

Downtown Parking Study

Fenton, Michigan



September 2024

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Introduction

The City of Fenton is working with a hotel developer on a project targeting the West Caroline Street lot. The City wishes to partner with the developer to build a parking structure to support the development and the nearby blocks of downtown Fenton. This report quantifies this need for parking at the subject development site and offers other measures that can be used to address findings.

Report Methodology

To assess the sizing needs for additional parking supply associated with the Caroline Lot Redevelopment, this study evaluated parking supply and demand in the north side of downtown Fenton, near the development site. Demand, or parking space usage, was studied thrice over eight months, assessing use in winter, spring, and summer. Additionally, the nature and scale of the proposed development of the Caroline lot were considered.

Existing Conditions

Study Area

The study area includes the north side of downtown Fenton, centered loosely around the project site on West Caroline at River Street. **Figure 1** shows the study area and the site of the proposed development. On-street parking and both public and private off-street parking were measured for supply and demand. Parking counts were conducted on Tuesday, December 19, 2023, Saturday, April 13, 2024 and Thursday, July 18. The December 19 counts excluded parking spots east of Walnut Street and south of the railroad tracks. The July 18 counts include nine spaces along Main Street, which were added after the first two counts to account for spillover parking caused by the opening of Railyard Fenton.

The study area has 972 parking spaces available for general parking, including barrier-free spaces¹. 141 of these spaces are on-street, and 831 are off-street. Most off-street parking spaces are City-owned, with private lots serving some outlying areas. **Figure 2** details the parking in the Study Area. These parking spaces serve nearly 334,000 square feet of commercial and residential space within the study area. This square footage is detailed in **Table 1**.

Table 1 - Study Area Building Space

	Square Feet	Buildings/Units
Commercial/Institutional	306,615	53
Residential	27,098	25
	333,713	78

Source: City of Fenton, Mission North, LLC; includes estimates for buildings whose square footage is not tracked by the City

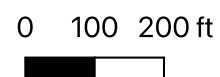
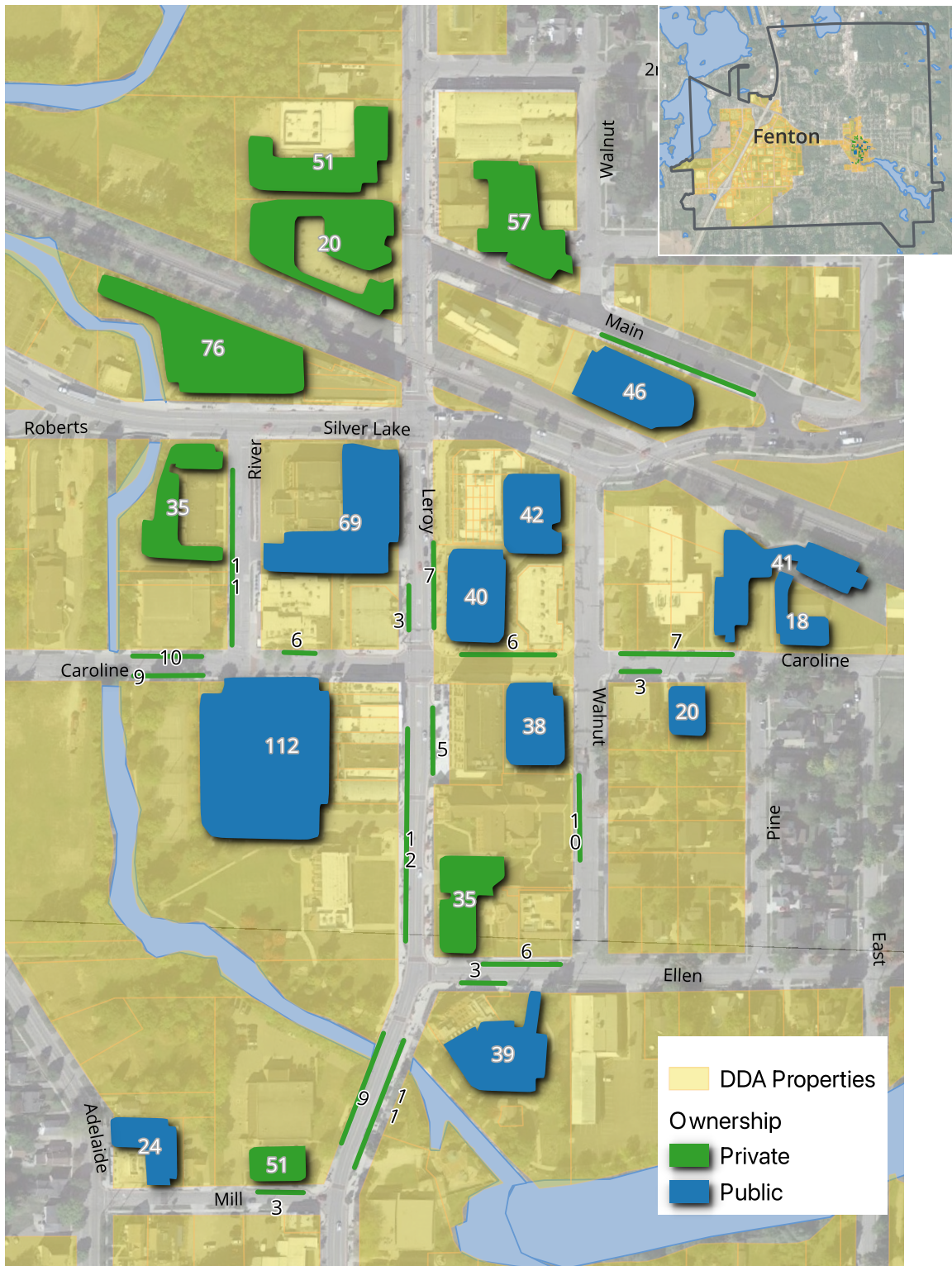
Nearly all of the on-street spaces have no time limits. Only the spaces on Mill Street are limited to two hours. All on-street spaces are offered without a charge. Most off-street spaces are open to the general public, though some privately owned lots, such as the Andiamo lot, are restricted.

¹ Section 19.05 of the Fenton Zoning Ordinance requires that barrier-free spaces be provided as dictated in the State Building Code, which requires 1 barrier-free space per 25 total spaces for facilities with up to 100 spaces.

Figure 1 - Study Area and Development Site



Parking Capacity and Lot Ownership



Parking Usage

Figures 3 through 11 show parking occupancy for the three days studied in the morning, afternoon, and evening. The first count was conducted on Tuesday, December 19, 2023, the second on Saturday, April 13, 2024, and the third on Thursday, July 19, 2024. A farmers market and an evening concert took place on July 19, which occupied a portion of the Caroline Parking Lot and added to demand. As a result, occupancy for the Caroline lot is underreported on the maps for that day.

Parking is considered optimally full at around 85%. As occupancy rises above that level, parkers perceive that a lot or on-street block is full, causing block circling and parker frustration. The parking facilities in blue have excess capacity, whereas green is optimal. Those facilities shown in orange and red are over capacity.

The 10 a.m. counts show ample capacity at most lots and streets except West Caroline and River Streets and the Caroline Lot on Tuesday, December 19. Later on Tuesday, the Caroline and State Bank lots were full, as were many of the on-street blocks on the west side of downtown. Activity shifted to the east side of downtown at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, with lots just east of Leroy Street filling up along with on-street spaces on Leroy and Walnut.

