

PURPOSE

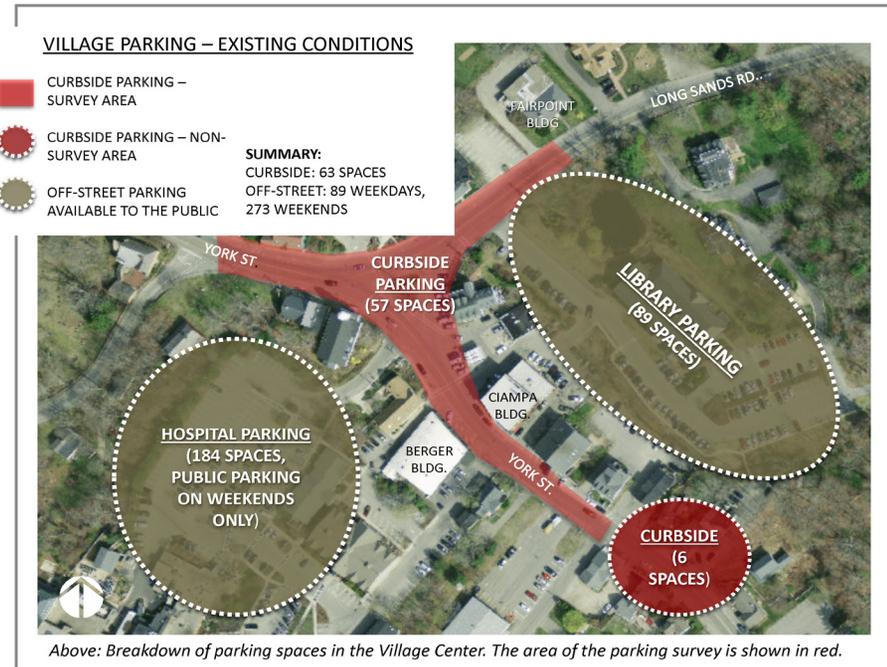
The heart of York Village is a busy commercial center, and parking is an important component of how the area functions. For Village businesses, the ready availability of parking, particularly curbside, is integral to their customer base and ultimate bottom line. To date, York Village's parking issue has been primarily couched as a supply and demand problem. Namely, the assumption has been that a lack of curbside parking within the Village core can only be resolved through an expansion of parking spaces. Over the years, these factors combined with the minimum parking requirements dictated by zoning have led to a place that caters almost exclusively to the automobile. A majority of available space has been dedicated to the automobile. Yet, despite this imbalance, there remains a strong perception that parking is insufficient and a persistent belief that the answer lies in more parking. This chapter provides an overview of the existing conditions and assessment, and recommendations related to curbside and off-street parking, as well as related zoning.

This chapter addresses:

- 3.1 Existing Conditions / Assessment**
- 3.2 Considerations**
- 3.3 Recommendations**

3.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS / ASSESSMENT

As part of this project, our team conducted weekday/weekend parking observations and counts during August peak-season and again in December. These parking observations allowed us to assess the occupancy and duration rates for on-street parking and in publicly accessible off-street lots, including the Library lot and portions of the Hospital lot, which opens to public parking on weekends. Our team also researched existing zoning standards, as they pertain to parking and land-use within the village, to



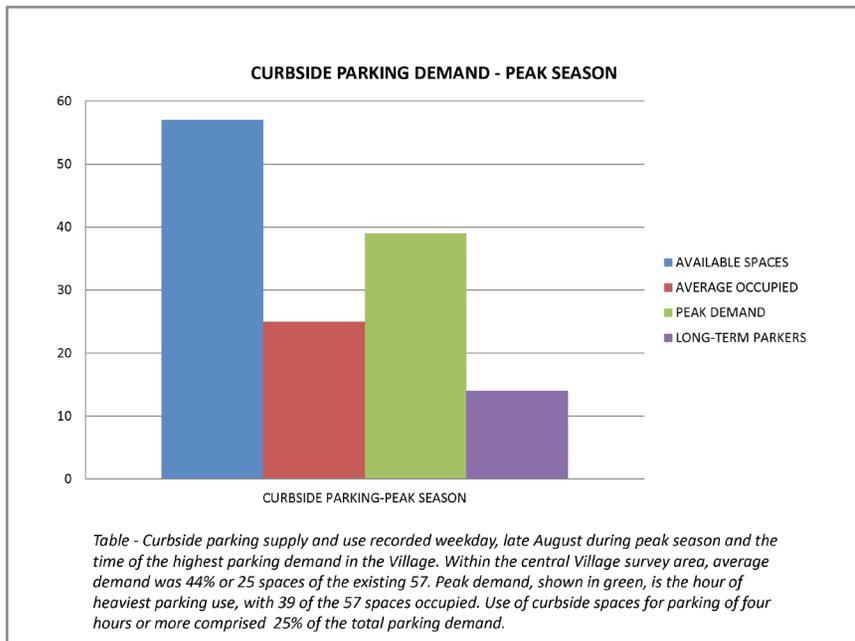
understand potential implications to both land-use and economic development patterns. Finally, we heard from property owners, local businesses, and residents about their concerns and needs for improving parking within the Village. Our findings from the inventory/assessment and outreach process suggest that parking management is needed and that parking supply is sufficient within the Village.

Curbside Parking

Availability of parking is a key necessity for attracting customers to the downtown, and the most highly valued spaces are the most convenient on-street spots. York Village currently has 57 marked curbside spaces within the central business area. Curbside parking is free with no time restrictions. Parking inventory data showed an average occupancy rate of 44% weekday and 37% weekend during the late August peak-season. The weekday, mid-December

off-peak occupancy rate was 37%. Our data revealed that when parking use was highest during weekday, occupancy was 68% during summer season and 55% off-season. Observed higher occupancies were generally during business hours (9am-5pm) when weekday occupancy rates were an average of 56.5% in the summer and 44.8% in the winter.

