FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

A Case Study of The Traffic Situation In Tallahassee

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I

INTRODUCTION

The City of Tallahassee is located in the North Central area of the State of Florida. The geographical location of Tallahassee causes it to be a crossroads for traffic going south from the north and west and traffic going west from the southeast. Many tourists travel the Tallahassee route each year.

There are many commercial vehicles coming through Tallahassee each day. Many of these commercial vehicles come from the St. Marks area transporting gasoline and oil to sections of Georgia and adjoining states. Refrigerator vans and trucks loaded with produce from the southern part of the state bound for northern markets pass through Tallahassee. This is one of the hilliest areas in Florida and this terrain causes the commercial vehicles to be more of a traffic hazard than they ordinarilly would be in a city whose terrain is flat.

Tallahassee changed to a Commission-Manager type of government in 1920. Its municipal government has the reputation of being successful and a good one, but it has not kept pace with the requirements that have been imposed by a growing population and modern traffic expansion.

The population of Tallahassee in 1920 was approximately 5,600; It has grown to 27,158 in 1951. This increase in

population over a period of 30 years possibly gives the impression of little significance but the greatest increase in this period of time was from 1940 to 1951. The population in Tallahassee has grown from 16,246 in 1940 to 27,158 in 1951.[1] This increase in population has caused traffic congestion and traffic problems to arise.

Tallahassee is the county seat of Leon County and the capitol of the State of Florida. Economically, Tallahassee is fortunate in being the capitol of the State of Florida and the County Seat for the state and county offices provide good employment for many of its citizens.

There are two state universities located in Tallahassee with over ten thousand students and faculty members. Many of these students patronize the business establishments of Tallahassee. The students of the two universities have contributed to the traffic problem because many of them own and operate automobiles in Tallahassee.

The above-average population growth plus the fact that so many people are able to have their own cars has given Tallahassee immense traffic problems, especially since 1940. Some of the people in Tallahassee have been aware of the growing traffic problem for several years. Articles and

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1. U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1950 Census of Population: Preliminary Counts. Population of Florida by Counties April 1, 1950.

editorials have appeared in the daily newspaper of Tallahassee, The Democrat. In 1946, the City Commission authorized parallel parking on some of the principal streets to alleviate growing congestion. Then, early in 1947, a group of people, representing themselves as merchants who were directly concerned, presented a petition to the Commission requesting a return to angle parking. At the same meeting, however, the Junior Chamber of Commerce and Kiwanis Club presented petitions to the Council asking them to retain parallel parking.

The Commission voted two to one to reinstate angle parking in the City of Tallahassee,[2] and things were quiet for a time.

In 1949 the State Road Department was asked to make a survey of the traffic conditions in Tallahassee by the City Commission. This survey was completed and presented by the State Road Department to the Commission with several recommendations.

Most people who drove downtown during these months probably would agree that some steps had to be taken. In the peak traffic hours, between four-thirty and six o'clock in the evening as people left offices and stores, cars jammed the streets, crawling at snail's-pace from traffic light to traffic light. Tempers were thin and frayed, and complaints began reaching the City Commission and the Manager.

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2. Minutes of The City Commission of Tallahassee, Florida. Vol. 6. p. 307.

II

GENERAL COMMENTS ON TRAFFIC PROBLEMS

Among the many techniques used for highway and street improvement, planning is one of the most necessary for developing a program designed to provide safe and efficient transportation in any city. Such a program should show the need for a modern urban street system planned in such a way that it will provide for the maximum use of existing streets and parking facilities and will permit a free flow of traffic among the various sections of the city.

In almost any city today, congestion on the streets, particularly in downtown business areas, is much too serious a matter to allow the city government to sit idly by while waiting for the realization of long-range plans. Even though the government may consider major revisions necessary, it still must face the fact that many of the existing streets will be in use for a long time to come. Some cities have been successful in developing ways and means through which existing streets can be made to facilitate increasing travel, faster speeds, and greater safety, while weaknesses in facilities and operation are ascertained through recognized procedures of traffic engineering.[3]

Among the facilities to be considered, the street system

3. Street and Curb Parking Survey for Tallahassee, Florida. State Road Department of the State of Florida, pp. 2-3.

forms the most important signle element in the major framework of a city. This system largely determines the case, convenience, and safety with which people travel about the city; it establishes the size of city blocks; and it is the channel for light and air required by overhead and underground utilities.

In addition to its importance in these respects, the street system is the most permanent element in the physical make-up of the city, for once a street has been opened, utilities installed, and the property along it improved, it is almost impossible to close it, relocate it, or widen it without involving great difficulty and expense. Therefore, the planning of new streets and the improvement of existing ones demand the most painstaking care if they are to produce results which will meet present requirements and will provide for possible demands in the future. Such planning should consider the fact that the access and traffic circulation function is normally the most critical of a street system's major functions.[4] There is scarcely a city in the United States today whose streets are not congested with passenger and freight traffic; and, at the same time, vehicular traffic with its attendant congestion is destined to increase still further with future increases in urban population, ownership and use of motor vehicles, and with added intensity of land use.

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4 Local Planning Administration, 2nd. edition. Chicago: The International City Managers' Association, 1948. p. 90.

Cost of Traffic Congestion

Traffic congestion everywhere is not only inconvenient and hazardous; it is also costly. As long as twenty-five years ago, direct costs of traffic delays resulting from congestion in central business districts were estimated at $25,000 per day in Worcester, Massachusetts; $100,000 per day in Cincinnati; and $50,000 per day on Manhatten Island,[5] while more recently, the average annual loss from automobile accidents in Flint, Michigan, over an eight-year period, has been estimated at $594,393.[6] In addition to the direct costs of traffic congestion, delays, and accidents, there are many indirect ones. These include loss of trade, increased costs of production, and reduction in property values.[7]

Although the police traffic division and the traffic engineers are responsible for seeing to it that the most effective use is made of the existing street system and although the planning agency is primarily responsible for proposing improvements in the system, all departments of city government are vitally concerned in a city's traffic problems. While the exact division of functions among these departments

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5 Regional Survey of New York and Its Environs, Vol. III, 1925, quoted in Local Planning Administration, pp. 60-61.

