

Parking Management Plan

The Economic Development Committee approved this plan by unanimous vote at its 10 January 2019 meeting.

Introduction: There have been three significant parking evaluation efforts in the past few years as noted below:

1. 2006: Part of the 2004 Community Development Plan Implementation, coordinated by then part time town planner Carolyn Britt. Three times/day counts on multiple days of the week indicated usage rates approaching 80% at a time when economic activity was high, i.e., pre-2008 recession.
2. 2015: Initiated by BOS with assistance of Maynard Business Alliance as part of plan to demolish parking deck; proposal drafted by ATA and two BOS members.
3. 2017: Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC) survey to determine adequacy of parking capability to support downtown businesses. Result indicated maximum usage of about 60% against a suggested intervention rate trigger of 85%. Note that this survey data was limited to mid-week and Saturday AM in May in a year with mill less than 50% occupied, multiple empty storefronts and limited implementation of mixed-use under DOD.

Need: While action has occurred as a result of specific requests from local businesses during the above period, virtually none of the recommendations from the larger studies cited above have been implemented or adopted as policy guidelines for use by the various town departments. The town has never adopted a philosophy or practice guiding what it wants to do with parking and has never taken action to create a parking management plan or the structure to manage it.

The recent parking meter pilot (May-September 2018) program confirmed what the MAPC study concluded – that there is not a current parking problem in Maynard as far as the number of spaces available. However, we believe that attention needs to be placed on identifying the type, purpose and location of these spaces.

There are two main functions needed to manage a successful parking plan intended to encourage and support economic development in Maynard. The first is establishment of a parking authority. Creation of a parking authority, established by the BOS and managed on an operating basis by the Town Administrator, would provide a focal point for the establishment, documentation and consistent management of parking policies in support of downtown commerce.

The second requirement is for a disciplined enforcement process to be in place. Today the single parking enforcement officer's duty schedule does not match the enforcement times noted on current signage or the information on the meters themselves. While the Police Chief is in full agreement to enforce whatever parking policies are established, he does not believe the Police Department should design these policies or be the clearinghouse for day to day decision making. In effect, the Police Department accepts that enforcement is their responsibility and is looking for direction.

As development continues in Maynard, meeting the two requirements described above will best support economic development of Maynard. Parking is a dynamic resource and should be managed as such for the various differing and sometimes competing "customers" thus served.

Goal:

- Plan and manage so that downtown parking meets projected demand to foster continued economic development

Objectives:

- 1- Propose and gain approval of a parking philosophy managed by a clearly defined authority
- 2- Consistent enforcement which encourages planned utilization, particularly in peak demand times
- 3- Post clear and relevant signage on all streets and in parking lots clearly indicating rates, times and hours of enforcement.
- 4- Availability before revenue

Scope:

Limited to municipally owned spaces and lots (Specifically not private property parking which is the purview of the Planning Board, but need to recognize there is interaction which may at some point need changes to zoning or other by-laws)

Parking Philosophy (Ref Objectives 1, 4):

A primary tenet of the philosophy is that the goal is to maximize availability and convenience to the downtown visitor, not to maximize parking revenue.

The second element is to recognize “purpose based” or categories of metering, reflecting the expected usage or context of parking spots as described below:

- 1- Short-term pick up/drop-off spaces: Limited to a few locations on Main and Nason streets and placed immediately adjacent to a street or driveway to facilitate easy and quick parking. These spaces would not be metered. Some already exist. These spaces should be located to serve multiple businesses
- 2- Mid-term parking: Two hour metered spaces on Main and Nason Streets and in the Central Plaza where it is desirable to have parking turn-over. The intent is to accommodate parking for the retail businesses on Main and Nason.
- 3- Non-metered parking: Intended to accommodate downtown employees and owners. Would apply to spaces in the Summer Street “movie theater” lot, the River Street lot and the rail trail side behind “CVS”. These spaces should not be time limited except for an end time limiting overnight parking.

Recommendation: Adopt the above as guiding principles for management of municipal parking in Maynard.

Parking Authority (Ref. Objective 1):

Creation of a parking authority, established by the BOS and managed on an operating basis by the Town Administrator, would provide a focal point for the establishment, documentation and consistent management of parking policies in support of downtown commerce. In addition, such a champion would act as a clearing house for DPW, the Police Dept and other town departments, boards or committees which may be impacted by parking, metering, etc. – today without guidelines. It would also

be a resource to make recommendations to the TA and/or BOS on both parking policy and tactical situations that will arise as the business mix changes over time. An example of the latter is the current request by Emerson Hospital for use of municipal spaces for employee parking. Other towns in our area including Hudson have found this to be useful.

Absence of such a focal point is the major reason why meters have been removed and not replaced, handicap signs have been installed where need may not be best served and older and conflicting signs exist.

Examples:

1. Installation of eight unnecessary handicapped parking signs behind CVS as part of ARRT construction. These have now been removed after review by the town engineer.
2. Removal of parking meters while installing new sidewalks in the Central Plaza near El Huipil, with no plan to re-install them.
3. Decision to eliminate seven parking spaces by not striping for parallel parking behind the Outdoor Store; now striped as a test to see if safety problems exist.
4. Meter windows need to be replaced; nearly impossible to read parking regulations through oxidized meter windows; meter regulations state maximum 2-hour parking
5. Poor sign conditions (missing, confusing, contradicting)
6. Sign behind Gruber Brothers "No exit to Main St. M-F 4PM-6PM": condition set by Planning Board, possibly unknown to Police and not enforced.
7. 15-minute parking sign on Nason St. in front of The Paper Store was arbitrarily removed
8. Parking by permit only at River street lot. The sign on the River St parking lot now implies it's for Maynard Food Pantry parking; no posted regulations; doesn't state overnight parking allowed by permit.

