

C&C Consulting Engineers, LLC

August 25, 2002

Hon. Alan Lavender
Mayor of the City of Newburyport
Newburyport City Hall, 60 Pleasant Street
Newburyport, MA 01950

RE: NEWBURYPORT, PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN

Dear Mayor Lavender:

In 1999 I conducted a study of the demand for parking in the Newburyport Central Business District as a part of a project that included the evaluation of possible sites for a future parking garage, and the development of conceptual plans for a garage on the Green Street Municipal Lot. The area considered in the demand study was bounded by Federal Street, High Street, Route 1 and Merrimack/Water Streets. A copy of the conclusions letter for the study is attached hereto. The study concluded that 450 to 500 new parking spaces were warranted, assuming that the two waterfront parking lots owned by the Newburyport Redevelopment Authority would eventually be converted to an open space park.

Since that time, this firm has conducted a site selection study and conceptual design exercise for the new parking garage under the direction of your Office of Planning and Development and the Newburyport Parking Committee. We recently completed designs for a 350-car structure that will be sited on three properties fronting on Titcolm Street and Merrimack Street, behind the City Hall. The size of the garage was targeted with the understanding that the Redevelopment Authority was considering retainage of 100 parking spaces in their plans for the new open space park, so that the total number of 450 spaces would be provided in accordance with my recommendation.

In the light of the developments of the past three years, the City's Project Manager has asked me to reconsider my 1999 recommendation, and to make a new recommendation if warranted. In the process of reconsidering my earlier recommendation, I undertook the following activities:

1. I made note of the development (or re-development) of several commercial properties on the fringes of the study area. These include properties in the Federal Street and Route 1 areas. Although these do add to the overall parking demand, each of these either had off-street parking for themselves, or they relied on un-used parking at curbside. None of these will have a noticeable effect on parking in the core downtown area.
2. I discussed the parking violations situation with Police Chief Thomas Howard to see if there were any unusual parking violation patterns that would foretell of an over-capacity situation. He has advised me that there has been no change in the violations patterns over the past three years.
3. I discussed the situation with the Director of the Chamber of Commerce, Bill Piercey. He confirmed that parking is usually easy to find in the core downtown area, so long as one is not bent on finding a space exactly in front of any particular business. As he noted in 1999, he again noted that congestion is significant for five or six "festival" day per year. It is generally felt that this sort of congestion is acceptable in a tourist community such as Newburyport.

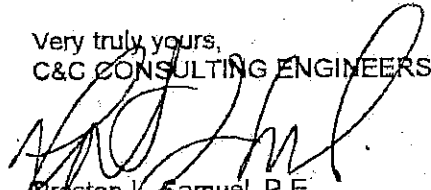
(formerly Hayden-Wegman Boston)

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- 4. I discussed the situation with Michael Lagasse at Piper Properties. In 1999 I had conducted a similar discussion with Anne Lagasse. The focus of my discussion was whether there had been any significant new lease space created in the study area that could create new parking demand since 1999. Mr. Lagasse concluded that there had been some new space created (most notably the former theater on Green Street), but it was insignificant when compared with the overall lease space area in the downtown area.

Based on the above findings, I conclude that there is no significant change in the parking demand in the downtown area. Additionally, I would note that the vacancy rates in the Downtown area continue to remain very low, and there is little room for further build-out under current zoning regulations. Accordingly, I recommend that the City continue to develop plans for approximately 350 new parking spaces, based on the assumption that the waterfront will retain approximately 100 spaces when the open space is redeveloped.

Very truly yours,
C&C CONSULTING ENGINEERS, LLC



Preston L. Samuel, P.E.
Manager of Transportation

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Ms. Nancy T. Colbert
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60 Pleasant Street
Newburyport, MA 01950

RE: NEWBURYPORT STRUCTURED PARKING

Dear Ms. Colbert:

The decision to build structured parking in Newburyport is a major one involving literally millions of dollars in taxpayer's money. Because of the large expense, it is important to rationalize the size of structure to be built very carefully. Over the past several weeks, we have considered the question of what size of facility to recommend for Newburyport to cover current and anticipated future parking needs. This letter summarizes our investigations and makes a recommendation that we think is appropriate, given what is known regarding possible future developments in the Downtown area.

