulation conditions in downtown Los Altos. These plans, to be most effective, will need the cooperation of the City, the Village Association, the Chamber of commerce, individual business owners and employees. A continuing coordinated effort can maintain the economic vitality of the business community and provide the residents of Los Altos with a convenient, useful, attractive and enjoyable downtown area.

RECOMMENDED ACTION PLAN

XI RECOMMENDED ACTION PLAN - PARKING

A. SHORT RANGE PROGRAM (to be implemented within 1 year)

1. Reconfigure parking layout on Main Street between First Street and Third Street by re-striping and street hardware relocation (provides 11 additional stalls).

2. Restripe parking layout on East side of First St., between S. Plaza and Whitney St. (provides 1 additional stall)

NOTE: Items 3, 4, 5 & 6 below are illustrated on Exhibit 9, on page 55.

3. Convert plaza pedestrian walk thru areas to parking stalls (provides 24 additional stalls).

4. Convert significant portions of loading zones in North and South Plazas to joint use, i.e. customer parking/loading zones. Customer parking would be from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and loading at all other times (provides 60 additional parking stalls at mid-day parking peak). Locations of joint use customer parking/loading zones are illustrated on Exhibit 10 on page 57.

5. Convert selected areas to compact stalls (provides 7 additional stalls).

6. Convert currently unused space in plazas to parking stalls (provides 4 additional stalls).

7. Develop program to assist private property owners to reconfigure private lots for maximum parking yield and encourage joint parking facilities on adjacent lots.

8. Develop an on-going "parking awareness" program to educate customers, employees and employers regarding parking information and conditions. Information for customers should focus on the "best times to shop" and the locations of available parking. Information to employees and employers should emphasize the objectives of the parking program and the proper use of the facilities. This program should also encourage residents and employees to use transportation options other than automobile (walking, bicycling, or using transit service). Car pooling among employees should also be promoted.

9. In reviewing the provisions of the new proposed General Plan, give strong consideration to the following:

- a. Land use controls and zoning that will balance parking demands with parking availability within the parking plaza areas.
- b. Land use controls and zoning that will reduce the mid-day parking peak so that parking occupancy in the plazas will generally not exceed the 85% level.
- c. Policies and programs that will require that all private properties with deficient parking conform to the City's current parking standards.

10. Conduct a detailed study of downtown land use in relation to parking. This study should include:

- a. A review and analysis of restaurant uses and the related impact on the mid-day parking peak.
- b. A review of the current mix of land uses in relation to parking needs.
- c. An analysis of the need to change development regulations for private underground parking facilities.

- d. A review of land uses near the Post Office in relation to parking needs.
- e. An analysis of the need to change development regulations regarding parking standards (i.e. sq. ft. of building floor area per parking stall).
- f. An evaluation of the use of additional criteria for granting parking variances (i.e. consideration of parking stall occupancy levels in individual plaza blocks).

11. Initiate a program to prevent non-plaza employees from using block number 7 (North Plaza, between First and Second Street) for all day parking. This could be accomplished with an early morning parking restriction (i.e. no parking in that plaza from 2:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m.) Note: this action may not be necessary if Post Office moves a significant part of their operations to South Los Altos.

12. Provide additional 20 minute zones at appropriate locations.

13. Use additional parking enforcement techniques (i.e. license number recording) to prevent employees from using 2 or 3 hour times zones for all day parking. Consider implementing a 3 month experiment in one central plaza block that would prohibit re-entry into 2 hour zone for a specified period of time (i.e. 5 hours).

NOTE: This would require special signs.

14. Adopt and enforce regulations to prohibit storage of garbage dumpsters in parking stalls, or allow dumpsters in parking stalls, but charge rental fee for privilege of use, with fees going to a "Parking Development Fund" for additional parking facilities.

15. Revise City encroachment permit procedures for construction activities affecting plazas and streets to minimize use of parking stalls by construction employees, equipment, and materials.

16. Install signs at plaza entrances indicating "CUSTOMER PARKING" for the aisles with time zones and "EMPLOYEE PARKING" in the aisles with all day parking. Install signs on Main St. and State St. indicating direction to parking areas.

17. Schedule street and landscape maintenance operations to avoid the 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. mid-day parking peak. In addition, schedule maintenance operations to avoid working in downtown plazas and streets on Fridays from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

18. Cooperate with the downtown business community in developing a sign/directory system that will inform customers and employees of locations of shops and services available in downtown Los Altos.

19. Eradicate the word "Customer" painted on some plaza parking curbs in all-day parking areas.

20. Provide parking stall "markings" on all existing unmarked streets in the downtown triangle to use space most effectively.

21. Adopt regulations that would require signs that indicate "CUSTOMER PARKING" or "VISITOR PARKING" at entrances to private underground garages.

22. Conduct a detailed study of options for a parking permit system.

23. Require all new development and re-development of property in the downtown area to provide on-street parking facilities if appropriate.

24. Implement a special holiday parking program in December to encourage employees to park in Lincoln Park and other peripheral areas.

25. Implement a special holiday parking program in December to lease private stalls for public use (customers and employees).

26. Provide information to the downtown business community regarding financing options for programs to provide parking and appearance improvements.

27. Establish a "Parking Development Fund" as an enterprise fund for financing parking improvements, programs, and services.

28. Provide the following allocations to the "Parking Development Fund" to fund the parking improvements and programs outlined in the above described Short Range Program:

- a. \$20,000 as an advance of funds from 1986-87 Capital Improvement Funds
- b. \$30,000 as an advance of funds from 1987-88 Capital Improvement Funds

The City is to be reimbursed for both of the fund advances in the future from other revenue sources that go into the "Parking Development Fund".

29. Conduct a detailed study of revenue sources to finance parking facility objectives described in the General Plan and other parking related objectives approved in relation to detailed land use studies completed in this action plan. This study would result in recommendations regarding the types and amount of fees needed for the "Parking Development Fund" including:

- a. A use fee for the use of each plaza and on-street parking stall for non-parking purposes (this would include use by garbage dumpsters, construction material and equipment, special events, etc.).
- b. A parking mitigation fee for all land uses in the parking plaza area that have higher than normal parking needs.
- c. A parking development fee for all new buildings constructed in the downtown area (this fee could be based on building area, number of parking stalls required, or other criteria that reflect differences in land uses).
- d. A permit parking fee for employees and employers to park all day in the public parking plazas.
- e. Other appropriate fees and charges.

The recommendations from this study would be presented to the City Council at a public hearing to receive public comment on the proposed fees and charges.

30. Conduct a 6 month progress review of action plan implementation in October 1987, and review results with Downtown Advisory Committee. Evaluate the results of all the above actions by conducting plaza and street parking occupancy counts in the Spring of 1988. Review evaluation of results with Downtown Parking Advisory Committee April, 1988.

## B. LONG RANGE "STANDBY" ACTION PLAN - PARKING

These alternatives are available when, and if, needed in the future. The timing of their individual implementation is planned to be flexible to meet needs as they develop in the future. As noted earlier, the short range action plan items were planned for implementation within one year. It is therefore anticipated that none of the long range "Standby" items would be considered for implementation for at least one year, or until the short range action plan has been completed and evaluated. The following list is not in order of priority and, in fact, some of the items may never need to be implemented.

1. Reconfigure Block No. 5 (Central Plaza between First St. and Second St.) by reconstruction of Northern section (provides 7 additional parking stalls).

2. Acquire 15 feet of land along Southerly boundary of Block No. 5 (Central Plaza between First St., and Second St.) and construct diagonal parking off the south side of the existing East bound aisle (provides 23 additional parking stalls).

3. Reconfigure Block No. 6 (Central Plaza between Second St. and Third St.) by reconstruction (provides 5 additional parking stalls).

4. Reconfigure Block No. 7 (Central Plaza between Third St. and State St.) by reconstruction (provides 5 additional parking stalls).

5. Construct on-street parking "duck-outs" on all public streets in downtown where appropriate (provides up to 56 additional stalls). NOTE: A "duck-out" is a widened street area of limited length, generally between existing trees, poles, or other obstructions.

6. Adopt regulations to prohibit re-entry into 2 or 3 hour zones for a specified period of time (i.e. 5 hours) in plazas to prevent employees from using 2 or 3 hour time zones for all day parking.

7. Initiate a "Valet Parking Service" for customers during the mid-day parking peak (11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.) with vehicles stored in Lincoln Park (drop-off points could be near major restaurants or other central locations).

8. Provide bus shelters at appropriate transit stops around downtown triangle.

9. Consider the initiation of a "Local Community Transit Service" that would use a leased van for a shopping shuttle service.

10. Consider implementing additional land use and zoning controls if parking occupancy generally exceeds 85% in the public parking plazas.

11. Conduct a study of the feasibility of parking structures in selected areas of the public parking plazas. The study should include possible locations, design standards, costs, financing, preliminary architectural design, and an in-depth evaluation of the visual acceptability of the structures in relation to the character and profile of downtown Los Altos.

12. Consider acquiring additional land adjacent to the existing parking plazas to expand the plazas.

13. Implement a parking permit system in the public parking plazas.

14. Take appropriate action on recommendations from detailed land use studies authorized in Short Range Action Plan. If the restaurant use study outlined in the short range action plan indicates that restaurants are a significant factor in the mid-day parking peak, then consider the following actions:

a. Freeze the number of restaurants and the number of restaurant authorized seats. Reduce the number of restaurants and seats by attrition.

b. Permit additional restaurants or restaurant seating increases only in areas without parking problems.

c. Require new restaurants in plazas to provide additional parking facilities on periphery of plaza or contribute funds for program to the "Parking Development Fund" for additional parking facilities.

15. Evaluate the impact and results of underground "secured" parking facilities on private property that are designed for employee use only.

16. Conduct a consumer and merchant survey to evaluate their perception of the parking situation and answer the question "Are Downtown Businesses Losing Customers due to inadequate parking facilities?"

17. Adopt regulations to require that vehicles using compact stalls park within the painted lines. (The length and width of compact stalls would be striped on pavement also).

18. Improve customer parking opportunities by establishing time zones on streets in North and South portions of triangle.

19. Evaluate all actions taken in Short Range Action Plan. Make adjustments where needed.

20. Continue to monitor and evaluate the downtown parking conditions by conducting parking plaza occupancy counts at least once each year.

RECOMMENDED ACTION PLAN - TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

C. SHORT RANGE PROGRAM (to be implemented in one year)

1. Redesign loading zone areas within the parking plaza areas (see Exhibit 10 showing proposed loading zone locations)
2. Post "NO U-TURN" signs at appropriate intersections on Main St. and State St.
3. Study need for additional street lights and provide additional street lights where needed.
4. Include pedestrian and bicycle safety and route information in the "parking awareness" educational program.
5. Construct new sidewalk on South side of W.Edith Avenue between Foothill Expressway and First St. to improve access to Lincoln Park and adjacent neighborhoods.
6. Request County to install pedestrian crossing signal heads and push buttons on South side of Foothill Expressway - W.Edith Avenue intersection.
7. Conduct Engineering Department/Police Department joint review of accident history and other input from this study to assist in setting enforcement priorities in downtown area.
8. Study alternatives for improving access from one part of the triangle to another, particularly the crossings of Main St. at Second and Third Streets.

9. Retain a professional consulting firm specializing in transportation and traffic engineering to study the following signalized intersections with the objective of improving traffic flow and safety conditions.

a. Main St. - First St., including coordination with Foothill Expressway signals.

b. W.Edith Ave. - First St., including coordination with Foothill Expressway signals.

c. Cuesta - First St., - San Antonio Road, including coordination with Foothill Expressway signals.

10. Finance this short range plan with funds budgeted in the Capital Improvement Program in 1987-88 for Traffic Mitigation and Safety Improvements.

D. LONG RANGE ACTION PLAN - TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

1. Implement bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements recommended in new General Plan.

2. Install new traffic signal at San Antonio - Third/Whitney St. - Pepper Drive intersection.

3. Complete intersection and traffic signal improvements recommended by traffic engineering consultant for the following intersections:

a. Main St. - First St., including coordination with Foothill Expressway signals.

b. W.Edith Ave. - First St., including coordination with Foothill Expressway signals.

