



ULI TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL REPORT

MAYNARD, MA

MAYNARD, MA

DECEMBER 11, 2019



**Urban Land
Institute**

Boston/New England

URBAN LAND INSTITUTE (ULI)

ULI is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit research and education organization supported by its members. The mission of ULI is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. Founded in 1936, the institute now has over 40,000 members worldwide representing the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines, working in private enterprise and public service, including developers, architects, planners, lawyers, bankers, and economic development professionals, among others.

ABOUT ULI BOSTON

ULI Boston/New England serves the six New England states and has over 1,400 members. As a preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI Boston/New England facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among local, and regional leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better places.

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ABOUT THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL (TAP) PROGRAM

ULI Boston/New England's Real Estate Advisory Committee convenes Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs) at the request of public officials and nonprofit organizations facing complex land use challenges who benefit from planning and development professionals providing pro bono recommendations.

At the TAP, a group of diverse professionals specially assembled with expertise in the issues posed spend one to two days visiting and analyzing existing conditions, identifying specific planning and development issues, and formulating realistic and actionable recommendations to move initiatives forward in a way consistent with the applicant's goals and objectives.

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Executive Summary

The Maynard Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) convened on December 11, 2019, at Maynard Town Hall, 195 Main Street, and at the Maynard Public Library, 77 Nason Street, in Maynard, under the direction of ULI Boston/New England. Over the course of the day, the TAP, consisting of eight real estate and land-use professionals, along with a ULI staff representative and a report writer, toured the study site, met with local business owners and representatives from the Town of Maynard, and other key stakeholders. Panelists used the information gathered to develop recommendations for the site which were presented in a public meeting the evening of December 11.

This TAP day was sponsored by MassDevelopment and the Town of Maynard.

Chapter 1: ULI and the TAP Process.

Offers an overview of ULI Boston/New England and its Technical Assistance Panels and the panelists and stakeholders who took part in this TAP to address questions posed by the town concerning Naylor Court or "The Basin". Maynard was seeking guidance on strategies to: encourage private investment to supplement the town's placemaking initiatives; activate the Basin as cultural destination; and preserve parking while enhancing pedestrian access and reducing impervious surfaces. The chapter also outlines the study area for the TAP and describes the process undertaken by the panelists and stakeholders during the information gathering sessions and subsequent charrette.

Chapter 2: Background and History

Provides a brief overview of Maynard as well as a brief history of the town; a physical description of the site under consideration, including its placement in relation to adjacent

attractions in the town; and key population and demographic information that provide insight into the issues facing Maynard today.

Chapter 3: Assets and Opportunities

Following the TAP panel's review of the resource binder, tour of the general study area, and two morning interview sessions with stakeholders, the TAP panel identified assets and opportunities presented by this key location, which can be utilized. Assets include Maynard's convenient Metrowest location, the lively and active downtown business and arts community, sufficient parking in the downtown area, and the variety of mobility options in the area including walking and biking trails, shuttles to the commuter rail station in South Acton, and highway access.

Chapter 4: Challenges

In keeping with both the background provided by the town as well as concerns raised by the stakeholders, the TAP panel identified concerns for the Town of Maynard to consider moving forward. Challenges include the conflicting concerns over parking and pedestrian access and safety and the continued economic development of the areas adjacent to the study area as well as the priorities of the different stakeholders.

Chapter 5: Recommendations

Following its afternoon charrette, the TAP panel came up with a range of recommendations for the town to consider in response to the questions posed concerning the general study area. Recommendations include placemaking and branding efforts to improve the look and feel of Naylor Court, ways to increase pedestrian access and safety, and short- and long-term ideas for expanding Veterans' Memorial Park.

Chapter 6: Funding

Provides identified sources of funding for various improvements including grants and funding options from public and private sources.

Depending on the level of expenditure and civic willingness to experiment with options concerning parking and transportation, this parcel can be transformed into a safe, useful, and unifying center for the town.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

The Town of Maynard has multiple options to turn the unattractive but utilitarian Naylor Court lot into the true “heart of Maynard.”

The TAP Process

ULI Boston/New England convened a volunteer panel of experts whose members represent a wide range of commercial real estate disciplines. The task was to analyze the challenges and opportunities facing the Town of Maynard as it considered a revitalization strategy and conceptual plan for the town-owned parking lot at Naylor Court (aka “The Basin”). Panelists included architects, planners, and developers.

