



City of Salem

# SALEM COMPREHENSIVE PARKING PLAN

FINAL REPORT • July 2010







## Parking is Part of Salem

Salem has great existing resources in its existing transportation network, and if efficiently managed in a coordinated and multi-modal fashion, these previously untapped resources can become the key to improving mobility and convenience in downtown. The city is directly connected to Boston through commuter rail, bus service, and seasonal ferry service, and it is close Route 128 and Route 95. Investments in the infrastructure, such as the new Bridge Street bypass road leading into downtown Salem, have made for a city center with great connectivity. Downtown Salem has eleven public off-street lots, two public parking garages, hundreds of on-street spaces, and thousands of off-street private parking spaces. While the multitude of parking facilities and parking operators poses a challenge, new approaches to coordinating these assets can bring much greater efficiencies while benefiting all parties.

## Key Questions

This consultant's approach focused on collecting as much existing use information as possible to come up with a profile of existing parking activity in Salem. Key questions the data was intended to answer included:

- How much parking is available for different user groups, including residents, employees, commuters, visitors and shoppers?
- To what extent is existing parking being utilized in the downtown?
- How are motorists directed to parking?
- Who utilizes the most convenient parking spaces?
- How much spillover is occurring in surrounding residential neighborhoods?
- How are the unique parking demands during events, weekends, near Halloween, and during snow storms managed?

## Existing Parking Standards

The primary area of focus for the Comprehensive Parking Program study is downtown Salem, which is almost entirely zoned Central Development (B5), with a number of other zones with differing land uses touching its periphery.

### KEY FINDINGS

- General parking requirements in Salem exceed the most conservative national standards from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), which bases its standards on stand-alone buildings in areas without transit or the ability to walk to other uses. Outside downtown, Salem's codes require an excessive amount of parking.
- Within the downtown, Salem has appropriately eliminated parking requirements for all uses except residential. However, the current residential requirement exceeds even ITE standards.
- Shared parking is allowed city-wide. However, off-site parking must be within a confined 400-foot radius, which is much lower than an easy 5-minute walk distance of 1,200-feet.
- No front-yard parking is allowed in the downtown, helping to maintain a strong pedestrian and streetscape environment which facilitates vehicle trip reduction.
- The City already maintains clear curb cut guidance to reduce excessive breaks in the sidewalk. Further detailed guidance on the design of curb cuts should be included that specifies an elevation equal to the sidewalk elevation in order to preserve a safe and level walking path across driveways.
- The City has no provisions in zoning for bicycle parking, car-sharing, transportation demand management (TDM), or revealing the cost of parking (pricing, unbundling, or cash-out).

# Parking Inventory and Utilization

The consultant, City staff, and City of Salem interns completed a parking inventory and conducted parking utilization and turnover counts in the downtown Salem study area on three separate dates: Tuesday August 18th, Thursday October 8th, and Saturday October 17th. 8th, and Saturdabe7th.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Of the over 5,500 parking spaces in the downtown, no more than 4,000 are utilized at the busiest time of a normal week (a utilization rate of 69-percent). This includes private spaces. For the publicly-available supply of 3,500 spaces, nearly 800 remain vacant at the busiest period (a utilization rate of 78-percent).
- Utilization of prime curbside spaces on Washington, Essex, and other streets near the courthouse often approaches available capacity.
- Turnover of prime curbside spaces on Washington and Essex is sufficient, but demand outstrips availability, as open spaces filled quickly.
- The MBTA commuter lot and spaces along Bridge Street are heavily utilized all day on weekdays.
- Many spaces south of Derby Street remain underutilized throughout the day. The Harbor Garage is poorly utilized at all hours.
- Residential streets east of the downtown are heavily utilized in the evening. Streets west of the downtown are not well utilized during the daytime and the evening.
- Overall utilization patterns are less intensive during August vacation.

## Utilization Summary

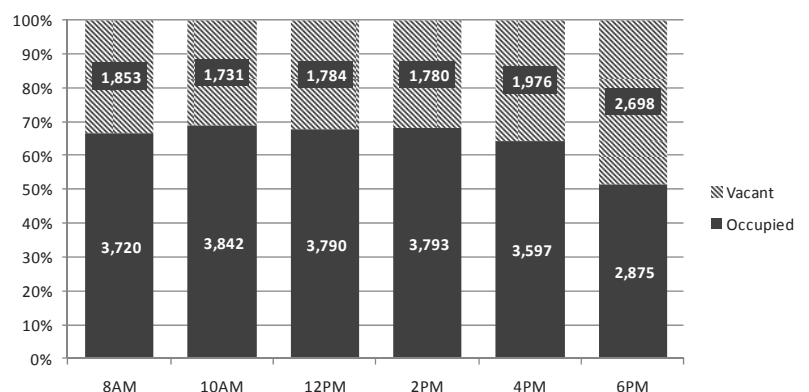
Within Salem's downtown there are approximately 5,500 combined on- and off-street parking spaces under private and municipal control (see table below). Nearly 1,400 on-street public spaces are conveniently located in front of most retail destinations. Several municipal lots, two municipal garages, and the MBTA lot within the downtown provide an additional 1,933 spaces of public parking. The remaining spaces are under private control for use by employees, customers and residents.

## Summary of Parking Supply

	Public	Private	Total
On-street	1,393	18	1,411
Off-street	1,933	2,143	4,076
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,326</b>	<b>2,161</b>	<b>5,487</b>

