TRUCK PARKING REPORT (2018 – 2024)

ARDOT ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Planning & Research Division
Research Section
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Arkansas Code §27-51-1302 prohibits the stopping of commercial and other vehicles on the shoulder, median, ramps, and all other right-of-way along Interstate or other fully controlled access highways, except in designated parking areas or for a brief duration due to an emergency, vehicle disablement, or to correct or avert an unsafe condition. This prohibition was enacted by the Arkansas State Legislature with Act 997 of 2007 in response to concerns about roadway safety.

Federal regulations on Hours of Service (HOS) of Drivers (Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 395) specify the maximum amount of time drivers are permitted to drive, as well as the number and length of rest periods, to ensure that drivers are alert and awake. Additionally, Jason's Law (MAP-21, Section 1401), was enacted in 2012 with the aim of improving highway safety and the working environment of truck drivers by elevating the national priority for addressing the truck parking shortage. This Truck Parking Report continues in the spirit of Jason's Law by documenting the availability of and need for truck parking in Arkansas

1.2 Purpose

The nationwide shortage of truck parking significantly impacts the safety of commercial motor vehicle drivers, other road users, and the efficiency of U.S. supply chains. When truck drivers are unable to find legal parking, they are often forced to park in prohibited locations to comply with HOS regulations. One example is the use of shoulders for truck parking, which creates a risk of collision between vehicles moving at high speeds and parked trucks. Other specific safety challenges associated with prohibited truck parking include reduced night-time visibility, standard trailer width exceeding standard ramp shoulder width, creating an unexpected obstacle, and obscuring the line of sight. In addition, highway shoulders are not designed to support the continued application of heavy loads from commercial trucks, which can lead to costly or frequent repairs.

To gain a better understanding of the truck parking demands and challenges in Arkansas, in 2006, the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) began conducting an annual overnight truck parking survey along Interstates and one non-Interstate full control of access highway. The survey is intended to assess the availability and use of public and private truck parking facilities associated with major Interstate commerce activities. In addition to counting available parking spaces, the number of parked trucks in unmarked areas or at prohibited locations is recorded to estimate the demand for truck parking.

With the exception of 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, overnight truck parking surveys have been conducted each year beginning in 2006 through 2024. This study summarizes the survey findings from 2018 through 2024.

2. SURVEY METHOD

Since the overnight truck parking survey is a snapshot of truck parking conditions, a consistent methodology is necessary to ensure the data are comparable from year to year. The following details the survey methodology:

- When: One (mid-week) night in September or October from 10:00 PM to 6:00 AM.
- Location: Each parking area is visible within three miles from every interchange along I-30, I-40, I-49, I-55, I-530, I-540, I-440, and Highway 67.

- Public Locations: These are areas within ARDOT right-of-way. Parking in these areas may be either permitted or prohibited. The definitions below apply exclusively to truck parking in public locations.
    - Permitted: These are designated areas such as welcome centers, weigh stations, rest areas, and truck parking facilities.
    - Prohibited: These include shoulders along fully controlled-access highways or interchange ramps, service roads, closed rest areas or weigh stations, inspection centers, and construction zones.
- Private Locations: These refer to areas outside of ARDOT right-of-way.
    - Private Designated Truck Parking Locations: This category includes non-ARDOT facilities where truck parking is allowed, such as truck stops, rest areas, gas stations, and supercenters. For private truck parking locations without clearly marked or painted parking spaces, parking capacity is requested from the facility's management.
    - Other Private Locations: These are private properties that do not have designated truck parking, such as closed gas stations, restaurants, hotels, banks, and outdated facilities.
- Total number of marked spaces: Facilities may be considered overcrowded if the number of parked trucks exceeds the number of marked spaces.
- The survey does not record trucks parked on the main lane shoulders between interchanges.
- Upon completing the fieldwork, data are aggregated and recorded in a database for archiving and analysis.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Truck Parking Conditions

As shown in **Figure 1,** from 2018 to 2024, the total number of trucks parked in public areas was over twice the number of available parking spaces in public areas. In 2024, a total of 1,454 parked trucks were recorded in public areas, while only 454 public truck parking spaces were available.

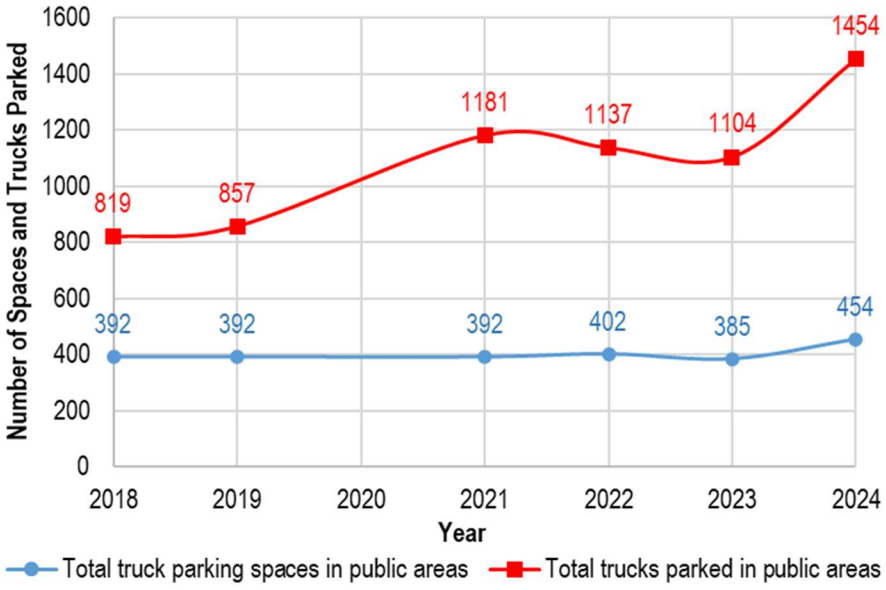

Figure 1: Truck Parking in Public Areas

The total number of trucks parked at private facilities correlates well with the number of available private parking spaces. As shown in **Figure 2,** starting in 2022, the available private truck parking spaces slightly exceeded the number of trucks parked on those properties. In 2024, a total of 6,360 parked trucks were recorded in private areas compared to 6,522 available private truck parking spaces.