Panel Members

Co-Chairs

Ed O’Rourke, Director of Business Development, Commodore Builders

Larry Spang, AIA, LEED AP, Principal, Arrowstreet

Panel

Kathy Lynch, Senior Landscape Architect, VHB

Barry Abramson, President, Abramson & Associates, Inc.

Christine Madore, AICP, VP Real Estate Services, MassDevelopment

Mike Finch AIA, Associate Bergmeyer

Jane Howard, Founding Principal, Howard Stein Hudson

Eric Halvorson, AICP, Principal, RKG Associates

Panelists have donated their time.

ULI Staff

Manikka Bowman, Director of Policy & Outreach

Sara Marsh, Manager

Michelle Landers, Executive Director

TAP Writer Clea Simon

Stakeholders

The TAP benefited from the participation of a diverse group of stakeholders—representatives from the local business

community, town officials, and members of Maynard’s creative community—who came together to discuss issues relating to the overall community and economic future of Maynard.

Bill Cranshaw, Maynard Planning Board, Affordable Housing Trust, Community Preservation Committee, resident

Adam Conn, Maynard Master Plan Steering Committee, Acme Theater actor, resident

Tim Hess, Owner, Studio InSitu Architects Inc., resident

Alonso and Alma Moreno, Owners, El Huipil Restaurant and Azucar Restaurant

Lynda Thayer, Maynard Business Alliance, Owner: Look Optical, resident

Jason Weeks, Executive Director, Cambridge Arts Council, resident

Kerry Healy, resident

Lorne Bell, Maynard Co-op Grocery representative, freelance journalist, resident

Dan Nash, Maynard Parking Authority member, resident

Andy Moerlein, Maynard Cultural Council member, local artist, resident

Jack MacKeen, Maynard Economic Development Committee and Historic Commission member, resident

Jim and Jacque MacDonald, Principals of MacDonald Development, active local developer

David Mark, local author, Maynard historian, resident

Paula Copley, Manager, Middlesex Bank

Rosalind Greenstein, Maynard Economic Development Committee member, Tufts University professor, resident

Steve Trumble, Owner, Maynard Fine Arts Theater

Julie Love Gagen, Maynard Business Alliance; Owner, Be the LOVE Yoga

The Assignment



The study area is located in the center of the town, immediately south of the Veterans' Memorial Park. Currently, the lot is a mix of private and public parking areas, driveways, restaurants, and storefronts (as well as the rear exits of some buildings). The lot is also where businesses access dumpsters and pedestrian access is challenging.

The purpose of the TAP was to answer three questions posed by the Town of Maynard concerning Naylor Court ("The Basin"), in Maynard's downtown. These questions were:

1. What strategies can be implemented to encourage private investment to supplement the town's targeted place-making initiatives in the Basin, such as: the permitting of outdoor dining; enhanced pedestrian features; Veterans' Memorial Park (VMP) improvements and the offering of "Business Enhancement Environment Program" (BEEP) grants?
2. How can the town activate the Basin as an arts and culture destination to further the goals of the Cultural District?
3. How can the town balance the preservation of parking while creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment and reducing impervious surface in the Basin?

Through the course of the day, the panel fielded general inquiries about possibilities for the town to improve traffic patterns, safety, and access to nearby restaurants and businesses, including the popular Fine Arts Cinema, as well as questions about the impact of any redevelopment of the Naylor Court lot on surrounding businesses. These queries, as well as the original three questions, were raised during a tour of the site and adjacent parts of the city as well as in two sequential meetings with stakeholders held during the morning and a luncheon meeting with representatives of the town.



View of Naylor Court from Veterans' Park.



Veterans' Park.

The Process

The Maynard TAP was held on December 11, 2019. A week prior to the TAP, panelists were provided briefing materials by the town which contained information on the study area, as well as the larger Maynard community. On TAP day, panelists from ULI Boston/ New England were greeted at the Maynard Town Hall by Bill Nemser, Maynard town planner, who led the ULI panel on a 40-minute tour of Maynard and the site.