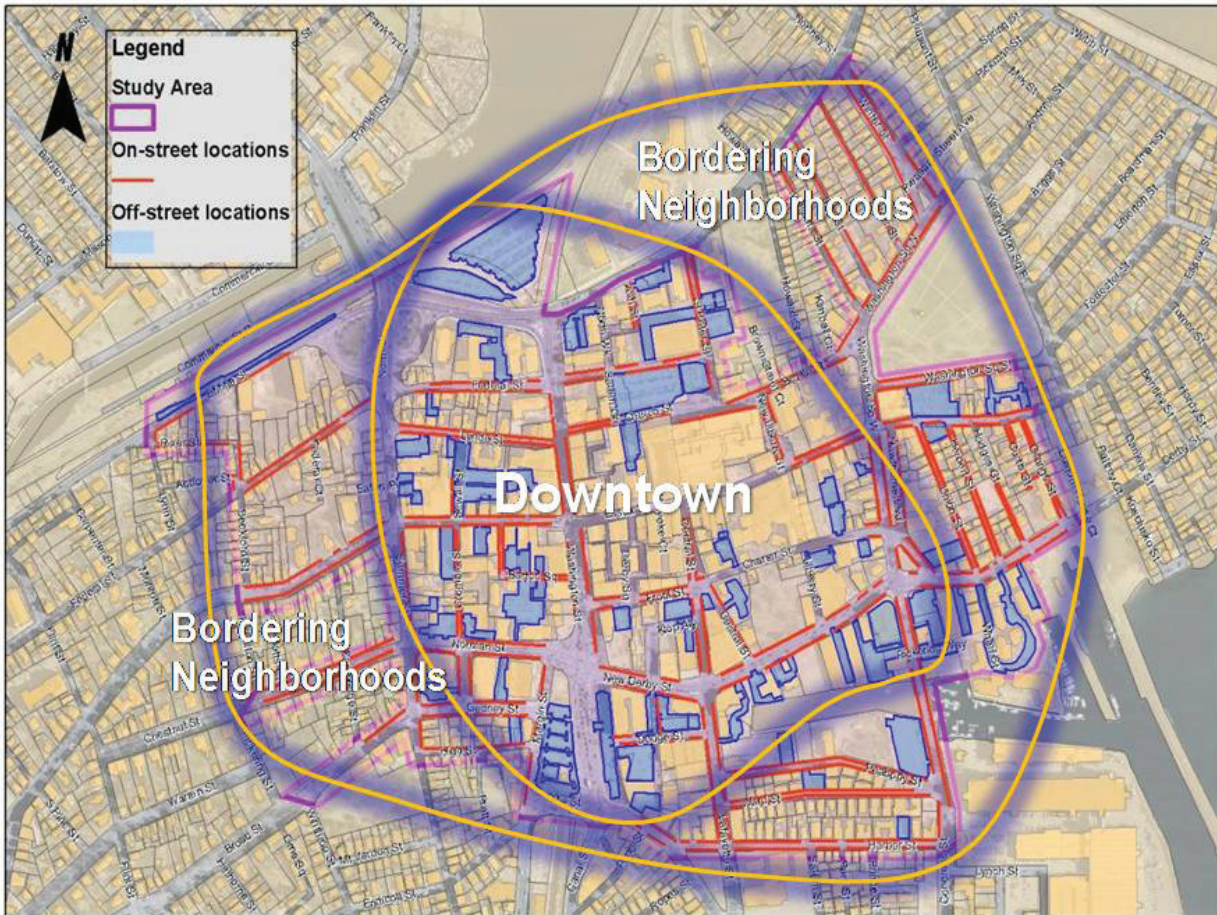
The graph below summarizes the combined utilization of these spaces throughout the course of an average weekday. As shown, no more than 69-percent of these spaces are utilized at the busiest period of the day.

## Weekday Parking Utilization Profile





## Map of Study Area



### PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACES

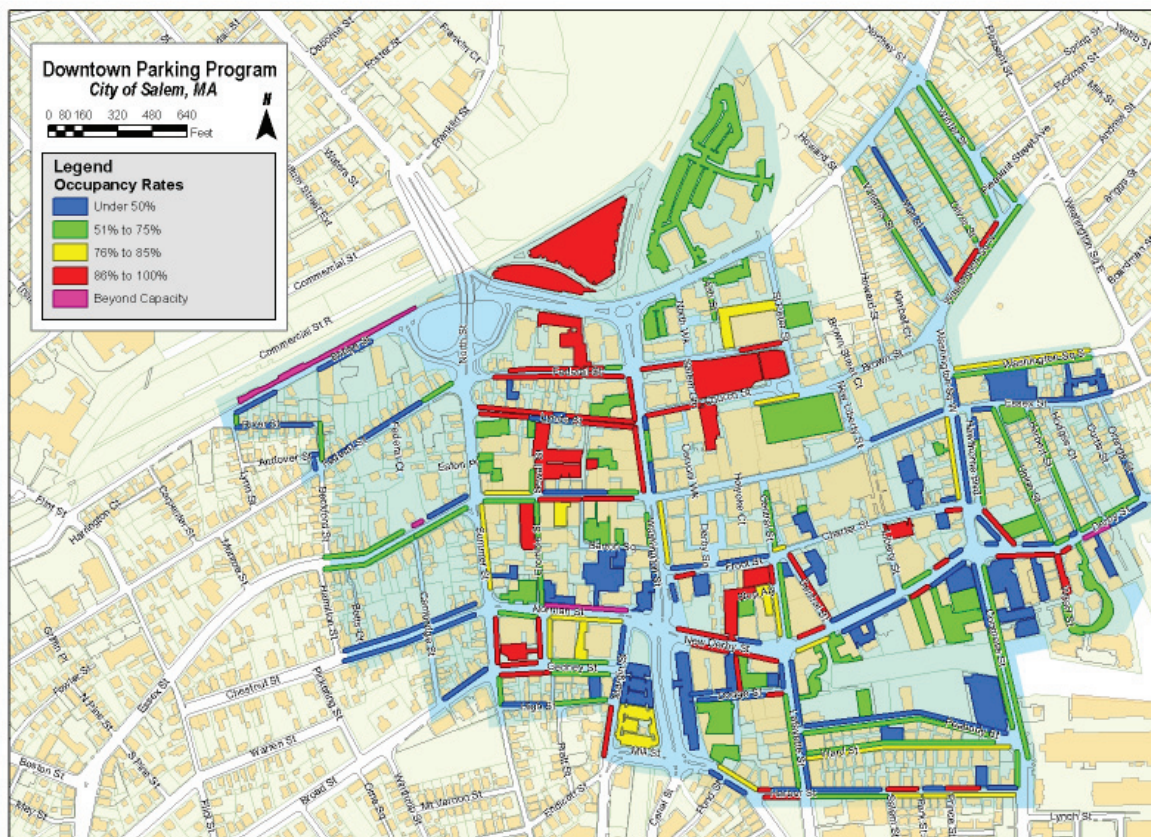
While the peak utilization for all of Salem's parking downtown doesn't exceed 70-percent, the public supply (consisting of on-street spaces, surface lots, and garages) experiences a peak utilization just under 80-percent. Taken as a whole, the private parking supply is under 60-percent utilized throughout the day.

### GEOGRAPHIC UTILIZATION

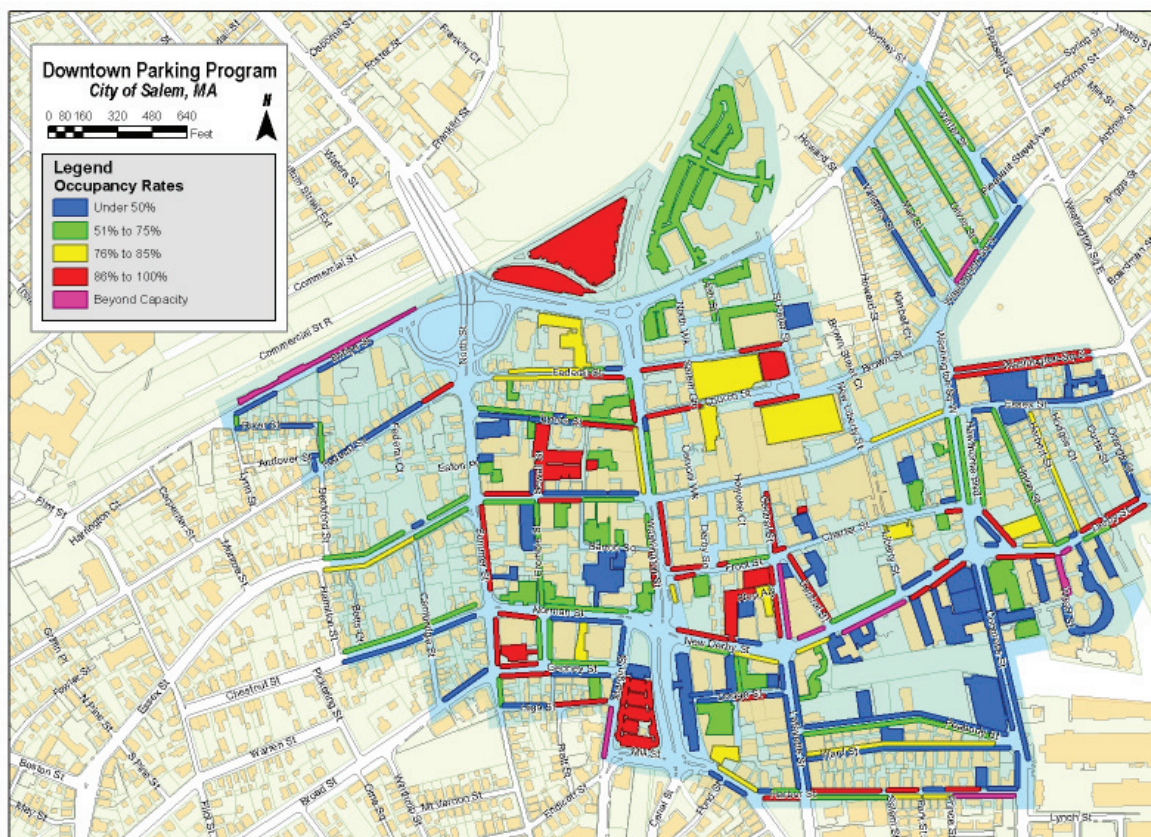
The consultant graphically summarized the average weekday parking utilization for the entire study area. It should be noted that utilization in several specific locations occasionally hits 100-percent or even surpasses it during the day. However, nearby locations remain under-utilized.



