



## TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

**Date:** October 4, 2023  
**To:** Angelina DeRosett, Transit Manager, City of Visalia  
**From:** Chris Kinzel, Vice President, TJKM  
**Subject:** Update to Scope of Visalia Parking Study

This memorandum discusses updates to the Visalia Parking Study scope.

### Background

The City of Visalia released a request for proposals (RFP) in 2019 in partnership with the Kaweah Health Medical Center and with funding from the Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG) to solicit proposals from qualified consulting firms experienced in producing parking studies. The purpose of the study was to determine the feasibility of implementing alternative means of transportation, including the operation of an employee shuttle service, for the purpose of alleviating the need for the construction of more parking stalls in the downtown Visalia area. TJKM Transportation Consultants was ultimately awarded the parking study contract.

With several facilities spread out over an eight-block district in the downtown area and with approximately 1,000 employees on shift at any given time, the Kaweah Health Medical Center is the largest employer in Visalia. Kaweah Health Medical Center has estimated that less than 35 percent of its workforce comes from outside the local area.

The City of Visalia has historically worked closely with Kaweah Health Medical Center to accommodate growth of the hospital while concomitantly mitigating impacts of that growth. The RFP stated that seeking solutions to the lack of adequate parking is the greatest challenge that the City and Kaweah Health Medical Center face in the downtown area. Kaweah Health Medical Center had at one point considered purchasing property in a remote area of the City to use as an off-site parking area and to shuttle its workforce from the off-site parking area to the hospital using the City's trolley buses. While the idea was initially deemed cost prohibitive and was not fully explored, the City sought and received funding from TCAG for a parking feasibility study for exploring additional transit options and to lessen the demand for parking in the downtown area.

## **Original Scope**

The original scope listed the following items to be completed by the consultant:

- Identify the current methods of transportation that employees are using;
- Determine the points of origin for employees;
- Survey and study the area to observe the parking limitations and shortages;
- Conduct an initial survey of Kaweah Health Medical Center employees to determine their willingness to utilize alternative parking or ride-share methods;
- Determine the cost-effectiveness of any proposed solutions and the financial impact for each participating agency;
- Consider several alternatives including shuttle and ride sharing services;
- Make recommendations on the efficient use of resources (equipment, facilities, administration activities, personnel, etc.);
- Consider long-term and short-term plans to ease parking congestion;
- Present all alternative methods both long- and short-term in the order of feasibility and willingness of Kaweah Health Medical Center staff; and
- Utilize comparable best practices, studies, and examples of other organizations with similar needs and experiences.

## **Changes since Signing of Contract**

The interim period from 2019 until the present has seen substantial changes in economic conditions. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic resulted in the State of California mandating shelter-in-place and work-from-home policies in 2020, which dramatically changed working and commuting patterns of workforces across the State. Though the State has since lifted the mandates, post-pandemic parking demand in downtown Visalia may still be different from 2019.

Additionally, a general rise in price levels of good and services in the US in the post-pandemic era could have affected commuting patterns and data collection costs.

## **Work Completed by TJKM to Date**

Since the start-up meeting on June 8, 2022, TJKM Transportation Consultants has conducted the following:

- Prepared a map of on-street and off-street parking facilities around Kaweah Health Medical Center;
- Drafted an online survey to for distribution to Kaweah Health Medical Center employees to determine their willingness to utilize alternative parking or ride-share methods; and
- Met with representatives from Kaweah Health Medical Center and the City to determine their perspectives on parking conditions near the hospital.

During the site visit in 2022, TJKM met with representatives from Kaweah Health Medical Center and the City to determine their perspectives on parking conditions near the hospital.

**Recommended Next Steps**

Considering the change in circumstances in the post-pandemic era, including possible reduced parking demand in the downtown Visalia area, TJKM would like to reassess with the City and Kaweah Health Medical Center the purpose and scope of the parking study.

The reassessment will inform adjustments to the scope of the data collection, analysis, and recommendation of viable alternatives.