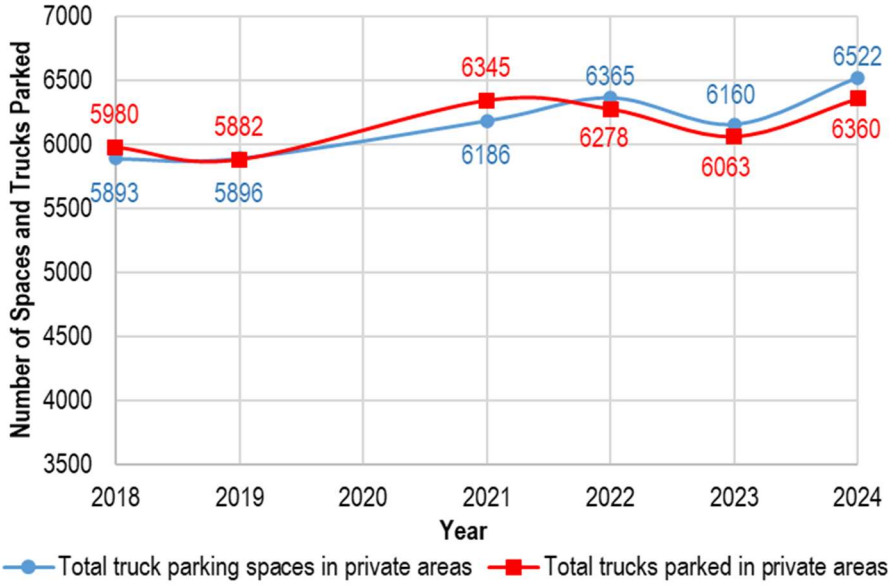

Figure 2: Truck Parking in Private Areas

To illustrate the overall truck parking condition in Arkansas, the number of truck parking spaces in public and private areas were combined as well as the number of trucks parked. As shown in **Figure 3,** there has been a persistent gap between the supply of and demand for truck parking, and the parking deficit is primarily reflected in trucks parked in prohibited spaces in public areas.

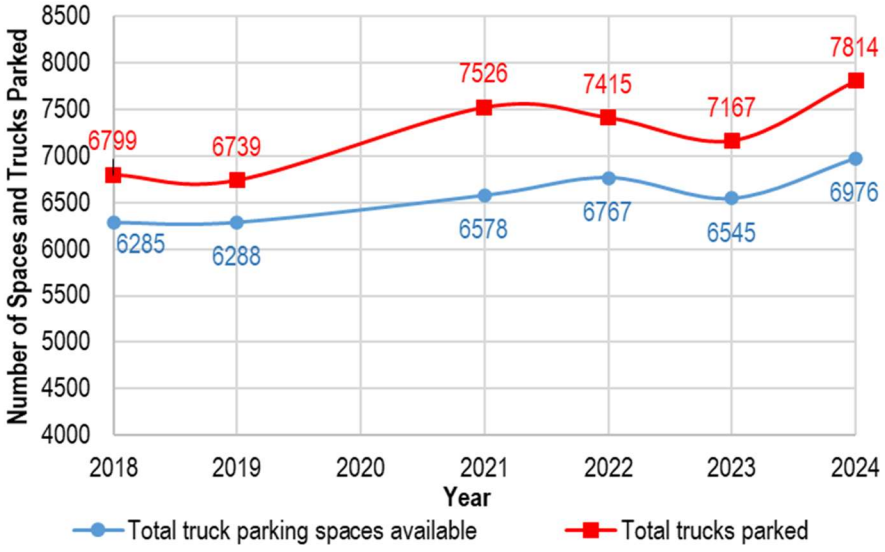

Figure 3: Overall Truck Parking Condition (Public and Private Areas)

3.2 Permitted vs. Prohibited Public Truck Parking

Figure 4 reports annual counts of permitted and prohibited truck parking in ARDOT right-of-way from 2018 to 2024. The data reveals an overall increase in trucks parked in permitted locations between 2018 and 2024, with 813 parked trucks observed in permitted locations in 2024. The data indicates overcrowding occurring at permitted public locations when the number of trucks parked (**Figure 1**) is compared to the number of truck parking spaces. In 2024, 359 parked trucks contributed to overcrowding.

