

Beacon Center City Parking Analysis



*Prepared by the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development
With assistance from the City of Beacon
November 2014*

The preparation of this report has been financed in part through grant[s] from the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, under the State Planning and Research Program, Section 505 [or Metropolitan Planning Program, Section 104(f)] of Title 23, U.S. Code. The contents of this report do not necessarily reflect the official views or policy of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Introduction

With the aim of measuring and managing current and projected parking impacts, Beacon City leaders requested that the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development (“the Planning Department”) lead a Center City Parking Analysis. The Planning Department, which hosts the Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council (PDCTC), has completed numerous transportation and land use analyses for local municipalities. We applaud Beacon’s efforts to proactively address parking concerns and we hope that this Analysis enhances Beacon’s progress as a thriving, diverse, healthy, and multi-modal community.

Several factors propel development in Beacon. The City is served by major highways and a rail station which conveniently connects to New York City and cities throughout the Northeast and beyond. The Hudson River, Fishkill Creek and Hudson Highlands are close at hand. Main Street contains a variety of public and private uses, including government, residential, non-profit, varied services, galleries, offices, restaurants, grocers and entertainment venues. Beacon’s reputation as a desirable place to live, work and play has grown and dovetails with strong demographic and cultural trends favoring mixed-use, vibrant communities that are walkable, bikeable and provide transportation options beyond the single occupancy vehicle. The opening of DIA: Beacon in 2003 helped establish Beacon as “up and coming.” Subsequent projects along Main Street, the waterfront, and the Fishkill Creek have further set the stage for the significant activity currently underway. While it is true that no new buildings have been constructed on Main Street in several decades, many existing structures were rehabilitated in the last ten years. The pace of activity has quickened, particularly in

the West and East Ends. The Roundhouse at Beacon, a very significant East End project, is nearing completion.

Land Use Decisions & Parking Policy

Key City policy directives reflect broad support for center city development. The City’s 2007 Comprehensive Plan promotes infill on vacant parcels and parking lots and establishment of a string of activity nodes/public greens along Main Street (p. 12). Main Street is forwarded as *“the most important civic space... and the City expects to benefit from (increased development) through the physical revitalization of the area, economic revitalization of local businesses where new residents will shop, and increased property tax revenues”* (p. 56). In 2013, the City Council rezoned a large portion of downtown into the Central Main Street (CMS) District. The CMS encourages infill development by raising development potential and lowering parking requirements. The Planning Department supports new development on Beacon’s Main Street and Linkage Districts as a matter of policy.

Land use decisions by the City Council, Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning Board typically accommodate reasonable requests to reduce parking provisions for specific projects below required minimums. Residents, business owners and elected representatives, however, recognize that vehicle parking can be a “limiting factor” to Beacon’s continued revitalization. High parking demand is likely a sign of success, but the costs that it imposes cannot be ignored. Excessive parking provision will undercut Beacon’s potential by keeping buildings widely spaced apart, rendering walking and bicycling unpleasant and unsafe. Greenway Connections states that: “Centers work best when they are close-knit and compact in form, supporting central utilities and having a mixture of uses

within a five to ten minute walk of surrounding residential areas.” (p. 24) Parking facilities generate environmental costs, such as air, noise and water pollution and heat island effects. Despite the high cost to build and maintain, parking in Beacon is free to users; on-street and off-street parking is not charged and time restrictions are not enforced. When parking is provided for free, economically rational consumers use it at a high rate and are less inclined to choose alternative means of transportation. Parking demand is greater in some portions of center city and at certain time periods. Concern about the impact of anticipated development is high, given these projects will increase parking demand. This Analysis quantifies utilization of existing parking resources and seeks to project and plan for growing demand.

Analysis Methodology

The Planning Department and the City jointly developed a methodology that sought to answer the following key questions:

- What is the available supply of downtown parking spaces on city streets and in private and municipal parking lots?
- What are the parking utilization rates at different days and time periods? When and where do they exceed the optimal rate?
- How much will parking demand increase over the next 10 years and how can this increase be effectively accommodated?

The Study Area includes the area within one block of Main Street from Route 9D to just east of the Fishkill Creek. It is one mile long and 0.14 mile across at its widest point (see Overview Map on page 3). A quarter-mile buffer shown on

this map demonstrates the large area of the City that lies within a short walk of Main Street.

Using in-house digital resources and Google Maps, Planning Department staff determined the parking capacity of street segments/parking lots and developed forms and maps which City staff used to record parking counts. Data was then entered into the County’s Geographic Information System (GIS), where utilization rates were generated and displayed.

Department staff reviewed key documents including the Zoning Code, Comprehensive Plan, and prior parking studies. Parking regulations within the City Code were mapped. The City Building Inspector provided data about recently approved and anticipated downtown development projects from which staff projected anticipated parking demand increase. Lastly, the Planning Department developed strategy recommendations to address current and future parking needs.

