

PARKING COMMITTEE REPORT

Bob Collier, Chair

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Over 4 years ago, the Parking Committee was given the mission to investigate solutions to improve the conditions relating to visitor parking in the downtown are of Bar Harbor.

The purpose of this mission was to develop strategies which would:

- 1. effectively utilize the limited available parking**
- 2. ease congestion**
- 3. avoid inconveniencing local residents, businesses and tourists**
- 4. secure additional parking areas that would provide easy, convenient access at an affordable price.**

This final report presents 8 strategies with their rationale and methodology for implementation.

- 1. Customer/Visitor Parking**
- 2. Residential Parking**
- 3. Employee Parking**
- 4. Deliveries**
- 5. Transportation Choices**
- 6. Parking Enforcement**
- 7. System of Exchanges**
- 8. Education**

Since these strategies are contingent upon each other for success, we recommend that the Town Council have the Town Planner implement these strategies as a total package.

With this report completing the mission of our Parking Committee, we further suggest that the Town Council establish a new Parking Committee to act as an oversight committee to insure that the strategies are implemented as well as to continue to adapt new ideas and strategies as the system develops or changes.

Strategy #1 - CUSTOMER/VISITOR PARKING

With customer/visitor parking being limited, overused, congested, inconvenient, inaccessible, difficult to find, it is obviously necessary to improve these.

1. Decrease the number of transient vehicles downtown.
 - Build new and improve peripheral parking lots (see diagram A)
 - Build long term parking facilities close to the head of the island (see diagram B)
 - Using Smart Meters, charge higher rates for in-town parking

Smart Meters: Configurations for Smart Metered Lots can be individualized per location. The concept allows consumers to park within a confined area and pay a scheduled fee based on their stay. Smart Meter systems can be bought, leased, or developed by an outside firm. With any choice comes the option of the town owning their own system in the future. Allowing an outside firm to set up the initial system has no risk or financial indebtedness to the town while still providing a shared income from the fees.

 - Limit vehicular access to parts of downtown during certain hours and at certain points (pedestrian mall).
 - Encouraging customers/visitors to leave their car at their lodging site
 - Inform and educate customers/visitors to use other transportation options
(**The Alternative Option Campaign**) (see Strategy #8)
 - Walking
 - Biking
 - Shuttle busses
2. The parking experience in Bar Harbor would be user friendly
 - Improving information and education
 - Parking facilities that are aesthetic, well lit and have appropriate signage
3. Peripheral lots and long term parking facilities would be pick up zones for bus tours, whale watching tours, kayak tours, etc.
 - private businesses would apply to the Town Council for a "pick up" permitted space
 - an Exchange rate of \$75/space/per season (see Strategy #7 for details)
 - tourist would be encouraged to use the peripheral parking facility for convenience when participating in a tour
 - after the tour, tourist could utilize the public shuttle system to go into town
 - additional "short-stop" loading zone designations would be added to facilitate the use of bus tours, etc. in the downtown area

With peripheral parking, long term parking and control downtown parking implemented, there will be less vehicular traffic, more in-town available parking, and a friendlier pedestrian experience. The Town Council would develop a system of incentives for businesses and institutions that dedicate their own spaces for either general parking or universal delivery.

Strategy #2 - RESIDENTIAL ONLY PARKING

To eliminate the problems of B & B overflow parking, employee long term parking and lack of patrolling in residential areas, "Residents Only" parking would be available for residents of side streets around the Downtown Business District and Shore Land General Development 1 Districts.

1. Residents of a neighborhood could petition the Council to designate unregulated street as *Residents Parking Only*.
2. These streets would require a parking sticker or placard for long-term parking.
3. Each property would apply for a free placard that would belong to the property owner not the tenant.
4. Property owners would be allowed to purchase additional placards at the parking Exchange system rate of \$50/per space per year for their guest (max. 3 placards).
5. B & B's that currently have curb cut in excess of a normal curb cut would be required to pay for those spaces
6. B & B that required on-street parking would be required to apply for to the Town Council for "Residents Only" parking Exchanges (Max. 50% of capacity) at a first year rate of \$75/per space per year (\$50/per year thereafter).
7. All placards will belong to, must be applied for, and paid for by property owners only. All other parking ordinances not withstanding will remain in effect.

With residential streets off limits to all day parking by employees, tourists and general town overflow, residents will reclaim their parking spaces as well as making their streets more accessible to their guests.

Strategy #3 - EMPLOYEE PARKING

To free up parking for customers/visitors and residents, alternatives for employee parking in the downtown area are a priority.

