

Town of Athol

# DOWNTOWN ATHOL PARKING PLAN



May 2020





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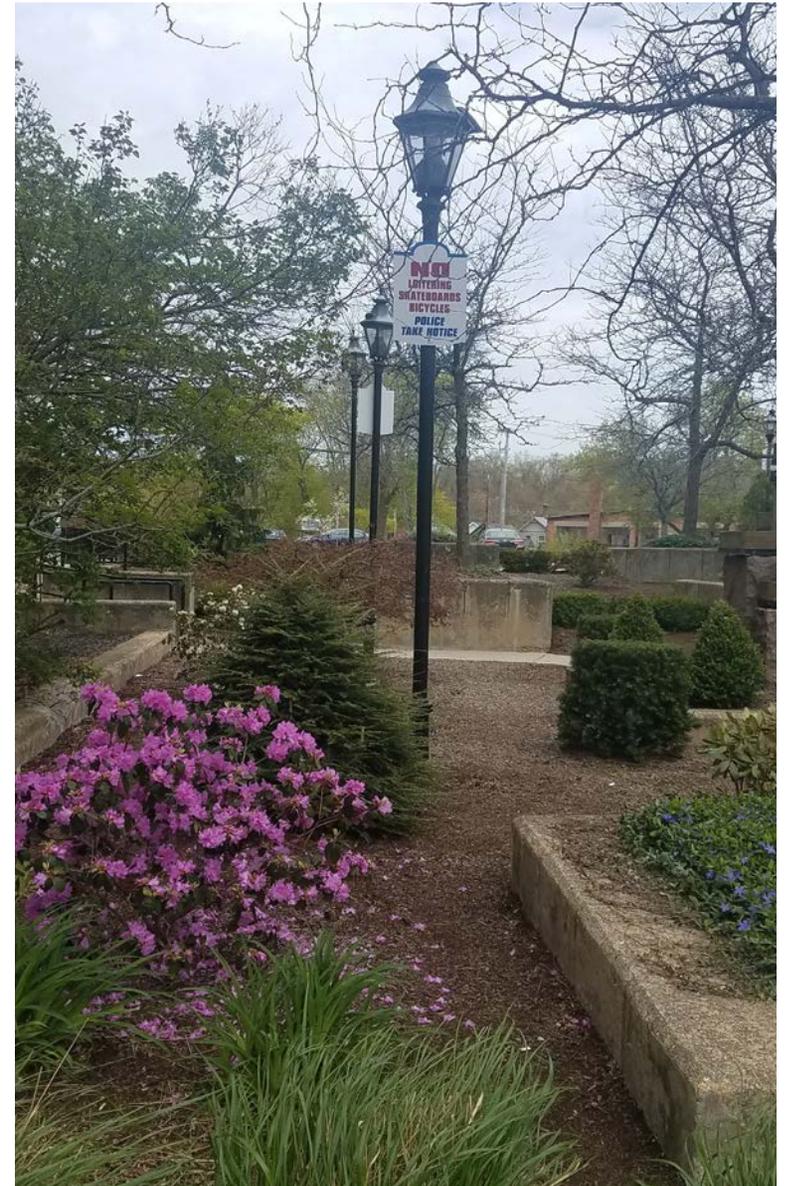


# INTRODUCTION

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The Town of Athol used funding from a “Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Technical Assistance Program” from the State Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to prepare the Downtown Athol Parking Plan. The Town staff provided oversight and review of the parking management plan, final report, and final presentation. In addition, Town businesses, residents and visitors provided insight and input into this study through a series of stakeholder meetings and a public open house held in October, 2019.

On behalf of DHCD and the Town of Athol, the study team would like to thank all stakeholders and public participants for their constructive inputs.



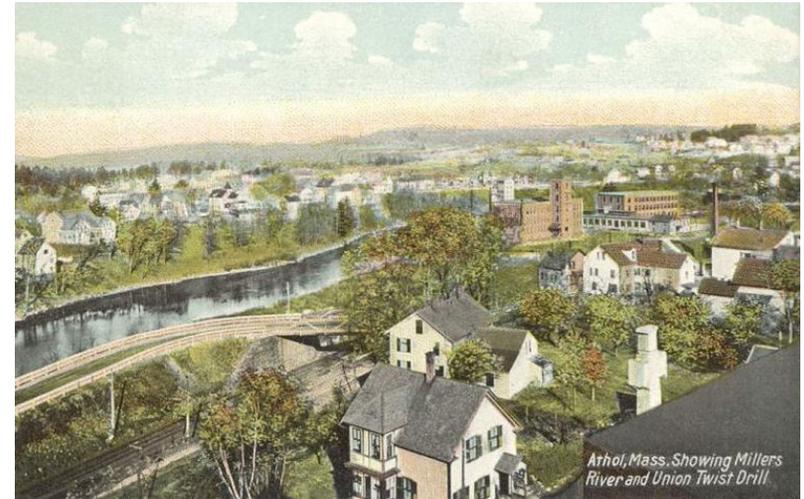
# INTRODUCTION | BACKGROUND & UNDERSTANDING

## Your Town: Athol

The Town of Athol is located 75 miles northwest of Downtown Boston. Athol is a historical mill town with a population of nearly 12,000 (2015). The Town is accessible via Route 2, and MART (Montachussett Area Regional Transit) provides two services which collect riders along key points in town including the YMCA, senior center near Lord Pond Plaza and nearby hospital and high school: The Athol-Gardner route which feeds into downtown Gardner, and the Athol-Orange route which drops off at Wal-Mart, Orange Center/Main Street, and the Orange Innovation Center.

Downtown Athol is largely defined by it's historic Main Street. The most densely built part of the street is two blocks long, featuring historic, two to four story buildings that host a variety of mixed uses. Some residential units occupy upper floors. Ground floor uses include a dental office, small shops, real estate office, credit union, and a pizza restaurant. Based on the 2017 Downtown Athol Analysis of Economic and Market Conditions Report, there is an estimated 25% commercial vacancy, which provides an opportunity for the town to tailor an approach to draw new demand and investment interest in the downtown. On the eastern end of downtown across Millers River, the L.S. Starrett Company is the only prominent economic anchor in Athol, with several hundred employed in tool manufacturing.

Downtown features a large amount of on- and off-street parking. Many spaces are found to be empty on-street throughout the average work day. Every year during a weekend in April, the Athol River Rat Race is a prominent event that draws participants from around the world put significant demand on parking. Otherwise, only the winter season presents a parking challenge with winter parking bans in effect, which reduce available supply.



Historic Athol

At the urging of the The Athol Downtown Vitality Committee -- a volunteer-based group comprised of residents, business owners, and community leaders that aims to support efforts which support the town mission of revitalizing downtown for both residents and visitors -- Town staff sought to study parking use to determine how downtown Athol might see increased activity without burdening its parking system. The DVC has participated in a variety of town efforts, including the recent Complete Streets Plan.

What is the Downtown Athol Parking Plan trying to achieve?

As the Town looks at opportunities to revitalize its downtown, reevaluating the current parking system and adjusting it to create a new parking management plan is of utmost importance for Downtown and the residents. Specific goals for the study include the following:

- **Implement a parking management strategy that will promote simplicity and customer-friendliness**
- **Improve and modernize parking facilities to support future economic opportunities and anticipated demand**
- **Support more bicycling and walking downtown with stronger connectivity to parking**
- **Investigate policy options to support Athol's anticipated parking and development needs**





# EXISTING CONDITIONS

Municipal Lot during the afternoon

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section documents existing parking conditions within Downtown Athol. Data was collected in the Summer of 2019, including existing parking supply, regulations, levels of utilization, and the Town's current parking management strategies.



Bike racks at Athol Library

A wide range of parking signs and restrictions can be observed throughout downtown







Underutilized parking lot

Even during mid-day, many parking lots downtown are highly underutilized

Underutilized parking lot

Millers River Environmental Center

Underutilized parking lot



Municipal Lot

Underutilized parking lot



Parking deck next to Franco-American National Club

## EXISTING CONDITIONS | STUDY AREA

To effectively measure parking usage across the Downtown area, the study team and Town identified a study area that generally includes areas of highest parking demand and activity - East and West Main Street, Exchange Street, South Street, and Marble Street.



# EXISTING CONDITIONS | PARKING INVENTORY

Within the Downtown study area, there is a **total of 1,584 parking spaces**. Of this inventory, 241 spaces (15%) are on-street and 1,343 spaces (85%) are off-street.

In order to gather the most accurate understanding of Downtown’s existing parking, the team recorded regulations within the study area as they would be viewed by a “visitor” or Downtown Athol “guest”. A breakdown of parking supply by regulation is reflected in the tables on this page.

The study team used these regulations to categorize parking spaces as ‘public’ or ‘private.’ Public spaces are those that are open to all users regardless of their destination – they are not associated with a private business. All on-street parking in Athol is public, as are many of the larger lots south of Main Street. Most of the public spaces are either metered or unregulated. Some other regulations are also present among public spaces. These are ADA spaces designated for people with disabilities and some regulated spaces in the Athol Public Library lot, which are reserved for electric vehicle charging.

Private spaces are those that are associated with a private business or residences and post restrictions regarding who can park. Private lots were mainly found along Main Street and Exchange Street. These offer parking spaces only for employees, members, visitors, or residences. One lot requires a permit, and a few private metered spaces are located at the YMCA. Some ADA spaces also are included in private lots.

## OFF-STREET

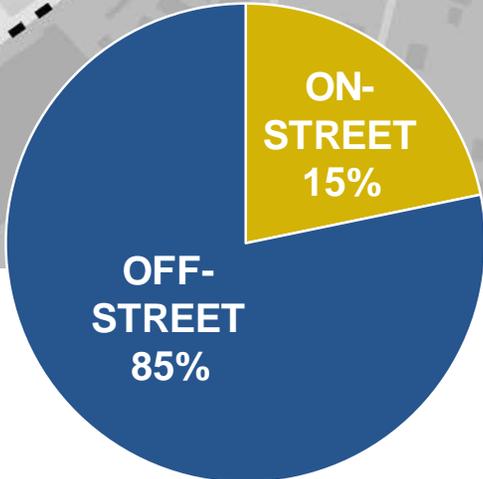
Regulation	Definition	Parking Supply	Percentage	Public or Private
ADA	ADA parking signage	62	5%	Public*
Employee parking only	“Employees only” signage	52	4%	Private
Members only	“Members only” signage	26	2%	Private
Metered	Meters present	11	1%	Public
Permit only	“Permit only” signage”	20	1%	Private
Regulated	Other regulation signage	20	1%	Private
Residents only	“Residents only” signage	57	4%	Private
Unregulated	No regulation or signage	1009	75%	Public
Visitor parking only	“Visitors only” signage	86	6%	Private
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,343</b>	<b>100%</b>	

\*Public but restricted

## ON-STREET

Regulation	Definition	Parking Supply	Percentage	Public or Private
ADA	ADA parking signage	3	1%	Public
Metered	Meters present	138	57%	Public
Unregulated	No regulation or signage	100	41%	Public
<b>Total</b>		<b>241</b>	<b>100%</b>	

# DOWNTOWN ATHOL PARKING INVENTORY



- Off-Street Regulation**
- ADA
  - Metered
  - Unregulated
  - Regulated
  - Employee parking only
  - Member parking only
  - Restricted
  - Resident parking only
  - Visitor parking only

- On-Street Regulation**
- ADA
  - Public Metered Parking
  - Public Unregulated Parking

# EXISTING CONDITIONS | PARKING UTILIZATION

## Parking Utilization Process

Periodic counts of parking occupancy provided data for a time series or spatial parking demand patterns, at different times of a weekday. The team worked with the Town to identify a spring weekday (while school was in session) in order to capture typical peak demand in Downtown Athol. To gather this data, the team counted parked cars along each on-street segment and every off-street facility in the study area at four, different periods between 10am and 8pm on a typical weekday.

Mapping the resulting parking utilization data helped to identify clear patterns of both high and low usage, including the impact of regulations. Land uses, regulations, topography, and signage can drastically impact how neighboring parking assets are utilized.

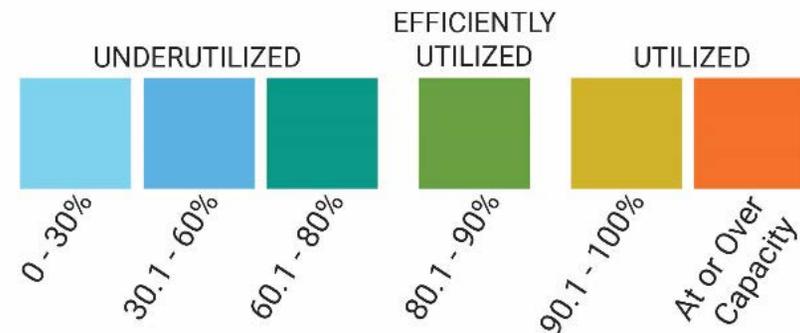
To ensure efficient parking management operations, it is ideal to maintain at least one empty space on each block of street parking to ensure easy customer access to businesses. This typically equates to about 1 out of 10 spaces free, or a target of 10% vacant or per block. Similarly, a goal of at least 10% vacancy is considered ideal in off-street lots. If any facility has less availability, it is effectively at its functional capacity (and drivers perceive a lack of availability). Facilities with lower utilization have excess capacity and can accommodate additional parked cars.

## Spatial Analysis of Parking Utilization: General Analysis

The utilization maps included in this report describe the overall occupancy and availability levels of all parking spaces within Downtown Athol.

## Parking Utilization Rates

Parking utilization rates are categorized in three groups, where 0-60% occupancy reflects low utilization, 60-80% is slightly busier, 80-90% is optimal, and 90%+ is at or over capacity

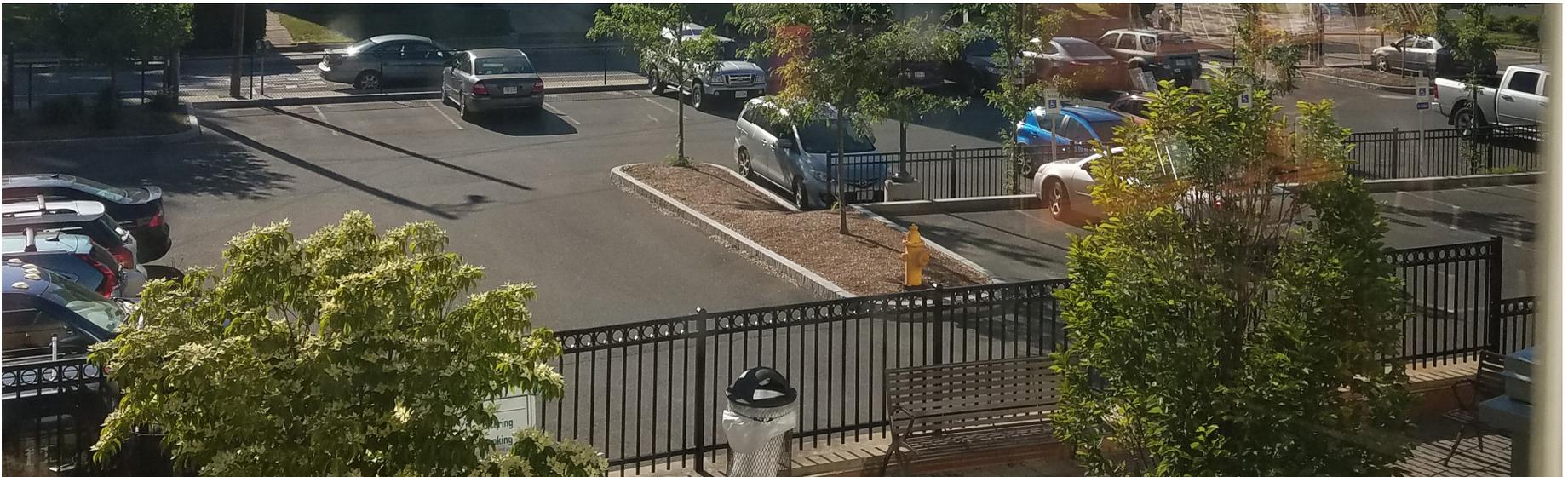
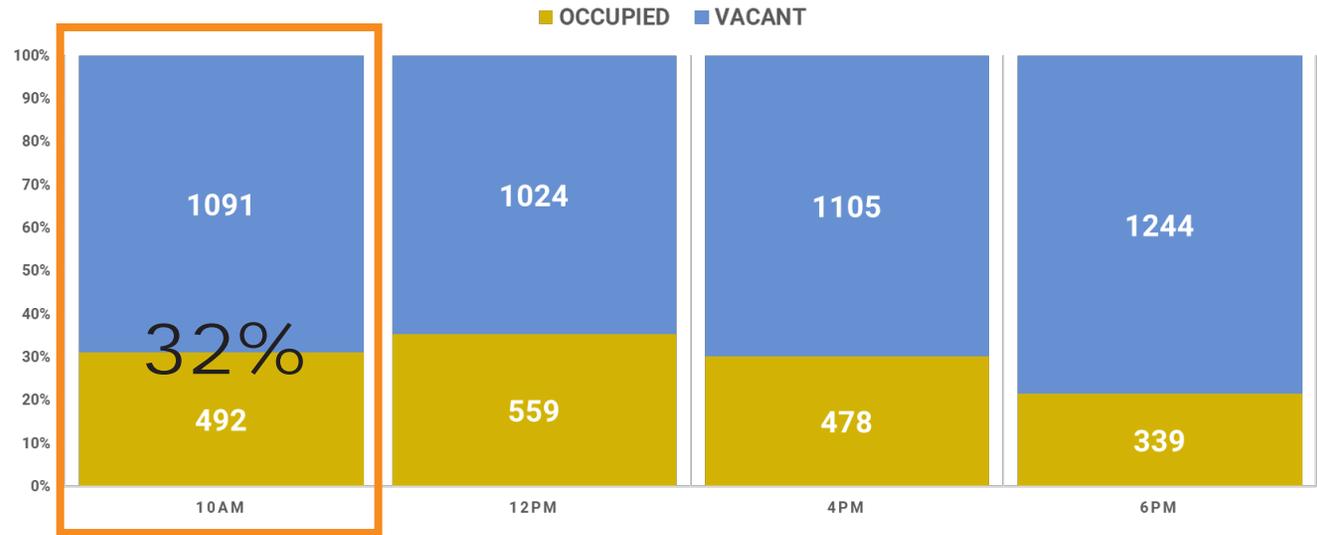