Previous Studies

In 2007 Frederick Clark Associates completed a *Traffic and Parking Study: Zoning Changes Transportation Study for the Proposed Comprehensive Plan*. The Study identified 250 private lot spaces, 346 municipal lot spaces and 260 on-street spaces along Main Street-facing blocks. A parking count determined that “for each block face along Main Street, the total current parking demand was substantially lower than available parking.” (p. 14). For the entire corridor, observed weekday parking utilization was 61% on-street, 51% within municipal lots and 45% within private lots. The East End, however, revealed a “generally high demand for day, evening and overnight parking with little or no available off-street parking areas.” (p. 14) The Frederick Clark study recommended that

developments along Main Street and other areas should include adequate off-street parking spaces within each development site and that additional municipal/private parking lots and garages should be constructed “within reasonable walking distance of Main Street and each of the developments around Main Street.” (p. 1) The City was encouraged to pursue public/private shared parking arrangements for specified existing off-street lots.

In 2008, BFJ Planning completed the *Beacon Transportation Linkages Program Final Report*. This study did not include parking counts but recommended expanded use of shared parking, off-site parking, structured parking facilities and reduced parking requirements in areas well served by transit. (p. 38) The Study also made recommendations for parking signage which have been implemented to some degree. (p. 58)

Parking Regulations and Enforcement

Beacon’s City Code restricts parking on several downtown streets. During weekdays, parking on Main Street is limited to two hours between 9 AM to 5 PM and along Dewindt, Henry



and Van Nydeck Streets is restricted to two hours between 7 AM to 5 PM. Other than site specific limitations bounding fire hydrants, loading zones and stop signs, parking on side streets is unrestricted. A few side streets prohibit parking at any time. Field observations by Department staff indicate that most street segments are adequately signed. Parking at municipal lots is limited to 24 hours. Parking at private lots is

typically limited to on-site business patrons, but it is not known if or where these rules are enforced or towing occurs. Some private lots, such as at Key Foods, seem to function almost as public lots. Only one private lot is gated.

The City does not enforce parking restrictions but plans to hire enforcement personnel to do so in the near future. Department staff observed low turnover at parking stalls, indicating that lack of enforcement might be impacting functional parking capacity.

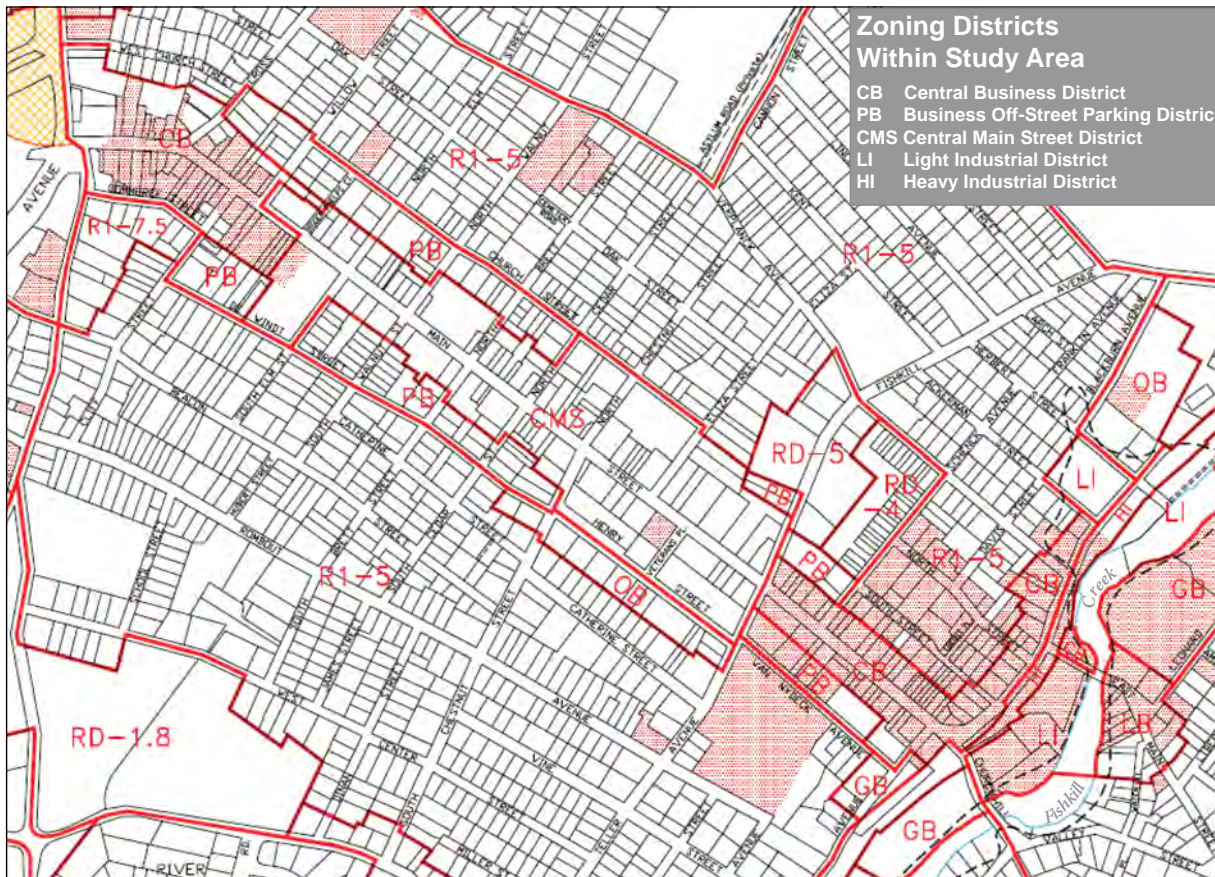
Parking requirements in Zoning Code

Zoning regulations have an important impact upon the amount and type of parking provided in new construction. The Zoning map to the right shows that most of the center city lies within the Central Main Street (CMS) or Central Business (CB) Districts with



lesser amounts in the Business Off-Street Parking (PB), Residential (R1-5) and Light Industry (LI) Districts.