## Weekday Morning Parking Utilization

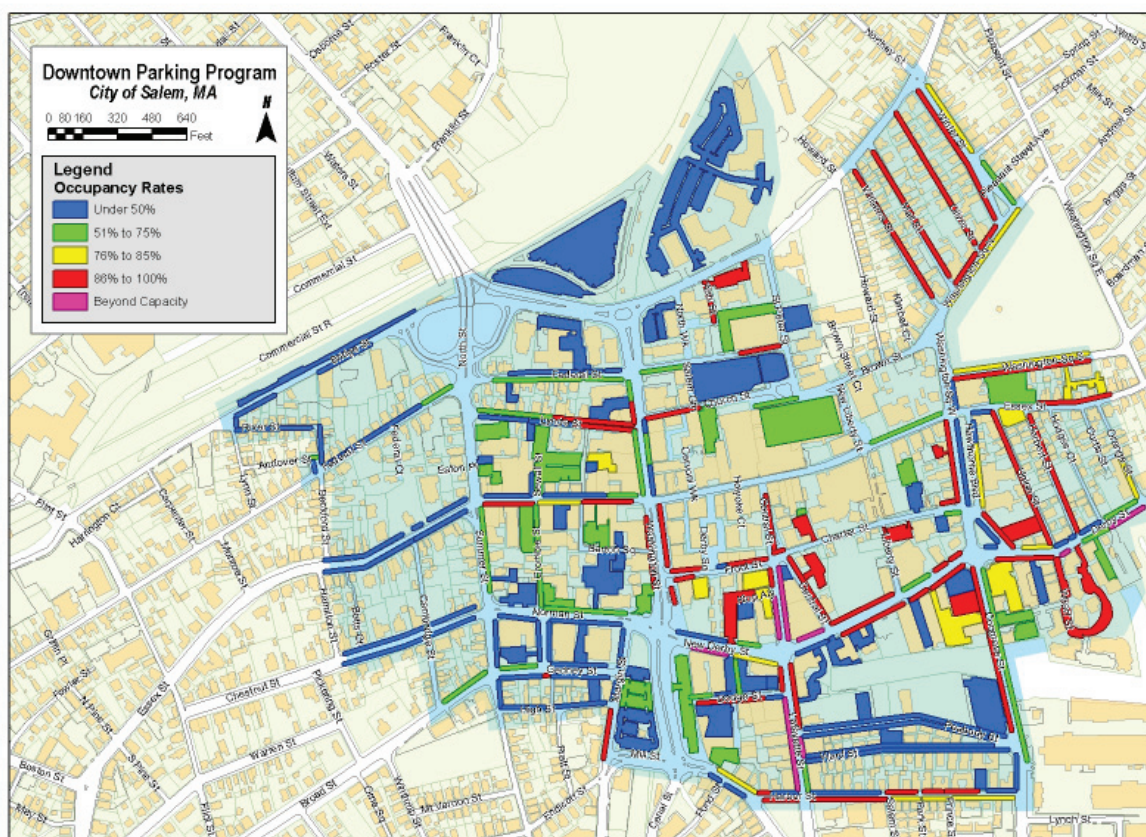


## Weekday Midday Parking Utilization





## Weekday Evening Parking Utilization



### ON AN AVERAGE WEEKDAY:

- The commuter lots at the train station are full by 8 AM and remain at that level until the end of the workday.
- The Church Street lot is full or nearly full shortly after 8 AM.
- The Museum Garage is never more than 85-percent occupied.
- The South Harbor Garage is never more than 26-percent occupied.
- Two-hour metered spaces in public lots are largely occupied, above 80-percent, throughout the daytime.
- Less than half of the parking in the East Riley Plaza lot is used during the day and less than three-quarters full after the workday.
- The free parking along Bridge Street is over capacity by 8 AM and remains full until after work.
- The unregulated public parking in West Riley Plaza is full or nearly full from 8 AM until after work.

- Two-hour metered on-street parking as a whole is nearly 40-percent vacant during the day and then drops to only 25-percent vacancy through late afternoon and evening.
- The spaces closest to the courthouse, on Federal Street, Lynde Street and northern Washington Street, are full or nearly full by 8 AM.
- The spaces along southern Washington become full or nearly full by 10 AM and remain so into the evening.
- Parking in the south east quadrant, specifically on Derby Street and Lafayette Street is very highly utilized in the evenings with some stretches of road over capacity.

### ON AN AVERAGE SATURDAY:

- Commuter parking (city pay lot, MBTA lot, and Bridge Street) is less than half full throughout Saturday.
- All other public parking is well utilized, specifically the two-hour metered parking (both on-street and in surface lots).



- The public surface lots are especially favored throughout the day.
- The Museum Garage is less than half-full throughout the day while the South Harbor Garage sees relatively high utilization.