6 A Comprehensive City Plan for Flint, Michigan, Part I, 1937, quoted in Local Planning Administration, pp. 64-65.

7 Local Planning Administration, p. 90.

will vary from city to city, it is of the utmost importance that they work in close cooperation. For example, it is important that the planner be familiar with the work of the engineer because the traffic engineer's knowledge and findings on street traffic and on the operating characteristics of automobiles are essential to the design of street systems. As a result of lack of cooperation in this respect in the past, street systems today present many difficulties. For one thing, they were primarily designed to satisfy the requirements of horse and buggy traffic rather than that of high speed automobiles. This undesirable situation can be avoided and remedied only through the cooperative planning and re-planning of street systems so they may perform, with a minimum of regulation, their functions of accommodating traffic safely and efficiently.[8]

Parking a General Urban Problem

Streets can serve their primary function of traffic circulation successfully only if the traffic system provides adequate facilities for parking. The streets themselves provide a significant portion of the required parking space, but street space alone is not adequate, particularly in central business districts and in other areas which attract a large volume of automobile traffic. In these areas, the street's main function of providing space for traffic movement may be impaired by the use of too much of the street's surface for parking space,

8. Ibid., p. 91.

because parking, standing, or loading along the curb lanes of a street reduces the traffic-carrying capacity of the roadway, frequently by as much as fifty percent. Although there are other solutions to the problem, many cities have resorted to costly street widenings and other street improvements to make up for the loss of roadway capacity while retaining curb lane parking.

In spite of its costliness, cities have felt the necessity for preserving such parking facilities, for there is scarcely a central business district in the United States which is not handicapped by a lack of automobile parking space. Businesses located in these areas frequently have a dropping off in trade as lack of adequate parking space forces shoppers travelling by automobile to make their purchases in less congested outlying shopping centers or in other cities which have better parking facilities. Parking in downtown areas continues to present a problem, therefore, as cities are unwilling to see a decrease in trade in the central business districts or to approve a decentralization in commerce.[9]

Attempts to Solve Traffic Problems

If a successful program of general traffic improvements is to be put into operation, parking problems must be among the first to be considered. These involve a number of conflicting demands from the citizens of the town, as, on the

9. Ibid., p. 109.

one hand, some merchants will request curb parking privileges which penalize the majority of street users while, on the other hand, there are others who insist that the success of their business depends entirely upon the availability to shoppers of curb parking space in front of their stores. In addition, there are shoppers (according to myth, especially women) who find it difficult to park automobiles parallel to the curb and will therefore avoid areas in which this type of parking is enforced, there are professional and "influential" people who demand special parking privileges, and there are commercial fleets, such as taxis, that want to monopolize curb parking space for the storage of their vehicles. All groups and individual operators have personal interests and their points of view regarding parking are usually governed accordingly.

With these conflicting demands and attitudes in mind, public officials must weigh and coordinate the requests for parking space in order to provide facilities which will operate to the best advantage of all. This particular responsibility belongs to the City Commission, which must consider all the wishes of the people and put forth a sound program that will be beneficial to all the people as a whole.[11]

City Street Capacity

The traffic carrying capacity of a street will depend

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11 Street and Curb Parking Survey for Tallahassee, Florida. State Road Department of the State of Florida, p. 4.

primarily upon the number of traffic lanes the roadway accomodates. Other factors which enter into the traffic carrying capacity of a street are spacing of intersecting streets, type of curb parking, and the type of traffic control devices in operation.

It is impossible to measure accurately the traffic carrying capacity of any particular street owing to the many variables concerned and problems concerning operation must therefore be adjusted in the light of conditions applicable to a specific case. As every city has street problems which differ from those of other cities, it is desirable to develop operational standards through actual observations.[12]

Angle Versus Parallel Parking

Some interesting facts concerning street parking arrangements are given in the Tallahassee report already cited.

> As settlements and towns grew, the "General Store" came into being. The managers of these stores set line posts to the tops of which a horizontal pole was fastened, thereby providing a hitching rack in front of their establishments. Customers headed their animals and teams up to the rack and tied them to the horizontal pole. This was the origin of what today is termed angle parking. Angle parking accomodates more vehicles for a given length of curb than parallel parking but it is hazardous for entering and leaving vehicles, which often impede traffic on more than one adjacent lane. Angle parking is not advised and should be used only in separate parking areas in low-speed urban areas where parking requirements take precedence over the smooth operation of through traffic.[13]

12. Local Planning Administration, p. 117.
13. Street and Curb Parking, p. 7.

Persons interested in traffic problems are frequently concerned with the relative merits of angle as opposed to parallel parking. The safety feature here is important and the question of how much more hazardous angle parking is than parallel parking is frequently asked. Salem, Oregon, has been able to answer this question with some degree of accuracy as a result of a four-year traffic engineering study of the accident records for two similar blocks, one having angle parking and the other having parallel parking.

> Both streets are 59 feet, curb to curb, both in the business district, with a similar type of traffic signals at the intersection and have a comparable average traffic volume of approximately 7,500 vehicles per day.[14]

The report goes on to show that a study of the accident records for the two blocks during the years 1941 to 1945, inclusive, revealed that there were fifty-seven accidents attributable to the angle parking on one street while only twenty accidents were attributable to parallel parking on the other. With all other conditions comparable therefore, parallel parking was the cause of 65% fewer accidents than angle parking.

The Intersection Problem

Parking problems are intimately connected with other traffic problems. For example, on city streets cut by frequent intersections, a driver is willing to accept a regulation of his speed

14 Ibid., p. 8.

set by the general flow of traffic providing the traffic flow is not unreasonably slow or broken by lengthy halts. The practical capacities of the intersections, therefore, generally control the practical capacities of the streets, but these may be seriously affected by conditions created by parking. There are numerous locations where mid-block interference such as angle parking, double parking, loading, and unloading restricts the flow of traffic to a greater extent than does the cross traffic at intersections. It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that where congestion exists as the result of poor parking conditions in downtown areas, improvements should be made to facilitate traffic before additional, expensive street improvements are necessary.[15]

In many cities, parking garages and parking lots, which are owned and operated by groups of merchants, doctors, and law firms for the convenience of their patrons, aid in relieving traffic congestion,[16] while other cities have instituted zoning ordinances which require the owners of new buildings to provide parking space for the occupants or patrons.[17]

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15 Ibid., pp. 13-14
16 Local Planning Administration, p. 110.
17 Ibid., p. 111.