The tour began with a visit to Mill and Main, the site of the former Assabet Woolen mill, which has been repurposed for creative office space. The sprawling site, with 1.1 million SF of space spread over three buildings, is approximately half occupied. The property has a parking garage on the east side of the complex and a large parking lot on the southwest side of the complex, which was reported to be underutilized. The property is located in an exceptionally scenic area between the former Mill Pond and the Assabet River. The area is zoned for lofts and one-bedrooms. Currently, several smaller high-tech companies lease space in the complex, including Acacia and Stratus. It is also home to Knowledge Beginnings, the only full-scale daycare/pre-school in the town.

The tour then proceeded into the center of town, passing by ArtSpace Maynard, a nonprofit community arts center housed in a former middle school on Summer Street. The shuttle stopped at the recently restored, Fine Arts Cinema, and panelists toured the Veterans' Memorial Park, across the street. Panelists noted the memorial as well as the adjacent open area, which serves as a gathering and performance space. Stairs (there is also a ramp) led down from the park to the main area of study, Naylor Court, aka "The Basin."

Panelists toured the town-owned lot where several smaller parking areas feed into the main lot ringed by businesses and the park. A small building, the remnant of an earlier parking garage that has since been demolished, serves to provide electrical equipment for the recharging of electric vehicles and other uses. As noted by the Town Planner, the various parking areas are not well delineated, and the spaces are inconsistently sized and marked.

A number of businesses, notably the Mexican restaurant El Huipil, have taken advantage of the central nature of the main parking lot and have oriented their entrances toward it as if it were a central piazza, with inviting entrances and even a mural and outdoor

seating area. Other businesses are treating the lot as service use only with dumpsters, receiving and storage, and other back-of-house uses that make the overall area less attractive.

Progressing through the lot revealed the lack of signage and clearly defined crosswalks. There are no clear pedestrian pathways, and the access to the streets was often via the same narrow passageways used by cars or delivery trucks.

The panelists then reconvened at the Maynard Public Library, where they met with stakeholders in two meetings.

At the stakeholder meetings, many issues were discussed including: the necessity of convenient, centralized parking to the continued economic health of Maynard's downtown businesses and service providers.

During the discussion, two potentially competing sets of interests were identified: maintaining the ease and accessibility of parking in Naylor Court while wanting to improve the overall look and feel of the space at the center of town.

Stakeholders also brought up a desire to incorporate arts into this central site. Ecological concerns, such as repaving with a porous or "green" surface, were also mentioned.

Following the stakeholder meetings, the panelists then engaged in an intensive "closed door" charrette to develop recommendations based on the briefing information and site tour, as well as input from stakeholders. "Next step" recommendations were shared with residents of Maynard, including elected officials, local artists, business owners and the general public at a public presentation at the library that evening



Mural created by El Huipil restaurant at the building's entrance.

Background and History

Maynard is justly proud of its reinvention. A former one-industry mill town, it has become an arts center, a home to internet and tech startups, and a regional gathering place - the "downtown" for its neighboring communities lacking active town centers.

This thriving and multifaceted reinvention is a far cry from Maynard's industrial origins. Built around the Assabet River, which flows through the town, Maynard first found prominence in the 19th century as a mill town. With Maynard's American Powder Mill producing gunpowder and the Assabet Woolen Mill making cloth, Maynard was essential to the Union Army in the Civil War. When this kind of heavy industry moved on, Maynard experienced a second wave of investment when technology companies including Raytheon and the Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) moved into the old mill buildings in the 1950s. DEC eventually took over the entire former Assabet Woolen Mill complex, earning Maynard the title of "Mini Computer Capital of the World." The company's departure in 1998 (when it was purchased by Compaq) spurred the redevelopment of these buildings into multi-tenant space, now known as Mill and Main. This space houses multiple tech startups

and other small businesses as the Maynard economy diversifies.

Currently home to over 150 local businesses, Maynard is both walkable and picturesque, retaining its distinctive New England downtown, which served as the setting for the recent film "Knives Out" and draws shoppers and visitors from neighboring towns, such as Acton, Stow, and Sudbury to its arts and cultural centers, recreational activities, and seasonal farmers market. Although neighboring Concord also has a downtown area, Maynard's thriving restaurants and attractions make it a regional draw.

