

# Manitou Springs Parking Plan Summary

## February 2008

### Introduction

In March of 2006, Dennis Burns, VP of Parking Planning for Carl Walker Engineering came to Manitou Springs as a guest of the Economic Development Council. He presented a program that provided examples of best practices for parking management from other communities. Nearly 70 people came to hear his comments at a publicly advertised town hall meeting.

Several other groups in Manitou Springs also recognized that parking management and expansion must move to the forefront. The Metropolitan Parking District, the Chamber of Commerce, The Pikes Peak Cog Railway and the Cliff House joined forces with the EDC to fund a parking management plan and hire Carl Walker Engineering. **Their agreed upon goal was to provide a unified, consistent, fair, city-wide parking plan so that residents, businesses and visitors are treated equitably.**

**Planning Process** The planning team from Carl Walker Engineering came to town on June 13. They conducted 7 focus groups with nearly every stakeholder in the community during an extensive 2 day research effort. They inventoried public and private parking, including residential areas and before departing, they conducted another town hall meeting to answer questions. Nearly 90 people attended the town hall meeting and participated in an extensive question and answer session.

With all of their research and site assessment information in hand, they developed a parking management plan based on “best in class” practices from around the country and submitted it to a steering committee of representatives from the Cliff House, Cog Railway, EDC, Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau and Metro Parking District in late December, 2007.

### Basic Plan Components

The number one recommendation for a new Manitou Springs parking system is to create a new organizational structure for parking management. In other words, success in execution of the plan is based on creating one organization to implement a comprehensive city-wide approach to managing all functions.

### JOB #1 - Organizational Structure

#### **All functions housed in one comprehensive parking organization.**

On Street Parking

Off Street Parking Lots

Enforcement of Parking Regulations

Development of New Facilities

## **JOB #2 - Professional Management**

A group of local volunteers cannot implement a considerable and complex parking management program from start-up. Currently the Metropolitan Parking District Board is run by volunteers. Their scope is the management of two parking lots. They use only basic administrative support provided by City staff. A successful comprehensive program will require a full time professional in the lead utilizing the Metropolitan Parking District properties as part of the off street parking system.

### **1. Why do we need to create this organization?**

Parking is an issue on everyone's mind in Manitou Springs. The current system of giving away the most valuable real estate (on-street parking), charging in the off street parking lots and not enforcing time restrictions has led to a system that will no longer support the community. A solution in the business district might create a problem in nearby residential areas. Likewise, redevelopment of the east and west ends of Manitou Springs will trigger other needs such as recreational use of Fountain Creek and the need for public facilities to service users in those areas. Having one central parking office to work in tandem with all the stakeholder needs is the most effective and economical solution.

### **2. Who will run the organization?**

Carl Walker Engineering has advised Manitou Springs to hire a professional parking manager.

### **3. How are they funded?**

Fees from paid on and off street parking as well as enforcement revenues will cover the cost of staffing the organization and begin to fund necessary capital investments.

### **4. Will there be meters on the street?**

On street parking is our most valuable resource. It therefore, should become fee based. The best practice guiding principle to be implemented is "friendly but not free."

### **5. Where will the new parking facilities be located?**

Currently, we do not have specific locations designated. However, the goal of the Metropolitan Parking District has been the development of west end parking facilities, since its inception. That goal will remain a top priority for an expanded parking authority in Manitou Springs.

### **6. What about parking problems in residential areas?**

The stated goal is to provide parking solutions for everyone, residents, businesses and visitors. The parking survey provided numerous options for helping residential areas, especially those streets that are chronically plagued with long term users such as downtown merchants and trail users. The plan is comprehensive. In other words, it identifies the relationship one solution for the business district has to another problem on a residential street. Having one central parking organization manage each function provides for the implementation of multiple management solutions across the community.