III

SPECIFIC TRAFFIC PROBLEMS IN TALLAHASSEE

Although any classification of traffic problems can be misleading, especially since they are not isolated, but closely related, the most acute problems facing the citizens of Tallahassee can be described as follows:

1. Traffic congestion on Monroe Street, between Tennessee and Pensacola Streets, and on College Avenue, from Duval to Calhoun Streets, creates an acute situation. (This area is marked on the map, Figure 1.)

2. There are not enough parking facilities in the Tallahassee business district to accomodate the number of people who wish to park their cars in that area.

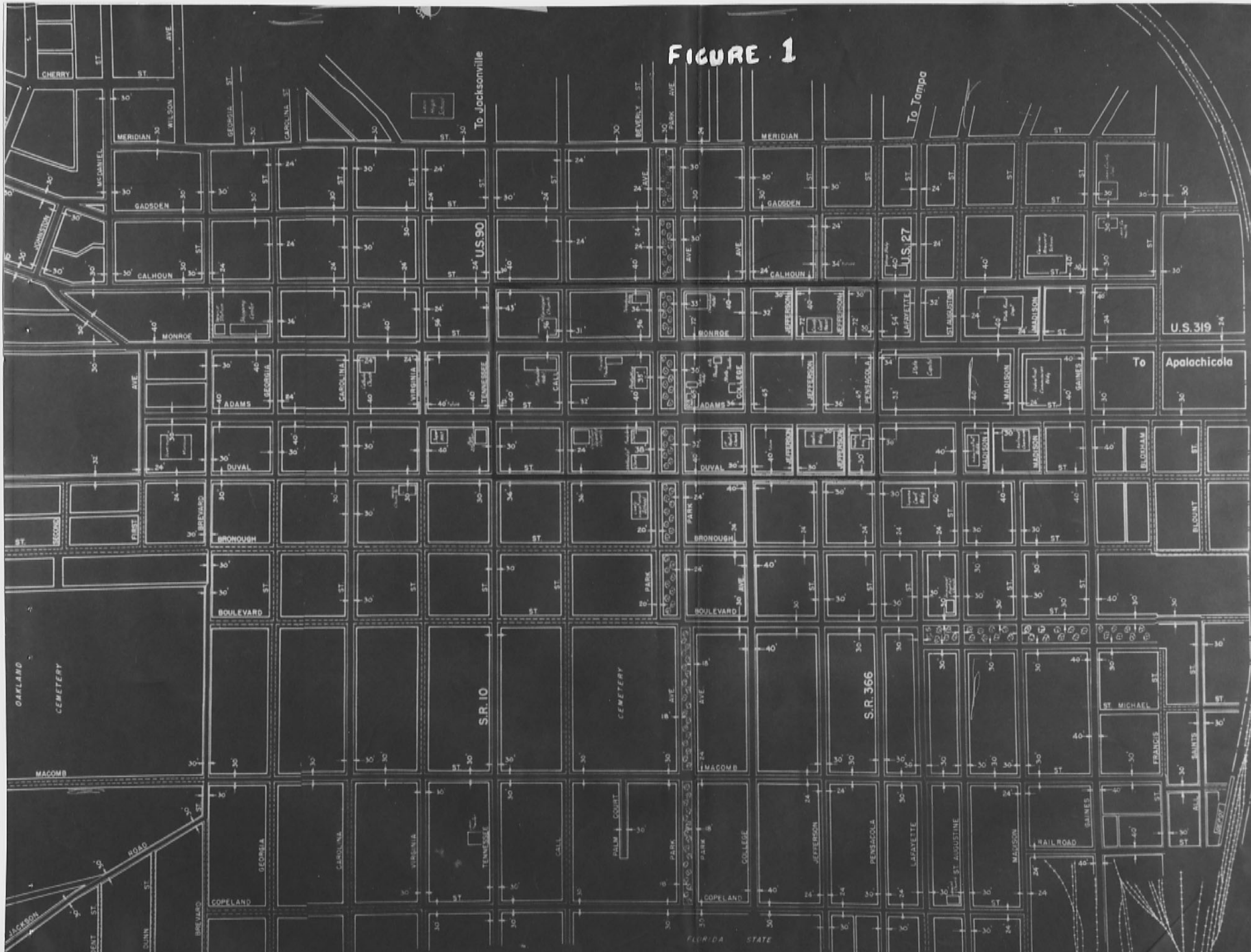
3. The traffic lights throughout Tallahassee are not synchronized in the least.

4. Commercial vehicles, especially gasoline trucks, create a safety hazard when passing through the business district of Tallahassee.

Traffic Congestion

Most of the traffic congestion in Tallahassee occurs between Pensacola Street on the south to Tennessee on the north and from Calhoun on the east to Duval on the west. Parallel parking has helped to speed up traffic on Adams Street because this type of parking keeps two lanes of traffic open at all times. Monroe Street, however, is more congested than all the other streets combined, as it has a heavy flow of traffic from eight in the morning until ten at night. Angle parking, which is the type of curb parking permitted on this street, is

FIGURE 1


To Jacksonville
To Tampa
CHERRY ST
MERIDIAN
GEORGIA ST
CAROLINA ST
BEVERLY ST
PARK AVE
WILSON
MCDANIEL
JOHNSTON
GADSDEN
CALHOUN
MONROE
ADAMS
DUVAL
BRONOUGH
BOULEVARD
U.S.90
U.S.27
U.S.319
S.R.10
S.R.366
To Apalachicola
GEORGIA
CAROLINA
VIRGINIA
TENNESSEE
CALL
COLLEGE
JEFFERSON
PENSACOLA
LAFAYETTE
ST AUGUSTINE
MADISON
GAINES
BLOUNT
PARK
PALM COURT
CEMETERY
OAKLAND CEMETERY
MACOMB
COPELAND
FLORIDA STATE
RAILROAD
ST MICHAEL
FRANCIS
SAINTS
ALL
JACKSON
ROAD
DUNN ST
BREVARD
FIRST
SECOND

one of the chief reasons for this congestion, for, whenever a driver backs out of a parking space into the outside lane of traffic, he stops the traffic flow in that lane completely. (See Figure 2)

