



**BAR HARBOR BACKYARD PARKING STUDY  
PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS  
SUBMITTED MARCH 8, 2016**



**Submitted to:  
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**Submitted by:**



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# BAR HARBOR BACKYARD PARKING STUDY

## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

### Public Open House Report

November 9, 2015

An Open House type meeting was held Monday, November 9, 2015 with the purpose of providing information and obtaining comments and input from the community on the Phase 4 of the Backyard Parking Study and proposed parking garage. Prior to the meeting, the Final Report for the Feasibility Study Lot Parking Garage dated October 2015 was made available on the Bar Harbor Town's website for review by the public. All previous presentations made to the Town as well as the presentation from the Open House have been available to the public through the Town's website. The Open House started with a short presentation that provided an overview of all previous efforts and the framework for the Open House. Surveys and Comment Cards were provided to all in attendance at the meeting, online and with the Town of Bar Harbor's staff. The period to submit surveys closed December 15, 2015. A total of 51 surveys were received. Participants sometimes did not answer the question or provided multiple answers to others. Below is a summary of the general observations from the survey results.

### Survey Results Summary Observations

- Most responses (78%) came from participants from the 52 to 74 age group. (18%) were in the category of 35-54 age groups.
- Most (82%) of the participants live in the Town or within a mile of the Town limits.
- 45% of the participants work in the center of Town and the second largest group (37%) of participants marked "not applicable." This could reflect that there may be a considerable group of attendees that could be retired.
- Most participants (74%) travel to the center of Town on a daily basis.
- Most participants (80%) live in Bar Harbor year-round.
- A little more than half (58%) of the participants drive to the Town. 30% walk there.
- Approximately half (46%) of the participants use on-street parking. (20%) of the participants park in residential areas. The rest or (34%) of the participant's park anywhere else they can find parking.
- The majority of the participants (78%) acknowledge there is a parking problem in the center of Town during the season. (29%) of the participants stated that there was no parking problem although their comments on this question supported the issue that there is a parking problem.
- As a follow up to the parking problem question, of those that responded yes (64%) stated that it is due to a lack of parking spaces.
- Of the participants that responded that there was no parking problem when asked why not, their comments supported the lack of parking or included a description of anecdotal situations such as people being impatient in the search of a parking space, or the fact that since they walk to town, there is no problem to them as individuals. Others commented that the parking problem fluctuates depending on what is happening on the waterfront.



# BAR HARBOR BACKYARD PARKING STUDY

## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

- Of the participants that responded (71) % opted for the user fee option for financing any proposed improvement.
- Of the participants that noted their preferences, (71%) chose some type of electronic meters or pay by phone meters.
- When the participants were asked as to their biggest concern with the recommendations, there was no clear majority pointing to a particular objection but the vote was split with (34%) selecting disagreement with a parking garage being the answer and (30%) pointing out concern with paying for on street parking. The other opinions were split between concerns with the design of the garage or the look of the parking meters. There were also opinions expressed, that the only place where the Town should charge for parking should be the garage.
- As far as what recommendations the participants agreed with, there was an even preference for all recommendations two being a slightly higher at (15%) for creating a no cost residential parking permit program and charging for parking in the Town's owned lots. Building the garage at the Backyard lot came in second at (14%).
- The last question was left open for suggestions as to what the Council should undertake and there was a similar ring to most of the comments:
  - Take a more holistic approach at the parking problem; consider multiple options; implement in phases.
  - Provide more opportunities for the public to obtain information and provide input.

### Final Observations:

- It seems that generally the information from past studies has not reached the public in spite of multiple presentations over the years.
- There is no acknowledgement that the reports evaluate different options even though the final October 15 report has a section dedicated to this evaluation.
- There is a desire that the Town look at a more holistic approach to the parking issues.
- There does not seem to be a clear understanding of user fee financing and how the parking fund would work using the revenues from metered on and off street parking and the garage and how this would fund the capital program without the use of any taxes. .
- Results were received from a not very diverse group of residents, most being in some of the highest age brackets, including retirees and residents that live in Bar Harbor all year long.

### Recommendations for Follow-Up Public Outreach:

- Provide to the Town of Bar Harbor a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document to be distributed through the Town and the Town's website covering most of the questions that were gathered during the Open House and the follow up comment period. This FAQ's can provide clarification to some of the issues that were raised.