Within the PB and CB Districts, minimum parking requirements can be waived or reduced by the Zoning



Board of Appeals. CMS District regulations allow for a parking modification by the Planning Board if the applicant demonstrates that adequate shared off-street parking is available to meet “foreseeable demand.” The alternative shared parking must be within 500 feet of the site and within the CMS or PB Districts. Modest reductions can be justified by providing on-site bicycle parking. Developers may also dedicate land to the City for public parking use. Such dedications can occur either on-site or via purchase/long-term lease of property within 800 feet of the site and within the CMS or PB Districts. The Planning Board may also

consider the findings of a professional parking study for the proposed use and surrounding area to justify the provision of fewer than required parking spaces. For lots of 8,000 square feet or less, where on-site parking is not feasible, the Board may waive all parking requirements, provided that the total floor area of the building is no greater than 5,000 square feet.

The ZBA and Planning Board have provided numerous parking variances and waivers for center city projects. This may reflect a pro-development viewpoint, but also may indicate that parking requirements in the Zoning Code are too high and ill-suited to the development market and/or downtown’s fabric. Parking requirements vary by Zoning District and those in the CB and PB Districts

resemble suburban standards. Projects in the CB District, for example, must provide one parking space for each 200 sf of floor area for “Retail or service businesses” and “Offices for professional or business” uses. Minimum requirements in the CMS are a better fit with Beacon’s downtown fabric. In the CMS District, “Office and nonretail commercial” uses must provide 1 space per 400 sf floor area while “Retail Commercial and Personal Services” must provide 1 space per 333 sf. The PB Zone appears to, at least indirectly, encourage conversion of homes, businesses and vacant parcels to principal use parking lots. The Fishkill Creek Development District,

south of the Study Area contains minimum and maximum parking requirements. The City might consider application of maximum standards in center city Districts.

Current Conditions

This Analysis quantifies parking supply and demand. Department staff derived capacity figures through a review of aerial photography. Where streets and lots are striped, capacity figures are verifiable. Several lots and side streets, however, are not striped and in these cases, staff generated approximate capacity figures in consideration of parking lot area and geometry, street length, curb cuts and other obstructions. On-site observations helped to verify relative accuracy of these estimates.

The industry-standard 85% utilization (15% vacancy) rate is

Center City Parking Capacity

| Type | # Spaces |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| on-street (Main Street) | 326 |
| on-street (other than Main Street) | 778 |
| on-street TOTAL = | 1,104 |
| Private lots | 316 |
| Municipal lots* | 478 |
| parking lot TOTAL = | 794 |
| Study Area TOTAL= | 1,898 |

*Includes lots owned/operated by the City of Beacon, Dutchess County

the benchmark for this Analysis. 85% occupancy is defined as “optimal” because enough vacant spaces remain to accommodate newly arriving vehicles looking for a space, which facilitates ingress and egress and minimizes the amount of wasteful “cruising.” 85% utilization indicates that the supply of parking is being efficiently maximized. Note: the reader should bear in mind that the varying capacity of lots and blocks results in a different absolute number of vacant

spaces for a given utilization rate. The examples below illustrate this point:

Block #1 example

$$85\% \text{ utilization rate} = \frac{17 \text{ parked cars}}{20 \text{ space capacity}} = 3 \text{ vacant spaces}$$

Block #2 example

$$85\% \text{ utilization rate} = \frac{51 \text{ parked cars}}{60 \text{ space capacity}} = 9 \text{ vacant spaces}$$

Parking count results

City staff and volunteers recorded point-in-time parking counts in the morning (9-11 AM), afternoon (1-3 PM) and evening (5-7 PM) on Tuesday August 5th, Thursday August 14th and Saturday September 6th. For reporting purposes, the two weekday counts for each time period have been averaged into one figure. It is important to acknowledge that the counts are representative. The City may wish to conduct additional counts to refine precision or to capture data from other time periods, such as later in the evening.

Analysis of count data indicates that, outside of specific street segments or lots at specific time periods, utilization rates generally do not exceed the 85% optimal rate. This demonstrates that, generally speaking, capacity is sufficient to meet demand. Utilization is generally low along streets perpendicular and parallel to Main Street and on several private lots. The fairly low number of instances where counts exceeded the 85% optimal utilization rate is reflected in the low values for the entire Study Area in the table at the top of the next page.

The East End and West End contained most of the counts exceeding 85% utilization. In the East End (the area east of Fishkill Avenue), the highest number of these occurred on Saturday evening. In the West end (the area west of Elm

Utilization Rates for entire Study Area

| Time Period of count | In Parking Lots | On-street |
|----------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Weekday morning | 53% | 38% |
| Weekday afternoon | 59% | 47% |
| Weekday evening | 31% | 40% |
| Saturday morning | 43% | 43% |
| Saturday afternoon | 43% | 44% |
| Saturday evening | 38% | 40% |

that there is underutilized capacity on streets and lots around high utilization clusters on the East and West Ends. Most side streets, portions of Main Street, and numerous lots remained well below the 85% rate. On Saturday evening, the East End's highest utilization period, 273 cars were counted on- and off-street, yet the sub-area contains approximately 455 total available spaces. During the weekday afternoon, the West End's highest utilization period, 270 cars were counted where the area contains approximately 491 spaces.

