

Initial Report – Recommendations for 2021 and Beyond

# IMPROVING ACCESS TO DOWNTOWN

Transportation Management Committee  
Town of Falmouth, MA  
February 2021

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the Committee's initial meeting and at the urging of the Town Manager, the Committee prioritized review of downtown parking and its attendant challenges. After considerable research and consideration, the TMC broadened their approach, focusing on **getting people downtown, rather than just accommodating cars once they are there**. This expanded view of the issue greatly enhanced our pool of possible solutions.

**The Committee concluded that traffic and parking problems downtown are primarily the result of several factors, which, if addressed, could vastly improve the situation.**

1. With a few exceptions, parking downtown is unregulated. The natural tendency is for people to try and park close to their destination, even if it means sitting in traffic or circling for an extended time. *(Management)*
2. Access to downtown by anything other than private cars is limited. Bicycle accommodations are non-existent, despite proximity to many lodging options and the Shining Sea Bikeway, which draws hundreds of thousands of visitors a year. Public transport is limited and not well advertised. *(Connectivity)*
3. Both of these factors are compounded by the fact that there is little or no information available to people in advance of their visit, or clear signage once in the vicinity, to lead them to more sensible access or parking options. *(Information)*

**The TMC therefore concludes that three basic approaches could have an enormous positive impact on summer traffic congestion and parking frustration in the downtown area. The Committee believes that if these approaches are implemented, the need for additional parking infrastructure is unlikely. All could be implemented quickly:**

1. *Better manage existing parking* by channeling different users into different areas.
2. *Improve the clarity, safety and convenience of accessing downtown through means other than private cars.* **Connectivity** of downtown to the Shining Sea Bikeway and other access points for cyclists and pedestrians is key if we are serious about reducing the number of cars downtown. The town's Complete Streets policy should be implemented in this area. Hours of public transport could be expanded to serve employees, dinner/bar patrons.
3. Finally, both require – and benefit from – *vastly improved public information, wayfinding and enforcement.*

**To realize the benefits of these approaches by Summer 2021, we recommend the following specific actions by the Select Board as soon as possible:**

1. Designate parking zones consistent with the recommendations of this report to better manage and improve parking turnover in prime downtown spaces.

2. Designate remote parking lots. Formalize the use of school parking areas when school is not in session. With TMC facilitation, engage with churches and other private entities in an attempt to formalize parking agreements.
3. Direct the DPW to begin design process for a crossing light at Katharine Lee Bates Rd. We recognize that this process involves MassDOT and can be lengthy – all the more reason to get going now.
4. Direct the DPW to include separated bicycle lanes/multi-use path in any changes/improvements made to KLB Rd. This includes adapting the design currently in the works to include bicycles. *This road is an essential connector between the bike path and Main St. Undertaking improvements with no thought to this connectivity would be a lost opportunity and points to the need for public and committee input early in such projects.*
5. Charge the DPW, with input from TMC (and Sign Committee?), to develop sign graphics, sizes, etc. for consistency and efficacy for different applications and audiences.
6. Install parking signage consistent with the report and expanded parking zones, establishing unambiguous parking regulation of the downtown.
7. Direct the chief of police to take necessary action for fair, consistent parking enforcement on a regular and predictable basis for improved parking management. Include enforcement of existing posted “No through truck traffic.” Such action may require hiring seasonal parking enforcement personnel, to be funded from enforcement revenues.
8. Authorize purchase of additional technology to expedite parking enforcement.
9. Direct the installation of additional *wayfinding\** signage throughout the downtown suitable for pedestrians, cyclists, CCRTA riders, and vehicles, including signs to municipal parking, points of interest and government services. Pedestrian-focused signs should indicate walking/biking time to the attraction.
10. Direct the DPW to erect wayfinding signage and install paint markings to directly link the Shining Sea Bikeway and Falmouth Station with the downtown to improve connectivity. Mileage or time should be included on signs.
11. Direct the IT department to develop a webpage with parking information consistent with report recommendations. Link to/supplement/greatly expand current Police Department web info.
12. Engage merchants to improve delivery schedules and locations to be off Main St and adjacent streets during peak hours. Based on merchant feedback, consider establishing loading zones establishing/posting allowable delivery hours.
13. Send letter to business owners with recommended actions they can take to improve parking situation...(Encourage off-peak delivery times, not let employees park in prime spots, utilize their private parking, better signage for private parking, add bicycle racks).

14. Direct the Town Manager to develop incentives for employees to (voluntarily) use alternative transportation (CCRTA, ride sharing, bicycling and walking) or remote parking.
15. Install directional signs to direct heavy traffic to KLB (existing signs are too small).
16. Direct IT department to explore wayfinding apps used by truckers in particular to make sure through traffic is not directed via Main St.
17. Direct designation of additional handicap spaces so that spaces meet parking lot guidelines and are no farther than 500 feet apart on Main Street.
18. Direct the installation of additional bicycle racks in the downtown.
19. Direct installation of information signs listing CCRTA schedule and fares in at least 2 locations along Main Street. Consideration should be given to signs capable of electronic schedule updates, e.g. next trolley to Woods Hole in 6 minutes, next bus to Hyannis in 12 minutes.
20. Direct the Town Manager and Police Chief to develop an overnight parking permit system for restaurants to issue to patrons who should not be driving.
21. Direct appropriate staff to investigate purchase of electric vehicle charging stations.