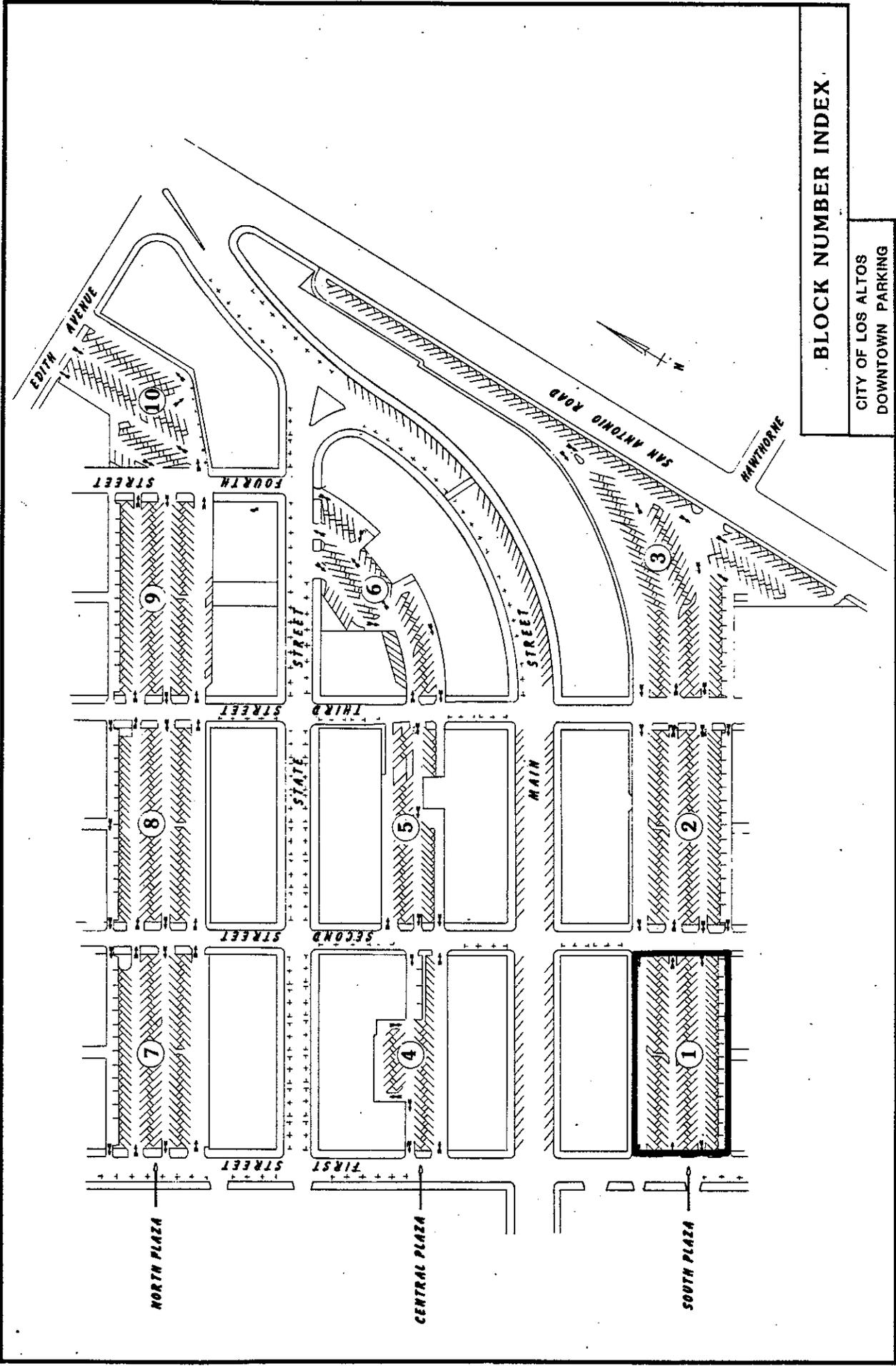
c. Cuesta - First St., - San Antonio Road, including coordination with Foothill Expressway signals.

4. Implement solutions to improve access across Main St. at Second St. and Third St.

5. Finance this long range program with funds budgeted in the Capital Improvement Program.

APPENDIX A

Individual Block Parking  
Occupancy Counts

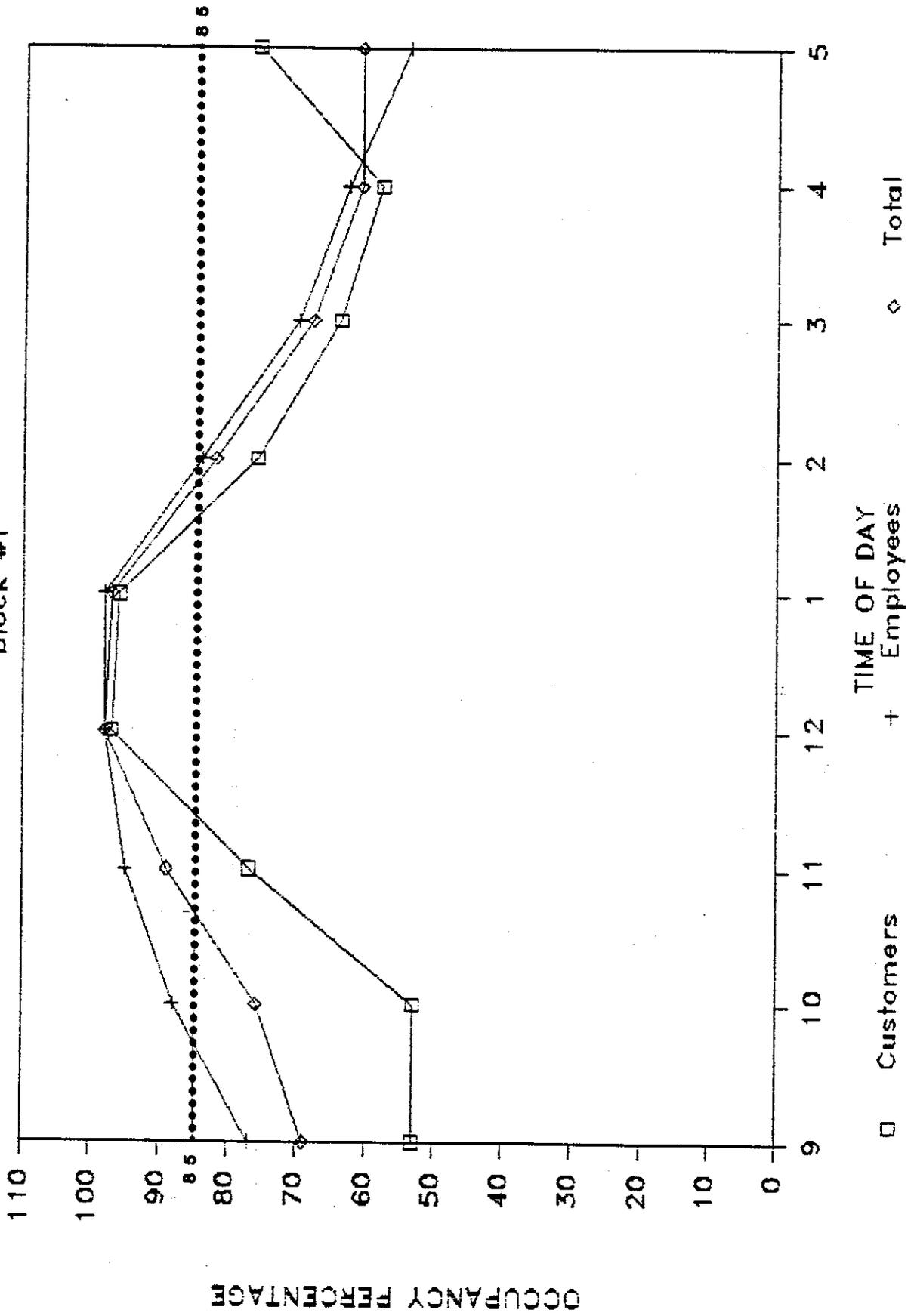


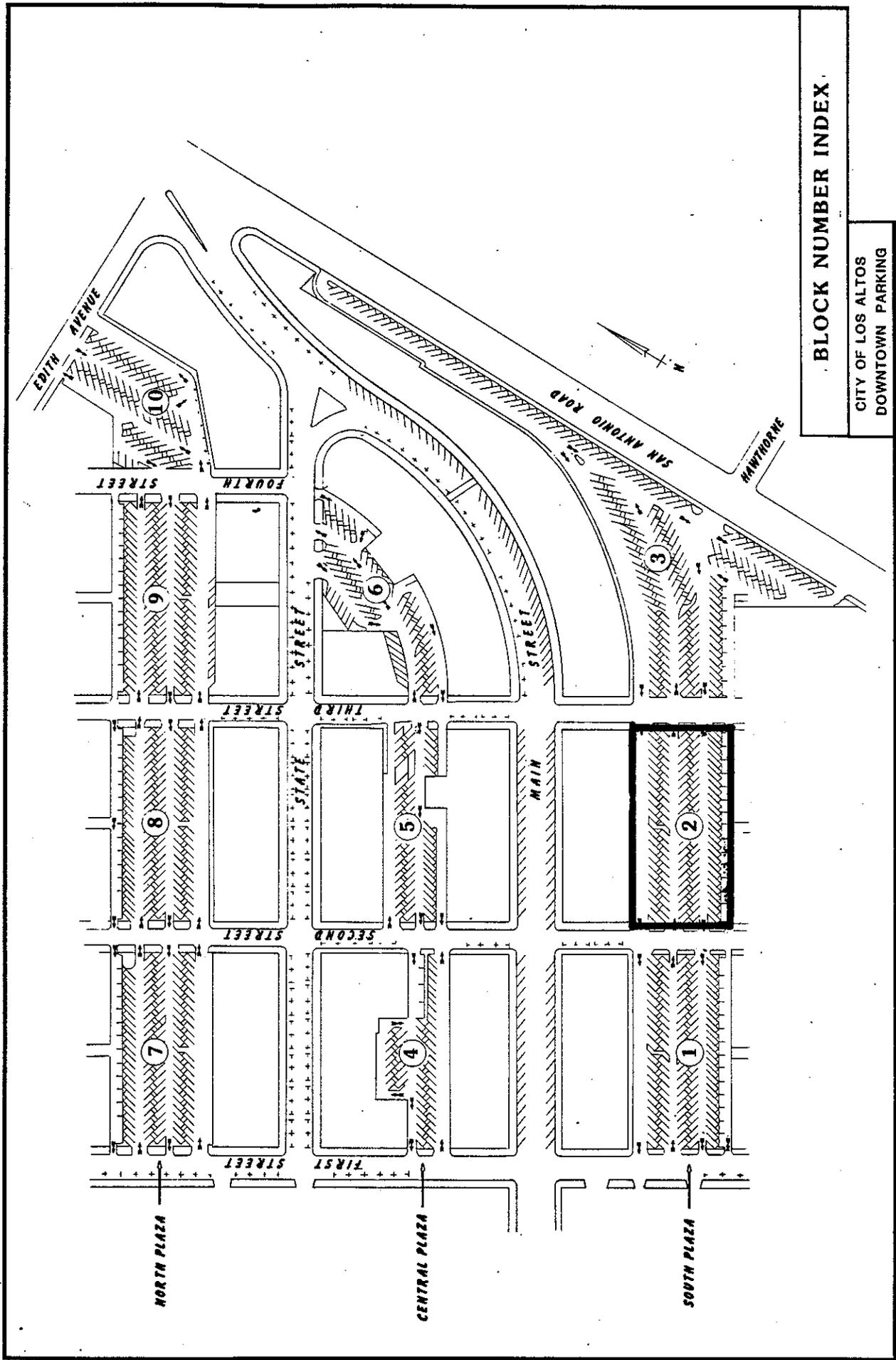
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CITY OF LOS ALTOS  
DOWNTOWN PARKING