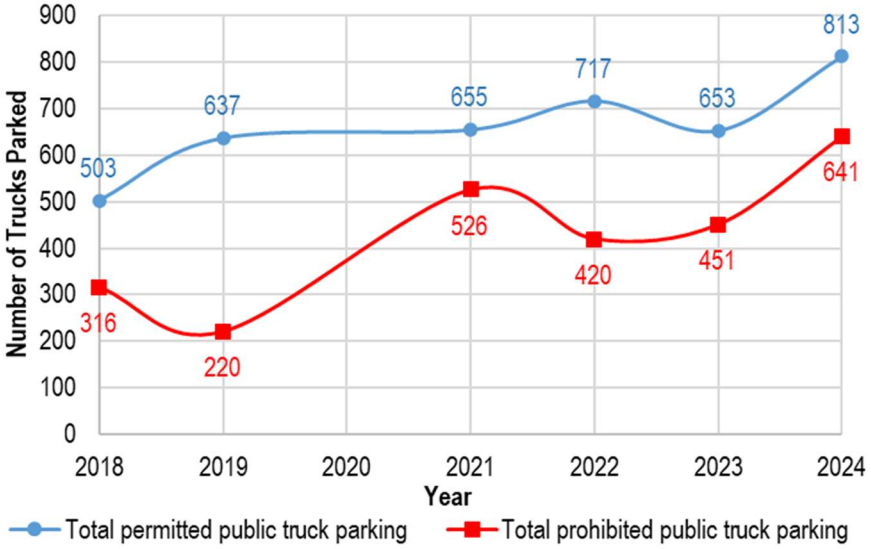

Figure 4: Permitted and Prohibited Truck Parking in Public Areas

Although the number of trucks parked in prohibited locations varied from year to year, that number has generally trended upward, with 641 instances of prohibited truck parking recorded in 2024. As shown in **Figure 5,** it was observed that the majority of prohibited truck parking in public areas occurs at interchange ramps and prohibited weigh stations. By 2024, the number of trucks parked in these areas totaled over 500.

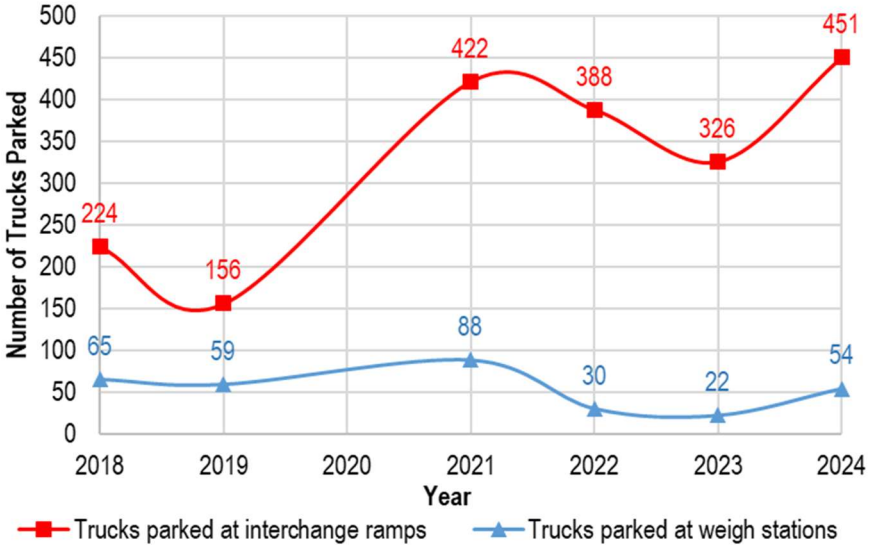

Figure 5: Prohibited Truck Parking at Interchange Ramps and Weigh Stations

3.3 Truck Parking Deficits

To identify locations with truck parking deficits, an analysis of truck parking supply and demand was conducted. As used here, a deficit occurs when the total number of trucks parked (demand) exceeds the total number of designated truck parking spots in both public and private areas (supply). When supply exceeds demand, the location has a surplus.

This analysis was conducted for I-40 and I-30 from 2022 to 2024. Highway exits where the three-year average deficit or surplus exceeded 10 spaces were identified.

The I-40 corridor experiences varying truck volumes due to its length, so it was divided into West and East segments at the I-440 interchange (Exit 159) in North Little Rock. The I-40 West corridor extends from Exit 1 near the Oklahoma State Line to Exit 159, while the I-40 East corridor runs from Exit 159 to Exit 281 in West Memphis.

As shown in **Figure 7**, the I-40 West corridor experienced significant truck parking deficits at the truck parking area between the rest area near Mayflower at Log Mile (LM) 134 and North Little Rock at Exit 157. The largest truck parking deficit was observed at the rest area in Ozark (LM 36), with an average deficit of 60 spaces. Interestingly, the largest average truck parking surplus of 61 truck parking spaces was noted at Exit 35, which is about one mile away from the rest area in Ozark.