\*For purposes of this report, *wayfinding signage* refers to (and is used interchangeably with) *directional signage* (e.g., “5-min. walk to shops and restaurants” with arrow). *Wayfinding apps/technology* refers to Google Maps and other tech-based tools to guide drivers/walkers/cyclists.

This report presents the results of our research into the issue. It outlines specific steps the town can and must take if we are serious about addressing the intolerable situation with summer traffic and parking downtown. Most of these steps can be implemented quickly, in time for the 2021 summer season. We hope the Board chooses to support this approach, and play a leadership role in encouraging Falmouth residents and visitors alike to embrace the changes required.

*In appreciation for the opportunity to serve,*  
Members of the Transportation Management Committee:  
Ed Dewitt, Chair  
Alison Leschen, Vice-Chair  
Paul Dreyer, Planning Board Representative  
Paul Grunden, Commission on Disabilities Representative  
Ralph Herbst, at-large  
Chris McGuire, Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee Representative  
Jane Perry, at-large

## BACKGROUND

Falmouth Village is a classic “town center” offering residents and visitors a full range of uses and services. These include governmental services [e.g. library, post office, emergency services (Fire/Rescue, Police), elementary school, and Town Hall], retail shopping, art galleries, dining (breakfast, bakery, lunch and dinner), lodging, entertainment, professional services (accounting, insurance, real estate, dentistry, medical and legal), religious activities, indoor recreation and outdoor recreation. There is very little not available in the village center.

Yet this idyllic setting is marred by traffic congestion, particularly in the summer. Currently, most people access downtown with private vehicles, requiring that each party find a parking space. In high season, available spaces quickly fill up, which creates congestion and frustration for visitors, residents and workers alike while people circle for a spot. The situation is compounded by several factors. Parallel parking on core streets challenges many drivers, causing back-ups while they maneuver into a spot, or wait for the driver who pulled too close behind them to back out of the way. Lack of wayfinding signage and otherwise poor communication about peripheral parking sites leaves visitors with no guidance about alternatives to endless circling for a space. Public transport to downtown is limited to two fixed-route lines operated by the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority (CCRTA), one of which is seasonal. Bicycle access is currently on streets that have no designated bike accommodations, which in general means that only experienced riders are comfortable getting there by bike.

The problem has been identified as one of “Downtown Parking.” But such labeling assumes that the current situation, where the vast majority of people access downtown in private vehicles and park within a short distance of their destination, should continue. The Transportation Management Committee (TMC) believes that this limited view leads to limited solutions. After researching and considering the issue, we instead chose to take a more expansive outlook.

## TMC VISION FOR THE DOWNTOWN

The TMC believes that a primary business district that is accessible, accommodating and welcoming to all with a variety of modes of travel both getting to and traveling around the business and government center of the community is essential. People should both want to come to the downtown and enjoy being there. Expanding our understanding of where and how parking can occur for different user groups, and broadening other means of access in a meaningful way could go a long way toward reducing demand for central parking and alleviating the accompanying traffic congestion. **By focusing on getting *people* downtown, rather than just accommodating *cars* once they are there**, we greatly expand our pool of possible solutions. By **better managing existing parking**, channeling different users into different areas, we believe the need for additional parking infrastructure is unlikely.

## **APPROACH**

To better understand the issues involved and the extent of the problem(s), and to begin to develop an approach to alleviating the situation, the Transportation Management Committee (TMC) interviewed or otherwise communicated with representatives from the Falmouth Police and Fire Rescue Departments, Department of Public Works (DPW), Town Planner, Chamber of Commerce, Falmouth Village Association, Downtown business owners, Falmouth AFCSME, Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority, Falmouth EDIC, Cape Cod Commission and Woods Hole Business Association. We also received email comments and Zoom meeting messages from a number of Falmouth residents. In addition, we drew heavily from the *Transportation Master Plan for Route 28/Main St.*, prepared for the Town of Falmouth by McMahon Associates in 2016. This is an excellent report with many sound recommendations. We encourage the Select Board to revisit it and begin to act on it. In addition, we are carrying out a survey to assess people's attitudes and experiences about visiting and parking downtown. The survey has been distributed widely, both to targeted groups and the general public. It has already provided valuable information about going forward, and will also act as a baseline to measure efficacy of actions taken. Some preliminary results, from the 1100 responses received at the time of this report are included.

A summary of our findings and subsequent recommendations follow.

## **CURRENT SITUATION**

### Parking

In Falmouth, parking is principally regulated through the Zoning Bylaw, ch. 240 of the Code of Falmouth. Section 104 of the Zoning Bylaw waives most parking requirements for the downtown because of the “large amount of public parking spaces available, and further finding that in order to enhance the economic vitality of downtown Main Street” parking requirements might inhibit commercial and residential development.

Currently, parking is available curbside on Main Street (125 spaces) and a section of Katherine Lee Bates (KLB) Road, in municipal off-street lots between Main Street and KLB Road (about 200 spaces) as well as Town Hall Square (132 spaces), adjacent to Fire Rescue Headquarters, and privately owned parking (mostly at the rear of businesses along Main Street and Palmer Avenue). Primarily seasonal parking totaling about 160 spaces is available on school property (Mullen Hall and Lawrence Schools) when school is not in session, but this is not well known, advertised or signed. All told, there is a total of about 450 publicly available parking spaces in the downtown corridor (McMahon report). There is a parking lot on Depot Ave. across from the Falmouth Station, which is large and reportedly underutilized, at least in the evening. There are some additional paved parking areas not currently utilized for public parking including churches and employee-only lots. With the exception of a 30-minute parking zone near the Post Office, municipal parking is free, limited to three hours on Main Street, unlimited as to time in municipal lots with the exception of no overnight parking in Town Hall Square. There is a reserved area in front of Town Hall for Town Hall business that does not have a posted time limit. Handicap parking spaces are limited and may not be distributed efficiently.