## DURING AN AUGUST VACATION WEEKDAY:

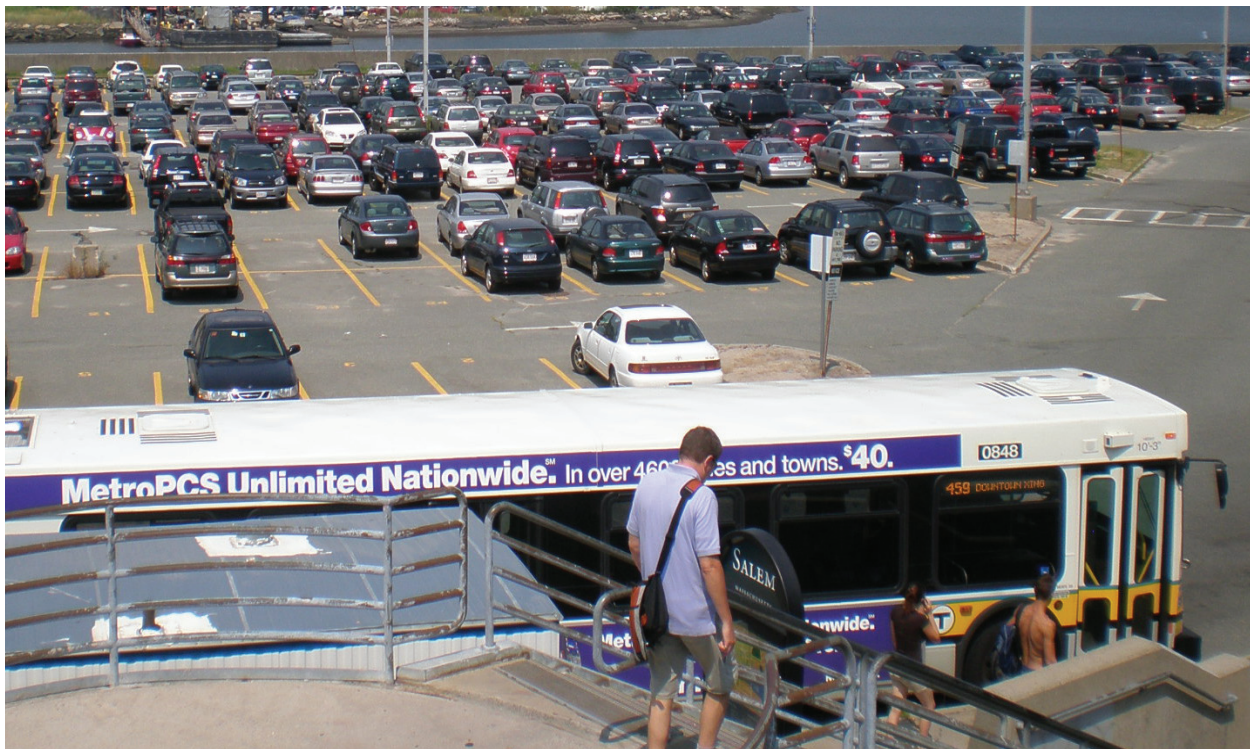
- Parking utilization is generally lower throughout Salem during the August vacation.
- The city commuter pay lot and Bridge Street parking are highly utilized throughout the weekday while the MBTA lot remains less than three-quarters full.
- The Church Street lots, Sewall Street lot, East Riley Plaza lot, Museum Garage, and South Harbor Garage do not see utilization above 85-percent throughout the day.
- The Klopp Alley, Pickering Wharf, and West Riley Plaza lots see points throughout the day where they are full or nearly full.

## Public Workshop

During the public parking workshop, approximately thirty participants offered their thoughts on areas of needs and opportunities as they relate to parking in downtown Salem.

### KEY FINDINGS

- Participants were concerned about the lack of available front-door parking for their errands and for the accommodation of visitors and shoppers in the downtown.
- Many participants were willing to park once and walk to multiple downtown destinations if they could be assured of finding a space easily, even if it meant a slightly longer walk.
- Some frustration with the 2-hour time limits was noted, with many noting that meter feeding took place.
- A fair number of participants were willing to pay to ensure an available parking space.
- Frustration was expressed with the management of the Sewall Street and Church Street lots which had limited availability. The Museum Garage was also noted to have rates too high for customers.
- Many desired better information about parking locations and rates.

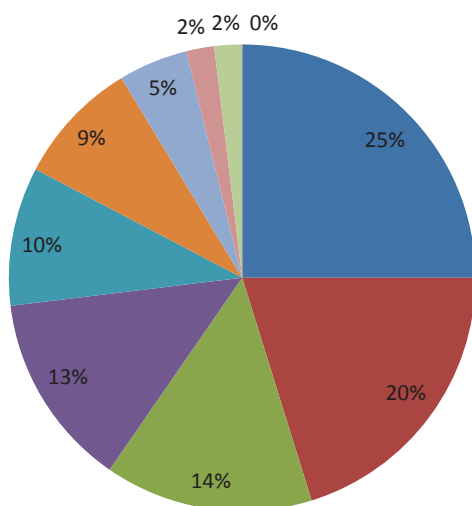




## Priorities Poster Activity

The initial activity at the meeting provided insight into the parking priorities of the attendees. Responding to a variety of statements, participants were able to indicate the strength of their preferences.

### Results of Priorities Poster Activity



- I would like to park only one time and walk to all my destinations when I come downtown
- I don't mind parking a little further away from my destination if it means I don't have to search for parking
- I find myself wasting time moving my car because of the 2 hour parking restrictions
- I would be willing to pay more to park if I knew I was going to get a convenient space for as long as I wanted to stay
- I would run more errands in downtown Salem if I knew there would be convenient parking available at my destination
- I would like to have a greater selection of options for getting downtown than using my car
- I avoid public lots and/or public garages because I can't afford to park in them
- I avoid using parking garages because they seem unsafe
- I would give up driving to work if my employer offered me a monthly cash benefit to give up parking
- I avoid downtown at night because some of the back streets feel unsafe due to a lack of lighting

## Areas of Need and Opportunity

Participants were invited to indicate in writing and with colored marker on large maps the locations they park and what issues they find in downtown Salem. Participants were also asked for their suggestions on what could be improved in downtown.

All comments made by participants at the workshop are paraphrased below (with **issues indicated in black** and **opportunities in green**).





# Summary of Key Issues and Opportunities

- A. Some drivers park in the Northfields neighborhood and carpool downtown
- B. Parking on Bridge Street is dangerous
- C. MBTA Lot: Is not well maintained, needs garage because people use downtown spaces, and needs secure bike parking
- D. Create parking lot from iron junkyard
- E. New courthouse should have parking for lawyers, jury duty, judges, etc.
- F. Parking in front of District Court after hours
- G. Area needs tourist and shopper instructions and signage
- H. YMCA lot fills up quickly
- I. Essex Street: Employees park in metered street spaces, People longer than the 30-minute limit, and Upper Crust delivery people use meters all day
- J. Signage on Essex Street is confusing/Reopen Essex Street to cars
- K. One-headed meter with two spaces
- L. Church Street lot: Churchgoers have to pay for parking on Sundays, lot fills very quickly, is used by Lifelong Learners with 2 hour courses who receive tickets because of the timing, always full, and does not accept monthly passes
- M. Museum Place Garage: Not well-lit and poor pedestrian access, needs space for covered bike parking, fills up too quickly during snowstorms, is too far to walk from work, is too expensive (\$20) on Halloween
- N. Limit of 30 minutes in front of Museum Place mall or meters
- O. Meter parking around the Common
- P. Resident parking issue
- Q. Botts Court residents cannot obtain parking stickers
- R. 15 minute parking opposite a barber shop
- S. Not enough 12-hour parking at Riley Plaza/Need 3-story parking garage
- T. Tavern in the Square/RCG should pay for parking stickers for other businesses that have no parking now
- U. Two loading spaces at 40 Front Street no longer needed because restaurant is no longer there
- V. Delfino's parking lot over taxed with residential parking
- W. Front Street Lot: Larger parking area needed and there are unused reserved spaces behind Fire Station
- X. Central Street meter feeding is a problem
- Y. Shetland Property employees park in neighborhoods
- Z. No signage along Derby Street in front of Custom House to restrict long term parking



# Parking Survey

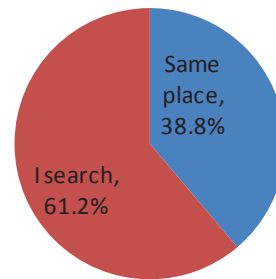
Beginning in October 2009, a one-page parking survey was distributed to potential users of the downtown Salem parking system. Several hundred printed surveys were distributed at key downtown businesses and municipal destinations. The survey also was posted online through a link on the City's webpage, and City staff emailed existing contact lists to encourage participation. By January 2010, over 600 responses had been logged.