Utilization – projected future condition

Indications from the parking counts completed for this project echo those from the 2007 Frederick Clark Associates study; current center city parking supply is adequate to meet demand. Anticipated development projects, however, will significantly increase demand. The City Building Inspector provided a list of downtown projects that have obtained or are seeking

Street) the time period with the most such counts was during the weekday afternoon. The parking counts also indicate

approvals/permits. Some projects are less certain to be developed than others, but herein we assume it is likely that the subject parcels will be developed in some fashion. In the list of “Anticipated Center City Projects with Parking”, the column “# Spaces Required” indicates the minimum number of parking spaces required per the use proposed and Zoning District designation. The column “# Spaces to be Provided (est.)” indicates how many on-site spaces are proposed (or assumed) to be built. As described above, the Planning and Zoning Boards can authorize less on-site parking than is required. The “Shortfall” column = (“# Spaces Required” minus “# Spaces to be Provided”). The Analysis utilizes this shortfall as an indication of potential development induced parking demand that is not provided on-site and thus must be absorbed on streets and lots.

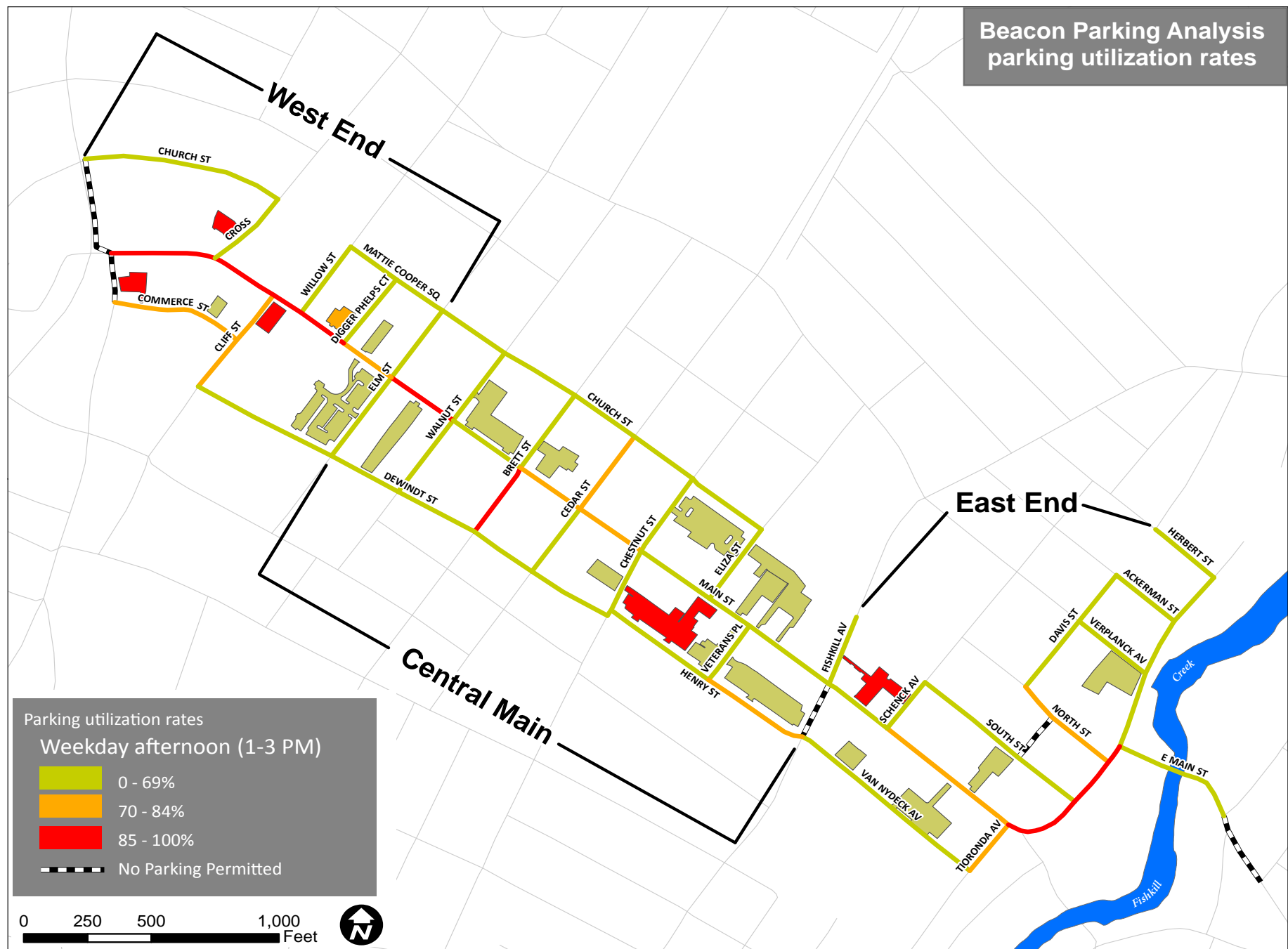
Anticipated Center City projects with parking