By 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 13, the Caroline lot was effectively full, as were some of the on-street parking on Leroy. By Saturday evening, most of the on-street blocks were full. The Caroline lot, Fenton Firehall, and lot at Silver Lake and Walnut were over capacity. Both evening counts were conducted at 6 p.m. and found the Railyard Fenton lot mostly empty. Reportedly, however, that lot fills up later in the evening on weekends and even some weekday nights.

In July, morning was quiet, but the parts of Leroy Street were full by afternoon. The Caroline Lot was partially taken over by vehicles associated with the farmer's market. At 7 p.m., many of the lots and streets were over capacity. In addition, the grassy property at the southeast corner of West Caroline and Adeline, just across the river from the Caroline lot, contained over 200 cars.

Near Term Development

Three near-term projects will impact the parking picture. They include the hotel project, which is the subject of this study, the Railyard Fenton project, and 113 Mill Street. 113 Mill Street was under construction at the time of this study, and Railyard Fenton was completed in June 2024 during the study. **Table 2** uses existing parking as a baseline and the City's parking requirements to estimate the impact of these new projects on the parking supply.

Table 2 - Parking for Near Term Projects, Spring 2024

	Hotel ¹	Railyard Fenton ²	113 Mill	TOTAL
Walking distance	Next door	5 minutes	6 minutes	
Change in Supply	-112	0	29	-83
Change in Demand	198	83	29	310
Net Demand	310	83	0	393

Notes

1. The hotel project will displace 112 spaces in the Caroline lot; demand is based on Fenton parking requirements for hotels; 74 rooms, 15 employees, and 3,500 SF of conference space, and applying a 25% reduction for collective parking.
2. Demand is based on Fenton parking requirements for restaurants with liquor license; 6,628 SF, and applying a 25% reduction for collective parking; Railyard Fenton opened in June of 2024 before the July parking counts.

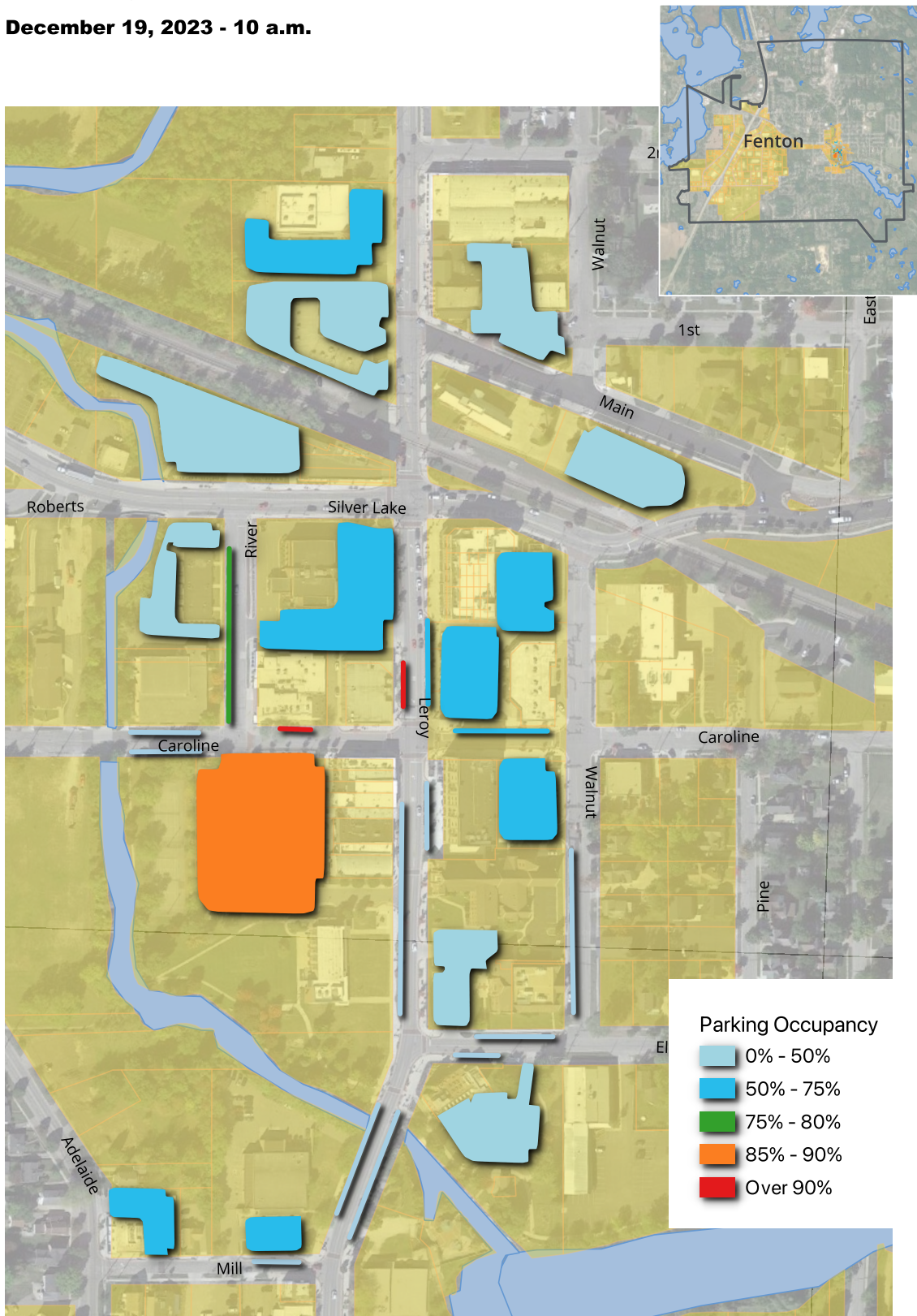
The table reflects Zoning Ordinance parking requirements. Because these developments are downtown, the impact of their demand on the parking garage will be lower because of the walk-friendly environment and other parking nearby.

Existing Plans and Development Standards

Fenton's 2007 Downtown Master Plan identifies three phases of development and redevelopment throughout the downtown area. The Plan's approach to parking is that, generally, new developments will come with parking on-site, often behind the building. Additionally, the Plan recommends two parking garages, one of which is the subject of this study. Many of the improvements contained in the master plan have been completed or are underway, as discussed above, though several remain. Of those that remain, those that significantly impact parking supply and demand in the study area include:

Parking Occupancy Rates

December 19, 2023 - 10 a.m.