Today the primary employers include Acacia Communications, Inc., one of the prime tenants at Mill and Main, followed by Gilson Inc., the Green Meadow Elementary School, and then Kuebix LLC, another Mill and Main tenant. The Massachusetts State Police crime laboratory is another major employer in the town, as are Stratus Technologies, Epsilon Associates, and Fisheye Software. The breakdown into employment sectors shows significant concentrations in educational services, health care and social assistance (29%); professional, scientific, management, and administrative and waste management services (16%); and retail trade (12%).

According to local historian David Mark, During the Great Depression, a public bathroom was built where the parking lot south of Memorial Park is now. The note on photo tells us "Built by the W. P. A. during the depression of the 1930's. It was used as an alert center for the Air Wardens during World War II. And was dismantled when the parking lot was enlarged to the rear of Memorial Park."

An 1875 map shows Glendale House (hotel) and a connecting alley between Summer and Main Streets. An 1889 map shows the hotel as



Park restroom, built by the Works Progress Administration during the Great Depression.

Maynard Hotel, and no connection between the streets. The Maynard Hotel was destroyed by fire on January 29, 1921. Memorial Park was dedicated on the hotel site on November 15, 1925.

From photographs of the park's dedication which are at the Historical Society collection the park appeared to extend farther south, behind the monument, as a grass slope. Beyond that, there were wood-frame buildings. At some point, a retaining wall was built behind the monument and the area south of that excavated to make a level parking lot. The wood-frame buildings also demolished, the area where they were now part of the parking area.

In time, the grassed area of the park was extended westward facing Summer Street, to Nason Street. Just south of that, facing Nason Street, a two-level parking deck existed 1984-2014 (demolished due to poor condition). Where that was, now northwest part of parking, large retaining wall (potential future mural site) and ramps that provide connection from the basin to street level at Nason Street.

Demographics

With a population of 10,560, Maynard is an affordable option appealing to families looking to own a home in the close-in western

suburbs of Boston. Although the greatest percentage of its residents range in age from 35 to 59 years old, it has an increasing number of five- to nine-year-olds, indicative of the young families moving to Maynard. Family households make up 64% of Maynard households, 0.8% above the Commonwealth average, although it also has a higher rate of non-family households than do its neighboring communities. Of the non-family households in Maynard, approximately 82% are householders living alone and almost 30% are seniors living alone.

These households are largely homeowners, with 73% owning rather than renting (significantly more than the Massachusetts average of 62%). In 2017, median home value was \$334,000, an increase of 2% from the previous year. Median household income is \$95,833, below the average of neighboring towns such as Concord but 29% above the state average. A full 14% of households earn more than \$200,000 annually, or 33% more than the Massachusetts average, while only 14% earn less than \$25,000 annually (22% fewer than the state average).

Although Maynard is overwhelmingly (more than 90%) of European descent, it is increasing in diversity, with significant Asian, African American, and bi- or multi-racial residents.



Maynard Hotel, photo credit: Maynard Historical Society Archive.



Maynard Hotel fire, January 29, 1921. Photo credit: Maynard Historical Society Archive.

Assets and Opportunities

Located between I-495 and I-95 approximately 25 miles west of Boston and 10 minutes from Route 2 and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) commuter line, Maynard is experiencing modest growth and attracting new residents, including many young families who have a vested interest in sustaining Maynard's livable, small-town environment. Maynard's arts community contributes to the life of the town with a full calendar of much-loved activities, including the holiday market, the "Sip and Stroll" gallery visits and the annual Maynard Fest.

These activities in turn, support downtown businesses and draw visitors from surrounding areas. Residents of neighboring towns, several of which lack a traditional downtown, have come to view Maynard as a regional center and frequently come to Maynard to shop, dine, and enjoy the activities available in a walkable downtown.

Naylor Court is located at the heart of Maynard. Its central location downtown, set in the middle of many of Maynard's restaurants and attractions and adjacent to the Veterans Memorial Park, is perfectly located. As a parking lot, it is also most visitors' first experience of the downtown. The shape of the space, contained on two sides and lower than the surrounding streets, is a coherent whole surrounded by businesses. This gives it a sense of place, more so than the average downtown parking lot.

Visitors and residents alike appreciate the traditional New England ambience and walkability of downtown Maynard, where many attractions are on the same or adjoining blocks.