To better understand these figures, we also analyzed the duration of parking. On average, vehicles parked 2.6 hours on peak season weekdays, 1.8 hours on off-peak season weekdays, and 1.3 hours on peak season weekends. A closer examination of the duration and occupancy data showed that approximately a quarter of the curbside parking is used for periods of four hours or more. For example, during normal weekday business hours in peak season, approximately 14 curbside spaces on average are being used for long-term parking. For the time examined, nearly 50% of these were being used for 8 hours or more. If long-term parking was shifted to off-street lots, the average occupancy of curbside parking would be significantly reduced. When we adjusted our calculations to remove long-term use of these spaces, the average occupancy



during peak season business hours fell from 56.5% to under 25% with a peak hour maximum of 39.7% compared to the 68% observed rate. This suggests that a minimum of 27 curbside spaces are needed to meet peak hour parking demand and to ensure that there is always an adequate number of available spaces (typically 15%).

The configuration of existing curbside parking is a combination of parallel and diagonal spaces. Many of the diagonal spaces intrude into pedestrian areas and compromise sight lines for vehicles and pedestrian crossings.

Zoning – Parking Requirements

Parking requirements integrally shape both economic development and urban form. Our team researched the Town’s current zoning standards to identify any potential issues that may contribute to sprawl, inhibit economic development, or limit opportunities to maximize parking assets within the Village core.

With exception of York Beach Village, the Town takes a “minimum parking standards” approach to zoning, in which the optimal parking supply is estimated using data compiled by the International Transportation Engineers (ITE). For York Village, zoning stipulates that “required off-street parking spaces shall be located on the same lot as the principle use, except when the Planning Board approves the use of an off-site parking facility.” The joint use of a parking facility, or shared parking, is allowed if parking requirements can be met “by reason of variation in the probable time of maximum use by patrons or employees of such establishment and where said parking facility is located three hundred feet of the establishment.” There is a provision for reduction of the parking standard, but this requires the Applicant to prove that a reduction in parking will not adversely impact adjacent properties and uses, compromise the health, welfare or safety of the public, and is consistent with York’s Comprehensive Plan. This approach places the burden of proof on the Applicant and creates a potential hurdle in the review process.

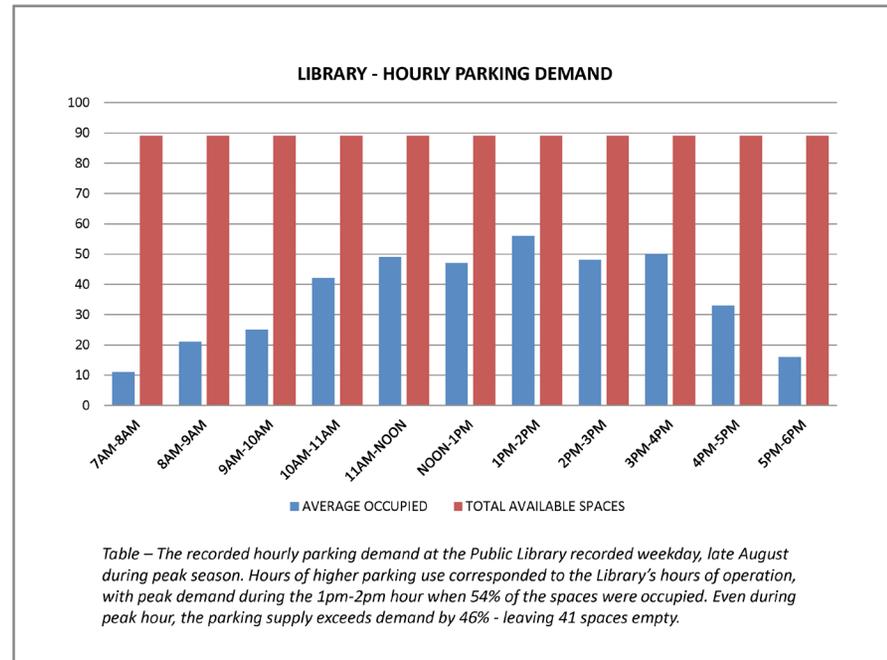
There are a number of reasons why this conventional zoning for parking is unsuitable for York Village. First, ITE data used to set parking requirements is based on limited, peak-demand observations taken in auto-centric settings that typically favor

“Parking requirements can freeze older buildings in their existing uses or even prevent any feasible use at all and therefore reduce the economic opportunities these building can offer to their neighborhoods. If a buildings does not satisfy the parking requirement for a new use, zoning will not allow it even if all other planning requirements are met.

Older buildings without on-site parking are often part of the historic fabric cities want to preserve, but parking requirements obstruct adaptive reuse. Even worse, the requirements often encourage demolition of older buildings - sometimes to make way for a parking lot.”