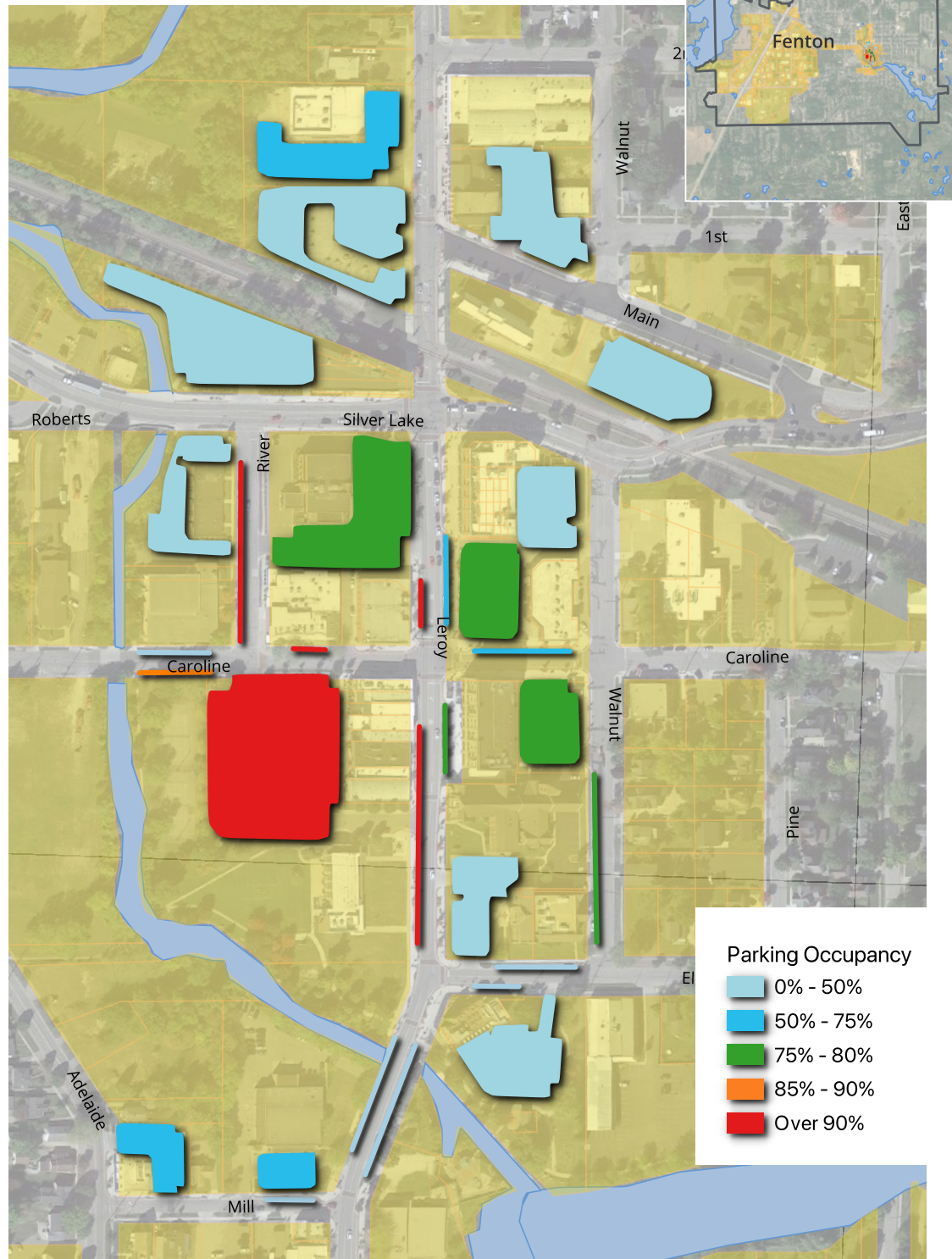
Base Map Source: Google Sattelite, Map Created September 3, 2024

0 100 200 ft



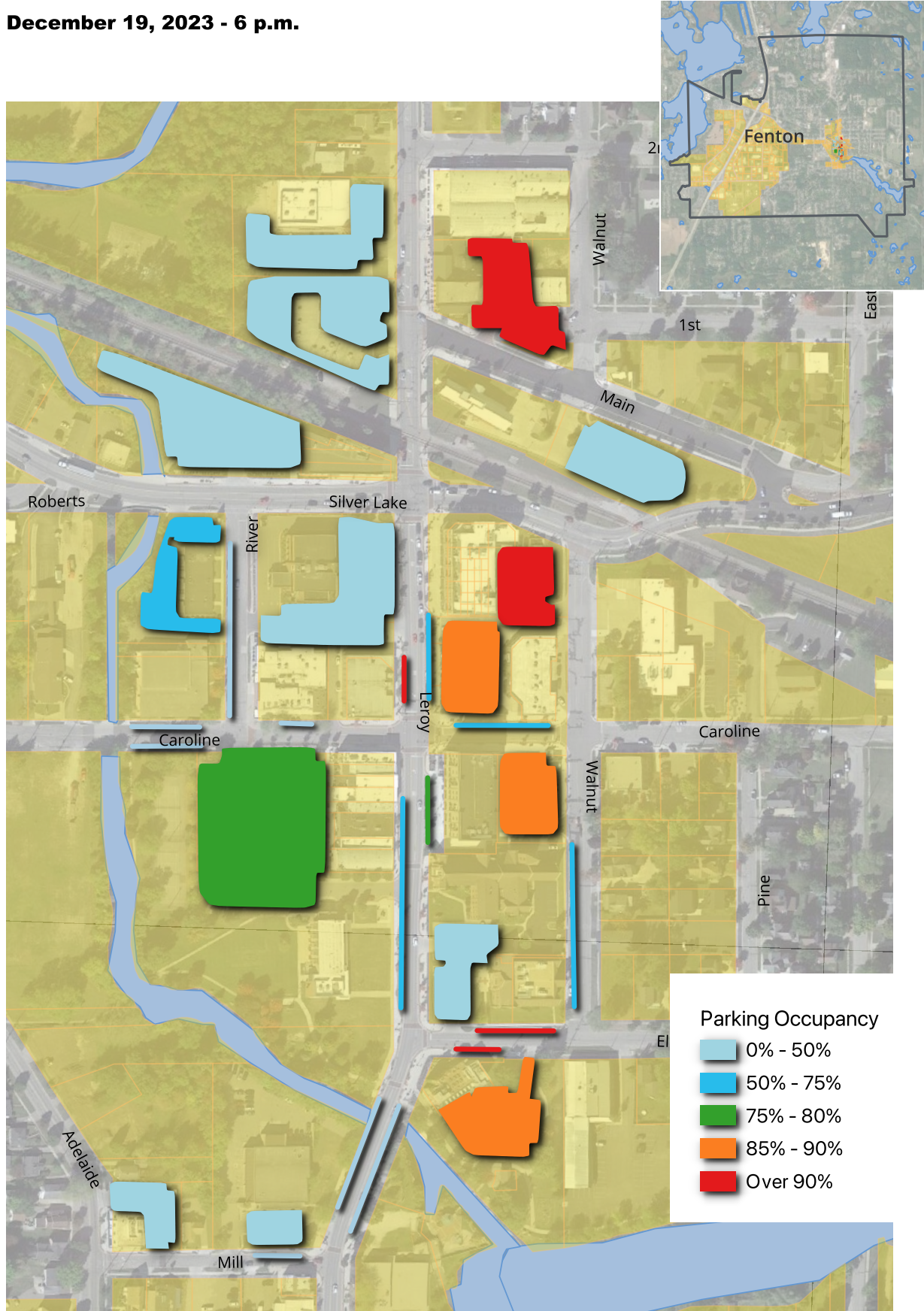
Parking Occupancy Rates

December 19, 2023 - 2 p.m.