# PARKING OCCUPANCY COUNTS

Block #1



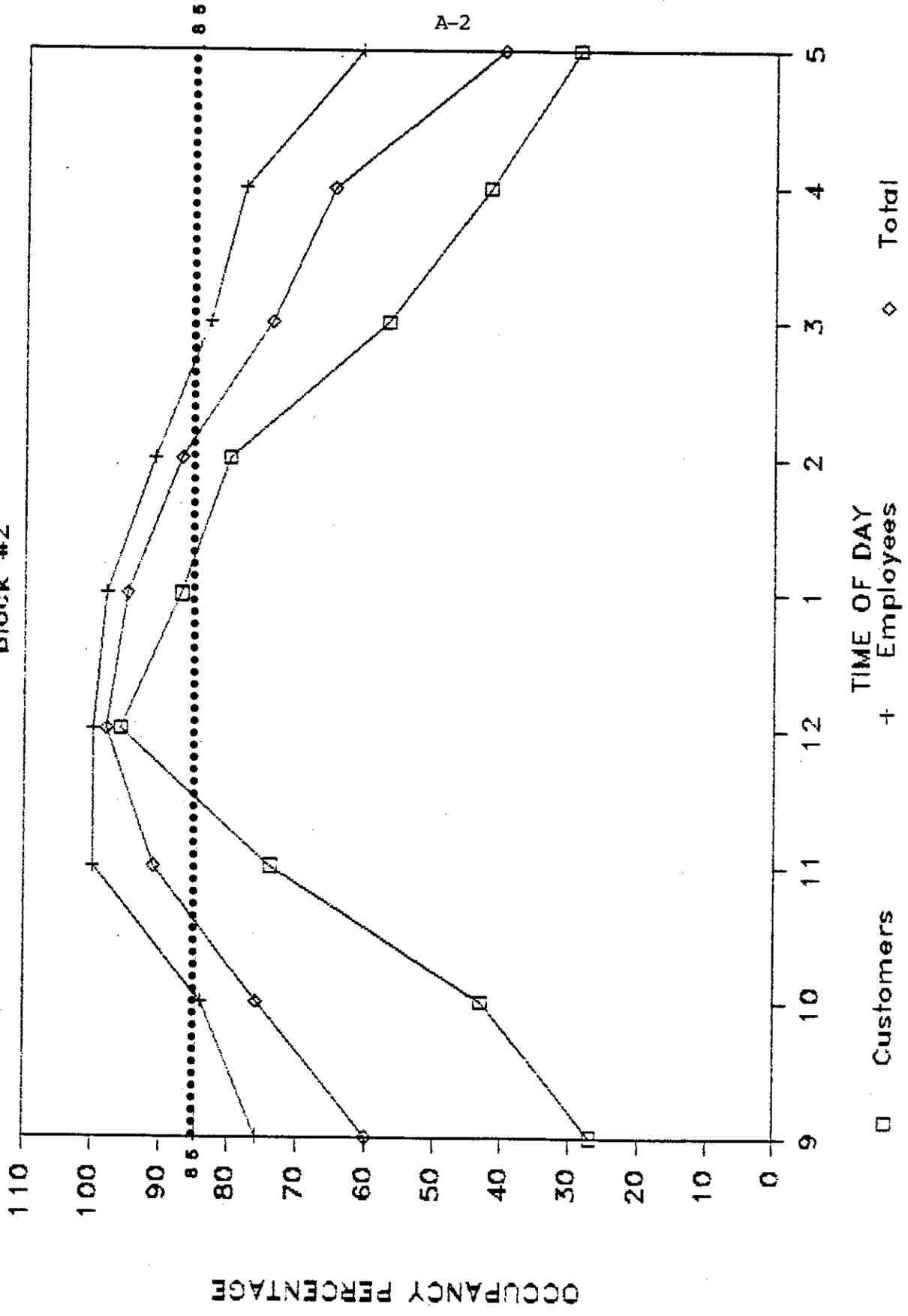


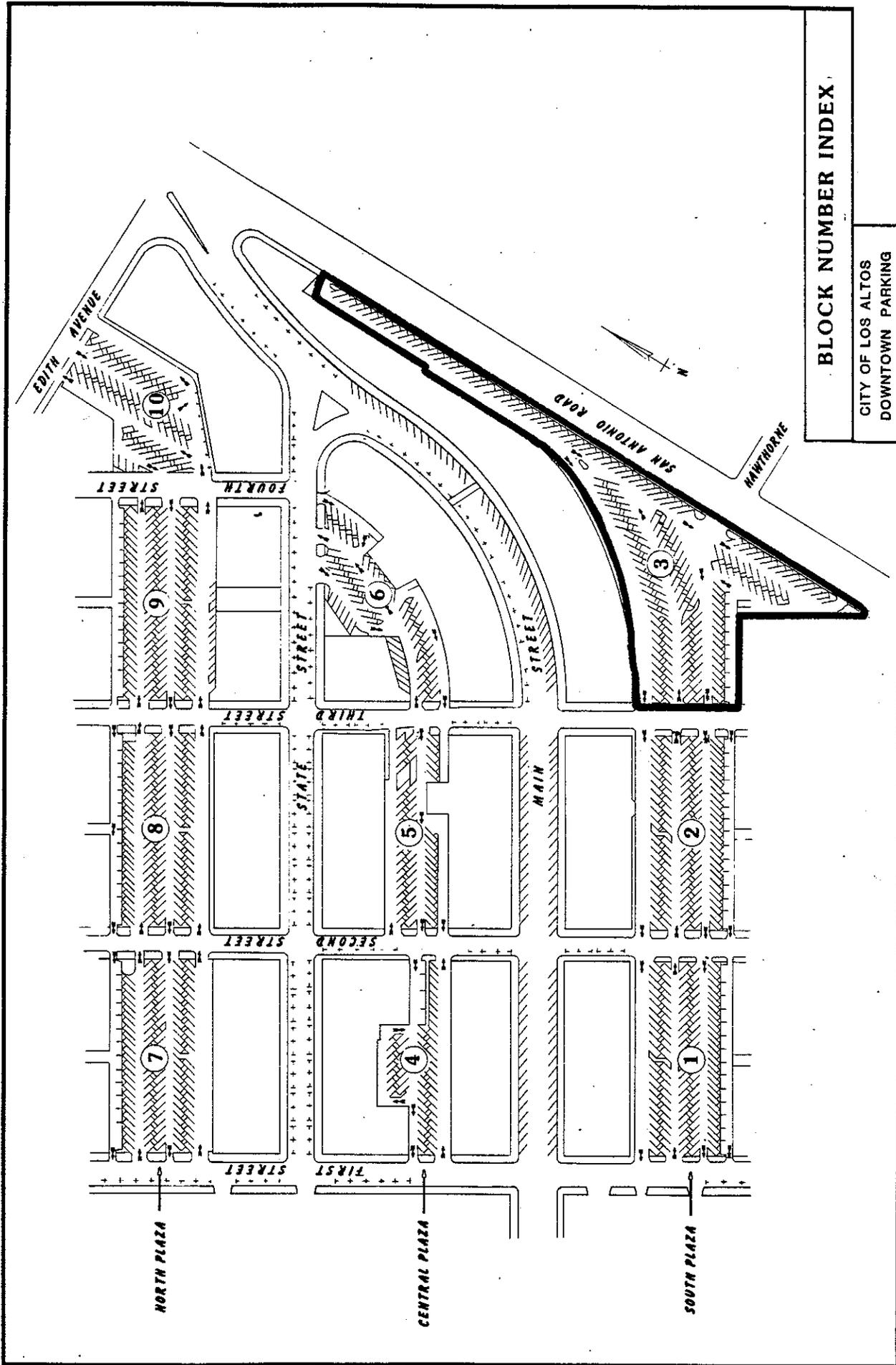
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CITY OF LOS ALTOS  
DOWNTOWN PARKING

# PARKING OCCUPANCY COUNTS

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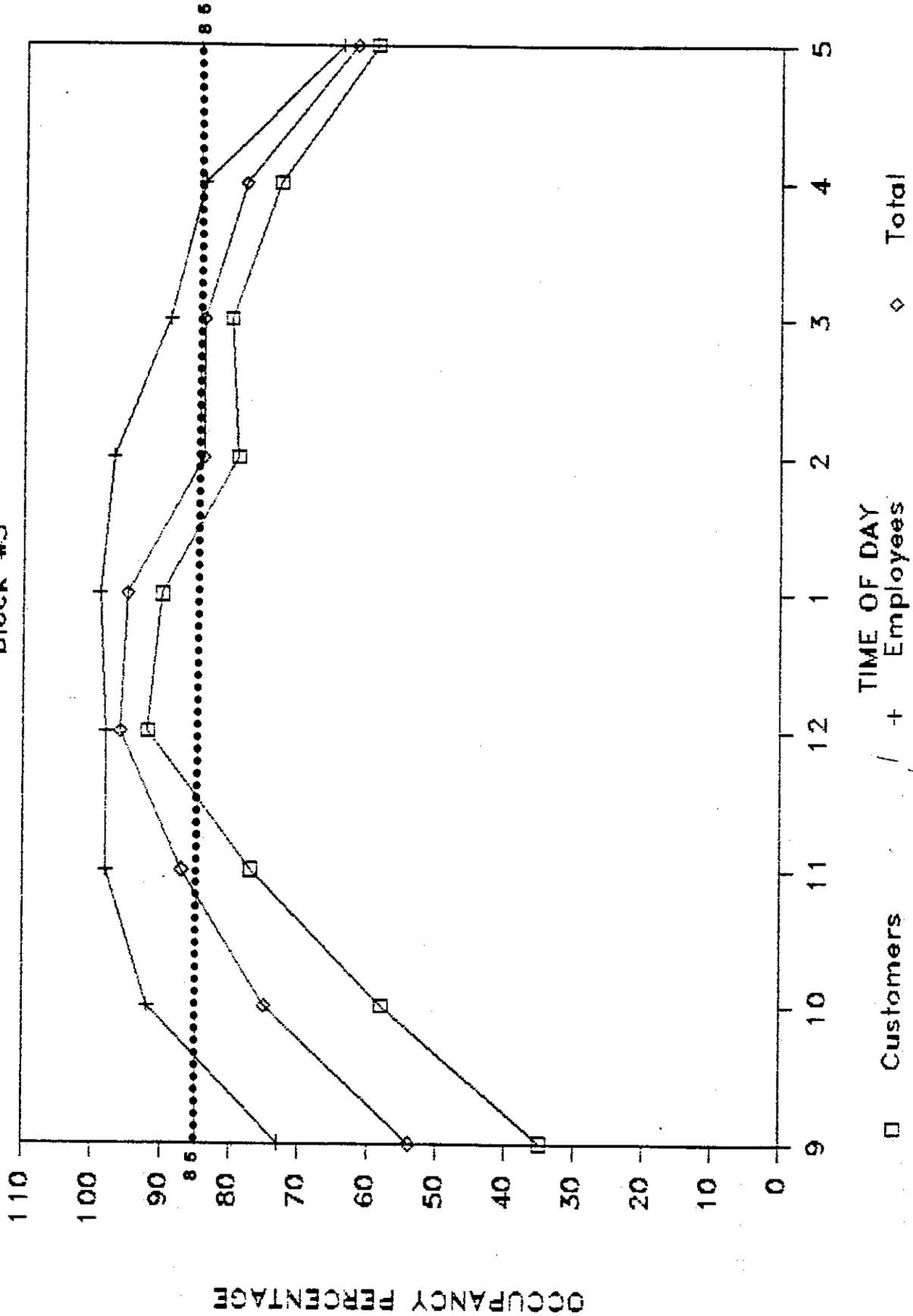


