

DOWNTOWN MYSTIC PARKING STUDY

Final Report

May 28, 2021



JOHN M. BURKE, PARKING & TRANSIT CONSULTING
PO BOX 1177MARION, MA 02738

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1:	Introduction and Background	2
	Mystic's Unique Parking Challenges	3
Chapter 2:	Study Approach	4
	Scope of Services	4
	Study Advisory Committee	4
	Study Area	4
Chapter 3:	Study Outreach & Guiding Principles	6
	Key Stakeholder Interviews	6
	Guiding Principles	7
	Public Meeting Input	8
Chapter 4:	Existing Conditions	9
	Parking Inventory/Regulations	9
	Current Parking Management and Enforcement	12
	Development/Zoning Required Parking	12
	Existing Transit Services	13
	Parking Utilization	14
Chapter 5:	Key Observations/Findings	21
	Parking Management/Enforcement	21
	Parking Inventory/Regulations	21
	Parking Utilization	22
	Development/Zoning Required Parking	23
Chapter 6:	Recommendations	24
	Parking Strategy/Actions	25
	Parking Program Elements	33
APPENDIX		36
Exhibit A:	Stakeholder Interview Summary Responses	37
Exhibit B:	Weekday and Saturday Occupancy Rate Tables	42

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Village of Mystic today is a major New England tourism destination on the move. Home to the Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration, the Mystic Seaport Maritime Museum, and Mystic Museum of Art, historic Mystic offers its visitors many diverse entertainment, shopping, and culinary choices in a scenic waterfront setting. The relatively small downtown business district contains many restaurants and shops on either side of the bascule drawbridge where U.S. Route 1 crosses the Mystic River separating the Towns of Groton and Stonington.

Interest in, and visitation to Downtown Mystic is perhaps at an all-time high as new exciting and diverse businesses continue to locate downtown. In fact, even during the present COVID 19 pandemic, Downtown Mystic is nearing full capacity with very few vacancies - due in part to its strong customer demand, mixed-use character, and density. Seasonality impacts to customer demand appears to be much less an issue in Mystic than in many other coastal New England communities. Parking counts conducted for this study near peak conditions in September 2020 differed little from ones conducted in November 2020 – again, during a pandemic.



Redevelopment activity in downtown Mystic is evident. Several mixed-use redevelopment projects are advancing including the Central Hall Block construction project on West Main Street in Groton and the “Standard” development at 3 Water Street in Groton. Other development projects recently proposed including a new boutique hotel on Broadway Avenue located near the Mystic Train Station in Stonington and a larger redevelopment of the Noank Shipyard in Stonington, which did not advance. Outside of Mystic Village, a large redevelopment of the Mystic Education Center on Oral School Road in Groton is proposed to create a mixed-use “village” with over 700 apartments, 100,000 square feet of commercial space, and a recreational center.

Recognizing the growing pressure on the Downtown Mystic parking supply created by lower downtown vacancy rates, increased visitor demand, and ongoing redevelopment, the Towns of Groton and Stonington jointly commissioned this study to identify effective parking management strategies that will better organize, manage and improve parking conditions for customers, visitors, employees and residents. This study report documents the results of the parking study, which was conducted in close consultation with a Study Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from both towns.

This study report provides an overview of the study approach/methodology and scope of services; a summary of the stakeholder & public outreach/input process/results; the development of guiding principles for evaluating parking management strategies; presentation of the data collection, analysis and evaluation; key findings and observations; and recommendations.

MYSTIC’S UNIQUE PARKING CHALLENGES: Mystic has many similar characteristics to other coastal downtown districts in New England, including higher weekend and summer parking demand, special event parking challenges, and a major state route as its primary retail street (in this case U.S. Route 1). However, there are several somewhat unique conditions and characteristics to Mystic that present special challenges to this parking study and efforts to optimize management of the downtown parking system.

- DUAL TOWN MANAGEMENT - Mystic is a census designated place (CDP) that spans the Towns of Groton and Stonington, but it is not a municipality in the State of Connecticut, and so it has no independent government. Therefore, Groton manages and enforces parking regulations on the west side of the river and Stonington on the east side. Ideally, parking regulations, policies, program services and management should be coordinated and consistent on both sides of the river in addressing the needs of the entire downtown. Dual town management of a comprehensive parking program represents a unique challenge.
- OFF-STREET PARKING SUPPLY IS ALMOST ENTIRELY PRIVATELY OWNED – within a 5-minute walk distance of the US 1 drawbridge over the Mystic River, almost the entire off-street parking supply is privately owned. Fortunately, the large, centrally located 210-space Mystic Art Museum parking lot, with direct access from Water St. and West Main St., provides paid “public use” parking even though it is privately owned¹. Management, enforcement, and pricing of this primary source of off-street public parking is overseen by Art Museum staff reporting to a Board of Directors. Therefore, any efforts to better balance the use of on- and off-street parking will require close cooperation of the towns and the Art Museum.
- RESIDENTIAL SIDE STREETS – the number of purely residential side streets intersecting with U.S. Rt. 1 and the business district downtown is somewhat unique compared to most other coastal New England downtown business districts where side streets are typically more commercial or mixed use. Streets such as Pearl and Gravel in Groton have mainly single-family homes lined almost all the way to the busy West Main Street business corridor. In Stonington, the residential streets of Willow and Jackson do reach all the way to East Main Street. The number of residential side streets intersecting with the Main Street business district certainly reflects the small “village” scale of Mystic (2020 US Census pop. 4,249) but also represents a potential “friction point” on parking issues between businesses and residents.
- FREE ON-STREET PARKING – there are not many coastal New England downtowns with Mystic’s customer/visitor demand that still provide free on-street parking within their business district year-round. Free parking in high-demand business districts, typically leads to over-use of public parking assets, traffic congestion and frustrated customers and visitors searching for convenient parking. Free on-street parking, where there is a fee for off-street parking, often leads to an imbalanced parking system.
- US 1 BASCULE DRAWBRIDGE OVER THE MYSTIC RIVER – this 100-year old bridge carrying vehicle and pedestrian traffic between the Groton & Stonington sides of Mystic is raised to accommodate boat traffic on a regular schedule: May 1 to October 31 from 7:40 am - 6:40 pm at 40 minutes past the hour, otherwise on demand. The bridge represents a unique challenge to vehicle/pedestrian circulation and parking.

¹ Ownership is shared between the Mystic Art Museum - the majority landowner and lot operator - and the owner of the Steamboat Wharf Inn - the minority landowner. The Art Museum leases a right-of-way to provide access to the Inn owner’s parking spaces.

CHAPTER 2: STUDY APPROACH

SCOPE OF SERVICES: The parking study scope of services was comprised of ten (10) primary tasks to be delivered in coordination and consultation with a Joint-Town Study Advisory Committee as follows:

1. Confirm the Study Area
2. Establish Guiding Parking Principles
3. Conduct Key Stakeholder Interviews
4. Conduct Document Review & Parking Inventory
5. Conduct Parking Occupancy & Time-Zone Compliance Surveys
6. Conduct Parking Efficiency Analysis
7. Identify Key Findings & Deficiencies
8. Recommend Parking Improvements
9. Conduct Public Presentation
10. Issue Final Report

STUDY ADVISORY COMMITTEE: The Advisory Committee, listed below, included downtown merchants/associations, residents and town officials from the Administration, Planning/Economic Development, Police, and Public Works Departments.

- John Burt, Groton Town Manager
- Danielle Chesebrough, Stonington First Selectwoman
- Susan Cullen, Stonington Economic & Community Development Director
- Paige Bronk, Groton Economic & Community Development Manager
- Jonathan Reiner, Groton Planning & Development Services Director
- Bob O'Shaughnessy, Stonington Police Commission
- L.J. Fusaro, Groton Police Chief
- Deb Jones, Groton Asst. Director of Planning
- Greg Hanover, Groton Public Works Director
- Amanda Arling, Whalers Inn
- Bill Furgueson, Downtown Mystic Merchants
- Susan Fisher, Mystic Museum of Art
- Paul Sartor, Stonington Resident
- Todd Brady, Groton Business Owner/Resident
- Bruce Flax, Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce

STUDY AREA: The study area for the purpose of data collection, analysis and primary program development, was set to encompass an approximate ¼ mile radius/5-minute walk of downtown Mystic – in substantial conformance with a 2017 parking inventory map provided by the towns, and is depicted in Figure 1 below. The study area was

then reviewed and broadened by the Advisory Committee to consider additional residential streets impacted by year-round parking demand including sections of Eldridge, Burrows, Ashby and Thames Streets in Groton, and Jackson Avenue, Bay Street and Washington Street east of Willow Street in Stonington.

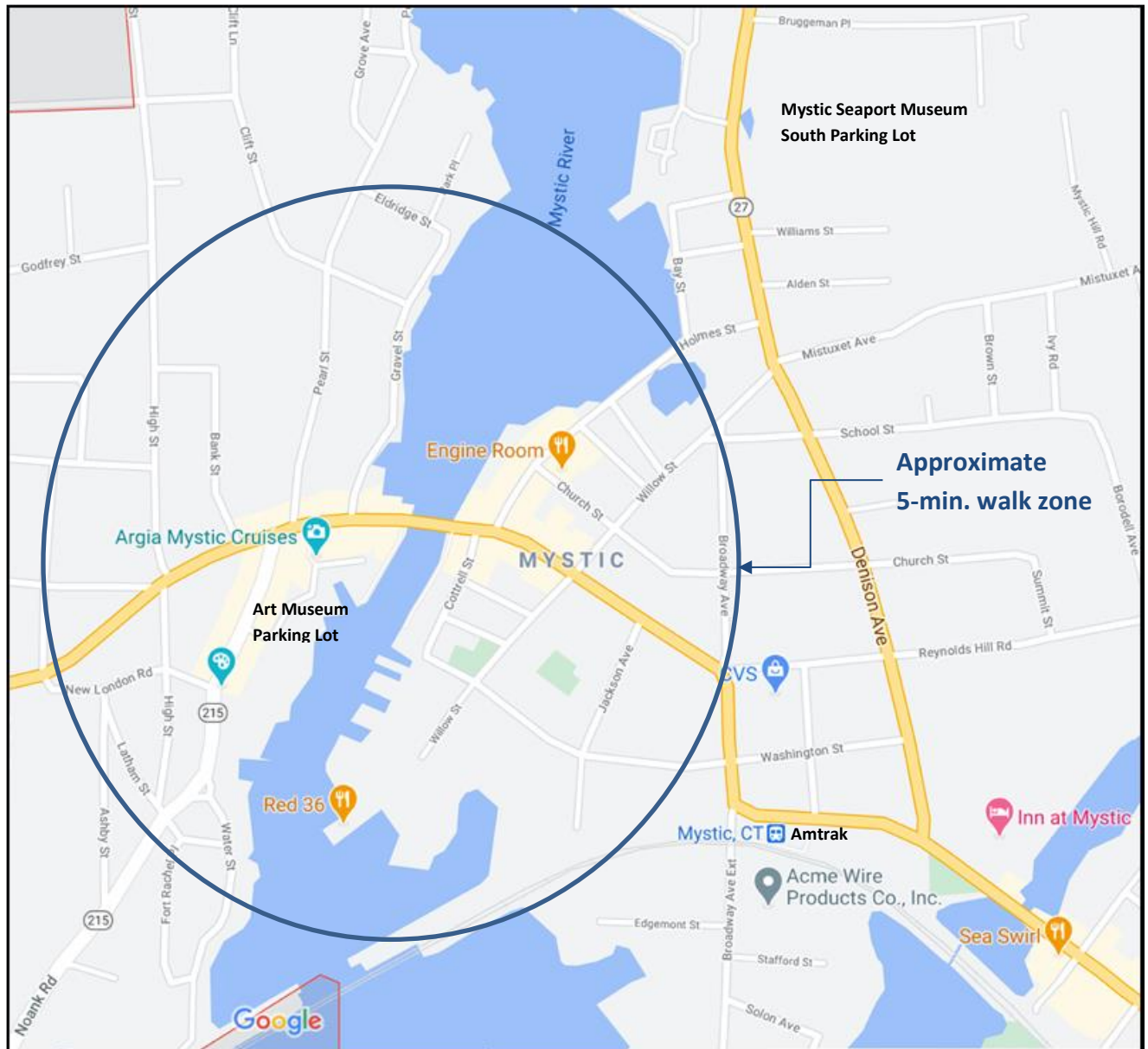


Figure 1: Study Area Map

While data collection efforts focused on the 5-minute walk zone, parking improvement strategies focused on areas both within and outside the 5-minute zone. Improvement strategies outside the 5-minute walk zone primarily focused on periods of high parking demand (summers, weekends, and special events). Strategies considered included peripheral/satellite parking areas, valet parking opportunities, bus/shuttle services and others.

CHAPTER 3: STUDY OUTREACH AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Given that the study would be conducted during the COVID 19 pandemic, the study outreach process was modified to include methods that could be accomplished under COVID restrictions. The Advisory Committee, as previously noted, was comprised of public officials but also business owners, parking lot/landowners and residents. The scope of work included 10 key parking stakeholder interviews (5 in each town) on downtown parking. In addition to the 10 key stakeholders, other stakeholders were interviewed as recommended by the Advisory Committee or town staff to address parking issues or opportunities that arose during the study process. Finally, a public meeting via videoconference was held on May 27, 2021 to gain input on the study findings and recommendations.

KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Each town nominated ten (10) stakeholders for interview to provide input on downtown parking and parking-related issues, concerns, perceived problems as well as potential alternative parking solutions. The key stakeholders included a broad cross-section of interests including downtown residents, other residents, business owners/employees, town board members and developers. The affiliations of the 10 stakeholders are as follows:

1. Groton Downtown Resident/Planning Zoning Commission
2. Groton Downtown Business Owner
3. Groton Business Owner/Resident
4. Groton Developer/Business Employee
5. Groton Downtown Resident
6. Stonington Downtown Resident/Mystic Park Commission
7. Stonington Downtown Business Owner
8. Stonington Resident/Planning Commission
9. Stonington Resident/Former Downtown Resident
10. Stonington Developer/Business Employee

Each stakeholder was asked three (3) primary questions with discussion follow-up:

1. How is the current parking situation impacting you?
2. What is the #1 parking problem facing Downtown Mystic and what would you do to address it?
3. What is a secondary contributing factor to these problems and how would you address it?

As reflected in the stakeholder interview summary responses provided in the **Appendix, Exhibit A**, there were plenty of differing views expressed on issues such as downtown redevelopment, the pros and cons of having recently converted Cottrell to a one-way street, and whether a parking garage should ever be built downtown. However, there was also common views expressed on the need for: reducing the growing tensions between residents and developers/government on redevelopment/traffic; charging for parking in high-demand areas; and bringing more people to Mystic without their cars - or if they do drive - incentivizing them to park once.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Study Advisory Committee established Guiding Principles for the parking study for use in identifying and evaluating alternative parking strategies and recommendations. A master list of potential guiding principles was developed, reviewed, scored, and ranked by each Advisory Committee member. Ultimately, twelve (12) Guiding Principles were endorsed for use based on composite scoring of the entire committee. The 12 Guiding Principles below are listed in order of highest composite committee score to the lowest.

#1. Commercial core areas should be reserved for short-term customer & visitor parking to the extent possible. Employees, residents, and longer-term parkers should use parking within a short walk to these core areas – especially during commercial hours of operation. User groups vary on their opinions as to whether a distance from origin to destination is “reasonable”. For example, retail customers will generally consider only a short walk (sometimes as short as 200 feet) reasonable while downtown employees as a group will generally consider a much longer walk reasonable (1/4-mile walk or more).

#2. Private parking facilities should be viewed as potential public parking assets. Private parking facilities are often underutilized when public parking facilities are full or near full. Municipalities should engage these private parking facility owners to determine under what mutually agreeable circumstances these facilities could be used for supplemental public parking during peak-times.

#3. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and non-auto transportation strategies are important ways to increase mobility and visitation to downtown while reducing parking need. Most parking agencies realize that it is not sustainable to singularly expand parking to meet development needs. Enhancing modal options such as transit, rideshare, biking and walking - and connections between modes not only increases mobility but can delay the need and associated cost for constructing additional parking facilities.

#4. You cannot park at what you cannot find. Wayfinding signage leading from all gateways, lot entry signage and good parking regulatory signage is essential to a properly functioning parking system. Online parking websites and apps are also useful in this regard.

#5. Existing and future parking within core commercial areas should be fairly priced commensurate with land value and location and paid for by users. Not all land in commercial districts is of equal economic value or in equal demand as often implied by one-size-fits-all downtown parking rates. Pricing should reflect the relative convenience and value of public parking. Parking on “Main St.” should not necessarily be set at the same price as parking a few minutes away. The parking program should be self-supporting not relying on General Fund revenues.

#6. Development projects in core commercial areas should share in the cost of their own parking and/or mobility needs. Full public subsidy of the parking needs associated with private development is not a sustainable strategy. Private development cost-sharing strategies for new public parking facilities or programs that reduce parking need are desirable.

#7. All public parking facilities must be safe, appealing and well maintained. Sufficient operating revenues must be dedicated to ensuring that public facilities are clean, well lit, and properly maintained – reflecting the high level of regard the community has for its visitors and regular customers.

#8. Mean what you say. Parking regulations should not be posted if they are not going to be enforced. Parking users quickly figure out whether regulations are being consistently enforced. When enforcement is lacking, compliance with municipal parking rules & regulations is poor and payments/revenue generation is substandard.

#9. Parking regulations should be consistent and easy to understand – This may mean consistent paid parking hours of operation for on-street vs. off-street, consistent hourly parking rates on-street vs. lots, consistent time limits, consistent/straight-forward payment technology, etc.

#10. Parking should be considered as a secondary use that supports the primary economic use of land. Land in the study area is of limited supply and is suitable for high-value primary uses. Using this relatively scarce commodity for surface parking, in some instances, and especially when it is very close to the downtown/waterfront, may represent a missed economic or green space opportunity.

#11. “Free” or affordable parking for low wage employees is desirable if available within a reasonable walking distance of the core commercial areas. Free or discounted parking areas in peripheral locations can be an important factor for attracting and retaining lower-wage employees. It may also attract parkers to store their cars outside of the busy retail core in underutilized spaces – thus expanding the effective parking supply.

#12. Consider the impacts of downtown employee and visitor parking spillover onto residentially zoned streets. Parking spillover from downtown core commercial districts into nearby residential neighborhoods can create negative quality-of-life impacts that include a shortage of available on-street parking for residential parking needs, which often occurs in densely developed residential-only zones where off-street residential parking is limited.

It is important to note that #12 Guiding Principle listed above was added after the initial scoring by the Advisory Committee because there was significant input on the topic. Therefore, its lowest composite score should not be interpreted as it being the lowest priority ranking of the guiding principles.

PUBLIC MEETING INPUT

A public meeting was held via videoconference to present the results of the Downtown Mystic Parking Study and receive community input on May 27, 2021. The Groton Town Council and Stonington Board of Selectmen were invited. Over 100 participants signed-up to attend the videoconference. Comments were received and incorporated into or addressed in this Final Report as appropriate.

CHAPTER 4: EXISTING CONDITIONS

Establishing existing conditions is important to identify baseline use of the parking system and to understand current parking management practices including enforcement. The purpose of this Chapter is to contextualize current parking conditions and practices downtown with perceived parking issues, concerns and identified deficiencies raised throughout the study process. The Existing Conditions Chapter is comprised of five (5) sections: Parking Inventory/Regulations; Current Parking Management and Enforcement; Development/Zoning Required Parking; Existing Transit Services; and Parking Utilization.

PARKING INVENTORY/REGULATIONS

The town's 2017 on- and off-street parking inventory map was verified and updated in the field for changes since 2017. It was then used to conduct parking data collection as presented later in this chapter. "Core" streets within an approximate 5-minute walk distance of downtown that were counted are listed below.

GROTON

Elm Street – Library St. to Burrows St.
 Library Street – Elm St. to Church Lot Dr.
 High Street – Latham St. to Academy Lane
 Academy Lane – High St. to Bank St.
 New London Road – Water St. to Latham St.
 West Main Street – Bank St. to Draw Bridge
 Bank Street – W. Main St. to Academy Lane
 Water Street – W. Main St. to Noank Rd.
 Pearl Street – W. Main St. to Clift St.
 Gravel Street – W. Main St. to Clift St.
 Clift Street – Gravel Street to Pearl St.

STONINGTON

East Main Street – Drawbridge to Broadway Ave.
 Cottrell Street – E. Main St. to Washington St.
 Haley Street – Cottrell St. to Willow St.
 Stanton Place – Cottrell St. to Willow St.
 Washington Street – Cottrell St. to Jackson Ave.
 Holmes Street – E. Main St. to Forsythe St.
 Forsythe Street – Holmes St. to Willow St.
 Church Street – Holmes St. to Broadway Ave.
 Willow Street – Forsythe St. to Washington St.
 Broadway Avenue – E. Main St. to Church St.

A total of 1,571² on- and off-street parking spaces were counted within the approximate 5-minute walk-zone of downtown as presented in Table 1 below. All off-street parking spaces are privately owned, and all on-street spaces are publicly owned.

Table 1: Inventory of Parking Spaces
 within an Approximate 5-Minute Walk of Downtown Mystic

	Groton	Stonington	Total
Off-Street Parking Spaces	548	444	992
On-Street Parking Spaces	393	186	579
Total	941	630	1,571

² The actual number of parking spaces within the 5-min. walk zone is considerably higher than this since parking spaces in gravel, unmarked lots, such as the Seaport Marine off Willow St. and Schooner Wharf off Holmes St., could not be counted. Count totals also do not include residential driveways/garages, nor the handful of residential streets added to the study scope by the Advisory Committee after the counts were conducted. These streets however, were spot checked in November 2020.

On-Street Parking Supply/Regulations

Of the 579 on-street spaces counted, 125 are **2-hour parking spaces**, 12 are **15-minute spaces**, eight (8) are **handicapped parking spaces**, and two (2) are designated **Bridge Tender parking spaces** for the State's drawbridge operators – one on either side of the bridge. The only designated **truck loading zones spaces** are in Stonington on Cottrell Street³ near its intersection with East Main Street, and in Groton on Pearl Street near its intersection with West Main Street. The 15-minute spaces on Willow St. are in effect around times when the Post Office is open. Almost all time-restricted parking stalls are painted. The towns do not charge for on-street parking. In general, on-street parking regulation signs are consistent and in good condition on both sides of the drawbridge. Designated on-street parking space regulations are depicted in Figure 2 below.

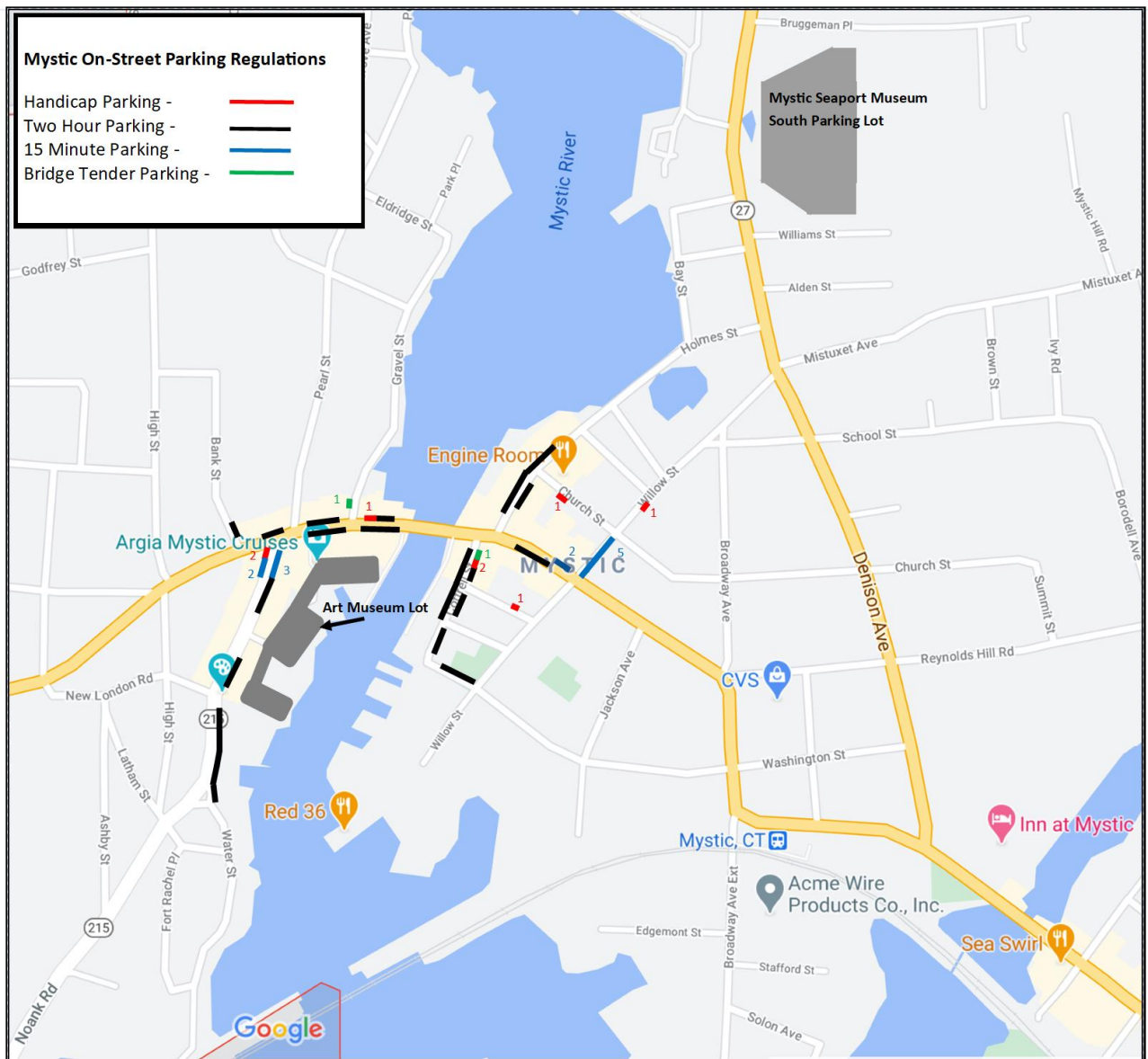


Figure 2: Designated On-street Parking Space Regulations

³ Two, 2-hr. parking spaces on Cottrell Street are designated loading zones M-F 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Off-Street Parking Supply/Regulations

All 992 off-street parking spaces counted are privately owned. The only lot providing general use public parking downtown is the large Mystic Art Museum Lot in Groton with its primary access driveway off Water Street and secondary access of West Main Street. This is also the only pay-to-park lot downtown. All other private lots counted are primarily dedicated for the parking needs of their own site-specific businesses or institutional uses.