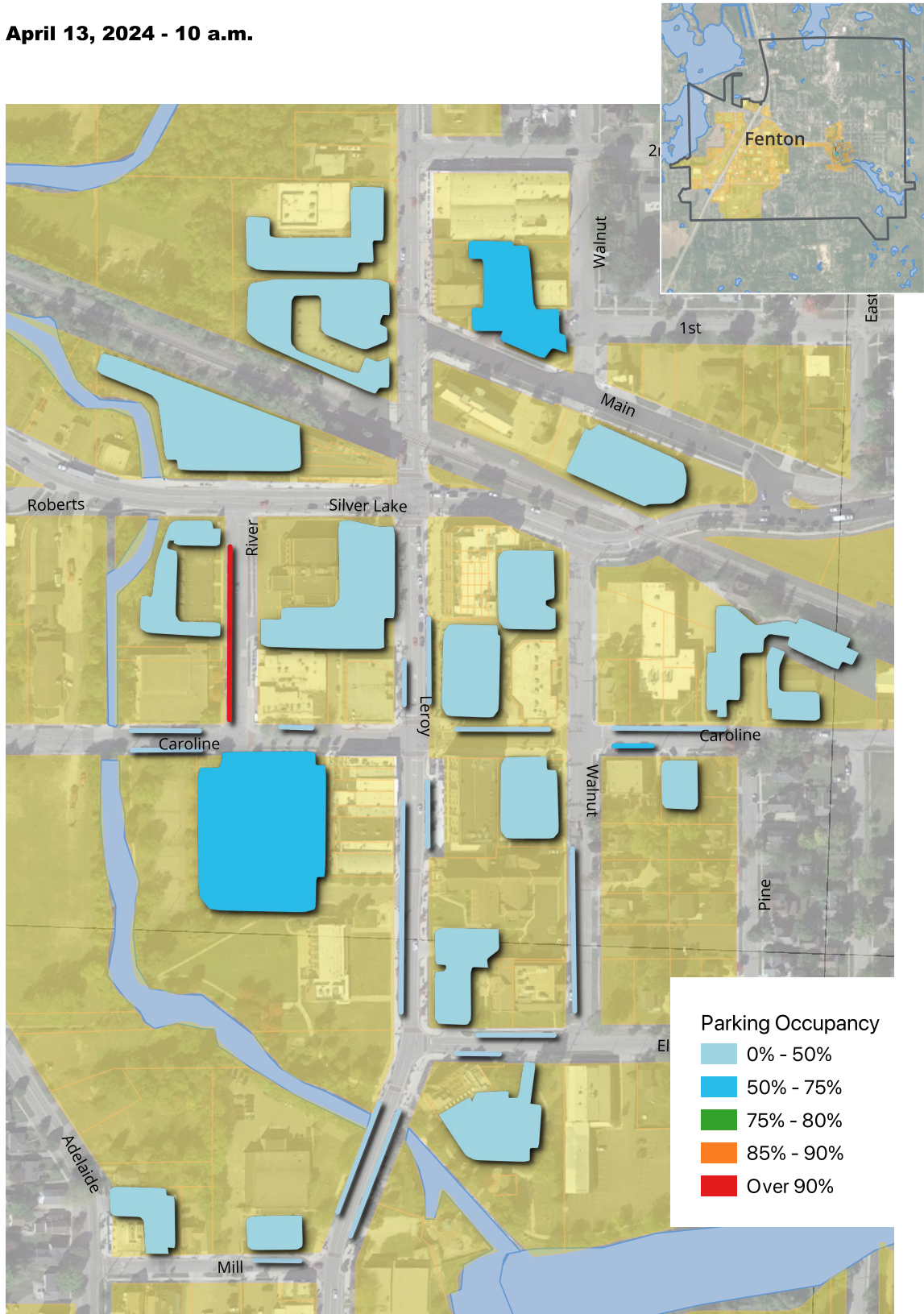
Parking Occupancy Rates

December 19, 2023 - 6 p.m.



Parking Occupancy Rates

April 13, 2024 - 10 a.m.



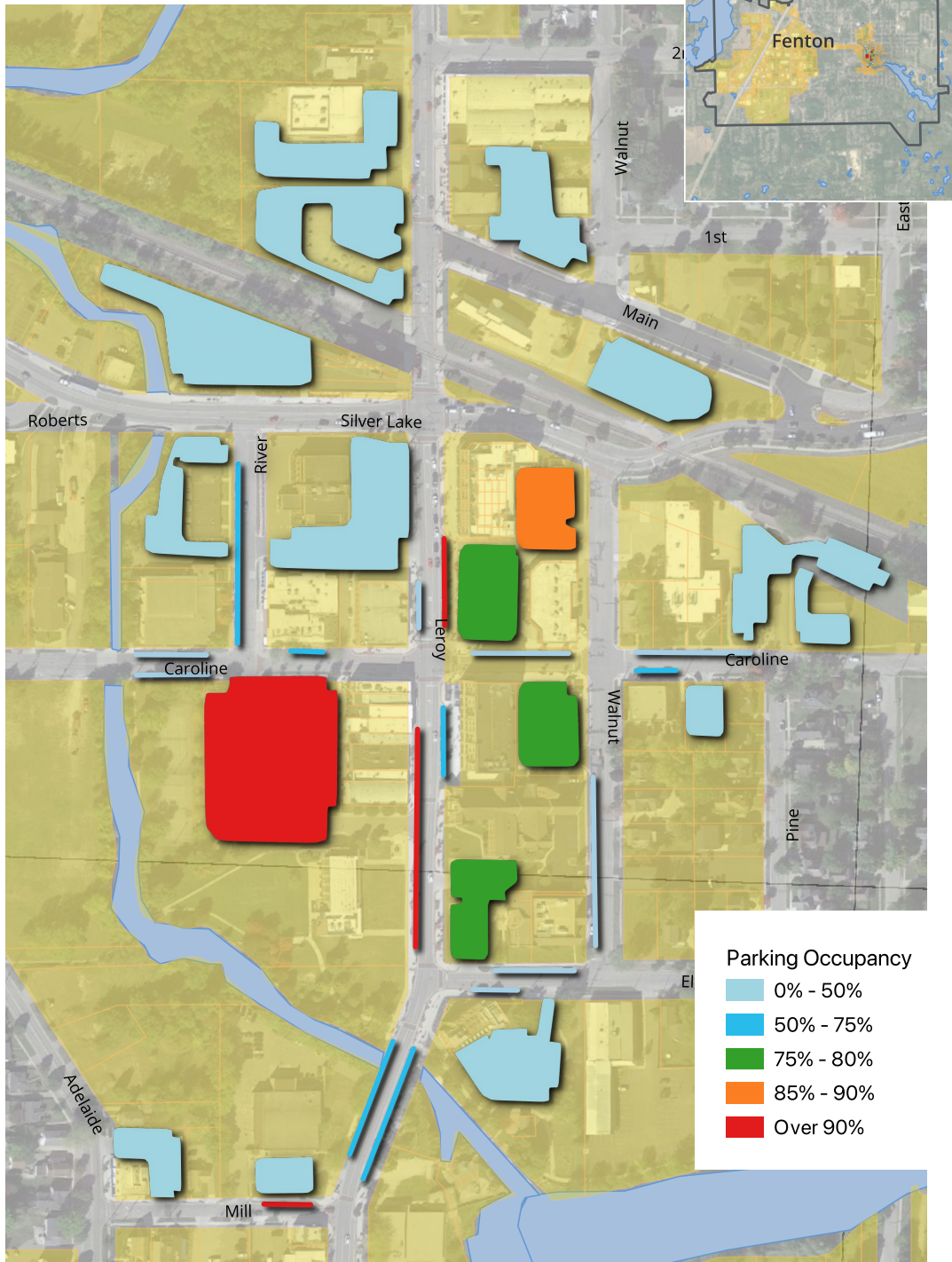
Base Map Source: Google SatteliteMap Created September 3,2024

0 100 200 ft



Parking Occupancy Rates

April 13, 2024 - 2 p.m.