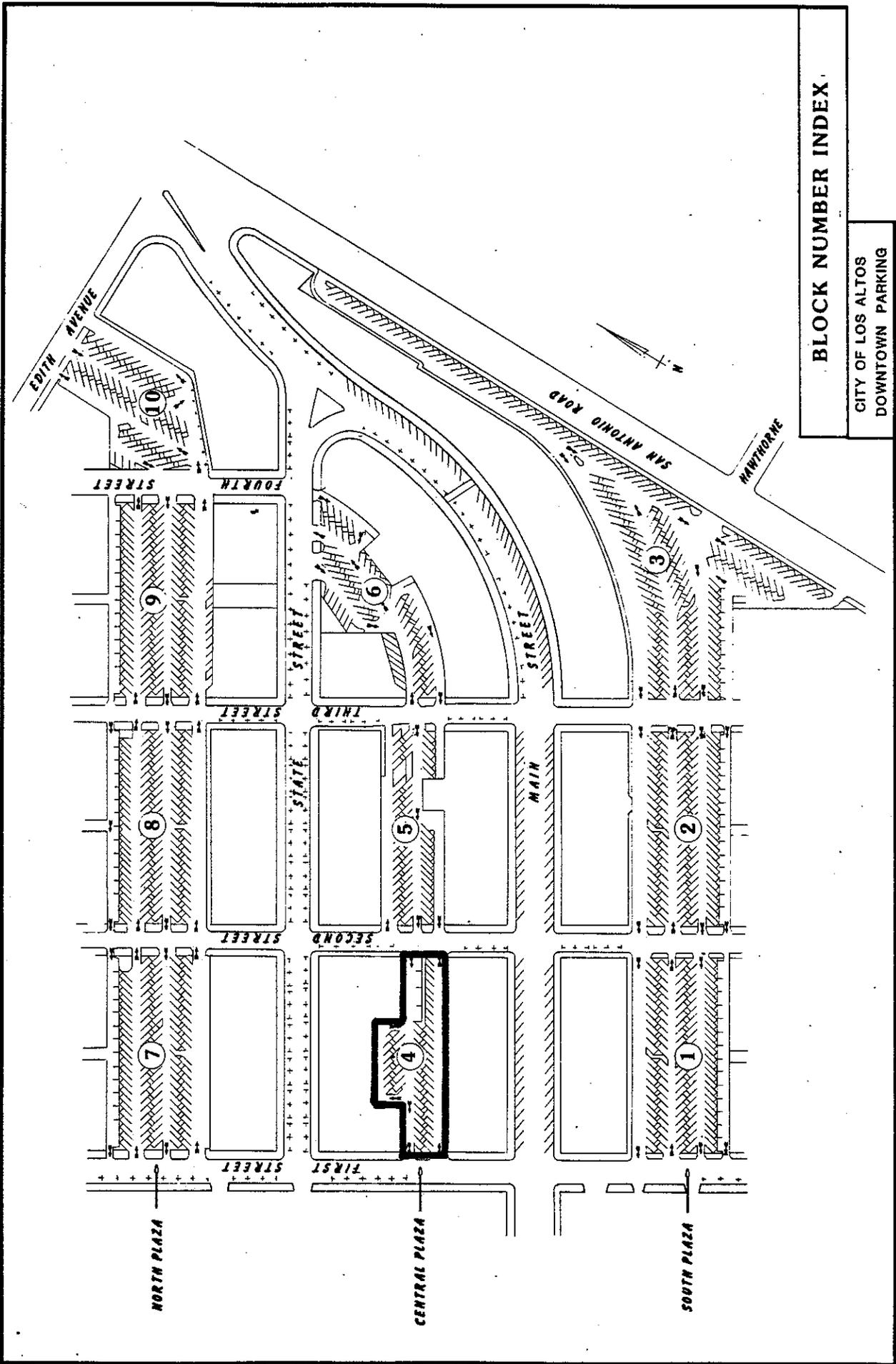


**BLOCK NUMBER INDEX**  
 CITY OF LOS ALTOS  
 DOWNTOWN PARKING

# PARKING OCCUPANCY COUNTS

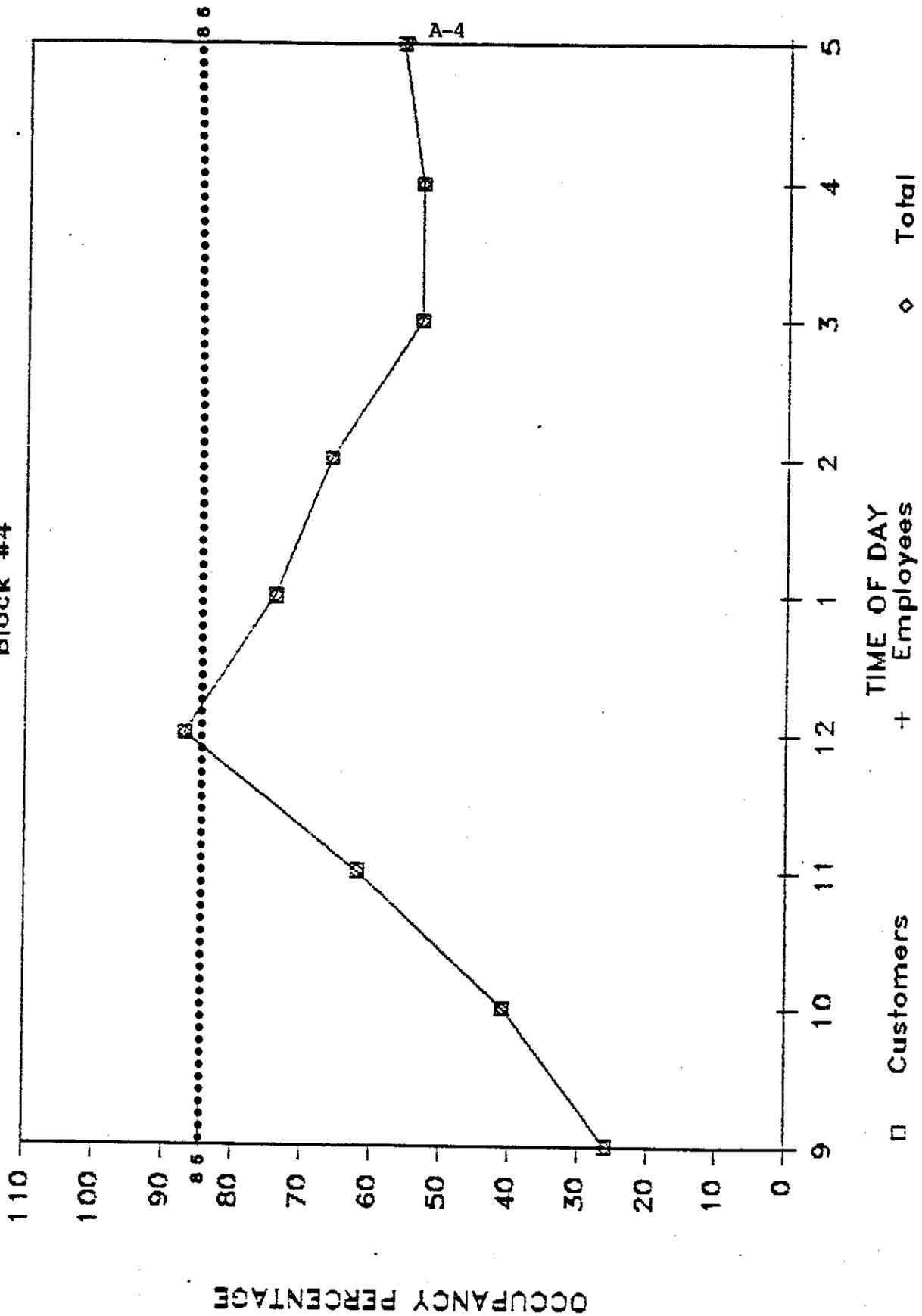
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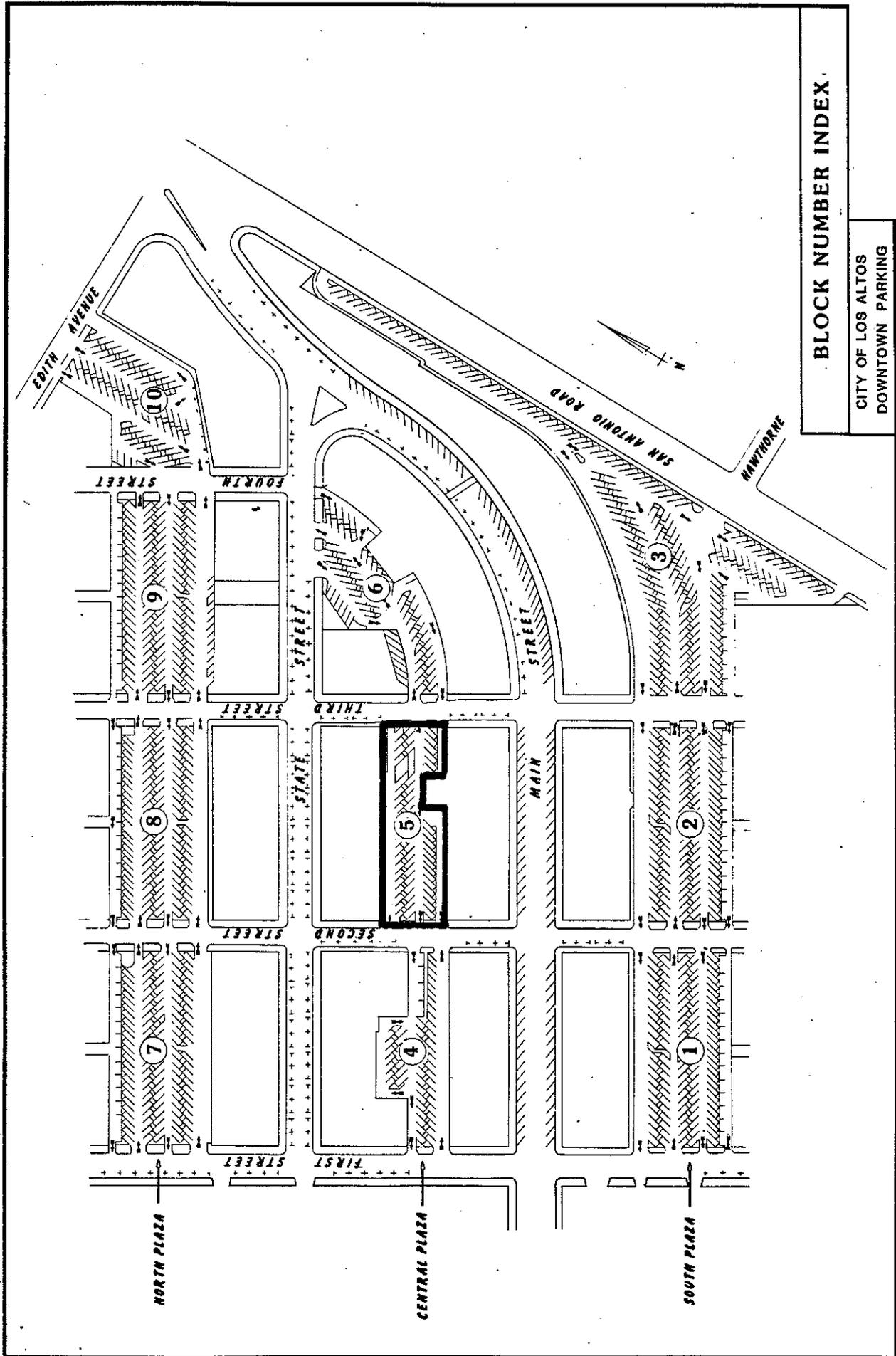