# PARKING UTILIZATION | PEAK DOWNTOWN CORE WEEKDAY - 10:00 AM

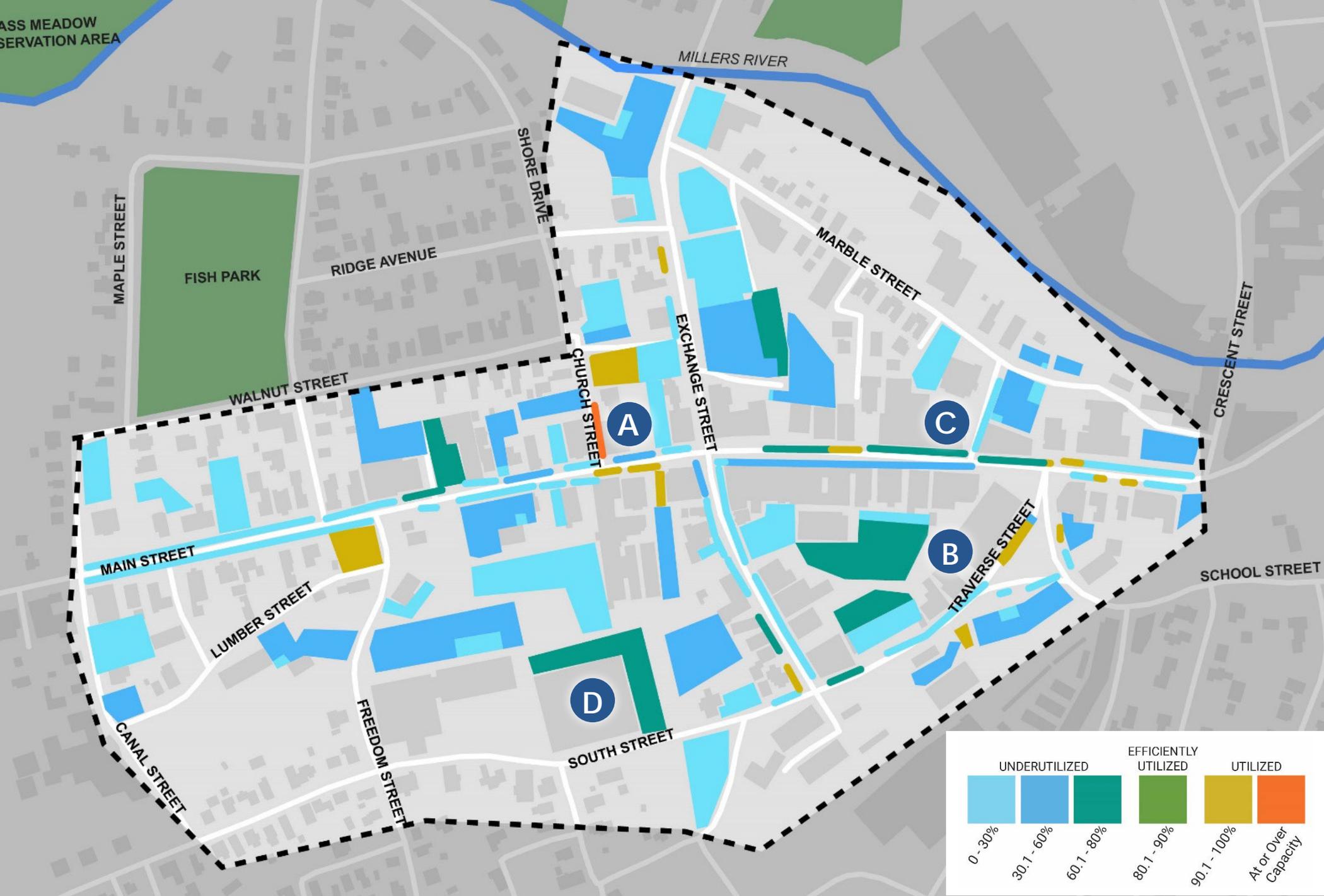


**AT 10AM ON WEEKDAYS:**

- A** Lot next to Athol Savings is nearly full
- B** Library lots are approaching capacity
- C** Significant excess capacity ay Lord Pond Plaza
- D** Higher demand for on-street parking near the YMCA

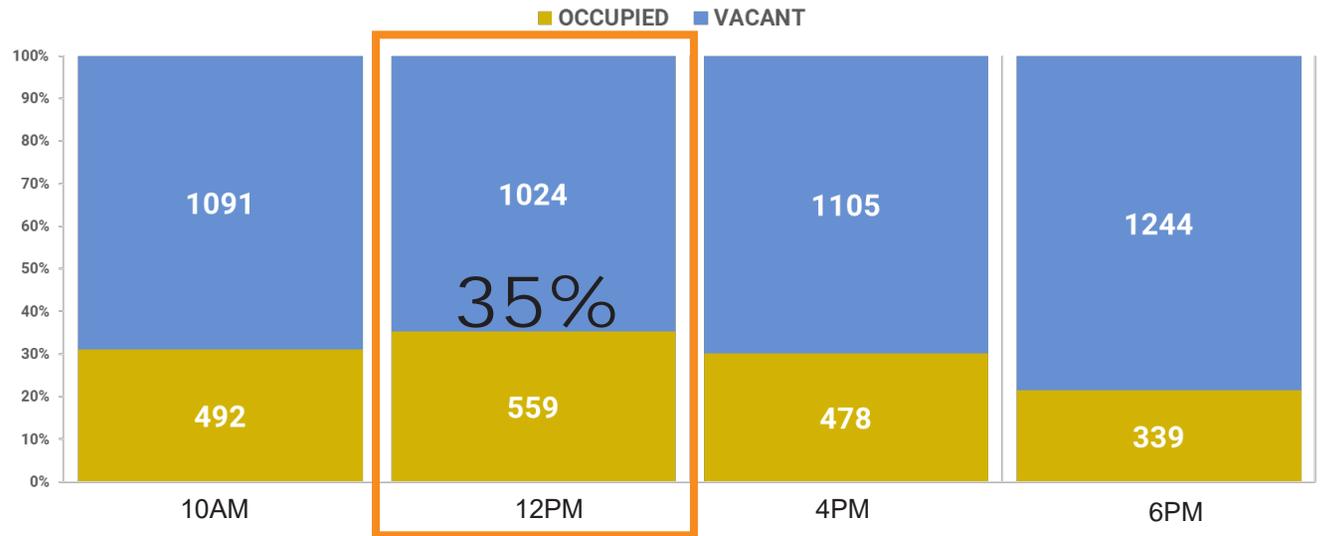


# PARKING UTILIZATION | PEAK DOWNTOWN CORE WEEKDAY - 12:00 PM



**AT 12PM ON WEEKDAYS:**

- A** Lot next to Athol Savings remains nearly full
- B** Lord Pond Plaza continues to have excess capacity during anticipated business peak
- C** Municipal lot utilization approaches functional capacity
- D** Highest period of demand for East Main Street metered spaces

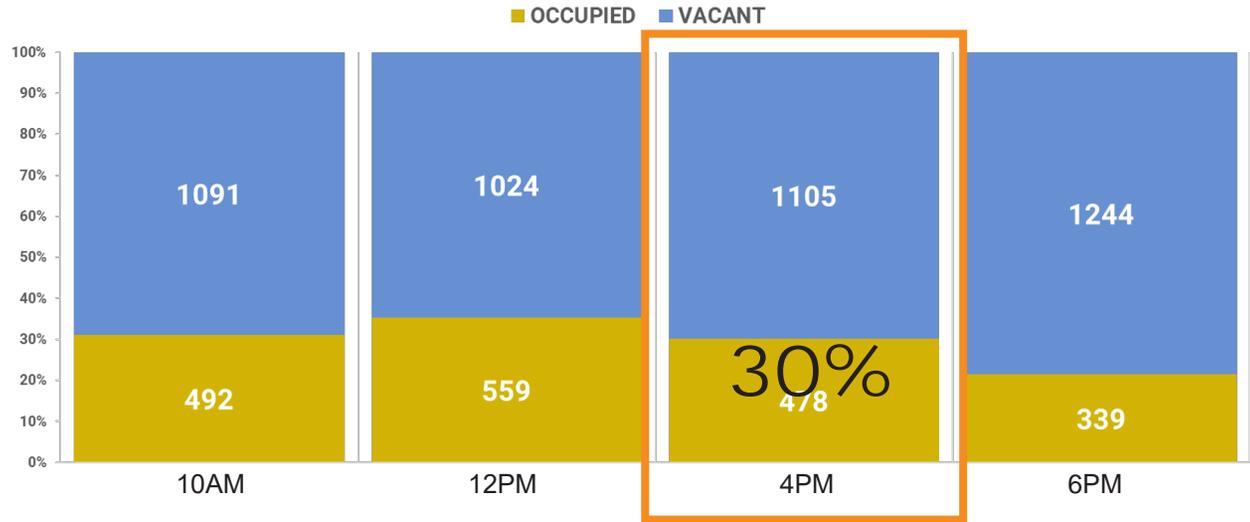


# PARKING UTILIZATION | PEAK DOWNTOWN CORE WEEKDAY - 4:00 PM



**AT 4PM ON WEEKDAYS:**

- A** Demand slightly lessens at lot next to Athol Savings
- B** Highest demand of the day for library lots
- C** On-street Post Office parking exceeds capacity
- D** Excess capacity remains at Lord Pond Plaza

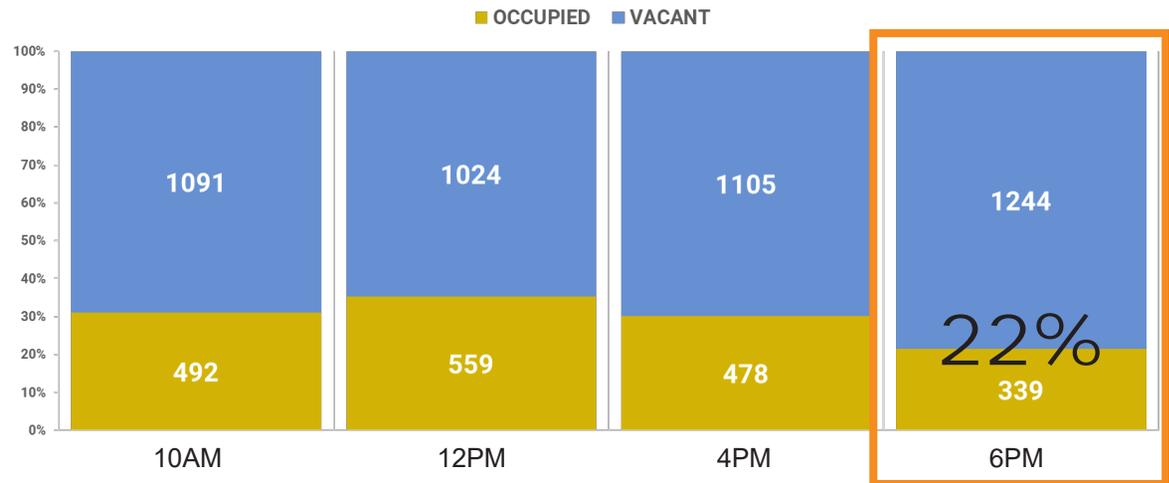


# PARKING UTILIZATION | PEAK DOWNTOWN CORE WEEKDAY - 6:00 PM

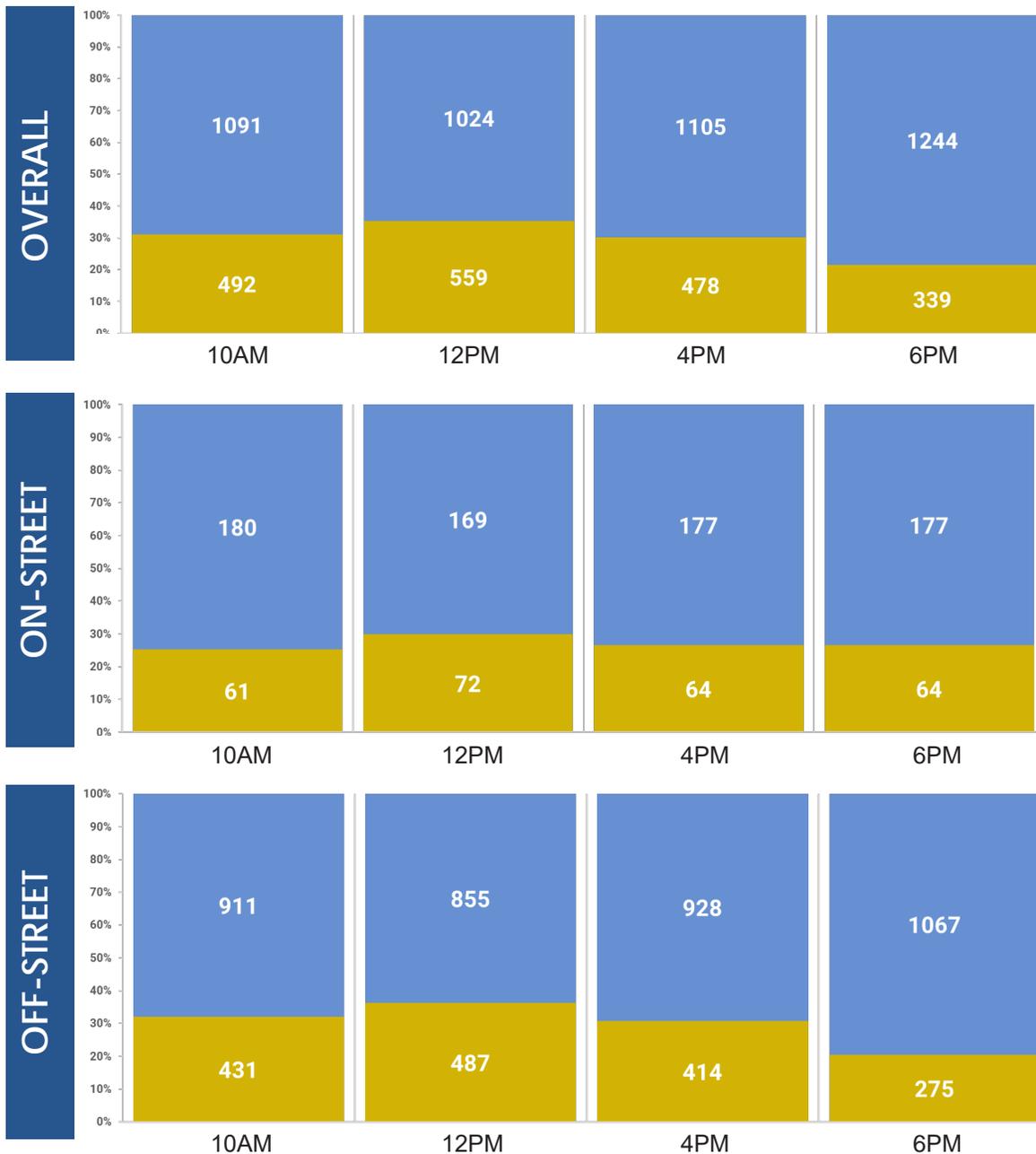


**AT 6PM ON WEEKDAYS:**

- A** Resident-only parking has remained near efficient utilization for most of the day
- B** The majority of lots and on-street spaces across town are nearly empty
- C** Parking demand near the YMCA has increased
- D** Library lots and Main Street on-street spaces are still relatively high in demand



# PARKING UTILIZATION | KEY FINDINGS



The comprehensive review of parking inventory and utilization provided an important baseline understanding for the study. Key findings from Downtown’s parking inventory and utilization include observations about how prime on-street spaces and surface lots in the Downtown core are typically used.