## KEY FINDINGS

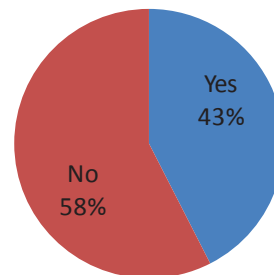
- Nearly two-thirds of respondents must search for parking every time they come to downtown.
- With two-thirds of the respondents being visitors or customers to the downtown, the fact that over 40-percent had to park illegally on occasion and nearly two-thirds would simply leave downtown because they could not find a space sometimes is alarming.
- Even though nearly half of the respondents had to pay for parking – mostly out of their own pocket – price was a concern of only 10-percent of respondents.
- Over three-quarters of respondents had the availability or location of parking as their primary concern.
- The average perceived time to find parking in downtown Salem was very long at over five minutes.

## Survey Results

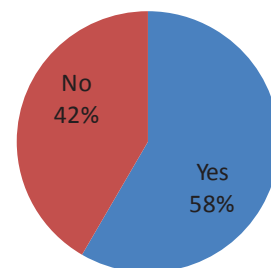
Do you always park in the same place or do you search?



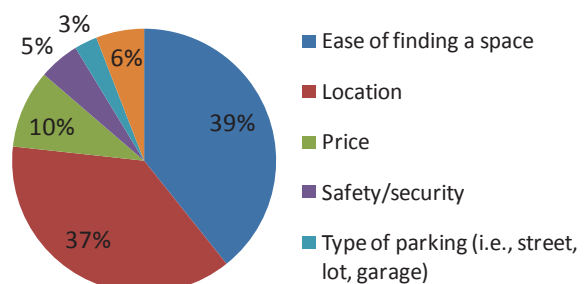
Are you ever forced to park or stand illegally?



Have you ever failed to find parking and just left?



What is the most important consideration for you in choosing where to park in Salem?





# Review of Innovative Parking Technologies

Parking management technology has come a long way since parking became a consideration on the minds of city leaders. Many of these innovations dramatically change the operations and management of parking as well as alter the way a city looks. Sidewalks no longer need to be littered with hundreds of parking meters; there are advancements in parking payment technologies that greatly reduce this clutter. Cities no longer need to rely on an infantry of parking enforcement and revenue collection officers; there are innovative technologies that streamline both enforcement and revenue collections. Drivers no longer need to wonder if or where parking is available; new signing systems are able to provide dynamic and live information to drivers.

## KEY FINDINGS

- Increased payment convenience can be provided to customers through the incorporation of cell-phone payment. Certain vendors can provide this on top of existing meter and pay station technology throughout downtown.
- Given the advantages of pay-by-space, Salem could convert meter posts to space numbers similar to those in Lowell and allow customers to refresh and update payments from any pay station in the downtown without returning to the car.
- In-car meters can allow the City to begin to share underutilized residential streets during the daytime with employees that have in-car meters.
- Real-time availability displays have great convenience for all types of users. Reduced technology costs can help make these available to the City cost-effectively, especially given the desire to present this information in multiple locations beyond the garage entrance.



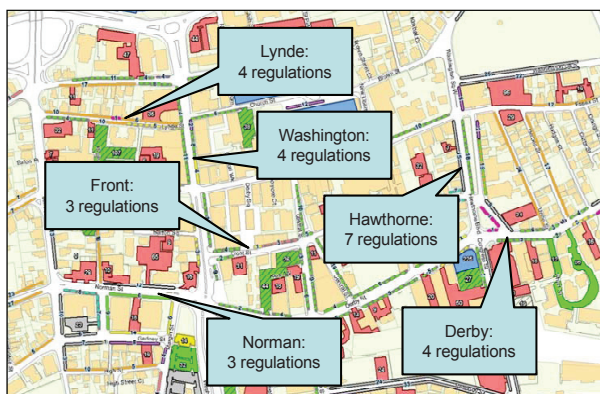
## Key Findings

The consultant identified the following key findings that represented areas where the Salem parking system was not operating well. These findings contribute directly to the final recommendations.

### SUMMARY

- Regulations are confusing.
- Availability is very unbalanced with congested parking areas near vacant areas.
- Parking information in Salem is among the best in the state, which means that other problems contribute to the unbalanced availability.
- Pricing is unbalanced and unfair to some user groups while others receive noticeable discounts.
- Certain downtown connectivity barriers may limit the utilization of more remote spaces.
- Private parking spaces are noticeably underutilized.

### Regulations Along Select Block Faces in Downtown



## Regulatory Confusion

During the course of data collection, the consultant observed that a great deal of effort had been spent by the City over the years tailoring street regulations to satisfy parking needs in the downtown. Unfortunately, it was also clear that the amount of different regulations was significant and that the variation in regulations – sometimes along just one block face – contributed to a great deal of confusion, delay, and possible driver frustration when seeking parking. In the downtown, there are thirteen separate on-street regulations and five different regulations in public off-street lots. This is a lot of regulatory variation in a one-half-mile area. Furthermore, variation along single block faces was excessive – as high as seven regulations in a stretch along Hawthorne Boulevard.

While tailored parking regulations might satisfy the needs of one user or user group, they are often at odds with the needs of another user or user group. This mix of parking regulations is not conducive to customer attraction and represents a number of problems, including:

- Unclear expectations for new visitors or customers
- A higher incidence of unintended user violations
- Decreased rates of enforcement
- Increased traffic circling for parking
- Increased sign maintenance cost and complexity
- Sign clutter

**KEY CONCLUSION:** The downtown regulatory environment is overworked, contributing directly to many perceived and real parking problems in Salem.



Input from the general public and initial observations of the downtown both indicate that it is very difficult to find parking in Salem. The prime commercial streets of Washington and Essex are heavily utilized much of the day. Similarly, prime lots such as the City lot at the MBTA station, the Sewall Street lot, and the Church Street lot were difficult to find spaces in. However, mapping the parking utilization data revealed that there are many streets and lots that remain underutilized throughout the day in the downtown – some simply around the corner from heavily utilized locations.

**KEY CONCLUSION:** Existing regulations throughout the downtown core are not resolving real and perceived availability problems in areas of high demand, even where available parking exists nearby.