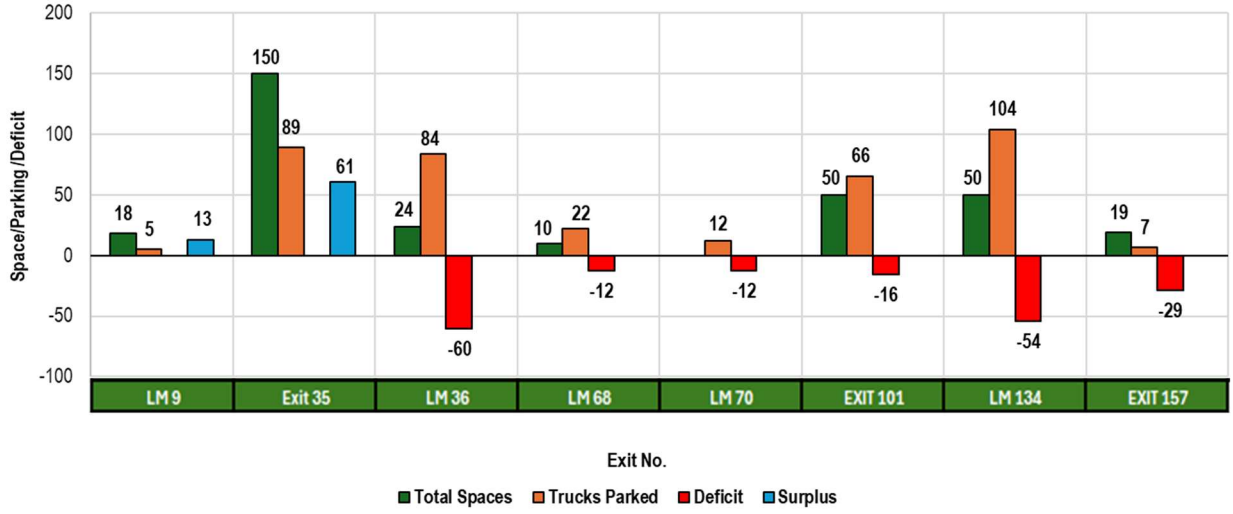

Figure 7: I-40 West: Overall Truck Parking Deficit or Surplus

As shown in **Figure 8,** the I-40 East corridor experienced significant truck parking deficits throughout the corridor, with the largest truck parking deficit observed at Exit 216 in Brinkley. Although the truck parking facilities at LM 274 and Exit 280 have insufficient parking spaces, an average surplus of 30 truck parking spaces was noted at Exit 279A in West Memphis.

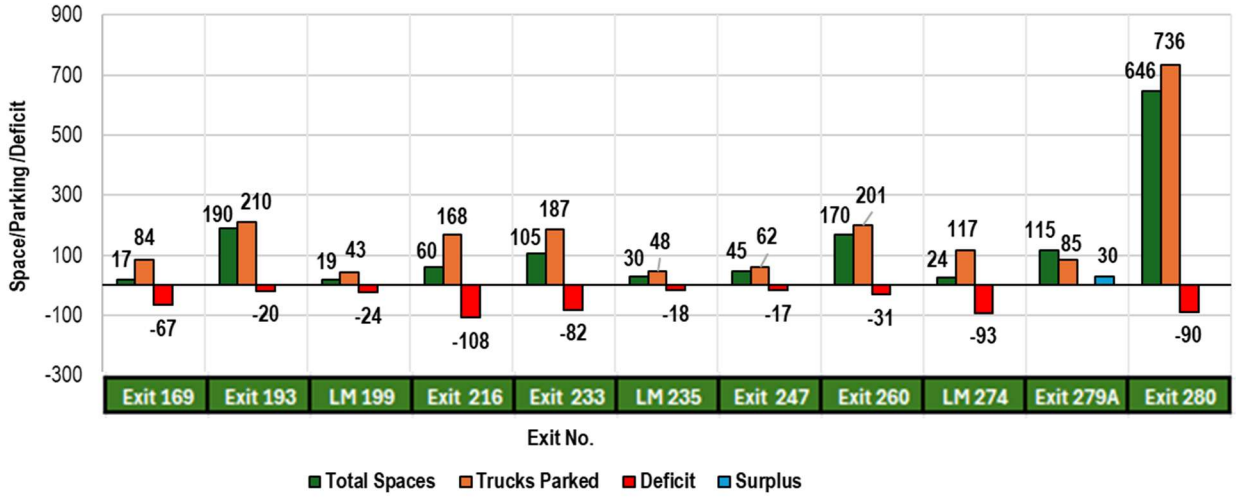

Figure 8: I-40 East: Overall Truck Parking Deficit or Surplus

Figure 9 highlights I-30, where the largest truck parking deficit was found at the rest area near Gurdon at LM 56, with an average deficit of 44 truck parking spaces. Additional deficits were noted at the rest area near Social Hill (LM 93) and Exit 97 in Malvern. However, there are significant truck parking surpluses at Exit 63 near Gurdon and Exit 106 near Glen Rose.