- **At no point on a typical weekday are there less than 1,000 empty parking spaces in Downtown**
- **Overall peak utilization occurs at 12PM with only 35% occupancy**
- Off-street spaces are in demand slightly less than on-street
- Low meter pricing preserves adequate availability on Main Street
- Central lots (including the municipal lot and parking deck) experience low utilization levels all day
- Parking near the YMCA is highest in the morning and evening
- The Library parking has highest demand in the late afternoon

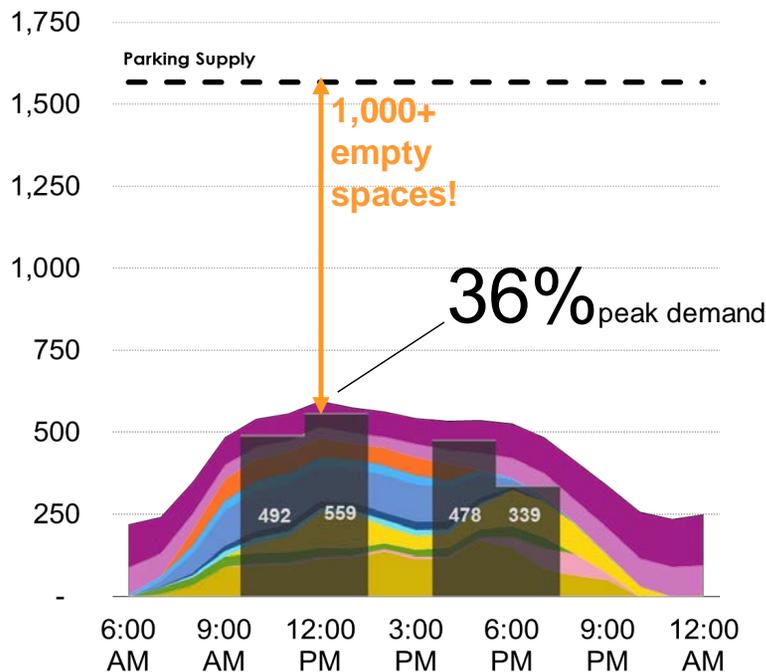
■ OCCUPIED ■ VACANT

# PARKING UTILIZATION | PARKING DEMAND MODEL

## ESTIMATED SHARED DEMAND TODAY (WITH CURRENT UTILIZATION)

A parking demand model was developed for Downtown in order to simulate the impact on parking supply of future redevelopment and new development. The consultant team first modeled parking demand for the total built floor area by land use in Downtown according to national average demand rates from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE). Reduction factors were used to simulate building vacancies. These were derived from past studies, the U.S. Census, and assumptions from visits to the study area.

Based on these assumptions, the theoretical parking demand in Downtown would be 996 spaces if every occupied space had its own parking. This is 63.6% of Athol's total parking inventory. However, peak utilization is only 35% as noted previously, suggesting that parking is being shared across users in Downtown. To simulate sharing, the consulting team applied Urban Land Institute (ULI) shared parking methods to the model, which simulate the varying peaks of demand of different uses (i.e. a resident may park at night in the same space an office employee used during the day.) Modeling these "staggered peaks" of Downtown Athol's mix of uses resulted in a peak demand of 662 spaces at 12 pm, which is still above the observed peak. By also modeling the effects of "internal capture", whereby one parker may walk to another use (i.e. an office employee parks once but may also visit a restaurant for lunch and go on an errand without moving their car) - this peak goes down to 531 (as shown in chart below).



### Assumptions:

- 1,567 parking spaces
- 531 shared demand parking spaces
- 1.09 million sq. ft. non-residential floor area
- 272 residential units
- 25% vacancy for commercial buildings
- 45% for all other buildings

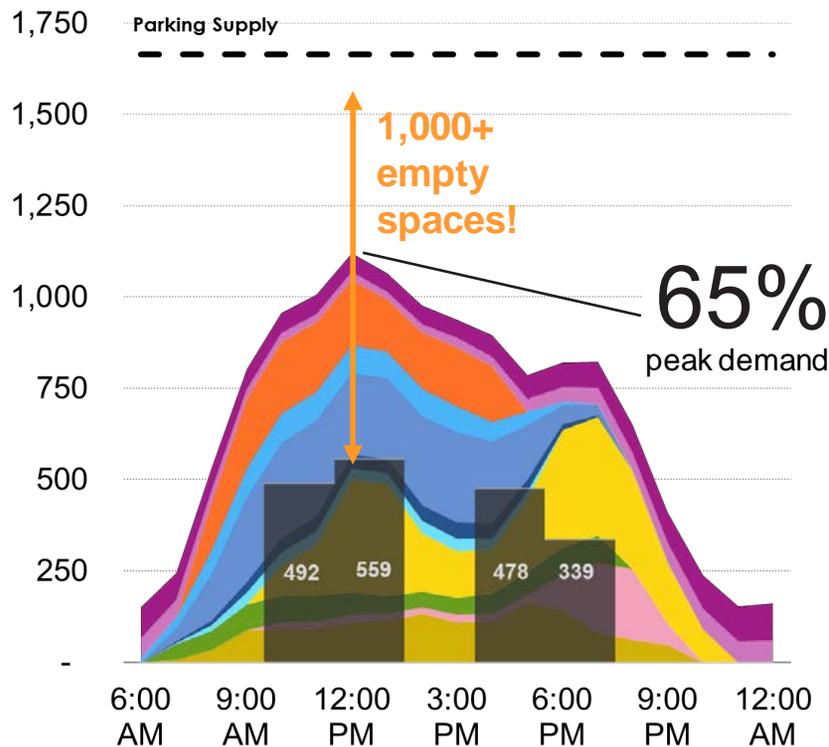
Mid-Rise Apartment	Bank
Low-Rise Apartment	Medical Office Building
General Light Industrial	Restaurant
Government Office Building	Recreational Community Center
General Office Building	Church

# PARKING UTILIZATION | PARKING DEMAND MODEL

## ESTIMATED DEMAND: SCENARIO 1 (WITH CURRENT UTILIZATION)

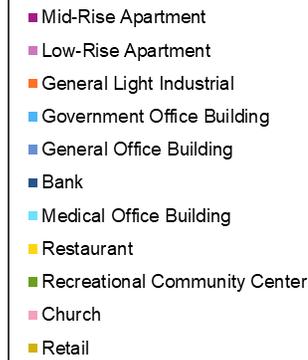
The first future scenario models parking demand resulting from a number of potential developments suggested by a recent master planning process completed for the Town. Proposed building and parking space additions were added to current conditions while also subtracting the area of buildings that would be removed to make room for the new developments. This resulted in a net gain of approximately 15,000 square feet of building space. Land use types for the new developments were based on existing land use type proportions: new buildings were assumed to be general office buildings, restaurants, recreational buildings, retail, and residential.

The parking demand model shows that Downtown could easily meet its parking demand using existing parking spaces. The peak parking demand would occur at 12pm with 1,120 spaces occupied: this represents approximately 65% of available parking spaces. As a result, Athol could easily add hundreds more housing units in its downtown, hundreds of thousands of square feet of commercial development, or a number of combinations of these and other uses without adding another parking space.



### Assumptions:

- 1,664 parking spaces
- 1,120 shared demand parking spaces
- 1.08 million sq. ft. non-residential floor area
- 293 residential units
- 20% vacancy for new buildings
- 25% vacancy for existing commercial buildings
- 50% vacancy for all other existing buildings

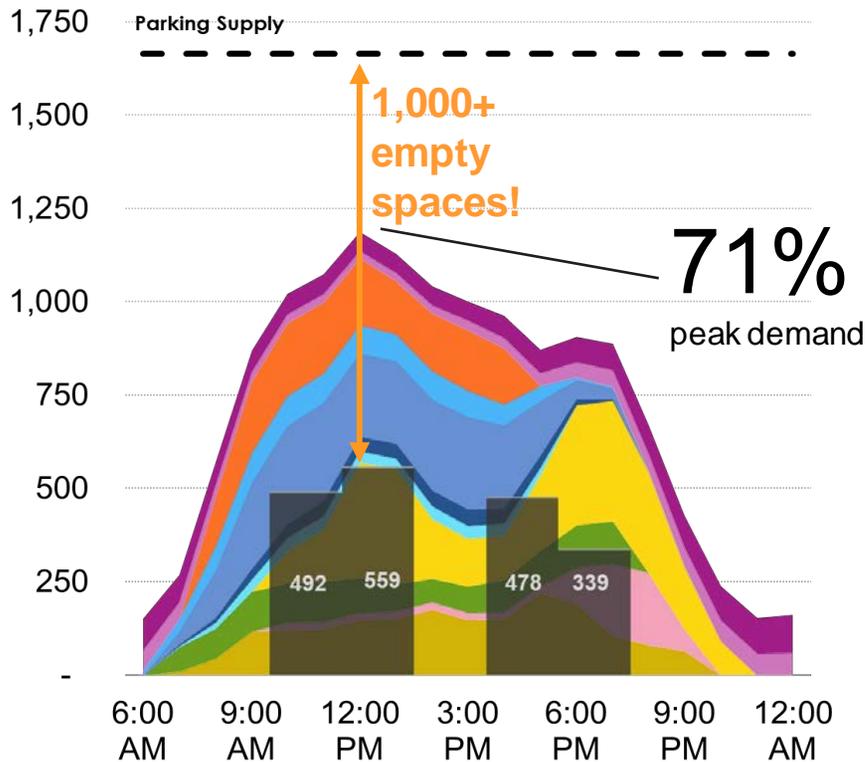


# PARKING UTILIZATION | PARKING DEMAND MODEL

## ESTIMATED DEMAND: SCENARIO 2 (WITH CURRENT UTILIZATION)

The second future scenario builds on the first by incorporating ULI’s recommendation to redevelop the Lord Pond Plaza. In addition to the additions discussed above, this would add a new 50,000 square foot supermarket, 175 apartment units, and a new senior center. Assumptions for this future scenario are outlined below.

The addition of retail, community space, and residential units to Downtown would increase the peak parking demand to only 71% of the existing supply (see chart below) if sharing and contextual reductions such as walking from destination to destination are taken into consideration.



- Assumptions:**
- 1,664 parking spaces
  - 1,200 shared demand parking spaces
  - 1.15 million sq. ft. non-residential floor area
  - 468 residential units
  - 20% vacancy for Scenario 1 new buildings and new residential units
  - 25% vacancy for existing commercial buildings
  - 50% vacancy for all other existing buildings

- Mid-Rise Apartment
- Low-Rise Apartment
- General Light Industrial
- Government Office Building
- General Office Building
- Bank
- Medical Office Building
- Restaurant
- Recreational Community Center
- Church
- Retail



# PUBLIC PROCESS

## PUBLIC PROCESS

Public outreach is integral to the parking study, helping to reveal how the parking system is used, perceived, and areas for potential improvement. The study team facilitated both stakeholder discussions, a public survey in September 2019, and a public open house in October 2019. These events provided valuable feedback from local residents and business owners.



## PUBLIC PROCESS | STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS & PUBLIC OUTREACH

On June 11, 2019, the study team met with the Downtown Vitality Committee. This initial meeting helped to inform the team of existing issues, considerations and opportunities that could help provide context during the data and analysis portion of the study.

Between September 4-24, 2019 the study team conducted a public survey (available both online and on paper) to understand parking trends and specific needs.

On October 29, 2019, the study team and Town invited the public to participate in a hands-on “Open House” to give feedback and provide additional input on the parking study. The open house gave the parking study team an opportunity to mark maps with comments and to get a more detailed understanding of local parking challenges and opportunities.

In addition to the meetings, the public was kept informed of the project through periodic articles in the Athol Daily News.

### Why stakeholder meetings?

Stakeholder meetings are an integral part in the planning process. Only through local knowledge can a full understanding of issues specific to the town be investigated. As a result, appropriate and feasible recommendations can be developed.

## DOWNTOWN ATHOL PARKING STUDY SURVEY

We want to hear your thoughts about parking in Athol!



As part of a Town parking study, a survey is being conducted to understand:

- Understand parking demand and trends in downtown Athol
  - Identify other transportation modes being used
  - What parking improvements people are interested in

Your feedback will help guide the study analysis to develop a set of recommendations for parking management/improvements in the town. These will be presented at a public open house on OCTOBER 28, 2019.

The survey is available at the following link:

[surveymonkey.com/atholparking](https://surveymonkey.com/atholparking)

Please respond by **SEPTEMBER 24TH!**

(paper copies are also available at the library)

Please contact Planning Director Eric Smith with questions: [planning@townofathol.org](mailto:planning@townofathol.org)



## TOWN OF ATHOL PARKING STUDY PARKING INVENTORY MAP



Please use a marker to note issues and opportunities connected with the parking system and areas for improvement.  
*Examples include issues with time limits, difficulty finding a space, walking, lighting challenges, poor signage.*



### WHAT WE HEARD:

- A** No bus shelter by senior center where needed
- B** Informal drop-off/pick-up zone
- C** Uninviting area
- D** Entire street in need of lighting
- E** No signage for accessing the lot
- F** Cars drive through the plaza fast
- G** Residents use Main Street as permanent parking
- H** Pedestrian improvements needed at this area
- I** Exchange Street part of proposed Complete Streets plan

## PUBLIC PROCESS | PARKING PRIORITY EXERCISE

At the open house, participants voted for their “top parking priorities.” Each participant had a set number of votes that they could assign to multiple priorities, with the option to put multiple votes towards a topic they felt strongly about.



# PUBLIC PROCESS | TOWN IMPROVEMENTS PRIORITY EXERCISE

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN DOWNTOWN ATHOL?  
(circle indicates those which received the most votes)

<p><b>SHARED PARKING SYSTEM</b></p>	<p><b>CELL PHONE PARKING PAYMENT</b></p>	<p><b>BETTER WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE</b></p>	<p><b>INTRODUCE A PERMIT SYSTEM</b></p>
<p><b>UPGRADED MUNICIPAL LOT</b></p>	<p><b>DESIGNATED BIKING AREAS</b></p>	<p><b>TIERED PRICING STRUCTURE TO MANAGE DEMAND</b></p>	<p><b>METER FUND FOR LOCAL IMPROVEMENTS</b></p>
<p><b>REMOVE 15% COST PREMIUM FOR NON-CA DISTRICT BUSINESSES</b></p>	<p><b>NEW RESTAURANTS/SHOPS</b></p>	<p><b>MORE BUSES</b></p>	<p><b>DESIGNATE MORE EMPLOYEE PARKING ZONES</b></p>

Based on the evaluation of parking supply and activity, as well as input from stakeholders, several key findings presented themselves.