1. Peripheral lots with shuttles to the downtown area will create inexpensive, safe, and convenient parking for employees.
 - Peripheral lots with Smart Meters would allow employees to park for a nominal fee (.50/hr.) (see diagram A)
 - Long term parking lots with smart meters would allow employees to park for a nominal fee (.25/hr.) (see diagram B)
 - Shuttle service would be often and free
2. Employees would be encouraged to use alternate means of transportation.
 - Car pooling
 - Bicycling
 - Walking
 - The shuttle bus system.
3. Employers would be encouraged to create an incentive program for their employees to use alternative modes of transportation.
 - The Alternative Option Campaign** (see Strategy #8)

By centralizing parking in peripheral and long term lots for employees there would be an increase in the use car pooling bicycling, walking and the shuttle bus system which in turn would create more available downtown parking for customers/visitors and residents.

Strategy #4 - DELIVERIES

Although problematic, deliveries into the downtown area are an integral part of our economy. Large tractor-trailers weave through our streets each day tying up parking spaces and causing congestion. Streets are too narrow, turning radii too small, parking inadequate, and the demanded tempo of delivery too fast. Our dilemma is that these huge trucks tie up entire blocks at a time. Often drivers can't find parking space and lodge their vehicles in the middle of a busy street - for however short a time this can be extremely inconvenient for others.

1. It is recommended that designated Early Morning Loading Zones be created for each block in the downtown area.
 - These areas would be reserved between the hours of 5 AM and 9 AM
 - After 9am these Zones would either revert to regular Loading Zones or become normal parking spots
2. To be able to get in and out of Bar Harbor conveniently and quickly, this creates an incentive for the major vendors to reschedule their routes
 - Town representative would confer with the business community to explain the rationale behind the new procedures
 - Town representatives from the business community would meet with vendors to inform them of this change in policy.
3. Signs in these designated areas would alert truckers as well as advise visitors.
4. Regular Loading Zones would be available all day
 - It is recommended that additional Loading Zones be considered in the following areas to prevent the current congestion at existing Loading Zones
 - Upper Agamont park
 - Lower Main St
 - Lower Cottage St
 - 2 additional Loading Zones to service Main/Mt. Desert Streets
5. Off-island vendors would have the option of purchasing a "Vendor Permit" for a nominal fee of \$50/yr. for access to Downtown Loading Zones
 - Vendors would receive a "Vendor Permit" sticker which would allow them to park in designated Loading Zones for delivery
 - Vendors would also receive a "Smart Meter" card with which drivers would 'sign in' at each Loading Zone
 - Early Morning Loading Zones between 5am-9am would have no time limitation
 - Loading Zones would have an hour time limitation
 - Violating companies would automatically be assessed fined thru "Smart Meter" cards.
6. Deliveries made by UPS and Federal Express and other shippers who can not comply with the early morning hours would be offered four centrally located downtown area locations from which to deliver.
 - These area would be designed as "Special Loading Zones" from 9AM-6PM
 - These four locations would be available to all shippers
 - Shippers who wish to use these areas would apply to the Town Council for a permit at a cost of \$100/month for the season.
 - A two hour limit would be monitored by Smart Meter

Designated delivery zones in the early morning hours would not impact local parking while reducing trucking and trucking demands during the normal business day, and create more short term downtown parking for residents and tourists.

Strategy #5 - TRANSPORTATION CHOICES

With long term parking closer to the head of the island and short term parking located at the perimeter of the town, the following transportation options will provide better mobility as a way to relieve parking and traffic congestion in the village. These options will improve the quality of life for residents and quality of experience for visitors. By promoting **The Alternative Option Campaign** (see Strategy #8), tourists who visit the Acadia National Park will be provided with options which encourage the reduced use of natural resources and promote a healthier lifestyle.

1. -Support and encourage use of the new island-wide transit for both locals and visitors alike.
 - A shuttle system would be in place between the town's center and peripheral parking areas
 - A shuttle system would be in place between long term parking areas (off island and the head of the island) for island workers and tourist visiting for a single day
 - In addition to expanding our current bus system, an inter coastal passenger ferry needs to be developed
2. -Continue encouraging bus tours and cruise ships (all are car free visitors)
3. -Improving roads and sidewalks which are currently substandard to eliminate barriers and hazards to walking and bicycling including to and from peripheral parking lots.
 - Develop comprehensive a bikelane / bikepath network
 - Increase bike parking with adequate off street bike parking provided as part of the future downtown streetscape improvements
 - 1/2 spaces or "no parking" areas on street where possible
 - On sidewalks where there is sufficient room (recommend small inverted U racks)
 - Businesses that supplies 5 or more bike spaces would get an exchange for 1 car space
 - Include walkways and bike paths from all satellite parking areas so they are inviting and safe
 - Increase non-intrusive lighting on sidewalks and walkways where needed
4. -Encourage carpooling for island workers.
 - Create carpool program through sign up program, employee incentives and website sign up
5. -Transform the pedestrian flooded part of Main and Cottage Streets into a pedestrian mall during peak seasonal hours for quality and safety reasons (recommend a trial date in fall/2003)

Employing these strategies is a much cheaper and wiser use of Bar Harbor's resources.