Enforcement is the responsibility of the Police Department, which uses computerized equipment to track parking and violations. While the Police Chief reports that there is zero tolerance for parking violators, enforcement depends on staff availability (there was very little in the summer of 2020). Perception is that parking is largely unregulated. This can result in use of prime Main St. and downtown lot spaces being used by long-term parkers such as employees or even Steamship passengers, rather than the shorter-term users like shoppers and diners for whom they are intended. A new parking fee structure was recently proposed by the Chief of Police and approved by the Board of Selectmen. Its efficacy will rely on increased resources being allocated to enforcement, hopefully offset by increased revenue from fines.

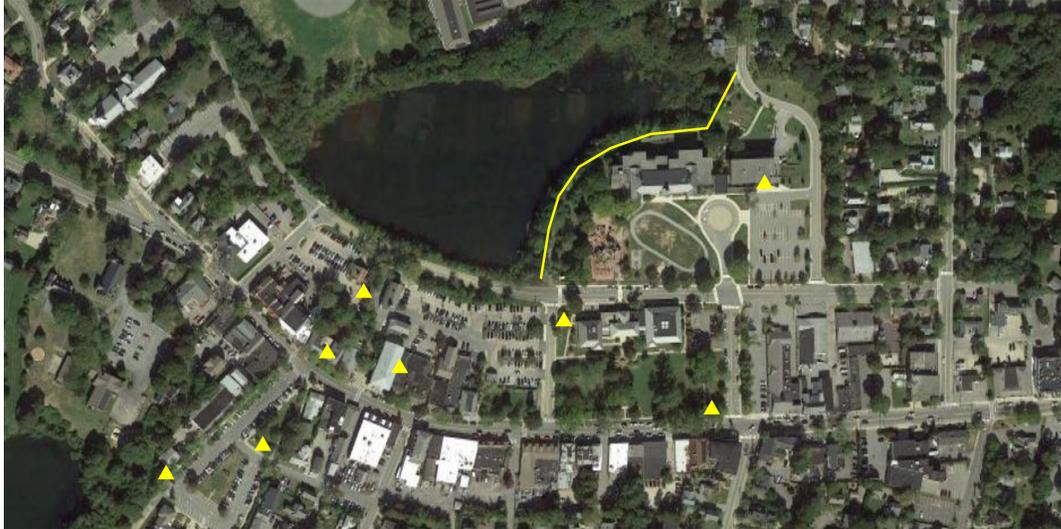
There is at least some truck and private vehicle traffic that uses Main St. as a through street, perhaps simply following the signs for Rt. 28. These vehicles would be much better served by any of the several cross-town roads like Jones, KLB, or even Rt. 151 or Thomas Landers Rd., depending on their ultimate destination, and would reduce Main St. traffic. Last summer DPW posted signs at West Main Street

and Locust Street as well as North Main and Palmer Avenue prohibiting through truck traffic. It is unclear whether the signs have had the desired impact.

A web search for “Parking in downtown Falmouth, MA” yields little useful or specific information to guide visitors. It is likely that most people simply drive to Main St. and then start looking for parking. Between these two issues, there is ample opportunity, by increasing pre-visit information for visitors – perhaps online, and with improved wayfinding – to intercept people before their arrival and steer them to alternate routes, peripheral lots or alternative means of access.

### Bicycle access

Studies have shown that 43% of adults in the US say they would be more likely to ride on roads if they were physically separated from cars. Our survey found similar results – 40%. Largely because of the Shining Sea Bikeway, Falmouth attracts a large number of visitors who travel via bicycle. Currently there are no separated bike lanes leading downtown. Katherine Lee Bates Rd. has “sharrows” painted on the pavement, but these offer no physical and little psychological protection from motorized vehicles (Fig. 1). Bicycling down Main St. itself is hazardous, with threats of distracted drivers and pedestrians, car doors opening, etc. Access from the Shining Sea Bikeway via a connector to Katherine Lee Bates Rd. is possible, though the current crosswalk over Rt. 28 is frequently ignored by motorists. Access from Depot Ave., which many bikers attempt, is even more haphazard and dangerous. Access along Rt. 28 from Teaticket is no better, with no bike accommodations and all the same dangers listed above. Once downtown, there is very limited bike parking, forcing the use of lamp and sign posts, sometimes impinging on sidewalks. None of this leads bikers to feel welcome downtown and limits access to the more experienced and determined bikers. This is unfortunate, as encouraging the broader public (many of whom live or are staying within 2 flat miles of downtown) to use bikes to access the area through appropriate infrastructure and design could go a long way toward alleviating traffic congestion. It could also enhance the visitor experience, as the journey becomes part of the adventure (and actual exercise), instead of an exercise in frustration sitting in traffic. Safely connecting the Shining Sea Bikeway with the downtown should be a very high priority for the Town.