| Sub-area | Address | Project Type | # Spaces Required | # Spaces to be Provided (est.) | Shortfall |
|----------|------------------|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| West End | 151 Main St. | Long View Hotel | 15 | -- | (15) |
| West End | Main & Cross St. | Commercial/residential | 8 | 8 | |
| Central | 378 Main St. | Office space 3rd floor | 14 | -- | (14) |
| Central | 344 Main St. | Commercial/residential | 8 | 8 | -- |
| Central | 395 Main St. | Apartments/restaurant | 20 | -- | (20) |
| East End | 416 Main St. | Triplex dinner theater | 36 | 6 | (30) |
| East End | 426 Main St. | Mt. Beacon Hotel | 30 | 20 | (10) |
| East End | 425 Main St. | Commercial | 30 | -- | (30) |
| East End | 445 Main St. | Theater | 125 | -- | (125) |
| East End | 1 East Main St. | Brewery/restaurant | 80 | 8 | (72) |
| East End | 448 Main St. | Apartments | 6 | 6 | -- |
| East End | 536 Main St. | Commercial/residential | 8 | 5 | (3) |
| | | Total West End | 54 | 15 | (39) |
| | | Total East End | 357 | 53 | (304) |
| | | TOTAL Downtown | 411 | 68 | (343) |

Beacon Parking Analysis parking utilization rates



Beacon Parking Analysis
parking utilization rates



Beacon Parking Analysis parking utilization rates



Beacon Parking Analysis parking utilization rates



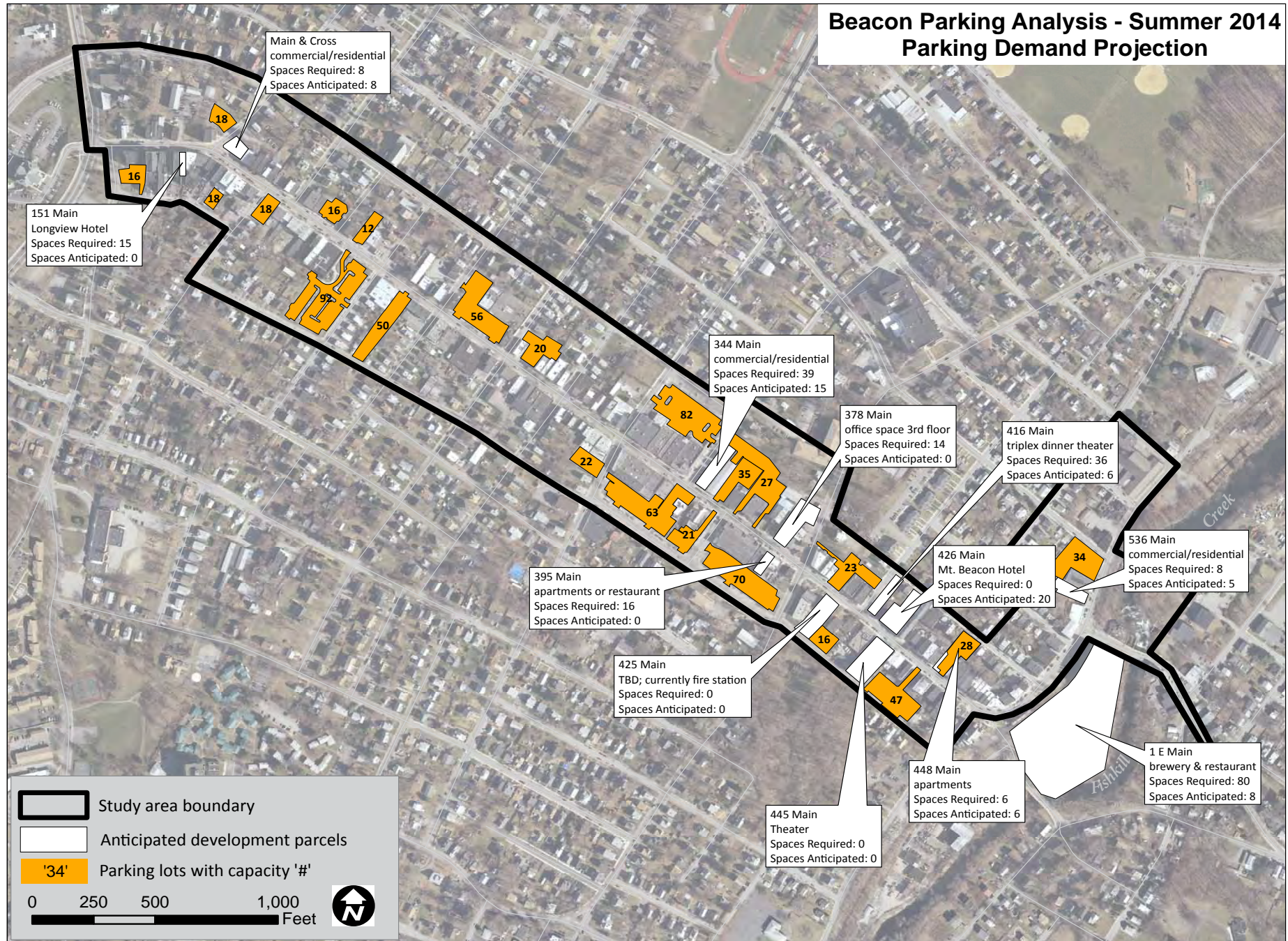
Beacon Parking Analysis parking utilization rates