### PARKING METERS AND PRICING

- Many people want to modernize meters but prefer those that take coins (followed by meters that also take credit cards)
- 57% of the online survey respondents support reinvesting parking funds into downtown improvements



### PARKING SUPPLY AND AVAILABILITY

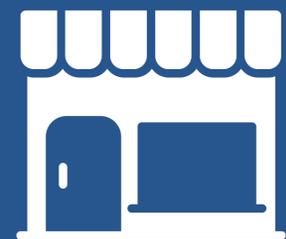
- There are plenty of parking spaces to meet current demand, but parking regulations and how they are advertised could be improved
- There is desire for Lord Pond Plaza and Municipal parking lots to be improved
- There is a perception of significant lack of parking (and speed) enforcement

## MULTIMODAL

- Pedestrian safety (especially at crosswalks) is of concern
- A significant number of people perceived safety issues when walking or parking in downtown at night
- A number of people have mobility challenges that impact ease of walking downtown
- There is desire for increased bus frequency

## OTHER

- There is strong desire to attract new food/retail offerings downtown to increase investment
- There is desire to improve the ambiance of various areas with streetscape improvements and “complete streets”





**PARK  
AT YOUR  
OWN RISK**  
WATCH FOR FALLING  
ICE AND SNOW

17-  
03

# RECOMMENDATIONS

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis of this study, Downtown Athol has more than ample parking to support its current needs, and current usage does not warrant the raising of parking prices. However, as Athol begins to achieve its goals of future economic growth and revitalization, increased demand will require a re-assessment of the performance, adequacy, and efficiency of the downtown parking network. The results from this study provide a foundational understanding of the parking network, as well as related opportunities which can be built upon to improve it, particularly relating to optimizing usage of underutilized off-street parking spaces.

The 14 strategies outlined in the following section aim to help Athol prepare in its transition towards increased economic activity. They are organized in order of importance and offer practical solutions that Athol can implement today to help address current parking and mobility issues within the Downtown core and prepare for the future.

The strategies have been organized by priority to reflect and support the project goals, reiterated below:



## PROJECT GOALS

- **Implement a parking management strategy that will promote simplicity and customer-friendliness**
- **Improve and modernize parking facilities to support future economic opportunities and anticipated demand**
- **Support more bicycling and walking downtown with stronger connectivity to parking**
- **Investigate policy options to support Athol's anticipated parking and development needs**

# 1. IDENTIFY OPTIONS FOR SHARING PARKING SPACES

The overall goal of sharing parking spaces is to accommodate various users without needing to build additional parking facilities. This is already happening in Downtown, as described earlier in the report, and Athol's mix of commercial, retail and residential activity is the ideal environment to promote sharing. Given the significant amount of un-utilized parking within a close walk throughout Downtown, Athol can support significant amounts of redevelopment and new development without any new parking for years to come. While sharing is a natural effect in any mixed-use downtown, encouraging it and educating landowners about the value of sharing (and the misperceptions of liability concerns) is an extremely cost-effective economic development strategy.

Right away, the Town should prepare and provide educational material about the benefits of sharing, the truth about liability, and the ease of formalizing shared arrangements if landowners prefer (sample shared parking agreements can be found at the end of this report). Advancing shared parking can be a way to open up underutilized parking lots just off of Main Street, which would be beneficial to nearby residents and small businesses that don't have a dedicated parking facility.

To further incentivize participation in shared parking agreements, the Town can provide in-kind services, such as plowing, maintenance, improved walking connections to Downtown and signage in exchange for property owners allowing the public to use their parking. Including a revenue sharing agreement also acts as an incentive for owners to give the public access to their parking facilities, especially during peak seasons when permit, parking lease, and meter revenues can be shared.

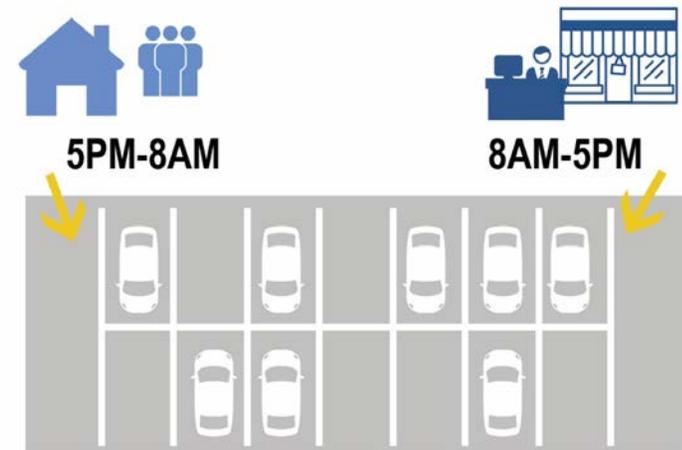


Diagram depicting the general concept of shared parking

The following is recommended:

- Amend ordinances to encourage shared parking at current and future developments
- Provide educational materials and sample agreements
- Pursue shared agreements between the Town and landowners with certain revenue sharing or in-kind services provided by the Town to help private lots become part of an overall public system - while ensuring that all private rights to shared lots can revert with short notice.

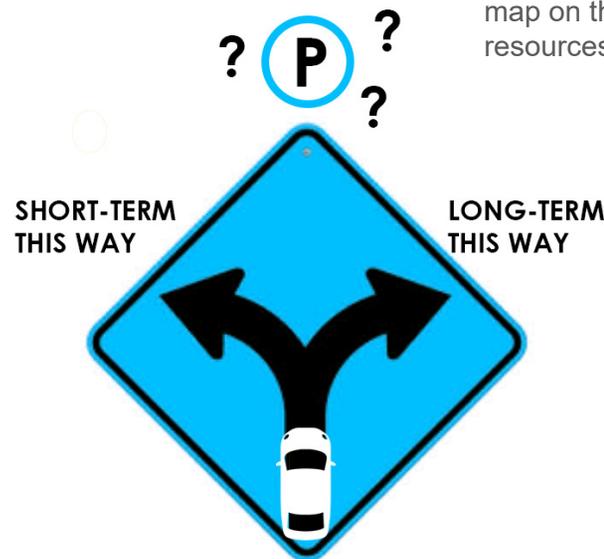
## 2. IDENTIFY SHORT AND LONG-TERM PARKING AREAS

Identifying off-street areas that are designated for people who may need to park in Athol for longer periods (e.g. employees of local businesses, residents) increases availability and turnover of on-street spaces in higher demand areas. In turn, traffic circulation may be improved by reducing the number of people hunting for parking space in a concentrated area. This supports the idea that parking needs and options should not be considered “one-size-fits-all”.

Of the respondents who participated in the survey for this study, 1 in 4 said they were unsure where public parking is located downtown. In addition, 49% said they prefer off-street, public lot spaces. Education about parking should be an ongoing effort that is supported through a range of channels.

The following is recommended:

- Work with landowners and business owners to identify various needs for short and long-term parking (e.g. number of employees vs. needs for loading areas and short-term deliveries)
- Designate on-street parking spaces along east Main Street as short-term
- Designate lots or portions of lots that can support all-day parking (e.g. the Municipal lot or Lord Pond Plaza lot) and form an agreement with relevant landowners and businesses
- Reinforce these areas through wayfinding techniques that provide high-visibility direction (e.g. lamp-post banners, permanent street signs like the example shown)
- The Town should also publish a user-friendly parking map on the Town website to describe available parking resources and help visitors easily find the right parking.



### 3. UPDATE MUNICIPAL AND PLAZA LOTS

The Municipal and Lord Pond Plaza lots are conveniently located near downtown amenities and provide the Town's highest volume of parking spaces, however they are often highly underutilized. Responses from the public survey imply that the lack of maintenance, lighting, and other access challenges of these lots impact their implied level of safety and overall desirability. As a result, there is unnecessary demand for on-street spaces at various times and locations during the day.

For greater efficiency of existing spaces available in these lots, the following is recommended:

- Update striping, lighting, landscaping, signage, vehicle access points, and safe pedestrian markings for access between these lots and Main Street (some of this has been proposed as part of the BSC development plan)
- Establish an ongoing maintenance strategy to include potential funding resources and responsible parties



Example of a recently upgraded parking lot in Massachusetts that prioritizes pedestrian connections

## 4. IMPROVE WAYFINDING AND CUES TO PARKING

Creating signage with clear guidance for patrons unfamiliar with the area will help to create a visitor-friendly environment. Wayfinding signage should highlight on and off-street parking options. The signage should clearly indicate where the public is allowed to park. As a result, demand for Main Street spaces can be reduced, and longer trips are encouraged which may in turn support the local economy. Additionally, wayfinding signage should:

- Define clear parking rules
- Identify public parking, including short and long-term parking (both on-and off-street)
- Identify major points of interest (such as the Millers River Trail and bus stops)
- Guide people walking to destinations Downtown – and importantly back to parking locations

The Town should use wayfinding and signage to:

- Intercept vehicle traffic before it reaches Downtown
- Direct pedestrians to different locations Downtown
- Implement a voluntary program for business owners where the Town covers payment and installation of private parking lot signage along public sidewalks
- Work with private landowners to create standardized signage. The Town can offer this as a voluntary program, which will help private landowners who otherwise may not be able to place signs on the sidewalk or public way.
- Direct parkers to parking that is less easy to find and at a walkable distance from Downtown destinations



These renderings depict how small improvements to wayfinding can have a big impact

## 5. CROSSWALK TREATMENTS

Athol resident observations reveal a high occurrence of vehicles speeding through Main Street and failing to stop at pedestrian crosswalks. Without boosted safety measures in place for pedestrians, there is less likeliness of off-street parking lots being utilized, and less pedestrian activity that could contribute to improved retail and restaurant offerings downtown.

The following is recommended:

- Extend/widen the crosswalk at School and Main Street intersection
- Install flashing crosswalk signs
- Install pedestrian refuge island at crosswalks near Island Street and in front of Town Hall



**Enhance Visibility**  
**Improve Driver Response**

## 6. IMPROVE DOWNTOWN LIGHTING

A recurring comment received through the public survey was that a lack of lighting in downtown contributed to safety challenges and aversion to utilizing some parking areas. Sufficient and consistent lighting through downtown offers the following benefits:

- Allows people with different levels of mobility to safely move between parking lots/spaces and downtown destinations
- Well-lit connections between parking lots and downtown destinations will encourage the use of nearby, underutilized lots
- Creates an environment that encourages evening activity which may attract new businesses and restaurants
- Deters negative behavior

The following is recommended:

- Develop a priority plan for areas needing improvements (e.g. Exchange Street corridor, coordination with recommended Complete Streets and trail development recommendations as outlined in the Athol Transportation Element, 2018)
- Investigate temporary lighting options that are more financially feasible in the short-term (e.g. solar-powered, post-mounted lights, portable generator-powered floodlights for street corners)



Historic light fixtures along Main Street

## 7. IMPROVE BICYCLE MARKINGS

Improving the networks for bike or transit transportation can reduce some need for driving for short trips in Athol and reduce some parking demand. A Community Development Block Grant has been applied for by the town to pursue the development of Walnut Street as a bicycling bypass to the existing route along Main Street. Discussions with the Downtown Vitality Committee also revealed an interest in investigating the possibility of utilizing School Street as a bike route to bypass Main Street when exiting/entering downtown from the East.

The following is recommended:

- Identify and designate a formal bike network
- Implement consistent pavement markings and signage that alert drivers and safely direct bicyclists (e.g. painted sharrows, Share the Road signs)
- Advertise the network with publicly-accessible maps and information through a variety of platforms
- Evaluate and make necessary safety improvements to roads that are likely connections for bicyclists to the new, proposed route



This rendering demonstrates some simple solutions that contribute to safer biking



One of many examples of signs that increase awareness of bicyclists

## 8. IMPROVE TRANSIT VISIBILITY

When asked how people most frequently travel, not one of the survey respondents claimed to use the bus. Transit services through Athol are somewhat limited, meaning that heavier reliance is given to single-person vehicles and increased parking demand. MART services (Athol-Gardner, Athol Link routes) stop at a selection of key destinations in and near downtown Athol however there is little to no visibility of stop locations. Improved bus facilities may encourage ridership and reduce demand for local car trips.

The following is recommended:

- Increase signage at bus stops and display current bus schedules (The BSC development already proposes an improved bus shelter in Lord Pond Plaza)
- Upgrade the bus stop near YMCA
- Improve clarity of pedestrian connections to bus stops with wayfinding and other visual cues



Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART) buses

## 9. INVESTIGATE FUTURE PARKING BENEFIT DISTRICT

A Parking Benefit District (PBD) is a mechanism that can give the Town a head start on investing in the improvements described in this report. A PBD is a defined geographic area where parking meter funds are allocated to an account that is dedicated to re-investment in public domain improvements. A PBD creates not only tangible benefits of parking costs (and a direct revenue stream) but also makes it easier for stakeholders to see benefits, firsthand, and for a designated committee to prioritize improvements in the town to be addressed by the funds. If a need to adjust parking prices is determined, a PBD can help manage overall demand.

A Parking Committee can identify priority investments and benefits in Downtown including:

- Improved crosswalks, sidewalks, etc.
- Wayfinding and signage
- Additional multimodal improvements (such as better bicycle infrastructure)
- Improved lighting
- Increased parking enforcement

According to a series of Mass General Laws (MGLs), a town's parking meter receipts are allocated to general fund revenue unless the town accepts a provision to have them credited to a separate, dedicated fund. These separate funds can be established through a Parking Benefit District or Business Improvement District.

The following is recommended:

- The Town should establish a group composed of individuals with different interest to champion the PBD
- Create a guiding set of principles, goals and rules of the PBD
- Develop action plan to identify location of meters, projects to be funded, and responsibilities
- Identify potential funding mechanisms that have been recommended through other studies in the Town (e.g. recommendation of a District Improvement Financing District through the BSC development project) and evaluate how/if they should support or supplement a PBD
- Adopt ordinance provision for separate meter fund allocation (as outlined by the Athol Office of Planning and Development in July 2018)

A PBD gives municipalities the opportunity to use parking revenue for community improvements



## 10. REVIEW AND AMEND PARKING ORDINANCES

As new or infill development increases in Athol, higher-than-necessary parking requirements can result in the creation of new parking facilities that are unlikely to be utilized and potentially prevent opportunities for other uses to be developed that can support a range of Athol's needs (e.g. new housing, landscaped or park areas to beautify downtown).

While the Commercial Area (CA) District is currently exempt from parking requirements reflected in the town ordinances, the requirements may be higher than typical standards for the anticipated demand of uses in Athol. It would therefore be beneficial to evaluate and potentially adjust the requirements in order for the parking network to experience better efficiency, overall, and to accommodate realistic expectations of future parking needs. Some examples of adjustments that may be relevant to Athol include waiving parking requirements when a new building replaces an old use, or permitting multiple developers to combine to fulfill a parking requirement.

The following is recommended:

- The Town should complete an evaluation of its zoning ordinance relative to downtown development and allowable uses per zoning code. Some by-right uses within certain zoning districts may not be considered conducive to promoting a vibrant, mixed-use downtown district.
- Reference study findings and national standards for appropriate and relevant parking ordinance wording that would be relevant to Athol and its development goals
- Establish zoning and ordinance amendments prior to the adoption of current developments and proposals being considered for the downtown area (e.g. BSC development proposal). This will aid in setting the stage for long-term best practice.

### Athol's Current Parking Requirements (Excerpt)

#### 3.6 Parking Requirements

The following parking requirements shall apply to all premises in all districts except CA Districts. The use of no premises shall be authorized or extended, and no building or structure shall be erected or enlarged, unless there is provided sufficient off-street parking space on paved areas within a reasonable distance of the principal building for all vehicles whose occupants use the premises. Minimum requirements are as follows:

- 3.6.1 Retail Business – One space for each one hundred and fifty square feet of floor space devoted to retail business plus one space for each two employees or nearest multiple thereof.
- 3.6.2 Business Offices – One space for each one hundred and fifty square feet of floor area.
- 3.6.3 Theater, Funeral Home and Places of Assembly, including religious and educational facilities – One space for each four seats, or one hundred square feet of floor area, whichever is the greater requirement.
- 3.6.4 Hotels, Inns, Motels or Guest Houses – one space for each rental unit, plus one space for each four employees.
- 3.6.5 Restaurants – One space for each three seats plus one space for each three employees or nearest multiple thereof.
- 3.6.6 Dwellings – Two spaces per dwelling unit.