Bike accommodations

**Fig. 1. Bike accommodations are limited to a handful of bike racks (yellow triangles) downtown and a multi-use path behind Mullen-Hall School. The roads that path leads to have no separated bike lanes and at one end, sidewalks in very poor condition.**

Pedestrian access

In general, the downtown is a comfortable place to stroll. The single largest complaint the TMC heard is of poor signage and wayfinding. While there are a number of crosswalks on Main Street and Katherine Lee Bates Road, mid-block crossing does occur frequently. None of the crosswalks are enhanced with warning lights, audible signals or raised elevation. In the past 5 years there have been 2 vehicle pedestrian collisions in the downtown. Unfortunately, sidewalks deteriorate rapidly once one moves away from Main St. (Fig. 2). Again, this does not send a signal of encouragement to walkers, much less wheel-chair riders, to come downtown.



Pedestrian accommodations

**Fig. 2. Sidewalks are good in the immediate Village Center, but deteriorate rapidly out from there (inserts 2 blocks off KLB Rd.).**

### Public transport

CCRTA operates two fixed route services, The Sealine and the Woods Hole (WHOOSH) Trolley. The WHOOSH operates seasonally, from June to early September. Its route goes between Falmouth Mall and Plaza, down Rt 28 and Main St, to Woods Hole and back. It travels twice an hour, but only between 10:15am and 7:15 pm, making it impractical for most employees and evening diners. The Sealine runs hourly (coordinated with the WHOOSH so there is every-20-minute service where the routes and hours of service overlap) from early morning until about 8:30 pm from the Hyannis Transportation Center to Woods Hole. Expanding the hours of operation, particularly of the WHOOSH trolley, could make it far more practical as a viable alternative to private cars.

Heavy summer traffic can cause delays to the schedule, though users can track buses on the NextBus app, downloadable from the CCRTA website. The ability to track and predict bus arrival times is key to making shuttle use to Main St. a viable option for downtown shoppers and lunch diners. If service could be extended into the evening hours, it would make it more feasible for restaurant dinner patrons. The relative lack of flexibility of hourly service in the off-season makes it unlikely that people who have private autos will choose the public transport option. All buses can accommodate 2 or 3 bicycles, and are wheelchair accessible, making them a viable option for mobility-impaired people to avoid parking in congested downtown, and still have vehicle-to-destination service.

In addition to these fixed route services, Dial-a-Ride Transportation (DART) is a low-cost door-to-door reservation service provided by CCRTA.

More effort should be made to make visitors aware of these options.

### Seasonal variation

Parking demand increases rapidly beginning in April and begins to subside after mid-October. From mid-October until April or May there is little or no reported shortage of parking. From an aesthetic and welcoming standpoint this is important. Over-paving to meet seasonal demand would result in empty parking areas the rest of the year, creating a deserted feeling that adds nothing to the downtown experience. Though the seasonality makes use of school parking viable in the summer, there are periods of mismatch where parking demand is quite high, but school is still in session (May/June and early September).

### Parking constituencies

TMC research revealed different constituencies for parking in the downtown. Each constituency has different needs and, most importantly, uses parking differently (especially parking duration). Moreover, constituencies can overlap and trips to downtown can be for multiple purposes and fall into more than one constituency.

1. Business operations – shopkeepers, restaurateurs, professionals and employees who work at various businesses, many of which operate 7 days a

- week in peak season. Parking/access is needed to match the workday, including late-night hours, and to accommodate leaving for lunch.
2. Delivery services – primarily trucks, including box trucks, and 18 wheelers that park for the purpose of delivering goods and supplies to businesses and, to a lesser extent, governmental offices, residents, churches and other entities. Generally, this constituency requires oversize spaces for a half hour or less.
  3. Residential – residents who live in apartments and homes in the downtown that do not have private parking. Parking demand varies but requires access to overnight parking.
  4. Governmental operations – staff and employees of the various government offices in the downtown including Town Hall, post office, library and schools. The majority, but not all, of government operations fall within business hours Monday through Friday. Parking is needed to match the workday. Overnight parking is also needed for some government vehicles.
  5. Government service seekers – citizens who obtain in-person governmental services. Usually these are people parking less than an hour.
  6. Business customers – citizens and visitors who patronize businesses. Time periods vary widely from a few minutes for take-out food pick-up to several hours for retail shoppers and restaurant patrons.
  7. Overnight parking - The TMC identified three constituencies that require overnight parking in the downtown.
    - 1) Residents who have no access to private parking.
    - 2) Restaurant patrons who have been drinking and should not be driving.
    - 3) Government vehicles.
  8. Disabled parking – individuals could fall into any of the above categories. There is a need here for convenient, ADA-compliant parking spaces, good, fully passable sidewalks to and within downtown, and audible signals at signaled pedestrian crossings.

Summary of additional testimony and information:

- In peak season, downtown can likely absorb more people/diners/shoppers, so enabling more access is desirable and consistent with supporting businesses in that area.
- There is no dedicated employee public parking. There are reports of employees going out every few hours to move their cars to avoid being ticketed. Communication from the head of the Town Hall employees union confirmed this, as well as that those who go out for lunch then have trouble finding a spot when they return.
- While Mullen-Hall lot is often well-used, there is underutilization of other nearby “peripheral” lots such as Lawrence School and churches. This is in part due to lack of knowledge/wayfinding/clarity of what’s allowed. It is also due to the fact that the town has not pursued formal agreements with these entities.

- There is no active discussion with churches about use of those lots for public parking when not needed for church purposes.
- Delivery trucks are one cause of congestion. Some of these are delivering to Main St. businesses; others are driving through, again likely because of lack of knowledge/wayfinding signage or apps to put them on more truck-appropriate roads. The town recently posted “No through truck traffic” signs on the outskirts of the downtown, but these are too small and it is unclear whether they have been effective.
- There are four marked handicap accessible parking spaces along Main Street.
- The majority of Town Hall employees park in the municipal lot in front of Town Hall.
- There are no written policies affecting Town Hall employee parking.
- There are no incentives for Town Hall employees to rideshare, use public transportation, walk or bicycle to work.