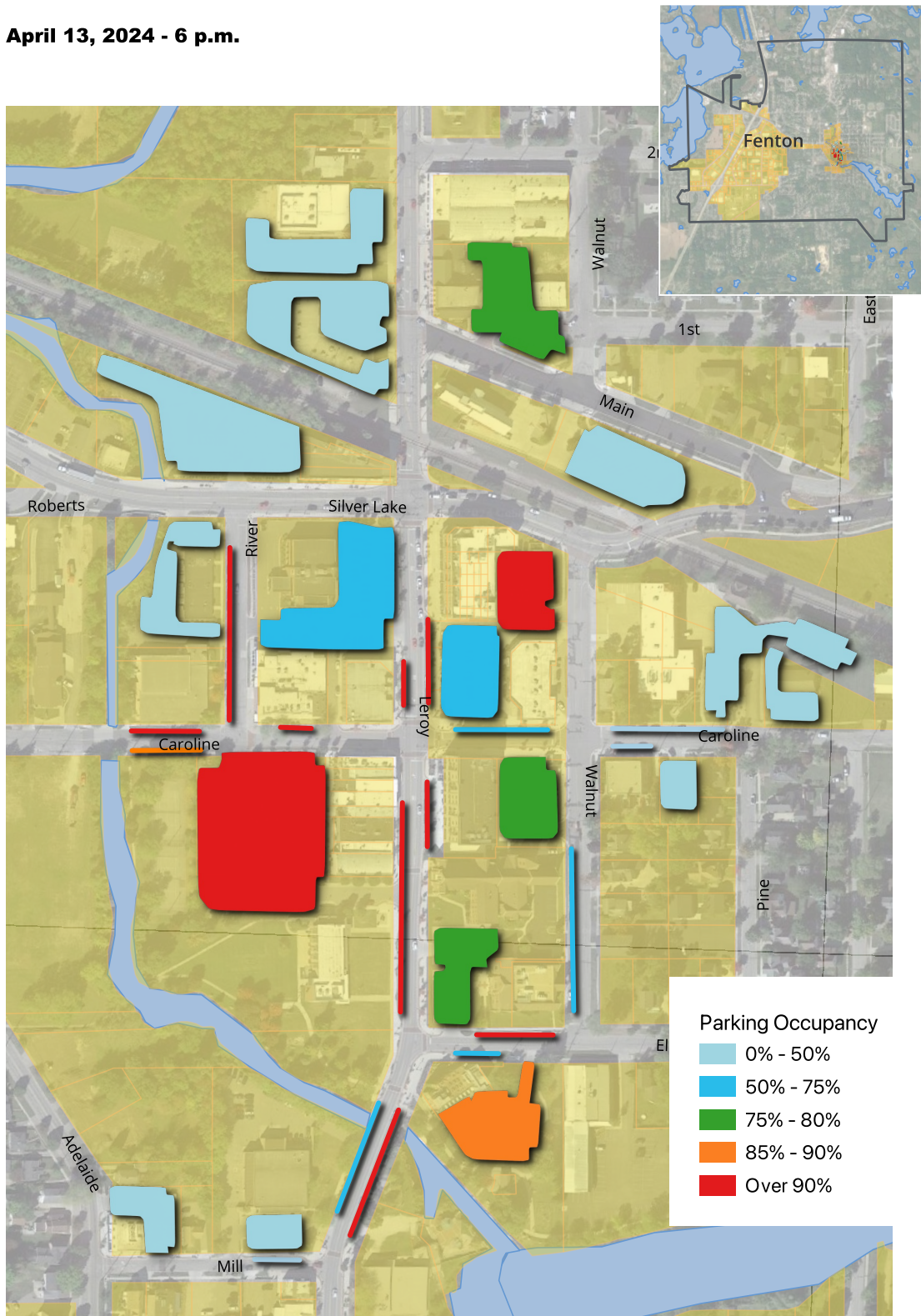
Base Map Source: Google Satellite, Map Created September 3, 2024

0 100 200 ft

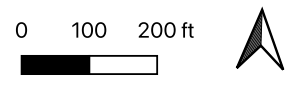


Parking Occupancy Rates

April 13, 2024 - 6 p.m.

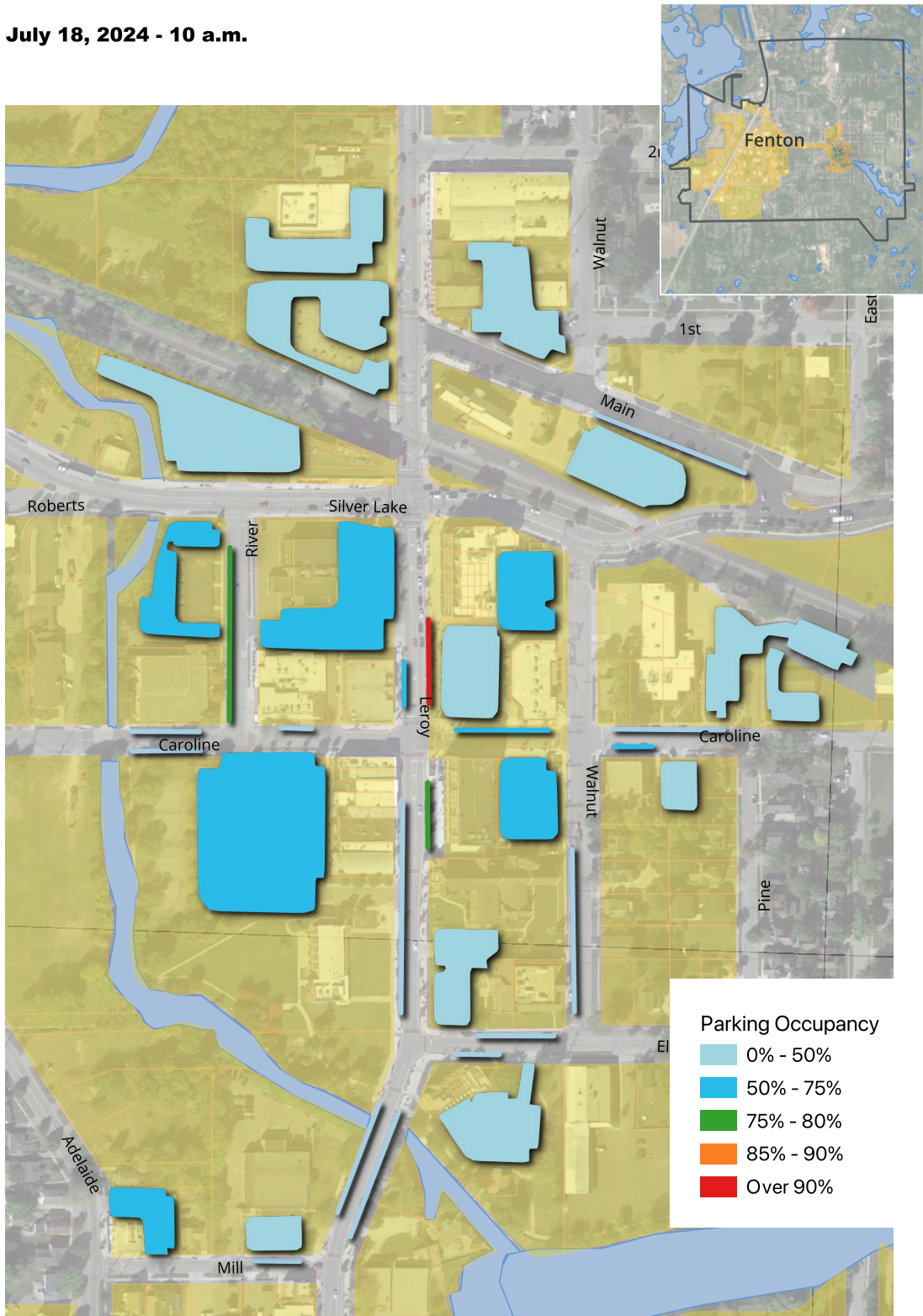


Base Map Source: Google SatteliteMap Created September 3, 2024



Parking Occupancy Rates

July 18, 2024 - 10 a.m.