# PARKING OCCUPANCY COUNTS

Block #4



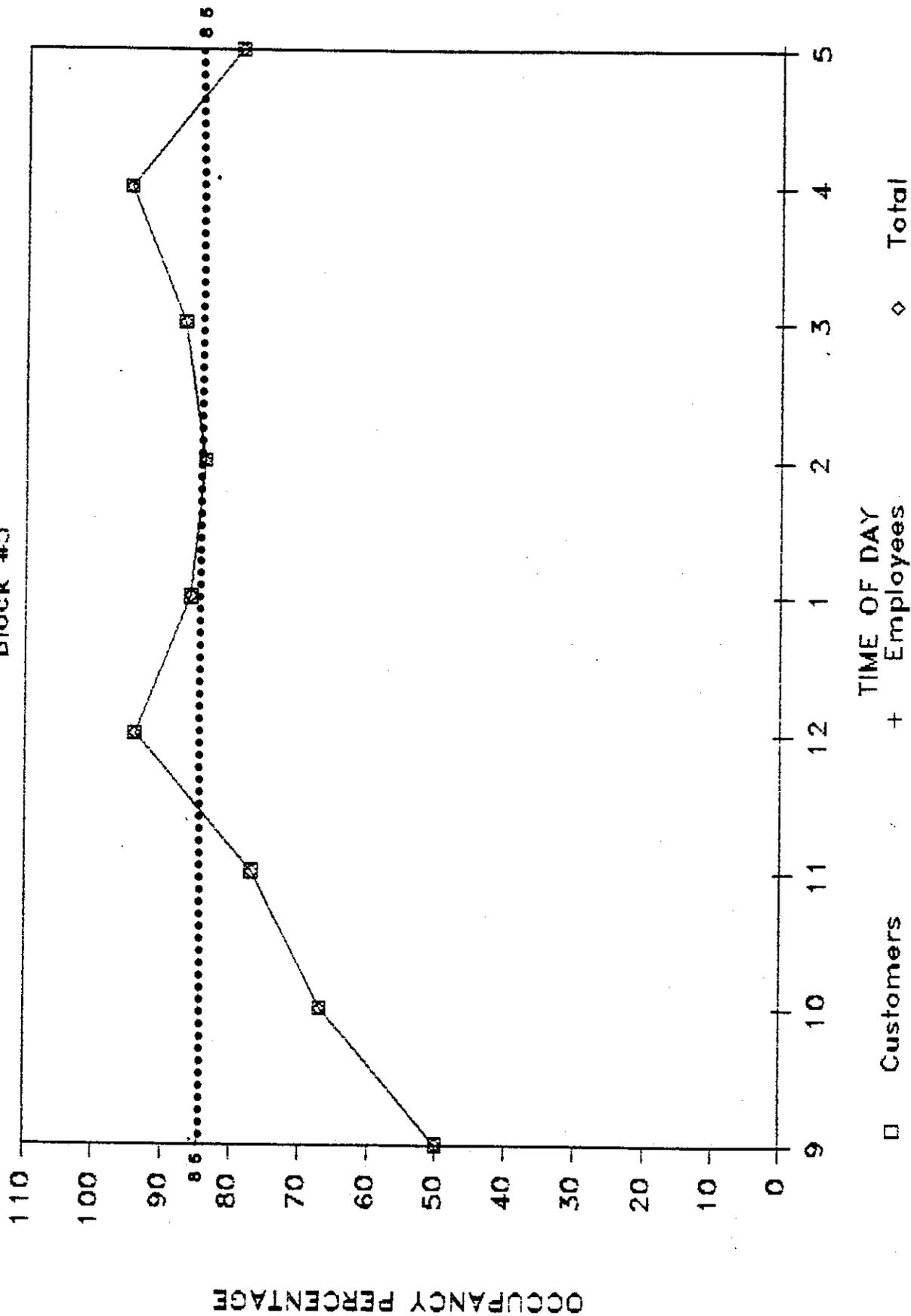


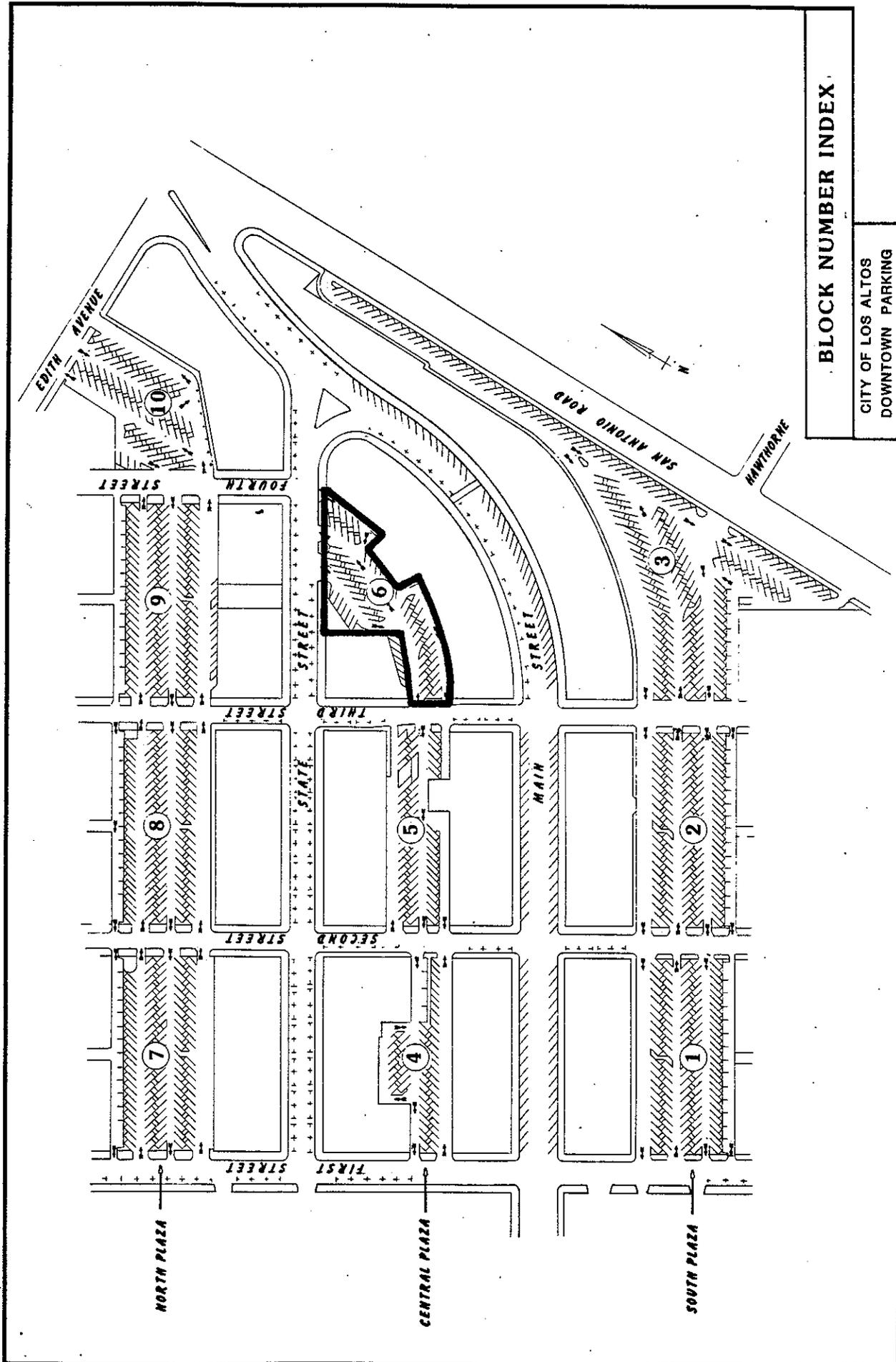
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CITY OF LOS ALTOS  
DOWNTOWN PARKING

# PARKING OCCUPANCY COUNTS

Block #5



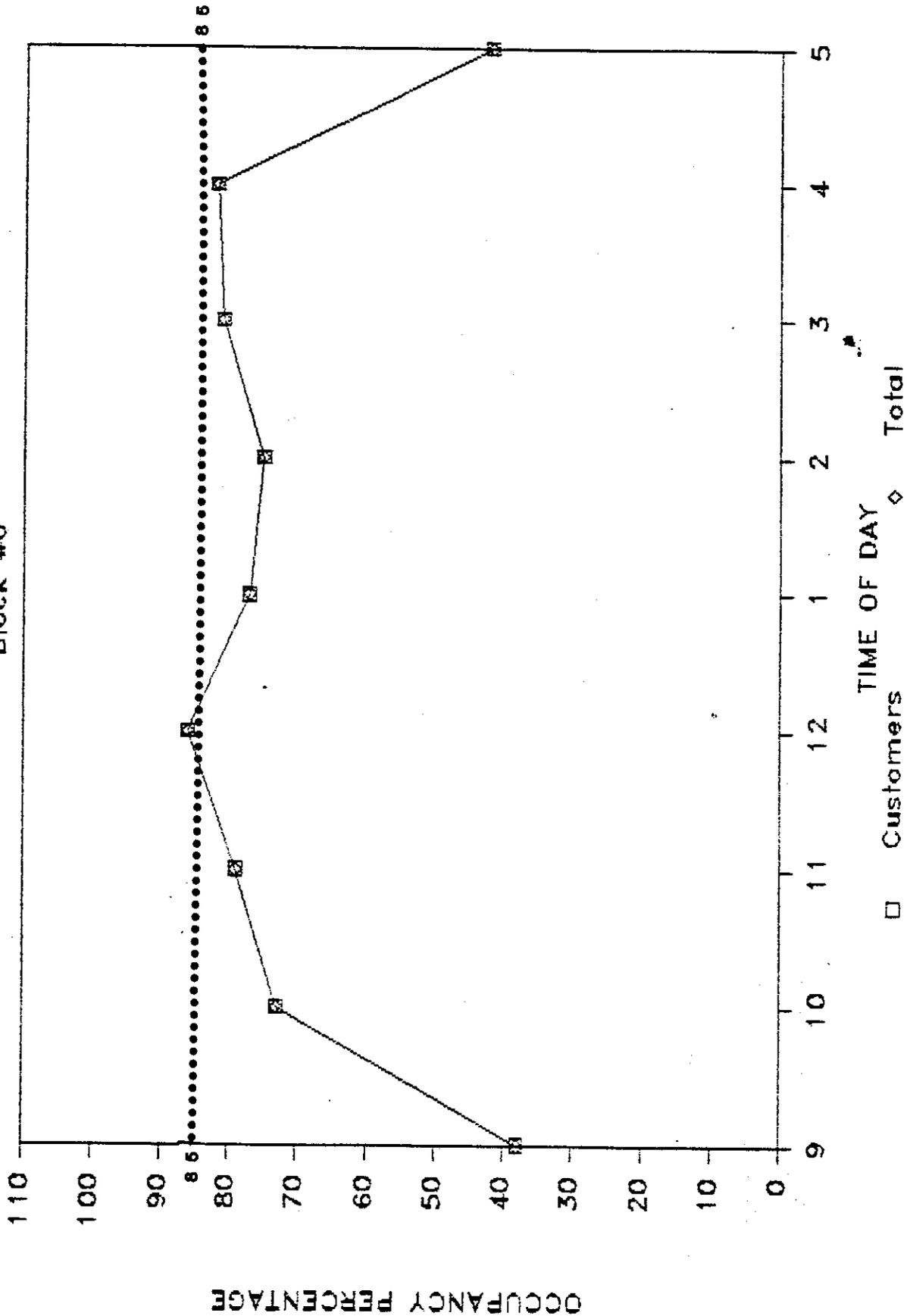


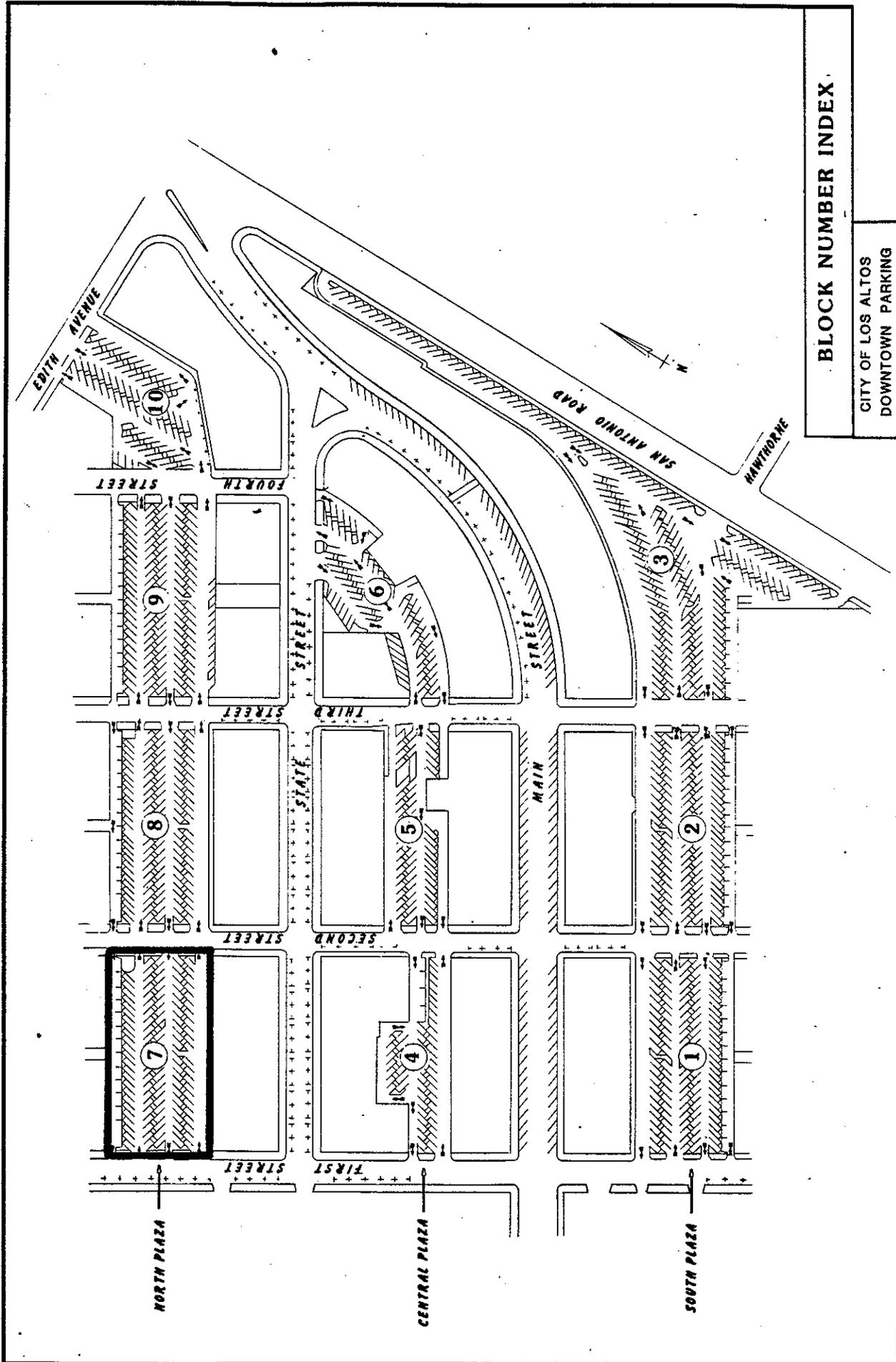
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CITY OF LOS ALTOS  
DOWNTOWN PARKING