There is no public transit within the town, but a local shuttle, part of the "Crosstown Connect" program, was introduced in 2016. The service uses buses from the Maynard Council on Aging and has several pickup locations in town. The majority of the steadily increasing ridership is traveling between Downtown Maynard and the South Acton Commuter Rail Station.

In addition, the proximity of the Assabet River Rail Trail bike path, which opened in 2019, offers recreational options for bikers, runners, and strollers, connecting Maynard with South Acton Commuter Rail Station. The 3.4 mile-section of the trail within Maynard passes through downtown and crosses the Assabet River, ending at White Pond Road. The unpaved path then proceeds through the 2,230-acre Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge. Zagster, a bicycle share program, opened in Maynard in 2018, with a bike station at Mill and Main.

The town's 2018 Downtown Parking Analysis states that while parking that is 85% (or greater) filled is generally considered a challenge, the parking in the study area is more often less than that. Parking demand tends to peak at midday and increase again in the early evening. However, perceived lack of safety and poor lighting in the central lot discourage its use, especially after dark. The study found that only on a very few occasions annually is parking more than 85% utilized and concluded that downtown parking should not be considered overly tight or full.

All these factors contribute to giving the town of Maynard, and specifically the downtown study area, outstanding live/work/play potential.

Challenges

Improvements to the study area face several challenges that may be seen as deterrents to fully realizing downtown Maynard's potential.

In general, Maynard is a very walkable city, for example, there is a continuous pedestrian loop around the downtown and Naylor Court. However, there is a significant gap in activated frontage on the eastern portion of loop, discouraging pedestrian as they proceed from one place to the next. This gap makes it necessary for pedestrians to backtrack and discourages strolling, browsing, and shopping that a complete and easily walkable sidewalk or walkway circuit allows.

Several cultural assets, such as the ArtSpace and the cinema, are physically disconnected from the Main/Nason street downtown pedestrian area. The Fine Arts Theater is a regional draw but its location at the west end of Naylor Court is disconnected from other urban activities, discouraging patrons from lingering after the show.

The disconnection is compounded by a lack of wayfinding signage, clearly delineated pedestrian pathways, haphazard parking

layout and insufficient lighting. These factors contribute to a perception that the parking lot may be unsafe.

In addition, the configuration of businesses abutting Naylor Court poses challenges to redevelopment. A few businesses, notably El Huipil Mexican restaurant, have created a welcoming front entrance onto the Naylor Court lot with seasonal café seating, festive lighting and decorative murals. Other businesses, however, have kept their traditional orientation toward the street. In these cases, the side that faces the study area is often dark or unwelcoming. Even when rear entrances allow access to these businesses, the overall impression is inhospitable. Dumpsters or outside storage, delivery equipment, and other back-of-house activities contribute to the negative impression of downtown, detracting from efforts of neighboring businesses to turn the lot into a friendly and welcoming central plaza for the town.

Recommendations

Parking strategies

As stated in the 2018 Downtown Parking Analysis, despite the common perception that parking is at a premium in Maynard, the town has a sufficient parking capacity available. This is particularly true if one includes other parking areas within a reasonable walking distance from the downtown core, around

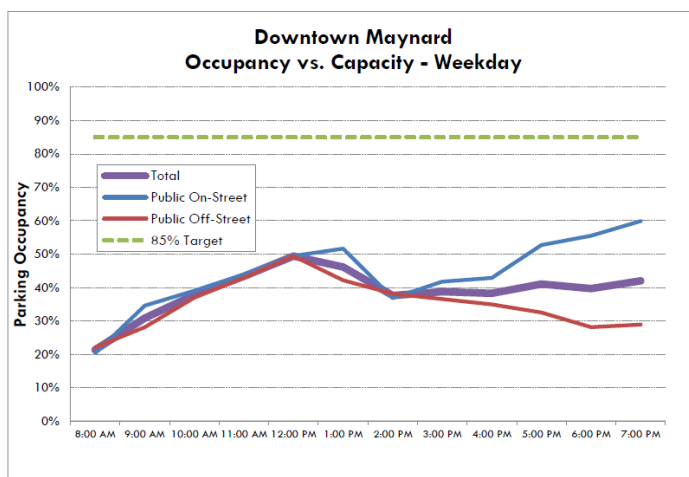
the Basin. (The Main and Mill lot, among the farthest, is a nine-minute walk from downtown.)

