

## **FINAL REPORT**

# **Plymouth Parking Management Plan**

Plymouth Growth and Development Corporation (PGDC)/Park Plymouth



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## Introduction

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The Plymouth Parking Management Plan is intended to act as a guide for public policy decisions and investments into the parking and transportation system of the Plymouth Downtown-Waterfront Area and North Plymouth. It will also include a series of specific short-, medium- and long-term parking improvements, strategies and programs designed to address the unique and dynamic nature of the study area. The Plan was developed in consideration of previous parking and economic development studies and master plans, stakeholder interviews, and past, current and future parking needs. It is grounded in a set of guiding principles that forms a lasting framework for future decision-making.

Unlike previous studies, this effort considered equally the need for supplying adequate and appropriately located parking with the need for managing, influencing and regulating parking demand within a sustainable management plan. It is understood that downtown areas are constantly evolving and therefore the Plan should be dynamic as well. As such, it is recommended that the Plan be updated regularly. Development of this plan was funded and developed by the Plymouth Growth & Development Corporation (PGDC), who operates Park Plymouth - the designated provider of parking services in the Downtown-Waterfront Area and North Plymouth.

## Study Context

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Plymouth is a community of great historical and cultural importance blessed with many natural and man-made strategic advantages including its sheer size as the Commonwealth's largest municipality (103 square miles); location at the mid-point between Boston and the heart of Cape Cod; and of course, its pivotal role in American history. The town population, now at approximately 59,000, has grown at a much higher-than-average rate than Massachusetts municipalities as a whole – having increased dramatically (145%) from 1970 to 1990 before slowing to a more moderate growth rate of 29% between 1990 and 2010. Population forecasts prepared for the Town of Plymouth project that the population will reach 77,000 people by 2030.

Plymouth has emerged as the economic and tourism center of the South Shore. Plymouth Center and North Plymouth are the town's primary commercial centers complimented by the Plymouth Industrial Park and the Cordage Commerce Center – both located just outside the town centers. There are also two major retail shopping areas in Colony Place and the Shops at 5 located in close proximity off Route 3. Plymouth's primary industries are tourism, healthcare, technical and scientific research, real estate, and telecommunications. The largest employer in the town is Jordan Hospital.

Downtown Plymouth has been the economic, cultural and activity center for residents and visitors since its beginning. Plymouth Center and North Plymouth Village are fairly densely developed, older New England commercial districts with a variety of retail, residential, office and institutional uses built out from the main street (Rt. 3A). There is a walkable, grid-patterned street and sidewalk system which provides a strong connection between the downtown and waterfront areas.

Plymouth has long embraced the concept of focusing growth in its village centers and specifically on the need to encourage redevelopment and development of in-fill sites in Plymouth Center and North Plymouth Village. There are several important redevelopment projects currently active in the Downtown-Waterfront Area – none more important than the 1820 County Courthouse project, which is now in the early stages of the redevelopment process. Due to its significant size and location in the heart of Downtown Plymouth, the importance of this project to the downtown’s economy cannot be overstated.

The Plymouth waterfront offers a great natural advantage to Downtown Plymouth with 2½ miles of uninterrupted views across the harbor supporting numerous restaurants, cultural and tourist facilities including Plymouth Rock and the Mayflower II. This advantage is more than just an extensive coastline. The town owns and controls a good percentage of the properties located along the 2½ mile stretch – many of which are land-banked parking lots that serve the waterfront district. It is the waterfront that draws a large percentage of Plymouth’s roughly one million visitors each year.

The Plymouth Downtown-Waterfront Area enjoys tremendous competitive transportation advantages over similar sized areas in other communities. It has excellent access to the state highway system (Route 3, 3A - through the downtown and shoreline areas, U.S. Route 44 and Route 80). It has MBTA commuter rail stops in North Plymouth and Kingston and is served by buses owned by the Plymouth & Brockton (P&B) Street Railway Co. with scheduled service to Logan Airport, downtown Boston, Hyannis and Provincetown. The Greater-Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA) provides local public bus services just within Plymouth-Kingston under a system known as the Plymouth Area Link (PAL).

There are also increased seasonal transportation services including a robust motor-coach/tour bus industry, trolley transportation services, seasonal ferry and excursion boats and pedicabs. Taxi and rental car services can also be found in the Downtown-Waterfront Area. There is also a well-used off-road bike trail located along the old rail line connecting North Plymouth Village to Plymouth Center. In 2010, the PDGC purchased and began installing bike rack facilities at the termini of the trail and at approximately 30 locations throughout the Downtown-Waterfront and North Plymouth area.

Plymouth has numerous public parking lots dispersed throughout the Downtown-Waterfront area including a sizable 64-space public lot serving North Plymouth Village. On-street parking is plentiful in the districts but heavily used in most areas during peak periods – especially on Main Street. Plymouth has no structured parking within the downtown and waterfront district although there is a near 50-year history of unsuccessful attempts to create it.

## Study Area and Background

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The first documented major parking study in Plymouth was the *Plymouth Compact of 1949*, which was also the first to identify a parking shortage in the central business district and to call for additional off-street parking. Several studies and comprehensive plans thereafter would identify the need for expanding downtown parking – three in 2003/2004 alone, including the *Downtown-Waterfront Area Parking Analysis* prepared for the Town by Fort Point Associates, Inc., the Planning Board's *Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Area Master Plan*, and *A Strategic Action Plan for the Town of Plymouth*, prepared for the Town by Goody & Clancy/RKG.