Recommendation: Create parking authority as a resource for to move Maynard toward consistent best practices for parking management as a tool for economic development.

Enforcement (Ref Objective 2):

Currently, where meter enforcement hours as posted on the meters, the hours are Monday-Wednesday 8AM-5PM, Thursday-Saturday 8AM-9PM. In its parking enforcement notice dated November 13, 2018, the Maynard Board of Selectmen noted there is no cost for metered parking downtown after 5PM Monday through Saturday, thereby defining enforcement hours. Actual enforcement of meter parking is only done Monday-Friday until 3PM. Ironically, this is mostly an off-peak time for parking demand.

Recommendations: Continue with current meters and rates. Task the Maynard Police Department with enforcing metered parking from 8AM-5PM Monday-Saturday. Clean up the meters, correct all meter information to reflect these times and post appropriate and consistent signage on streets and in parking lots.

Signage (Ref. Objective 3):

Signage is one of the most fundamental ways to communicate parking regulations to users, and serves as an important component of a welcoming business district by making it easier for visitors to know where to park. The MAPC survey noted some signage was faded and damaged. If signage isn't maintained, it can be unclear whether the posted regulations are still in effect. There are also multiple

variations of the two-hour regulations, with parking restrictions from 7am-5pm in some off-street spaces, and 8am-5pm in some on-street spaces.

Additionally, some temporary signage was posted, which is an important means of communicating short-term parking regulations. However, some of this signage was posted haphazardly, which makes it more challenging for users to abide by temporary changes in regulations.

Recommendations:

A signage inventory can be a useful way for the Town to document all posted parking regulations in the downtown, and will help inform future priorities for replacement. If possible, it would be helpful to streamline all of the two-hour parking regulations so that the time of day the restrictions are in place is uniform across the business district. Overall, uniform signage, including updating old signage and ensuring all signs are facing the correct way, helps ensure regulations are clearly communicated. To further clarify to visitors where parking facilities are available, the Town could install additional generic blue parking signs at different access points.

At present the DPW is conducting a town-wide sign inventory, although it is not specifically targeting parking signage. In addition, the EDC has contracted for a wayfinding signage program specifically aimed at publicizing access points. These color-coded public parking signs will direct visitors to the Rail Trail, central parking plaza, the Summer Street (Fine Arts Theater) and River Street lots and are currently described on the downtown maps.

Parking Subcommittee Consensus:

The Subcommittee believes a two-phase approach would yield best overall results.

1. Phase one: Implement the process and operating structure recommendations noted above and the short-term recommendations from the recent MAPC study (see below) reflecting the current state of demand/occupancy on municipally owned parking spaces/lots.
2. Phase two: Task the parking authority, working with local business owner input, to implement best practices (again as informed by the MAPC study) for all facets of municipal parking in anticipation of higher parking demand in the future. This could include meter locations, rates, enforcement hours, signage, policies, possible use of technologies other than meters to manage parking enforcement (which might allow restriping to gain added spaces), as well as possible purchase of land for additional parking.

The recommendations in this report are clearly predicated on current utilization. The elements which would shape expected higher parking demand in the future are already known and include:

- full occupancy at Mill and Main,
- increased bike and pedestrian traffic via the rail trail,
- greater presence in the DOD following mixed use investment already planned,
- Higher retail traffic from marijuana dispensaries
- increased activities/events driven by the Cultural District,
- potentially higher demand from spillover from 129 Parker
- added parking to support Crosstown shuttle users.

Phase 1: Implement recommendations below (from MAPC study except #10-12):

<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Time Frames</u>	<u>Approx. Costs</u>	<u>Responsible Party</u>
1. Fix (or replace as needed) parking meters in downtown Maynard.	Short-term	Medium	DPW in conjunction with Police Dept.
2. Conduct a parking signage inventory for the downtown.	Short-term	Low	DPW (general signage review in process, grant funded); completion date TBD, does not directly address parking
3. Remove/update any parking regulation signage that is unclear, including on meters.	Short-term	Low	DPW (follow on to #2 above)
4. Post regulations on designated loading times on Main and Nason Street.	Short-term	Low	DPW
5. River Street municipal lot; clarify the posted regulations.	Short-term	Low	Town of Maynard (clarify regs, incl public, overnight, permit, snow removal); DPW
6. River Street municipal lot, invest in lighting and pedestrian improvements, negotiate easement across 80 Main (Sanctuary).	Medium-term	Medium	Town of Maynard (TA/BOS re easement); DPW
7. If the Town chooses to use the River Street municipal lot for employee parking, also consider moving the shuttle services to the River Street lot.	Short-term	Low	Town of Maynard
8. Enforce existing parking regulations	Short-term	Low/Medium	Police Department
9. Complete installation of bicycle racks to accommodate expected increase in bicycle traffic with rail trail completion.	Short-term	Funded via BEEP	DPW
10. Review existing/potential 15-minute and loading zone locations on Main and Nason Streets	Short Term	Low	DPW/Town engineer
11. Re-install meters on new sidewalk adjacent to El Huipil	Short term	Low	DPW
12. Audit density and if appropriate, reallocate handicapped parking signs installed behind Subway.	Short-term	Low	DPW

Note: The MAPC study can be found at <https://www.townofmaynard-ma.gov/documents/mapc-parking-analysis-20180110.pdf>.