The parking study also provided other insights as to the makeup and ownership of Maynard's lots. Many of the town's additional parking lots are privately held. Naylor Court itself (the study area) may be seen as comprising three distinct parts, one off Summer and two off Nason, which contribute to the poor traffic flow and perception of a lack of safe access for pedestrians. Metering is haphazard in these areas, while enforcement is commonly viewed as nonexistent.

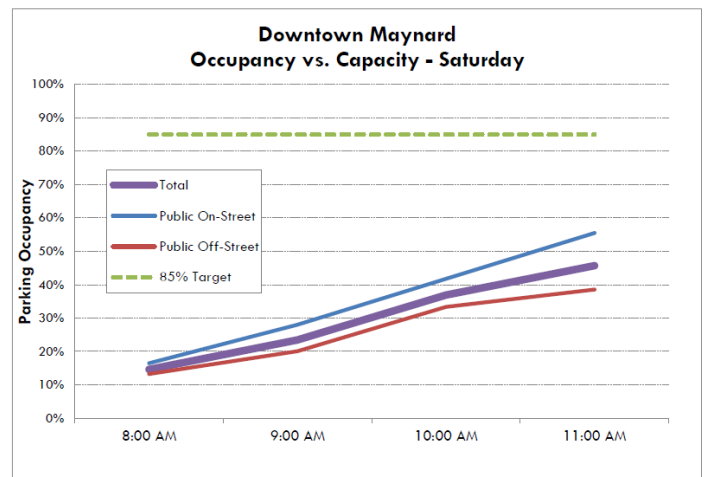
To implement new parking strategies, the town should look not only at more consistent metering and enforcement but also modernizing meters to enable paying by credit card or cell phone app and to facilitate staggered parking rates, depending on demand and/or time of day. Parking meter kiosks would be useful, as would clear and consistent signage and enforcement. The town has recently created a Parking Authority that is already in the process of funding and implementing an improved wayfinding system.



Existing parking within walking distance from Naylor Court.



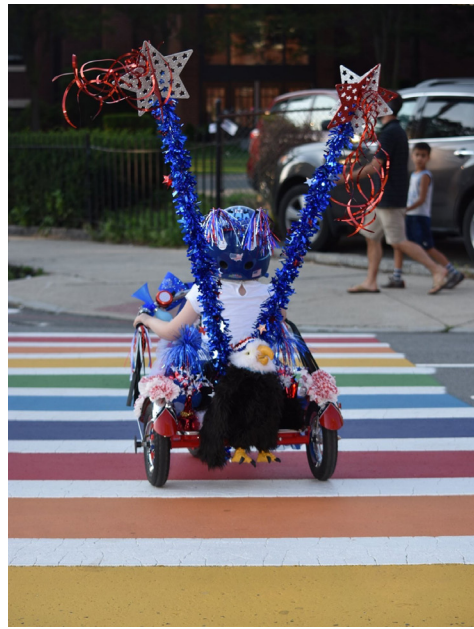
MAPC 2018 Parking Analysis Study.



MAPC 2018 Parking Analysis Study.



A "smart" parking meter that accepts payment via credit cards or a smartphone app.



Decorative crosswalks can help create a sense of place and activate an area.

With better signage, metering, and lighting—as well as the improved wayfinding and transportation that these would provide—the town could identify different areas for parking. The study area, for example, could be identified as short-term parking intended for shoppers and diners, who desire quick and easy access.

Employees of downtown businesses can be redirected to designated long-term parking in satellite lots, such as the River Street lot. Areas of these lots may be designated for dedicated employee parking, which would offer a guarantee to employees to offset the inconvenience of parking farther away. Again, improved signage and lighting along pedestrian walkways, and shuttle service would make such distant lots more accessible. In addition, the town should look into partnering with area businesses that have private lots, such as Emerson. As many of these lots are unused after business hours, the town could reach an agreement with these businesses to offer use of these lots for special event or after-hours, i.e., evening, parking for diners or those attending the cinema.