# BAR HARBOR BACKYARD PARKING STUDY

## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

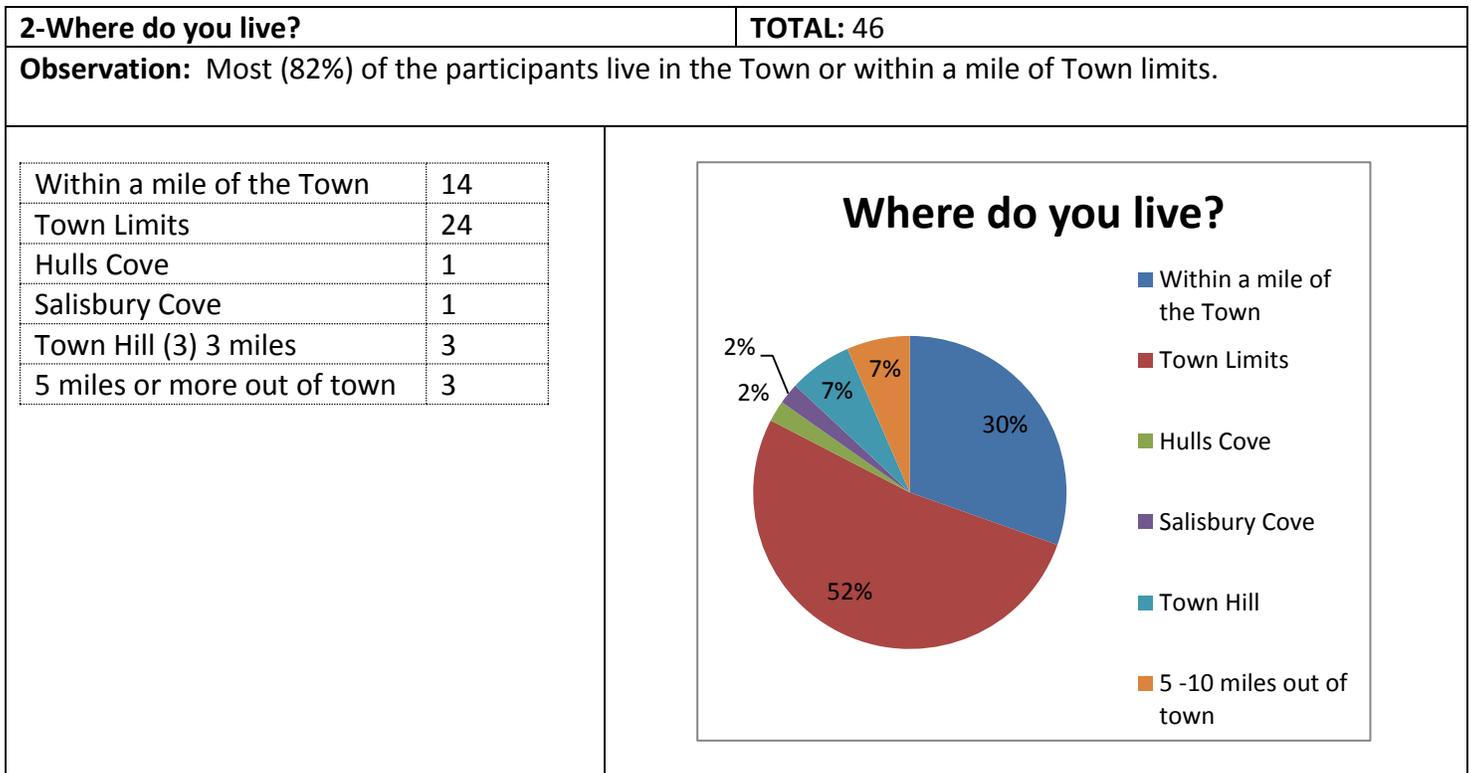
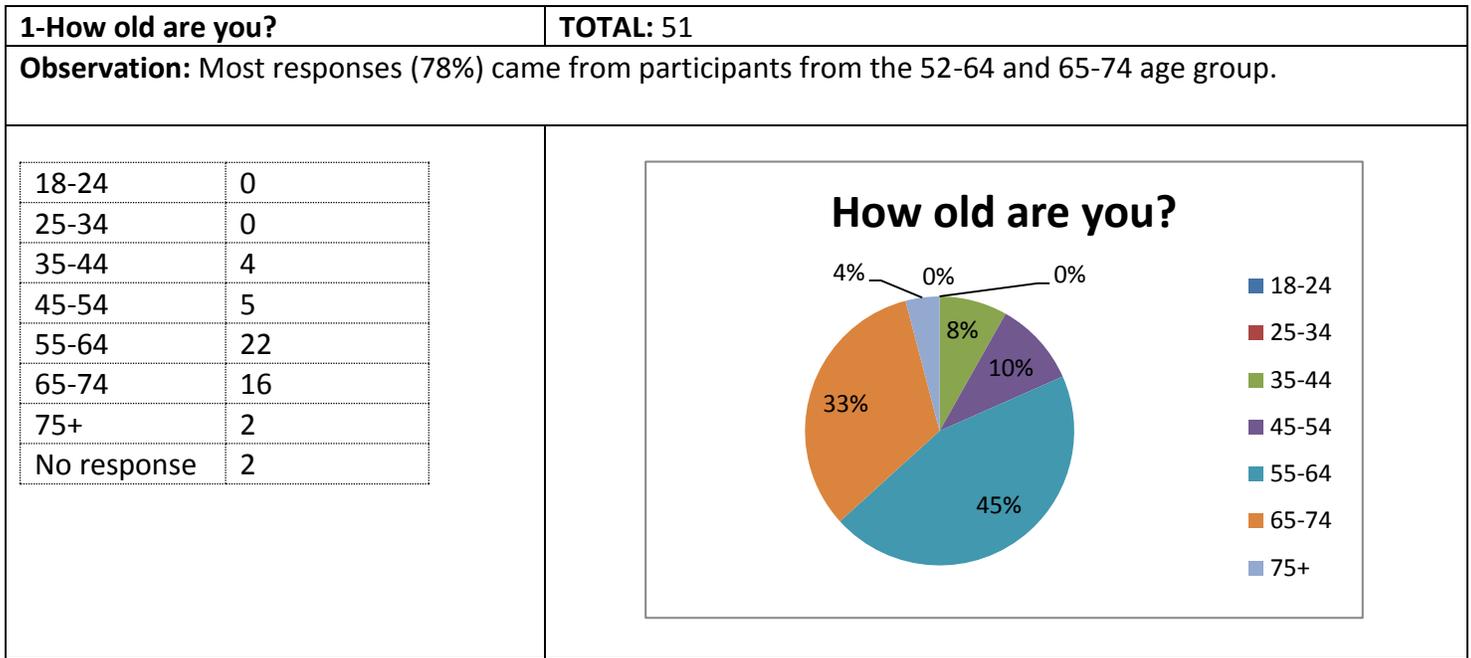
- The final recommendations should consider the implementation of a complete parking program. There has been emphasis on the garage as the recommended option since it's the only one that creates additional spaces in the center of Town, but implementation includes other programs also. Most importantly, emphasis should be given to how the creation of a parking fund, fed by user fees from the metered on and off street parking as well as the garage (not taxes), creates an opportunity for the Town of Bar Harbor to fund not only a garage but future phases of parking infrastructure improvements that can include remote/satellite options or additional streetscape within the center of Town.
- The parking program included in the final recommendations can provide a long term answer to the parking issues in Bar Harbor and the financial capacity in the future to fund other elements of a parking program.
- The Frequently Asked Questions can be the base to provide a greater degree of public involvement and understanding with an effort to a greater degree of residents and business owners and set the framework to garner public consensus.