Several forms of rationalization have been applied to the problem of sizing for the Newburyport structure, and they are as follows:

- Prior parking and traffic studies were reviewed. These studies were completed over the recent time period from 1986 to 1999, so each reflects the context of infrastructure, market and socio-political climate that still exists in Newburyport today.
- Discussions were held with numerous persons involved in the Downtown Newburyport community, to discuss the adequacy of existing parking supply, localized problems and characteristics of the parking public, and trends that might reasonably be expected in parking demand in the future.
- Finally, members of the study team spent time on the streets of Newburyport to gain a first-hand appreciation of the parking operations, parking demand, and the inter-relationship of parking with individual land uses and community focus points throughout the Downtown area. Mapping and aerial photography were used to a great extent to assess the origin of parking demand, as well as for forecasting the quantity of demand.

PRIOR STUDIES

Two prior studies, in particular, dealt with parking demand. The first was a study entitled *Newburyport Central Business District Parking Analysis and Recommendations*, published in 1996 by The Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce and Industry Economic Development Action Committee, in cooperation with The City of Newburyport Office of Planning and Development. This study assessed the demand in the downtown area between Federal Street, High Street, U.S. Route 1, and the Merrimack River.

The study utilized Assessor's maps to estimate the gross occupied space of buildings, and parking demand was estimated using a factor of one space per 400 square feet of space, or 2.5 spaces per thousand square feet. For each Assessor's map, the estimated parking demand was compared with the actual existing parking available, and a surplus or deficit was computed. Finally, a spreadsheet was developed which identified the gross deficit of parking in the Downtown area. The deficit identified was 684 spaces. This number was based on 100% occupancy of all structures, a condition that rarely occurs.

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The study went on to evaluate the effect that redevelopment of certain properties would have on the deficit. The developments considered included 1) the Library and the Greek Church redevelopment, 2) a hotel adjacent to Michael's Harborside, 3) the NRA West Lot redevelopment into a waterfront park with limited parking, 4) full development of the NRA East Lot with no parking, and 5) construction of a small parking lot on Liberty Street. The spreadsheet model indicates that a deficit of 1248 cars would result from that scenario.

Both of the above estimates of deficit were based on no allowance for on-street parking. In reality, there are approximately 1000 on-street spaces within the study area. If they were taken into account, there would be a current surplus of parking (about 300 spaces) and a future deficit of less than 300 spaces.

Among the variables in the above-discussed study, the parking ratio appears to have the greatest affect on the outcome of the study. The ratio of one space per 400 square feet, or 2.5 spaces per thousand square feet was used in the study. One way of validating this ratio would be to compare it with the current zoning requirements of the City of Newburyport. Although this approach may seem logical, the reader is cautioned that zoning codes are designed to be applied to individual projects, or uses. For example, a retail service use in Newburyport would be required to provide at least 3.3 spaces per thousand square feet; considerably higher than that used in the parking study. Similarly, a restaurant would require approximately 5 spaces per thousand square feet. What is not considered in the zoning codes is the degree to which businesses in the Downtown area share the parking. Retail establishments tend to have parking utilization peaks in the mid-afternoon, while restaurants peak in the early evening hours. Residential uses peak even later in the evening than restaurants.

To adequately assess the requirements of the composite Downtown area, therefore, we would turn to a more generalized source of information applicable to business centers, rather than local zoning codes. One such source of information is the publication *Parking*, by Robert A. Weant and Herbert S. Levinson. Table 3.3 of that publication is attached hereto. The table introduces information on overall parking standards for various cities, including the Boston metropolitan area. It can be deduced from this table that a ratio of 2.5 spaces per thousand square feet, or one per four hundred square feet, is adequate for this region.

The second study that was reviewed was entitled *Downtown Parking Study*, published by Transportation Planning Services of Gloucester, MA in 1998. This study conducted a comprehensive inventory of all on-street and off-street public and private parking spaces within the study area. The total spaces numbered 3873 at the time of the inventory. Of even greater importance, a parking accumulation survey was done during the height of the tourist season. This survey indicated that parking is saturated (90% full or greater) throughout the core area of the downtown between Green Street and State Street. Other public parking areas in the general vicinity of Market Square were also saturated. Overall in the Downtown area, a surplus of parking still existed, however the location of vacant spaces was generally more than three hundred feet from the core of the commercial area. Three to six hundred feet is the practical limit of utilization for parking facilities in a mixed commercial area. Finally, the study focussed on the immediate loss of public parking space that would occur if the Newburyport Inn and Conference Center were to be constructed on the waterfront. Four hundred and thirty spaces would be lost, amounting to about 22% of the currently available public spaces.

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DISCUSSIONS WITH INDIVIDUALS

Various persons have first-hand long-term experience with the ways that Downtown Newburyport has handled parking. Hayden Wegman has conducted discussions with several members of the Parking Committee, and have made contact with others in the community by telephone. A summary of some of the conversations is as follows.