Beacon Parking Analysis parking utilization rates



Beacon Parking Analysis - Summer 2014 Parking Demand Projection



The potential increase in parking demand represented by anticipated projects is large and, in the East End, dramatic. On an existing base of 455 total existing spaces, the projects above would increase demand in the East End by 304 spaces or 75%. The increase in the West End would be more modest at an increase of 39 spaces on a base of 491 for an increase of 8%. The projected increase indicates that, within certain sections of downtown, anticipated development will result in large increases of greater than 85% utilization. The challenge facing City government and stakeholders, is to accommodate this rising demand without degrading the downtown environment and curtailing continued revitalization. In order to achieve this balance, two main goals must be sought 1) efficiently utilize capacity and 2) manage demand.



Recommended Strategies

High parking utilization is an unavoidable effect of revitalization within a compact urban environment. Given that parking demand is projected to increase significantly

in the near future, the Planning Department recommends consideration of several strategies to utilize capacity more efficiently and to manage demand. Implementation involves changes to policy, parking infrastructure and modes of transport and emphasizes flexibility in response to changing conditions. Development of prime properties to their best use is an important goal and, with few exceptions, parking lots do not meet that standard. This Analysis provides a baseline of actual parking conditions. As strategies are implemented amid ever changing conditions, we recommend that the City regularly gather data to gauge strategy impacts.

Recommendation #1: Increase shared use of parking lots

Parking lots typically experience parking associated with office and retail uses during the morning and afternoon periods. Residential, restaurant and entertainment uses account for a greater share of demand in the evening. City-owned lots allow parking for 24 hours and, therefore, accommodate demand generated by many types of uses. The Towne Crier entertainment venue is adjacent to a large municipal lot which experiences high utilization during the morning and afternoon, but typically low utilization in the evening. During its evening and weekend events, Towne Crier employees and guests park in this lot. A different lot, at the corner of Verplanck and East Main contains cross-access easements that permit parking by the public and for private use associated with an adjacent apartment building.

Shared parking at private lots should particularly be encouraged and incentivized. Parking counts indicate that several private lots are poorly utilized at one or all time periods. Two adjacent private lots with high capacity but very low utilization rates all day are located on the northeast

corner of Main and Eliza Street. These lots are close-by the high utilization East End and, if they could be opened up for broader use, available capacity in that area would be significantly increased. Shared parking arrangements typically generate revenue for the property owner. The City could provide incentives for private owners to open up lots for public use by placing parking stations in them and splitting the resulting revenue.



Recommendation #2: Develop additional capacity along the Van Nydeck Street corridor

Anticipated development will likely necessitate development of additional parking capacity in the East End. The City is considering purchase of land at Churchill and Main Streets within the 1 East Main Street project site. Development of a large parking lot at this site is perhaps not the best use of this valuable Creek frontage, but including amenities such as a Greenway trail and park features could ameliorate such impact.

It appears that the Van Nydeck Street corridor between Tioranda and Teller Avenues presents a unique opportunity to significantly increase parking capacity within the East End, while also enhancing streetscape, pedestrian access, and infill development opportunities. Current parking capacity within this small corridor consists of approximately 73 off-street and 16 on-street spaces for a total of 89 spaces. Conservative estimates indicate that the corridor could be improved to accommodate a total of 177 spaces which is a net increase of 88 spaces by:

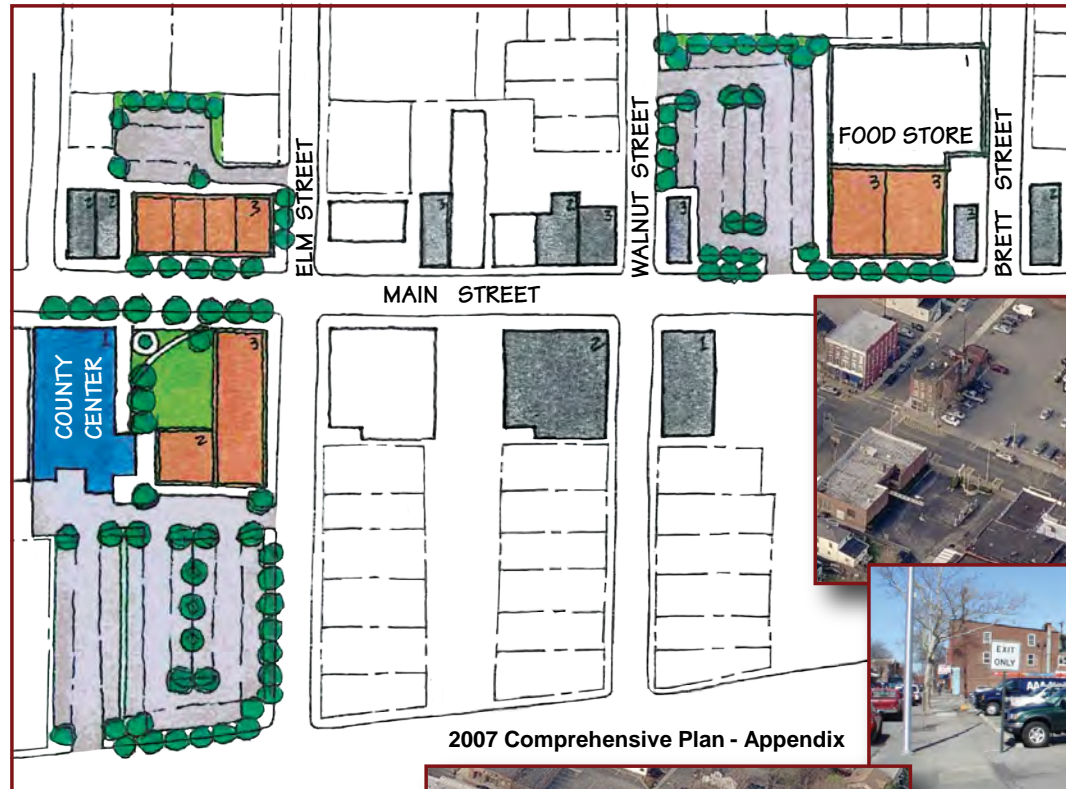
- Increasing capacity at the existing 47 space municipal lot to 52 spaces;
- Developing a parking lot on the east side of the Madam Brett House property. An attractive, well-screened and compatible lot at the site could yield 85 spaces; and
- Organizing on-street parking along the south side of Van Nydeck Street could yield a total of approximately 40 spaces.