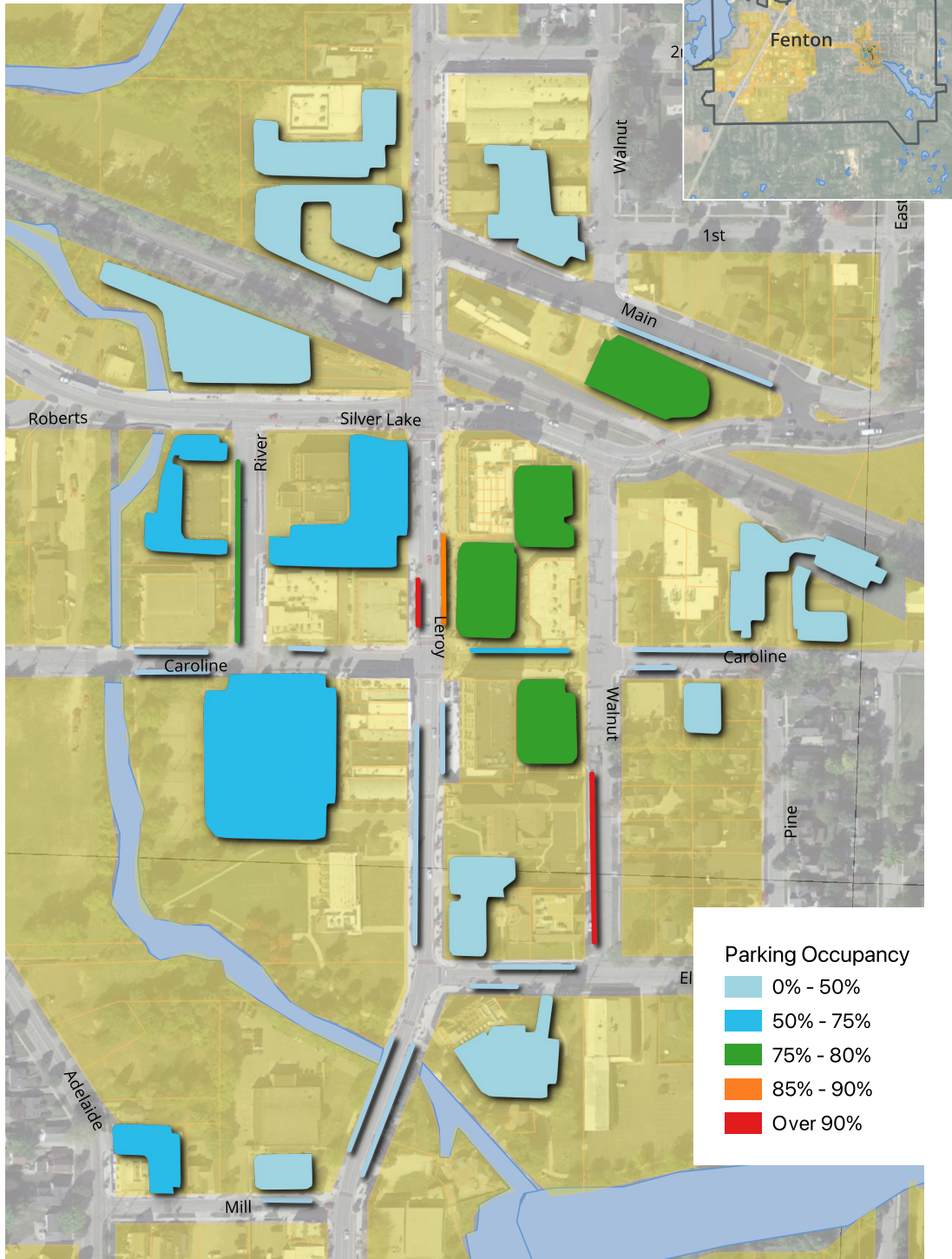
Base Map Source: Google Sattelite,Map Created September 3,2024

0 100 200 ft



Parking Occupancy Rates

July 18, 2024 - 2 p.m.



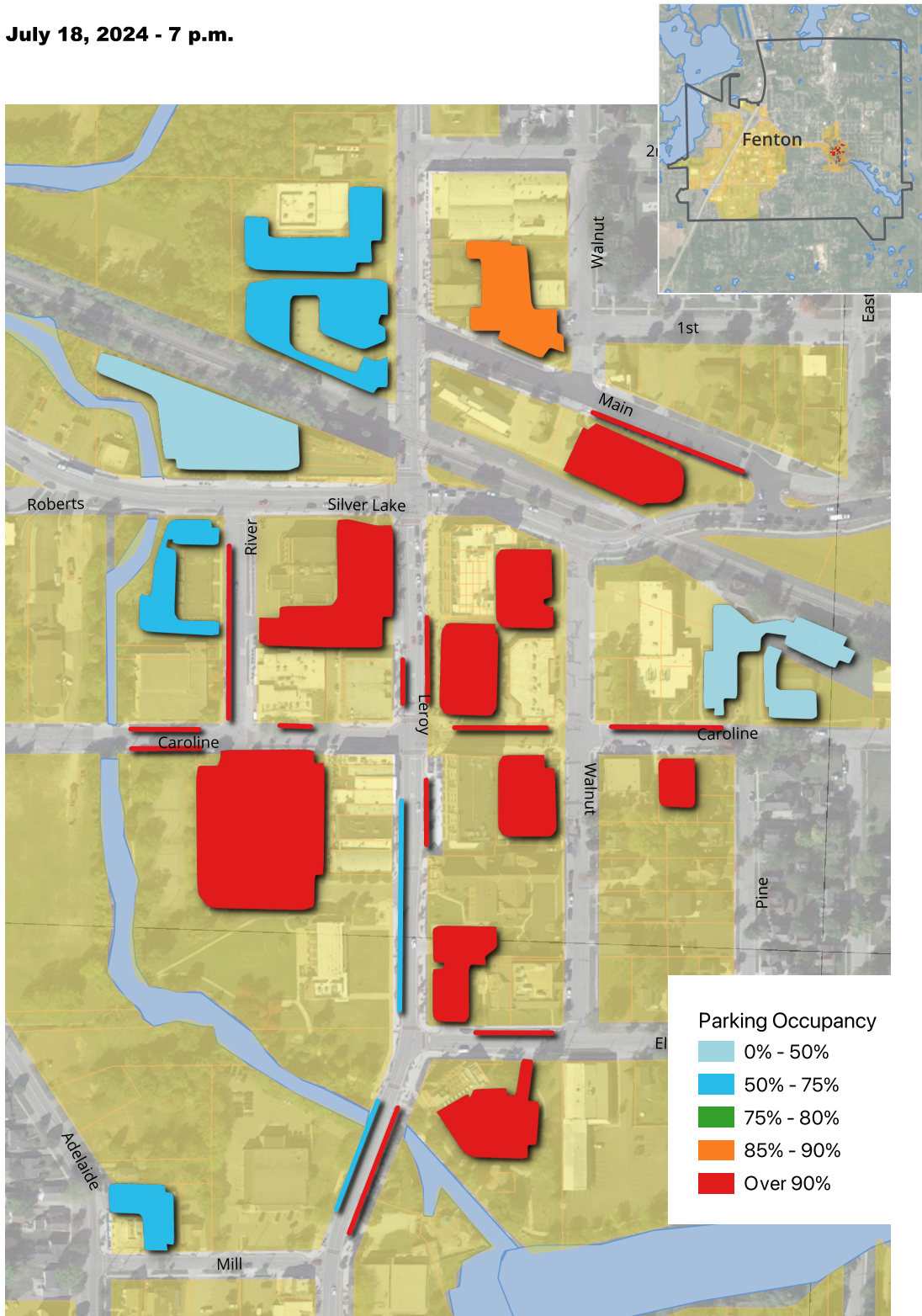
Base Map Source: Google Sattelite,Map Created September 3,2024

0 100 200 ft



Parking Occupancy Rates

July 18, 2024 - 7 p.m.