- Police Chief John Connors noted that illegal parking is not a problem, except an occasional incident on State Street, where drivers are running into stores on quick errands. This observation may indicate that there is generally an adequate supply of legal parking spaces available within an acceptable distance of the commercial center of the area.
- Police Chief Connors also noted the Green Street lot is used by area employees, who regularly move their cars to avoid tickets. This may indicate that finding a parking spot when being forced to move is not difficult. If it were, employees would park where they would be secure for the day.
- Director of the Chamber of Commerce Bill Pearcey noted that parking is only a problem on weekends with festivals, and on holidays. This reinforces the feelings of Chief Connors.
- Piper Real Estate Company representative Ann Legasse noted that vacancy rates on the ground floor in the Downtown area is near zero. The overall vacancy rate including upper floors is about five percent. This observation may indicate that parking demand has reached a maximum, unless new development takes place.
- Ann Legasse also noted that lease rates are on the rise, in part because of the extension of commuter rail to Newburyport recently. Increased rates could be the forerunner of new development. Ms. Legasse noted that there are two properties, the theater on Green Street and one on upper State Street that could be redeveloped for office space without too much difficulty. This may indicate the possibility of new parking demand in the future, if the economy keeps expanding at its current rate.
- In summary, parking demand could rise another 5 % to 10%, given the current economy. This does not include significant new projects such as the Newburyport Inn and Conference Center.

OBSERVATIONS

Most small communities in New England have parking situations not unlike Newburyport. In the course of our travels, we have seen some that provide adequate parking, and some that do not. From our experience, we have been able to draw the generalized conclusion that communities such as Newburyport need to have roughly the same amount of space in their parking lots as they do in their buildings (total of all occupied floors). Assuming average parking conditions, this is equivalent to a parking ratio of one space per 325 square feet of occupied space, or slightly more than three spaces per thousand square feet.

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To judge whether Newburyport has enough parking according to this rough measure, we obtained an aerial photograph of the study area and used it to conduct a field review of all on-street and off-street parking areas. The areas identified were highlighted on the aerial photograph, and this record is being retained in our files; available upon request for future use. In general, this approximate method of evaluation would lead one to conclude that there are more than adequate amounts of parking along the waterfront, adequate amounts of parking in the central business district and less than adequate amounts of parking in the balance of the study area. One shortcoming of the method is that it did not account for small off-street lots and residential parking on individual properties in the less commercialized sectors of the study area.

CONCLUSIONS

- The study entitled *Newburyport Central Business District Parking Analysis and Recommendations*, published in 1996 by The Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce and Industry Economic Development Action Committee, in cooperation with The City of Newburyport Office of Planning and Development, appears to be technically sound and applicable to current conditions in Newburyport. The study found that there was a shortage of 684 parking spaces under current conditions, and that a future "full development" shortage could be as high as 1248 spaces. These numbers do not account for available on-street parking supply; therefore, the recommendations should be seen as conservative.
- The study entitled *Downtown Parking Study*, published by Transportation Planning Services of Gloucester, MA in 1998, indicated that parking supply was adequate at present, but the loss of the MRA waterfront lots could create an immediate shortfall of approximately 430 spaces.
- Interviews with community representatives indicate that additional development in the study area could result in between 5% and 10% additional demand. When applied to the recommendations of the above-discussed study, the shortfall would be approximately 473 spaces.
- General observations within the study area support the findings of the second study. It indicates a current balance between parking supply and demand, with conditions ranging from excessive supply on the waterfront, to a shortfall of supply in the fringes of the central business district.
- It is recommended that the City make plans for construction of between 450 and 500 additional parking spaces, based on the results of prior studies. The parking should be located within 300 feet of Merrimack Street/Water Street to adequately serve existing and possible future commercial activities, as well as the waterfront area. If future plans to redevelop the NRA East and West Lots include the preservation of some of the existing parking, this parking should be considered as satisfying a portion of the recommendation.

On the following pages we present concepts for construction of a structured parking project at four sites within the study area. We also include a commentary on benefits and drawbacks of

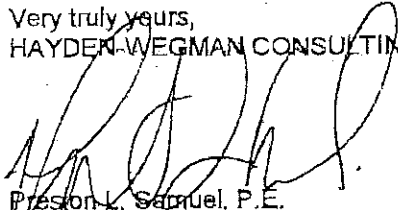
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each site. Blank paper is included with each concept to allow the reviewer to jot down notes and make sketches during our presentation.

Please feel free to ask question at any time during our presentation.

Very truly yours,
HAYDEN WEGMAN CONSULTING ENGINEERS



Preston L. Samuel, P.E.
Manager of Transportation