Strategy #6 - PARKING ENFORCEMENT

In-town short term parking will be monitored by smart meters and parking attendants. Perimeter parking and long term parking will be monitored solely by smart meters. The primary responsibility of the attendants is to insure that on-street parking is not abused. In addition, they will act to promote the use of perimeter and long term parking by directing visitors to area lots as well as informing them with pamphlets explaining the use of the island wide transit system.

1. -Clear and well lit signs will direct motorist to appropriate parking area.
2. -Enforce parking laws will be in effect from Memorial Day to Columbus Day.
3. -Smart Meters will control all parking lots.
4. -Parking fines will be raised from \$10.00 to \$20.00. All other parking related offenses will be raised by an additional \$15.00.
5. -Additional parking attendants will be hired.
6. -Extend parking laws daily to 8PM. (to prevent those employees that work an evening shift from parking on the street for the night in order to free up short term parking for evening shoppers and restaurateurs.)

Tourists and residents alike will know where to park and for how long as well as the penalties for inappropriate parking.

Strategy #7 – ELIMINATING ALL PARKING WAIVERS AND REPLACING WITH A SYSTEM OF EXCHANGES

The Exchange system would only apply in the Downtown Business and Shore land General Development I Districts. The Exchange system would allow for business expansion or change without having to create new asphalt lots and tear down existing buildings. The Exchange system would discourage additional parking facilities in the downtown area that would add to our congestion and hamper efforts to divert traffic to perimeter lots. The system of Exchanges would be available to any business that can't provide all required off street parking or has more than one curb cut of 15 ft per fifteen parking spaces.

The present system of Parking Waivers will be replaced with Exchanges.

1. The Council, with the assistance of the Planning Department, will determine the number of parking waivers each business has been authorized in the past.
2. In place of those parking waivers, these businesses will be assessed a nominal fee per space required per year. The suggested formula is \$50/per space per year.
3. A business that increases it's size or a change in it's use and requires a larger number of parking spaces, will be assessed an Exchange fee of \$75/per space for the first year (\$50/per space thereafter).
4. If a business decreases its requirements, the fee will be reduced by \$50/ per space per year accordingly.
5. The increase or decrease of parking requirements, which is the direct cause of an individual business, will be the individual businesses responsibility to secure and pay for Exchanges. (not the landlord)
6. Town Council will establish a committee to enforce and oversee parking requirements.
 - The committee would consist of the public safety officials, town officials and several people at large.
 - The committee would provide capacity (requirements) certificates for each business on an annual basis.
7. Parking requirements and Exchanges (if any) would be noted on the property assessment cards when properties are reviewed for assessments purposes.

The increased availability of downtown short term parking for residents and the ability of businesses to expand should be a win-win situation.

The Exchange system fees would contribute to cost of additional peripheral parking lots, the shuttle system and parking enforcement. Fees for use would be used as income instead of increased overall town taxation.

Strategy #8 - EDUCATION

To modify our parking behavior, employers, employees, residents, and visitors alike will have to be educated about the parking and transportation options and new regulations and penalties.