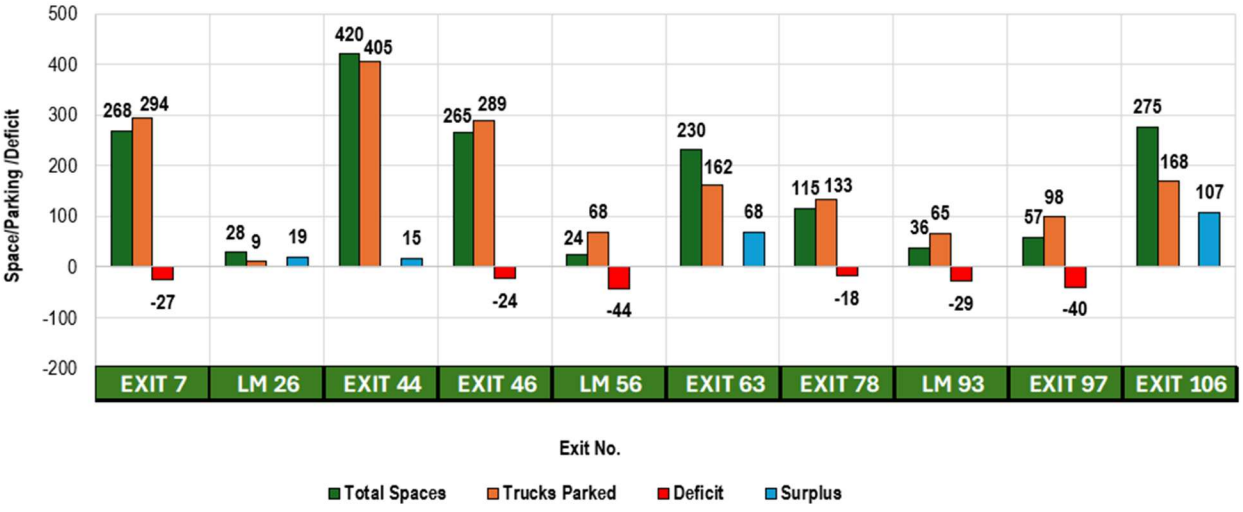

Figure 9: I-30: Overall Truck Parking Deficit or Surplus

Additional analysis of the major truck corridors throughout the state is presented in **Appendix A**. To visualize the truck parking data by location and understand overcrowding, maps were created using data from 2022 to 2024, which are presented in **Appendix B**.

3.4 Truck Traffic Volume

Figure 10 reports the 2023 average daily truck traffic (ADTT) of each route surveyed for this report. Logically, the demand for truck parking is related to ADTT, though the mix of trucks – long-haul versus short-haul – and proximity to freight traffic generators are also factors. In 2023, the highest truck traffic volume in the state was observed on I-40 East, which experienced an ADTT of 26,000 in West Memphis. The highest truck volume observed on I-30 was an ADTT of 21,000 near Malvern.

The 2022 Arkansas State Freight Plan forecasts that highway freight will grow from approximately 360 million tons in 2019 to 600 million tons in 2050 (an increase of more than 60%). This anticipated growth in truck traffic implies a need for an increase in truck parking over that period. It should be noted that policy changes or technology advancements, such as connected and autonomous commercial vehicles, could have an effect on the anticipated growth. Most of this growth is expected to occur on routes that already experience high truck traffic volumes – I-30, I-40, and I-55.

Figure 10: 2023 Interstate/Freeway Truck Volumes

4. SUMMARY

This report documents the results of recent truck parking surveys and summarizes conditions and trends. Key findings include:

- ***Public Truck Parking:***

  Despite a recent increase in the number of public truck parking spaces, the number of trucks parked in public right-of-way continues to outpace the available truck parking spaces. In 2024, the total number of parked trucks in public areas was approximately three times the number of designated public truck parking spaces.

- ***Private Truck Parking:***

  The number of private truck parking spaces increased by about 11% from 2018 to 2024. Generally, the number of trucks parked in private truck parking areas mirrors the supply of truck parking spaces in those areas.

- ***Combined Truck Parking:***

  Arkansas experienced a slow but steady increase in both the number of truck parking spaces and the number of trucks parked from 2018 to 2024. In 2024, the number of parked trucks exceeded available spaces by approximately 12%.

- ***Permitted vs. Prohibited Truck Parking:***

  While the number of trucks parked in prohibited locations dropped significantly from 2018 to 2019, that number has generally trended upward since 2019.

- ***Specific Route Analysis:***

  - Truck parking activity is highest along I-30 from Texarkana to Little Rock and along I-40 from Little Rock to West Memphis. This corresponds to the fact that truck volumes are highest along these routes.
  - I-40 consistently experiences the greatest deficit between the number of truck parking spaces and the number of trucks parked.
  - I-40 in Brinkley (Exit 216) experienced the largest truck parking deficit.
  - While overcrowding was observed at several locations, it was also observed that truck parking spaces in the nearby interchanges were not fully utilized. This may indicate a need to share parking information along the corridors to maximize the use of the existing facilities.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SPECIFIC ROUTE ANALYSIS

Whereas statewide truck parking information (**Figures 1** through **5**) provides a useful, high-level overview of the availability of and demand for truck parking, individual truck parking decisions are driven by the availability of truck parking along a desired route. **Figures A-1** through **A-4** illustrate the number of truck parking spaces (both public and private) and the number of parked trucks recorded along I-30, I-40, I-49, and I-55 from 2018 to 2024. Together, these routes represent approximately 90% of the total available truck parking spaces along fully controlled access highways in Arkansas.

I-40 Corridor

As shown in **Figure A-1**, both the availability of and demand for truck parking have grown steadily along I-40. Due to the length of the I-40 corridor, this route was split into West and East segments at the I-440 interchange (Exit 159) in North Little Rock. The West corridor extends from Exit 1 near the Oklahoma State Line to Exit 159, while the East corridor runs from Exit 159 to Exit 281 in West Memphis. As displayed in **Figure 10**, the largest truck volumes in Arkansas are found on I-40 East and I-30. Notably, the number of parked trucks recorded along I-40 East has grown faster than the number of truck parking spaces along the corridor. During the 2024 survey, a deficit of 603 truck parking spaces was recorded on the I-40 East corridor. The demand for truck parking on the I-40 West corridor remained stable from 2018 to 2023 but increased in 2024, resulting in a deficit of 258 truck parking spaces.