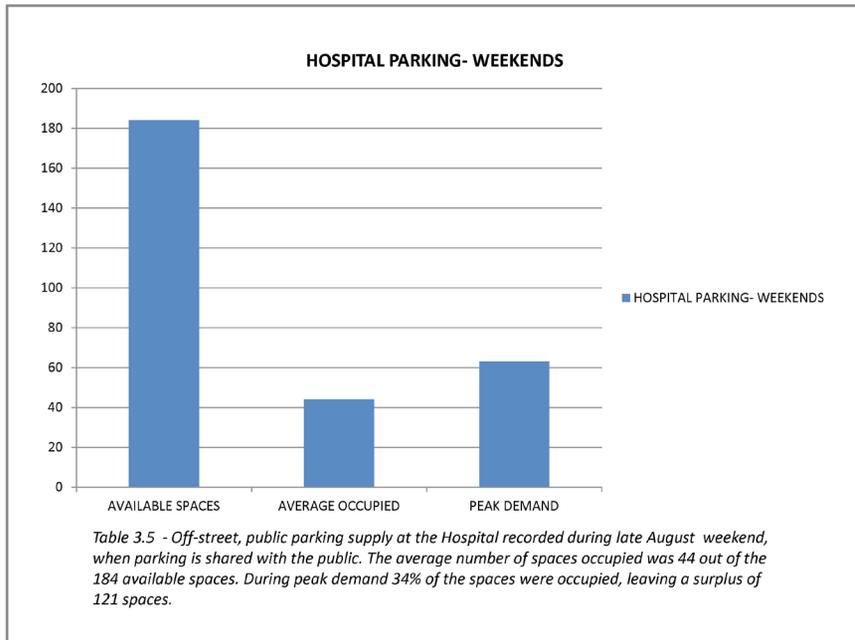
- Donald Shoup, *The High Cost of Free Parking*

sprawl over density. These small data sets of “maximum observed demand” have become the “minimum required parking supply” dictated within most land-use codes, including those for York Village. This has generally led to an over-supply of parking. A recent study of 27 mixed-use districts across the United States found that “parking was universally over-supplied, and in many cases quite significantly.” On average, researchers found that parking supply



exceeded demand by 65%. These numbers tend to be based upon the premise that parking must be individually accommodated. These conventional parking standards, which already err toward over-supply, become especially excessive for walkable, compact downtowns where parking ideally serves multiple destinations. In most cases, parking spaces provided to meet minimum requirements are not available for public parking and as such, do not contribute to the general parking supply.

In York Village, many businesses and properties within the commercial core are grandfathered from current parking requirements, provided there is no alteration or change of use. That said, it is important to recognize that the need to meet minimum standards for any alteration or change of use can also deter investment and/or redevelopment. Retrofitting existing urban sites for parking or finding nearby off-site facilities is often challenging and expensive, taking investment dollars away from those very things that draw customers: the business itself.



Excessive off-street parking requirements also undermine those distinctive qualities that make downtowns and village commercial centers unique and successful: a dense urban form that has a diversity of economic, social and cultural activities. These features are the very things that make central business districts like York Village attractive and different from suburban areas. In a typical application of conventional parking standards, approximately one-quarter of the lot is dedicated to building and one-half of the lot is dedicated to parking. Simply reducing the minimum parking standard by 50% would allow twice the space for building on a particular parcel, leading to more compact development, lower building costs and greater opportunities to stimulate economic development.

Off-Street Parking

The New York Times recently reported that there are approximately two million parking spaces in the United States and, of those, approximately a third are in parking lots. There are eight parking spaces for every car in the United States according to one cited source. A recent study by M.I.T. shows that, in some cities, parking

lots cover thirty percent of the land use area, “becoming the single most salient landscape feature of our built environment.” These figures demonstrate how parking lots have altered land patterns and the balance of land uses, particularly in our urban centers. This imbalance is reflected in the York Village commercial center where a majority of space is dedicated to parking and vehicle uses. The Village Center is decidedly auto-centric.

Our parking inventory included a survey of publicly shared parking lot usage. The compiled results show an excess of off-street parking that is much in line with the aforementioned findings. Our team conducted weekday parking studies of the York Public Library lot, which has 89 spaces available for public parking. As expected, the hours of highest parking activity and use occurred between 10am-5:30pm, corresponding roughly to the hours of operation for the library. Use of the lot during this time is 54% of capacity and generally 30% higher than early morning or late evening hours. The findings suggest that the library lot is currently under-utilized even during peak hours, with an available capacity of 37-41 spaces. The more conservative number allows for a 10% buffer to ensure there are adequate open spaces for visitors during hours of peak use.

Our survey did not include private off-street parking, such as the multiple commercial properties along the southern portion of York Street on the east side. These lots, which are located within the commercial core, primarily serve property owners, businesses, and renters of the associated buildings. Spaces are striped, but not marked for designated users. Access for these lots is via four alleyways running perpendicular to York Street and via a curb cut into the Cumberland Farms property. A driveway from the library driveway provides access to the northwesterly lot. There

"The right to have access to every building in the city by private motorcar in an age when everyone possesses such a vehicle is the right to destroy the city."

- Lewis Mumford

are currently 57 spaces associated with five properties and two contiguous paved areas that are separated by a grass median.

3.2 CONSIDERATIONS FOR PARKING

The Master Plan process included discussions with business owners, property owners, and town residents to understand needs and concerns related to parking in the Village. While there was some initial skepticism about findings from the parking survey, there seemed to be strong consensus in the acknowledgement that improving pedestrian space and enhancing the streetscape will require the reallocation of some parking spaces. People strongly supported the need for convenient, public, off-street parking opportunities in the Village center.

There are several considerations that impact the potential for curbside parking in a reorganized streetscape. First, it must be acknowledged that 36% of the current on-street parking is diagonal. These spaces most severely limit pedestrian movement, increase the potential for accidents, and restrict sight lines in the Village center. There was clear consensus that diagonal parking has to go. This said, diagonal parking is about 2.5 times more efficient than parallel curbside spaces. One parallel space requires 20- 22 feet of curb, whereas a diagonal space requires 8-9 feet. Therefore, shifting on-street parking from diagonal to parallel spaces necessarily reduces available curbside parking by at least half. Extensive curb cuts also limit opportunities for parallel parking, particularly if setbacks are added to improve sight lines at intersections and pedestrian crossings. Reconfiguring the intersection to improve clarity, safety and to reduce vehicle speeds necessitates adjustments to the roadway alignment, which further impacts opportunities for curbside spaces. Finally, the narrow right-of-way limits space and necessitates choosing between streetscape amenities and curbside parking. All of this to say that a reduction in on-street parking is a necessary outcome in order to balance pedestrian and vehicle needs.