The map displays a city street grid with various colored overlays and callout boxes. The streets shown include North St, Church St, and others. The colored regions are: green (top left), yellow (top center), red (top right), blue (bottom left), and green (bottom right). The callout boxes are: 'High' (top left), 'Low' (top center), 'High/Low' (top right), 'Low/High' (middle left), 'Low/High' (middle center), 'Low/High' (bottom left), 'Low/High' (bottom center), and 'Low/High' (bottom right). The map is oriented with North at the top.

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## Sufficient Parking Information

In many communities, the poor utilization of some parking resources is attributed to inadequate signing and other information about downtown parking resources. However, Salem has a strong parking information program, incorporating a website, parking signs throughout downtown, and parking information incorporated as part of its downtown wayfinding program.

While some opportunities exist to improve parking information, existing systems in Salem are among the best in the state. City staff continue to assess the need for additional signing, and an expanded wayfinding program will place more signs in the coming year.

**KEY CONCLUSION: The parking information in Salem is among the best in the state, with clear signing to direct patrons to reserve parking locations.**



## Unfair Pricing

Today, the majority of downtown Salem's parking spaces are priced in one way or another. The table below summarizes the prices at facilities in the downtown if each had no regulatory restrictions. This exercise helps evaluate pricing structures.

### *Existing Pricing Structure in Downtown Salem*

Location	Hourly Rate or Equivalent	Daily Rate or Equivalent	Monthly Rate or Equivalent
Church St. Lot & Public Garages – Published Rate	\$1.50	\$12.00 (daily max)	\$252 (equivalent)
On-Street Meters & Other Public Lots	\$0.50	\$4.00 (8-hr. equivalent)	\$84 (equivalent)
MBTA Commuter Lot	\$0.50 (8-hr. equivalent)	\$4.00	\$84 (equivalent)
Public Garages – Monthly Pass	\$0.37 (8-hr. equivalent)	\$2.86 (equivalent)	\$60
City Lot at MBTA Station	\$0.25 (equivalent)	\$2.00	\$42 (equivalent)
Public Garages – Yearly Pass	\$0.25 (8-hr. equivalent)	\$1.98 (equivalent)	\$42 (\$500 per year)
On-Street Resident Pass	½ cent (8-hr. equivalent)	\$0.05 (equivalent)	\$2 (\$25 per 2 years)



The hourly-paying general public pays the highest parking rates in Salem. Employees and residents with monthly or annual passes pay the lowest rates. This structure has some notable negative impacts:

- The most valuable spaces to customers – on-street meters in front of their destination – are one-third the price of the garages, leading to circling, low availability, and penalty for parking in a garage.
- The Bridge Street lot is severely underpriced, making it the best deal in town for non-residents.

- Low-wage part-time employees that typically need to park for only a few hours a day or week pay at least twice as much to park at meters or in the garage as those who can afford monthly or annual passes.

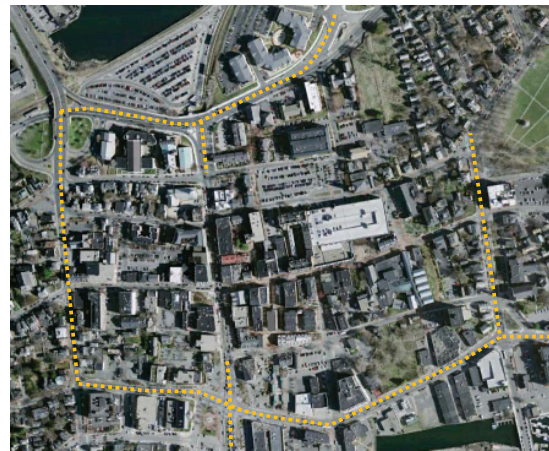
**KEY CONCLUSION: Parking pricing as currently structured in Salem is contributing to the lack of availability on prime streets, inconveniencing visitors, and leaving facilities like the Harbor Garage underutilized.**

## Improving Connectivity

The City has continued to improve the walking environment through improved sidewalks, crosswalks, benches, lighting, and wayfinding. These improvements are critical for motorists seeking to park in Salem, because every motorist becomes a pedestrian upon exiting the car. While walking conditions are generally excellent in the core of downtown, there tends to be a walking barrier of sorts surrounding the core as defined generally by Bridge, North, Norman/Derby, and Hawthorne Boulevard. For example, Derby Street experiences dramatic utilization changes from one side of the street to another. At over 60-feet in width with three travel lanes and parking lanes, accessing a free space on the other side of the street can be less desirable than circling the block for a preferred space.

**KEY CONCLUSION: Larger size and volume roadways surrounding the downtown core represent a barrier to motorists accessing parking outside the core.**

### *Roadway Barriers to Parking Access*



Derby Street



Washington & Derby



North Street

## Under-Utilization of Private Parking

While the City is mostly interested in improvements to the public parking system in Salem, a large number of private parking lots go underutilized every day in Salem. In aggregate, the private off-street parking system is never more than 50-percent utilized, representing hundreds of vacant spaces at the busiest hours of parking demand. Private owners seem to covet and protect this capacity, as evidenced by the preponderance of “No Parking” and “Violators Will Be Towed” signs in downtown.

**KEY CONCLUSION:** Private parking lot operators are very protective of their parking, but there is very poor utilization of these parking assets.





# Recommendations

The recommendations that follow were developed through an effort by the consultant to rationalize the downtown parking system. That process is described below, followed by recommended actions for the short-term and then several additional recommendations for consideration.

## SUMMARY

### Short-Term Recommendations

- Salem should implement demand-responsive pricing on- and off-street to help create availability and better balance parking demand in the downtown.
- Designated employee parking areas should be established that are price and convenience competitive with customer spaces to help ease user conflicts at prime front-door spaces.
- Residential parking in nearby neighborhoods should continue to be protected with Salem's resident permit system, and a new area-wide permit for downtown residents should be established.
- A new permitting program for tour buses and jitneys can help rationalize curb regulations and reduce under-utilized tow-zone space in Salem.
- The City should establish a parking & transportation fund that spends surplus parking revenues on downtown improvements and connections to remote parking. Decisions should be made in close coordination with Salem's downtown business community.
- On-going monitoring of parking utilization is necessary in order to adjust programs in response to performance on the ground.
- The City should move to develop an implementation program for pricing, regulatory, signing, and technology changes as soon as possible, including a robust outreach and education program.

### Additional Recommendations

- The City should consider creating and offering a municipal management program for private parking facilities to improve utilization of these assets and generate new public and private revenues.

- Several low-cost supply increases in existing lots and on wider streets should be considered after better management practices have been operating successfully and before additional parking lots or garages are contemplated.
- Smart parking technologies should be considered to enhance customer convenience, information, revenue collection, enforcement, and overall efficiency.

## Rationalizing the Parking System

One goal of the consultant's recommendations was to help restructure parking regulations and pricing. Based on strong complaints from downtown customers, a key objective of this effort was to improve customer parking availability and convenience in the downtown. This was closely followed by the objective of ensuring a clear supply of parking for downtown employees that discouraged long-term parking in key customer locations, such as on-street, in attractive lots, and on the lowest levels of garages. Finally, it was clear that a strategy to protect surrounding residential neighborhoods from spill-over parking should be reinforced. These policy goals were summarized spatially for the working group.