## 11. MAINTAIN AND UPDATE PARKING STUDY INFORMATION

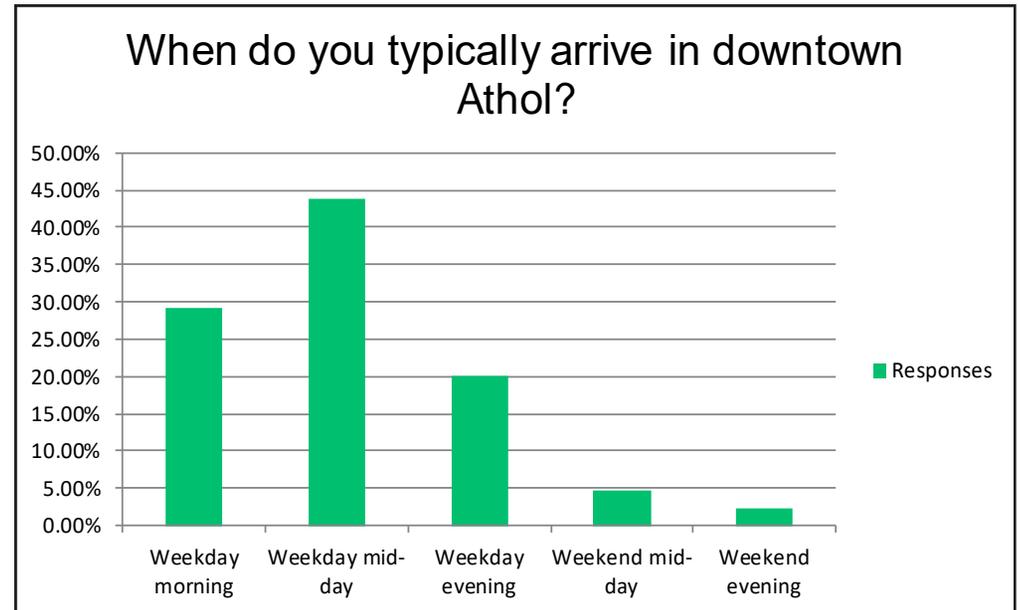
Through the Downtown Athol Parking Plan process, a range of useful data was collected both on the ground, through research, and through a public survey. One of the most useful tools from these plans is having knowledge that can be carried forward and used to support other efforts for the Town, including changes to development or adjustments to roadway infrastructure.

Some of the benefits of data from this plan include:

- Removing the need to “start from scratch” in data needs for future studies/plans
- Ground-truthing perceived issues
- Inform priorities and identify solutions likely to garner support

The following is recommended:

- Identify information/data analyzed in this report that is likely to fluctuate over a period of time (e.g. parking counts)
- Identify a reasonable time period for regular updates
- Identify potential staff/committee that can help update data



Sample survey question and results

## 12. ADJUST CURRENT METER PRICING

Currently, a significant amount of parking spaces in Downtown Athol are underutilized, implying that parking demand does not warrant a pricing increase. Projections reflected in the parking demand model show that, even with substantial additions of downtown development, the current parking supply is still easily able to absorb potential demand. However, there are a selection of spaces in the core that experience periodic high demand during the day and may continue to increase in demand as changes brought on by development and other factors revitalize Downtown.

As economic activity increases in Athol, it may be necessary to evaluate pricing in order to maintain an ideal level of parking demand and turnover. If further analysis identifies a need to manage demand in core areas, pricing should be increased at high-demand on-street meters and during typical periods of greater activity while also encouraging the use of lower-priced and free spaces or lots. This will also reduce “all-day parking” in prime spaces when they are most in demand (e.g. right in front of the Library or Town Hall during mid-day) and will encourage use of the many other parking options which are nearby and walkable.

The following is recommended:

- Conduct analysis following implementation of development changes Downtown to understand parking utilization trends and any changes in areas and intensity of demand
- Identify areas where parking demand should be reduced and consider raising prices by a small amount and through a phased approach
- Follow on by analyzing impacts of new prices on parking demand over time as town development and number of visitors increase

To properly set prices along Main Street and the periphery areas and achieve an overall target utilization rate of 85%, the Town can use baseline utilization data from this study to monitor changes and provide pricing information for users on a centralized map on the Town website.



## 13. UPGRADE PARKING METERS

Upgrading parking meters that provide more options for how to pay improves the overall customer experience. The significant shift towards online purchasing and credit card payment options at most brick and mortar businesses/services means that many people no longer carry cash. On the other hand, some people may not own a credit card. Survey results from this study show that the highest preferences for upgraded parking technology were: 1) sticker or permit system, and 2) individual meters that take coins and credit cards, followed by interest in 3) pay-by-phone apps (such as the Passport Parking app). Some kiosk models can accommodate all three of these.

There is always an adjustment period when implementing changes in an area that hasn't experienced change in many years, however the overall goal is to provide ease of payment by accepting methods people currently use while also considering future needs as the town develops and attracts more visitors or new businesses/residents.

The following is recommended:

- Consider ease of use for Athol's customer needs when selecting a meter vendor
- Consider ease of management by Athol (in context of administrative capacity) for revenue gathering, maintenance of selected parking technology, etc
- Consider investigating the purchase of used (though more modern than Athol's current meters) meters from a community that has recently upgraded them
- Consider surveying residents 6 months after the new technology has been implemented to gauge overall satisfaction



An example of meters that accept both coins and credit cards

## 14. INCREASE ENFORCEMENT AND PARKING TICKETS COSTS

Increasing enforcement of areas that are attractive to “all-day parkers”, helps maintain availability (maintain consistent turnover) of spaces higher in demand while encouraging the use of other nearby parking facilities and spaces which may be more appropriate for longer-term visits. The Town of Athol is currently anticipating the arrival of a dedicated police officer in the coming months.

The following is recommended:

- Targeted parking enforcement along East Main Street during the weekday when parkers tend to exceed time limits most frequently
- Increase parking ticket fines to an amount high enough that greatly discourages parkers from exceeding time limits
- Consider implementing a ‘first-ticket free’ policy and have police officers share parking information (pricing, time restrictions, available parking areas) in place of a ticket for a first-time offender
- Consider recruiting a voluntary parking ambassador for handing out information about parking requirements and available areas





# APPENDICES





# APPENDIX A | MAPS AND BOARDS FROM STAKEHOLDER/PUBLIC MEETINGS

## TOWN OF ATHOL PARKING STUDY

### WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?

What are your thoughts about potential options? Please write your comments on a Post-it and place it on the board relevant to the option.

**TOWN OF ATHOL PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**SHARED PARKING SYSTEM**

5PM-8AM      8AM-5PM

**CELL PHONE PARKING PAYMENT**

**BETTER WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE**

**INTRODUCE A PERMIT SYSTEM**

**UPGRADED MUNICIPAL LOT**

**DESIGNATED BIKING AREAS**

**TIERED PRICING STRUCTURE TO MANAGE DEMAND**

**METER FUND FOR LOCAL IMPROVEMENT**

**REMOVE 15% COST PREMIUM FOR NON-CA DISTRICT BUSINESSES**

**NEW RESTAURANTS/SHOPS**

**MORE BUSES**

**DESIGNATE MORE EMPLOYEE PARKING ZONES**

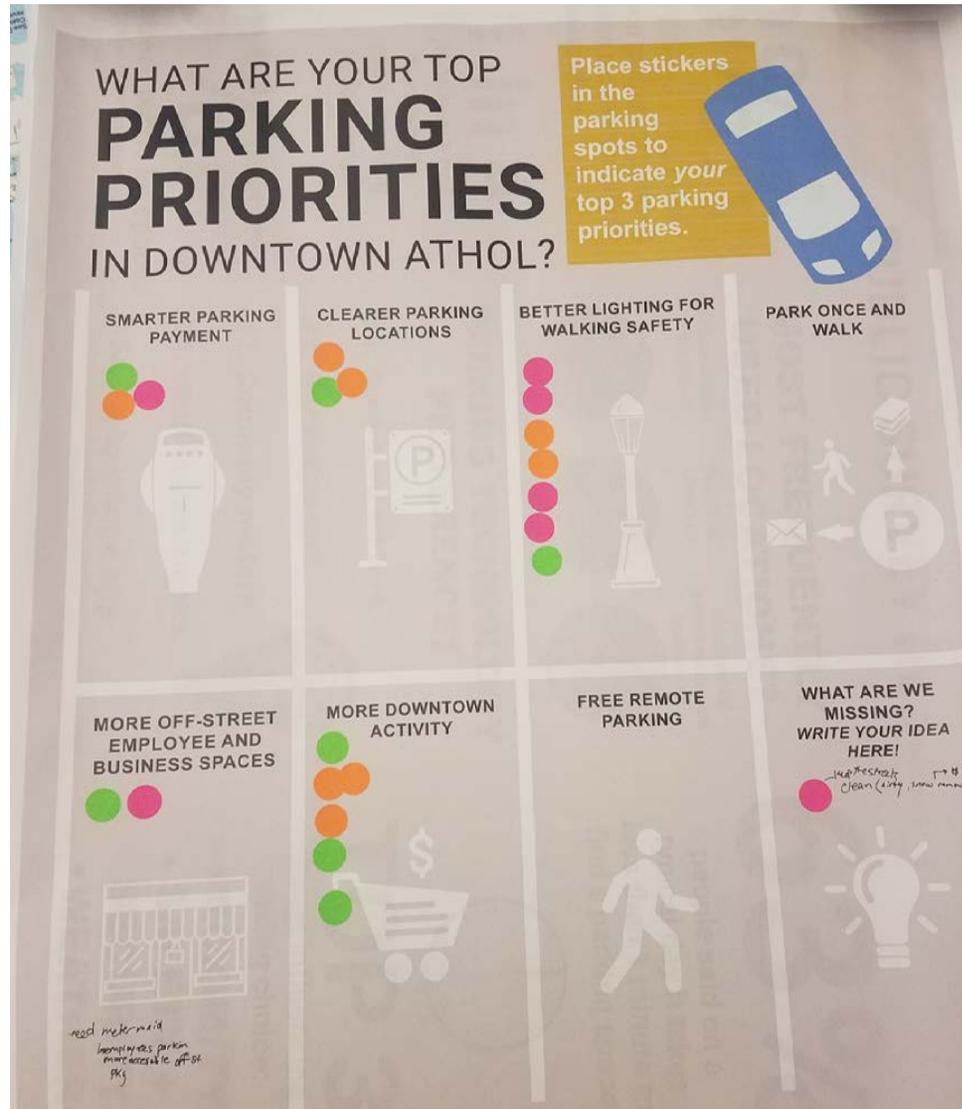
**Handwritten Post-it Comments:**

- Before lights, attract life, clean access to municipal lot - Allego before others*
- Preserve streetscape, no holes*
- Well lit walking*
- Resident and business parking is better*
- Lead Park, Tea Room Lobby*
- Keep \$ for parking in Downtown*
- No chains stores or restaurants*
- Design business parking*
- Coordinate scheduling + use frequent buses*
- Bikes, big directions to parking areas.*

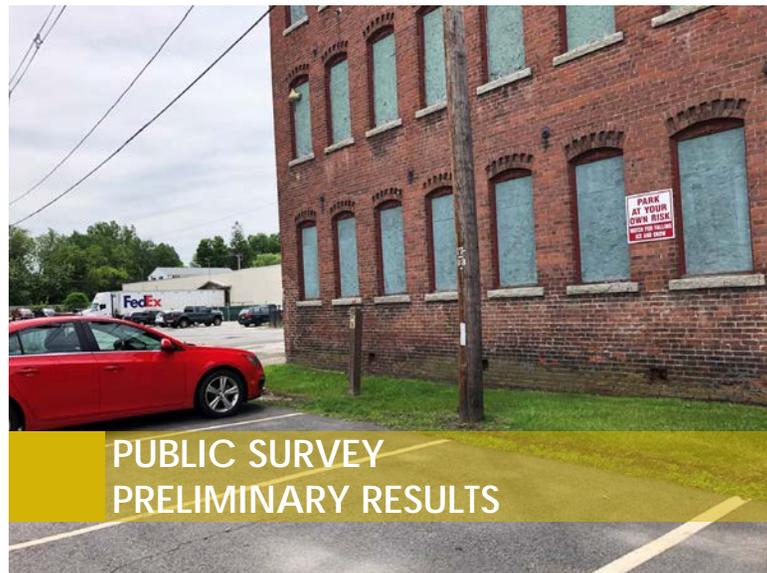
# APPENDIX A | MAPS AND BOARDS FROM STAKEHOLDER/PUBLIC MEETINGS



# APPENDIX A | MAPS AND BOARDS FROM STAKEHOLDER/PUBLIC MEETINGS



# APPENDIX B | DOWNTOWN VITALITY COMMITTEE PRESENTATION - SURVEY RESULTS



## SURVEY SUMMARY

**WHEN?**  
September

**WHO PARTICIPATED?**  
150 people!

**WHY?**  
Receive feedback on parking issues and concerns  
Gauge parking improvement interests

### DOWNTOWN ATHOL PARKING STUDY SURVEY

We want to hear your thoughts about parking in Athol!



As part of a Town parking study, a survey is being conducted to understand:

- Understand parking demand and trends in downtown Athol
- Identify other transportation modes being used
- What parking improvements people are interested in

Your feedback will help guide the study analysis to develop a set of recommendations for parking management/improvements in the town. These will be presented at a public open house on OCTOBER 28, 2019.

The survey is available at the following link:

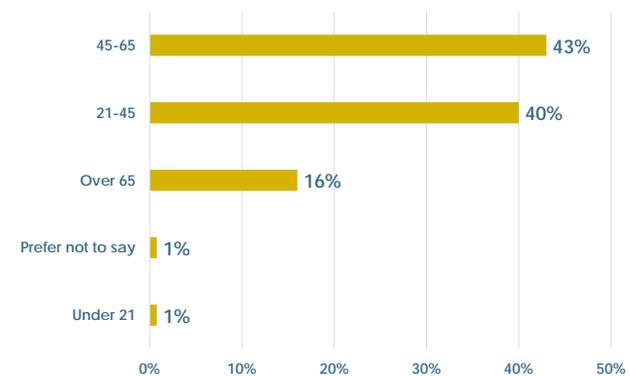
[surveymonkey.com/atholparking](https://surveymonkey.com/atholparking)

Please respond by **SEPTEMBER 24TH!**  
(paper copies are also available at the library)

Please contact Planning Director Eric Smith with questions: [planning@townofathol.org](mailto:planning@townofathol.org)



## What is your age?

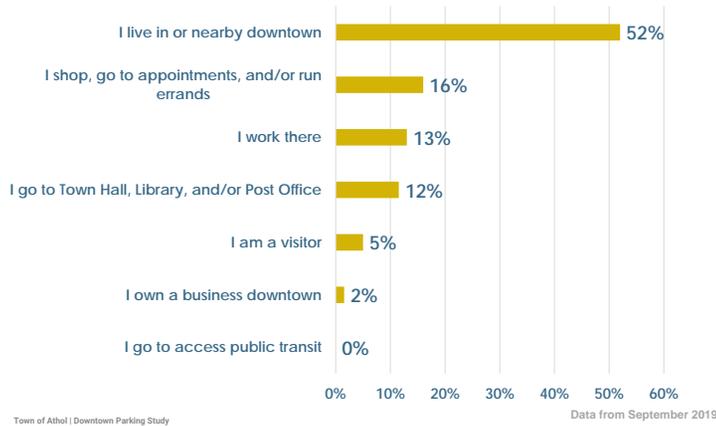


Town of Athol | Downtown Parking Study

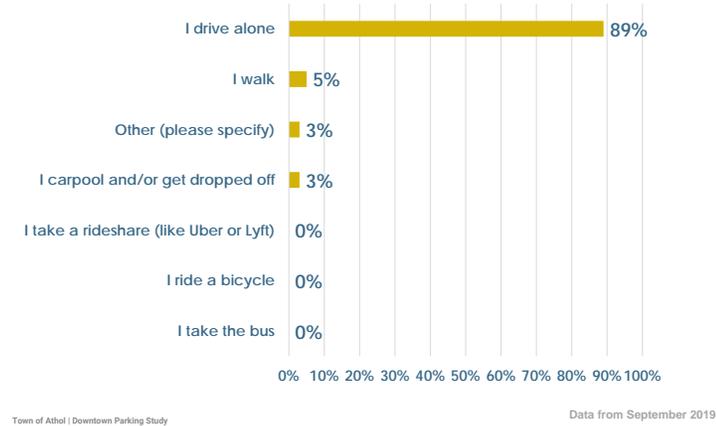
Data from September 2019

# APPENDIX B | DOWNTOWN VITALITY COMMITTEE PRESENTATION - SURVEY RESULTS

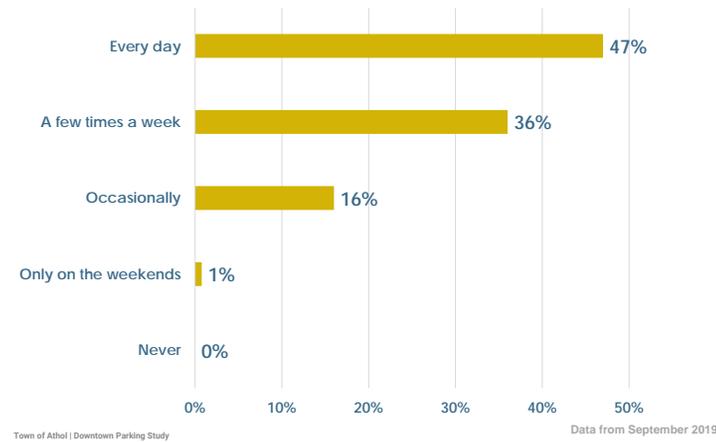
## What is your primary reason for traveling to Athol?