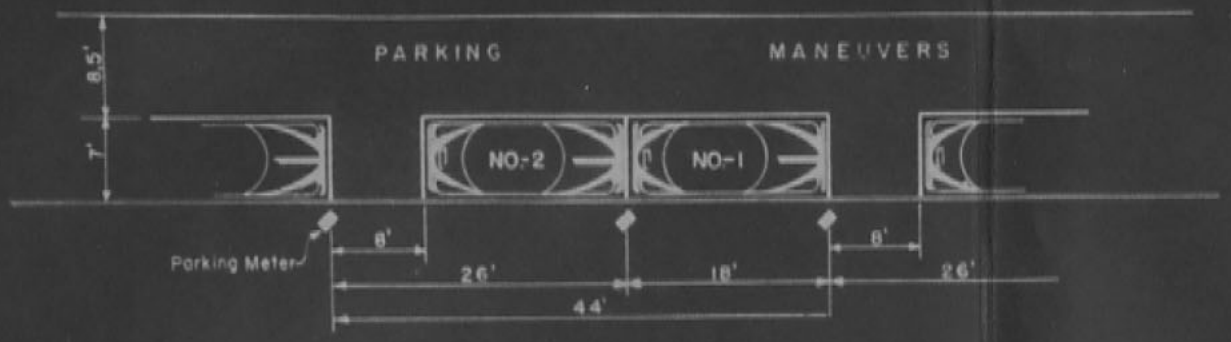
In addition to this, many people double-park in the outside lane on Monroe Street, causing more congestion in this lane. During the past two months, I have personally checked the length of time that traffic was stopped on various occasions as a result of the conditions which I have described and have found that traffic was stopped from one to eight minutes with most stoppages being clocked closer to eight minutes than to one.

The flow of traffic going East on Park Avenue between Adams and Calhoun Streets is heavy all during the day and maintains its peak until approximately ten o'clock at night. As this is a narrow street with parallel parking permitted on both sides of the street, traffic is completely blocked in one lane whenever anyone tries to park on either side of this two-lane street. If parking were limited to one side of the street only, some of the parking hazards would be eliminated and the flow of traffic on this street would be speeded up.

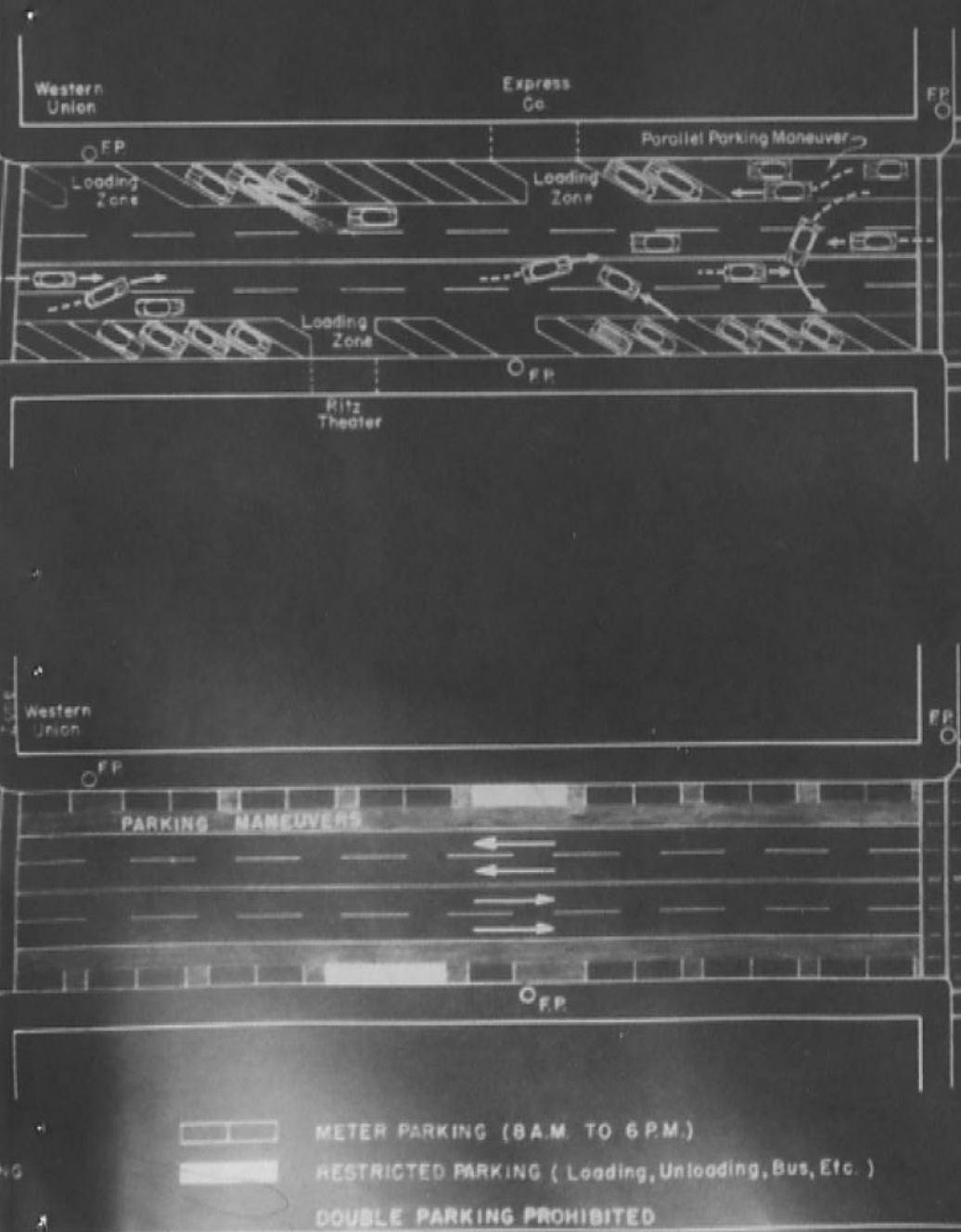
The traffic channels which were put into effect at the intersection of Tennessee and Monroe Streets have been a big help in speeding up traffic and preventing accidents. There is an immediate need for similar channels at the intersection of Monroe, Thomasville Highway, and the Havanna Highway. Traffic