# BAR HARBOR BACKYARD PARKING STUDY

## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

### Graphic Representation of Survey Results





# BAR HARBOR BACKYARD PARKING STUDY

## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

<b>3-Where do you work?</b>	<b>TOTAL: 51</b>															
<p><b>Observations:</b> 45% of the participants work in the Town and the second largest group (37%) of participants marked “not applicable.” We could infer that this group can include retirees.</p>																
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<b>4-In season, how often do you come to the Town?</b>	<b>TOTAL: 50</b>															
<p><b>Observations:</b> Most participants (74%) travel to town on a daily basis.</p>																
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# BAR HARBOR BACKYARD PARKING STUDY

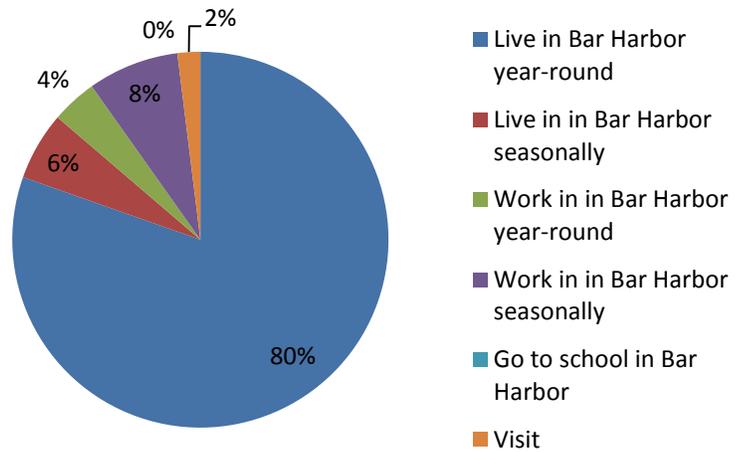
## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

**5-What brings you to Bar Harbor?** **TOTAL: 51**

**Observation:** Most participants (80%) live in Bar Harbor year-round.

Live in Bar Harbor year-round	41
Live in in Bar Harbor seasonally	3
Work in Bar Harbor year-round	2
Work in Bar Harbor seasonally	4
Go to school in Bar Harbor	0
Visit	1

### What brings you to Bar Harbor?

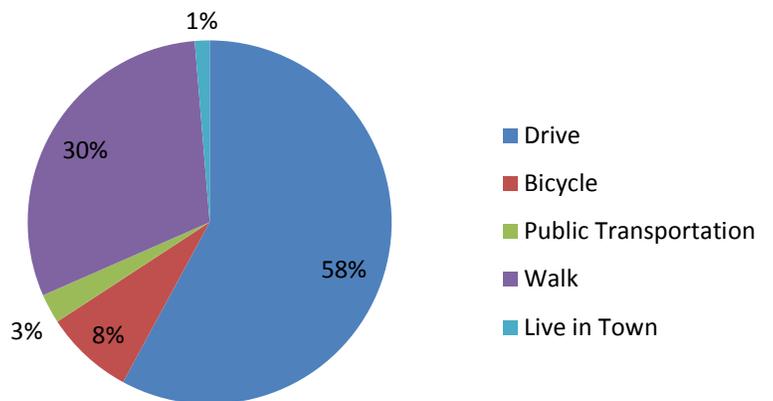


**6- How do you travel to the Town?** **TOTAL: 76** (Participants provided multiple responses)

**Observations:** A little more than half (58%) of the participants drive to the Town. 30% walk there.

Drive	44
Bicycle	6
Public Transportation	2
Walk	23
Not applicable	Live here (1)