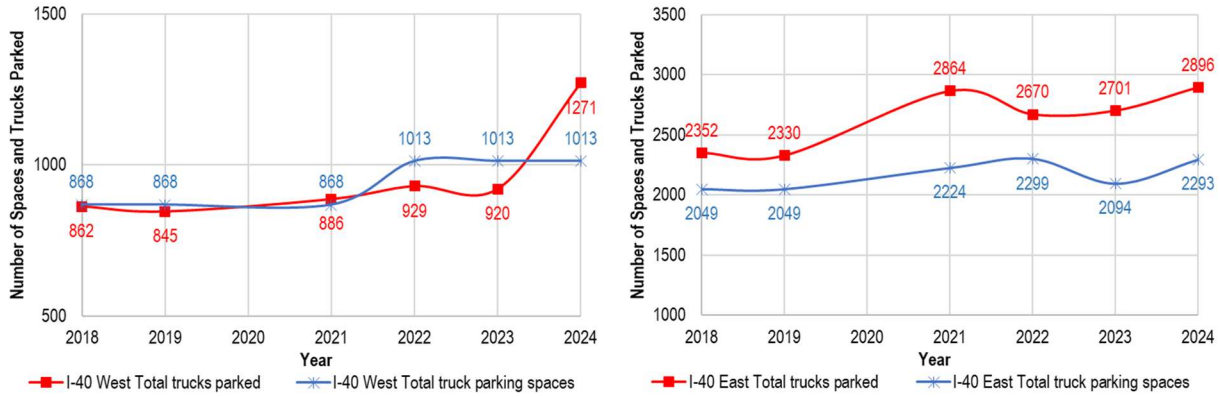

Figure A-1: Overall Truck Parking for I-40 West and East Corridor

I-30 Corridor

As shown in **Figure A-2**, the number of trucks parked along I-30 generally trended upward from 2018 to 2024, but the number of parked trucks recorded in 2023 and 2024 fell from the high values recorded in 2021 and 2022. The number of truck parking spaces along I-30 remained relatively stable. The maximum deficit between parked trucks and parking spaces was recorded in 2022 (236 spaces). However, for 2024, the number of available spaces exceeded the number of parked trucks recorded by the survey.

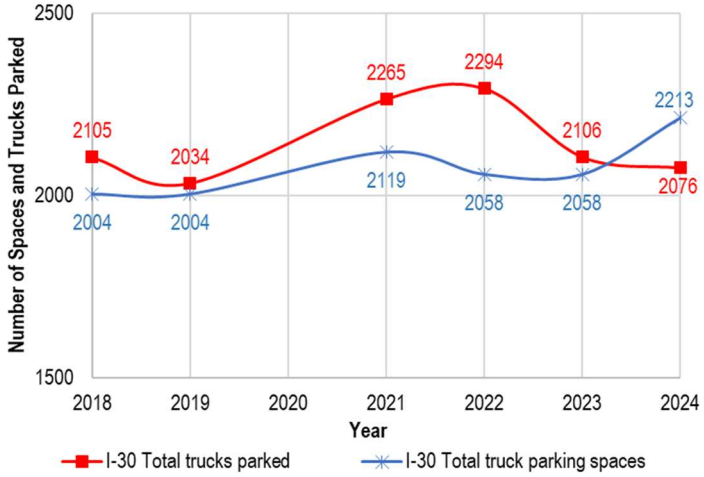

Figure A-2: Overall Truck Parking for I-30 Corridor

I-49 Corridor

As shown in **Figure A-3,** truck parking capacity along I-49 is limited when compared to I-30 or I-40. I-49 is also divided into two corridors: the South Corridor and the North Corridor. The South Corridor runs from Exit 4 near the Louisiana State Line to Exit 41 in Texarkana. The North Corridor stretches from Exit 24 near Alma to Exit 102 near the Missouri State Line. On the I-49 North corridor, a persistent and growing deficit in truck parking spaces was observed from 2018 to 2021. However, there has been some recent variation in the number of parked trucks along the corridor, which obscures any trend in demand. Truck parking demand along the I-49 South corridor remained stable from 2018 to 2024.

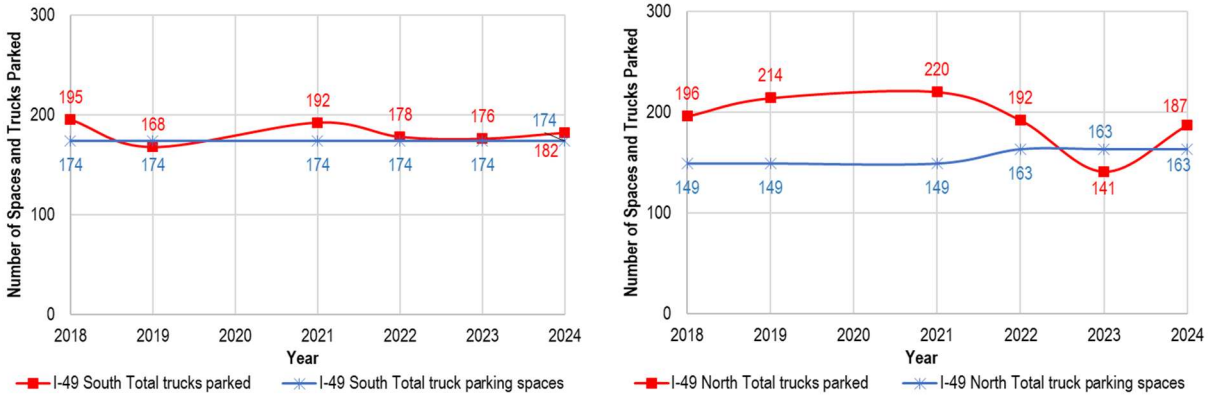

Figure A-3: Overall Truck Parking for I-49 South and North Corridor

I-55 Corridor

As shown in **Figure A-4**, truck parking capacity along I-55 is comparable to that of I-49. On I-55, both the number of parked trucks and the number of truck parking spaces have remained relatively stable, but there has been a persistent deficit in the availability of truck parking spaces (82 spaces in 2024).