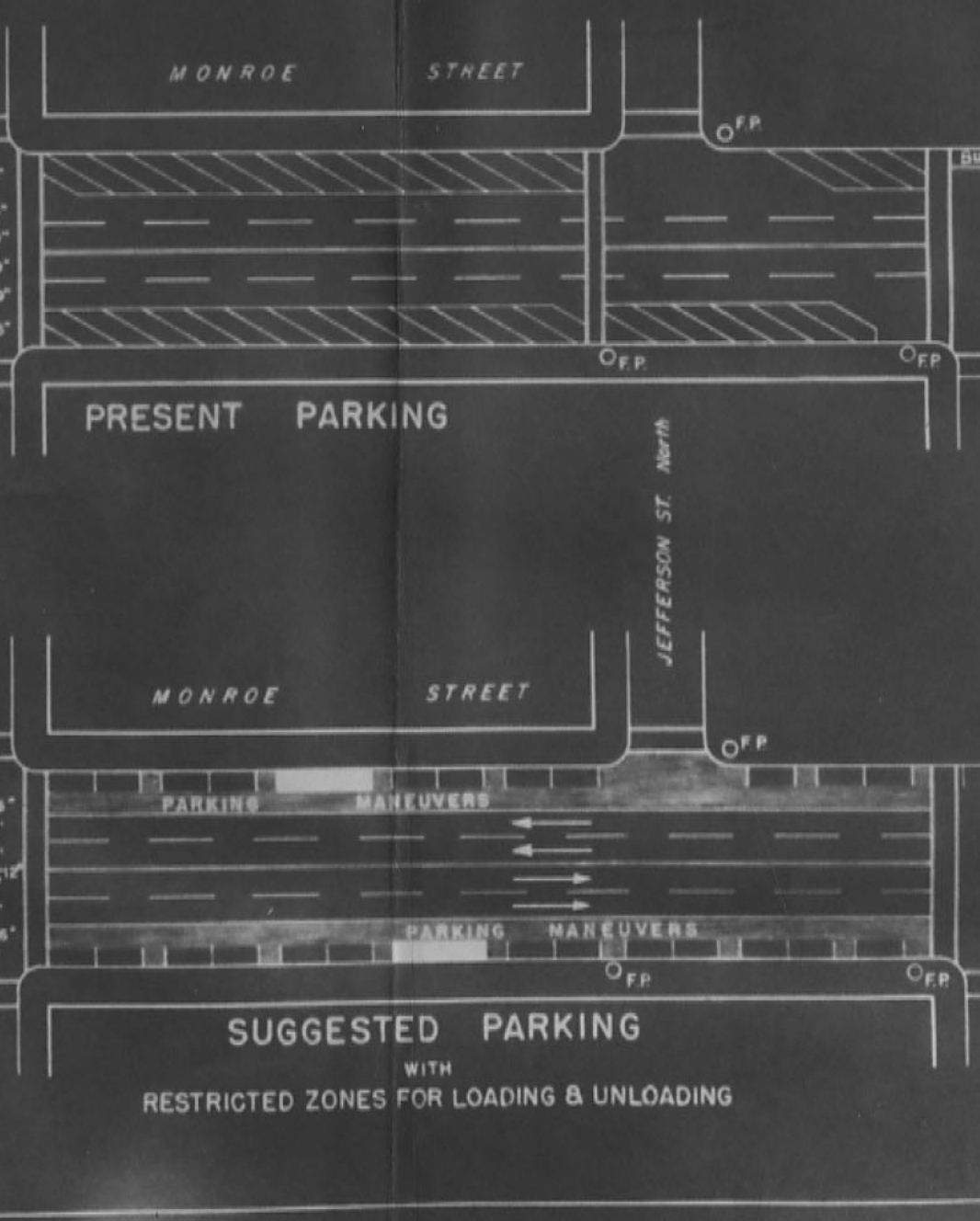
FIGURE 2

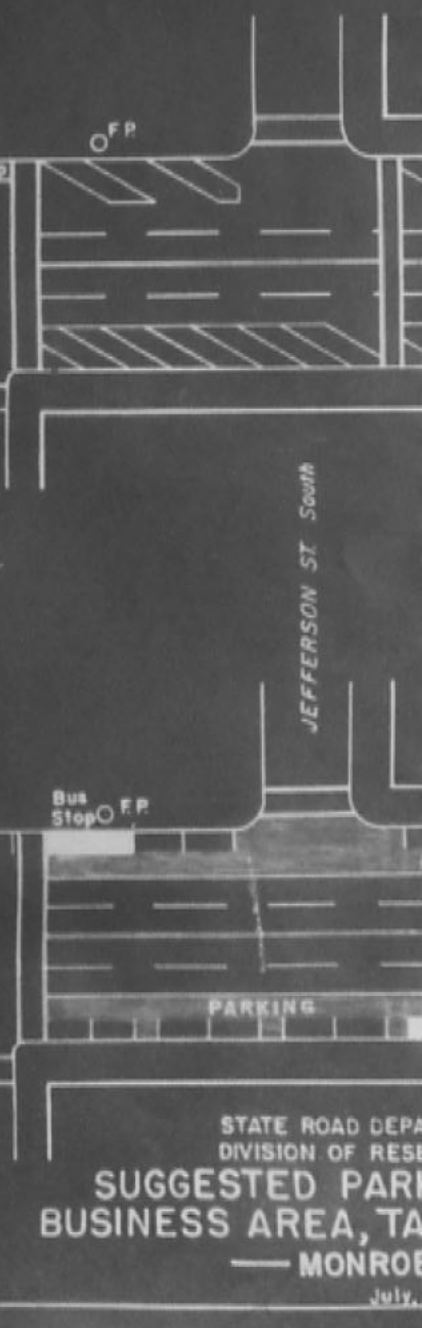
NOTE: LEFT TURN FROM MONROE STREET INTO PARK AVE SOUTH PROHIBITED.



SUGGESTED "PAIR PARKING" OF CARS
GARY SYSTEM







METER PARKING (8 A.M. TO 6 P.M.)
RESTRICTED PARKING (Loading, Unloading, Bus, Etc.)
DOUBLE PARKING PROHIBITED

SUGGESTED PARKING
WITH
RESTRICTED ZONES FOR LOADING & UNLOADING

STATE ROAD DEPA
DIVISION OF RESE
SUGGESTED PARI
BUSINESS AREA, TA
— MONROE
July,

is heavy much of the time at this intersection and, at the present time, there are no traffic channels of any kind there.