### How do you travel to the Town?





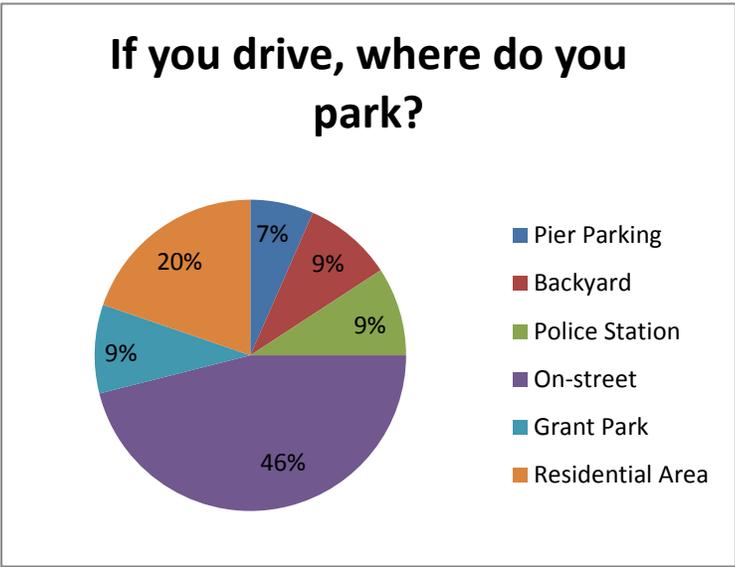
# BAR HARBOR BACKYARD PARKING STUDY

## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

**7- If you drive, where do you park?** **TOTAL:** 75 (Participants provided multiple responses)

**Observations:** A little less than half (46%) of the participants use on-street parking. 20% of participants park in residential areas. The rest of the 34% of participant’s park anywhere else they can find parking.

Pier Parking	5
Backyard	7
Police Station	7
On-street	35
Grant Park	7
Residential Area	15



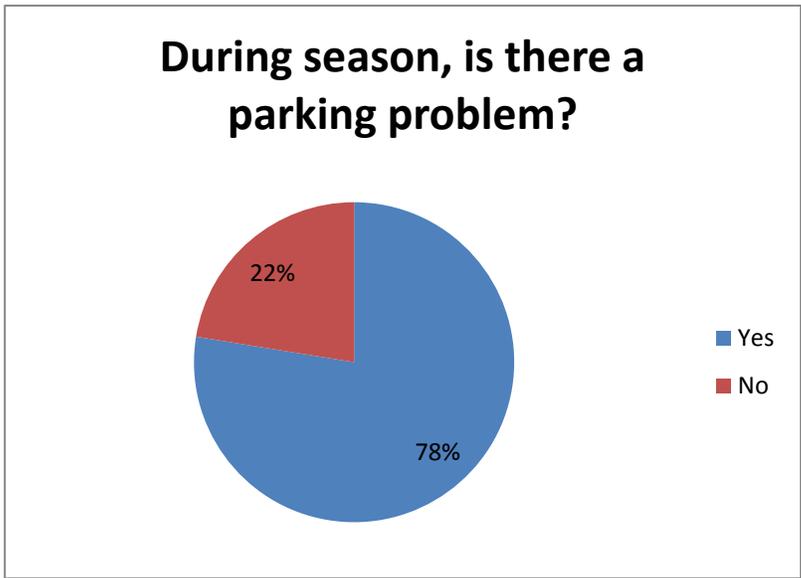
**Comments:**

- Secret Parking
- There is nowhere! A crisis! Banks, Hannaford’s, behind fire station. At business I patronize.
- Municipal lots
- Church when there

**8-During season, is there a parking problem?** **TOTAL:** 49

**Observations:** Most participants (78%) acknowledge there is a parking problem in the Town during the season.

Yes	38
No	11





# BAR HARBOR BACKYARD PARKING STUDY

## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

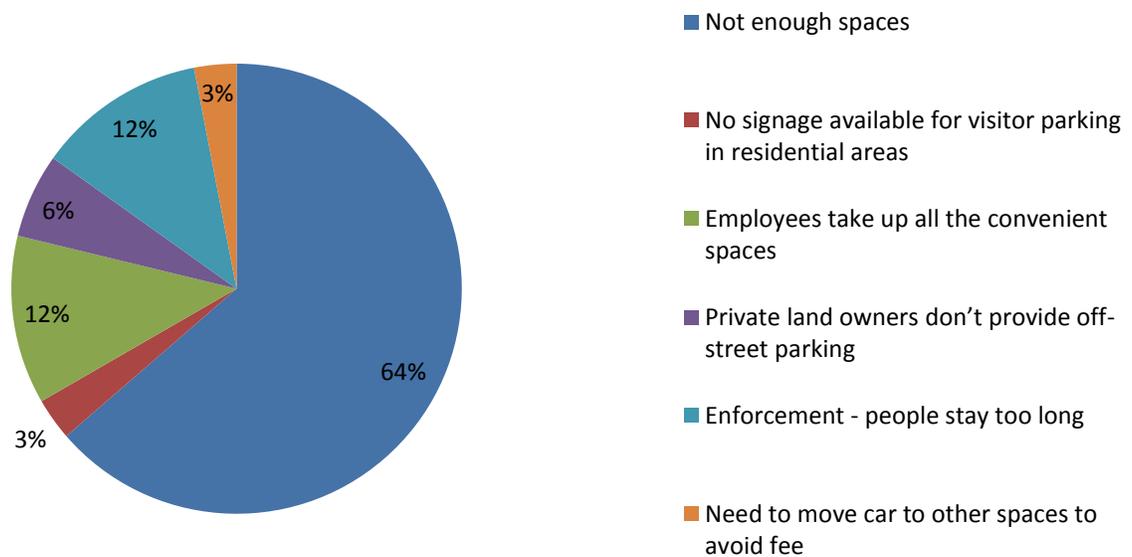
**9- If you answered "Yes" to #8, what do you feel is the greatest issue?**

**TOTAL: 33**

Observations: The majority recognize that the greatest issue is the lack of sufficient spaces.