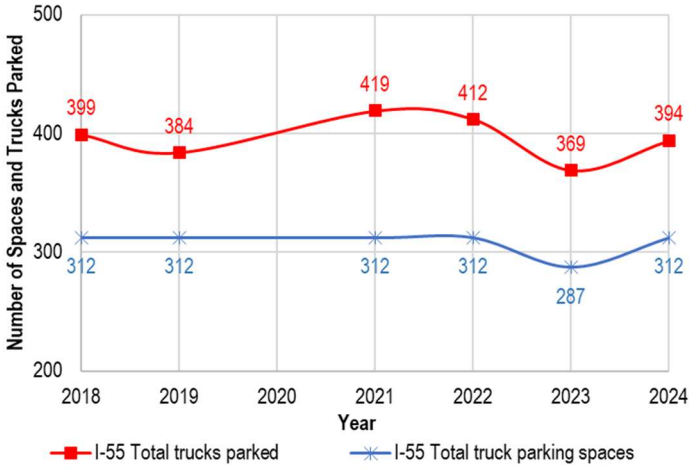

Figure A-4: Overall Truck Parking for I-55 Corridor

APPENDIX B: VISUALIZATION OF TRUCK PARKING SURVEY DATA

Figures B-1 to 3 display the results of the 2022, 2023, and 2024 truck parking surveys by location (Exit). Localized truck parking counts are illustrated by the size of the circle, and the type of parking is illustrated by the color of the circle. Larger circles indicate a greater number of parked trucks than smaller circles. Green-shaded areas represent trucks parked at private designated truck parking locations, while blue-shaded areas represent trucks parked in other private locations. Orange-shaded areas illustrate trucks parked at public facilities where truck parking is permitted, and red-shaded areas indicate trucks parked at public facilities where truck parking is prohibited. The blue- and red-shaded areas are of particular interest because they indicate locations where additional truck parking may be needed.

Figures B-1 to 3 illustrate that truck parking activity is concentrated along I-30 between Texarkana and Little Rock and I-40 between Little Rock and West Memphis. Specific locations along these corridors with high truck parking activity include Nevada County near Prescott, Pulaski County east of Little Rock, and Crittenden County near West Memphis. The Little Rock and West Memphis areas are logical locations for high truck parking demand since they are at the cross-roads of multiple Interstate Highways and serve major economic and multimodal activity centers.

Figure B-4 displays a map illustrating the truck parking deficits and surpluses along the I-40 and I-30 corridors in 2024. This map is based on the data presented in **Figures 7, 8, and 9**. Larger circles indicate a larger truck parking deficit or surplus. Blue-shaded circles represent areas with truck parking surpluses, while red-shaded circles indicate areas with truck parking deficits.

Figure B-1: Trucks Parked by Location (2022)