Parking Facilities

From my own observations and from interviews which I have had with people living in Tallahassee, I have found that many people dread the thought of driving their cars downtown because they cannot find a parking space in that area. Although there is one parking lot in downtown Tallahassee open to the general public, it is not very large and will not accomodate many cars.

If this condition is not changed soon, people living in Tallahassee will most likely follow the example of those in other cities, and will go to outlying shopping centers having better parking facilities in order to do their shopping. This in turn will cause some of the business establishments to move out of the immediate downtown area into other areas of the city.

Synchronization of Traffic Lights

The inefficient operation of traffic lights in the City of Tallahassee is another factor contributing to the problem of traffic congestion. The lights are not synchronized in any direction and it is impossible for anyone to drive more than two blocks without hitting a red light if he stays within the specified speed limits. Although the north-south traffic lights seem to be synchronized better than the east-west ones, none

are regulated in such a way as to permit the free flow of traffic. With respect to this problem, The Tallahassee Democrat published the following editorial in its June 12, 1951 edition:

> A recent visitor to the city during the legislative session made the following statement, "The traffic lights of Tallahassee are the most aggravating we've ever encountered, the lights stay on too long and it's almost impossible to catch two in a row green."...Traffic lights as we understand their purpose are to promote the smooth flow of traffic and perhaps to make drivers "corner conscious." They are as much psychological as regulatory in value. When the city purchased the first part of the new system, it was announced that one feature allowed them to be synchronized, and the timing to be changed by a central control panel. Theoretically, this would allow for adjustments to take care of peak loads when a longer interval is desired.
>
> In effect, the lights have not been synchronized nor the timing changed for peak periods. The reason has been given that Tallahassee blocks are irregular in length. Other cities have the same problem and in several the lights are synchronized.
>
> Either the lights won't do what was expected of them, or they are not properly adjusted. Since the adjustment has been changed, it appears the former is true.[17]

Commercial Traffic Hazard

The State Road Department of Florida made a survey for a by-pass route for commercial vehicles at the request of a delegation from Tallahassee which was particularly concerned with the hazard created by gasoline trucks passing through the city. Not only did many people feel that the commercial vehicles were a hazard but they also felt that they contributed to the already

17. The Tallahassee Democrat, June 7, 1951. p. 6.

congested conditions in Tallahassee.[18]

In view of these opinions, the survey was made on a long-range planning base of twenty years and provided for a by-pass route which could be improved as commercial traffic increased. Not only would such a by-pass benefit the citizens of Tallahassee, but it would also benefit the companies owning the commercial vehicles as the time saved the drivers of these vehicles would more than offset the added mileage of the by-pass route. The greatest benefit, however, would be derived by the city in the removal of a safety hazard and in the decrease in traffic congestion.[19]

Although the State Road Department agreed in its survey that the gasoline trucks coming through Tallahassee were a hazard, it did not feel that the commercial traffic problem was a critical one, and, although the Department suggested the possibility of the county and city officials' petitioning the State Road Board for the allocation of surplus gasoline tax funds for the project, it also indicated that such funds could be used more justifiably in other critical areas.[20]

City Traffic Problems as Revealed by the Minutes of the City Commission

A perusal of the Minutes of the City Commission from September, 1949, to May, 1951, shows the frequency with which

18. Tallahassee Urban Area Survey By-Pass Study, Tallahassee: State Road Department of Florida, April 1951. p. 1.
19. Ibid., pp. 1-2.

traffic problems were brought before it and details the reception given to suggestions for traffic improvement made by various individuals and groups during this period of time.

A majority of the requests dealt with some aspect of the parking problem. On September 13, 1949, for example, the Commission agreed, at the request of G. E. Lee and other merchants on West Tennessee, to continue the right to park on the west-bound side of Tennessee between Adams and Duval Streets while the east-bound side was to be kept as a "no parking" zone.[21] Another phase of the parking problem was discussed at the September 27 meeting of the Commission when City Auditor and Clerk, Mr. White, presented a letter from the City Planning Board which endorsed the findings of the State Road Department survey as well as the recommendations made by the City Manager concerning parking and off-street parking areas. In addition, the Board recommended that all of the net revenue from parking meters be set aside for off-street parking facilities. Although the Commission ordered the recommendations filed,[22] a portion of them were recalled at the October 11 meeting when Mr. Julius Parker appeared before the Commission with reference to his offer to rent parking lot space adjacent to Calhoun Street to the city.[23]

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20. Ibid., pp. 5-6.
21. The Minutes of the City Commission of Tallahassee, Florida, September 13, 1949. Vol. 7, p. 220.
22. Ibid., September 27, 1949. Vol. 7, p. 222.
23. Ibid., October 11, 1949. Vol. 7, p. 250.

Although another meeting in October found the Commission dealing with problems of traffic flow and recommending that Calhoun Street be made a one-way street from the Thomasville Highway to Tennessee Street and that Gadsden be made one-way from Lafayette to McDaniel,[24] the November 8 meeting found the Commission again faced with problems concerning parking. Mr. J. A. Grant, heading a committee of three, appeared before the Commission at this time to present a petition signed by many of the merchants on Monroe Street requesting that the Commission reconsider its action to change angle parking on Monroe Street to parallel parking. The matter was discussed but no action was taken[25] and the question of parallel parking was not considered again until February.

In the meantime, Mr. Julius Parker appeared at the December 20 meeting to discuss with the Commission the matter of his offer of a parking lot which he had discussed at the October 11 meeting. At this time he proposed to lease the lot to the city for a period of five years providing the city would pave the lot, install parking meters, and pay him one-half of the receipts from the meters until they had been paid for and three-fourths of the receipts after the meters had been paid for. The Commission agreed to give the matter further consideration but deferred action on it.[26]

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24. Ibid., November 8, 1947. Vol. 7, p. 261.
25. Ibid., November 8, 1949. Vol. 7, p. 261.
26. Ibid., December 20, 1949. Vol. 7, p. 276.