Not enough spaces	21
No signage available for visitor parking in residential areas	1
Employees take up all the convenient spaces	4
Private land owners don't provide off-street parking	2
Enforcement - people stay too long	4
Need to move car to other spaces to avoid fee	1

### If you answered "Yes" to #8, what do you feel is the greatest issue?



**Comments:**

- Hotels/motels/inns and expansions do not provide enough parking or downtown businesses don't need to provide parking.
- Large whale watch companies and tow operators don't provide enough spaces yet attract many folks. These businesses should provide out of town lots and bus people in to reduce congestions.
- Need remote parking areas with "Express" buses to Downtown in the future. .
- A parking garage may be a piece of the solution, but Town should consider all possibilities.
- Not convenient public transportation from out of town. Sometimes island explorer takes over an hour.
- Atlantic Avenue gets a lot of all-day parking in season – hard to get out of driveway.
- Town was not designed for the number of visitors it gets.



# BAR HARBOR BACKYARD PARKING STUDY

## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

**Continued: 9- If you answered "Yes" to #8, what do you feel is the greatest issue?**

- On-street parking spots obscure vision when trying to enter street from parking area. When entering Cottage St from Hannaford parking lot, I have to pull half way out into the street before I can see if there is traffic coming.
- It would be convenient to have a place for longer-term parking or all-day parking instead of on-street.
- If you drive to a city or major attraction, you expect to pay for parking. The Town of Bar Harbor is not obligated to provide free parking to all visitors.

**10-If you answered "No" to #8, why do feel there is not a problem in season?**

**TOTAL: 18**

**Observations:** Some of the comments do support the fact that there is a problem even though the individuals answered no. There are some of anecdotal comments or opinions as what should be done about the problem.

- It's not consistent day to day – depending on activities, weather, boat cruise ship visits, etc. Buses for cruise ships take up many spaces on pier and in-town.
- There is no problem for me. I walk to town.
- Always can find a spot on Roberts Ave. when needed for me and tenants.
- It is crowded in season, but I would rather have residents and visitors walk farther away from downtown to park (similar to now, for shoppers have to walk at typical Banger Mall or Maine Mall to shop in the mall than turn everything into paid parking. We will turn off visitors to Bar Harbor if we have paid parking.
- I would rather see the Gateway Center completed and/or Satellite Parking created as close to town as possible. Local employees who do not live in town can't afford to pay for parking every day.
- The question assumes more people should be accommodated without asking why.
- It is a matter of patience and also timing – I don't go to town during peak hours, e.g. lunch time.
- I adjust my schedule to avoid worst times of day or the places I need to go provide their own parking. Yes, it is very crowded in-season, but I plan ahead and am willing to walk a ways. Or we park peripheral to downtown and take the bus in.
- I've never had a problem parking. These people are impatient brats who want what they want instantly.
- Park at Bank to do banking, park at Hannaford's to go grocery shopping, park on street (with some searching) to do other errands.
- We always find a spot!
- We just keep looking and always find one.
- You can find a place to park; you just might have to walk a little bit.
- There is no need to park, only in one small area such as at the waterfront.
- Boat tour businesses near the harbor take up too many spaces on West St.
- Too many people. Town can't sustain any more. No town parking lot
- There is no shuttle system to get to town.
- We need satellite parking with buses bringing people into town. I am worried.



# BAR HARBOR BACKYARD PARKING STUDY

## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

**11-How would you prefer to fund the parking garage? TOTAL: 31**

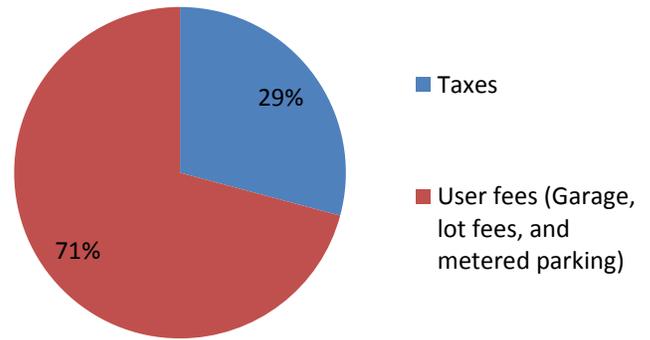
**Observations:** Of the participants that answered 71% opted for the user fee option. Some alternative opinions expressed.

Taxes	7
User fees (Garage, lot fees, and metered parking)	24

**Comments:**

- Garage should pay for itself, without subsidy
- Fees from business owners and downtown merchants. Create out of town lots and bus people.
- No metered parking.
- Businesses whose customers will use the garage.
- Free metered parking for all Bar Harbor residents.
- Don't want a parking garage.