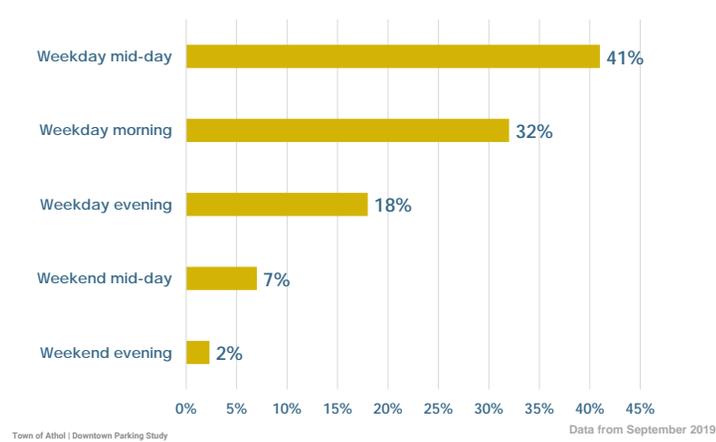
## How do you most frequently travel to Athol?



## How often do you come to Athol?

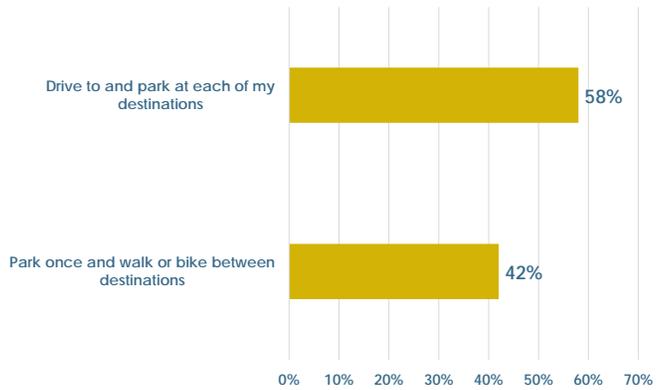


## When do you typically arrive in Athol?



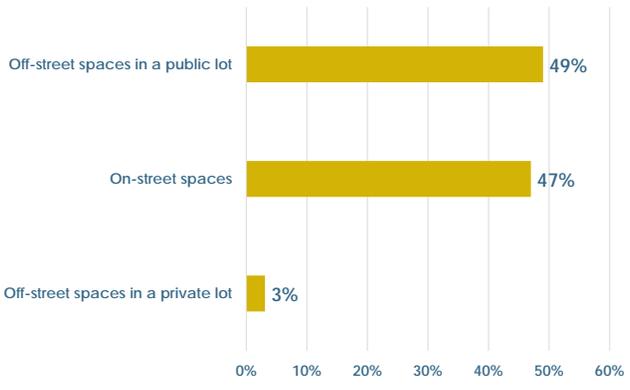
# APPENDIX B | DOWNTOWN VITALITY COMMITTEE PRESENTATION - SURVEY RESULTS

## When driving and parking in Athol, I'd rather...



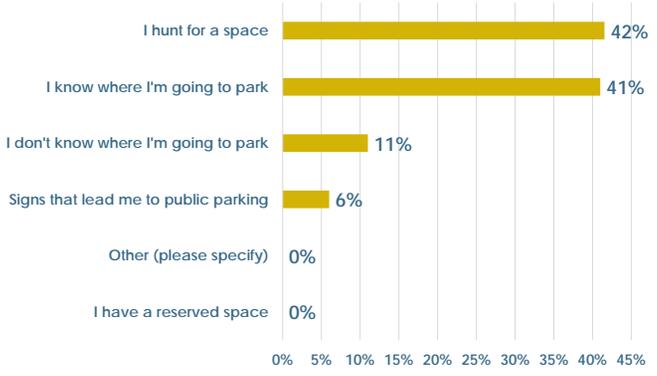
Town of Athol | Downtown Parking Study Data from September 2019

## Which type of parking do you prefer?



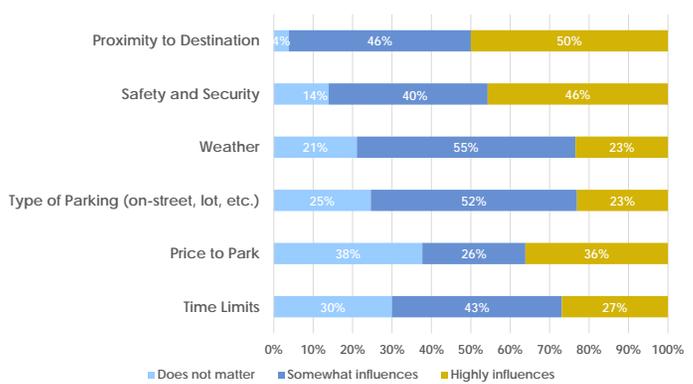
Town of Athol | Downtown Parking Study Data from September 2019

## How do you find a place to park?



Town of Athol | Downtown Parking Study Data from September 2019

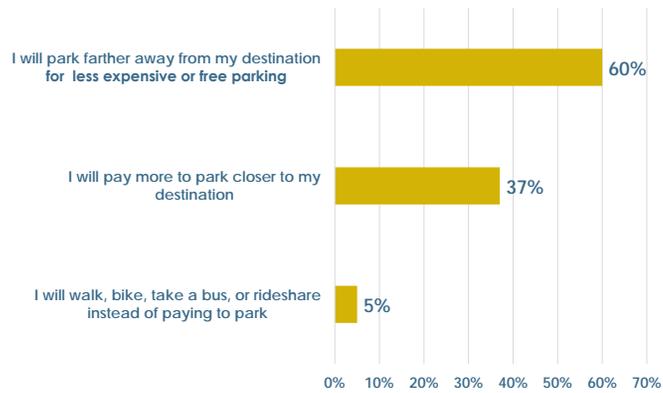
## When looking for a space to park, how do the following factors influence your choice?



Town of Athol | Downtown Parking Study Data from September 2019

# APPENDIX B | DOWNTOWN VITALITY COMMITTEE PRESENTATION - SURVEY RESULTS

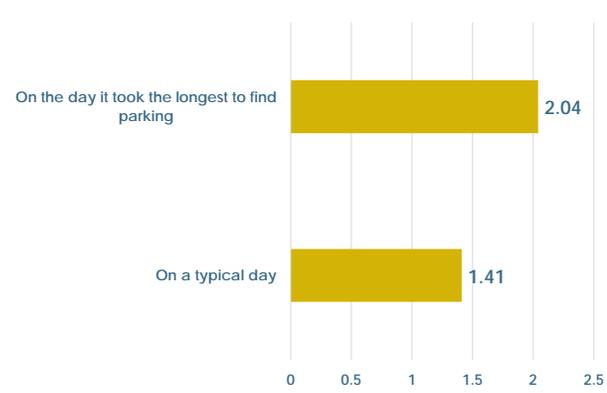
## How does paid parking influence your parking choice (not only in Athol)?



Town of Athol | Downtown Parking Study

Data from September 2019

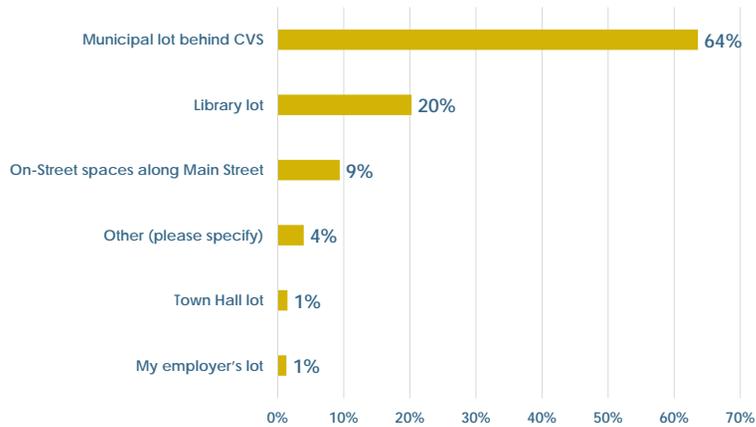
## How long does it take you to find a parking space in Athol?



Town of Athol | Downtown Parking Study

Data from September 2019

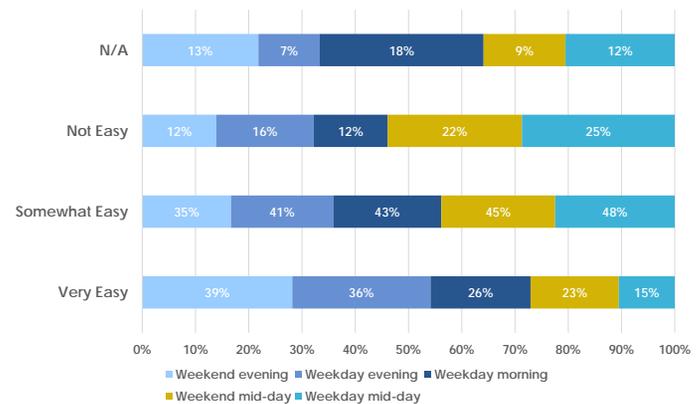
## Where do you park most frequently?



Town of Athol | Downtown Parking Study

Data from September 2019

## Typically, how easy is it to find a parking spot in Athol on a weekday morning? DRAFT

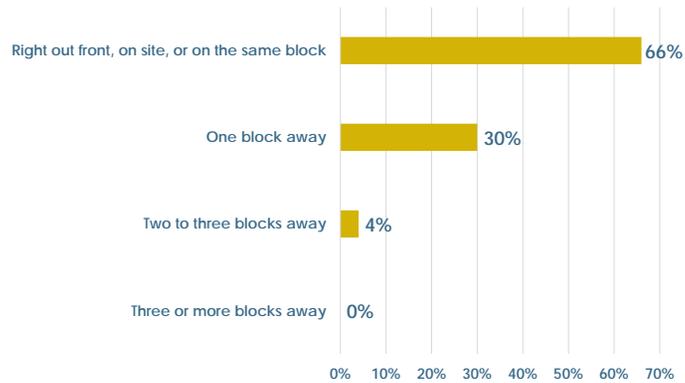


Town of Athol | Downtown Parking Study

Data from September 2019

# APPENDIX B | DOWNTOWN VITALITY COMMITTEE PRESENTATION - SURVEY RESULTS

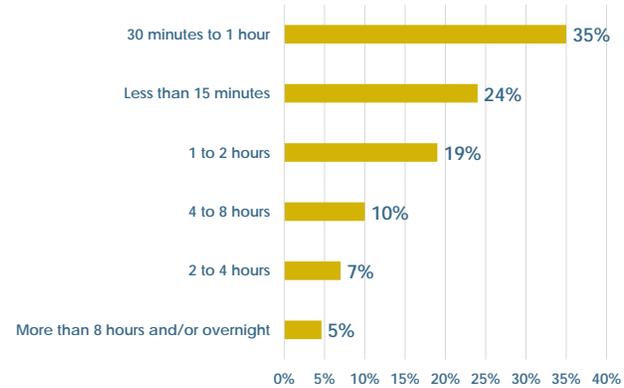
## Typically, how close to your destination do you park?



Town of Athol | Downtown Parking Study

Data from September 2019

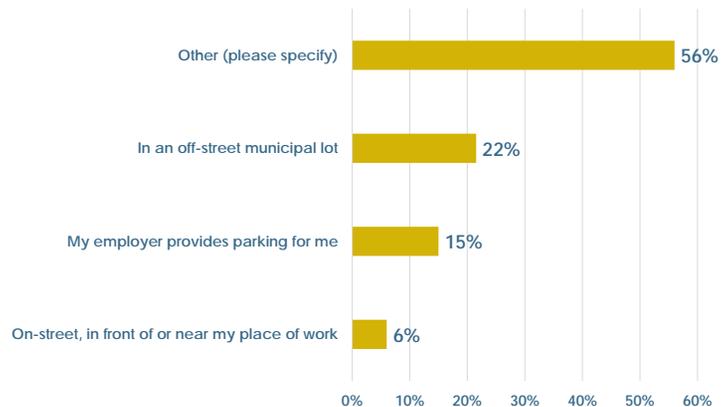
## How long do you typically stay downtown?



Town of Athol | Downtown Parking Study

Data from September 2019

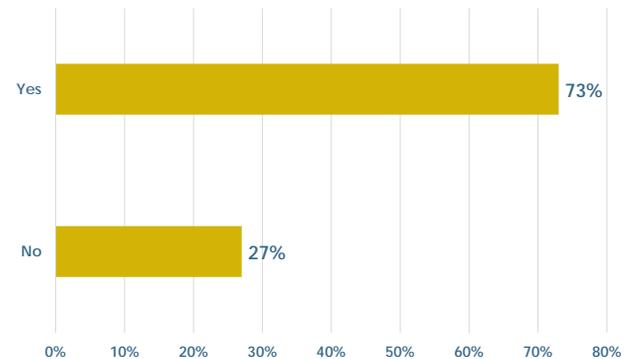
## If you are an employer or business owner, where do you usually park?



Town of Athol | Downtown Parking Study

Data from September 2019

## Is it clear to you where public parking exists in downtown Athol?



Town of Athol | Downtown Parking Study

Data from September 2019

# APPENDIX B | DOWNTOWN VITALITY COMMITTEE PRESENTATION - SURVEY RESULTS

Indicate what level you think parking is enforced in downtown Athol

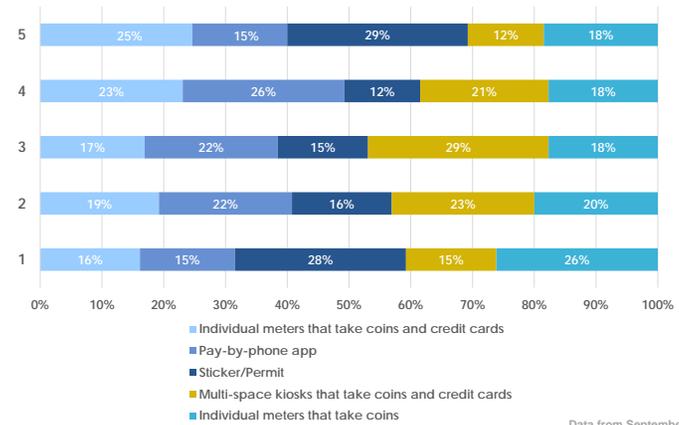
Options were a scale between  
 (1) Minimum enforcement  
 (5) Balanced enforcement  
 (10) Maximum enforcement

Average response was **Level 3**

Town of Athol | Downtown Parking Study

Data from September 2019

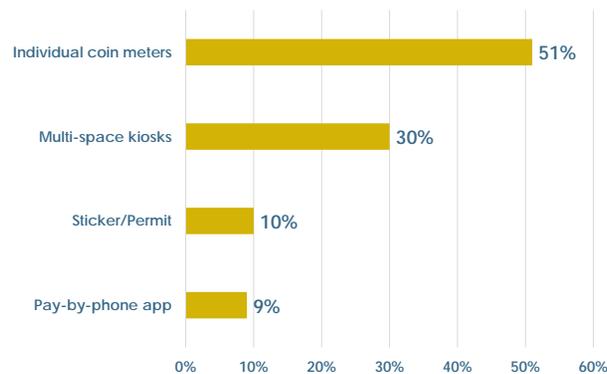
The parking meters along Main Street haven't been updated in a significant amount of time. Which parking technology would you prefer to see downtown?