# PARKING OCCUPANCY COUNTS

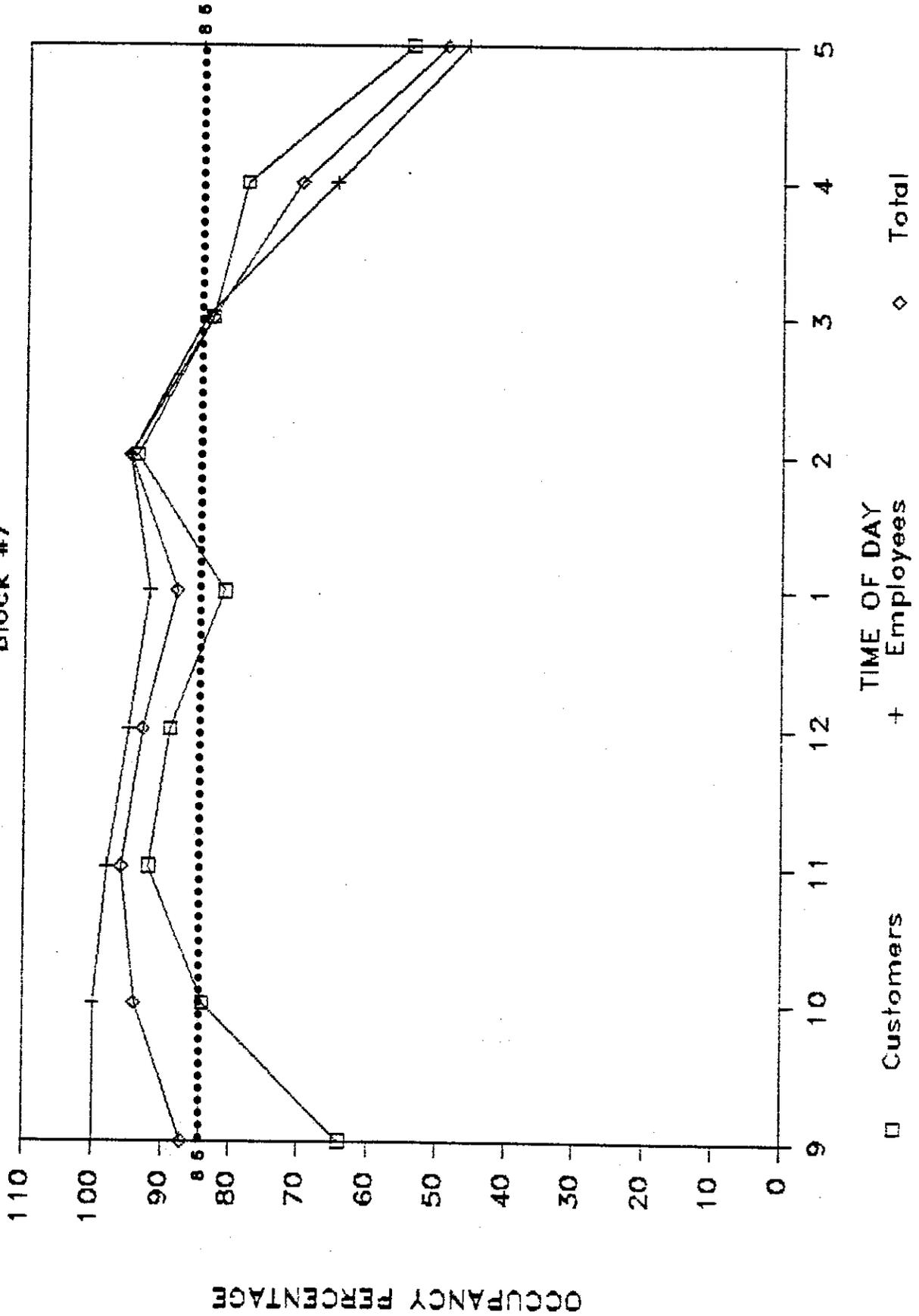
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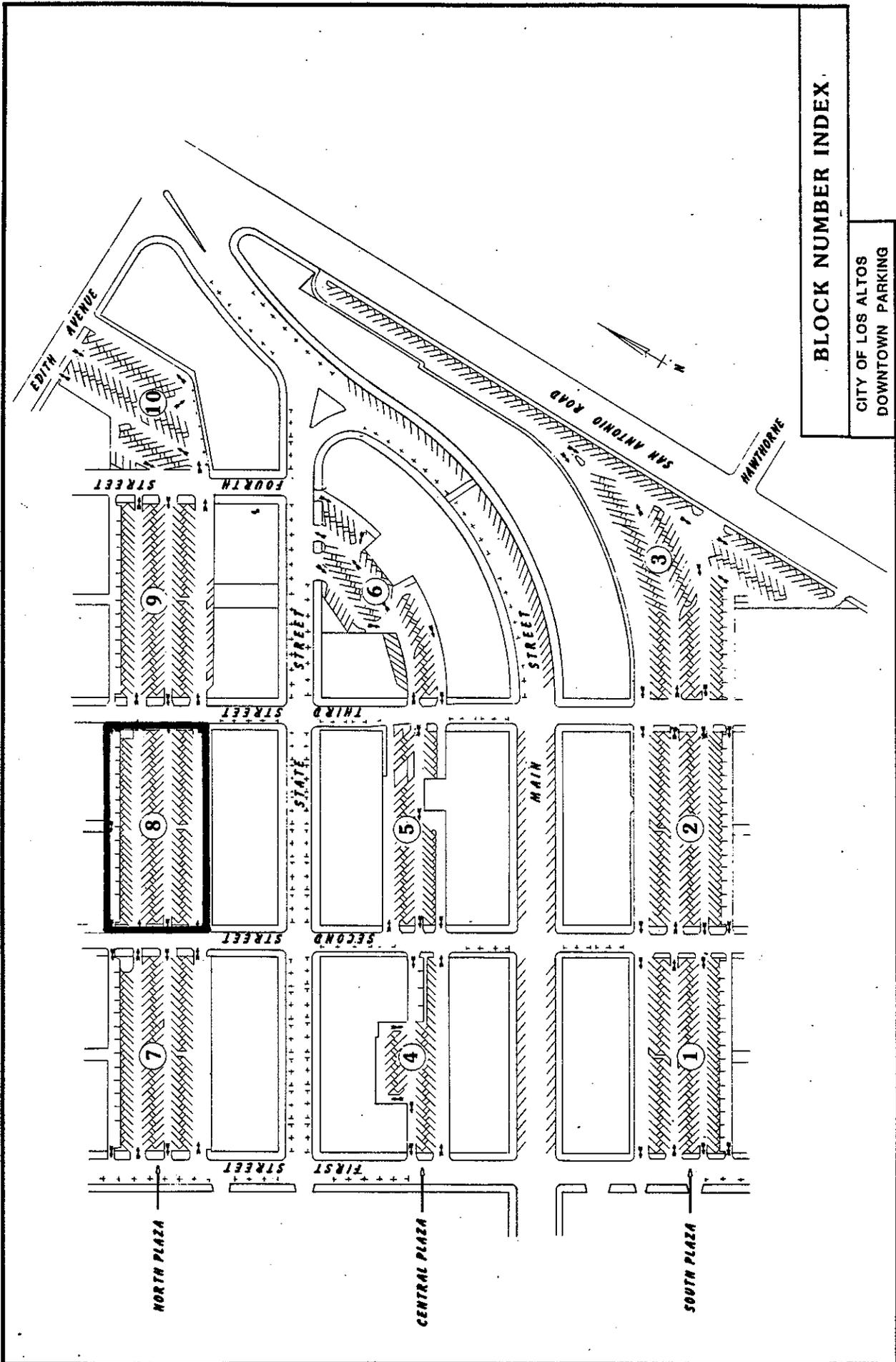