### How would you prefer to fund the parking garage?



**12-For metered parking would you prefer: TOTAL: 27**

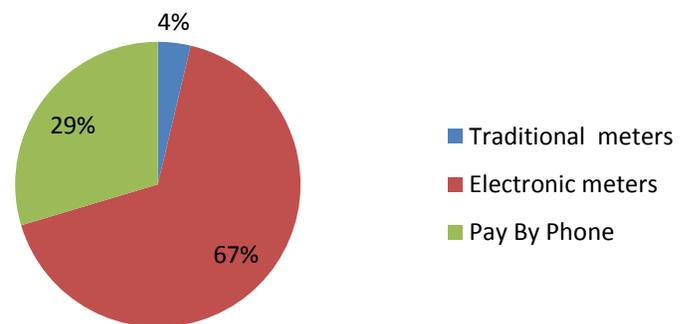
**Observations:** Of the participants that noted their preferences, 67% chose electronic meters. There was a suggestion to use kiosks.

Traditional meters	1
Electronic meters	18
Pay By Phone	8

**Comments:**

- No meters. Use kiosks.
- None of the above.
- Don't want it.
- Free metered parking for all Bar - Harbor residents.
- No metered parking

### For metered parking would you prefer:





# BAR HARBOR BACKYARD PARKING STUDY

## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

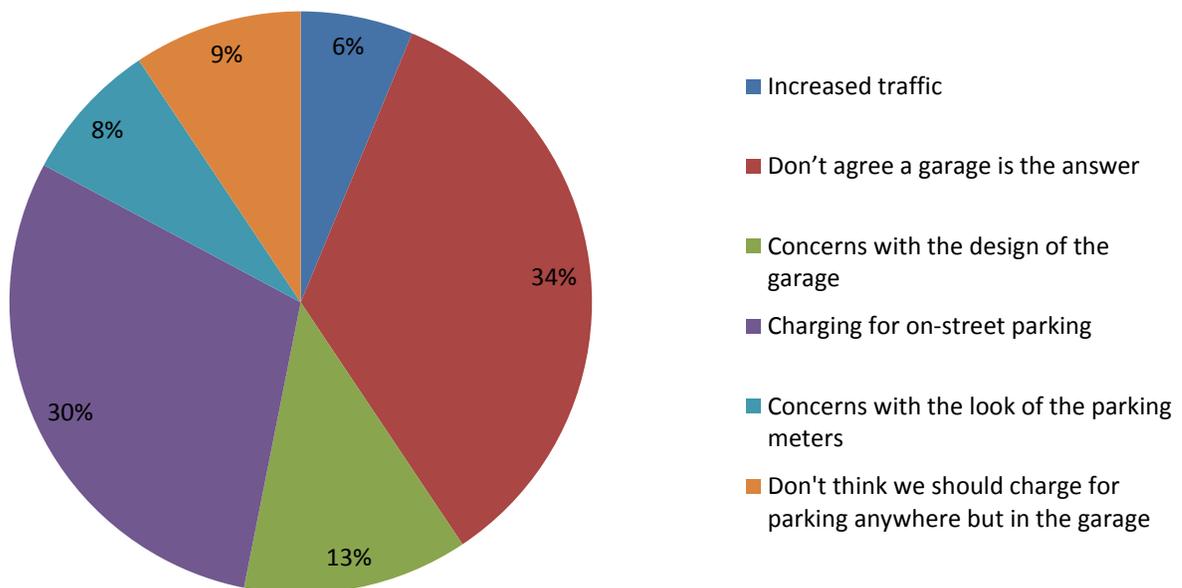
**13-What is your biggest concern regarding the recommendation of the Backyard Parking Study?**

**TOTAL: 84**

**Observations:** The majority of the answers provided were split expressing disagreements with the garage and metered parking. Participants provided multiple responses to the concerns. It interesting how the pie chart becomes more even divided into different concerns.

Increased traffic	4
Don't agree a garage is the answer	22
Concerns with the design of the garage	8
Charging for on-street parking	19
Concerns with the look of the parking meters	5
Don't think we should charge for parking anywhere but in the garage	6

### What is your biggest concern regarding the recommendation of the Backyard Parking Study?



**Comments:**

- Too congested for delivery trucks and fire (safety) trucks to maneuver around this garage.
- No partnership with Tom Walsh.



## BAR HARBOR BACKYARD PARKING STUDY PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

### Continued: 13-What is your biggest concern regarding the recommendation of the Backyard Parking Study –

- Garage isn't large enough to solve problem (per 8/19/15 DESMAN Report).
- Garage is too costly and Town can't afford it.
- ?
- Curbside meters on streets are an eyesore and detract from quaint village character.
- There are other places to consider.
- I'm content with the parking in Bar Harbor now.
- Possible effect on visitors due to paid parking.
- Services Access for Backyard abutters.
- For the most part, it is a good plan for a long standing issue.
- Bar Harbor is too beautiful to put garages and parking meters.
- If meters are used as part of the mix, devise mechanism so Bar Harbor residents can use the metered spaces for free during high season.
- Expenses falling on year-around residents to accommodate visitors.
- It can be the answer, but it's not being presented as part of a holistic concept, with a walkability of Downtown, Satellite parking, and sustainability elements before the plan is implemented.
- There are many non-tourism-related, year-round businesses in downtown that do not provide parking for their employees. Some of these employees go and come throughout the day and need a dedicated space for them. We depend on the residential neighborhoods for all-day spaces. Need to issue residential permits for employees too!
- Local workers who live outside of town can't afford to pay for parking every day.
- It didn't look at parking lot satellite seriously, 2002 excellent report.
- No parking meters. Don't encumber our ailing sidewalks, it will push walkers away.
- No concerns with the plans.
- Need Off island facility and shuttle-buses.
- Provide garage for people that need more than 1-hour parking.
- I used to live near a tourist town and they brought in metered parking. It was a disaster, the local people stopped coming to into town.
- Visiting a town with metered parking is a drag. The idea of a huge parking garage to be used for about 12 weeks is foolish and will look horrible.



