

## 'Full' Signs Up on Downtown Parking

**D**ON'T go downtown in Oklahoma City unless you have a reserved place to park or are prepared to walk several blocks to your destination.

Downtown parking facilities are pretty well filled up with cars of people who work downtown. By mid-morning on many days, the signs are out: "Monthly Parking Only" or "Full."

Granted, people who work downtown need convenient places to leave their cars, but so do customers and clients.

Customers might find it more convenient to do downtown business by mail than to drive around awkward one-way streets looking for a place to park. Even 15-cent stamps are cheaper than gasoline.

Downtown is an easy place to avoid anyway, due to long overdue construction of freeways and widened thoroughfares. A hundred shopping centers are easier to reach and parking is free.

Many people have been heard to say they would not struggle through present traffic jams to go downtown

to shop or be entertained, if and when the oft-delayed Galleria and Myriad Gardens are completed.

Existing expressways are so inadequate that two or three cars involved in an accident can make hundreds of people late for work. There are too few alternate routes to handle the traffic.

When the occasional visitor does reach the downtown district, he is apt to find his search for a parking place impeded by traffic patterns that require blocks of needless driving.

If he is lucky enough to find a space in one of the large facilities and is ready to leave during a rush period, he may burn a lot of gasoline just getting through undermanned checkout booths.

Following a recent luncheon attended by several hundred persons, many of the guests spent more than an hour reaching the street after they got into their cars.

Only one of the two toll booths was operating, except for parking card holders. One customer paid \$2 for parking, with one-fourth of the

time consumed while waiting.

Well, ride the bus downtown. You must be kidding. Recently, riders on one route staged a demonstration because of the crowded buses. Yet officials say they can't operate adequate bus lines without subsidies.

Car pools, used by many people who work downtown, may be practical only for those who live and work in adjacent areas and who keep about the same hours.

A newspaper writer recently predicted that "the transportation system (of Oklahoma City), called the key to any city's future, will undergo drastic changes." Obviously, drastic changes are needed.

The tempo of expressway construction needs to be stepped up and adequate convenient parking facilities built before the opening of additional major downtown business and entertainment attractions.

Political procrastination and local pussyfooting with federal agencies make it look like those things aren't going to happen. Yet, streets and parking installations cannot handle downtown business now.