Mystic Art Museum Lot – This 210-space gated lot, which abuts the downtown Mystic commercial district to the south and east on the Groton side (see fig. 2 above), has a staffed booth with ticket dispenser and proximity card reader at its main Water St. access drive. It has a secondary gated entrance for permit holders only at its West Main St. entrance. Parking fees are posted at main entry gate as shown in the photo to the right. The parking fee is \$5.00/hour to park with the first ½ hour free and each additional half-hour \$2.50 to a daily maximum fee of \$25.00. Buses & RVs are a flat rate fee of \$40 per day. Cash & credit/debit cards are accepted at the booth. Monthly parking fees are \$548/year, which equates to \$45.67/mo. Permitholders are issued proximity cards for access to the lot, which does not guarantee them an available space. A merchant validation program is offered whereby participating merchants can purchase bar-coded parking vouchers at a reduced rate (\$1.75/hr.) and provide them to their customers for up to 2-hours of free parking in the lot. In 2020, the Art Museum sold approximately 2,300 vouchers to adjacent businesses.



Church Parking Lots - Three (3) prominent church parking lots are located downtown including the Union Baptist Church (53 spaces) at 119 High St., Groton, St. Mark's Episcopal Church (34 spaces) at 15 Pearl St., Groton, and St. Patrick's Catholic Church (72 spaces) at 32 East Main St., Stonington. Some downtown employees/visitors were observed parking in these lots, which can be problematic according to the Pastors if it occurs during church services and functions. The photo to the right shows St. Pat's Church Lot on a Saturday morning in November.



Marina Parking Lots – The Mystic Downtown Marina gravel (gated) parking lot at 31 Water St., which has an estimated 48 spaces, was included in the 992 off-street parking spaces counted. The lot owner indicated that off-season the gates are often left up to allow free public parking – although there is no lot signage in that regard. The large, ungated Seaport Marine lots off Willow Street in Stonington, (shown in the photo to the right), serve several onsite uses including the Red 36 Restaurant. This lot was not included in the 992 off-street parking spaces counted - mainly because most of the estimated 200+ spaces are gravel and unmarked - making it difficult in many cases, to differentiate potential parking spaces from access aisles, fire zones and storage areas. A representative of the marina confirmed our field observations that people routinely park on the property and walk into town, which the marina has allowed as long it does not interfere with the restaurant and other uses on the property.



Other key downtown “core-area” and “peripheral” parking lots are discussed later in the Parking Utilization Section of this Chapter.

CURRENT PARKING MANAGEMENT AND ENFORCEMENT

Individual interviews were conducted with the Police Chiefs of both towns to gain a better understanding of how parking is currently managed and enforced downtown. There is no parking commission or parking board separate of the Boards of Selectmen – although both communities have a staff process for handling traffic and parking complaints. Neither town currently provides continuous, year-round parking enforcement shifts downtown. Off-season parking enforcement is to some extent, complaint driven. Neither town “chalks” tires to enforce its free 15- and 2-hr. time-zones⁴ - instead they use note pads to time how long vehicles are in spaces, which is a time-consuming, labor-intensive enforcement method.

Stonington PD employs part-time Community Service Officers (CSOs) during the summers who have the authority to issue parking citations. In addition to monitoring parking, they also act as downtown ambassadors assisting visitors with questions - including where to park. The CSOs typically work mid-June to around Labor Day, usually from 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. The Town of Groton PD was recently granted approval to begin hiring CSOs for this function beginning in 2021. The fine for time-zone parking infractions in Stonington is \$25.00 and parking payments must be mailed or made in-person within 72 hours to avoid late fees. In Groton, the same infraction is \$20.00 and must be made online, mailed or in-person within 14 days to avoid late fees.

DEVELOPMENT/ZONING REQUIRED PARKING

The Downtown Mystic commercial district has a good mix of land uses and small-scale retail to encourage a highly-walkable environment in its downtown core – especially given the large amount of residential uses leading into downtown. Downtown redevelopment is active and ongoing. As previously mentioned, two mixed-use residential/retail redevelopments are currently in construction within the commercial district on the Groton side of the drawbridge. The zoning regulations of each town were reviewed to determine how each community is handling development-required parking.

Minimum parking requirements by land use included in the zoning ordinance in each town appear to be reasonably comparable and for the most part below published rates in the Institute of Transportation Engineer’s (ITE) periodic Parking Generation Manual⁵. However, there are some differences. Groton allows for a full 50% reduction in the parking requirements in the downtown district – recognizing that many visitors downtown park and visit multiple stores/establishments⁶. Stonington provides its Planning and Zoning Commission the ability to increase or decrease by 25% the minimum parking requirements if they are determined to be insufficient or

⁴ A 2019 US Court of Appeals decision upheld a Federal District Court decision in Michigan that physically marking a tire for parking enforcement without a warrant is a violation of the 4th Amendment of the US Constitution.

⁵ While ITE is still the industry standard for community’s establishing parking rate requirements, the parking demand ratios are primarily derived from studies conducted in suburban settings with increased auto ownership/use and less walking, biking and transit – and therefore would be inappropriately high for Mystic’s mixed-use downtown.

⁶ Groton’s parking requirements were recently updated through a major rewrite of the Zoning Ordinance via consultant study in 2019.

excessive. Both communities reflect the value and need for mixed-use development and shared parking opportunities downtown by allowing for parking reductions based on documented shared use parking studies.

Both towns also allow developers to provide for their parking requirements off-site. Both towns stipulate that off-site parking must still be in the downtown district and within 500 feet of the development site. In Groton, off-site parking must be accompanied by leases for a minimum term of one (1) year with automatic annual renewals. Proof of leases and annual renewals must be provided. Stonington allows off-site parking only by Special Permit and at the discretion of the Planning and Zoning Commission. They too require a written lease agreement, but it is for the entire term of the Special Permit - so if the lease is terminated, the Special Permit is revoked. It is important to note, that the Art Museum has discontinued leasing permit spaces in their lot to developers, given the frequency of lot filling and the resultant freeze on parking permits.

EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICES

BUS/SHUTTLE SERVICES: Bus transit services in Downtown Mystic are limited with no fixed-route bus or seasonal trolley services currently in operations. However, the Southeast Area Transit District (SEAT) does provide year-round demand response bus service in Stonington – including Downtown Mystic - which is offered weekdays from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. for a \$2 fare. There is only one bus with average wait times (after calling for a ride) of about 30 minutes according to SEAT. SEAT does not provide demand response service in Groton but does provide a fixed-route bus service there. However, the Groton bus service does not extend into Downtown Mystic. Several nearby hotels offer complimentary shuttle bus service to their customers who want to travel into Downtown Mystic without their vehicles. Years ago, a seasonal shuttle bus system connected Downtown Mystic to Olde Mistick Village, the Mystic Aquarium and Mystic Seaport, but was discontinued due to a reported lack of funding.

WATER TAXI SERVICE: While there are no fixed-route water taxi services currently serving Mystic, the Thames River Heritage Park Water Taxi does connect Groton at the Thames River Landing to New London on weekends and holidays during the summer. Fares for adults are \$10 with season passes are set at only \$50.

INTERCITY RAIL SERVICE: Intercity rail service is provided to Downtown Mystic by Amtrak with stops at the Mystic Train Station located off Roosevelt Avenue (US Route 1) and just over a 5-min. walk to the drawbridge downtown. Service is provided within Amtrak's Northeast Regional Corridor. The Mystic Train Station is approximately halfway between New York City and Boston. No commuter rail service is provided from the Mystic Train Station but in 2020, Amtrak did increase its weekday service from 3 to 6 trains. Rental cars, taxis, and rideshare services are available for arriving passengers.



PARKING UTILIZATION

Parking occupancy counts were collected on two separate warm/sunny days on Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020 and Thursday, Sept. 24, 2020. After July and August, September is often the highest parking demand month of the year in coastal New England downtowns with heavy tourist visitation. An independent data collection firm, Precision Data Industries, conducted the occupancy survey. The survey data was collected every two hours from 8 a.m. through 8 p.m. each day. Follow-up “spot” counts were also conducted on a good weather weekday and Saturday in November 2020 to gauge seasonality of demand.

Parking occupancy levels and utilization patterns were evaluated by time of day, day of week, and geographic location. Peak parking conditions were determined for both the weekday and Saturday condition. On-street public parking occupancy rates were calculated and presented at the block level. Off-street privately-owned parking use by facility was also determined. Weekday and Saturday occupancy rates tables by town, hour of day, and on- and off-street parking facilities⁷ are provided in the **Appendix, Exhibit B**. Color-coded maps were then developed to highlight parking areas that were over-used (greater than 85% use) in **red**, under used (less than 60% use) in **blue**, and within a generally acceptable range of use (60% to 85%) in **black**.

WEEKDAY PARKING UTILIZATION: The Thursday parking occupancy rates for the combined 1,571 on- and off-street parking spaces within the approximate 5-min. walk zone of Downtown Mystic are presented by hour in Table 2 below. This “macro-view” of the parking supply shows that total on-street parking never exceeded 53.0% occupancy and the off-street supply never exceeded 51.5% occupancy.

Table 2: Weekday Parking Occupancy Rates by Hour, Thurs. 9/24/20
5-Minute Walk Zone, Downtown Mystic

	8 am	10 am	12 pm	2 pm	4 pm	6 pm	8 pm
On-Street	23.5%	37.8%	49.2%	53.0%	52.3%	47.8%	44.2%
Off-Street	31.9%	39.2%	47.2%	49.3%	49.2%	51.5%	43.6%
Total	28.3%	38.6%	48.1%	50.9%	50.5%	49.9%	43.9%

Overall parking occupancy rates peaked at 2 p.m., however, occupancy rates at 4 p.m. & 6 p.m. were within 1% and 2% of the peak rate, respectively. Weekday peak-hour parking occupancy rates are depicted in Figure 3 below.

THE 85% PARKING OCCUPANCY RULE

An 85% parking occupancy rate is typically considered by parking planners to be the highest acceptable on-street occupancy rate. Studies show that when on-street parking use exceeds 85% (about 1 open space for every 7 occupied), drivers start having difficulty finding a parking space and begin circling in search of one, which adds to local traffic congestion and visitor/customer dissatisfaction. Acceptable off-street parking rates are typically a little higher than on-street rates - ranging from 85% to 90%.

Parking agencies will often establish “target” on-street parking occupancy rates of say, 75% to 85%, to ensure a street is being efficiently used, while also providing sufficient parking availability to users.

Finding excessively high occupancy rates in one parking area - with low rates nearby - suggests a need for parking management actions (pricing, regulations, etc.) to better balance and efficiently use the entire parking supply.

⁷ Only parking lots of 20 spaces or greater are included in the Appendix and shown for later graphical depiction in Figures 3 and 4.

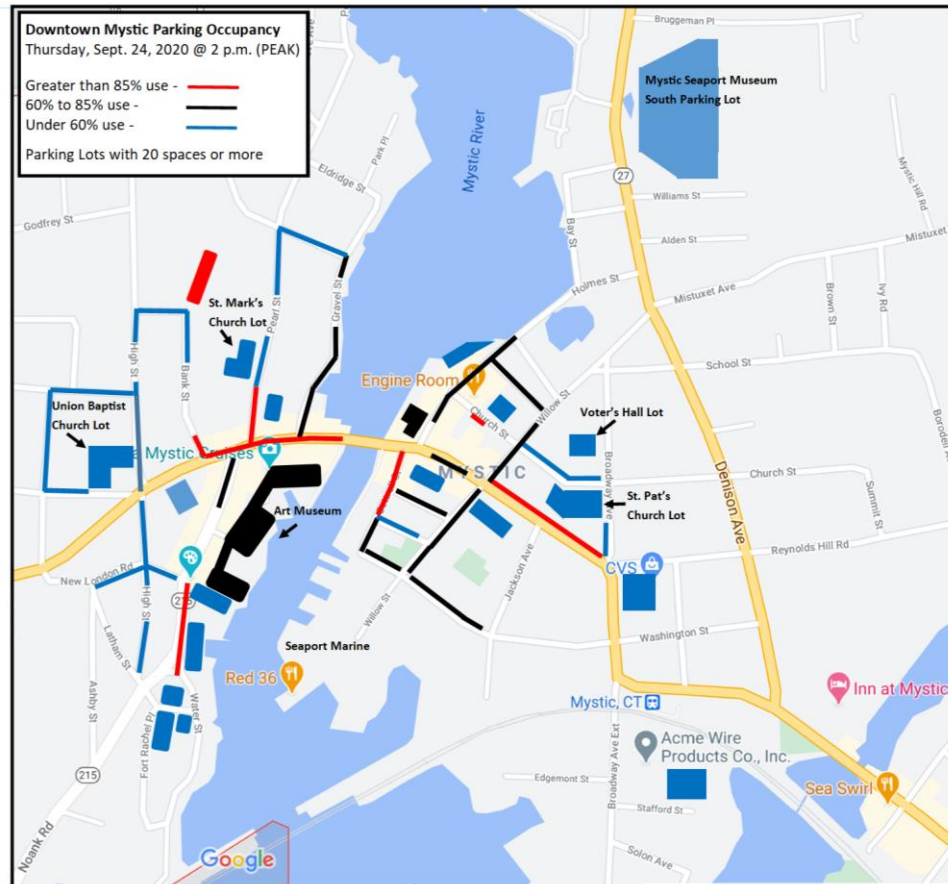


Figure 3: Weekday “Peak-Hour” (2 p.m.) Parking Occupancy Rates

OFF-STREET PARKING SUPPLY: Most off-street parking lots were underutilized, and none exceeded 85% use during the 2 p.m. weekday peak hour. The 210-space Art Museum Lot, which provides the fee-based supply of off-street public parking downtown, was busy, but never exceeded 80.5% occupancy throughout the count period.