# PARKING OCCUPANCY COUNTS

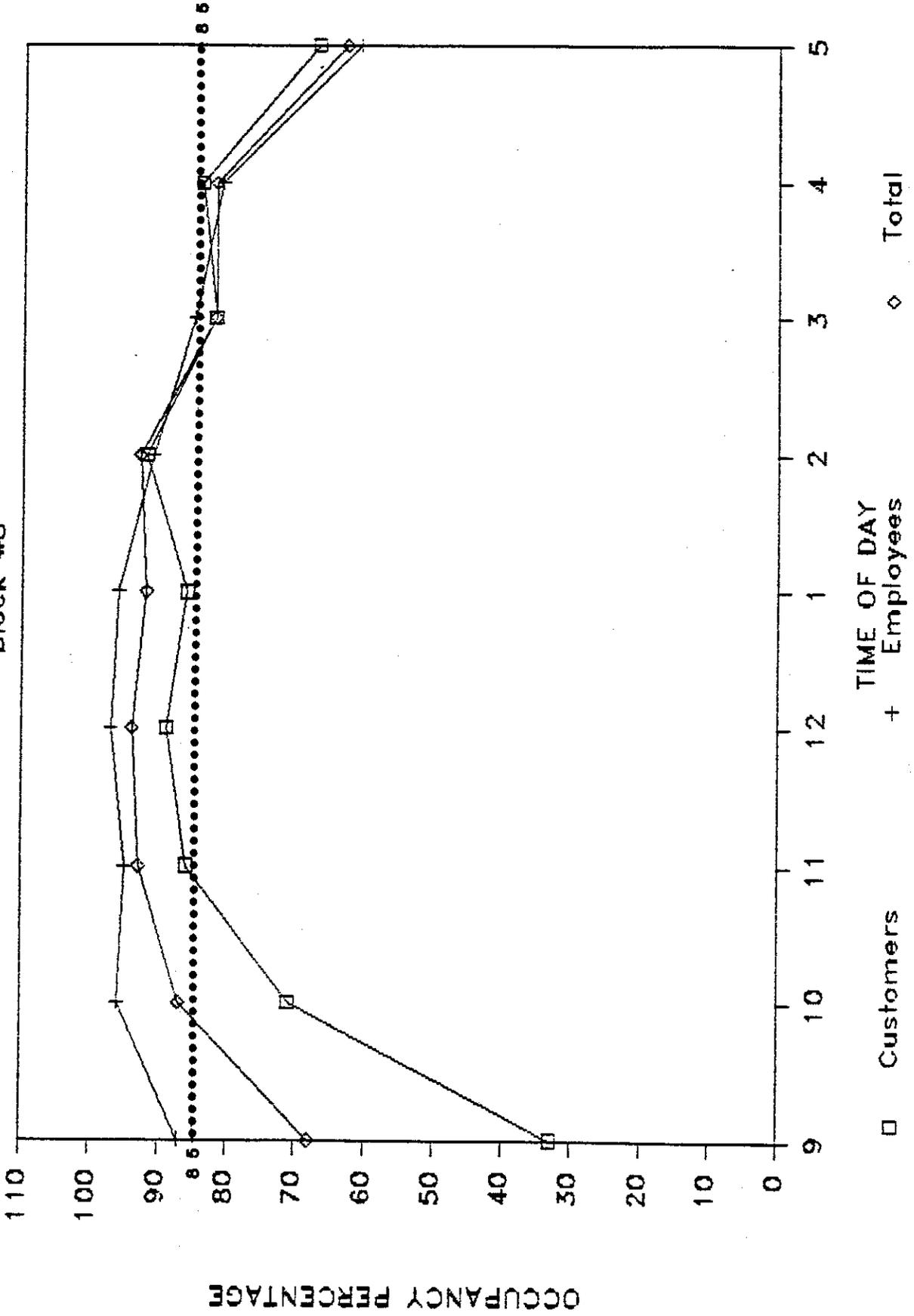
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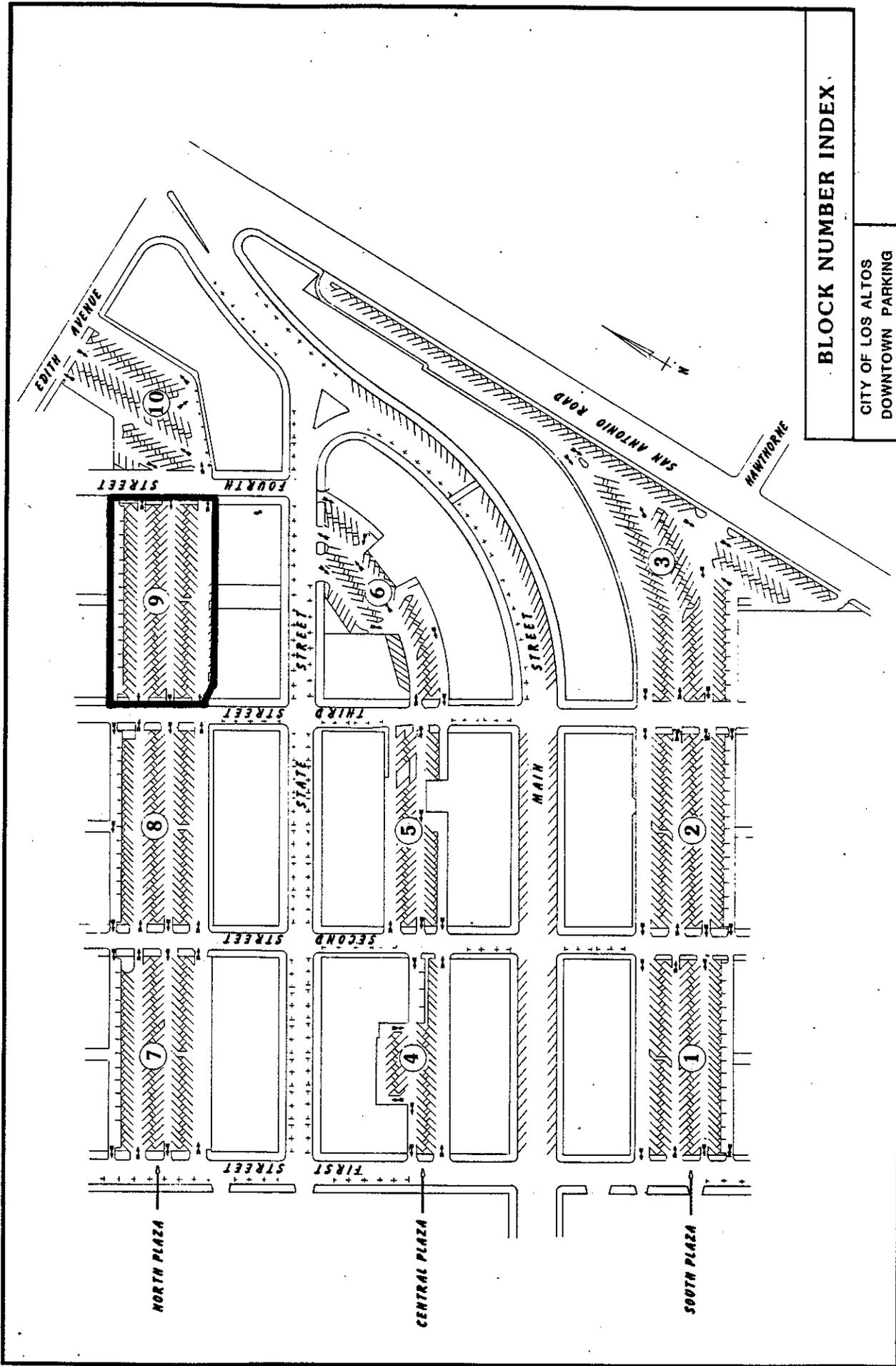