It is likely:

- Some congestion is caused by people circling for parking spaces, or driving slowly to “scout” for spots.
- Some congestion is caused by drivers having difficulty with parallel parking on Main Street. Some additional congestion is caused by drivers pulling too close behind a vehicle that intends to back into a parking space.
- Some downtown parking is used by people going to the Vineyard for the day or even overnight.

## PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Our exploration of this topic has yielded a significant number of “low hanging fruit” approaches which we believe could go a long way toward improving access to and circulation through, downtown and in turn alleviating parking issues. None of these approaches involves acquiring or creating new parking, which we feel would be premature and likely unnecessary. We have divided the recommendations into Short- (by next summer), Mid- (1-2 years), and Long-Term (3+ years).

### SHORT-TERM (Fully ready for implementation beginning May 1, 2021)

**The TMC starts with the premise that two basic approaches could have an enormous positive impact on summer traffic congestion and parking frustration in the downtown area, and that both could be implemented quickly.** The first is better management of parking – in terms of who parks where. The second is improving the clarity, safety and convenience of accessing downtown through means other than private cars. Both require – and benefit from – vastly improved public information, wayfinding signage and enforcement. Connectivity of downtown to the Shining Sea Bikeway and other access points for cyclists and pedestrians is key if we are serious about reducing the number of cars downtown.

The TMC was asked to examine reported seasonal parking shortages and challenges in the downtown. Our recommendations are not perfect and are intended only to improve overall parking and access management. Some challenges like the geometric layout of Main Street are insurmountable – there is only so much that can be accomplished in a limited space. The Committee’s mandate is to make recommendations, which this report does. No doubt there will be public support for some our recommendations and public dislike of others. The TMC has striven to fairly and effectively balance the interest of the various downtown constituencies. The Select Board ultimately will have to weigh our recommendations and decide whether or not to implement all or some. The TMC is confident that the situation while not solved, can be significantly improved. The TMC has looked at the downtown as an interconnected system of walkers, cyclists, drivers, and truckers. We think this is the proper approach for the Town to employ.

Our proposed changes in policy, parking zones and regulations are intended to be in effect only from May 1 to October 1 – peak tourist season. Four **Strategies**, each complete with **Action** items required to implement them, follow.

**Strategy 1:** In town-owned parking areas, designate different parking “zones” for different users and needs. Zones may change between business- and non-business hours.

**Assumptions:** Presumably the *primary goals* of any parking strategy are:

1. To encourage patronage of downtown businesses through ease of access.

2. To enable citizens to conduct (relatively quick) town/bank/professional business with ease of access.
3. To allow overnight parking for residents of downtown.
4. To provide clearly defined/designated, shift-length employee parking.
5. To allow convenient access to shops, businesses and Town Hall for disabled users.
6. To reduce the demand for parking by encouraging access to downtown through alternatives to private vehicles – biking, walking, public transport.

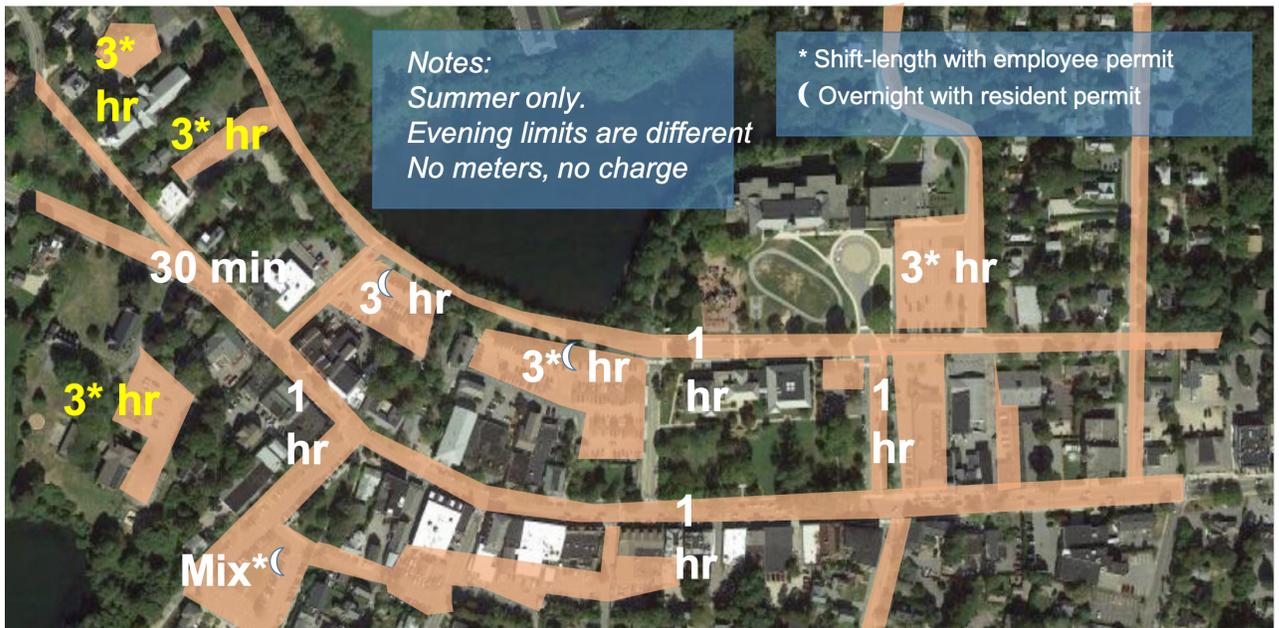
In addition, if we think of the different constituencies as having different parking needs, it naturally follows that they be channeled into different parking areas or “zones,” defined using the following considerations/assumptions:

1. If clearly defined and marked parking areas are available, the confusion and congestion caused by everyone competing for the same spaces on Main St. will decrease. This in turn will make coming downtown in summer more pleasant for visitors, and encourage, for example, local residents to get take-out or meet a friend for lunch.
2. Many visitors to downtown have multiple destinations, so a “park once, walk a little” strategy makes more sense than trying to move the car for every different destination.
3. Survey responses indicate that 74% of people are willing to walk up to 5 minutes, and 50% from 5-10 minutes from parking to destination if their route is well defined and feels safe. This puts all downtown public, school, and potential private (churches, banks etc.) within accepted walking distance. Making the routes interesting/attractive can further induce people to park at these distances. (An obvious example of this is the walk from Lawrence School, past Shivericks Pond, a 7-min. walk to Main St.).

**Action 1 – Designate zones:**

1. *With the exception of the 30-minute area near the Post Office and handicap-accessible spaces, all on-street parking is limited to one hour from 8 am to 6 pm. “Highest and best use” of parking along Main St. itself should be for shorter-term errands like picking up take-out, having a quick lunch, or going into a store for a specific item. This ensures high turnover of those spaces, which presumably brings more customers and makes people more willing to come downtown to accomplish these errands if they know it’s likely they can get a parking spot. Handicapped spots are an exception and should have a 3 hr time limit. Additional ADA spaces (at least one ADA space for every twenty regular spaces) may be needed to ensure easy access to all businesses for the mobility-impaired. After 6 pm, parking limit is 3 hrs. This allows evening restaurant and bar patrons to park there, since most retail businesses are closed by then.*
2. Library lot on Shore St. Extension remains *1 hour*. Note: the lot serving the businesses across the street – First Citizens Credit Union, Hannoush Jewelers, etc.) is private.

3. Town Hall lot – the 26 spaces currently designated for Town Hall business shall remain as such, but posted with a 1-hr time limit, so as to be enforceable.
4. All other downtown lots (Library Ln, lot behind Eastman’s, Mullen-Hall School, any churches or banks with which an agreement is formed, Town Hall with above-mentioned Town Hall business spaces excepted) are 3-hr parking for the public.
5. Lawrence School would have a 6-hr limit.
6. In certain lots, employees will be allowed shift-length parking and downtown residents may park overnight (Fig. 3).



Parking zones 8am – 6 pm

**Fig. 3: Proposed parking zones. In addition, Lawrence School would have a 6-hr limit, with employee shift-length parking as well.**

**What’s involved:**

1. Set new parking policies.
2. Formalize agreement with School Committee regarding use, hours and season for school lot use. Greatly improve wayfinding signage, the path from Lawrence School (in conjunction with Shivericks Pond Trail project), information available in advance online or otherwise to encourage use of these lots.
3. Greatly increase information, outreach and wayfinding signage. This could include a simple webpage on the Town site which displays parking options on a clickable map, with lot hours, time limits, walking time to Main St. or CCRTA schedule. Particularly effective might be messaging like, “Average time spent circling for a Main St. parking spot – 10 mins. Walking time from Lawrence School – 7 minutes.” The web page would come up when

googling “parking in Falmouth (Village).” The same information would appear on signs at the lots themselves. This website could include other information as well about other means of accessing downtown (see below for more detail). This information could supplement the brief parking information currently on the Police Department webpage.

4. Hold public information sessions and meet with different constituencies to explain and work out new policies.
5. Maybe institute a fun public information campaign with a commercial like the Superbowl “Smaht Pahk” one. “Pahk smaht in Falmouth,” featuring someone well-known in town with a Cape Cod accent! It could run on radio, FCTV, and on the web page.
6. Added enforcement. According to some literature on parking, fair, consistent and predictable enforcement is an effective tool for parking turnover and, based on fines, can be better than revenue neutral. This aspect will be crucial to making the zonation plan work.

**Expenses:**

1. New signage – developing a coordinated “look,” determining appropriate sizes, printing and installing the signs.
2. Public outreach and education materials, including developing a webpage with parking information.
3. More or reallocated enforcement personnel (likely offset by increased revenue from fines).

**Action 2 – Develop system for overnight parking needs**

Overnight parking is needed by two primary constituencies: downtown residents, and bar/restaurant patrons incapable of safely driving home. Currently overnight (2 am to 5 am) parking is selectively enforced (tow zone) and not clearly posted. This situation can be exploited by Steamship Authority patrons avoiding the pay lots.

**What’s Involved:**

An overnight parking (2 am to 5 am) ban should be strictly enforced in all public areas of the downtown except by permit. Because residents generally have a place to park and are less likely to avoid SSA lots, we recommend allowing overnight parking for any valid Falmouth parking permit (beach, transfer station, combo etc.) This reduces the cost for establishing and maintaining a new and separate permit system.

Each business that serves alcohol would be allowed to generate/create a one-night permit for any patron that has had too much to drink. The permits would be dated, sequentially numbered, capable of easily adhering to the driver’s window, contain the name of the establishment and be visible from 10 feet away. The police department will make available an example of the permit. As long as the vehicle is legally parked, it would not be towed for a minimum twenty-four hour period.