ON-STREET PARKING SUPPLY: While the overall on-street parking supply never exceeded 53.0%, use of Mystic’s 2-hour parking zone exceeded (85.0%) functional capacity at 2 p.m. (87.5%), 4 p.m. (88.3%) and 6 p.m. (90.0%). Parking in the 2-hr. zone on lower Water Street from Noank Road to north of New London Road in Groton was at or over 85% occupancy from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. indicating likely employee parking there. In general, parking occupancy rates on downtown residential streets in Stonington exceeded those in Groton – primarily, because many of Groton’s streets that are within a 5-minute walk of the downtown commercial district are steeply uphill of the district making them much less attractive to visitors as compared to Stonington streets. While several streets such as lower Cottrell and Holmes Street in Stonington did not exceed the 85% threshold during the 2 p.m. weekday peak period, they did exceed it for later time periods.

SATURDAY PARKING UTILIZATION: The Saturday parking occupancy rates for the combined 1,564 on- and off-street parking spaces within the approximate 5-min. walk zone are presented in Table 3 below. Downtown parking occupancy was much higher on Saturday than the Thursday counted as expected – since more residents are home and tourist visitation is typically greater on weekends. The overall peak parking occupancy of 73.5% occurred at 4 p.m. Just like on weekdays, on-street parking use declines between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. while off-street use increases during the same period. Saturday peak-hour occupancy rates are depicted in Figure 4 below.

Table 3: Saturday Parking Occupancy Rates by Hour, Sat., Sept. 19, 2020
5-minute Walk Zone, Downtown Mystic

	8 am	10 am	12 pm	2 pm	4 pm	6 pm	8 pm
On-Street	33.0%	42.0%	63.8%	71.6%	71.6%	66.8%	57.3%
Off-Street	34.5%	44.5%	63.1%	72.2%	75.0%	75.4%	69.9%
Total	33.9%	43.4%	63.4%	72.0%	73.5%	71.6%	64.5%

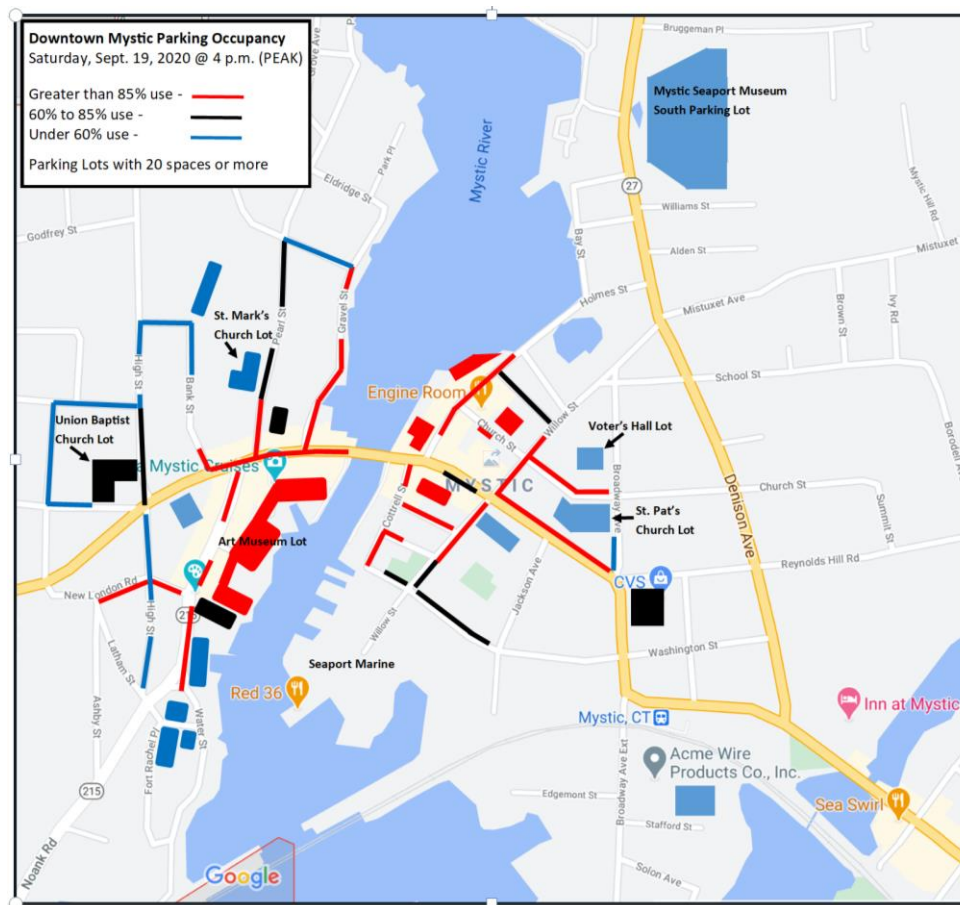


Figure 4: Saturday “Peak-Hour” (4 p.m.) Parking Occupancy Rates

OFF-STREET PARKING SUPPLY: Several off-street private parking lots were exceeding functional capacity. The 210-space Art Museum Lot, which provides the fee-based supply of off-street public parking downtown, filled at 12 noon. In fact, there were more vehicles parked in the lot than there are marked parking spaces from sometime just after 12 noon through 8 p.m. The highest parking count total of 243 vehicles occurred at 2 p.m. During these times, people were parking in access aisles and in some cases, on grassed areas. Parking duration-of-stay data was requested of the Art Museum parking staff to determine the duration of average parking sessions and how many people utilize the 30-minute free option on the Saturday counted. However, the parking mgt. software used by the Art Museum was unable to generate such a report.



Parking staff of the Art Museum estimate there are currently about 320 proximity cards issued to annual passholders and another 300+ people on a waiting list to purchase the passes. The Art Museum could not confirm how many of the 320 proximity cards are in active use. Currently, pass sales are frozen because the lot is frequently at capacity. In general, passes can only be purchased by property or business owners of buildings directly adjacent to the lot. Therefore, individual employees and tenants are only able to obtain a parking pass in the lot if they work or live in a property located directly adjacent to the lot, and their landlord or business owner provides them one. The Art Museum does not issue passes to individual vehicles/license plates therefore the proximity card pass can be shared by multiple parkers.

For the most part, the church lots were underutilized during the Saturday peak period - as they were for the weekday peak period. There were three (3) good size parking lots that were gated off and empty or near empty on the Groton side on Saturday that included the 19-space lot that was for sale at 1 Pearl Street behind the old Bank of America Building; the Downtown Mystic Marina gravel lot at 34 Water Street (estimated 48 spaces); and an office building parking lot (36 spaces) at 5 Fort Rachel Street. On the Stonington side, a few lots on outer Washington Street were empty or near empty; the small, 4th Voter's Hall gravel lot was near empty, and while it was not counted, Seaport Marine appeared to have plenty of parking availability throughout the day.

Outside the 5-minute walk zone, there are two large parking lots in Stonington that were significantly underutilized – the ACME Wire Company parking lot at 7 Broadway Ave. Extension and the Mystic Seaport Museum's south parking lot off Greenmanville Ave. (500+ parking spaces), which are just under a 10-minute and 15-minute walk to the drawbridge, respectively.

ON-STREET PARKING SUPPLY: The on-street supply was constrained much of the day – particularly in Stonington where the peak-hour parking occupancy was 93.0%. Like the Thursday counts, many of the residential streets in Groton located uphill of the downtown commercial district, were underused. Use of Mystic's 2-hour parking zone peaked at 94.8%. Many downtown streets had more vehicles parked than lawful spaces including Pearl, Bank & lower Water St. in Groton, and Stanton Place, Cottrell, and Willow St. north of East Main St. in Stonington.

“OFF-SEASON” PARKING UTILIZATION: “Spot” parking occupancy counts were conducted during the afternoon peak period on Thursday, November 5, 2020 and Saturday, November 7, 2020 to gauge the seasonality of demand in Mystic. Both days were seasonally warm and dry. The spot counts involved counting vehicles parked in several parking lots and street segments during peak periods identified in the September occupancy counts. Weekday use of the 2-hour time zone was very high - like it was in September, but parking outside of this core commercial area was significantly lower. Saturday parking demand was very strong for an off-season month like November. Sidewalks were filled with people and parking was at a premium. In fact, the Art Museum Parking Lot filled-to-capacity with the “Parking Lot Full” sign displayed from approximately 1 p.m. through 4 p.m. (see photo above).

2-HOUR TIME-ZONE COMPLIANCE: A limited license plate survey of the 2-hour parking spaces downtown (102 out of 125 spaces) was also conducted on Saturday, November 7, 2020 to evaluate parker compliance with posted 2-hour time limits. Occupied spaces within this segment of the 2-hour zone were collected at 2-hour & 15-minute intervals at 10 a.m., 12:15 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. Table 4 below shows the number and percentage of vehicles parked by street segment longer than the 2-hour time limit as well as the number and percentage of vehicles parked in the same space longer than 4 hours.

On average, 23.4% of all vehicles were parked longer than the 2-hour time limit and an average of 14.7% longer than 4-hours. While they were not included in the survey, the 2-hour parking spaces on Water Street from Noank Road to just north of New London Road in Groton would likely have increased these violation rates since the occupancy survey showed that this street segment was 100% or more occupied from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Table 4: 2-Hour Time Zone Parking Compliance Survey, Saturday, November 7, 2020

Street	From/To	2 Hr. Spaces Counted	Parked in Excess of 2-Hr. Limit	% Spaces in Violation (avg.)	# Parked in Excess of 4 hrs.	% of Spaces Parked 4 hrs.+
Water St.	Art Museum Lot to W. Main St.	4	1	25.0%	1	25.0%
Bank St.	Next to Mystic Pizza	2	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
W. Main St.	Bank St. to Drawbridge	24	5	20.8%	3	12.5%
Cottrell St.	E. Main St. to Washington St.	45	12	26.7%	7	15.5%
Washington St.	Cottrell St. to Willow St.	5	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
E. Main St.	Willow St. to Holmes St.	5	1	20.0%	1	20.0%
Holmes St.	E. Main St. to Forsythe St.	17	5	29.4%	3	17.6%
TOTAL		102	24	23.5%	15	14.7%

COMMERCIAL LOADING ZONES: The only designated commercial loading zone on the Stonington side is located on Cottrell Street near its intersection with East Main Street. The Stonington PD reported that most deliveries happen in the morning before traffic picks up and occur in the Cottrell Street loading zones or in off-street private lots. Stonington PD noted that deliveries occur to a lesser degree on East Main Street and Church Street; and while double parking will sometimes occur, it is not an issue requiring the designation of additional commercial loading zones. The Parking Study Advisory Committee concurred.

The only designated commercial loading zone on the Groton side is located on Pearl Street near its intersection with West Main Street (see photo to right). This is a very active loading zone area with frequent deliveries to businesses such as the Mystic Florist, Young Buns and the Harp and Hound restaurant. At times, trucks will park on southbound Pearl Street at the stop sign seen in the photo to unload, which reduces Pearl Street to a single lane. In discussions with Groton PD, potential solutions to address this involve parking enforcement/curb management, extending the existing loading zone on Pearl Street, or moving the loading zone to West Main Street. The latter two alternatives would require eliminating on-street parking.

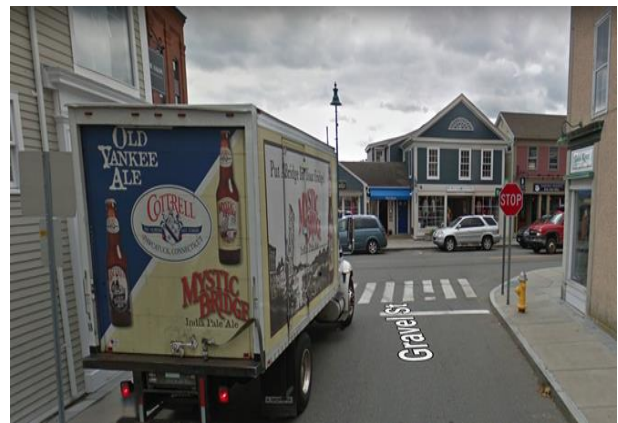


There were two (2) other locations observed in the field where truck deliveries during the day reduced 2-way traffic to a single lane for a short duration:

- Water Street north of New London Road between the Oyster Club and Margarita's; and
- Gravel Street at its intersection with West Main Street.



Water Street just north of New London Road



Gravel Street @ West Main Street

In discussions with Groton PD, Gravel Street deliveries are infrequent during the busy times of the day; but short-term deliveries on Water Street near New London Road are not. A formal loading zone location could be designated on Water Street, but again, it would require eliminating existing parking spaces. Another potential delivery/loading location to address this situation was explored at the Art Museum Lot. However, the Art Museum restricts daytime truck deliveries from June 1st to October 1st due to potential traffic/pedestrian conflicts. Given the short duration of loading/unloading at these locations, the Parking Advisory Committee was not in favor of creating additional commercial loading zones at these locations.

CHAPTER 5: KEY OBSERVATIONS/FINDINGS

Based on survey data, the existing conditions analysis, the stakeholder interviews, and advisory committee input, the following key findings and observations can be made:

PARKING MANAGEMENT/ENFORCEMENT

- Free on-street parking is managed by regulatory time limit signs with enforcement to promote parking turnover in the commercial district.
- Paid off-street public parking is managed and regulated solely by the Mystic Art Museum at their 210-space parking lot in Groton. The Towns do not participate directly in its management and regulation.
- Dedicated staffing for daily parking enforcement downtown is seasonal in both Towns. During the off-season directed parking enforcement is largely complaint driven.
- Each town has different parking fines, fees, and payment requirements.

PARKING INVENTORY/REGULATIONS

- The off-street parking supply serving Downtown Mystic is almost 100% privately owned and controlled.
- The number of designated 2-hour on-street parking spaces serving the downtown commercial district (125) is relatively small when compared to other small, seasonal, downtown coastal New England communities such as the Towns of Rockport, MA (200+) and Plymouth, MA (450+).
- Most of the on-street parking supply within a 5-minute walk of the commercial district is free, unregulated parking on residential streets.
- Hourly (\$5) and daily (\$25) parking rates in the Art Museum Lot are at the higher end of parking rates found in comparable New England coastal towns. However, the annual permit parking rate (\$548), which equates to \$45.67/month, is at the lower end of parking rates - considering the permit allows 24/7 access to a lot located directly in the heart of the downtown demand center.
- Parking regulatory signage is generally in good condition and well located. Parking wayfinding signage to and within the Mystic Art Museum Lot is poor.