Considering the above, making way for recommended streetscape and pedestrian improvements will require a 45-50% reduction in existing on-street parking. With this in mind, the Town must take

calculated steps to maximize other available parking opportunities in the Village. This is distinct from simply adding to the existing parking supply.

3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Managing the existing parking supply and its associated patterns of use is one of the most important steps in achieving the goals of the Master Plan for York Village. For the Village to function and be attractive for both business investment and customers there must be convenient and available parking as well as a safe and attractive pedestrian environment. The York Village Master Plan recommendations seek to rebalance the existing public right-of-way so that it serves both vehicles and pedestrians.

Numerous studies have shown that existing total parking supply is often underutilized. As in York Village, parking problems are centered upon the most convenient curb spaces even while less convenient off-street parking is readily available nearby. In many communities, including York Village, zoning using minimum parking requirements has contributed to an excess of off-street parking that is often reserved for private use and does not support multi-destination visits. For these reasons, simply increasing the off-street parking supply does not generally solve parking problems. The solution lies in creating a more flexible parking system and shifting demand from the most desirable spaces to the under-utilized ones. Initiated with new directional signage, accommodations for alternate forms of transportation, and general circulation improvements, active parking management can have enormous positive impacts within York Village.

Rethink Off-Street Parking Requirements for Zoning

Off-street parking requirements in particular, significantly compromise the urban form, reduce density and constrain economic development, thereby limiting growth and vitality in our commercial centers. Worse still, parking lots created in response to these requirements do little to satiate public parking needs since they typically serve single uses. This model is counterproductive to a diverse and dense downtown, where one space best serves multiple destinations and walkability is the focus. Rather, excessive

“If our real problem is too many cars rather than too few parking spaces, minimum parking requirements make everything else worse.”

- City official, City of Carmel, California

parking requirements serve to reduce urban density and to advance sprawl. Renowned New Urbanists Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zybek have called parking requirements “the single greatest killer of urbanism in the U.S. today.” A Buffalo, New York study found that 50% of the downtown was dedicated to parking. “If our Master Plan is to demolish all of the downtown, then we’re only halfway there. If you look very closely there are still some buildings standing in the way of parking progress,” a city administrator noted. “The downtown doesn’t have a parking problem, it has a planning problem.”

Many other communities are rethinking off-street parking requirements in their commercial cores to stimulate redevelopment of historic properties, attract new businesses and investment, and enhance the built environment. Parking reform presents a range of options, from simply reducing existing minimum standards to eliminating or even prohibiting standards altogether. Following are several examples of parking reform as it relates to zoning.

- **Reduction.** The Town of York Zoning Ordinance currently provides alternate provisions for York Beach Village. The language acknowledges walkability of the district and a high percentage of shared parking. The special provisions reduce minimum required parking standards by 50% for most land uses and allow non-residential changes of use that do not expand existing building footprints. While the code does not allow existing on-site parking to be reduced, it also does not require a lessening of non-conformity. At a minimum, the Town should

consider developing similar alternative parking standards for the York Village center.

- **Deregulation.** In 2012, Cincinnati voted to eliminate minimum parking standards within its central business district. “The goal of the ordinance is to encourage development in the urban core by permitting developers to determine their own parking needs for downtown developments,” explained a one Cincinnati council woman. “I firmly believe that the market will work to meet parking demands better than government minimum parking requirements.” This deregulation of parking essentially moves communities away from mandating parking, allowing parking instead to be economically driven and responsive to actual need. Cities including Philadelphia, Portland, and Seattle have all recently adopted the deregulation of required parking in their commercial centers. It should be noted, however, that these shifts in zoning must be supplemented with programs for shared parking and parking management.
- **Prohibition.** Going a step further, Carmel, California prohibits all off-street parking in its central commercial district in order to reduce curb cuts, improve pedestrian flow, and create opportunities for interior courts and walkways. While Carmel does have parking requirements, developers in the central commercial district pay in-lieu fees, which collectively support shared public parking spaces bordering the downtown. Most importantly, it is the absence of off-street parking that contributes to Carmel’s unique pedestrian environment that makes the town a wonderful place to live and visit. To quote a Carmel town official, “If our real problem is too many cars rather than too few parking spaces, minimum parking requirements make everything else worse.” While Carmel is on the opposite spectrum of York Village’s zoning approach, it serves to show what can be gained from reducing space dedicated to parking.

Initiate In-Lieu and Parking Credit Options

Allow developers/businesses to pay one-time in-lieu or annual parking credit fees to fund public parking facilities rather than requiring private, single destination parking on each site. In a Parking Credit Program, businesses pay a modest fee in-lieu of

providing the required off-street spaces – for example, a fee used in one small town yielded \$125/year/space. The low fees reduce barriers to new business establishment, encourage adaptive reuse of existing buildings, and create alternatives to high up-front costs of providing those parking spaces on-site or paying the more substantial in-lieu fees. Income from the program would be dedicated to a Village Parking Trust Fund for the maintenance and provision of public parking facilities. Parking credit programs do not relieve costs associated with leasing spaces or paying for off-street parking, so businesses or their employees pay for spaces as needed – just as other drivers.

Unbundle Off-Street Parking

Parking is often automatically included in rental unit pricing, which hides the true value of off-street parking spaces. As an example, the price for a two bedroom apartment with two parking spaces might be listed at \$1,500 per month. Unbundling the cost of the rental unit (\$1,200) from the cost of the parking spaces (\$150/each x 2) would create more flexibility to the renter who can reduce their cost of living, and the property owner, who can rent the space at a premium. Unbundling parking effectively identifies the economic cost of parking and incentivizes alternate modes of transportation to offset those costs. Most important, unbundled parking is an important step in setting a monetary value for in-town parking spaces. Unbundling parking from rental costs will require that the Town work closely with property owners in the Village to ensure that zoning language provides the necessary flexibility.

