

Appendix A. 25 Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can we create new parking spaces to solve the problem?

In August 2017, The Town Council asked the Parking Solutions Task Force to revise their Spring 2017 plan to solve the long-standing parking problem. The task force has been working to make EXISTING parking more efficient. Consistent with the Council Goals for a sustainable future, our overall approach is to encourage visitors and residents alike to WALK, BIKE AND BUS, with the aim of reducing demand on finite downtown parking instead of creating new parking spaces.

2. Will we have an opportunity to vote on the revised plan?

Yes. When voters considered a bond for purchase of kiosks and meters in June, many people left town meeting before the final vote tally, when the vote was ____ in favor and ____ opposed. The Town Council asked us to keep working so we have come back to the community with a revised plan to help solve the long-standing parking problem. Assuming that the Council seeks to pay “up front” costs to purchase kiosks, meters and software through a bond, which will be up for a vote at June 2018 town meeting.

3. Can we create a better balance of residential and employee parking in our neighborhoods?

Employees are already parking in many neighborhoods. In addition, they park in the commercial districts and move their cars every two hours to avoid a ticket, or they take a chance on a ticket. Our permitting program will give Bar Harbor residents a free parking sticker for residential areas. Those employees who are not residents will receive a parking sticker at a nominal fee, allowing parking in designated areas including some residential streets. Instead of parking on residential streets as they do now, tourists will be directed to paid parking on streets and public parking lots.

4. What options will residents have for parking?

If you are a resident, you will receive a permit allowing you to park on any of the residential streets. We will create a number of “fifteen-minute free” spaces (post office, town office, library, etc). And you can purchase a discounted “smart pass”, allowing you to use all of the public spaces and lots... it will work like a debit card, which you can “top up” as needed. With further public input, we may be able to create additional “resident only” spaces.

5. What if residents just want to run some short errands downtown?

First, residents and others will be able to park in all areas before 9 AM. There is free customer parking all day for customers of our local banks, pharmacies, health services and grocery stores. We will designate free 15 minute spaces for the post office, town hall and library.

6. Can the spaces at Conners-Emerson school be used to augment employee parking?

Parking Solutions Task Force met with representatives of the elementary school and high school. We are working together to make some employee parking available during the latter part of June, July and until mid-August, when the school is not in session.

7. Can the ferry terminal lot be used for satellite parking?

The Ferry Terminal Advisory Committee has recommended to Town Council that we include satellite parking with a shuttle into downtown at the ferry terminal. The Parking Solution Task Force endorses this recommendation and urges the Council to use revenues from paid parking to contribute to payment for improvements and related shuttle services.

8. How much parking do we need to accommodate residents, employees and visitors?

The Desman parking studies over two summers (2014-15) concluded that that most tourists, residents and employees are accommodated most of the time with our existing number of parking spots. At peak times, however, as many as 100 cars circulate through the commercial district and into residential areas looking for parking. This plan attempts to change behavior... with residents and employees guaranteed parking spaces through the permit program, and with tourists using paid parking on streets and in public parking lots in the commercial district.

The need for employee parking vary greatly from year to year and even from shift to shift. Some employees live in the downtown and walk to work, some live off island and drive to work and every scenario in between. When surveying the needs, we found that employers/employees were grateful for our attempts to find employee parking so that employees don't have to move cars every two hours. Solving the employee parking may need adjustment from year to year.

9. Besides additional revenues to the Parking Fund, what are the other benefits to the town?

The seasonal parking plan will generate at least \$500,000 per year. The first priority will be to pay off the cost of parking equipment, enforcement and related costs. After which, we recommend revenues be designated to assist with development of satellite parking at ferry terminal and associated shuttle service and improvements to our streets, sidewalks, making Bar Harbor more walkable, "bike-able" and pleasant for all. The additional revenues will have the effect of offsetting expenses born by tax payers.

10. Why can't we try the parking lots first and then do on street parking?

If we charge for parking in public lots only, folks will flock to the free on-street parking thus increasing traffic congestion. Permit parking will free up parking along residential streets now taken by visitors. Parking consultants, local and from away, have advised us to do paid parking on-street and in lots simultaneously with a permit program for residents and employees.

11. Will paid parking be 24 hours a day?

NO. Everyone will have 13 HOURS A DAY OF FREE parking. Paid parking will be 9 am to 8 pm. Delivery of inventory, removal of trash and recyclables, etc. can be done before parking charges start at 9 am. Also, we will have continued free parking for seven months, from mid-October to mid-May.

12. Will COA students be able to get a residential parking sticker?

Students can present a valid college ID and a car registration from any state to the Town of Bar Harbor for a free residential parking sticker.

13. How will parking enforcement be enhanced and improved within the Parking Program?

Smart parking meters/kiosks will make enforcement and revenue collection more efficient. The Police Chief has met with the committee and the Police Department will develop strategies that make enforcement more effective. The cost of parking enforcement can be reimbursed from the funds taken in through kiosks and meters.

14. Have other communities with a similar set of parking problems implemented programs similar to what we are proposing?

While every community is different, we found several communities that use a combination of paid parking via Smart Meters and Kiosks, along with permit parking for residents and employees. Among them are Newburyport, MA. and Hot Springs, Arkansas.

15. When will parking regulations be enforced?

Mid May –Mid October 7 days/week, 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM. The rest of the year the parking meters will be removed from the streets.

16. What are the time limits for meters and lots?

Most spaces downtown will be limited to two hours. Other spaces and lots will allow all-day parking

17. What are the overnight restrictions at meters and in paid lots?

Same as the current ordinance: Vehicles may not be left anywhere for more than 72 hours.

18. Why not use kiosks for on-street parking instead of meters?

Meters have less visual impact and less impact on pedestrian flow. Kiosks are only effective when visible (“findable”) from a large number of condensed spaces (parking lots or street parking without cross-street interruptions).

19. Is a parking garage part of this plan?

The concept of a parking garage is not part of this plan. Recent zoning changes do not allow parking garages in the downtown area.

20. Who gets a “resident” sticker and where can it be used?

Any resident of BH gets a free sticker for each vehicle registered in BH, including residents from outlying BH villages. “Resident” stickers can be used in the many streets designated as “resident and employee only” and in any “Resident Only” spaces designated within the metered spaces and the public lots.

21. Who gets an “employee” sticker and where can it be used?

Any employee may show proof of employment and receive a permit for \$30 for the entire season. Any employer may also purchase permits for their employees. Employees may park on any of the streets designated “resident and employee only”

22. What if I have friends coming to visit from another town during enforcement times?

BH residents can get a free, visitor parking pass. Remember your “resident” sticker will allow you to park on street, and your visitors can park in your driveway.

23. Will the sticker program increase parking in residential areas?

By eliminating visitor parking in residential areas, no overall increase in parking in residential areas is anticipated.

24. How much will a parking violation cost?

The recommendation in the Task Force report suggests \$20 for the first offense, \$35 for the second and \$50 for each subsequent violation.

25. Will parking fees discourage tourists?

Most tourists are accustomed to paying for parking and will appreciate the improved experience.