One of downtown's largest parking lots will close this week as developers prepare for construction of the incoming $400 million casino at Broadway Commons.

By Wednesday, more than 2,000 parking spots are expected to disappear as officials with Rock Gaming LLC begin fencing off the massive 22-acre parking lot at Reading Road and Broadway.

City officials say work is

under way on longer-term parking fixes that could include building new garages and expanding current facilities.

But shorter-term solutions "are still being ironed out," said Tiffany Hardy, a spokeswoman with Cincinnati's city manager's office.

The parking pinch has some small business owners stuck shelling out big bucks as they scramble for last-minute alternatives.

"I'm putting a lot of money into a temporary solution, which is really frustrating," said Jenny White, owner of "Boost...for meetings sake," a banquet and meeting facility at 538 Reading Road in Pendleton.

White's clients have relied on the soon-to-be eliminated parking that's just across the street from her small business. Without convenient parking, she's concerned she'll have to scale back the number of events Boost can host.

Now, White is trying to cobble together open spaces at three different sites - one of which may cost up to $10,000 to convert into a gravel parking lot. That's in addition to a more than $1,200 monthly rental fee she'll pay for the space.

Her landlord, Urban Sites, has been helping her scout out alternatives, but says it will likely take

a series of incremental solutions to help small business owners along Reading Road.

"I'm optimistic," said Greg Olsen, CEO at Urban Sites. "We have people at the city that have demonstrated a willingness and the ability to work with us on this."

White said the city manager's office has helped her accelerate the permitting process for her new parking lot, but she still feels like she's "scrambling" to find all the parking she needs.

Likewise, Jim Verdin, owner of the Bell Event Center in Pendleton, said his only solution may be to bus clients to his Reading Road wedding and corporate event venue from parking lots five blocks away.

"This is going to be tough for a couple of years," Verdin said. "It certainly makes no financial sense for us, but it's what we have to do. The city has not come forward at all."

To figure out alternatives, Cincinnati City Manager Milton Dohoney established a parking infrastructure group earlier this year that included Rock Gaming officials and neighborhood stakeholders.

"We've been very forthright in saying there would come a time when we would need to secure the site and the parking would go away," said Jennifer Kulczycki, a spokeswoman for Rock Gaming. "At the end of the day, we want to be a good neighbor, but at the same time we have to keep this site safe and secure. It's not feasible to allow any parking on the site when we fence it off and bring in massive grading equipment and start demolition."

To help alleviate parking pain in the future, Rock Gaming has said, it's considering allowing some public parking at the casino once it's built in 2012.

Other solutions may include a residential parking permit program for residents in Pendleton - the neighborhood directly north of the casino site, Hardy said.

Meanwhile, the city is "close" to signing off on a proposal with a private developer that would bring a 660-car parking garage and 200-room hotel to the former American Red Cross site at Eighth and Sycamore streets, Hardy said.

Also, city parking officials have said they are considering a major remake of a 260-space, city-owned garage at the northwest corner of Seventh Street and Broadway. It could yield 1,050 parking spaces overall.

Meanwhile, Downtown-based Western & Southern Financial Group recently purchased a more than 1-acre tract of land at 417 E. Seventh St. city officials said it may be considering using for parking that could accommodate about 100 vehicles.

"We are exploring alternative uses for the property that may include parking, but no final decisions have been made," said Jose Marques, a spokesman for Western & Southern.

Rock Gaming's Kulczycki said plans to close the Broadway lot originally were slated for today,but pushed back to avoid causing traffic delays or other interferences with Tuesday's election. She said the lot is expected to be fully fenced off and secured by the end of the week, after which demolition of the buildings remaining on the site will begin.

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