Encourage Shared Parking and Convert Single-Use Parking to Public Parking Where Possible

Shared parking is a key strategy for increasing off-street parking facility efficiency and use. Parking lots that serve multiple users or destinations are much more efficient than reserved or single-

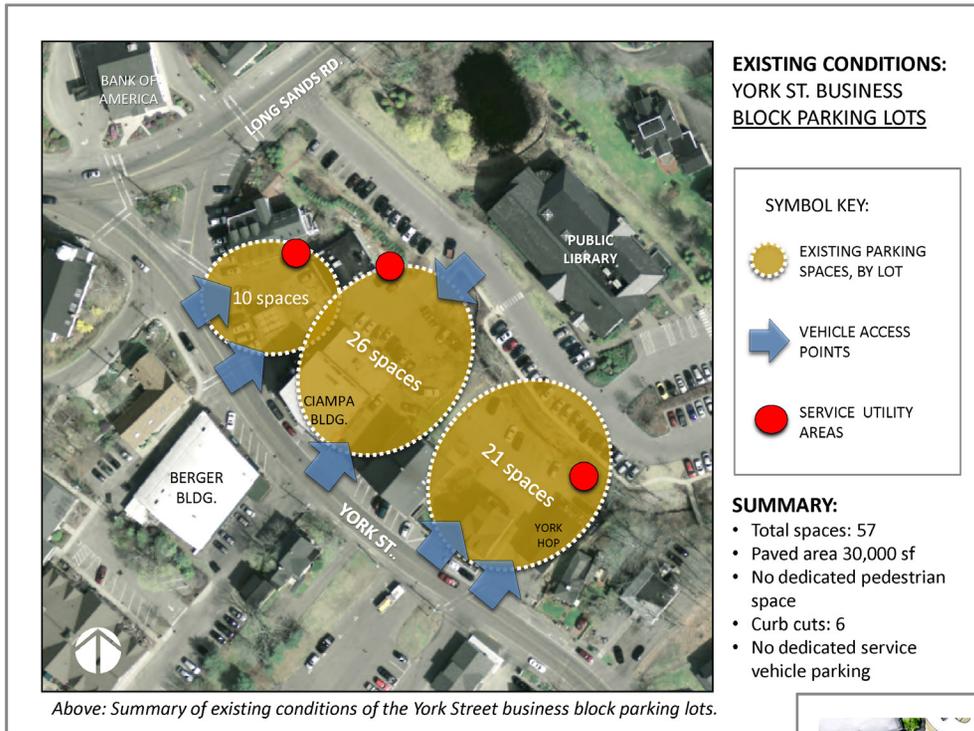


Above: View across the commercial parking areas at the rear of the York business block off York Street.

use spaces. As other towns, York Village has an abundance of underutilized private parking facilities. Increasing shared parking can reduce parking demand and can provide great benefits for the Town as well as property and business owners. Shared parking addresses a public need, reduces traffic congestion, provides a potential revenue source for lot owners, and supports goals for downtown development. While the Town may conditionally allow shared parking, minimum parking standards are excessive and the process places the burden of proof on the applicant, which can be cost prohibitive. In reconsidering its zoning, the Town has an opportunity to develop innovative approaches to parking in the Village center.

Shared Parking that serves multiple users or destinations is most successful if the destinations have different peak parking times, or if there is an overlap in patronage, allowing customers to park once and walk to multiple destinations. Parking facilities can be shared in several ways. Individual spaces, which may otherwise be reserved,

A centrally located public parking space can often substitute for two to three single-destination spaces.



Above: Summary of existing conditions of the York Street business block parking lots.

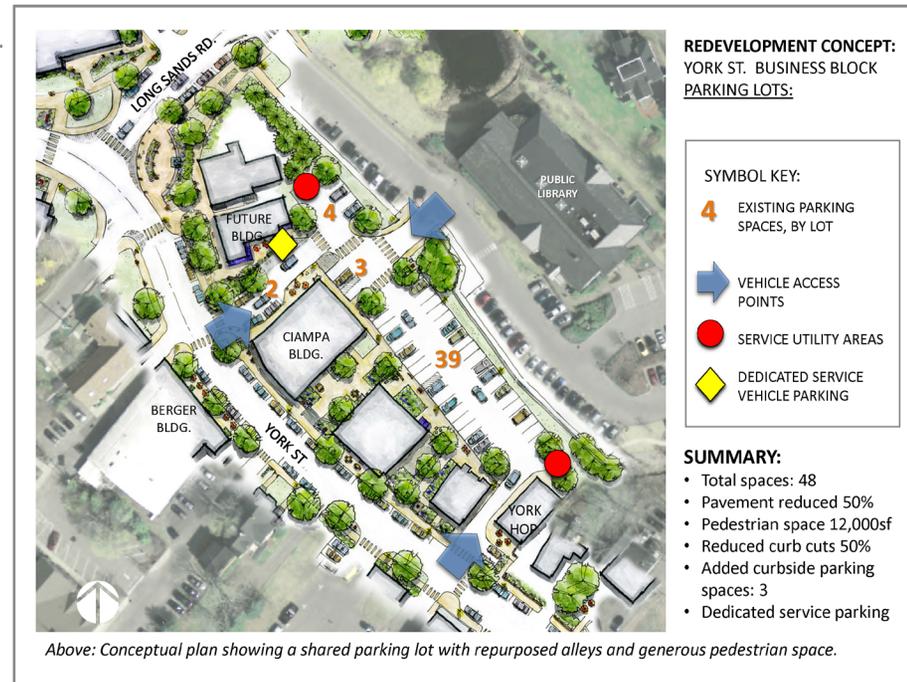
parking space, on the other hand, can often substitute for two to three single-destination spaces. For example, if three downtown businesses require 10 parking spaces each, adding 15 public spaces may provide the same benefit as adding 30 private, single-use spaces. This strategy allows for shared use of parking that can serve multiple destinations. Converting single-use parking to public parking will require both modifications to zoning as well as the development of long-term public-private partnerships. In-lieu fees or parking credits are great avenues for stimulating economic development and investing in a valuable public good.

