

## Parking

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Library to make room for more customers.

Local employers said they fear that without some sort of intervention, businesses will begin to fail as customers turn away from downtown.

Alicia Prabe, owner of Alicia's Salon and Gift shop, is considering moving out of her downtown location because the parking situation is so bad. She rents parking spaces for her employees at the back of the store to save them a walk from the parking lot and said the time limits on public parking and space availability makes it hard on customers.

Bob Jones has owned the Book Cellar across from the municipal building for 30 years and said parking is a constant complaint among patrons. While he said the parking pledge for employers

**"Unless you can park by the door, people will always complain about parking."**

**Bob Jones,  
Book Cellar owner**

is good, it will only work "if they'll do it."

He and his employees already park in the large lots, but he said the problem is with businesses with headquarters in other cities and managers who won't tell employees to park elsewhere because they don't care.

Jones said he marveled at the hypocritical thinking of some patrons who, on a busy day at the Temple Mall, may have to park more than 100 meters from the door, spend their day walking around to browse inside, then complain when they have to walk half a block from their cars to get to a location downtown.

"Unless you can park by the

door, people will always complain about parking," Jones said.

Popular downtown eateries struggle for space during peak hours at breakfast, lunch and dinner. The fact that street parking is public means overflow between restaurants and businesses — generating headaches for businesses that rely on ease of access during mealtimes.

Freddy Tsai, manager of Pignetti's, said after 10 a.m. the spaces around his restaurant are always full, and people often park outside his door then walk to other establishments — often leaving their cars for more than hour.

"If they don't find more parking spaces it will ruin downtown," Tsai said. "Nobody's going to come."

An argument could be made that a large number of cars outside indicates popularity and is a draw for undecided customers. However Tsai said the restaurants around downtown are bunched so close together and parking is at such a premium that those customers are just as likely to drive on than hunt for one of the few available spaces.

Aside from the burden on the customer, the walk from the public lots is also hurting burgeoning small business owners.

The Temple Business Incubator has no parking for any of the six start-up businesses currently renting space in the building, and director Rodney Bell said it is a challenge to sell someone on the idea of a renting space

when parking is so far away.

"While public parking is free and accessible, you're carrying supplies back and forth all day, it's difficult," Bell said. "For some walking a block or two is not going to be an option."

He said some people have gone as far as to park in the adjacent public spaces and move their vehicles before the two-hour time limit is up.

While to the casual observer there are plenty of spaces, but in areas with restaurants and during certain hours of the day, finding spaces is tedious.

"It's mainly during peak hours at lunchtime right after work and right at the early morning hours," said Temple Downtown Development Alliance Spokesman Brynn Ray. "A lot of times people will have to circle the block up to five to six times in front

of a café, restaurant or business."

Ms. Ray said the pledge is designed to foster a "walking culture" in the downtown area.

The committee, part of the Temple Chamber of Commerce, is inviting downtown business owners to be "sworn in" at a 2 p.m. pledge ceremony today.

The city of Temple plans to go out for bids for a study of the parking situation downtown so officials can start thinking of long term solutions. Assistant City Manager Kim Foutz said the city has already purchased several lots for parking and development and the study should help decide whether more lots are needed and if the city needs to invest in a parking garage.

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## Iraq

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Even before al-Mashhadani's province in June 2006 and was replaced by al-Masri

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