Base Map Source: Google Sattelite,Map Created September 3,2024

0 100 200 ft



- **SW Corner of S. Leroy and Silver Lake Road.** This project, conceptually, eliminates around 47 parking spaces and adds to demand. The level of demand will depend upon the ultimate size of the building².
- **NE corner of Leroy Street and East Caroline Street.** Building on this parking lot will remove 40 spaces and may add demand³.

The City of Fenton Zoning Ordinance allows buildings up to 35 feet tall by right in the Central Business District zone, which covers the bulk of the study area. Taller buildings are permitted with the approval of the Zoning Board of Appeals. There are no lot coverage or setback requirements in the Central Business District. Parking is required for all uses, even in the Central Business District, but there are provisions for reductions based on shared use and other factors. The City of Fenton has a practice of providing public parking adjacent to developments in the Central Business District.

Table 3 - Events in Downtown Fenton

Event	Date(s)	Est. Daily Attendance
Farmers Market	Thursdays, mid-May through mid-September	700
Concerts in the park	Thursdays, June through early September	1,000
Pride Night	Mid-June	1,500
Freedom Festival	Early July	8,000
Family Night	Mid-July	1,500
Art Walk	Late July	3,500
Back to the Bricks	Early August	10,000
Taste of Fenton	Mid-August	1,500
Homecoming Parade	Early October	3,000
Witches Night	Mid-October	750
Event So Good It's Scary	Late October	500
Ladies Night	Early November	500
Jinglefest & Jingle Jog	Early December	8,000

² Downtown Master Plan, 2006

³ Downtown Master Plan, 2006

Events

Downtown Fenton hosts several outdoor and indoor events throughout the year. Events include a weekly farmers market in season, weekly concerts in the park in the summer, Back to the Bricks, an art walk, downtown Halloween trick or treat, holiday Ladies Night, and Jingle Fest & Jingle Jog. These events draw hundreds, thousands, and, in the case of Jingle Fest, tens of thousands of visitors to downtown. In addition to these primarily outdoor events, the Fenton Community & Cultural Center, located next to the Development Site, has five rooms that accommodate a variety of events, such as weddings, children's activities, and business meetings. **Table 3** lists major events and their estimated daily attendance. This list represents around 30 days of the year when events draw at least 500 people to downtown Fenton.

Observations

- The Caroline lot, where the development is proposed, is usually over capacity, including in the evening when hotel guests would be checking in.
- Other lots and on-street spaces fill up as activity shifts from the west side in the morning and midday to primarily east of Leroy Street in the evening.
- There is an opportunity to transfer some of the demand from over-capacity parking areas to less full ones on the periphery.
- The hotel will create demand for an estimated 198 parking spaces based on Fenton's parking standards; however, because of its location in the CBD with nearby public parking, the actual impact on the parking garage will be less.
- Fenton's Downtown Master Plan calls for at least two additional projects, likely increasing net demand in the Study Area, see footnotes, Page 18.
- Downtown events draw hundreds, and sometimes thousands of people downtown, stressing parking supply.
- Privately-held and at southeast corner of West Caroline and Adelaide, which is expected to be redeveloped, serves as overflow parking for over 200 cars during events.

Parking Needs Assessment

Four factors drive the recommended sizing of the Caroline parking deck: replacing displaced spaces in the Caroline lot, new demand caused by the proposed hotel, indirect demand, and future demand.

Replacing Caroline Lot spaces

The Caroline lot, which the hotel and new parking garage will displace, has 112 parking spaces. Our observations are that the lot is heavily used, and therefore, the parking garage will need to, at a minimum, account for all lost spaces. Some concepts call for all spaces to be displaced, however, there is one concept that preserves 25 surface spaces. For the purposes of this study, it is assumed that all **112** spaces need to be replaced in the parking garage.

Serving the needs of the hotel

The hotel requires 198 spaces, according to the City's parking requirements for hotels and information provided by the hotel developer. These standards are designed for full occupancy, so the hotel will usually not require all these spaces. Nevertheless, because alternative available parking is scarce, particularly in the evening when check-ins occur, the parking garage should have capacity for **150-170** spaces to serve the hotel to ensure spaces are available for guests, other patrons, and employees when the hotel is in full use.

Indirect demand

A parking garage, coupled with a parking policy that encourages its use, can serve other parts of downtown. If visitors are encouraged to park in the garage instead of searching downtown and residential streets, parking will become a more predictable and reliable experience. This report identified two potential developments cited in the 2007 Downtown Master Plan that could be served, at least partially, by a Caroline Street parking garage. This can remove pressure from those projects to accommodate all parking onsite, freeing up space for more interesting and valuable uses such as retail and housing. Railyard Fenton, a few blocks north of the site, opened in the Summer of 2024 and has created demand beyond the capacity of its onsite spaces. Additionally, the future redevelopment of privately owned land at the southeast corner of West Caroline and South Adelaide streets, just west of the redevelopment site, could eliminate what has been an important overflow parking lot for downtown events. Over 200 cars park here during larger events.

Table 3, below, quantifies the number of cars that could be redirected to the proposed parking garage to avoid over-full parking lot and streets. The July evening count identified nearly **100** cars that should be relocated to achieve satisfactory, albeit full, parking capacity levels.

Table 4 - Cars Over Capacity by Count

	Overparking
12/19/23 10am	3
12/19/23 2pm	16
12/19/23 6pm	19
4/13/24 10am	2
4/13/2024 2pm	18
4/13/24 6pm	26
7/18/24 10am	1
7/18/24 2pm	2
7/18/24 7pm	97

Using 85% as the definition of at capacity for all parking facilities

Future Demand

As noted earlier, there are two projects in the master plan that could remove 87 spaces, collectively. In addition, these projects would increase demand because they would likely involve additional floors. Because of this, it is recommended to add at least **100** spaces for future demand.

Parking Needed

Based on replacing spaces in the Caroline lot and the proposed hotel, the parking garage is recommended to contain **482** spaces, detailed in **Table 5**. Additional capacity would help accommodate the impact of future development, which may reduce available spaces while increasing demand.

Table 5 - Parking Need

Replace Caroline Lot Spaces	112
Demand from the Hotel	170
Indirect Demand	100
Future Demand	100
TOTAL	482

Strategies to Address Parking Needs

As the study area continues to develop, additional parking may be displaced by uses that add parking demand. Below is a summary of strategies that may be used to address these shifting conditions:

Adjust Supply

In addition to the parking garage that is the subject of this study, additional parking could be developed to serve new developments. Maximizing limited downtown land may require underground and/or vertical parking.

Maximize Existing Supply

Redistribute cars to lesser-used parking through time limits, valet parking, and other means, such as:

- Time limits. Limiting time at high-demand parking spaces works well with offering longer-term parking away from these primary areas. Time limits are especially helpful in shopping zones where turnover supports greater sales. In addition, time limits on residential streets adjacent to downtown will help direct downtown parkers to other options the City deems more appropriate.
- Valet parking. Railyard Fenton is using valet parking. As demand grows and outlying capacity allows, valet parking in one or two other locations could effectively redistribute cars away from high-demand areas.
- Pricing. Establishing pricing through physical or virtual meters is another way to shift parking away from certain areas to areas that are free or have a lower cost.