# BAR HARBOR BACKYARD PARKING STUDY

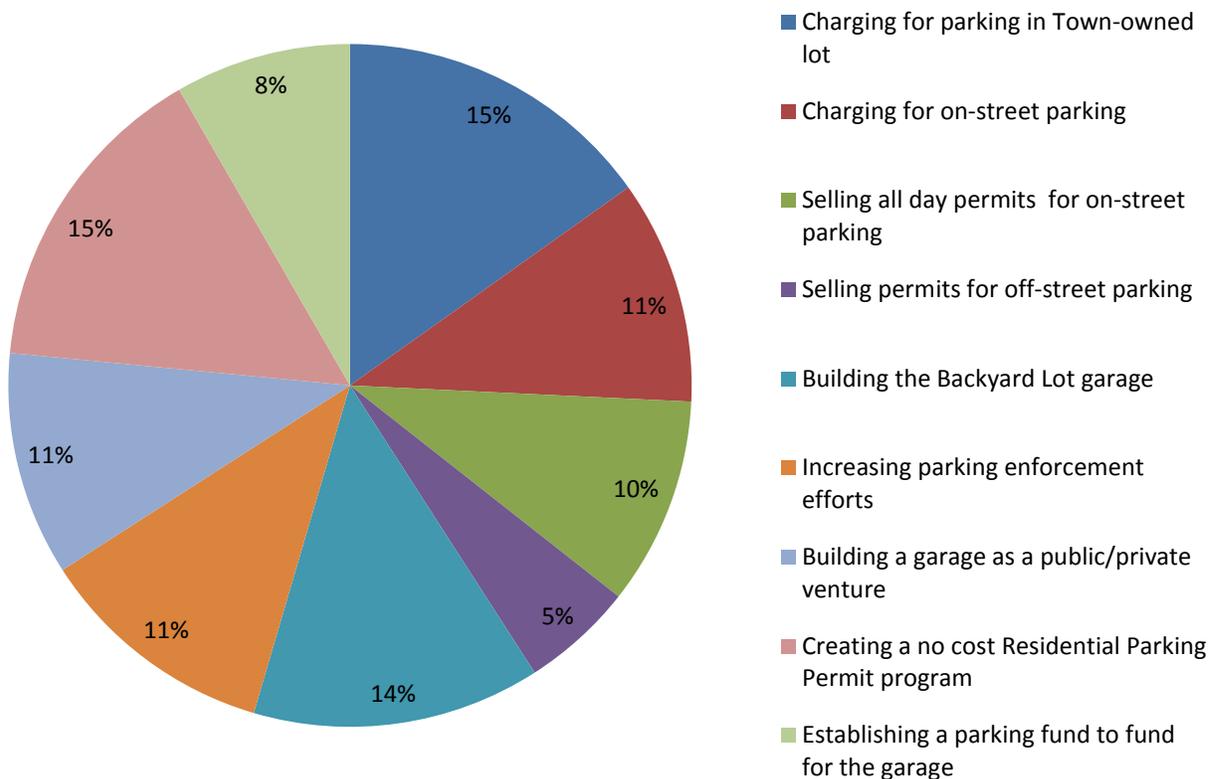
## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

**14-What recommendations do agree with?** **TOTAL: 138**

**Observations:** There were multiple of answers from the group and the answers reflected almost equal agreement on the multiple recommendations. This was the question where most participation was noted. There were a number of recommendations included in the comments.

Charging for parking in Town-owned lot	20
Charging for on-street parking	14
Selling all day permits for on-street parking	13
Selling permits for off-street parking	7
Building the Backyard Lot garage	18
Increasing parking enforcement efforts	15
Building a garage as a public/private venture	14
Creating a no cost Residential Parking Permit program	20
Establishing a parking fund to fund for the garage	11