In February, the question of angle versus parallel parking raised its head again when Commissioner Easterwood brought up the question and said he thought this matter ought to be considered further before parking meters were installed. He was followed by Mayor Parker who explained the city's action in providing parallel parking on certain streets and stated that the change had been made upon the findings and recommendations by the State Road Department. To verify this, Chief Montgomery gave figures concerning the advisability of changing to parallel parking. No action was taken by the Commission at this time as it was deemed advisable to give the two new Commissioners time in which to study the question.[27]

It was not until the December, 1950, meeting that the Commission again took up problems concerning traffic and its action at this time was mainly of a negative nature. At this meeting the Commission declined to prepare a lot south of the H. G. Smith property on East Lafayette Street as a parking area pursuant to a request presented by City Manager Yancey for the Game and Fresh Water Commission. In addition to this, the Commission discussed the timing of the traffic light system and agreed that too little time was permitted for the movement of traffic on the east-west cross streets in the traffic light area.[28]

27 Ibid., February 1950. Vol. 7, p. 225.
28 Ibid., December 1950. Vol. 8, p. 31.

The question of the advisability of discontinuing angle parking[29] again came to the fore in two meetings of the Commission in January, 1951, with the result that at the second meeting the Commission took partial action by recommending that parallel parking be established on both sides of the street in the 100 block of North Monroe Street. Commissioners Parker, Cates, and Ragsdale voted for the measure while Commissioners Mayo and Easterwood voted against it.[30]

During the February, 1951, meeting a problem of traffic flow was brought up and was solved by the Commission's decision to eliminate left turns on Monroe and Adams Streets. This action concludes the work done by the Commission on traffic problems brought up during the period studied, as the following meetings on April 24 and May 8 were given over to a consideration of a problem of a more far-reaching nature.

On April 24, 1951, Mr. Mack Humphrey, Chairman of the City Planning Board, appeared before the City Commission to discuss the Commission's request that the members of the Planning Board resign. As the request had been based upon the publication of a letter which had been construed as reflecting upon the integrity of the City Commission, Mr. Humphrey undertook to explain the letter and to state that the Planning Board was reluctant to resign under pressure and that many citizens had requested its members not to resign. The matter was discussed but no

29. Ibid., Januray, 1951. Vol. 8, p. 35.
30. Ibid., January, 1951. Vol. 8, p. 40.

action was taken[31] until May 8 at which time Commissioners Mayo and Easterwood recommended that the personnel of the planning Board be changed. After much discussion the Commission decided to ask the members of the Planning Board to resign.[32]

A recapitulation of the Commission's meetings during the two-year period shows that, while many problems concerning parking and traffic congestion were considered, little was done to remedy situations except in the case of problems in traffic flow. These seem to have been dealt with in a more realistic manner than parking problems which were discussed and then dropped or indefinitely postponed. In addition, the history of the meetings during this two-year period ends on the sour note of a rift between the Commission and the Planning Board.

Personal Interviews Present Traffic Problems from Many Points of View

Personal interviews with people connected with the city government, the City Planning Board, and civic organizations as well as with merchants and private citizens reveal a variety of attitudes and opinions toward Tallahassee's traffic congestion and parking problems.

When approached for his views on the situation, Mr. Wayne W. Todd, City Police Captain in charge of the traffic division in Tallahassee, showed that he was mainly concerned with the

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31 Ibid., April 24, 1951. Vol 8 (Page not numbered).
32 Ibid., May 8, 1951. Vol. 8 (Page not recorded).

parking problem and that he favored parallel parking generally and recommended that type of parking for Monroe Street, specifically. "Although parallel parking has reduced traffic congestion and accidents over 50% on Adams Street," he stated, "we have not been able to put parallel parking into effect on Monroe Street because some of the merchants on this street object to it." For further solution of the problem, Chief Todd recommended off-street parking, possibly using parking garages to provide the space. Other traffic problems could be solved in part, he believed, by synchronizing the traffic lights and by providing a by-pass for commercial vehicles.

Another city official, Mr. Malcolm Yancey, City Manager for the City of Tallahassee, who has an intimate knowledge of traffic problems in this city, revealed that he was in accord with Chief Todd on many points, namely those referring to the institution of parallel parking, the reasons why parallel parking had not been introduced on Monroe Street, the possible solution of the parking problem by off-street parking, the necessity for better synchronization of traffic lights, and the advisability of building a by-pass for commercial vehicles. In addition, he pointed to the successful operation of the traffic channels at the intersection of Tennessee Street and Monroe and stated, "These have been very helpful in speeding up traffic and reducing accidents." Mr. Yancey also put himself on record as favoring the conversion of two-way streets to one-way streets

in order to relieve congestion and specifically recommended that two streets beyond Duval Street be made into one-way streets, one going north and one south, and that they be paved to carry heavy traffic.

Mr. Mack Humphrey, former chairman of the City Planning Board, when interviewed, tended to place the blame for an inadequate solution to Tallahassee's traffic and parking problems on the City Commission's refusal to act and stated that it was unfortunate that some of the Commissioners were not big enough for their jobs and that some did not have enough foresight for long-range planning. He cited the failure of city officials to act upon the Planning Board's recommendations, specifically in the institution of parallel parking on Monroe Street and in the proposal to purchase lots to provide off-street parking. In the matter of parallel parking for Monroe Street, he felt that the Commission had been influenced by a survey made and presented to it by Mr. J. A. Grant, Mr. Fain and Mr. Collins, Monroe Street merchants. "This was not a fair survey," Mr. Humphrey stated. "Because only certain people were contacted to sign the petition to have angle parking retained on Monroe Street, this was not a fair representation of the merchants." He further indicated that he felt the failure to introduce parallel parking on Monroe Street a serious error as angle parking there causes one of the most acute bottlenecks in Tallahassee traffic. He stressed

the need for a Planning Board in Tallahassee and for giving the Planning Board's recommendations due consideration. He agreed with the City Manager concerning the success of the traffic channels at Tennessee and Monroe, expressed himself as being in favor of off-street parking, synchronization of lights, and the construction of a by-pass, and specifically recommended that parking be eliminated on the north side of College Avenue between Adams and Monroe.

When Mr. Steve Yates, managing editor of The Tallahassee Democrat, was interviewed, he expressed himself as being in favor of parallel parking, specifically on Monroe Street, of the construction of a by-pass for commercial vehicles, and for the conversion of some streets to one-way streets in order to relieve congestion. He mentioned, as a hopeful feature of the parking problem, the fact that there is a general trend for new businesses to furnish parking space for their customers.