Shared parking can work seamlessly with the Parking Credit Program by allowing business and property owners to pay in-lieu or parking credit fees to fund public parking instead of private, single-use destination parking at each site. The zoning codes should be updated to specify provisions for shared parking related to Off-Street Parking and Loading

can be shared.

Todd Litman provides the following example of shared facilities in his book, *Parking Management Strategies, Evaluation and Planning*: 100 employees can usually share 60-80 parking spaces, since at any particular time some are on leave, commuting by an alternative mode, in the field, or working another shift. Hotels, apartments, condominiums and dormitories can share parking spaces among several units, since the number of vehicles per unit varies over time. Sharing can be optional, so for example, motorists could choose between \$60 per month for a shared space or \$100 for a reserved space.

Converting off-street parking from single-use to public parking in high priority areas allows more sharing and encourages “park once” trips that support multiple destinations. Single-use parking typically has a lower demand because activities serve only one destination, such a specific business. A centrally located public



Above: Conceptual plan showing a shared parking lot with repurposed alleys and generous pedestrian space.

Standards. At its discretion, the Town can allocate in-lieu and parking credit funds for improvements to existing lots providing public parking, forming private-public partnerships when necessary to further the objectives of a parking management strategy.

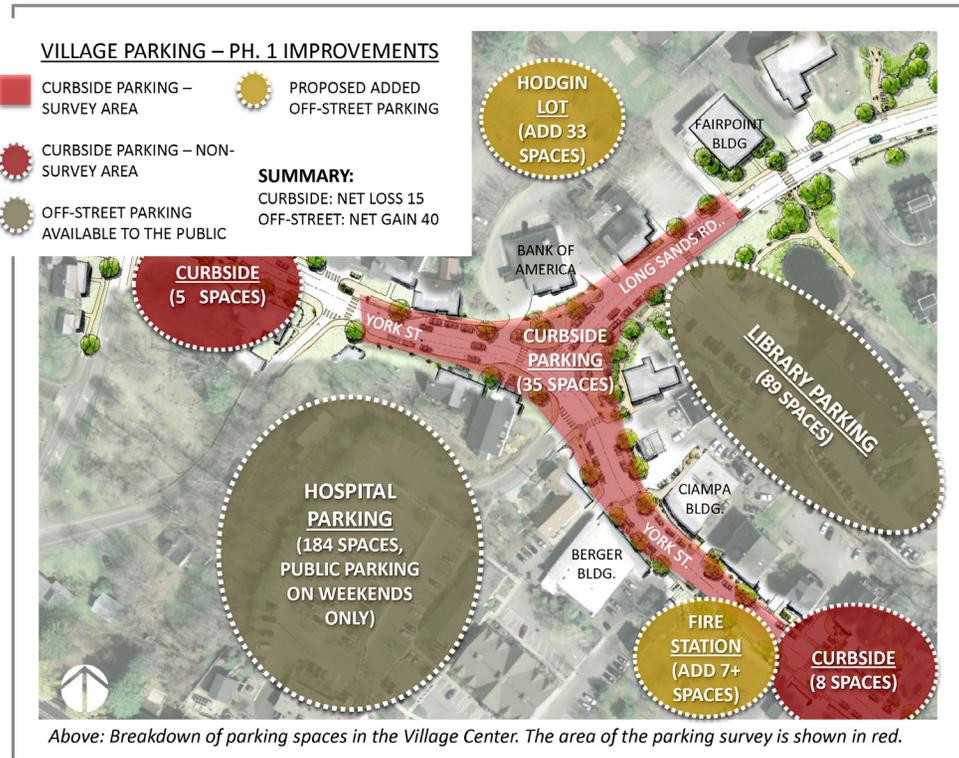
Form a Public-Private Partnership to Improve the York Street Parking Lots

As stated previously, the key objective in the parking strategy involves shifting much of the demand for curbside parking to off-street public lots. Parking facilities behind the York Street central business block, with their potential capacity and strategic location, have the greatest potential for use as a consolidated, shared use parking facility. The Town should work closely with the property and business owners to shift business owner, employee and resident parking to another nearby location in order to free up opportunities for public parking close to the Village center.

Because this parking is very convenient, it should be managed by Demand Responsive Pricing similar to on-street spaces. As an incentive to current users, the Town could initially offer free parking in these locations, later charging a nominal fee for permit parking. With other tools, such as unbundling parking or creating employee incentives for using alternate transportation, current parking demand could also be decreased. The Town of York should consider forming a public-private partnership with the property owners and fronting investment to consolidate these lots and make the physical improvements necessary to increase efficiency, safety, access and the pedestrian environment. Funds from the Parking Benefit District could be used to subsidize upkeep and future improvements as part of the partnership agreement. Oversight of the lot could be managed by the Advisory Board of the Business Improvement District.

Define Existing Public Parking within the Library Lot

There are currently 89 spaces open to the general public at the Public Library. Although the parking lot primarily serves the Library,



its use is well below capacity with only 54% of the spaces filled during peak demand. With an adjustment of 10% as a buffer to ensure open spaces, there are conservatively 37 empty spaces during the library’s busiest times. The Town has an arrangement with the Library to designate the 37 spaces along the western edge of the entrance drive as public parking, but these spaces need to be more clearly defined. These centrally-located spaces could potentially offset the anticipated reduction in curbside parking, so it will be important to clearly identify these spaces with signage. The town should also consider adding parking location signs near the Long Sands Road and York Street lot entrances..