PARKING UTILIZATION

- Parking demand in Downtown Mystic is (summer) seasonal like most coastal New England communities with a strong tourism draw.
- Parking demand on weekend days is generally higher than on weekdays and remains very strong in the off-season, which reflects the strong customer/visitor demand and success of Downtown Mystic.
- Peak parking use downtown was found to be 2 p.m. on the weekday and 4 p.m. on Saturday, but parking occupancy levels were very close to the same at 2 p.m., 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. both days.
- The free 2-hour parking supply exceeds functional capacity for both the weekday (87.5%) and Saturday (94.8%) peak period (2 p.m.) as well as at 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. As such, a customer/visitor cannot have a reasonable expectation of finding a 2-hour on-street parking space downtown relatively close to their destination at these times.
- Non-compliance with posted 2-hour time limits is high (23.5%) and turnover of 2-hour spaces is poor – which typically impacts retail sales in a negative way.
- A relatively high percentage of vehicles were observed parking over 4-hours in the 2-hour time zone (14.7%) – which often indicates significant employee and/or business owner parking in the 2-hour zone.
- The lack of available, convenient, short-term parking on-street contributes to traffic congestion created by parkers “circling” & “hunting” for available spaces as well as customers parking on residential streets.
- While only a small section of one (1) residential street exceeded 85% occupancy during the weekday peak period (Pearl St. between West Main St. and St. Mark’s Church), several street sections exceeded 85% occupancy during the Saturday peak including New London Road, Pearl Street, Gravel Street, Stanton Place, Haley Street, Willow Street and Church Street.
- Many residential streets in Groton within a 5-minute walk of downtown are underused, however, most of these streets are up a steep hill from the downtown, which limits their attractiveness and use for some parkers. Stonington has higher occupancy rates on its residential streets than Groton.
- The Art Museum Lot never exceeded 80.5% occupancy on Thursday, September 24, 2020. There was sufficient parking availability throughout the day – as there was for the weekday observed in November.
- The Art Museum Lot exceeded 100% capacity on Saturday, September 19, 2020 from 12 noon until after 8 p.m. As many as 243 cars were parked in the lot – some along unmarked access drives and grassed

areas. The lot was checked again on Saturday, November 7, 2020. The lot again filled in the afternoon for several hours.

- The Art Museum Lot routinely exceeds capacity for extended periods of times throughout the summer and on offseason weekends (Friday night, Sat., Sun.) per the Art Museum parking staff. Due to capacity constraints, the Art Museum has a freeze on annual pass sales and a waiting list of over 300.
- Within the 5-minute walk-zone of downtown, there are several church lots and other privately owned lots that are underutilized at the same time the Art Museum Lot is full, and the on-street 2-hour parking zone is at functional capacity.
- Within a 10-minute walk of downtown a significant amount of on-street parking was available during peak periods and off-street parking was underutilized.

DEVELOPMENT/ZONING REQUIRED PARKING

- The peak-hour weekday parking occupancy rates shown in Chapter 4, Figure 3, demonstrates that downtown public-use paid parking facilities are typically much better at sharing parking than private commercial parking lots. During the weekday peak in Mystic, the 2-hour zone is 90% utilized and the Art Museum lot is just over 80% utilized, while most of the private lots are under 60% used. Fortunately, both towns' Zoning Codes allow on- and off-site shared parking for new development – where off-site shared lots must be in the commercial district, within 500 feet of the development site in Groton – and in Stonington by Special Permit. Groton requires this development agreement to be in a form of a minimum 1-year lease with documented automatic renewals. In the past, the Art Museum lot has been a source for Groton development to satisfy its zoning-required parking, but with current capacity constraints, and a permit freeze in place, this is no longer the case.
- Developers who have obtained Art Museum Lot passes (proximity cards) are not required by the Art Museum to provide individual names or license plates for each proximity card/pass. Historically, this information has not been required by the Town of Groton. Therefore, there is no guarantee that the development's employees/parkers are issued proximity cards.
- Several stakeholders have cited rising tensions between downtown residents and new business/development over whether developers are providing adequate off-site/parking for their developments and mitigating traffic concerns. The parking concern has focused on whether there are proper controls in place on developers using Art Museum Lot leases (permits) to satisfy zoning required parking for their development.

CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS

Mystic has seen many changes over the past 5 years. As recently as 2016, newspaper articles bemoaned the number of empty storefronts and lack of foot traffic downtown. The Mystic Merchant's Association and Chamber of Commerce held emergency meetings. Some in the community blamed these conditions on earlier recessions, rigid Historic District Commissions, zoning/building codes and even construction impacts related to downtown improvements (streetscape upgrade and drawbridge repair/painting). Fast forward to 2020 and a completely different picture emerges. Following a few years of active redevelopment and many new businesses relocating downtown, the business district is now thriving with very few empty storefronts, increased foot traffic, and an uptick in walk-in retail - this, despite a global pandemic with its requisite mask wearing and social distancing. Today, the primary downtown concerns, which are perhaps biproducts of its recent success, are traffic and parking - and whether the downtown can handle any more development.

With success comes challenges, and it would seem downtown parking has reached a tipping point. The downtown's only off-street "public-use" parking lot now routinely fills and closes on many summer days and off-season weekends – so much so that it has frozen parking pass sales. Therefore, many employees, whose employer does not provide them off-street parking, must find their own daily parking, which may be a customer 2-hour parking space, in a residential neighborhood, or in a private lot – with or without the owner's consent. The 2-hr. on-street commercial parking zone exceeds functional capacity on weekday and Saturday afternoons during the peak and off-peak seasons. Some employees are parking in the 2-hr. zone thus displacing customers and visitors. Downtown residents are increasingly frustrated with parking spillover from the business district leaving at times, no available spaces on their street.

Mystic has long employed what can be characterized as a "passive" parking management approach - one that involves simply posting free, time-restricted parking on its commercial streets, adding some seasonal part-time parking enforcement, and leaving the supply and management of off-street public parking to the private sector. Passive parking programs, which are typically found in downtowns with relatively low parking demand, are often complaint-driven and reactive. While this approach, and the complaints that come with it, may be more tolerable in less-than-ideal economic times, it is not sustainable in an environment of high and growing consumer, tourist, and development demand.

"Actively" managed parking programs are the opposite of passively managed ones. Actively managed programs are common to virtually all vibrant, successful downtowns. They usually include some form of demand-based parking pricing, regular and consistent enforcement, an accountable and responsive parking entity, and adherence to policies, regulations and programs that result in more efficient, balanced use of parking resources. Actively managed parking programs monitor and regulate parking occupancy, on-street turnover and curb activities including commercial deliveries to ensure that all parking assets are being appropriately used during peak demand. They recognize that land use and parking demand are dynamic, and therefore the parking program must

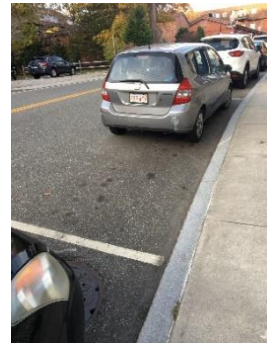
be too. A primary goal of many actively managed parking programs is to use parking revenues to reinvest in the downtown and to eliminate or significantly delay the need for constructing a costly parking structure downtown.

While a few stakeholders proposed constructing a public parking garage directly in the downtown, several others were adamantly opposed to it. Structured parking is extremely expensive to maintain and operate and can be quite impactful when located in the center of a small, historic downtowns like Mystic – particularly with respect to traffic, aesthetics and character. Because of cost and impact, structured public parking is typically pursued only after all other parking management options are exhausted. Mystic’s parking challenges are real and will require the towns to take a more active role in managing its parking system, but there is still plenty of underutilized parking lots and streets within a 5- and 10-minute walk of downtown.

PARKING STRATEGY/ACTIONS

In consideration of the established Guiding Principles, key stakeholder interviews, parking data & analysis, key findings & observations, and Advisory Committee and public meeting input, recommended parking strategies and actions are provided below.

1. Meter and expand the 2-hour parking zone year-round – Parking meters will increase on-street parking availability, turnover, and compliance within the 2-hour zone and, if appropriately priced, move most employees out of these spaces. Meters are to a large extent, self-enforcing as compared to regulatory signage. It is not uncommon to achieve 5% non-compliance or less with time restricted parking in a metered zone compared to 15% or higher in a signed zone – and do so with fewer enforcement personnel. If the 125 existing 2-hour spaces are turning over an average of 3 times per day currently, these spaces are only serving 375 customers. With increased compliance and say, 6 turns per day, these spaces could serve 750 customers – a gain of 375 parking sessions.



A mobile payment app should also be provided as a convenient alternative to paying at the parking meter. The mobile payment app would allow people to pay for or extend parking time remotely using their cell phone (tied to their credit card) and license plate. Merchant validations can also be provided at a metered space.

As noted earlier, the existing 125, 2-hour parking spaces downtown is on the low side for similar size downtown commercial districts. Modest expansions of the 2-hour zone down some side streets to Route 1/commercial district will provide much needed additional turnover parking for customers/visitors and extend the walk distance to employee parking. Also, if parking kiosks via pay-by-plate are used for metering the 2-hour zone, then the need to stripe parking stalls is eliminated so cars can park closer together⁸. In this way, the on-street parking



⁸ Areas where cannot park are still striped including street/driveway, crosswalk, and fire hydrant clearances.

supply can be effectively increased by about 10%. The photo above of a parking stall on Water Street, demonstrates the inefficiency of marked parking stalls for smaller vehicles.

This recommendation is consistent with the Advisory Committee's #1 Guiding Principle: *"Commercial core areas should be reserved for short-term customer & visitor parking to the extent possible"*.

Increase and coordinate parking enforcement – Posted time limits are only as effective as their enforcement. If enforcement is inconsistent, downtown "regulars" are the first to know and take "front-door" parking spaces. Multiple stakeholders noted the need for more parking enforcement. The Stonington Police Department currently employs Community Service Officers (CSOs) in Mystic mid-June through Labor Day, usually 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. The Groton Police Dept. have budgeted for CSOs as well. It is recommended that at a minimum, one CSO in Groton and one in Stonington be on duty daily during the hours of time-regulated/fee-based parking year-round. The CSOs provide an invaluable customer service function for the downtown by not only improving management of public parking but providing visitor information and assistance.



The towns should replace handwritten tickets with more efficient electronic handheld ticketing devices with electronic chalking, photo, and license plate look-up capabilities. The wireless handheld devices would be integrated with parking meter, pay-by-phone, permit, and mgt. system software. Providing consistent daily enforcement should also improve the real-time management of truck deliveries and parking during special events.



This recommendation is consistent with the Advisory Committee's #8 Guiding Principle: *"Mean what you say. Parking regulations should not be posted if they are not going to be enforced."*

2. Expand Off-Street Public Parking – There is insufficient off-street "public-use" parking serving downtown Mystic – particularly on the weekends and during the summer. Based on previous parking studies and best practices, it is desirable for municipalities with small downtowns to have control of approximately 50 percent of the off-street parking supply to more effectively manage parking in the context of changing development, parking demand and parking pricing. It also tends to increase overall shared parking downtown. There are several opportunities to expand longer-term off-street parking for employees, residents and visitors as described below. Bike parking should also be expanded in these lots where appropriate.

- [illegible]

This recommendation, regarding wayfinding, is consistent with the Advisory Committee’s #4 Guiding Principle: *“You cannot park at what you cannot find.”*

-

- **Secure “shared-lot” parking agreements** with private and institutional parking lot owners. As highlighted in Chapter 4, there are several churches and private lots that are underutilized at the same time the Art Museum Lot and on-street 2-hour parking zone is at capacity. The towns should explore shared-lot parking agreements to allow public parking in these lots – particularly employee and resident parking by permit. Pastors from all three churches (St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, St. Patrick’s Catholic Church, and the Union Baptist Church) and the General Manager of Seaport Marine all expressed a willingness to discuss and consider shared lot agreements with the towns to allow employee/resident permit parking during times that do not conflict with church functions or marina operations. Potential tax implications for churches, as non-profit organizations, that lease their parking spaces must be considered. There are also gated commercial lots that are empty or near empty on Saturdays that may allow public parking – again under agreement with the towns.

This recommendation is consistent with the Advisory Committee’s #2 Guiding Principle: *“Private parking facilities should be viewed as potential public parking assets.”*

- **Seek to lease/purchase private parking lots in the 10-minute walk zone.** As property/surface lots within a 10-minute walk of downtown go up for sale or otherwise become available, the towns should conduct a cost/benefit analysis of acquiring them for potential public parking use. These lots could help grow the employee parking permit program by adding to the shared-lot parking agreements previously discussed. Cities and towns often purchase or lease such lots as “land banks” – using them for surface parking until they are either no longer needed or ripe for development.

This recommendation is consistent with the Advisory Committee’s #2 Guiding Principle: *“Private parking facilities should be viewed as potential public parking assets.”*

- **License, regulate and promote valet/tandem parking.** Valet is an excellent way to expand the effective supply of off-street parking without building anything. Valet is particularly effective at expanding parking on weekends when off-street parking is needed the most. By parking cars in tandem (nose to tail), roughly 50% more vehicles can be parked in a lot by a valet operator than a public self-park lot. Valet programs also typically shift cars that would have otherwise parked in a high-demand corridor and moves them to a lower-demand, more remote parking lot. Usually a few on-street, metered spaces are taken out of service to allow for restaurant patron vehicle drop-off/pick-up. Most municipalities that license and regulate private valet services find that the loss of these few on-street spaces are well worth the additional parking realized off-street. The Towns should actively promote valet parking to its downtown restaurants.