Town of Athol | Downtown Parking Study

Data from September 2019

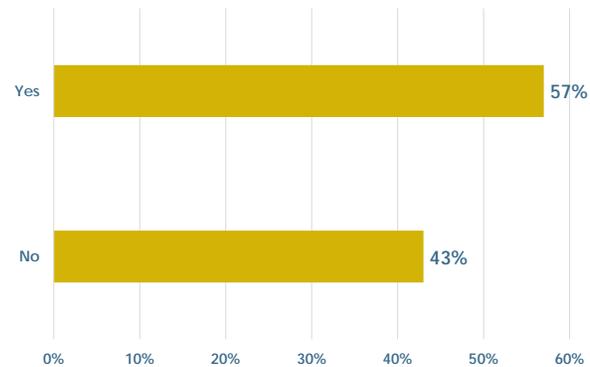
What parking technology are you most familiar with?



Town of Athol | Downtown Parking Study

Data from September 2019

Would you be willing to pay more to park if meter revenue was allocated to streetscape improvements and downtown beautification?

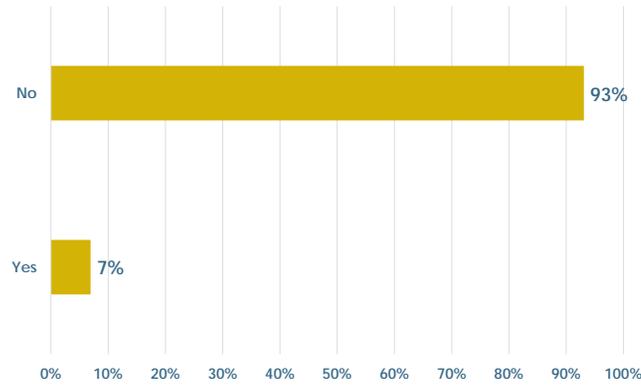


Town of Athol | Downtown Parking Study

Data from September 2019

# APPENDIX B | DOWNTOWN VITALITY COMMITTEE PRESENTATION - SURVEY RESULTS

Are you familiar with Parking Benefit Districts?



Town of Athol | Downtown Parking Study

Data from September 2019

Open-ended questions provided in a separate document

Town of Athol | Downtown Parking Study

Data from September 2019

THANK YOU!

October 24, 2019



# APPENDIX C | SAMPLE SHARED PARKING AGREEMENTS

## Model - Shared Use Agreement for Parking Facilities

This Shared Use Agreement for Parking Facilities, entered into this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, between \_\_\_\_\_, hereinafter called lessor and \_\_\_\_\_, hereinafter called lessee. In consideration of the covenants herein, lessor agrees to share with lessee certain parking facilities, as is situated in the City of \_\_\_\_\_, County of \_\_\_\_\_ and State of \_\_\_\_\_, hereinafter called the facilities, described as: [Include legal description of location and spaces to be shared here, and as shown on attachment 1.]

The facilities shall be shared commencing with the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and ending at 11:59 PM on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, for [insert negotiated compensation figures, as appropriate]. [The lessee agrees to pay at [insert payment address] to lessor by the \_\_\_\_ day of each month [or other payment arrangements].] Lessor hereby represents that it holds legal title to the facilities

### The parties agree:

#### 1. USE OF FACILITIES

This section should describe the nature of the shared use (exclusive, joint sections, time(s) and day(s) of week of usage.

**-SAMPLE CLAUSE-**[Lessee shall have exclusive use of the facilities. The use shall only be between the hours of 5:30 PM Friday through 5:30 AM Monday and between the hours of 5:30 PM and 5:30 AM Monday through Thursday.]

#### 2. MAINTENANCE

This section should describe responsibility for aspects of maintenance of the facilities. This could include cleaning, striping, seal coating, asphalt repair and more.

**-SAMPLE CLAUSE-**[Lessor shall provide, as reasonably necessary asphalt repair work. Lessee and Lessor agree to share striping, seal coating and lot sweeping at a 50%/50% split based upon mutually accepted maintenance contracts with outside vendors. Lessor shall maintain lot and landscaping at or above the current condition, at no additional cost to the lessee.]

#### 3. UTILITIES and TAXES

This section should describe responsibility for utilities and taxes. This could include electrical, water, sewage, and more.

**-SAMPLE CLAUSE-**[Lessor shall pay all taxes and utilities associated with the facilities, including maintenance of existing facility lighting as directed by standard safety practices.]

#### 4. SIGNAGE

This section should describe signage allowances and restrictions.

**-SAMPLE CLAUSE-**  
[Lessee may provide signage, meeting with the written approval of lessor, designating usage allowances.]

#### 5. ENFORCEMENT

This section should describe any facility usage enforcement methods.

**-SAMPLE CLAUSE-**[Lessee may provide a surveillance officer(s) for parking safety and usage only for the period of its exclusive use. Lessee and lessor reserve the right to tow, at owners expense, vehicles improperly parked or abandoned. All towing shall be with the approval of the lessor.]

#### 6. COOPERATION

This section should describe communication relationship.

**-SAMPLE CLAUSE-**[Lessor and lessee agree to cooperate to the best of their abilities to mutually use the facilities without disrupting the other party. The parties agree to meet on occasion to work out any problems that may arise to the shared use.]

#### 7. INSURANCE

This section should describe insurance requirements for the facilities.

**-SAMPLE CLAUSE-**[At their own expense, lessor and lessee agree to maintain liability insurance for the facilities as is standard for their own business usage.]

#### 8. INDEMNIFICATION

This section should describe indemnification as applicable and negotiated. This is a very technical section and legal counsel should be consulted for appropriate language to each and every agreement.

**-NO SAMPLE CLAUSE PROVIDED-**

#### 9. TERMINATION

This section should describe how to or if this agreement can be terminated and post termination responsibilities.

**-SAMPLE CLAUSE-**[If lessor transfers ownership, or if part of all of the facilities are condemned, or access to the facilities is changed or limited, lessee may, in its sole discretion terminate this agreement without further liability by giving Lessor not less than 60 days prior written notice. Upon termination of this agreement, Lessee agrees to remove all signage and repair damage due to excessive use or abuse. Lessor agrees to give lessee the right of first refusal on subsequent renewal of this agreement.]

#### 10. SUPPLEMENTAL COVENANTS

This section should contain any additional covenants, rights, responsibilities and/or agreements.

**-NO SAMPLE CLAUSE PROVIDED-**

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Agreement as of the Effective Date Set forth at the outset hereof.

[Signature and notarization as appropriate to a legal document and as appropriate to recording process negotiated between parties.]

# APPENDIX C | SAMPLE SHARED PARKING AGREEMENTS

## LICENSE AGREEMENT

This Agreement is executed as of \_\_\_\_\_, 2006 by and between **BOSTON EDISON COMPANY** a Massachusetts corporation and electric company having its principal place of business at 800 Boylston Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02199, hereinafter called the "Licensor", and the **TOWN OF LEXINGTON**, a Massachusetts municipal corporation, having a principal place of business at 1625 Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington, MA 02420, hereinafter called the "Licensee".

### RECITALS:

WHEREAS, Licensor is the owner of a certain parcel of real property (the "Property") with an address of 4 Grant Street in the Town of Lexington, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, by virtue of deeds and other instruments recorded in the Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds, including but not limited to Book 3749, Page 370, Book 3773, Page 318, Book 5184, Page 296, and Book 5198, Page 21.

WHEREAS, the Licensee has requested permission from the Licensor to make use of a portion of the Property, said portion located outside the Licensor's electrical substation, hereinafter referred to as the "Licensed Area", which Licensed Area is shown on a plan entitled "Conceptual Parking Plan, 4 Grant Street, Lexington" attached hereto as Exhibit A, for the specific purpose of constructing, maintaining and operating a public, municipal parking lot.

WHEREAS, Licensor is willing to permit the use of the Licensed Area by the Licensee for such purposes, but only upon the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth; and

NOW THEREFORE, for and in consideration of such permission and the payments to Licensor described herein, Licensor and Licensee hereby agree as follows:

1. Licensee, its agents, contractors, employees, and invitees, including members of the public, may enter upon and use the Licensed Area for the purpose of constructing, maintaining, operating and utilizing a municipal parking lot. No other activity on the Licensed Area (specifically including, but without limitation, (a) maintenance, servicing or repair of motor vehicles, or (b) storage of vehicles, other equipment, machinery, or parts) is permitted hereby (with the exception of initial construction activity to prepare the Licensed Area for said permitted use, said construction activity shall proceed as set forth in Section 6). In its sole discretion, Licensor reserves the right under this Section to require Licensee to relocate or remove from the Licensed Area any item Licensor deems reasonably necessary to protect its electric facilities and operations. Upon verbal or written notice by Licensor to Licensee, Licensee shall relocate or remove any such items from the Licensed Area as soon as possible, but in all events within 24 hours.
2. Licensee, its agents, contractors, employees and invitees, shall have the right of ingress and egress over, across and upon the Licensed Area as necessary for the uses permitted hereby.
3. This License shall commence upon the issuance of all approvals and permits from the Town of Lexington or any other entity required by law for the

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construction and operation of the Licensed Area for the specific and limited purposes stated herein, and shall continue for three (3) years from the earlier of (a) the date construction is completed and the lot is ready for use, as established by notice given by Licensee to Licensor, or (b) eighteen (18) months after the date of execution hereof (herein the "Construction Completion Date"). After the expiration of the Initial Term, absent a notice of termination pursuant to Section 5 below, the term shall automatically renew for successive periods of one (1) year each. The Licensee shall give the Licensor written notification of its receipt of all the necessary permits and approvals. In the event the Licensee is unable to obtain all necessary approvals and permits required by law within 12 months of the execution of this Agreement, this Agreement shall become null and void, unless the parties agree to extend this period, without any recourse for the Licensee at law or in equity.

4. Licensee agrees, beginning on the Construction Completion Date of this License, to pay Licensor an annual rental equal to Nine Thousand Six Hundred Dollars (\$9,600.00) per year, payable to Licensee in monthly installments of Eight Hundred Dollars (\$800.00). After year three, and every year thereafter, the annual fee of this License shall be increased by three (3%) percent over the previous year's rent until the termination or expiration date of this License.
5. After the expiration of the Initial Term, Licensor and Licensee shall each have the right to terminate this License at any time, for any or no stated reason, by written notice to the other party. The effective date of such termination shall be one (1) year from the date of the notice of termination, regardless of any then effective renewal term. Notwithstanding any other provision of this License, the parties intend that this Agreement constitute a terminable license, and no interest in real property is created hereby. The Licensor does not hereby dedicate the Property or the Licensed Area to public use.
6. Prior to any installation, preparation, or construction by Licensee of the Licensed Area to accommodate said municipal parking lot, Licensee shall submit plans to Licensor for approval detailing all work to be performed at the Licensed Area. Such approval shall not be unreasonably withheld or delayed. Once approved by Licensor, any such plans will be incorporated as Exhibit B to this Agreement. Licensee agrees to follow any guidelines reasonably set forth by the Licensor, and Licensee shall coordinate any initial construction work in the Licensed Area with the Licensor. Licensee further agrees to reimburse Licensor for all costs associated with any construction activities (including but not limited to Licensor's supervision of said construction activities).
7. It is agreed that Licensee shall not erect or permit any structures or improvements upon, and that Licensee shall make or permit no uses of the Licensed Area, other than those improvements and uses expressly permitted in this License.
8. During the term of this Agreement, Licensee shall maintain the Licensed Area in good order and condition in all respects, free from snow, ice, trash and debris or other nuisance. Prior to the effective date of the termination of this Agreement, Licensee shall remove its personal property and, if necessary, restore the Licensed Area to the same condition as it was in (other than changes made by the

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# APPENDIX C | SAMPLE SHARED PARKING AGREEMENTS

Licensor) prior to Licensee's use. All vehicles will be removed prior to termination.

9. By granting this License, Licensor does not represent or warrant that the Licensed Area is appropriate, safe or suitable for the proposed use, or that it may be used for the purposes specified herein under applicable zoning, environmental or other laws or regulations, nor does Licensor undertake to make the Licensed Area appropriate, safe or suitable for such use, or to obtain any permits, licenses or approvals of any governmental authority which may be required to permit such use. Licensee shall obtain any and all necessary governmental permits, licenses and approvals at its sole cost and expense prior to the commencement of any use of the Licensed Area and Licensor shall cooperate in any efforts by Licensee to obtain any such permits so long as there is no cost or expense for Licensor that is not paid by Licensee. Licensee shall notify Licensor of its intentions to obtain said permits, licenses and approvals and shall provide copies of the same once received.
10. In exercising its rights under this License, Licensee shall at all times and in all respects comply with all applicable laws, ordinances, rules and regulations of all governmental authorities having jurisdiction and shall comply with all licenses and permits or other approvals issued to it by a governmental authority.
11. Licensee hereby represents and warrants, and it is hereby made a condition of this License, that the use of the Licensed Area by Licensee shall not result in the release of any oil or hazardous materials (other than non-reportable quantities associated with typical leaks from automobiles and construction equipment in the ordinary course of operation), as those terms are defined in the Massachusetts Contingency Plan, 310 CMR 40.000, et seq. In the event of any breach of the foregoing warranty and condition by Licensee, Licensor shall, in addition to the right to terminate this License and seek damages, have the benefit of the indemnity provision set forth in Section 12, and injunctive relief.
12. Licensee acknowledges that the Licensed Area is situated in close proximity to an operating electrical substation, which carries inherent risks associated with high voltage operations. Accordingly, to the greatest extent permitted by law, the Licensee, for itself and its agents, contractors, employees, and invitees, hereby releases and shall indemnify, defend and save harmless the Licensor, its officers, agents and employees from and against all demands, claims, actions, damages, costs, expenses, losses or liability whatsoever in any manner resulting from or arising out of the actions of any person with respect to the Licensed Area or the use thereof, or in any manner resulting from or arising out of the use of the Licensed Area by any person, including, without limitation, any failure of any person to comply with any applicable laws or regulations, except to the extent that such liability results from the gross negligence or willful misconduct of the Licensor, its employees, agents or contractors. This provision shall survive the termination of this License.
13. Licensee shall procure and maintain at its expense, at all times during the term of this License Agreement, public liability insurance, including personal injury and property damage, in amounts of \$4,000,000 combined single limit, against all claims and demands of any injury to person or property which may occur or

be claimed to have occurred on the property of the Licensor as the result of the use of the Licensed Area by any person. Licensor shall be designated as an additional insured party in such policy. Licensee shall also maintain workers compensation insurance in statutory amounts as required by Massachusetts law. The Licensee shall, before entry upon the Licensed Area for the purposes herein set forth, furnish the Licensor (to the address listed in Section 15) with a valid certificate of such insurances reasonably satisfactory to it. Such policies shall specify that they are not cancelable except upon twenty (20) days' prior written notice to the Licensor.

14. Licensee agrees that in the event a public health, safety or security emergency should arise as determined at the sole discretion of the Licensor, the Licensor, its officers, agents and employees, shall have the right to enter upon the Licensed Area, and undertake whatever action may be necessary, in the Licensor's discretion, to alleviate the emergency, including but not limited to requiring the temporary suspension of Licensee's use and occupancy of the Licensed Area. If in connection therewith Licensor requires the removal of any vehicles, Licensor shall notify Licensee thereof and effect such removal in a safe and reasonable manner. In the event the vehicles need to be removed at any time the Licensor shall contact the Town DPW Department at 1-781-862-0500 to effectuate said removal.
15. Notices, statements and other communications to be given under the terms of this License shall be in writing and delivered by hand against receipt, or sent by first class mail and addressed as follows:

**If to Licensor:**

Boston Edison Company  
Real Estate Department  
One NSTAR Way, SE-210  
Westwood, MA 02090  
Attn: Real Estate Manager  
Fax: (781) 441-8909

**If to the Licensee:**

Town of Lexington  
Lexington Town Hall  
1625 Massachusetts Avenue  
Lexington, MA 02420  
Attn: Town Manager  
Fax: (781) 861-2921

16. This License is personal to the Licensee, and Licensee shall have no right to assign or transfer its rights and obligations hereunder, in whole or in part to any other person. This provision does not preclude use of the Licensed Area as contemplated hereby.