Acquire the Hodgin Lot for Public or Shared Parking

The Town has recently considered acquiring the 33-space Hodgin parking lot, a land-locked parcel approximately 1/3 acre in size located north of the Bank of America property on York Street.

“Under-regulated on-street parking results in limited parking availability, inefficient utilization of spaces, and excess vehicular circulation.”

– *On-Street Parking Management and Pricing Study, San Francisco County Transportation Authority. 2009.*

While the lot was formerly leased to the bank, it has been blocked off and unused for the past several years. The parcel has been offered for sale at well above assessed value, but it presents a unique opportunity for the Town to acquire public parking near the Village center. The Hodgkin property also provides opportunities for improving pedestrian and vehicle connectivity with parking spaces available near Town Hall.

As the Town implements these recommendations for shared and public parking, this lot becomes especially valuable. As stated before, the redevelopment of commercial parking lots behind the York Street business block is a creative way to increase the supply of off-street public parking in the heart of the Village center. For that scenario to be successful, however, employees and business owners must park elsewhere, and the alternative parking must be convenient and safe. Acquisition of the Hodgkin lot would provide the Town with the necessary leverage to negotiate a shared parking arrangement with business and property owners that would free up valuable parking spaces for the general public within the heart of the Village.

Update Fire Station Lot To Include Public Parking Spaces

The Fire Station site presents an opportunity to expand public parking opportunities in the Village Center. This can be done

without impacting the stated parking demands of the Fire Department personnel. The Hospital owns a narrow parcel abutting the property along its northern boundary. The Hospital Board has expressed a willingness to consider allowing the Town to utilize a portion of this lot to convert existing parallel parking spaces to perpendicular spaces. This would add a minimum of seven public off-street parking spaces. The Town should work with the Fire Department to assess their staff parking needs and to develop a plan for streamlining parking on site. If the Fire Station is eventually relocated, the Town should redevelop the parcel to include infill development with off-street shared or public parking. New zoning must be implemented to allow this flexibility, however.

Initiate a Demand-Responsive Pricing System for On-Street Parking

On its face, free curbside parking is often seen as a good thing: supportive of businesses and activities in the Village center. A closer examination of the facts shows that the opposite is true. Free curbside parking in the Village center offers benefits limited to the few “first come, first served” drivers, a quarter of whom have been shown to utilize these valuable spaces in excess of four hours or more. This pattern of use reduces the availability of on-street parking for customers and adds unnecessary traffic as cars cruise around looking for empty spaces. Over the years, on-street parking in York Village has displaced pedestrian and streetscape spaces that contribute to “sense of place,” and one of its most important marketable resources.

While York Village currently has no time-limited parking in the business center, there has been discussion about using time-limits to prevent long-term parking. Shop owners in particular have expressed frustration that on-street parking by employees and residents creates a lack of curbside spaces for customers. However, there are several critical factors to consider before instituting time-limited parking. First, not only is time-limited parking a punitive and typically unpopular revenue source, it is also fairly ineffective as a management tool. A recent study in Seattle found that the average duration of stay for cars parked in one-hour limit spaces was, on average, over two-hours. Surveys have also shown that over 50% of all cars parked in time-limit zones are either in violation of the time limits or are parked illegally.

Many communities have adopted demand-responsive pricing as an effective means for shifting demand from on-street parking to less convenient, but plentiful off-street spaces. Studies have shown that properly priced curb parking ensures a balance of vacant spaces, reduces the time required to find curbside parking, lessens the uncertainty of travel time, and reduces traffic congestion. Short-term parkers tend to be more concerned about the time it takes to find a vacant space than about the price of parking. Pricing based on performance goals, such as maintaining a 15% - or one space per block – vacancy rate, responds appropriately to shifting demand by the hour or season: higher during times of peak demand times and lower at other times. Price-based regulation also includes strategies to discourage long-term curbside parking by charging higher rates for successive time periods. This is also called progressive pricing or length of stay pricing. This strategy allows the relaxation of time-limit restrictions while encouraging a higher turnover of spaces. It also provides greater flexibility and convenience to users.

Newer, multi-space electronic meters are user friendly and more convenient, with interactive screens and cashless transactions. They easily accommodate variable rates and can be managed wirelessly from a single, remote location. With one per block, these meters do not clutter the sidewalks or require marking individual parking spaces. In fact, studies have shown that unmarked curbs can typically accommodate 10-15% more cars in any available space. Many communities manage on-street parking without lining individual spaces, including the City of Portland.

Establish a Parking Benefit-Business Improvement District

Business owners and residents are much more likely to support paying for parking if the generated revenue goes back to public amenities that benefit the public good: clean and safe sidewalks, streetscape improvements, improved store facades, or enhanced security. According to one planner, “curb parking revenue is a benefit in search of a beneficiary: the funds need the right recipient to generate political support for market prices.” One way to do this is to establish a Parking Benefit District associated with a Business Improvement District (BID). In a BID, the property/business owners identify, and assess themselves to pay for, public services

Studies have shown that properly priced curb parking ensures a balance of vacant spaces, reduces the time required to find a curb parking, lessens the uncertainty of travel time and reduces traffic congestion.

beyond those provided by the City. These assessments are roughly proportionate to the benefits received, and the costs borne by each property/business owner are relatively small. Since individual assessments are typically exceeded by the commercial return, there is great economic incentive for establishing a BID. Spending the revenue to benefit residents and business owners in visible and meaningful ways also creates a powerful new constituency for market pricing of parking, particularly since non-residents bear the majority of the cost.