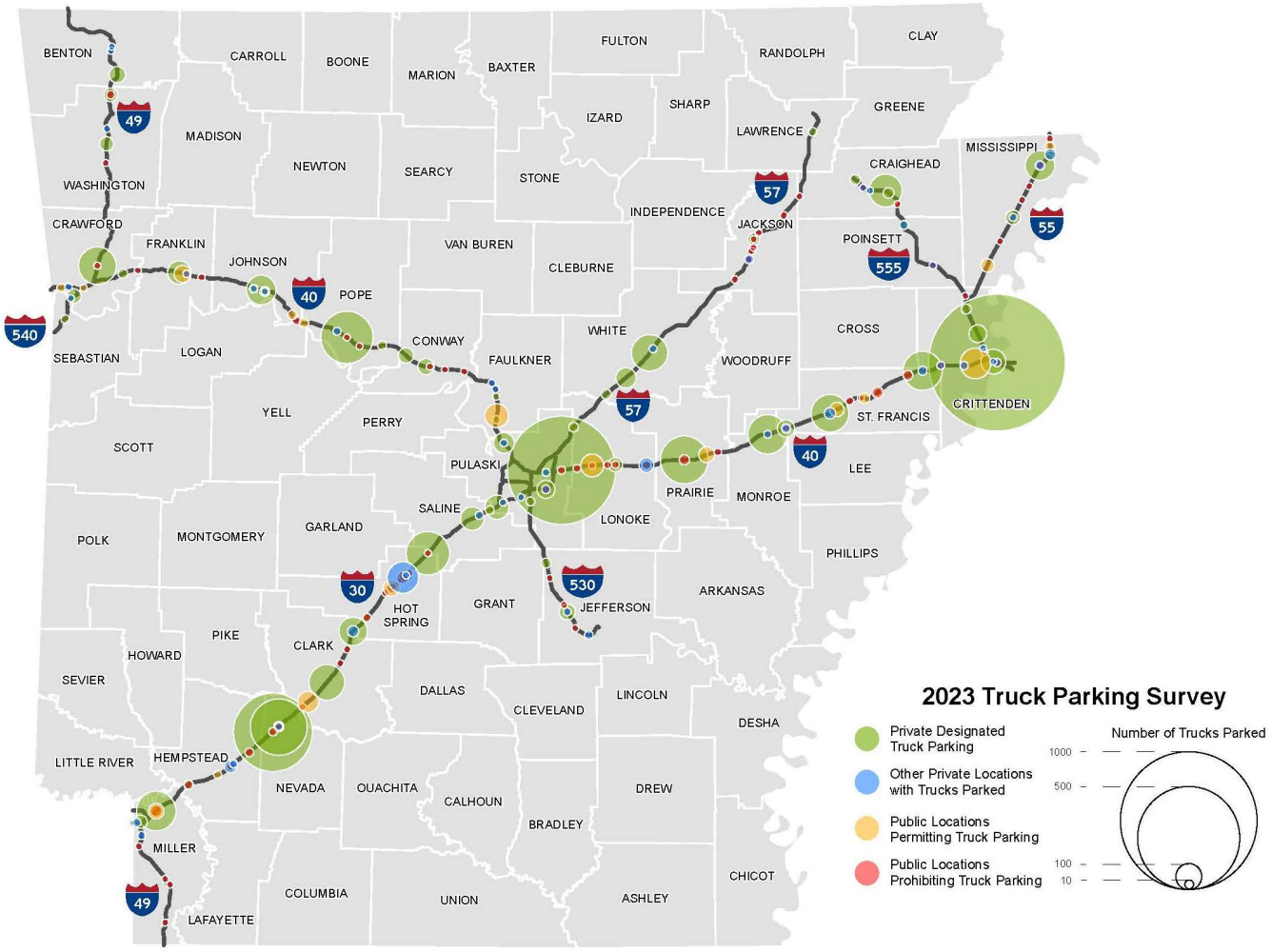

Figure B-2: Trucks Parked by Location (2023)

Figure B-3: Trucks Parked by Location (2024)

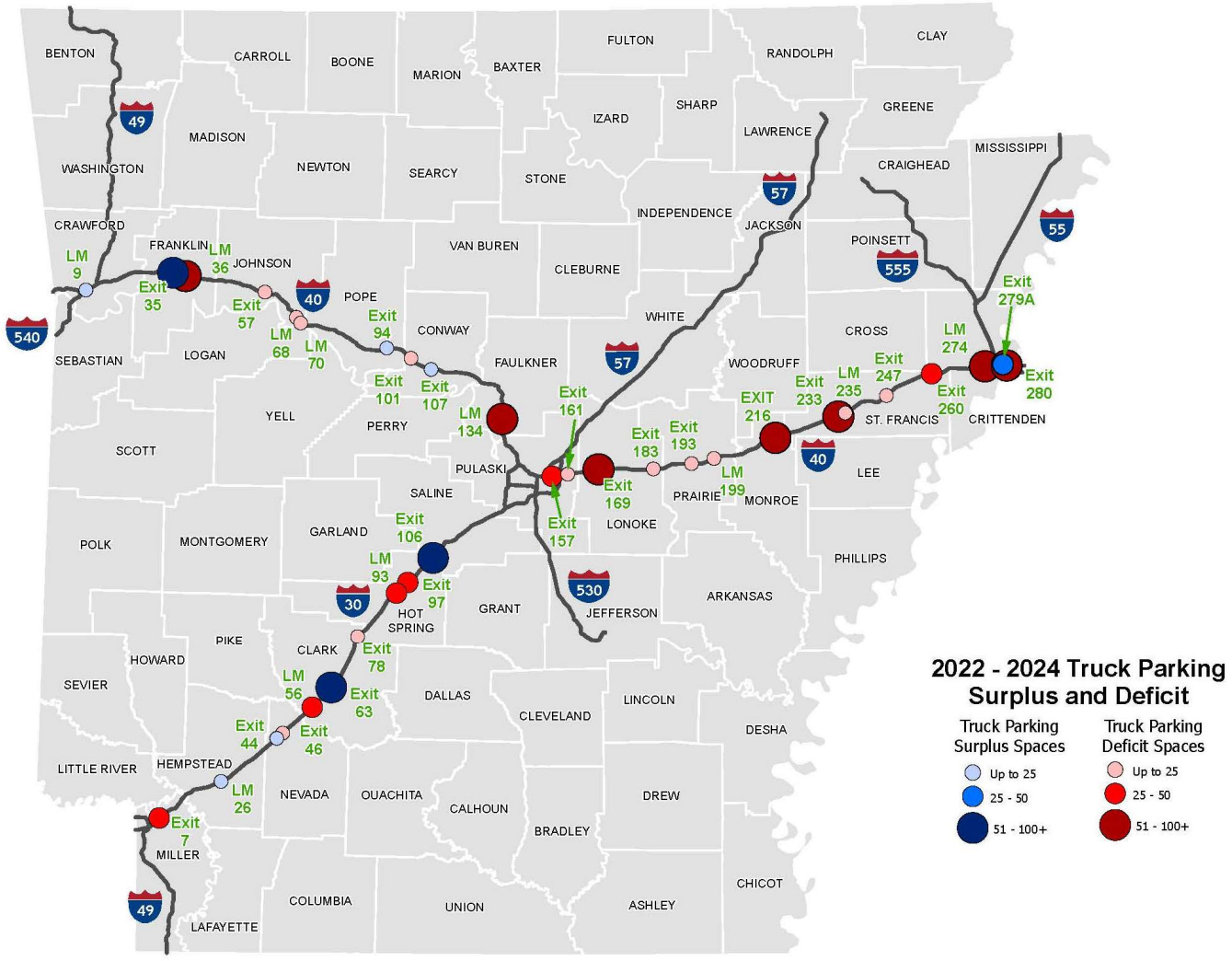

Figure B-4: Three-Year (2022–2024) Average Truck Parking Deficit or Surplus for I-30 and I-40