3. Establish an Off-street Employee Parking Permit Program. Downtown employees appear to be the odd user left out of the parking system. If they don’t have employer-provided off-street parking, they have few off-street parking options. They can’t as individuals obtain a parking permit from the Art Museum even if the parking permit freeze was off. Employees will typically take the closest space to their place of work, which is usually on a residential street or in a 2-hour parking space. Issuing monthly permits at a

reasonable rate in leased or shared parking lots should draw many employees away from 2-hour commercial spaces and residential streets – especially in conjunction with metering the 2-hour zone and increasing enforcement. It should also reduce the permit waiting list for the Art Museum lot.

4. Protect residential neighborhoods from excessive downtown parking infiltration -

By metering and properly enforcing the 2-hour zone, many more customers will be able to park there, thus reducing customer parking infiltration onto residential streets. By establishing an off-street employee parking permit program, employee parking infiltration onto residential streets should also be reduced. However, there are some unregulated residential streets that may be closer to downtown than the secured employee permit lots previously discussed. The Towns should monitor parking utilization of these streets after metering the 2-hour zone and issuing employee permits. If they consistently exceed 85% use for extended periods, the Towns should consider posting 2-hour or even 3-hour time-limited parking to these streets/zones – with residents of the street/zone exempt from the time limits when they have a residential parking permit. Resident permit streets/zones would need to meet strict eligibility requirements to even be considered. Depending on surveyed occupancy rates, the resident permits may only need to be seasonal (summer) as they are in Newport, RI. The posted time limits will reduce employee infiltration to these residential streets while allowing short-term customer use and longer-term resident use to maintain efficient overall use.



This recommendation is consistent with the Advisory Committee's #12 Guiding Principle: *"Consider the impacts of downtown employee and visitor parking spillover onto residentially zoned streets."*

5. Implement Demand-Based Pricing - Demand-based pricing requires parking rates to be set and adjusted to the levels of demand for that parking using market principles. In areas of higher demand, parking has a higher price – in areas of lower demand, a lower price. For peripheral parking areas the market rate for parking may be \$0. Rather than changing prices in real-time, they should be reviewed and adjusted annually with a goal of achieving on-street parking occupancy rates of 75% to 85%; off-street 85% to 90%. Establishing appropriate pricing for each potential parking product in the program is discussed below.

- **Art Museum Parking Lot** – As stated earlier, hourly (\$5) and daily maximum (\$25) rates at this lot are at the higher end of surface lot rates found in comparable New England downtowns. However, through the promotional "first 30 minutes free" and merchant validation program, customers can reduce their hourly and daily cost significantly. Long-term parking permit rates (\$548/year or \$45.67/month) for 24/7 access to this high-demand lot are very modestly priced – especially compared to the hourly and daily rate. So, it is not surprising to see a permit freeze and waiting list of over 300. The \$45.67/month permit rate equates to just over \$1.50/day for someone to store their car all day directly on the waterfront downtown. It is recommended the Art Museum consider increasing this annual/monthly rate and perhaps offering a reduced permit rate for weekday (only) users – especially considering the lower weekday demand.

- **On-Street Meter Rates** - On-street hourly meter rates in high demand areas of coastal New England downtowns with heavy tourist visitation typically range from \$1.50/hour to \$2.00/hour or more. Some communities offer discounted hourly parking in lower demand meter zones and via merchant validation. At these rates, meters can pay for themselves in 2 years or less – after which, funds can be reinvested in parking and transportation-related improvements downtown.
- **Off-Street Employee Permit Parking** – monthly permit rates would be established for employee use of designated parking areas included in the shared parking lot agreements previously discussed. Typically, a permit parker can use any of the lots included in the program on a first-come-first-serve basis. Like the Art Museum Lot, they have access but are not guaranteed a space in any of the off-street lots. Some towns/cities use tiered permit pricing if they have permit lots that are significantly higher demand than others. These monthly employee permit rates would be established in relation to monthly permit fees charged in the high-demand Art Museum Lot.
- **Resident Permit Parking** – on-street resident permits are typically offered at a nominal fee (ex. \$25/year). Off-street resident permits are typically market rate although some communities offer residents a discount on the monthly employee rate.
- **Meter/Overtime Fine Amount** – It is recommended that meter and overtime fine amounts be consistent in both towns and set to a minimum of \$25 violation rate. Stonington’s overtime parking is already \$25 but Groton would need to increase their fine from \$20 to \$25.

This recommendation is consistent with the Advisory Committee’s #5 Guiding Principle: *“Existing and future parking within core commercial areas should be fairly priced commensurate with land value and location and paid for by users.”*

6. Increase controls on shared off-site parking for new development. - The shared parking provisions within the town’s zoning ordinance for new development are quite good. However, the degree to which shared parking “actually” occurs is only as good as the shared-parking agreement. In the case of developers using the Art Museum Lot, since the Art Museum does not issue parking passes (proximity cards) to individuals tied to their license plates – the proximity cards can be shared by multiple users - and there are no guarantees that employees “actually” get the permits. The same concerns exist for when developers lease off-site private lots. Sometimes employees still end up in a residential neighborhood – either because the off-site spaces were directed to another user or because there were free residential spaces closer to their work. Therefore, some municipalities require the developer to file and regularly update a list of employee license plates/permits at the off-site facility with the municipality – for monitoring and enforcement. The Art Museum is currently considering upgrading their parking access and revenue control system to eliminate proximity cards in favor of a permit system issued to a permittee’s license plate, which will improve tracking and controls of permit parkers.

7. Consider Fee In-lieu of Parking for new development - In areas of more intense activity downtown where the community wants to promote density, requiring each use to provide separate parking facilities can degrade the pedestrian environment and limit density. In-lieu fees allow developers to pay into a municipal parking and traffic mitigation fund that pays for leasing/purchasing/developing off-street parking lots/structures or reducing parking demand through transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities/improvements. This approach has been successfully used to fund public parking and transit improvements that address downtown parking needs, rather than the needs of an individual site, while encouraging in-fill development and redevelopment in downtowns and historic buildings. Legally, the fee must be tied to a “rational nexus” of specific parking and related improvements that are part of the Town’s plan to address parking and traffic. In Mystic, it could be used to expand off-street parking through purchase, lease and/or shared lot agreement in support of a planned parking permit program. In-lieu fees are governed by State Statute in Connecticut.

This recommendation is consistent with the Advisory Committee’s #6 Guiding Principle: *“Development projects in core commercial areas should share in the cost of their own parking and/or mobility needs.”*

8. Implement strategies to address peak summer and special event parking demand – like most coastal New England downtowns, parking demand in Mystic is significantly higher during the summer than off-season. A logical way to approach seasonal fluctuations is to treat it as you would a special event. Typically, this means considering the use of peripheral parking areas (5 to 10-minute walk to downtown) and remote parking areas (parking more than a 10-minute walk from downtown) possibly in conjunction with valet parking (recommended earlier), free or flat-rate parking, and shuttle bus/trolley services.

- **Expand peripheral, free off-street parking within a 10-minute walk of downtown** – from field observations there appeared to be several underutilized parking lots/areas within a 10-minute walk of downtown including the ACME Wire Products parking lots off Broadway Ave. Extension and Lincoln Ave. directly behind CVS in Stonington to name a couple. There also appears to be vacant land behind the Stonington Fire Department that could provide free, supplemental long-term employee and visitor parking during the summer. Pedestrian wayfinding signage and lighting should be improved from peripheral lots into downtown. Bike parking areas within these lots should be considered.

This recommendation is consistent with the Advisory Committee’s #11 Guiding Principle: *“Free or affordable parking for low wage employees is desirable if available within a reasonable walking distance of the core commercial areas.”*

- **Implement a Parking Guidance System (PGS) utilizing real-time, dynamic message boards to direct drivers to available peripheral lot(s) when the Art Museum Lot is full/closed** – some communities utilized dynamic variable message boards to direct drivers to available off-street

parking when a primary downtown off-street parking facility fills to capacity. By doing so, they avoid having everyone drive to the central parking facility only to find out it is full and then back-track in search of parking. If for example, the Seaport Museum, which is under a 15-minute walk to the commercial district, allowed its south lot to be used for overflow public parking, a PGS could be installed along Route 1 in advance of the south lot to direct people to it should the Art Museum Lot fill.



- **Create a task force to investigate the feasibility of implementing a shuttle bus system to link remote parking lots, hotels, attractions, and the Mystic Train Station between I-95 and Downtown Mystic** – The Task Force could include Town officials, the Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Merchants Association, the Southeast Area Transit District, SCCOG, attractions (Mystic Aquarium, Mystic Seaport, etc.) connecting hotels (some are currently running shuttles) and others. Such a service could connect intermodal transit services at the I-95/Exit 90 area parking lots with hotels, major attractions/parking lots, the Mystic Train Station and Downtown Mystic.



The shuttle would likely need a convenient Main St. drop-off location that stays clear of drawbridge traffic and back-ups that could jeopardize scheduled headways/ convenience as a parking shuttle. The shuttle could run from Memorial Day to Columbus Day perhaps with weekend service that extends later into fall. Operating funding, which is a critical challenge for shuttle systems, could potentially draw from State of CT transit operating funds, a local parking & transportation fund, in-lieu fees, advertising revenues, local hotel/attractions, etc. Parking shuttles are commonly fare free to promote remote parking use. A similar effort/group could also evaluate potential seasonal water shuttle/taxi service.

This recommendation is consistent with the Advisory Committee's #11 Guiding Principle: *"Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and non-auto transportation strategies are important ways to increase mobility and visitation to downtown while reducing parking need."*

9. Establish a Parking & Transportation Fund - the Towns should consider establishing separate accounts or enterprise funds for surplus parking revenues from meters, permits, fines and fees to fund the paid parking program including the purchase of parking meters, equipment, on-going parking mgt., enforcement, and operations & maintenance. The fund could also be used to purchase, lease and/or

develop off-street parking facilities or make improvements to private property in exchange for operating public parking there. Eligible uses of these funds would include public transit and other transportation demand management measures and downtown improvements. This fund could also receive other payments such as fees paid in-lieu of providing required on-site parking or public improvement grants.

This recommendation is consistent with the Advisory Committee's #5 Guiding Principle: *"Existing and future parking within core commercial areas should be fairly priced commensurate with land value and location and paid for by users."*

10. Conduct a Downtown Traffic Circulation Study – downtown traffic congestion was repeatedly raised as a major threat to a positive downtown experience and quality of life. Recently, Cottrell Street was made one-way to expand on-street parking with some resident objections due to traffic circulation impacts. Both towns have explored making other streets one-way to potentially expand on-street parking and improve downtown traffic flow such as Bank Street, Gravel Street and Holmes Street. Traffic impacts and circulation have also been major concerns expressed in recent redevelopment proposals on both sides of the drawbridge. A traffic circulation study is the appropriate way to review such proposals in a comprehensive way to include improving bicycle and pedestrian safety, potentially expanding outside dining and other competing uses for curb space.

PARKING PROGRAM ELEMENTS

The year-round elements of the paid parking program downtown include:

- expanding paid public parking at the Art Museum Lot
- metering and expanding the 2-hour parking zone (approx. 38 spaces) to include:
 - Pearl Street – just n/o W. Main St. to St. Mark's Church (approx. 24 spaces)
 - Gravel Street – just n/o W. Main St. to just n/o Church of Christ, Scientist (approx. 7 spaces)
 - East Main Street - Willow St. to St. Pat's Catholic Center (approx. 7 spaces)
- offering a mobile payment option to paying at the meter
- offering merchant validation option at the meter
- establishing an employee permit program (downtown residents also able to purchase lot permits) within the 5-minute walk-zone through shared-lot parking and lease agreements
- expanding parking enforcement coverage using wireless, handheld ticketing devices and establishing consistent parking policies and regulations including fines and fees
- promoting, licensing, and regulating valet/tandem parking targeted at downtown restaurants
- monitoring parking occupancy rates on residential streets for customer/employee infiltration, which may require regulation/enforcement.

Summer seasonal elements of the paid parking program downtown include:

- all the elements above
- offering free, peripheral parking on designated streets and lots located between a 5 and 10-minute walk of downtown.
- Implementing a parking guidance system (PGS)
- providing a shuttle bus system to link remote and peripheral parking lots, hotels, attractions, the Mystic Amtrak Station between I-95, and Downtown Mystic.

A plan view of the recommended parking program elements is provided in Figure 5 below. This plan is just an example of how Groton and Stonington – given more discussion, preparation, and decision-making – could assemble its future parking program. For example, the employee permit and free parking lots shown would be dependent on successful negotiations between the towns and the lot owners. The private lots shown only include lots where during the study process, owner’s representatives expressed interest in discussing a shared lot parking agreement with the towns. There may be other potential shared-lot or leased parking opportunities that could be explored as well.

Also, the shuttle bus routing shown in Figure 5 is just one potential routing alternative. The actual shuttle bus routing would be established following a feasibility determination and decision on whether to pursue it. The shuttle bus system, which is likely a longer-term proposition, could certainly be phased to occur after the metered parking, employee permit, and enhanced enforcement program are implemented.

Parking program elements and parameters related to management structure/staffing, funding/budget, fee structure, periods of paid parking operation, regulations, policies, technology/equipment, and procurement should be established within an implementation plan once the primary parking program elements are approved.