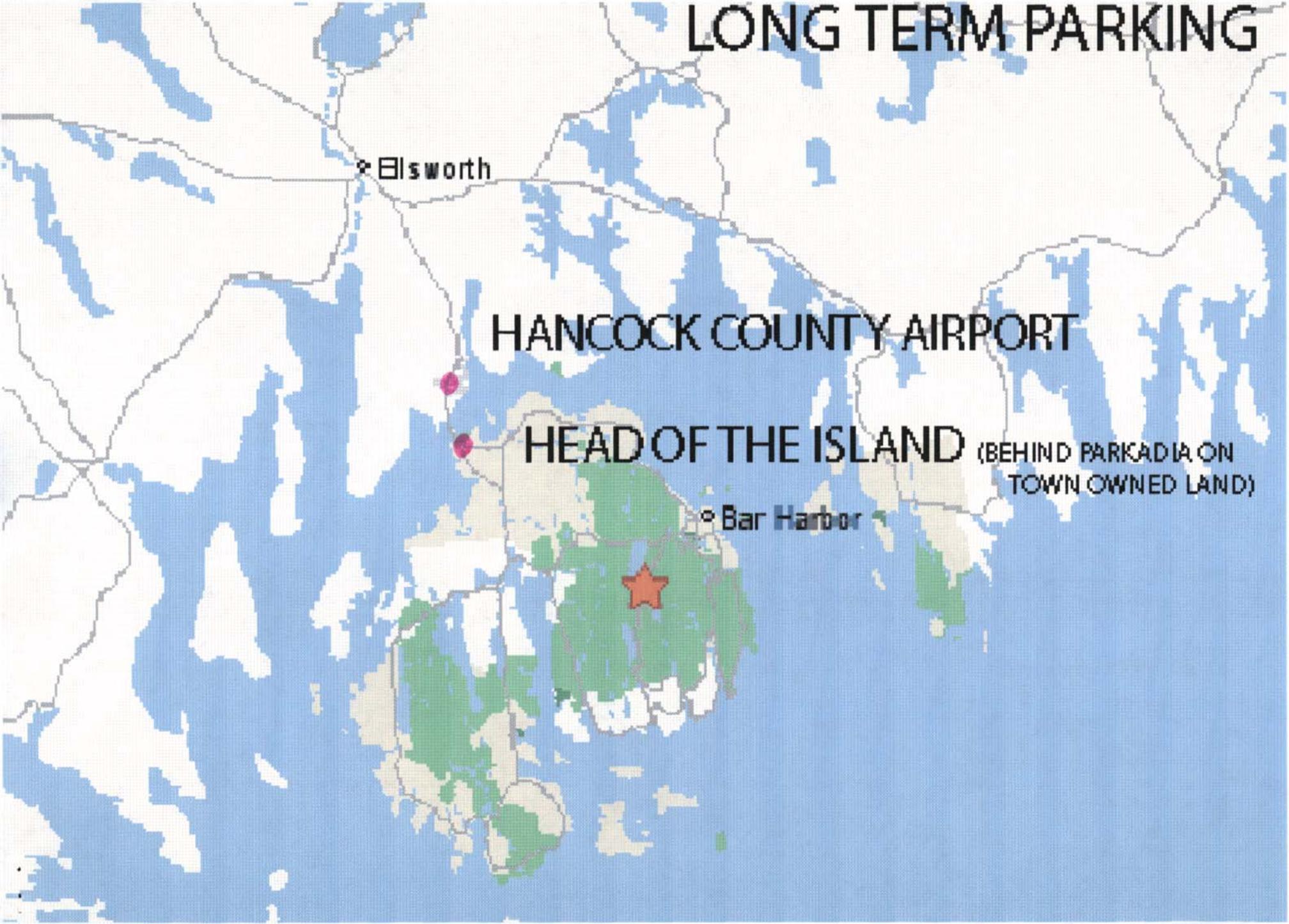
1. Parking signs will be clear, well lit, strategically located in order to designate where parking is allowed, its limitations, and the available transportation options.
2. Parking enforcement employees will be well trained to direct the public to the appropriate parking area.
3. Local residents will learn of the changes through repeated neighborhood hearings, public forums, newspaper articles, radio, TV coverage and notices attached to their tax bill.
4. Visitors will be instructed with the aid of the Chambers of Commerce, the National Park Service, and the Town of Bar Harbor
 - When making inquiries or reservations
 - Road signs on entering routes
 - 1610 AM radio announcements...
 - Interaction with parking enforcement personnel or local
 - Publications, visitors' guides, bus schedules, route maps.
 - Promotional literature will explain the **Alternative Option Campaign**

The Alternative Option Campaign is a concerted effort on the part of the Town of Bar Harbor, the Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce and Acadia National Park to promote environmental stewardship. Logically, the tourists who visit Acadia National Park are predisposed to energy saving awareness. The Alternative Option Campaign includes educating tourist of our area's transportation options such as using the Island Explorer, biking or walking, and allow for accommodations and restaurants to promote their recycling and conservation efforts in addition to helping the National Park reinforce tourist consciousness.
5. Each employer will need to be shown the benefits of an uncongested downtown with easily accessible parking, peripheral parking with shuttle buses, and long term parking with shuttle buses.
 - With the benefits acknowledged it will be equally important for employers strongly encourage their staff to participate in the program and its training.
6. Employees will be trained to provide a consistent message.
 - The town will prepare a short video parking, alternative means of travel, public transportation, housing etiquette, noise, public services, locations of public interest, etc.
 - This should be sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce might sponsor the video.
 - Businesses whose employees have viewed the video will be permitted to post an official "Tourist Information/Ask Us About parking" Chamber sticker for their establishment.

Educating "target groups" will have a positive affect in managing the parking demand while establishing that all sectors are on the same playing field.



LONG TERM PARKING



Elsworth

HANCOCK COUNTY AIRPORT

HEAD OF THE ISLAND (BEHIND PARKADIA ON TOWN OWNED LAND)

Bar Harbor

SHARED PARKING

COLLEGE OF THE ATLANTIC



JACKSON LABORATORY