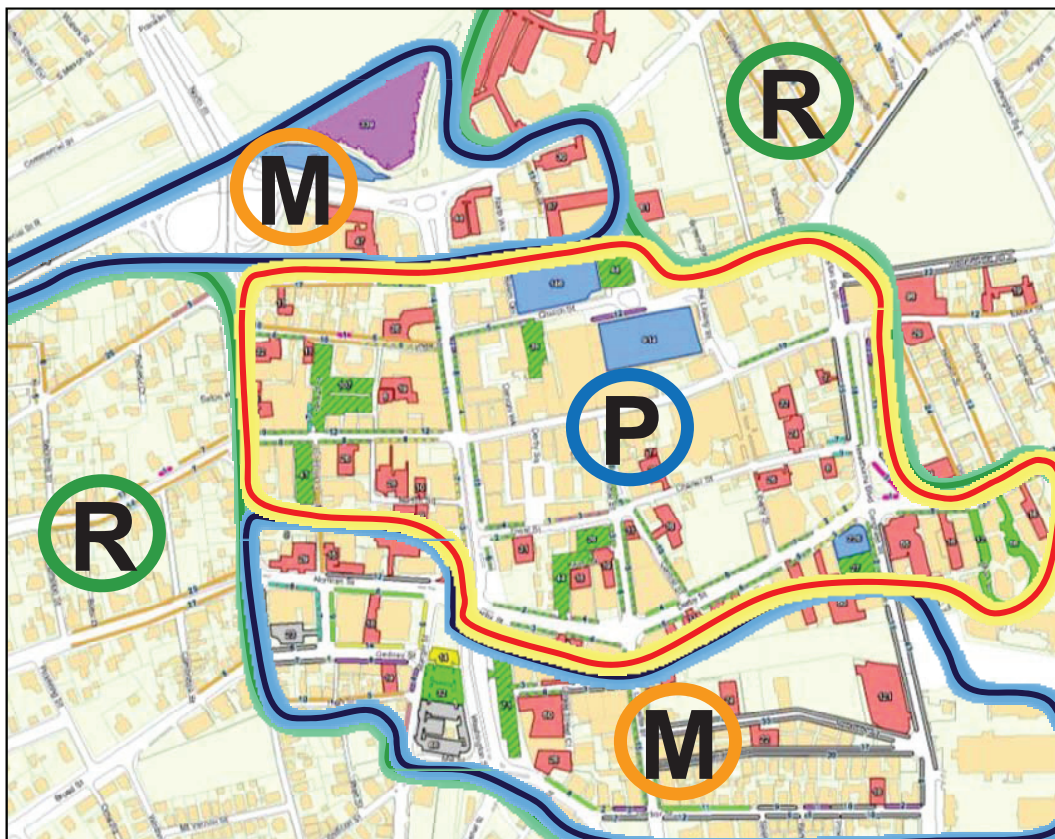
The consultant then sought to move beyond the classification of users by specific categories such as commuter, employee, courthouse visitor, downtown resident, neighborhood resident, and customer, to instead identify the core operational desire of each user group. In general, customers and visitors each desire short-term parking that is convenient to downtown destinations; employees and commuters generally return to the downtown daily and often seek monthly parking privileges; and residents in the core or nearby seek to have a parking space near their home that is not encumbered by other users.

With these simple assumptions in mind, the consultant identified parking areas by short-term (or "public") parking, long-term (or "monthly") parking, and protected residential parking. The result is the basis for the following recommendations.

## Policy Goals for the Comprehensive Parking Plan



## Recommended Parking Operations Areas in Downtown Salem





## Short-Term Recommendations

### RECOMMENDATION 1: IMPLEMENT DEMAND-RESPONSIVE PRICING

Within the core “public parking” area, implement strategies that ensure availability for short-term visitors. The following strategies should be implemented simultaneously:

#### Adjust On-Street Pricing by Block Face to Maintain 15-Percent Vacancy

The goal of the comprehensive parking plan is to efficiently manage demand for downtown parking while accommodating customer, employee, resident, and commuter parking needs. Demand-responsive pricing helps to put customers first in the “public parking” area by creating vacancies and turnover of the most convenient “front door” curb parking spaces to ensure availability for customers and visitors. Existing parking rates should be revised to rates that will create a 15-percent vacancy rate on each block – or roughly one space free for every 7 parked cars – rather than relying on arbitrary time-limits. Rates in some places may be zero. Rates in other areas may be subsequently raised or lowered based on future occupancy counts. The pricing should be supported by a City Council policy that ensures 15-percent availability as opposed to a specific set of prices.

#### Revised Meter Rates

Location	Hourly Rate	Hours of Operation
Federal, Church, Washington (north of Essex)	\$1.50	8 AM – 4 PM
Essex (btwn. North & Washington), Front, Central, Lafayette (north of Derby), Derby, Hawthorne, Washington (south of Front)	\$0.75	10 AM – 8 PM
Congress, Lafayette (south of Derby)	\$0.50	10 AM – 4 PM

#### Extend All Time-Limits to At Least 4-Hours

Once a policy of market rate pricing is adopted with the goal of achieving an 85% occupancy rate, then time-limits need not be instituted. With no time limits, much of the worry and “ticket anxiety” for downtown customers disappears.

#### Adjust Garage Pricing to Maximize Utilization

Similar to the pricing goal of on-street meters, parking garages are not considered to be optimally utilized until they reach 90-percent of their capacity. Today, neither public garage meets this goal, and their spaces represent lost capacity that is more valuable on-street. To encourage greater use of the garages, demand-responsive pricing is again in order.

#### Revised Garage and Lot Rates

Location	Hourly Rate	Hours of Operation
Church St. Lot	\$1.00	8 AM – 4 PM
Museum Garage & Sewall St. Lot	\$0.75	8 AM – 4 PM
Crombie, Front, & Riley Plaza East Lots	\$0.50	10 AM – 6 PM
Harbor Garage	\$0.25	10 AM – 4 PM

#### Implement a Clear Information Program

Throughout the “public parking” operations area on streets where meters exist today, all existing parking regulatory signing can be removed (besides those reserved for special uses or safety clearance). Meters alone are an indication of public parking availability, and the four-hour time-limit will be evident on the meters themselves. The City should develop a strong outreach campaign to advise businesses and residents of the changes. Important parts of this campaign include:

- Outreach brochures
- Informational meetings
- A comment line, email, and blog
- A special notice webpage

The City also should consider having PCO's hand out brochures and help answer questions, even if enforcement activity is significantly reduced for a month.

## **RECOMMENDATION 2: PROVIDE EMPLOYEE PARKING AREAS**

A significant amount of employee parking occurs today in the “public parking” downtown core. Many employees feed meters. Others move their cars every hour or two. Some Salem residents park in surrounding residential areas to go walk to work in the downtown. A large amount of the capacity of the Museum Garage – especially on the lower decks – is taken by employees while the Harbor Garage remains underutilized. To incentivize the use of underutilized parking assets, the following strategies are recommended.

### **Establish a Monthly Permit Zone**

In areas that are utilized today mostly by employees, the City should formalize this operation for the benefit of employees, which will help to attract employees to these areas. Through a system of simple signs enforceable by normal ticketing, several existing parking areas should become “Monthly Permit” parking only.