As an example, San Diego established a Community Parking District (CPD) program in 1997. The program returns 45% of the curbside parking and other related revenues, such as in-lieu and parking credit fees, to the designated parking district. The City currently has six parking districts that are, with City approval, designated as business improvement districts or community/ non-profit organizations. Each has its own Advisory Board of local residents and business representatives who work together to prioritize plans for the use of the parking revenues.

Programs like this can provide a stimulus for private investment. Old Pasadena, now one of Southern California’s most popular shopping and entertainment areas, used dedicated meter revenue to finance public improvements that have played a major role in the downtown’s revival. In 1978, the City decided that revitalization needed to build on Old Pasadena’s unique character, but it was not until Pasadena devised a creative parking policy in 1993 that the City was able to finance its vision. City officials worked with the Business Improvement District to establish boundaries for the Old

Pasadena Parking Meter Zone (PMZ) and set up the Old Pasadena PMZ Advisory Board of business and property owners in the district. The City borrowed \$5 million to fund streetscape and alleyway improvements using parking meter revenue to repay the debt. In subsequent years, as pedestrian traffic has increased, the funds are also used to increase public services such as sidewalk sweeping, trash collection, foot patrols or parking enforcement. In the words of Donald Shoup, this public investment has created “a place where people want to be, rather than merely another place where everyone can park for free.”

Delineate Loading Zones and Develop Loading Zone Policies

Areas of commercial activity require designated loading zones and/or policies to ensure a proper integration with other uses. York Village is especially challenged by the volume of its summer traffic flow, the width and orientation of side streets, and topography. With streetscape improvements and the long-term reduction of curb cuts, the Town will need to work closely with Village merchants and suppliers to identify specific needs and to assess the best strategies for managing delivery activities, particularly during busy summer and fall months.

In general, studies suggest that a loading zone is best located at the end of a street block in the direction of travel or at the entrance of an alley, where a driver can access multiple destinations from a single location. The minimum recommended length for a loading zone is thirty feet. Ideally, there should be one loading zone per block, oriented to support “front-in, front-out” travel that does not require the driver to back up. Currently, private off-street lots and existing access-ways are heavily used for local deliveries. For this reason, any future closure of alleys or reconfiguration of parking spaces would need to ensure continued access.

Develop a Parking Way-Finding System

Many of York Village’s parking issues have resulted in part because information about parking locations, regulations, prices, and other helpful user information has been greatly inadequate. Many residents, for example, are unaware that the hospital allows public parking from Friday night through Sunday night. Public parking is available at the library lot, but is currently unmarked. As a result,

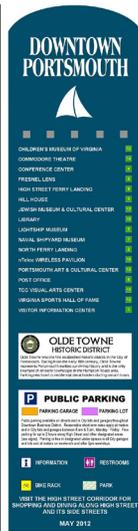
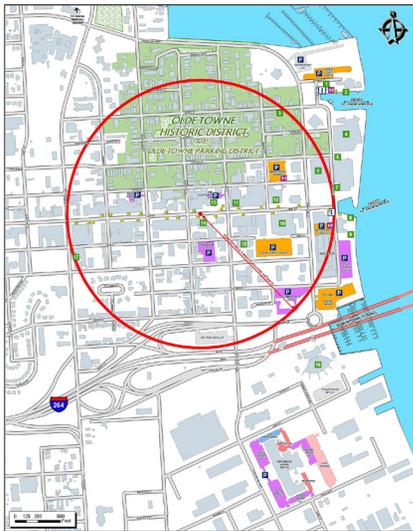


Above image: Dedicated loading zone zones behind the commercial block would expedite deliveries and mitigate potential conflicts between pedestrians, passenger vehicles and delivery trucks.

curbside parking is the only obvious public parking available for visitors. This is despite a relative abundance of nearby public off-street parking.

Development of a parking way-finding system to direct cars from main transportation routes to designated parking lots is a key component of the overall parking management strategy. Parking information can be incorporated in street signage, visitor materials, kiosks, and digitally on a “parking and transportation” specific web site.

The Town should engage an environmental graphic design firm to develop a coordinated signage program that includes parking way-finding and possibly branding. A well-developed parking system brand conveys a positive message to visitors and residents about the quality and management of parking facilities, which helps parking to emerge as a positive and marketable asset. As a short-term measure, the Town should install parking directional signs using the blue international symbol and arrows at designated locations on Route One and specified routes. Consideration should be given for motorists leaving the lots as well, with signage indicating directions



Images, left to right: Downtown District wayfinding map for the City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire; Public parking sign in Freeport, Maine; Directional signage along Route One entering Freeport.

back to Route One north and south. To orient visitors, off-street lots should include directional information to important destination points in the Village Center.

Beautify Parking Lots and Enhance Connections

An important part of parking management strategy includes enhancing safety and connectivity for pedestrians traveling from off-street parking areas to destinations. A pedestrian-oriented environment with complimentary streetscape elements, landscaping, and signage has a powerful impact on its users. Studies show a strong correlation between perceptions of safety and visual beauty – well maintained and landscaped spaces generally elicit a greater sense of security in both men and women. Improvements to pedestrian circulation routes and the parking lots themselves are therefore important factors in raising the level of use of off-street parking lots as a safe and desirable alternative to curbside parking.

CONCLUSION

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, lack of parking can have serious implications to a business district like York Village. Despite the fact that the majority of available space in the Village has been

dedicated to the automobile, there remains a strong perception that parking is still insufficient. What to do? This chapter provided recommendations for enhancing public parking in the Village center through adjustments in zoning, active management techniques, and public-private cooperation. It is important to note that these changes will require time and coordination. Change will happen incrementally and strategies may need to be adjusted over time, but one thing is clear: setting the stage for and adapting to the needs of a growing Village economy will require a significant investment to parking resources and management.

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