A parking lot near the Madam Brett House, the County's oldest extant house, could generate significant revenue for its upkeep and increase visitorship by increasing local foot traffic and improving the streetscape. Infill opportunities at underutilized properties such as the firehouse would also be enhanced.

Recommendation #3: Increase functional capacity on existing lots and streets

Parking is permitted all-day on most downtown streets perpendicular and parallel to Main Street, but their current utilization is low. Many of these streets are not striped for parking. The City can encourage better parking utilization of roadways by striping parking spaces, closing defunct curb cuts, deploying way-finding and adjusting access to and from Main Street (one-way/two-way



- Expand food store to street frontage;
- Multi-story buildings face Main Street;
- Relocate parking behind storefronts;
- Add trees and landscape screening.



Main Street Infill Strategies Illustrative Sketch Plan

streets). It is recognized that a few side streets are too narrow to accommodate more parked cars. Van Nydeck Street and Tioranda Avenue are notable examples of underutilized East End streets where parking capacity could be far better utilized.

Publicly accessible parking lots should provide the maximum number of parking spaces feasible. Opportunities to increase the number of parking spaces in municipal lots should be examined. The County Government Center, for example, is currently striped for 92 parking spaces. The site layout is inefficient, and the Illustrative Sketch Design by Department staff, completed for the Beacon Comprehensive Plan, shows how parking capacity could be increased to 107 spaces while also adding Main Street liner buildings and a small public green. This site could possibly accommodate a parking garage.

Recommendation #4: Charge for parking & enforce regulations

Parking in Beacon is currently free to users, but is expensive to build and maintain. Excluding land costs, nationwide parking construction costs in 2012 averaged to \$4,000-\$8,000 per space¹. Because downtown parking is free to the user, taxpayers pay for construction and maintenance. Free parking subsidizes and, hence, encourages use of single occupancy vehicles. Where parking is free and restrictions not enforced, drivers are encouraged to park their cars in the most valuable on-street spaces and leave them there for hours. Their good fortune in securing a convenient parking space on a given day is a misfortune for others who are then unable to park. Lower turnover means foregone consumer spending. Free parking perversely discourages infill development.

The countermeasure to free parking is paid parking. Professor Donald Shoup has famously documented the beneficial changes that can accrue when communities charge for parking, increased municipal revenue being only one. The truly transformative effect is that parking demand becomes more

¹ Shoup, Donald, The High Cost of Free Parking. American Planning Association Planner's Press, page 185.

evenly distributed, creating availability in the most desirable center city locations.² Pricing drives parking behavior. Where utilization exceeds the optimal 85% utilization rate, parking prices should be raised until the utilization rate falls below that threshold. Where utilization is well below 85%, pricing is too high. Modern electronic stations facilitate discrete price toggling. Pricing has strong potential to maximize efficient use of capacity in Beacon's center. In the West and East Ends, at times when curb parking is over-utilized, pricing will cause some portion of drivers to make use of slightly more distant but "free" side streets and parking lots, thus stalling needless and expensive expansion of parking facilities. There are a range of detailed decision points to consider before implementing paid parking in the city center (payment station type, financing options, maintenance, etc.) that are best addressed by vendors. Start-up costs can be significant. Old-style meters have been supplanted by better looking and functioning electronic pay stations that collect data and facilitates management of the parking system. We suggest that in concert with charging for parking, the City seriously consider implementing a parking benefit district (see Recommendation #5 below). The City can also consider implementing paid parking in phases. Phase One, for example, could include pay stations just at on-street parking along Main Street (approximately 326 spaces). Later phases could expand to municipal lots, side streets and even private lots.

It is important to emphasize that business owners and center city residents stand to gain the most from paid parking in Beacon's center city, yet revenue generation can also be significant. An initial estimate of projected income from a

² Shoup (p. 205)

Phase One implementation (326 spaces along Main Street) could generate between \$612,000 to \$867,000 gross annual revenue. Subsequent Phases would increase gross revenue (as well as marginal costs).