Enhance Other Transportation Modes

If some trips shift to other modes such as transit, walking, and biking, the pressure on parking can be reduced. Here are a couple of ways other modes help relieve pressure in downtown Fenton:

- MTA Trolley. This new trolley currently runs on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday on a north/south route. Service on other days and in more areas is planned.
- On-demand transit. There are also plans for enhanced on-demand transit for qualified riders. As this and the trolley grow ridership, coordinated stops downtown can be enhanced to make riding more comfortable and desirable by adding, for example, bus shelters
- Biking enhancements. Fenton should continue to encourage biking by assuring bikers have safe travel ways through downtown, ample places to park bikes, and places to charge e-bikes.

Exhibits

- Parking Occupancy Table
- Over-parking by Facility and Count

Parking Occupancy Table

Block	AKA	Supply	12/19/23 10am	12/19/23 2pm	12/19/23 6pm	4/13/24 10am	4/13/2024 2pm	4/13/24 6pm	7/18/24 10am	7/18/2024 2pm	7/18/24 7pm
134 N. Leroy	Salon 416	42	67%	50%	93%	50%	88%	93%	67%	79%	98%
132 N. Leroy	Andy Alger Team - Keller Williams	43	67%	79%	88%	0%	79%	72%	49%	81%	98%
200 E. Caroline - Fire Dept Lot	Fire Department Lot	41				10%	15%	15%	39%	20%	32%
129 River	Ms. Amy Bray	41	44%	44%	51%	5%	12%	5%	54%	63%	66%
300 E. Caroline - Abandoned Bld.		18				0%	0%	0%	6%	6%	17%
W. Caroline lot		112	87%	95%	76%	58%	98%	97%	62%	65%	98%
111 S. Leroy	Xolo	38	74%	76%	89%	16%	79%	76%	66%	79%	100%
119 S. Leroy	Fenton Untied Methodist Church	35	17%	23%	49%	9%	80%	80%	46%	11%	100%
201 S. Leroy	Fenton Fire Hall	41	2%	15%	90%	15%	44%	88%	7%	17%	95%
210 S. Leroy	Post Office	17	59%	59%	24%	18%	41%	6%	24%	12%	100%
116 Mill	Rejuv	24	75%	63%	33%	13%	0%	0%	75%	75%	58%
175 N Leroy	The State Bank	75	60%	79%	17%	13%	37%	60%	63%	55%	99%
102 W Silver Lake	Andiamo Fenton	76	29%	18%	39%	1%	11%	33%	20%	20%	47%
305 N Leroy	Fenton Pharmacy	54	61%	61%	19%	2%	0%	0%	44%	31%	65%
235 N Leroy	Jet's Pizza	43	33%	33%	26%	9%	40%	42%	23%	30%	53%
302 N. Leroy	Fenton Hotel Tavern/Cheese Lady	57	9%	21%	100%	58%	33%	84%	9%	18%	86%
234 N. Leroy	Railyard Fenton	54	2%	2%	9%	39%	4%	4%	9%	78%	96%
200 E Caroline, Library	Library	20				20%	40%	0%	10%	50%	100%
100 N. Leroy - east side		7	71%	71%	71%	29%	100%	100%	100%	86%	100%
100 N. Leroy - west side		3	100%	100%	100%	0%	33%	100%	67%	100%	100%
100 S. Leroy - east side		5	40%	80%	80%	40%	60%	100%	80%	40%	120%
100 S. Leroy - west side		12	25%	100%	58%	0%	92%	92%	33%	17%	75%
200 S. Leroy - east side		11	0%	0%	27%	0%	64%	91%	0%	9%	100%
200 S. Leroy - west side		9	22%	22%	33%	0%	67%	56%	11%	0%	67%
100 W. Mill - north side		3	33%	33%	0%	0%	100%	0%	33%	33%	133%
100 E. Ellen - North		6	0%	17%	100%	0%	0%	100%	17%	0%	117%
100 E. Ellen - south side		3	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	67%	0%	0%	133%
100 S. Walnut - west side		12	50%	83%	58%	0%	42%	75%	25%	100%	133%
200 E. Caroline - south side		9				22%	22%	11%	22%	11%	100%
200 E. Caroline - north side		8				0%	13%	0%	38%	38%	100%
100 E. Caroline - north side		8	63%	63%	75%	38%	50%	63%	75%	75%	100%
200 W. Caroline - north		10	0%	50%	0%	10%	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%
200 W. Caroline - south		9	11%	89%	11%	44%	44%	89%	33%	33%	100%
100 W. Caroline - north		6	100%	100%	50%	50%	67%	100%	50%	50%	100%
100 River - west side		11	82%	100%	36%	100%	64%	91%	82%	82%	118%
200 E. Main		9							11%	33%	100%
		972									

Notes
 • Highlighted counts are over-capacity

Over-parking

Block	AKA	On/Off	12/19/23 10am	12/19/23 2pm	12/19/23 6pm	4/13/24 10am	4/13/2024 2pm	4/13/24 6pm	7/18/24 10am	7/18/24 2pm	7/18/24 7pm
Target Occupancy>			85%	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%
134 N. Leroy	Salon 416	Off	0	0	3	0	1	3	0	0	5
132 N. Leroy	Andy Alger Team - Keller Williams	Off	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
200 E. Caroline - Fire Dept Lot	Fire Department Lot	Off	x	x	x	0	0	0	0	0	0
129 River	Ms. Amy Bray	Off	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
300 E. Caroline - Abandoned Bld.		Off	x	x	x	0	0	0	0	0	0
W. Caroline lot		Off	2	11	0	0	15	14	0	0	15
111 S. Leroy	Xolo	Off	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
119 S. Leroy	Fenton Untied Methodist Church	Off	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
201 S. Leroy	Fenton Fire Hall	Off	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	4
210 S. Leroy	Post Office	Off	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
116 Mill	Rejuv	Off	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
175 N Leroy	The State Bank	Off	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10
102 W Silver Lake	Andiamo Fenton	Off	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
305 N Leroy	Fenton Pharmacy	Off	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
235 N Leroy	Jet's Pizza	Off	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
302 N. Leroy	Fenton Hotel Tavern/Cheese Lady	Off	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	1
234 N. Leroy	Railyard Fenton	Off	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
200 E Caroline, Library	Library	Off	x	x	x	0	0	0	0	0	3
100 N. Leroy - east side		On	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
100 N. Leroy - west side		On	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
100 S. Leroy - east side		On	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
100 S. Leroy - west side		On	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
200 S. Leroy - east side		On	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
200 S. Leroy - west side		On	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
100 W. Mill - north side		On	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
100 E. Ellen - North		On	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
100 E. Ellen - south side		On	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
100 S. Walnut - west side		On	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	6
200 E. Caroline - south side		On	x	x	x	0	0	0	0	0	1
200 E. Caroline - north side		On	x	x	x	0	0	0	0	0	1
100 E. Caroline - north side		On	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
200 W. Caroline - north		On	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
200 W. Caroline - south		On	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
100 W. Caroline - north		On	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
100 River - west side		On	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	4
200 E. Main		On	x	x	x	x	x	x	0	0	1
			3	16	19	2	18	26	1	2	91

Notes
 • For areas with unmarked spaces, the number of spaces were calculated at 21 feet long.