A Parking Benefits District can also serve as immediate source of revenue. This revenue could be reinvested specifically to benefit

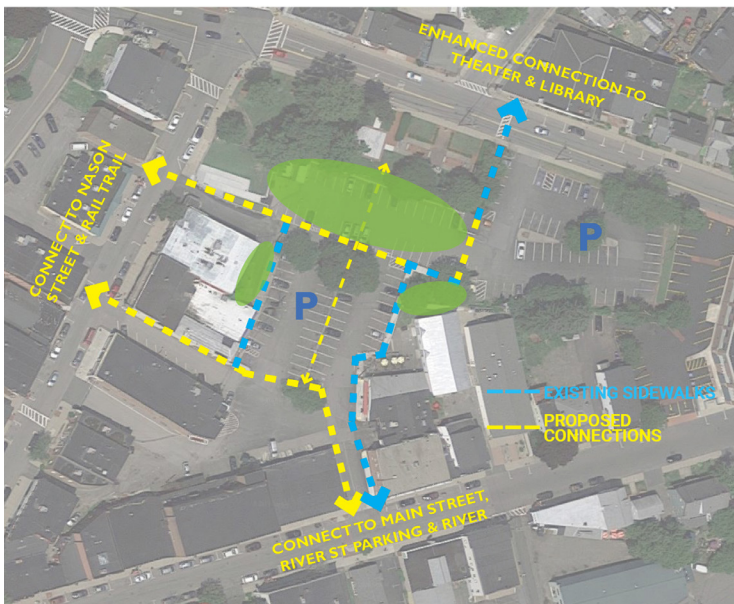
area transportation, such as shuttle service to the commuter rail station. To enact this, management tools would need to be created to enforce existing parking rules, collect and redistribute revenues. Boundaries on the district and additional parking rules would need to be decided by the town.

Short-term recommendations

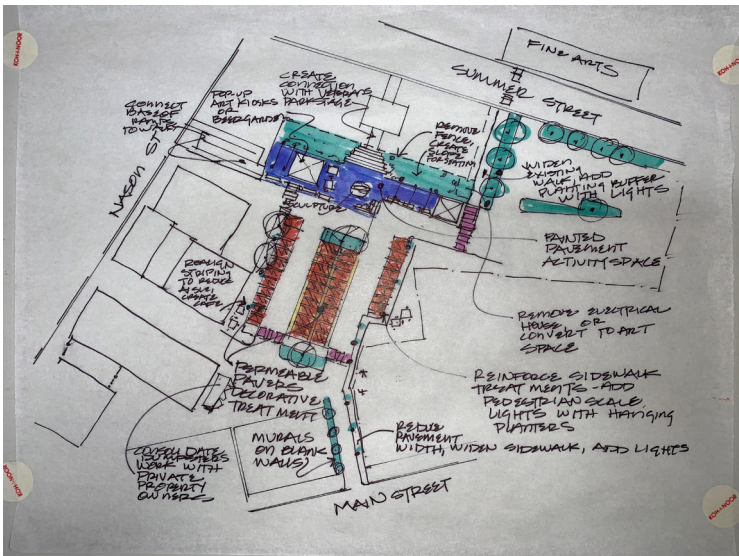
To create a sense of place (and replace the term "The Basin," which has negative connotations for some residents), engage the community in rebranding the study area. Soliciting ideas for names should involve the town and clarify the concept of what the study area could and should be. Lighting would also immediately benefit and improve the usability of the area.

Convert the north parking row and drive aisle (adjacent to the Veterans Memorial Park) to temporary park space, perhaps one day a week. This could be done inexpensively and on a temporary basis by delineating the area with colored pavement treatments, planters, string lighting, etc.

Within this newly recaptured pedestrian-friendly space, build on existing placemaking activities. These could involve food trucks, café seating, and games, such as bocci and



Proposed pedestrian connections.



Placemaking concept map created by panelists.

cornhole. Maynard is home to two microbreweries, and these could be invited to set up temporary beer gardens in the warmer months. The town should consider moving its farmers market (now held in the Main and Mill parking lot) to this new temporary park area to create interest and support pedestrian use of the area.

The town and area businesses should also look to add art to crosswalks and public space, following the lead of El Huipil which painted a mural near the restaurant entrance to enliven the view from the parking lot. Create "Parklets" along Main and Nason streets by replacing a few on-street parking spaces on a temporary basis with benches, tables and chairs, planters, string lighting and perhaps public art that would create public dining and add activity to the streetscape. To further such public-private initiatives, Maynard and the downtown businesses should consider forming a Main Streets organization.