### What recommendations do agree with?





## BAR HARBOR BACKYARD PARKING STUDY PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

### Comments: (No. 14-What recommendations do agree with?)

- Parking garage will benefit business owners financially. Therefore, business owner should finance the building and maintenance of the garage.
- No parking garage.
- Explore alternative strategies that actually solve the parking problem and are more affordable, as satellite parking.
- Include year-round business employees in the list who can apply for residential parking permits. Otherwise, a disincentive for year-round, non-tourism businesses to locate in town.
- Requiring seasonal employees to park at a satellite lot (school) and shuttle in.
- Consider out of downtown on-island parking lot with express buses.
- People want convenience and they are willing to pay for it!
- Need an employee permit program during the season.
- Require hotels and boat tours operators to provide satellite parking and shuttle service.
- Provide restriction of hotel expansion and numbers on boat tours.
- Keep current time limits for street and parking in town-owned lots.
- Some on-street parking for patrons, no store owners or customers. Eliminate parking on one side of West Street, make garage free and make everything else pay.
- How about optional pay and display if you want to stay longer than the posted limit –it's a 2-hour spot and you need to stay 4 hours for your whale watch trip. Make all street and lot parking spaces have a limit of 2 hours or less limit. Maybe convert old Public Works/sandpole lot into a public parking lot.
- Create more parking spaces –There are unused lots in town and around that would look better as parking than abandoned buildings. It may be cheaper to buy those properties than build a garage.
- Park at the Trenton facility and use shuttle-buses.
- None. Discontinue initiative.
- Leave things as they are.
- Use satellite parking at the old ferry terminal on Route 3 and Field by YMCA.



# BAR HARBOR BACKYARD PARKING STUDY

## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

15- What actions would you like to see Town Council undertake next with regards to this initiative?

TOTAL: 38

**Comments:**

- Feasibility study, funding model, advisory vote.
- Fine Tune Plan. Take to voters.
- Listen to the tax payers.
- More public input in various places. Not everyone can make just one meeting.
- Build this garage and plan for the next one!
- What would be the cost of out of town surface lots and free busing back and forth?
- Never hold a meeting in this format again. People couldn't hear. We couldn't ask questions in an organized way. I prefer everyone asking, answering and hearing same information.
- Move forward.
- Require seasonal employees to park at a satellite lot (school) and shuttle in, such as what is done in Atlantic City, N. J.
- Consider satellite parking with shuttles.
- I patronize businesses that provide parking for their customers. If garage and on-street meters are installed, the businesses that will profit from more customers would pay for the garage and meters, not town residents.
- Have a meeting and let us talk and give our opinions.
- Do a transportation/parking comprehensive plan.
- Build garage and remove existing parking to make streets more pedestrian friendly.
- Not only did economic development recommend a garage but a citizen "Transportation Task Force" previously had determined the need for a garage and on street meters.
- Not to go into this venture with a business entity.
- Have more discussion about the "Big Picture", including traffic flow and parking by developing Ferry terminal, using parking lots and Island Explorer shuttle buses (high school, Cenneis Emerson, Gateway, Park Visitor center, etc.).
- Have out of town employee use parking lots. Make Ocean Properties purchase their own land to provide parking for West St. hotel and tour boats.
- Ask Ocean Properties to figure out a system that uses a phone to call them for a shuttle to pick one up on 17-minute drive out of town. I do this at the airport in Boston and they carry my luggage.
- Assure that all shops have accessibility for deliveries.
- Make streets green and walking only. Move whale watch, ships out of town such as Diver Ed at COA.
- Should have been addressing funding for the last several years to offset costs, maintenance, etc. before construction.
- Discuss a more holistic approach. Start with satellite parking and infrastructure to accommodate that with metered parking. We need to have a feasible and long term strategy with better communication.
- I think the answers are a mix of the recommendations, but this is the cart before horse. Alternative 1 will win lots of public PR.
- Go back to the 2002 parking lot recommendation of automated parking lot meters.
-



## BAR HARBOR BACKYARD PARKING STUDY

### PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

#### Continued 15- What actions would you like to see Town Council undertake next with regards to this initiative?

- Explore alternative options to help solve the "Parking Problem" without a predefined project.
- They just sighted Moby Dick from a whale watcher. We got to have parking for whale watchers. One more Whale Watcher and you'll need another garage.
- Explore and evaluate other strategies that not only solve the downtown parking problem, but do so at lower cost, e.g. satellite parking and other alternatives in 2002 Parking Committee Report.
- Drop it!
- Phase in paid metered parking to show revenues in the parking fund, and then proceed with garage.
- Move forward cautiously with more input from the community, or this initiative will fail.
- I see this as something driven by a few individual. I don't see I need to subsidize this with more taxes of more fees. Leave it alone.
- In season only limit free in-town parking to one hour on-street and two hours in town lots. Build fee-based parking lot with shuttle service somewhere on MDI and charge by the hour for long-term parking.
- I live outside downtown and don't want my taxes to fund the garage – another service I derive little benefit from. Wait to see what happens with the ferry terminal before making a decision on Backyard garage.
- Explore parking areas out to the downtown and shuttle buses to town. Consider a walking mall. –
- Explore ways to keep cars out of town.
- Off-site parking and promoting use of bus shuttle service. This charming little town will lose all its beauty with more automobile access.
- Drop it. Garage plan is a way over the top for basically 3 months of usage. The other 9 months it would be another big empty shell.
- Agree to talk about it later.
- I am urging Town Council to discontinue the initiative and to have a moratorium on all future development in Bar Harbor, especially the downtown area, because overdevelopment is transforming the history and character of the downtown area. The garage does not fit with the architectural style and will be a disruption and is not in keeping with the vision. Council should encourage greener model of transportation via Explorer.
- Whale boat and tour boat operators should use the Ferry Terminal or Acadia Gateway Center as satellite parking lots.
- The multi-level concrete garage does not belong and is not a long term answer to increased tourism.
- Nothing, if it's not broken don't fix it.
- Can it.
- Make it happen.