**Expense**- Signage and enforcement effort.

**Strategy 2:** Public/Private Partnerships

There are a number of privately owned and sometimes underutilized parking areas in, or directly adjacent to, the downtown. These include churches, banks and other businesses that have peak demands different from the bulk of Main Street.

**Action 1 – Work With “Parking Rich” Neighbors**

The Town should explore individual agreements with our downtown neighbors to test the feasibility of public parking when these lots are not needed for church or business activities.

**What’s involved**

Establishing a fair price and/or appropriate good will for such arrangements.

**Expense:**

Less than buying land or paving more land! Signage that can be used to indicate when parking is permitted. Inclusion of this information on web page.

**Strategy 3:** Shift focus to getting *people* – not just cars – downtown.

Encourage access to downtown via means other than private autos. Note: these are the short-term, quickly implementable aspects to this strategy. Mid-and long-term ones follow in those sections.

**Action 1 – Promote Alternatives:**

Many (able-bodied) people live or stay within an easily walk-able or bike-able distance from Main St. They can be encouraged to access downtown in this way through information provided by their hotels/inns/hosts and with signage.

**What’s involved:**

Working with lodging hosts and implementing a signage campaign like the following: An online toolkit, [Walkyourcity.org](http://Walkyourcity.org), “helps communities increase their walkability by combining educational pedestrian signage with web-based campaign management and data collection, accessible to both citizens and city staff.” Simple, inexpensive, attractive signs (e.g., “It’s a 5-min. walk to borrow a book” with an arrow and QR code map) can raise awareness of just how much can be reached within an easy walk (Fig. 1). The same can be applied to bikers. Lenox, MA, as an example of another seasonal, tourist-driven economy, has implemented this approach.



Fig. 1: Examples of simple, inexpensive signs available through Walkyourcity.org that encourage people to walk or cycle instead of driving.

**Expenses:**

Signage.

**Action 2 – Promote Transit:**

If people knew about the shuttle (CCRTA) option, some would park at the mall or plaza and use CCRTA to get to Main St.

**What’s involved:**

Work with Mall/Plaza owners to gain their official support for people parking there. Messaging could encourage people to patronize these shopping centers in addition to just parking there. Work with CCRTA to greatly increase awareness of this option. Improve signage at mall and plaza so it’s immediately obvious where to park and catch bus/trolley. Have schedule posted there as well as online tracking app information.

**Expenses:**

Signage and other messaging (shared with CCRTA?).

**Action 3 – Focus on Largest Employer:**

The single largest employer in the downtown is the Town of Falmouth. Approximately 55 parking spaces are used by Town employees on any given day. While they can be accommodated in Town Hall Square and other downtown lots, providing incentives for them to voluntarily park in slightly further lots could free up a significant number of prime spaces near Main St.

**What’s involved:**

The Town currently offers employees no incentives to walk or bicycle to work, nor does it offer employees incentives to ride CCRTA buses and

trolleys, or to carpool, to work. Incentives can include such things as rideshare spaces at Town Hall, bonuses, discounts on health insurance, more flexible work hours, free or discounted transit passes or personal days off.

**Expense:**

Cost of the incentives. Some studies show that worker productivity can actually increase with such modest incentives. Cost of permit/sticker for vehicles.

**Action 4 – Improve Alternative Connectivity:**

Connection to the bike path and Falmouth Station must be enhanced and made safe. The aforementioned webpage could be made broader to include “Accessing downtown Falmouth from the Shining Sea Bikeway or the Falmouth Station.”

**What’s involved:**

It must be clear to bike path users how to get downtown, and it must feel easy and safe to do so. The way from the bike path/Falmouth Station for bikes/pedestrians must be clearly marked and well-maintained, with several safety features added. At a recent meeting with Falmouth EDIC representatives, it became clear that they share this goal, and that such features dovetail perfectly with the Master Plan they are developing for Falmouth Station.

More specifically, the Town needs to improve signage from the bikepath/Falmouth Station to the downtown for both cyclists and pedestrians. The Falmouth Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee advocates funneling all ped/bike traffic to the KLB connector, and then along KLB to Main St. The TMC supports this concept, at least in the short term. The crossing at KLB Rd. therefore needs to be better marked and a warning beacon/system installed. Ideally the speed limit on the stretch of Rt. 28 from Crabapples, past the Goodwill Park crossing (in the works), past the Locust St. crossing (site of current flashing light), should be lowered to 30, with flashing speed signs at the beginning from both ends warning of “heavy pedestrian/bike crossing – SLOW DOWN.” Periodic police enforcement of this stretch and crossing is needed.

A clear message must reach motorists through multiple means that this area is not a highway to the ferry, but is a town center prioritized for pedestrians and bikes, and they must drive accordingly. Added travel time for motorists on that stretch driving 35 mph (current limit) vs. 30 mph is less than a minute, with possibly a few additional seconds delay if they need to stop at a crosswalk. This calculation can be used to counter the argument that we must “move cars along the highway,” or “people will miss their ferry.” Falmouth should be prioritizing increasing patronage of its businesses (by

bike path and Falmouth Station users) rather than moving people away from Falmouth faster!

The speed limit on KLB needs to be set at 25 mph and clearly posted, preferably with a sign that flashes a car's speed.

Incorporate information into a webpage. Possibly work with Peter Pan, CCRTA and other transport companies to include clickable links on their web pages to the Town webpage. Do the same on webpages highlighting the bike path. That way people planning a day on the bike path or arriving by bus will know ahead of time how easy it is to access Main St. and can incorporate lunch or bit of shopping into their plan.