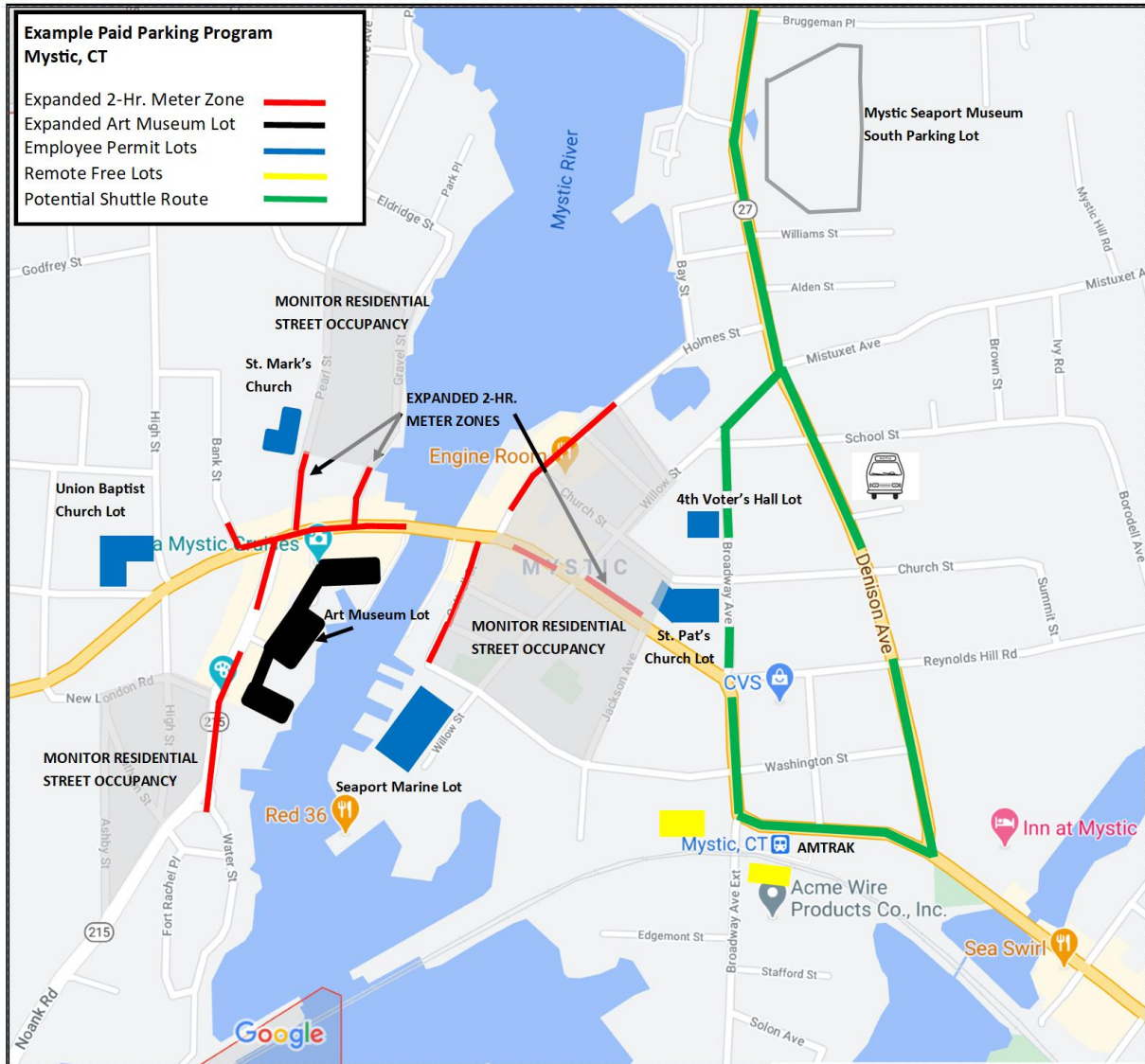


Figure 5: Example of Potential Paid Parking Program

APPENDIX

Exhibit A: Stakeholder Interview Summary Responses

How is the current parking situation impacting you?

1. *Simply finding public parking - as a resident, I know where the hidden parking spots are, so it is easy for me to find available parking - but not for the infrequent visitor. **Groton downtown resident***
2. *The one-waying of Cottrell has been a negative. The road is no longer straight. The angle spaces extend too far into street. Trying to make a left from Stanton onto Cottrell is totally blind and making a left from Cottrell onto Washington is impeded by pedestrians on Washington near the park that must walk in the street. The addition to parking in these places has been a detriment to neighborhoods of Cottrell, Washington, Willow and Jackson. **Stonington downtown resident***
3. *Central Hall Building was a recent development project of ours. It took 2 years to receive approvals. The parking issues contributed to the difficulty in this downtown redevelopment. **Groton Downtown Business/Developer***
4. *We walk into town to our boat at Fort Rachel and notice most streets full on Friday and Saturday nights. Residents put cones out in front of their houses in some instances. Noise is a concern in the neighborhoods. During big events in particular - cars line our streets and some residents don't want people parking in front of their house. Seeing more tension among residents due to the success of downtown Mystic. Neighborhood infiltration is an issue. **Groton downtown resident/PZC member***
5. *When I did live downtown, we theoretically had two spaces with our apartment in the Art Museum Lot. Most weekdays we could find parking but on many weekends we either couldn't find parking, or we "creatively" parked. So, it was impactful to us as residents. **Stonington resident/(former) downtown resident***
6. *We have lived directly off Water Street for many years. We have 3 vehicles. Parking on both sides of our street at night is very tight, such that it is difficult to get two cars down the street at the same time. Employees park on our street very early in the morning. **Groton downtown resident***
7. *Traffic. As a realtor there is a big work around with the drawbridge when its up. It can take 45 minutes to go from CVS to a destination on the other side of the river. **Stonington resident/Planning Commission member***
8. *Side street parking to Main Street is taken up by employees very early in the morning as more labor-intensive businesses are coming to Town. Employees go to the closest free space available to them. More side street customer parking close to Main Street retail is needed by businesses. **Groton downtown business owner***

9. *One-waying Cottrell – I was pessimistic about it originally, but business on Cottrell increased with the one-way. However, it has created flow issues on Willow because Willow is not wide enough. **Stonington downtown business owner***
10. *Lack of downtown parking/traffic planning and management is impacting needed redevelopment and improvements. **Stonington downtown business/developer***

What is the #1 parking problem facing Downtown Mystic?

1. *There are not enough parking spaces given the continued growth and interest in Mystic. Employees take customer spaces early in morning. Downtown Business Owners are concerned that their customers can't always get to their businesses. **Groton downtown resident***
2. *Development. It might be enough is enough. We have reached our critical mass – maybe we can't continue to accommodate more and more, restaurants, etc. Development could progress but you need to accommodate their parking needs while also considering the residents. No one is happy with change in character. **Stonington downtown resident***
3. *Parking affordability. \$5/hour in the Art Museum lot is high. We pushed for the 30 minutes free promotion. That and the \$1.75 vouchers are the work-around to a high hourly rate. The annual permit rate there though is reasonably affordable. **Groton Downtown Business/Developer***
4. *The heightened tension between neighborhood and business interests. **Groton downtown resident/PZC member***
5. *Potentially turning people away from going to Mystic if the parking is too difficult. **Stonington (former) downtown resident***
6. *So many businesses go before the Town commissions and always say that they will be using the Art Museum Lot, which fills. Employees are the main issue here. Some of the new businesses coming to Town are bakeries or restaurants that are labor intensive. Employees must fend for themselves in finding spaces on the street. **Groton downtown resident***
7. *Groton has a very strong Historic District Commission, but Zoning regulations are lax. Downtown is already "paralyzed" primarily because of the drawbridge but not helped by people searching for parking. I watched someone circle the block 6 times looking for parking so that is contributing to traffic impacts. **Stonington resident/ Planning Commission member***
8. *The Towns require that new businesses and development account for their parking needs when they are going for approval. The new businesses just say that their parking needs will be met by the Art Museum*

*Parking Lot, which already fills somedays. Each parking space has probably been rented out 3 times over. **Groton downtown business owner.***

9. *It is the lack of employee parking. I don't have enough off-street parking for my employees. Some employees are parking in prime 2-hour zone spaces. **Stonington downtown business owner***
10. *Lack of downtown parking/traffic planning and management is impacting needed redevelopment and improvements. **Stonington downtown business/developer***

What would you do to address it?

1. *I would favor paid parking on-street to create turnover provided that the revenues finance parking improvements and transit/bike solutions. I don't think anyone wants an above ground, concrete, monolith parking garage. You may solve the parking problem that way, but you create another problem. People come to Mystic for the beauty and the aesthetic quality of the downtown. Alternatively, you could procure land off I-95 and construct surface parking with direct water taxi and/or shuttle bus to bring people in and out of downtown. **Groton downtown resident***
2. *I would be more in favor of building a parking garage than trying to squeeze in more parking spaces by one-way streets, etc. These impacts can be very negative to those who live with it. **Stonington downtown resident***
3. *The Town should consider, buying, owning, and operating the Art Museum lot. Get the pricing right. The lot should be reconfigured to create additional parking. A conceptual plan was developed but the Art Museum Association did not advance it. **Groton Downtown Business/Developer***
4. *Charge for parking on-street and use the revenue to purchase/lease off-street parking lots for public use. **Groton downtown resident/PZC member***
5. *Create a parking facility at Exit 90 and shuttle bus or water taxi people into Downtown Mystic. There is a lot of surplus space in Mystic Village so it could be a win-win. Maybe it could be done in connection with a hotel or development out there. **Stonington (former) downtown resident***
6. *Start by using the Church Lots for parking that are often empty or close to empty. **Groton downtown resident***
7. *(1) There is value to looking at traffic circulation throughout the downtown making more streets one-way to improve traffic and parking. We should look at individual intersections. The Cottrell one-way was fine and it did add parking - but it also created some left turning difficulties. People in the residential neighborhood didn't like it. (2) The Exit 90 Golden Triangle. There are parking lots there not well used where that could be*

*satellite parking with shuttle bus. Of course, it takes money. Trolleys cost money. Parking fees could pay for it but I'm not sure people will pay increased parking fees for this. (3) Develop a joint Parking Commission between the two towns to improve and oversee the management of the parking. **Stonington resident/Planning Commission member***

8. *(1) Go to the churches like St. Mark's in Groton or the Voter's parking lot in Stonington to develop agreements for employee parking. (2) Improve parking directional signage, which is poor. (3) Do not let new development satisfy their parking requirements with the Art Center lot, which fills. **Groton downtown business owner***
9. *We need to find off-street parking for employees. Art Museum Lot can't provide it. Maybe use ACME Wiring near the train station for employee parking and use shuttles. **Stonington downtown business owner***
10. *Improve pedestrian connections from the train station to downtown. Create additional public parking lots outside of the downtown and improve pedestrian connections to/from. **Stonington downtown business/developer***

What is a secondary contributing factor to the parking problems facing Downtown Mystic and how would you address it?

1. *Downtown developers are getting approvals by saying they are going to use parking in the Art Museum lot that doesn't always have the parking. My suggestion is that developers not be granted approvals based on the Art Museum Lot parking and whenever a development comes to downtown or near downtown, make sure there is a non-automobile option for handling demand whether that is remote parking with water taxi/bus shuttle, biking or walking. **Groton downtown resident***
2. *Starting to see resentment on the Stonington side of the bridge for the Groton side. We are becoming the parking supplier for Groton. **Stonington downtown resident***
3. *Poor signage. Wayfinding signage is needed. If you are not from Mystic, it is very confusing once you enter the Art Museum Lot to know where you are supposed to go and where you can and cannot park. **Groton Downtown Business/Developer***
4. *Employees of new developments are likely parking on neighborhood streets. Tensions between residential neighborhoods and development – particularly on the Stonington side is prevalent. Charge for parking on-street and use the revenue to purchase/lease off-street parking lots for public use. **Groton downtown resident/PZC member***

5. *Expand off-street parking downtown. On the Stonington side, Seaport Marine could potentially provide additional parking. They have a prime lot that is not a long walk away and could be used. The one-way of Cottrell Street seemed to add a lot of on-street parking that helped. **Stonington (former) downtown resident***
6. *Food delivery trucks to restaurants and taverns, particularly on Water St. usually in the morning creates traffic and safety issues when they park in the lane and force vehicles into the other lane. We enjoy living downtown, understand what comes with it and appreciate the need for downtown business and activities and growth – but active parking management should come with it. Currently, parking enforcement appears non-existent. Never seen a parking ticket downtown. **Groton downtown resident***
7. *Resident parking impacts. Residential permit parking is probably fair to folks on streets like Willow Street. More cars than driveways in some of these old houses so I understand. On our side of the river we don't have a lot of commerce but are the satellite parking for Groton who has the bulk of the commerce. If parking is continually moved to Stonington side, it will contribute to overall traffic problems here. **Stonington resident/ Planning Commission member***
8. *Creating additional off-street parking will allow the towns to provide for additional street/sidewalk access and create additional outside dining. Consider planning for a new parking garage downtown to accommodate current and future development and overall parking needs. **Groton downtown business owner***
9. *We need to create a system where people park once in Mystic and then walk or take a shuttle. People are constantly searching for a parking space – that, along with parallel parking on Main St., creates a huge traffic flow issue. Back in the 1990s we had a trolley that went from I90/Exit 90 Ramada Inn, Mystic Seaport, the Train Station and into downtown. Some hotels already have shuttles. **Stonington downtown business owner***
10. *Anti-redevelopment efforts by downtown residents. The Towns should be partnering with private businesses/development on existing parking issues – to create additional shared “public-use” parking when possible. **Stonington downtown business/developer***