Mr. Peyton Yon, Manager of Yon's Hardware Store on Adams Street, expressed himself as being in favor of any change which would alleviate the present traffic situation and said that, owing to outmoded points of view and vested interests, many of his fellow citizens did not feel the same way but rather opposed a change of any kind. With respect to parallel parking, he stated that the institution of parallel parking on Adams Street had benefited both him and his customers and

that it was worthwhile as a safety feature alone. He indicated further that maneuvering lanes prevented accidents while permitting people to park for short periods to pick up packages and take care of other errands not requiring long parking. Mr. Yon also stated that he thought the proposed by-pass, off-street parking, and a better synchronization of lights would help straighten out the traffic tangle in Tallahassee.

Like Mr. Yon, Mr. Lewis Turner of Turner's Department Store, a Monroe Street merchant, expressed himself as being in favor of any change that would help relieve traffic congestion and parking problems in Tallahassee. Unlike some of the other Monroe Street merchants, Mr. Turner favored parallel parking on Monroe Street and stated that he felt that parallel parking was necessary for traffic safety and for the relief of traffic congestion. Like many of the others previously interviewed, Mr. Turner was in favor of off-street parking, parking restricted to one side of the street only on narrow streets, and of better synchronization of traffic lights.

When Mr. Julian Proctor, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Tallahassee and owner of an automobile agency and garage on Monroe Street, was interviewed, he stated, "I am not aware that there is much traffic congestion or many parking problems in Tallahassee." He objected to parallel parking on Monroe Street on the grounds that parallel parking would

reduce the number of parking spaces and said that he did not see the necessity for off-street parking as parking meters had been installed to relieve whatever parking problem existed. Contrary to Mr. Proctor's statement that he was not aware of much traffic congestion in Tallahassee, he agreed that a by-pass would be beneficial in relieving such congestion.

Although Mr. J. A. Grant of Grant's Furniture Store on Monroe Street felt the need for better synchronization of traffic lights and stated that one-way streets would help traffic congestion in Tallahassee, he was, for the most part, in favor of maintaining the status quo. He said that angle parking suited him and that he did not believe anything could be done to improve Monroe Street. He did not favor parallel parking on Monroe Street, his contention being that many women could not park in parallel parking spaces. In addition he wished to have reserved parking spaces in front of his store and favored off-street parking as a possible solution for the requirement for more parking space. Although he did agree that a by-pass might aid in relieving traffic congestion in Tallahassee, he maintained that Tallahassee was not large enough and did not have enough traffic congestion to warrant the construction of a by-pass.

Other efforts have been made within recent years to find out what the people of Tallahassee think about their traffic and parking problems. Mr. Ed Hughes, former chairman of the

Safety Council of Tallahassee, stated that one thousand questionnaires were sent out to the residents of the City of Tallahassee asking them whether they favored retaining angle parking or whether they wished to change to parallel parking. Six hundred reports were returned, of which 68% were in favor of keeping the present (angle) form of parking.

In 1949, however, an experiment was made. Parallel parking was put into effect on Adams Street and six months later 95% of the merchants on that street favored the new type of parking. In a further effort to solve the parking problem, another survey was made to determine who parked on Monroe Street and it was found that one-fourth of the parking spaces there were occupied from five to eight hours a day by downtown merchants or their employees.

IV

Conclusion

In the preceding chapter I have enumerated what I have considered to be the major problems concerning traffic congestion and parking in Tallahassee and the changes to be put into effect that would tend to eliminate these problems. There is another factor which I think is essential to the solution of parking problems in this city. That is the use of off-street parking facilities.

Many cities throughout the United States have been, and most of them still are, confronted by increasing demands for more parking space for automobiles. This problem has been met, to a large extent, by off-street parking lots and by parking garages, either of one-floor or multi-floor levels. In Boston, Massachusetts, one parking garage provides more parking space than the entire Loop district of Chicago provides with curb parking.[33] To meet similar parking problems, Miami, Florida, has made plans for off-street parking lots and garages to be financed through a self-liquidating process. At the present time, Miami has parking space for approximately 20,000 automobiles but the Committee on Traffic for Miami feels that there may be needed space for 40,000 automobiles and have therefore made plans to acquire the

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33 Local Planning, op. cit., p. 110.

additional 20,000 spaces if the need for them arises.[34]

Similarly, Tallahassee could acquire lots to be made into parking lots and later to be converted into parking garages of a multi-level nature should that need arise for additional parking space. These lots could be purchased by the city and paid for on a self-liquidating basis. As there is an immediate need for off-street parking in Tallahassee, residents ought to consider the matter seriously and soon.

To date, most of the recommendations and suggestions that have been made to the City Manager and to the City Commission of Tallahassee by various individuals with respect to the possible solution of the parking problems and the traffic congestion have been blocked by self-centered, selfish individuals who have put their own desires and vested interests ahead of changes that would be a benefit to all the residents of Tallahassee, including themselves. It is alleged that one of the chief reasons why the members of the Planning Board were fired in May was because they went against the wishes of some of the individuals in Tallahassee who wield political influence. As a result of the Planning Board's attempt to get changes made that would benefit all the people of Tallahassee with respect to the traffic situation, the members were asked to resign.

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34. Miami: Proposed Capital Improvement Budget, Miami: Budget Committee, 1950. pp. 68-70.

In my opinion, the members of the Planning Board in Tallahassee have done some good but have been handicapped by the manner in which they have been appointed to office. They are directly responsible to the City Commission, can make suggestions, but do not have any power to enforce the suggestions. In addition, they are responsible to persons who do not have any technical knowledge concerning planning and who might well be described by Walker's statement, "In general, Commission members have a limited social outlook and a wholly inadequate grasp of planning."[35]

There is a definite need for a planning board in Tallahassee but whether the city makes use of a board or hires a professional planner, the group or person should be responsible to the city executive and not to the City Commission. If the board or planner were responsible to the executive, I believe the plans suggested or made by the board or planner and presented through the executive would be accepted more readily by the Commission.

Today's problem is how to secure informed leadership and an informed electorate. The technical problems are not insurmountable.

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35. Robert A. Walker, The Planning Function in Urban Government, Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1951. p. 333.

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Note: Other materials used included maps drawn up by the State Road Department of Florida and Minutes of the City Commission of Tallahassee, September 1949 to May 1951.