## APPENDIX C | SAMPLE SHARED PARKING AGREEMENTS

17. This License contains all the agreements of the parties with respect to the subject matter thereof and supersedes all prior agreements and dealings between them with respect to such subject matter.
18. Licensee acknowledges and agrees that the Licensor shall at all times have convenient and unimpeded access to its electrical substation or any other structures and equipment, which are now or may hereinafter be installed by Licensor within the Licensed Area.
19. Licensee acknowledges that the Licensor will not be providing, and is under no obligation to provide, any security or lighting for the Licensed Area.
20. In the event that the Licensor's Property or a material portion of the Property of which the Licensed Area are a part, shall be taken by any public authority or for any public use, or shall be destroyed or damaged by fire or casualty, or by action of any public authority, then this License shall terminate with respect to the taken, damaged or destroyed area, effective on the date when title vests in the condemning authority, or when the casualty occurs.
21. Irrespective of the form in which recovery may be had by law, all rights to damages or compensation for a taking or casualty for the Licensed Area shall belong to Licensor in all cases. Licensee hereby grants to Licensor all of Licensee's rights to such damages and covenants to deliver such further assignments or endorsements as Licensor may from time to time request.
22. In connection with Licensee's use and maintenance of the Licensed Area, the Licensee shall not endanger or damage the existing buried transmission lines, cad weld connections, grounding grid system or any other structures and equipment in the Licensed Area which are now or may hereafter be installed within the Licensed Area, all being the property of the Licensor. In the event that such damage should nevertheless occur resulting from an act, omission or negligence of Licensee, its agents, contractors and employees, the Licensee shall forthwith notify the Licensor, by calling the Licensor's System Dispatcher at the Licensor's Boston Service Center (telephone number 617-541-7833), so that immediate repairs may be made, and shall also promptly reimburse the Licensor upon request for all reasonable costs or expenses incurred by it in repairing or replacing any such damage to said structures and equipment or to any other property of the Licensor.
23. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS:
  - a. Licensee shall post a sign on the Property restricting access to Licensor's existing parking area behind the electrical substation building. The sign shall read "No vehicles beyond this point, NSTAR vehicles only".
  - b. The Licensee shall perform snow plowing, ice and litter removal for the entire portion of the Property that is outside the substation fence and that includes the Licensed Area, including snow removal on the public sidewalks outside the substation and substation fencing.

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- c. Licensee agrees to deal with any and all comments, questions or complaints from any abutters and or the general public with regards to the Licensed Area and its permitted use as set forth herein.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this License Agreement as a sealed instrument by and through their respective duly authorized representatives, as of the day and year first above written.

LICENSOR:

**BOSTON EDISON COMPANY**

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Donald Anastasia  
Assistant Treasurer

LICENSEE:

**TOWN OF LEXINGTON**

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: Carl F. Valente  
Title: Town Manager

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# APPENDIX C | SAMPLE SHARED PARKING AGREEMENTS

B. Church grants Synagogue the right to park on Church's parking lots at any time where Synagogue's parking needs exceed the available spaces on Synagogue's own lots, (for example, but not limited to the Jewish High Holy Days).

C. Church grants to Synagogue an easement for shared use of the middle section of the parking lot indicated on the cross-hatched areas set forth in Exhibit C, attached and incorporated herein as if fully set forth.

#### Maintenance of Easement

3. The Parties may establish and assign maintenance, insurance and other obligations to each other that may be mutually acceptable without an amendment of this Agreement.

#### Indemnity

4. Synagogue will indemnify and defend Church for any claims filed by a visitor to Synagogue who utilizes Church's parking areas and files a claim against Church. Church will indemnify and defend Synagogue for any claims filed by a visitor to Church who utilizes Synagogue's parking areas and files a claim against Synagogue.

#### Attorneys' Fees

5. If any legal action or proceeding arising out of or relating to this Agreement is brought by either party to this Agreement, the prevailing party shall be entitled to receive from the other party, in addition to any other relief that may be granted, the reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and expenses incurred in the action or proceeding by the prevailing party.

#### Entire Agreement

6. This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between Church and Synagogue relating to the above easement. Any prior agreements, promises, negotiations, or representations not expressly set forth in this Agreement are of no force and effect. Any amendment to this Agreement shall be of no force and effect unless it is in writing and signed by Church and Synagogue.

#### Binding Effect

7. This Agreement shall be binding on and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, administrators, successors, and assigns of Grantor and Grantee.

Executed on \_\_\_\_\_ [date].

#### **CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION**

By: \_\_\_\_\_, it's \_\_\_\_\_

Parking Easement and Maintenance Agreement  
Page 2 of \_\_\_\_  
Ver. 1

#### **CONGREGATION BETH DAVID**

By: \_\_\_\_\_, it's President

#### Notary Acknowledgment

Attachments:  
Exhibit A, Legal Description for Church  
Exhibit B, Legal Description for Synagogue  
Exhibit C, Parking Diagram

Parking Easement and Maintenance Agreement  
Page 3 of \_\_\_\_  
Ver. 1

# APPENDIX C | SAMPLE SHARED PARKING AGREEMENTS

**EXHIBIT A  
Legal Description  
Church of the Ascension**

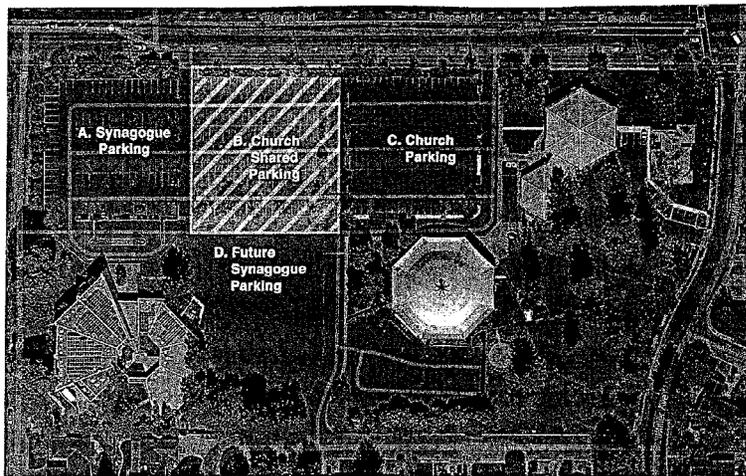
[to be supplied by the Church]

**Exhibit B  
Legal Description  
Congregation Beth David**

[to be supplied by Beth David]

# APPENDIX C | SAMPLE SHARED PARKING AGREEMENTS

Exhibit C  
Parking Easement Diagram



Parking Easement and Maintenance Agreement  
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# APPENDIX D | MUNICIPAL MODERNIZATION ACT MEMO TO TOWN MANAGER - JULY 19, 2018



TOWN OF ATHOL

## OFFICE OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

584 MAIN STREET \*\* ROOM 29  
ATHOL, MA 01331

Telephone: 978 575 0301  
Fax: 978 575 0323  
e-mail: [planning@townofathol.org](mailto:planning@townofathol.org)

### Memorandum

**To:** Shaun Suhoski, Town Manager  
Downtown Vitality Committee

**Cc:** Christine Mailloux, Town Accountant  
Detective Ron Cote, Athol Police  
Tammy Collier, Town Treasurer/Collector  
Bridget Sullivan, Selectmen's Office

**From:** Eric R. Smith, AICP, Director of Planning and Community Development 

**Re:** Parking Meter Receipts and Downtown Improvements

**Date:** July 19, 2018

The purpose of this Memo is to present various options available under existing State Law related to parking meter funds and downtown improvements. Under Massachusetts statutes, there are essentially three (3) options for the Town of Athol to consider using as tools to address taking collection of parking meter receipts (or another source of funds as explained below) and targeting them specifically for downtown parking meter maintenance/improvements as well as streetscape-related improvements. This Memo provides an introduction and some information related to each. The first two specifically relate to parking meter collections and the third uses a property assessment for downtown property owners to fund such improvements.

#### Municipal Modernization Act and Parking Meter Receipts

As part of the Municipal Modernization Act (hereinafter "MMA") amendments were made to a series of Mass General Laws (hereinafter "MGLs") pertaining to parking meter receipt collections and distribution of said collected funds. I summarize these below and have provided the respective MGLs as attachments. According to a May 2017 MA Division of Local Services (DLS) memo "as a result of the Act MGL c. 40 §22a, and §22b and §22c have been amended. Parking meter receipts are unrestricted and unreserved general fund revenue unless the...town accepts provision in those statutes in order to credit them to a 'receipts reserved for appropriation' special revenue fund."

Key excerpts of the amended §22A are provided below:

"Any...town...may appropriate money for the acquisition, installation, maintenance and operation of parking meters, or by vote of the city council or of the town may authorize a board or officer to enter into agreement for such acquisition, installation or maintenance of parking meters...**In any city or town that accepts this sentence** (emphasis added), the agreement for the acquisition or installation of parking meters may provide that payments thereunder shall be made over a period not exceeding 5 years without appropriation, from fees received for the use of such parking meters notwithstanding section 53 of chapter 44. Such fees shall be established and charged at rates determined by the city or town. Rates may be set for the purpose of managing the parking supply. The revenue therefrom may be used for acquisition, installation, maintenance and operation of parking meters and other parking payment and enforcement technology, the regulation of parking, salaries of parking management personnel, improvements to the public realm, and transportation improvements, including, but not limited to, the operations of mass transit and facilities for biking and walking...Any city or town may, in accordance with the provisions of this section, acquire and operate coin-operated locking devices for bicycle parking."

It is my understanding that the Town's legislative body (e.g. Town Meeting) will need to accept the provisions of MGL c. 40 §22A before the process to utilize the parking meter receipts for any of the prescribed area/categories on our streets with parking meters could begin.

Section 22B has to do with off-street parking areas (e.g. municipal parking lots). And the provisions of Section 22C regard parking meters and use of facilities in off-street parking areas. I have provided key parts of the amended §22C below with both §22B and §22C text provided as attachments.

From Section 22C: "Any city or town, having installed parking meters or coin-operated locking devices for bicycle parking under section 22A, may install parking meters in municipally owned or leased off-street parking lots and other devices for controlling the off-street parking lots. **In a city or town that accepts this sentence** (emphasis added), the city or town may use any receipts from those parking meters and other devices for the purpose of purchase or lease of additional parking lots, the care and maintenance of the parking lots, the purchase or lease of a commuter shuttle or commuter shuttle services between the parking lots and available public transportation, the care and maintenance of public transportation station accessibility improvements and in general for traffic control or traffic safety purposes, including payment for public liability coverage in connection with the purchase, lease and use of the municipally owned or leased parking lots and commuter shuttles or commuter shuttle services or any of the purposes and uses listed in section 22A."

Again Athol Town Meeting voters would have to accept the provision of both MGL Ch. 40 §22B and §22C.

#### Parking Benefit Districts

At the same time in 2016 the Municipal Modernization Act efforts amended the parking-related sections under MGL Chapter 40, §22A, §22B and §22C, the State Legislature added as a new subsection under Ch. 40: §22A ½, which provides authorization for communities to establish Parking Benefits Districts. This option expands what is possible beyond the previous described statutes and below I have provided the paragraph length text that comprises §22A ½:

# APPENDIX D | MUNICIPAL MODERNIZATION ACT MEMO TO TOWN MANAGER - JULY 19, 2018

“Section 22A 1/2. A city or town may establish 1 or more parking benefit districts, as a geographically defined area, in which parking revenue collected therein may be designated in whole or in part for use in that district through a dedicated fund in accordance with the purposes and uses listed in section 22A. A parking benefit district may be managed by a body designated by the municipality, including, but not limited to, a business improvement district or main streets organization.”

Based on information I learned at an April 4, 2017 Parking Benefits District Workshop held in Worcester the general idea is to have the parking revenue used to finance “improvements” in the area of the geographically-defined district. Some potential projects and programs, based on review of other existing PBDs across the country have included:

- Purchase and installation costs of meters / meter upgrades (I would imagine that maintenance/repair of existing meters would be an eligible cost as well)
- Parking operations costs, including fees and labor
- Purchase or leasing of private off-street spaces
- Wayfinding and signage
- Landscaping, lighting and streetscape greening
- Street cleaning, power-washing of sidewalks, and graffiti removal
- Transit, pedestrian, and bicycle infrastructure and amenities
- Additional parking enforcement
- Valet parking
- Outreach Programs
- Marketing and Promotion
- Management activities for the oversight entity
- “Mobility Ambassadors”
- Construction of additional parking

For the management, a parking benefits district can be managed by any body designated by the municipality designated by the Town, which could be a new entity, or an existing group such as the Downtown Vitality Committee. If the Town were to create a Business Improvement District (or BID), which is described further below, the BID management entity could also manage parking benefits district.

The Town of Arlington is an example of a community that recently created a Parking Benefits District (As an aside Arlington had started out from situation with no parking meters in their Downtown). The Town approved an Arlington Center Parking Management Plan in 2014 and that led to a Parking Implementation Governance Committee. In 2017 their Parking Benefits District was created and the first revenue appropriated this year. They are focusing their funds on physical improvements, such as new and enhanced street furniture, lighting, sidewalks, spaces for outdoor dining and entertainment, and wayfinding. I learned at a June Planners Lunch and Learn Workshop in Arlington that the Town did better than projected in year 1, as they budgeted \$125,000 but the actual parking meters receipts collected were \$175,000.

## Business Improvement Districts (BID)

The last of the three tools/approaches is known as a Business Improvement District, or a “BID”. In general, in order to create a BID there would be a vote of property owners and then there would be an annual assessment.

In more detail, BIDs are special districts in which property owners vote to initiate, manage and finance supplemental services above and beyond the baseline of services already provided by their city or town governments. The information presented below is based on an “Business Improvements Districts” one-page summary prepared by the Mass. Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and “A Guide for Establishing BIDs – Massachusetts Business Improvements Districts” (unknown author).

Communities are authorized to establish BIDs, under MGL ch. 400. A BID must be a continuous geographic area in which at least 75% of the land is zoned or used for commercial, retail, industrial, or mixed uses. A BID is established through a local and public hearing process. The petition must be signed by the owners of at least 60% of the real property and at least 51% of the assessed valuation of the real property within the proposed BID. The petition must also include delineation of the boundary, a proposed improvements plan, a budget and an assessment/fee structure. The Town has to forward the BID petition to DHCD as well.

All property owners within the BID are assessed a fee in addition to their real property taxes to fund the supplemental services and programs. The treasurer-collector of the municipality collects the fees and distributes them to the management entity designated by the BID. The amount of the fee is established by each BID but cannot annually exceed one-half of one percent (.05) of the total assessed value of the real property owned by participating members of the district. The BID has the option to limit of cap this maximum fee on individual properties or the total annual revenue generated by the BID.

The Benefits/Activities of a BID are definitely more expansive then, but can include, the elements of eligible activities under Parking Benefit District programs. Common BID programs include: helping to market Downtown (through special events and collaborate marketing materials for example), landscaping/streetscape projects (such as street trees, planter boxes), capital improvements (wayfinding signs and lighting for example), business development (recruitment and market analysis), maintenance (street and sidewalk cleaning), public safety (help pay for public safety officers), economic development (infrastructure enhancements and façade grant programs), and parking facilities (both planning and management).

## Summary

If the Town is interested in the Parking Benefits District or BID program, we could look to bring someone in from DHCD to further to explain the program to key Town Officials and Downtown Stakeholders. I am not sure if the property owners of Downtown Athol would be ready to accept an additional assessment on their property at this time and further outreach would be needed to explain the program to property owners and gauge their interest. The Town of Hudson recently established a BID in their Downtown, but this happened after several years into their successful revitalization efforts. It seems that the Parking Benefits District would be the most logical/acceptable to explore further at this stage of Downtown Athol’s revitalization efforts or at least start with acceptance of MGL Ch. 40§22A, B and C. In either case, additional planning and outreach would also be required. For example, the Town of Athol would likely need a plan similar to Arlington’s Arlington Center Parking Management Plan. Massachusetts Downtown Initiative funding could be an eligible source of funding for such a plan here in Downtown Athol.

Attachments: MGL Ch. 40 §22A, B and C.