Mid-term recommendations

Continue improvements that would increase the safety, walkability, and attractiveness of the Naylor Court study area and the surrounding area. These would include more permanent improvements, such as widening sidewalks and adding lighting, which would improve connections between the lot and attractions such as the theater and would also allow for shorter pedestrian "loops" between attractions. Highlight these and the existing pedestrian walkways through the lot with colored pavement and improved signage to area businesses, attractions, and street access to create a sense of connection and usability.



Street art and murals found in Wynwood Arts District, Miami.

Expand and improve wayfinding to the satellite parking areas and the rail trail.

To improve the attractiveness and safety of the lot, explore options for consolidating dumpsters in one area inside an enclosure or behind a barrier, which could be decorated by area artists. This could be done in collaboration with the proposed hotel, as well as with adjacent businesses.

Depending on the reevaluation of parking sufficiency, further expand the temporary park by the Veterans Memorial, increasing the park size by an additional parking row. Additional electric car charging stations would make this more environmentally and user friendly.

Long-term recommendations

Make the park expansion permanent, converting that small north side of the Naylor Court study area from parking to park.

Depending on parking sufficiency, connect this new park/plaza area to the existing Veterans Memorial Park. This could be accomplished by removing the wall and

reworking the pedestrian ramp area, replacing with either a landscaped slope or steps with landscape or hardscape in the lower park area. This will not only join the two spaces into one larger space, it will better connect the park to the remaining parking lot, and, by way of the improved pedestrian paths, other downtown attractions. In addition, a landscaped slope would enlarge the Veterans Memorial Park performance area, creating a natural amphitheater for outdoor events.

Permeable paving treatments for the remaining parking would further the town's vision of a "greener," ecologically-minded town center.

Bold visions

A future reworking, at a point when parking would be unnecessary, would replace the remainder of the Naylor Court lot with a plaza/piazza that could serve as a true pedestrian center/"heart" of Maynard. This could serve as a central gathering spot for residents and visitors alike and would set Maynard apart with a unique central attractions.



Steps and seating found along the Highline in New York City.

Funding and Resources

The community should investigate the following sources as potential funding for the proposed improvements:

State grants

MassDevelopment—Commonwealth Places

Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD)—MA Downtown Initiative (MDI)

MassDOT

Chapter 90 Program

CPA (Community Preservation Act)

Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC)—District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA)

Banks (Low interest/no interest loans)

FHL Bank Boston, Coastal Heritage, South Shore Bank

Private funding from area restaurants, which would sponsor “parklets” in exchange for use as café areas

Conclusion

Naylor Court is ready to be leveraged into a welcoming civic space, a development that could begin immediately with small, temporary changes that extend as far as the town and its residents would like. Although the conversion of the existing parking lot into civic space would involve the loss of some spaces, several options exist that could make satellite parking, such as the River Street lot, more welcoming and available. An investigation into the possibility of a public-private partnership with adjacent businesses, such as Emerson Medical, to make formerly private parking available after business hours could help alleviate concerns about limited parking and better utilize previously empty or underused space.

As noted above, this conversion may be done in a series of steps and may first be tried out as a temporary and reversible step. As the parking survey commissioned by the town itself showed, parking is both more plentiful and accessible than is generally perceived by the public. However, these gradual steps should help further ease the transition. In addition, the continuation of

processes already begun by the town—such as improved wayfinding and pedestrian pathways—will change the perception of other parking areas, showing them to be accessible, safe, and convenient.

By creating better pedestrian walkways and improving wayfinding, the town will be able to complete the activated downtown loop, encouraging shoppers, visitors, and residents and boosting the perception of Maynard as a walkable town. The increased park area, both adjacent to the Veterans' Memorial and in potential small "parklets" along Main, Nason, or other streets, will add visual appeal and encourage visitors and residents alike to stroll, shop, dine, and partake of Maynard's many attractions.

In conclusion, the Town of Maynard has multiple options to turn the unattractive but utilitarian Naylor Court lot into the true "heart of Maynard." Depending on the level of expenditure and civic willingness to experiment with options concerning parking and transportation, this parcel can be transformed into a safe, useful, and unifying center for the town.



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