Several recent MassDOT grant opportunities would have been a perfect fit for this project. The town should move forward on design – even rough, conceptual design – to be ready for such opportunities. *Beginning the design process for the crossing beacon is particularly important as it involves MassDOT and can be lengthy.*

**Expense:**

Sidewalk improvement, signage, paint, crossing beacon and (3-4) flashing speed signs (but see above opportunities for state funding). Work on webpage.

**Action 5 – Bicycle Parking**

**What's Involved:**

Add additional bicycle racks throughout the downtown that do not impede pedestrian flow.

**Expense:** Cost (and installation) of the racks. The Ped/Bikeways Committee has gotten CPA funding in the past for these. The Cape Cod Commission usually has a fund for bike racks that the Town might use.

**Strategy 4: Streamline Freight and Trucks**

**Action 1 – Manage Loading Zones**

Establish at least four 40-foot long loading zones on Main Street with effective operating hours of 8 am until 11 am. Other times require and allow trucks to park on the 2 downtown side streets, Post Office Road, and Library Lane, to make deliveries.

**What's involved**

Work with Main Street merchants to identify optimum loading zone locations. Note: after 11 am the loading zones become regular parking places for Main Street business. This will require working with trucking/freight

firms to educate them about the zones and times. Additional enforcement requirements/responsibility. This needs to be reevaluated after one year.

**Expense** – Paint and signage. Additional enforcement.

**Action 2** – Reduce Unnecessary Truck Traffic on Main St.

Truck traffic on Main St. equals congestion. Main Street has narrow travel lanes. Wide trucks often straddle the centerline, slowing traffic in both directions.

**What's involved**

Work with MassDOT to improve truck route signage and wayfinding to keep trucks off Main Street that don't need to be there. Stepped-up enforcement of the posted "No Through Truck" zones.

**Expense** - Signage and enforcement effort.

## Continuing Issues for Longer Term Evaluation and Recommendations

The TMC's work is far from done. The challenges are multi-dimensional and require continuous review and reevaluation. Tackling congestion and parking downtown is a multi-year undertaking.

1. Largely due to dimensional limitations, Main Street poses a host of transportation challenges. Among those challenges are:
  - a. Emergency vehicle response is frequently impeded because of traffic congestion and the lack of space to pull over.
  - b. Parallel parking is least efficient parking method both in terms of space allocated per spot and time needed to park. Consider alternatives to parallel parking on Main Street.
  - c. Crosswalk visibility is impaired by parked vehicles. People in crosswalks at night can be difficult to detect. Consider ways to make pedestrian crossings as visible as possible
  - d. There is limited space for adding dedicated bicycle lanes on Main Street. Falmouth needs to embrace its identity as a bicycling destination and make cycling to and in the downtown both inviting and safe.
  
2. Connectivity with the downtown. How the downtown connects with other Town assets controls to a large degree how people arrive and move around the downtown. The town needs to consider the following:
  - a. The addition of bicycle lanes and paths leading to, and in, the downtown (note challenge above).
  - b. The lack of safe walking routes and bike paths between schools and the public library or the downtown. The Shivericks Pond Trail is a great addition, but there is a long way to go.
  - c. The connection of the downtown with the harbor and beaches needs to be improved for pedestrians and cyclists.
  - d. Improvement of sidewalk condition and continuity, maintenance and safety, including addressing the placement of utility poles in the middle of sidewalks.
  
3. Continue working with the CCRTA to enhance service in and to the downtown, as well as public awareness of this service.
  - a. Explore ways to make riding the WHOOSH a tourist "must" experience.
  - b. Work with the CCRTA to expand service hours of the WHOOSH to better accommodate employee hours and evening restaurant patrons.
  - c. Work with employers to make the CCRTA an attractive way to commute to work.
  
4. Involve the public in transportation decision making,

- a. In recognition that making change is as much a social challenge as an engineering challenge, conduct regular public involvement and listening sessions. Use surveys to evaluate success and failure.
- b. *Require the DPW to include at a minimum the TMC and Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee in planning road improvements/changes.* Too many opportunities have been lost just in the last year for significant bike/ped improvements because this was not done.
- c. Try to match up people from other comparable towns which have made changes we are considering with Falmouth people in similar positions (e.g. Fire Chief to Fire Chief, business owner to business owner, Town Hall employee to Town Hall employee) to discuss what the changes have really been like, hopefully alleviating concerns.
- d. Recognize and quantify the public's need for services in the downtown. Considering the parking needed to accommodate Town Hall employees, and the threat of sea level rise to the existing facility, it is likely appropriate to begin discussing if, when and to where Town Hall should be relocated.

5. Regulatory Framework

- a. The Zoning Bylaw section on parking in the B-1 district (240-102) should be reevaluated by the Planning Board. The TMC finds the underlying assumptions are no longer valid.
- b. Parking regulation and site plan review should both be reevaluated to promote walking and cycling. Parking must include needs of the various constituencies the TMC identified for the downtown.
- c. Standards for on-street parking should be incorporated into the Town's planning and regulatory framework.

6. Effectively Use Technology

Parking apps on Smartphones, webpage on town website. While an informational webpage should be fairly straightforward to implement before summer 2021, further exploration of real-time parking apps and other technologies is needed for the future.

- 7. Assign appropriate personnel to begin increasing the number of electric vehicle charging stations. Falmouth is falling far behind other towns in this regard.