### **Revise the Monthly Permit Program**

The current monthly permit prices do not motivate the use of the Harbor Garage. Meanwhile, many potential purchasers of monthly permits cannot afford the cost or the time it takes to obtain a permit. Therefore, a new pricing structure should be implemented which works to encourage the use of underutilized facilities. Permits should be made available for purchase through the web to speed transaction time and ease.

## **Revised Permit Rates**

Location	Monthly Rate
Church St. Lot	\$75
Museum Garage, top three decks	\$65
Harbor Garage	\$40
Riley Plaza & on-street spaces	\$25

The City also should immediately investigate the use of in-car meters. For the employee parking program, an in-car meter can be a huge benefit by enabling part-time employees to park cost-effectively in the employee parking areas as well as on underutilized residential during the day for a low rate (\$0.25 per hour).

## **RECOMMENDATION 3: ENSURE AND PROTECT RESIDENTIAL PARKING**

Salem already employs an effective residential permit program that protects residential streets from parking by out of town commuters and employees. This program should continue to be enforced outside of the downtown. However, within the downtown, residential permit-only zones exist on Federal, Lynde, Ash, and Crombie Streets where there is also high demand for on-street parking – especially when residents have left for work, leaving spaces vacant but unusable by other non-permitted users.

### **Convert Residential Parking to Public Parking**

On Federal, Lynde, Ash, and Crombie Streets, convert the existing residential permit zones to public parking and install meters or pay stations, with the “resident only” restriction limited to the hours of 5 PM – 8 AM and weekends. This affects approximately 100 existing residential units on these streets where about 60 residential spaces are signed today for permit parking. These residents would have access to a new district-wide permit allowing them to park on-street in the “public parking”



area on weekdays from 8 AM to 5 PM. The permit would cost the same as the standard residential permit. The associated visitor pass would be limited to resident only zones.

#### **Initiate a District-Wide**

#### **Parking Permit Program**

After other changes to the parking system have been implemented, the City may choose to offer district-wide permit parking to other downtown residents. Two variants of this permit would allow only those who live downtown either 24-hour or overnight parking in the public parking area at meters and time-restricted spaces. Initially only 200 permits would be sold at either \$5,000 or \$1,500 per year respectively.

### **RECOMMENDATION 4: IMPLEMENT A TOUR & JITNEY BUS PARKING REGISTRATION**

Salem's successful tourist economy is dependent on access by large tour buses and local trolley buses throughout the year. However, unpredictability often results in an over- or under-supply of curbside tour bus parking, depending on the desired location, the equipment used, and the time of year. A successful solution is to require that operators purchase a permit that covers the cost of the municipality posting and maintaining custom signs for private tour operators. With the permit application, operators can be required to provide information about the stop location(s), days and hours of operation, and amount of curb length required, helping to clarify when tow-zones need to be active and freeing up spaces for customers when they are inactive.

### **RECOMMENDATION 5: ESTABLISH A PARKING & TRANSPORTATION FUND**

Surplus revenues from the employee permit program and other additional revenue sources, such as additional meter revenue, should fund public improvements that benefit the

downtown. If downtown parking revenues seem to disappear into the General Fund, where they may appear to produce no direct benefit for downtown businesses, there will be little support for parking policies that may ultimately benefit business, such as increased permit fees, installing parking meters, or adjusting regulations. Potential uses for Parking and Transportation Fund revenues include:

- Landscaping and streetscape greening
- Increased frequency of trash collection
- Street cleaning, power-washing of sidewalks, and graffiti removal
- Parking, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle infrastructure and amenities
- Additional parking enforcement
- Garage improvements
- Reconfiguration and restriping of Riley Plaza west lot (see Recommendation 9)
- Marketing and promotion of Salem's merchants
- Additional programs and projects as recommended by downtown stakeholders and approved by the Board of Selectmen

### **RECOMMENDATION 6: MONITOR PARKING UTILIZATION**

An important part of maintaining the success of any of these recommendations will be monitoring parking utilization on a regular basis. A recurring annual or biennial monitoring regime can allow the City to modify its pricing, permitting, zoning requirements, and other key policies. Based on the detailed utilization information collected for this study, a much smaller and targeted utilization effort can be conducted (potentially in-house or with the use of students or volunteers) by focusing on area of high demand and only casually observing other areas to confirm the results of this effort.

## RECOMMENDATION 7: IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

In order to implement these short-term recommendations effectively, it is advised that the City seek professional assistance to implement the various strategies. A variety of tasks are needed, including:

- Development of signs and sign locations
- Establishment of final operations area boundaries
- Refinement of pricing structures
- Recommended on-line permit purchase services
- Identification of appropriate parking technologies (i.e. additional pay stations, smart meters, in-car meters, real-time parking occupancy signs, etc.)
- Public outreach publications
- Facilitation of information meetings
- Reconfiguration of existing meter mechanicals
- Monitoring

## Additional Recommendations

### RECOMMENDATION 8: MUNICIPAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR PRIVATE PARKING

The utilization study revealed that between 900 and one thousand privately held and operated parking spaces remain vacant at the busiest times of day in downtown Salem – a vacancy rate of at least 40-percent throughout the entire day. This is a significant amount of

underutilized parking supply – mostly contained in commercial and residential surface lots scattered throughout the downtown. A well-structured public program should be established that clearly outlines a beneficial and consistent arrangement that the City can offer to landowners in exchange for the ability to utilize their parking. Key elements would include:

- Clear removal of private liability concerns;
- A lease payment at a valuable rate in excess of current parking revenues but below the full market potential so as not to discourage more productive redevelopment;
- Higher lease payments for parking that is entirely municipally managed; lower for parking that is retained as exclusive private use;
- Clearly stated maintenance, security, and operating terms that keep the facility in good condition for the public and the landowner; and
- Assurance that parking can be returned to the landowner on short notice if a redevelopment plan is approved and/or permitted.

### RECOMMENDATION 9: EXPAND EMPLOYEE PARKING SUPPLY

As the downtown grows, demand for employee parking may increase. If supplies in the “monthly permit” areas begin to be insufficient, expansion of that parking supply may be warranted.

### *Parking Reconfiguration and Expansion at Riley Plaza*





A cost effective approach to parking supply increase is to reconfigure lots and add-on street parking where travel lane capacity is excessive. Both of these strategies happen to be very applicable to Riley Plaza and surrounding streets. The image below suggests how this parking supply could be increased by over 120 spaces.



## **RECOMMENDATION 10: IMPLEMENT SMART PARKING SOLUTIONS**

After the short-term recommendations are implemented, it is very likely that demand for improved parking technologies that provide greater customer conveniences will grow. Many vendors offer very advanced solutions that the City would be wise to consider as part of furthering customer convenience, increasing revenues, and attracting economic development.

- Smart meters
- Multi-space meters
- Cell phone payment
- Variable daily pricing
- MBTA pass integration
- Debit card integration
- Real-time space availability sensors
- Mobile applications



LivingWell  
Therapeutic  
Massage

RELIEF

RENEW

STARBUCKS  
COFFEE

Billy Ray's  
Dry Cleaning  
745-5299

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