Exhibit B: Weekday and Saturday Occupancy Rate Tables

Parking Utilization Rates- Downtown Mystic, CT

Thursday, Sept. 24, 2020		8 am	10 am	12 pm	2 pm	4 pm	6 pm	8 pm	Peak Hourly Use Rate*
Groton Parking Lots (Lots with 20 spaces or more)	Total Spaces								
Lot behind Harp & Hound	21	5	6	6	8	8	10	9	47.6%
St. Mark's Church Lot	34	3	4	7	6	8	20	14	58.8%
Academy Point Lot	30	29	30	31	28	18	13	12	103.3%
Union Baptist Church	53	6	6	7	14	12	14	18	34.0%
Factory Square Lot	34	15	15	16	14	20	18	24	70.6%
Power House Lots	26	8	14	13	10	16	16	16	61.5%
Art Museum Lots	210	83	96	146	156	169	164	135	80.5%
Mystic Downtown Marina Gated Gravel Lots (est. spaces)	48	22	23	19	21	12	7	6	47.9%
Daniel Packer Inn Lots	24	3	7	12	6	3	6	5	50.0%
34 Water St. Commons Lot (roped-off/closed)	36	18	19	19	16	2	0	0	52.8%
Total Parking Lot Use	516	192	220	276	279	268	268	239	54.1%
Groton On-Street Parking	Total Spaces								
West Main Street - Bank St. to Gravel St.	21	6	18	20	18	19	17	13	95.2%
West Main Street - Gravel St. to Drawbridge	8	0	8	8	9	6	8	6	112.5%
Gravel Street - West Main St. to Cliff St.	32	14	18	24	23	24	22	22	75.0%
Cliff Street - Gravel St. to Pearl St.	14	2	4	2	2	5	7	4	50.0%
Pearl Street - Cliff St. to Funeral Home	19	4	2	4	10	9	7	11	57.9%
Pearl Street - Funeral Home to St. Mark's Lot	30	8	15	21	15	16	15	15	70.0%
Pearl Street - St. Mark's Lot to West Main St.	17	8	9	19	13	16	14	16	111.8%
Bank Street - West Main St. to #10 Bank St.	11	0	6	6	7	7	5	7	63.6%
Bank Street - #10 Bank St. to Academy Lane	12	2	2	3	6	6	4	3	50.0%
Academy Lane - Bank St. to High St.	8	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	25.0%
High Street - Academy Lane to Burrow St.	32	0	0	3	6	0	0	0	18.8%
High Street - Burrow St. to West Main St.	31	3	6	4	5	5	4	6	19.4%
High Street - W. Main St. to New London Rd.	26	3	4	6	8	10	8	11	42.3%
High Street - New London Rd. to Latham St.	31	3	2	4	7	15	10	12	48.4%
Elm Street - Burrow St. to Library St.	48	5	11	12	10	6	6	6	25.0%
Library Street - Elm St. to Church Lot Drive	10	0	2	3	2	2	2	0	30.0%
New London Road - Latham St. to Water St.	21	3	5	9	10	12	12	8	57.1%
Water Street - Noank to n/o of New London St.	13	6	11	11	12	13	11	11	100.0%
Water Street - Sift Bakery to West Main St.	9	3	5	5	7	5	4	4	77.8%
Total On-Street Parking Use	393	70	128	164	170	178	158	156	45.3%
*Parking counts by PDI, Inc.		J. Burke Parking & Transit Consulting							
*Peak hour(s) for each parking lot and street section are shaded in the table above.									

■ - Effective Capacity - exceeds 85% use.

■ - Balanced Range - 60% to 85% use.

■ - Underutilized - less than 60% use.

Peak Parking Lot Use 2 p.m.

Peak Parking On-street 4 p.m.

DOWNTOWN MYSTIC PARKING STUDY, FINAL REPORT

Parking Utilization Rates- Downtown Mystic, CT

Thursday, Sept. 24, 2020		8 am	10 am	12 pm	2 pm	4 pm	6 pm	8 pm	Peak Hourly Use Rate*
Stonington Parking Lots (Lots with 20 spaces or more)	Total Spaces								
S&P Oyster Lot	25	3	2	15	21	18	23	15	92.0%
Bake Shop (Holmes St.)	30	6	15	15	9	15	17	10	56.7%
Schooner Wharf Lot (Church St.)	40	8	17	20	18	29	26	27	72.5%
St. Pat's Church Lot	72	5	6	9	13	7	6	3	18.1%
CVS Lot	60	13	29	25	28	28	33	16	55.0%
Whaler's Inn Lot	34	21	16	7	15	17	27	29	85.3%
Total Parking Lot Use	261	56	85	91	104	114	132	100	50.6%
Stonington On-Street Parking	Total Spaces								
Holmes Street - East Main St. to Forsyth St.	17	1	5	12	12	12	16	15	94.1%
Forsyth Street - Holmes St. to Willow St.	11	4	8	7	9	10	7	5	90.9%
Church Street - Holmes St. to Willow St.	3	1	2	3	5	4	3	3	166.7%
Church Street - Willow St. to Broadway Ave.	19	8	11	14	11	10	8	8	73.7%
East Main Street - Holmes St. to Willow St.	7	1	3	3	5	5	3	7	100.0%
East Main Street - Willow St. to Broadway Ave.	0	1	1	2	4	2	3	2	N/A
Willow Street - East Main St. to Forsyth St.	18	13	9	8	14	9	7	15	83.3%
Broadway Avenue - East Main St. to Church St.	9	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	11.1%
Cottrell Street - East Main St. to Haley St.	22	6	15	21	19	20	22	14	100.0%
Cottrell Street - Haley St. to Stanton Place	16	3	10	15	14	16	16	11	100.0%
Cottrell Street - Stanton Place to Washington St.	11	2	1	7	9	10	11	4	100.0%
Haley Street - Cottrell St. to Willow St.	13	9	8	9	10	9	9	5	76.9%
Stanton Place - Cottrell St. to Willow St.	4	2	2	4	2	2	1	1	100.0%
Washington Street - Cottrell St. to Willow St.	10	0	0	6	6	3	5	3	60.0%
Willow Street - East Main St. to Stanton Place	16	11	12	9	11	8	6	5	75.0%
Willow Street - Stanton Place to Washington St.	10	4	4	0	6	4	2	2	60.0%
Total On-Street Parking Use	186	66	91	121	138	125	119	100	74.2%
*Parking counts by PDI, Inc.		J. Burke Parking & Transit Consulting							

- Effective Capacity - exceeds 85% use.

- Balanced Range - 60% to 85% use.

- Underutilized - less than 60% use.

Peak parking lot use 6 p.m.

Peak Parking On-street 2 p.m.

*Peak hour(s) for each parking lot and street section are shaded in the table above.

■ - **Effective Capacity** - exceeds 85% use.

■ - **Balanced Range** - 60% to 85% use.

■ - **Underutilized** - less than 60% use.

Peak parking lot use 6 p.m.

Peak Parking On-street 2 p.m.

DOWNTOWN MYSTIC PARKING STUDY, FINAL REPORT

Parking Utilization Rates- Downtown Mystic, CT

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020		8 am	10 am	12 pm	2 pm	4 pm	6 pm	8 pm	Peak Hourly Use Rate*
Groton Parking Lots (Lots with 20 spaces or more)	Total Spaces								
Lot behind Harp & Hound	21	6	10	9	12	13	11	9	61.9%
St. Mark's Church Lot	34	10	17	16	18	19	20	21	61.8%
Academy Point Lot	28	18	21	19	16	13	8	8	75.0%
Union Baptist Church	53	5	14	24	29	37	44	31	83.0%
Factory Square Lot	34	23	22	20	12	17	19	23	67.6%
Power House Lots	26	12	15	12	14	17	18	12	69.2%
Art Museum Lots	210	103	127	210	243	229	227	218	115.7%
Mystic Downtown Marina Gated Gravel Lots (est. spaces)	48	19	19	22	24	26	29	22	60.4%
Daniel Packer Inn Lots	24	6	7	12	13	13	22	24	100.0%
34 Water St. Commons Lot (roped-off/closed)	36	1	1	0	0	4	9	14	28.6%
Total Parking Lot Use	514	203	253	344	381	388	407	382	79.2%
Groton On-Street Parking	Total Spaces								
West Main Street - Bank St. to Gravel St.	21	8	17	21	21	21	20	20	100.0%
West Main Street - Gravel St. to Drawbridge	8	3	7	8	8	8	8	7	100.0%
Gravel Street - West Main St. to Cliff St.	32	6	18	27	31	30	27	14	96.9%
Cliff Street - Gravel St. to Pearl St.	14	2	2	7	9	8	6	7	64.3%
Pearl Street - Cliff St. to Funeral Home	19	8	9	17	22	16	16	14	115.8%
Pearl Street - Funeral Home to St. Mark's Lot	30	14	14	18	21	18	20	14	70.0%
Pearl Street - St. Mark's Lot to West Main St.	17	11	8	10	17	19	8	15	111.8%
Bank Street - West Main St. to #10 Bank St.	11	0	6	18	15	12	10	9	163.6%
Bank Street - #10 Bank St. to Academy Lane	12	2	2	7	6	7	3	5	58.3%
Academy Lane - Bank St. to High St.	8	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	25.0%
High Street - Academy Lane to Burrow St.	32	0	0	2	3	5	4	2	15.6%
High Street - Burrow St. to West Main St.	31	4	6	16	20	19	20	11	64.5%
High Street - W. Main St. to New London Rd.	26	4	5	8	9	11	13	12	50.0%
High Street - New London Rd. to Latham St.	30	3	3	8	14	17	14	10	56.7%
Elm Street - Burrow St. to Library St.	48	3	5	8	13	8	8	4	27.1%
Library Street - Elm St. to Church Lot Drive	10	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	10.0%
New London Road - Latham St. to Water St.	21	7	8	13	16	20	17	14	95.3%
Water Street - Noank to n/o of New London St.	13	14	14	14	15	13	15	14	115.4%
Water Street - Sift Bakery to West Main St.	9	4	7	8	6	7	8	5	88.9%
Total On-Street Parking Use	392	93	131	211	246	241	219	178	62.8%
*Parking counts by PDI, Inc.		J. Burke Parking & Transit Consulting							
*Peak hour(s) for each parking lot and street section are shaded in the table above.									

Effective Capacity

- exceeds 85% use.

Balanced Range

- 60% to 85% use.

Underutilized

- less than 60% use.

Peak Parking Lot Use 6 p.m.

Peak Parking On-street 2 p.m.

■ - **Effective Capacity** - exceeds 85% use.

■ - **Balanced Range** - 60% to 85% use.

■ - **Underutilized** - less than 60% use.

Peak Parking Lot Use 6 p.m.

Peak Parking On-street 2 p.m.

DOWNTOWN MYSTIC PARKING STUDY, FINAL REPORT

Parking Utilization Rates- Downtown Mystic, CT

Saturday, Sept. 19, 2020		8 am	10 am	12 pm	2 pm	4 pm	6 pm	8 pm	Peak Hourly Use Rate*
Stonington Parking Lots (Lots with 20 spaces or more)	Total Spaces								
S&P Oyster Lot	25	2	2	22	22	24	24	22	96.0%
Bake Shop (Holmes St.)	30	13	21	30	30	28	26	26	100.0%
Schooner Wharf Lot (Church St.)	40	1	3	27	44	47	43	43	117.5%
St. Pat's Church Lot	72	6	9	6	13	24	18	12	33.3%
CVS Lot	60	10	28	40	36	37	33	18	66.7%
Whaler's Inn Lot	34	33	29	20	34	33	33	39	114.7%
Total Parking Lot Use	261	65	92	145	179	193	177	160	73.9%
Stonington On-Street Parking	Total Spaces								
Holmes Street - East Main St. to Forsyth St.	17	7	11	17	17	17	17	17	100.0%
Forsyth Street - Holmes St. to Willow St.	11	9	8	7	8	9	10	10	90.9%
Church Street - Holmes St. to Willow St.	3	1	1	2	3	3	3	4	133.3%
Church Street - Willow St. to Broadway Ave.	19	9	8	13	16	17	14	14	89.5%
East Main Street - Holmes St. to Willow St.	7	5	3	5	5	5	5	6	85.7%
East Main Street - Willow St. to Broadway Ave.	0	3	5	8	6	6	6	7	N/A
Willow Street - East Main St. to Forsyth St.	18	15	14	12	14	20	18	13	111.1%
Broadway Avenue - East Main St. to Church St.	9	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	22.2%
Cottrell Street - East Main St. to Haley St.	22	14	18	22	24	22	23	19	109.1%
Cottrell Street - Haley St. to Stanton Place	16	7	9	16	16	16	16	9	100.0%
Cottrell Street - Stanton Place to Washington St.	11	1	3	11	11	11	11	8	100.0%
Haley Street - Cottrell St. to Willow St.	13	12	12	12	12	12	12	13	100.0%
Stanton Place - Cottrell St. to Willow St.	4	2	5	5	7	7	7	8	200.0%
Washington Street - Cottrell St. to Willow St.	10	2	1	7	8	7	7	7	80.0%
Willow Street - East Main St. to Stanton Place	16	9	11	12	14	13	12	12	87.5%
Willow Street - Stanton Place to Washington St.	10	2	2	7	7	7	6	6	70.0%
Total On-Street Parking Use	186	98	112	158	168	173	167	153	93.0%
*Parking counts by PDI, Inc.		J. Burke Parking & Transit Consulting							

- Effective Capacity - exceeds 85% use.

- Balanced Range - 60% to 85% use.

- Underutilized - less than 60% use.

Peak parking lot use 4 p.m.

Peak Parking On-street 4 p.m.

*Peak hour(s) for each parking lot and street section are shaded in the table above.

■ - **Effective Capacity** - exceeds 85% use.

■ - **Balanced Range** - 60% to 85% use.

■ - **Underutilized** - less than 60% use.

Peak parking lot use 4 p.m.

Peak Parking On-street 4 p.m.