Effective implementation of paid parking in Beacon will require enforcement. The City is reportedly already hiring such personnel. Enforcement will ensure that meters achieve the desired parking turnover crucial to center city business and also meet revenue potential. Enforcement will also generate revenue from issuance of violations.

Recommendation #5: Develop a Center City Benefit Fund

Maintaining, expanding or improving center city parking requires money. We recommend creation of a Center City Benefit Fund to implement parking strategies and other center city transportation improvements. Expensive structured parking could even be contemplated if the fund grows large enough and/or the garage is developed in partnership with a private development project.

This Fund would be maintained via two main sources: The experience of other communities suggests that paid parking is more readily embraced when the resulting funds are reinvested into parking and target area needs. The City should consider reserving funds generated at parking stations for improvements within the center city. Beacon decision-makers have provided generous relief to developers seeking to build less parking than is required by Code. It can be argued that such relief is a (justifiable) public subsidy to new development, where the newly generated off-site parking impact is absorbed on-street or in municipal lots. Parking variances or waivers, however, allow development to proceed without providing the

money necessary for construction and upkeep of the actually needed parking facilities. The City should consider instituting a ‘payment-in-lieu of parking’ system that captures the costs of parking provision. Such a system facilitates infill development particularly on parcels that cannot provide required spaces on-site, pooling funds from multiple small developments to invest in facilities available to all. The City may find that spreading payments over time via quarterly billing may ease resistance from property owners and establish a larger ongoing revenue stream.

Recommendation #6: Adjust parking regulations in Zoning Code

Some parking requirements for the Central Business (CB) and Business Off Street Parking (PB) Districts resemble suburban standards. The frequency with which the Planning and Zoning Boards issue waivers and variances for parking requirements seems to indicate that the requirements are not in line with the development market or what the center city can to accommodate. We recommend that the City consider the following changes:

Apply Central Main Street (CMS) parking standards, which better serve downtown’s needs, to the CB and PB Districts. In addition, consider that the Fishkill Creek Development District established minimum and maximum parking requirements and that maximum standards may also be advantageously applied along Main Street.

Extend the Planning Board parking waiver process used in the CMS throughout downtown. This process is streamlined in comparison to a Zoning Board of Appeals variance process and is supportive of affordable infill development.

The PB Zone appears to, at least indirectly, encourage conversion of homes, businesses and vacant parcels to principal use parking lots. Consider eliminating the District. Concurrent adjustments to the Planning Board parking waiver process would be necessary.

Recommendation #7: Wayfinding

The City should facilitate use of existing parking capacity. We recommend improving municipal lot signage by ensuring that they are all of the same design and are correctly situated.



Several of the existing municipal lot signs along Main Street are pointing in the wrong direction or are absent. A sign in front of the Beacon Center is of a different design and difficult to read. The City may consider installing all new signs with a more visible dark background and white letter design. The City should create an

easily located webpage on its website. This page should include a map of municipal and (perhaps) private lots, indicate parking limits on streets and contain information on meters if and when these are installed. The map should also be placed along Main Street at lots, kiosks or other streetside gathering areas.

Recommendation #8: Improve the biking and walking environment

The goal of a balanced transportation system is to offer community residents a variety of travel choices. Beacon is already well suited to alternative transportation, exhibiting the County's highest percentage of zero car and one-car households.(p. 112) Ample opportunity exists to provide

meaningful, relatively inexpensive improvement to the City's walking and bicycling environment. The Overview Map on page 3 demonstrates the large area of the City that lies within a quarter-mile buffer of Main Street. Parking demand can be reduced by encouraging and equipping shifts from single occupancy vehicles to other travel modes.

Adopted in 2014, *Walk-Bike Dutchess* is a County-wide transportation planning tool that includes recommendations specific to Beacon:

- Install bicycle parking at key locations such as City Hall, the Beacon Welcome Center, Post Office, Library, Dutchess County Building, DIA-Beacon, Beacon High School, Riverfront Park, and along Main Street, and provide bicycle lockers at the Beacon train station;
- Mark sharrows on Beekman Street and Red Flynn Drive between Route 9D and the Beacon train station and ferry dock. Sharrows were recently added to Main Street and should be regularly painted;
- Provide a sidewalk on the northwest side of Beekman Street to complete the gap between West Main Street and the existing sidewalk south of River Street;
- Create a new sidewalk or path south of City Hall between Beekman Street and Wolcott Avenue/Route 9D to connect the train station and Main Street; and
- Consider a formal path or sidewalk connection between Ferry Street and Wolcott Avenue/Route 9D.

Very recently the City was awarded \$958,064 to construct pedestrian improvements at intersections along Main Street in the City Center.



Recommendation #9: Enhance Main Street bus service

Beacon is served by intercity and County bus service. We recommend that the City confer with County officials to develop convenient and frequent service along Main Street in order to reduce parking demand by supporting zero- or one-car households, indeed, those households most likely to choose to live in Beacon's Center City. The transit experience could be further enhanced by establishing a small number of Main Street "transit activity centers" complete with benches, route signage, shelters, retail kiosks and landscaping. These could be developed as part of scheduled projects and one potential location would be in front of the County-owned Beacon Center.