# PARKING OCCUPANCY COUNTS

Block #8



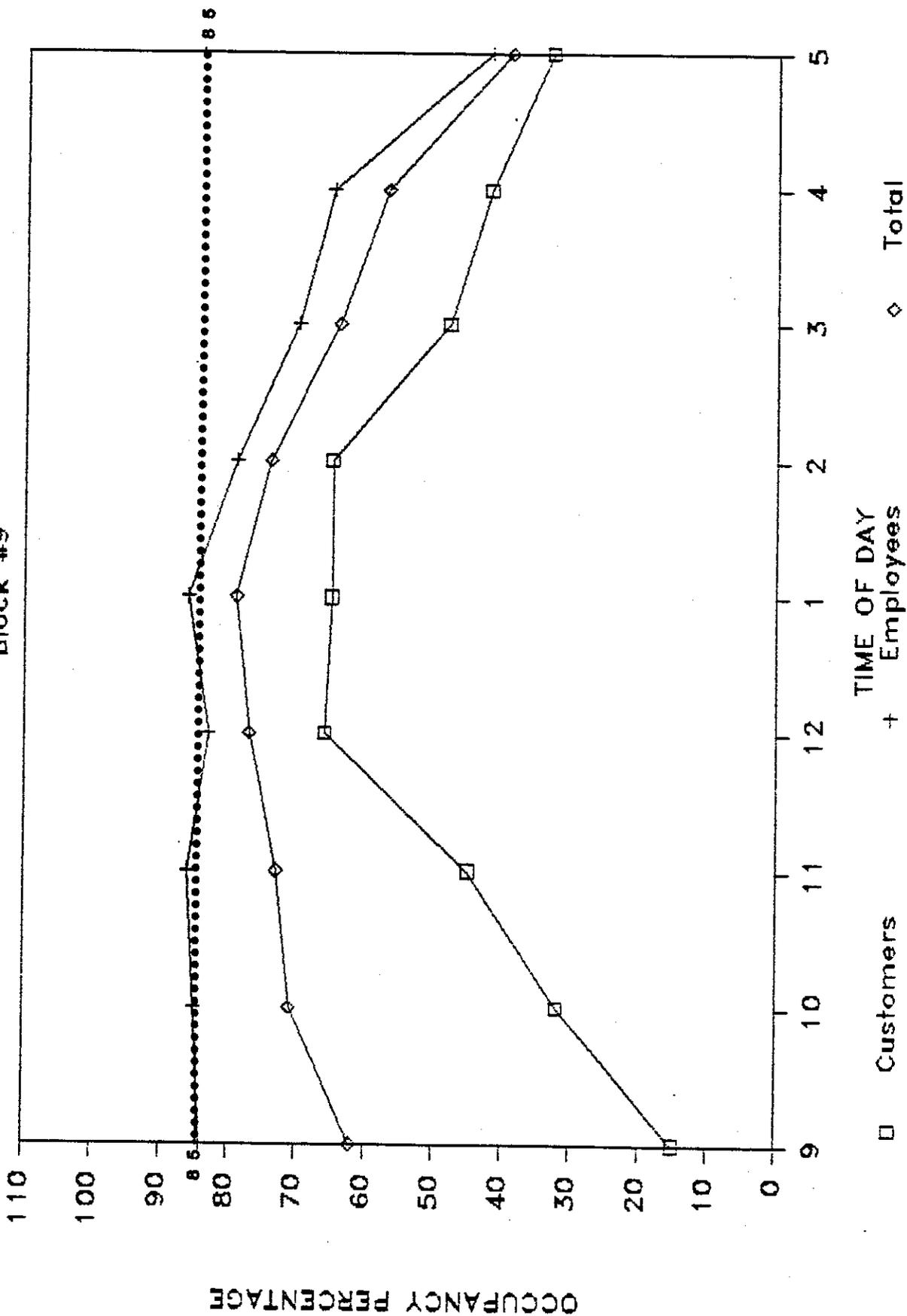


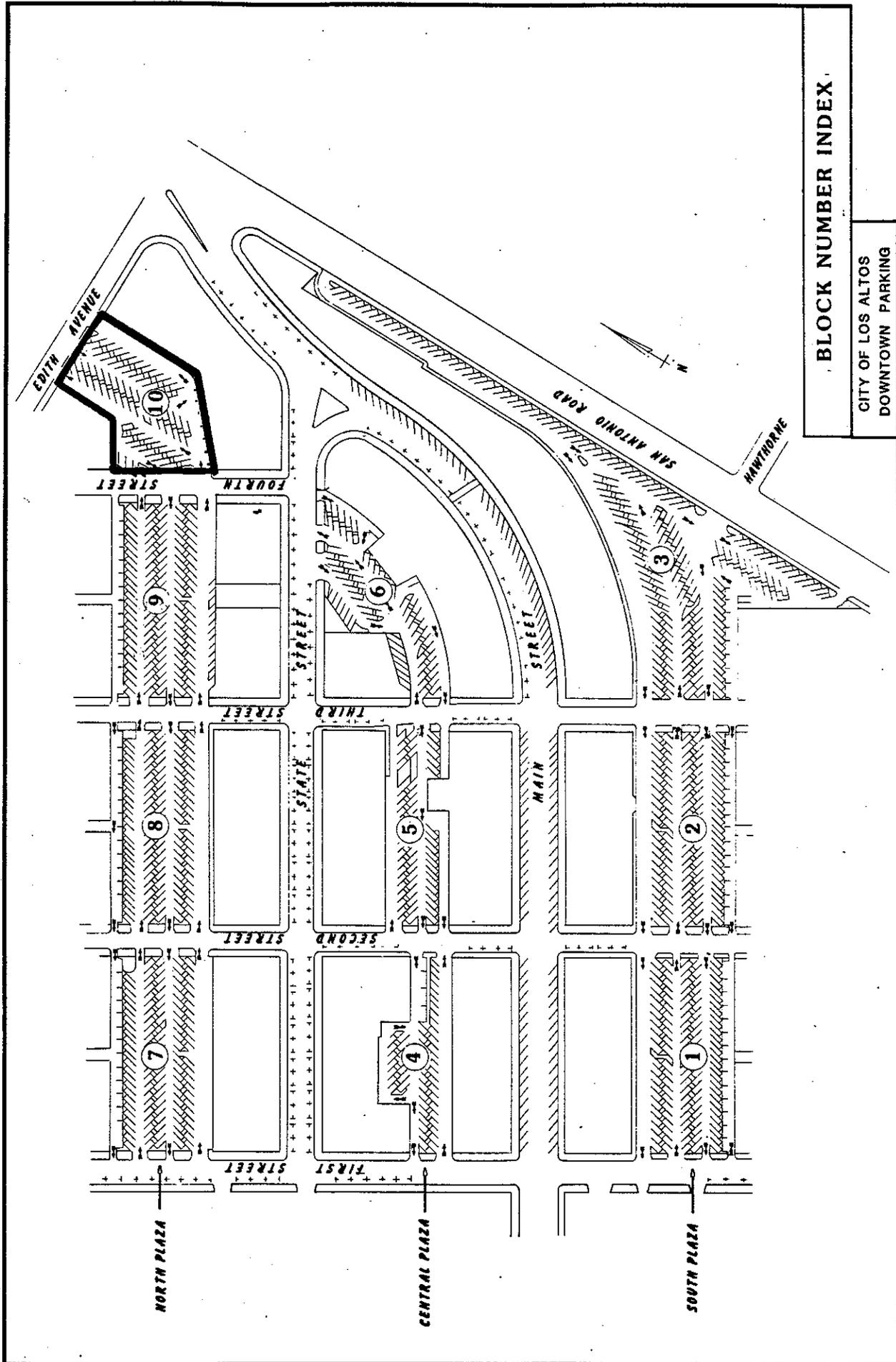
**BLOCK NUMBER INDEX**

CITY OF LOS ALTOS  
DOWNTOWN PARKING

# PARKING OCCUPANCY COUNTS

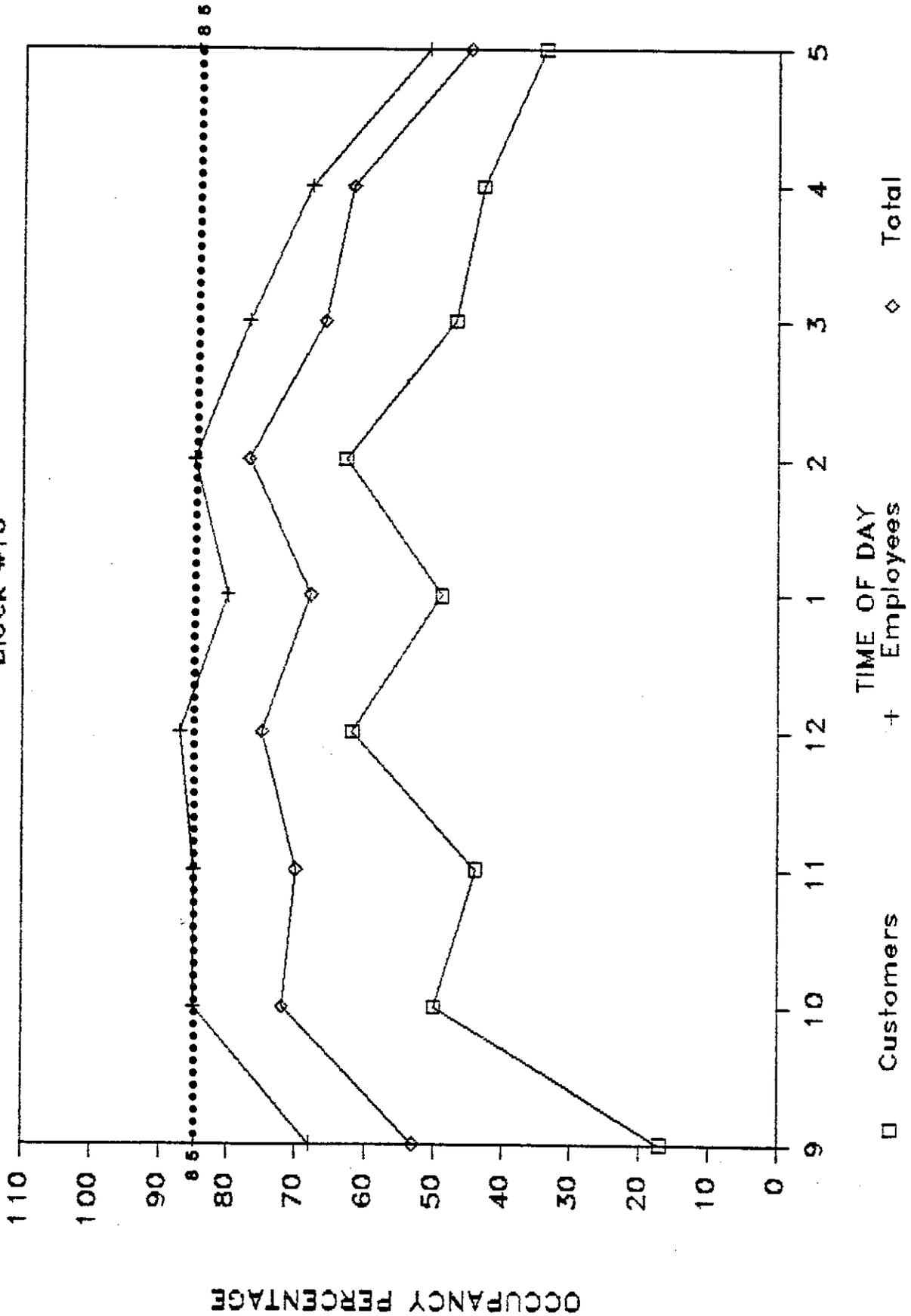
Block #9





# PARKING OCCUPANCY COUNTS

Block #10



APPENDIX B

Summary Report of 1986  
Holiday Parking Program

B-1

MEMO

To: Bruce Bane, Director of Public Works

From: Ron Gruenwald, Civil Engineer

Date: April 2, 1987

Subject: Summary Report and Evaluation of Special Holiday Downtown  
Parking Program

Recommendation: It is recommended that a special holiday parking  
program be implemented again for the 1987 season  
with the suggestions outlined herein.

I BACKGROUND

This program was initiated by a committee that was organized and chaired by Councilwoman Jane Reed. A variety of representatives of the downtown business community and city staff were included on the committee. The committee agreed that a special program was needed during the holiday season when retail sales are at their peak and parking conditions are at their worst in the downtown area. The primary goal of the program was to provide additional parking spaces for retail customers of businesses in the parking plazas. This was to be accomplished by using additional facilities, both public and private, for additional employee parking that would result in a corresponding increase in space for retail customers in the plazas. An objective was established to create at least 50 additional parking spaces in and around the periphery of downtown during the month of December. It was decided that the City would take responsibility to make the arrangements for short term leasing of available private property. The Village Association, with assistance from the Chamber of Commerce, agreed to sponsor an incentive awards program for employees to park in Lincoln Park.

II PROGRAM ARRANGEMENTSA. Private Lot Leasing Program

The City reviewed several possible sites and subsequently entered into agreements with the following owners to use their property for public parking purposes at no cost to the City except the provision of liability insurance:

1. Abby Ahrens & Frank B. Lloyd - vacant lot at 130 Second Street (space for 10 stalls).
2. Melchor Investment Company - vacant lot at State Street and First Street (space for 20 stalls).
3. Dennis Young - basement garage of new but mostly unoccupied building at 280 Second Street (50 stalls maximum).

Circulars were distributed to the employees in businesses in the blocks near these lots promoting the use of these additional facilities.

B. Incentive Awards Program

The Village Association contacted merchants to donate prizes and gift certificates for the Lincoln Park incentive program. The City's downtown parking enforcement officer recorded the license numbers of cars using the Lincoln Park area twice a day from December 1 to December 24. The Chamber of Commerce and Village Association coordinated a weekly drawing of the license numbers for prizes. The license numbers of Wells Fargo Bank employees using the Civic Center for parking were also included in the drawing since the Civic Center was a designated peripheral lot. The Village Association distributed a circular to businesses and the City distributed a circular on employee cars in the plazas to promote the use of Lincoln Park.

III PROGRAM RESULTS

In total, the program should be considered a success since the results exceeded the objective of 50 additional stalls being available. Certain elements of the program did not fulfill expectations. The results of the individual program elements are as follows:

A. Private Lot Leasing ProgramVacant lot, 130 Second St. (adjacent to N. Parking Plaza)

This lot was graded and lined into 10 stalls.

Observations indicated that it was almost always 100% fully occupied during employee peak parking periods. This lot was available to anyone on a first come- first served basis which greatly contributed to its' full utilization.

Vacant lot, State St. at First St.

The use of this lot was controlled with a permit system. This was necessary due to a requirement of the property owner that access to the lot be controlled with lock and key through the existing gate along the Central Plaza. This lot was covered with straw from a former pumpkin sale and was used essentially in "as is" condition. After circulars were distributed, there were 24 applicants for the maximum of 20 permits authorized by the property owner. Permits and keys were issued to the first 20 applicants and the other four were placed on a "stand by list." Observations of the lot usage, after a few days, indicated that only 8 to 10 of the 20 permit holders were using the lot on a regular basis. A telephone survey of the permit holders not using the lot regularly was accomplished that indicated a variety of reasons for not using the lot. Some had been out of town, sick, or not scheduled for work. Others admitted that if plenty of space were available in the regular plaza, they would park there due to the difficulty and inconvenience of using the lock and gate. The property owner agreed to the issuance of 8 additional

permits. Permits were issued to the 4 employees on the stand-by list. Signs were erected on the site indicating permits were available, but there were no further permit applicants. The average usage of the lot increased to an average of about 12 vehicles after the additional permits were issued. A further deterrent to the convenient use of this lot was mud and a large pond near the gate that occurred after mid-December rains. Even though this lot was not fully utilized, it was a valuable parking resource in the crowded Central Plaza area.

Basement Garage, 280 Second St.

Access to this facility was controlled with a permit system (no lock or keys) due to the remote access to the entrance and restrictions during the construction process. Thirty nine employees applied for permits after the circulars were distributed. Additional circulars were distributed to more distant blocks to fill the 50 permit maximum, but no other employees applied. Observations indicate that the garage was occupied by an average of 26 vehicles during typical days. It is likely that more than 26 permit holders actually used the lot, but this could not be verified due to employees coming and leaving at various work shifts.

Lincoln Park (Church Parking Lot Area)

The lack of use of this area was the program's major disappointment. On a typical day, only 1 or 2 employee vehicles were observed parking in this area. Employees and employers have commented that the area is too far and inconvenient. Others expressed concern about using this area in hours of darkness. This particular concern was recognized by the program committee as employees were encouraged to move their cars from Lincoln Park to the regular plazas after the peak midday parking period was over. It is possible many employees do not have enough flexibility in their work schedule to do this. The time constraint in organizing the incentive program was a major handicap. There is much that can be done to improve the incentive program which will be discussed below.

Lincoln Park (W. Edith Ave. Area)

This area was well utilized by Post Office employees. On a typical December day, an average of 16 employee vehicles were observed. It should be noted that Mr. James Riley, Officer in Charge of the Post Office, promoted and encouraged the use of this area by postal employees which undoubtedly contributed greatly to the success of this element of the program.

Civic Center

It is understood that 5 to 10 employees of Wells Fargo Bank used the Civic Center parking as a peripheral downtown location. This was not verified due to the large number of other vehicles parked on Civic Center property.

Summary

In total, including all elements of the special program, there were typically approximately 65 employee vehicles per day using the special facilities. This represents an approximate 6% increase in total parking capacity compared to the capacity of the public parking plazas. Even with the special program in operation, parking stall occupancy of the total plaza was in excess of 95% on many days during the mid day peak. If the program had not been in operation, severe parking problems would have occurred.

IV Conclusions:

The special holiday parking program, while not completely successful, was of significant value in providing additional parking spaces for customers in the parking plazas. The program achieved its' stated objectives and was a "learning experience" that can serve as a foundation for future holiday parking programs.

V Suggestions for Future Holiday Parking Programs

A. Private Lot Leasing Program

a. The City should complete a survey of potential lots and make arrangements (contracts, insurance) with the cooperating owners by mid-November.

b. Underutilized portions of existing private lots and garages should be considered for leasing (i.e. the City and property owner could agree that a specific number and location of stalls could be used for public parking.

c. Care should be taken to not confuse this lot leasing program with the Lincoln Park incentive program. Employees using the lot leasing program stalls will not need an incentive since these facilities will be within the downtown triangle area.

d. Under ideal conditions, spaces provided by the lot leasing program would be available to both customers and employees. Space should be available on a first come-first served basis.

e. A permit system for any lot should be avoided if possible. If a permit system is necessary at a particular location, past experience has demonstrated that more permits should be issued than the spaces available (30 to 50% more permits than spaces.) The use of keys, locks, or gates in permit areas should also be avoided, if possible.

f. Any vacant lots used should be well graded and the stalls lined with a ball field line marker.

g. Property owners participating in the lot leasing program should receive appropriate public recognition for their cooperation and program contribution.

B. Incentive Awards Program

a. Planning and organizing for this program element needs to be done well in advance of the holiday season. Initial planning should begin in September.

b. A committee should be formed to plan, organize, implement, coordinate, and monitor the incentive program. Committee representatives should include a variety of business persons, employees, a Village Association representative, a Chamber of Commerce representative, and City staff.

c. The program should be highly publized and promoted well in advance of the holiday season.

d. The list of prizes and awards should be very specific and included in the promotion.

e. The prize program should include definite rewards to those individuals participating on a regular basis, not just a "chance" of winning a prize (i.e. specific rewards could be:

Reward "A" -5 days of participation

Reward "B" -10 " " "

Reward "C" -15 " " "

f. The drawing for prizes should be continued for all participants together with the definite awards program described above.

g. The committee should endeavor to build a base of support among the employers to encourage their employees to participate (i.e. giving time-off to employees to move their cars from Lincoln Park to the regular parking plaza after the mid-day parking peak is over).

h. Special attention should be given again to Post office employees in encouraging them to use Lincoln Park.

i. If other peripheral parking areas (i.e. Civic Center, Hillview Ave., etc.) are included in the incentive program, the stalls in the program should be designated and marked so they may be monitored.

In summary, there is excellent potential to accomplish significant parking improvments in the downtown area during the 1987 holiday season and beyond. The key to the success of these future programs will be the extent of cooperation, interest, and efforts of the City, the Village Association, the Chamber of Commerce, and individual employers and employees of the downtown business community.