The *Downtown-Waterfront Area Parking Analysis* provided the most detailed analysis related to locating and constructing parking structures. It identified a parking shortage downtown of between 400 and 600 spaces and reviewed various off-street candidate locations. It identified the town-owned **Memorial Hall Parking Lot** as a strong candidate for development of structured parking based on its complimentary physical form/topography; potential connection, relationship and screening by Memorial Hall; and potential to serve both the downtown and waterfront area. The final report included an operating and capital Pro Forma for developing a facility there. In the years immediately following, mixed-use/parking garage projects at the Memorial Avenue Lot and at the Main Street/Market Street Extension Lots advanced well into the development process before being dropped as the economy began to decline.

In 2007, Carlone & Associates completed the *Plymouth Public Space Action Plan* for the Town that recommended multiple strategically located sites for new parking garages to be constructed over time to replace and redistribute throughout the Town the public parking that is currently located along the waterfront. Three of the five proposed sites are town-owned public parking lots managed by the PGDC/Park Plymouth as follows: **Memorial Hall Parking Lot, Middle Street Parking Lot and Main/Market Streets Parking Lot**. The other two private sites are located behind the 1620 Restaurant along Water Street and behind the Probate Court off Russell Street within the Courthouse Corridor.

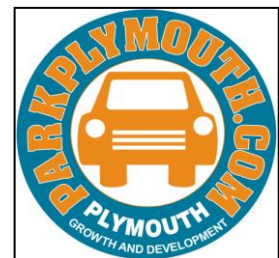
The *Public Space Action Plan*, which was approved by the Plymouth Board of Selectmen, emphasized that the highest and best use for the town-owned waterfront parking lots was not surface parking but for the most appropriate public-accessible use that would accommodate long-standing plans for a continuous public walkway along the waterfront.

In 2010, the City, PGDC and GATRA formed a partnership to conduct a site location, feasibility and facility design study for constructing a new Multi-Modal Transportation Center that would provide off-street parking, improved transit facilities and services, and traveler information services from a central location in the Downtown-Waterfront Area. The site selection study evaluated nine sites and shortlisted to two: the Memorial Hall lot and the parcels within the Courthouse Corridor. After a thorough comparison and public input, the Memorial Hall lot was selected as the preferred site. In 2012, the consultant will refine a formal development concept and conduct a comprehensive review of engineering and financial feasibility. Based on the study findings, public input and a sound funding plan, preliminary design for the new facility could begin as early as 2012.

The Multi-Modal Transportation Center concept has the Center serving a critical missing link in the transportation system as a hub to allow visitors full realization of mobility benefits derived from local, regional and intercity transit systems. The Transportation Center would seamlessly coordinate and integrate various modes of transportation and transit, parking and visitor information services from a centralized downtown location allowing visitors who arrive downtown with and without their cars a host of transportation and information services and ability to make transfers and get around. It is expected that the center will play a major role in increasing visitation to Plymouth while reducing the future need for constructing costly structured parking.

Plymouth's upcoming 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is also placing renewed emphasis on the need for improved parking and transit services. In anticipation of a year-long, multi-event, international celebration in 2020, the Town and PGDC are actively seeking to expand connections to remote and downtown parking via rail/bus infrastructure and services as a way to handle variable seasonal and event-based demand. It is envisioned that the infrastructure and services created for this year of celebration will benefit the Town for years to follow by dramatically increasing and accommodating visitation into historic Plymouth via modes in addition to the automobile.

Finally, discussions within the planning for the 1820 County Courthouse Redevelopment Project have identified the need for off-street parking within the Courthouse corridor to support the future redevelopment project. There is currently over 50,000 square feet of vacant space in this corridor that depending on what is developed could have a major impact on downtown parking - especially if sufficient parking is not provided with the development.



From an operating perspective, parking services in the Downtown-Waterfront and North Plymouth area are provided by Park Plymouth – an organization operated by the PGDC under agreement with the Town of Plymouth and Chapter 182 of the Acts of 2002 of the

Massachusetts State Legislature. In addition to fostering, stimulating and developing economic growth, the Act charges PGDC with developing, managing and operating all public on-street and off-street parking spaces from the Kingston Town Line to approximately Stephens Field, and from the Atlantic Ocean to approximately 500 feet west of Route 3A. This PGDC/Park Plymouth designated area corresponds to the study area for the development of this Plan.

It is estimated that there are well over 4,000 public on-street and off-street parking spaces in the designated area although many of these are unrestricted residential on-street spaces. Park Plymouth manages these spaces by enforcing parking regulations, charging for hourly parking through the use of electronic single-space meters and multi-space pay stations and selling residential, merchant, employee and other permits for use in its lots and in limited circumstances on street.

Park Plymouth enforces parking rules and regulations for the Town under its *1954 Traffic Rules & Orders*. In 2010, PGDC/Park Plymouth in coordination with the Town initiated the update to this 50+ year old document. This massive undertaking resulted in the development of an updated set of parking rules and regulations for the PGDC/Plan Study Area that was approved by the Plymouth Board of Selectmen in 2011. It is expected that the Plymouth Parking Management Plan will be a key reference for future revisions to this document.

## **Study Methodology and Public Involvement**

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The study methodology was developed in consideration of the numerous parking studies, surveys and master plans that have already been done for the Plymouth Downtown and Waterfront areas (DWA). The intent here was not to recreate these large-scale master planning processes, whose findings in many cases remain pertinent today, but to update, augment and expand these efforts where necessary and create a workable, pragmatic parking management plan - one that will include a defined financial and programmatic element as well as a blueprint for better manage the parking system.

The parking management plan itself is intended to be flexible enough to provide short-, medium- and long-term solutions, decision-making guidelines and investment strategies to assure that parking management programs and improvements are implemented in a manner that best serves the unique and changing nature of the downtown business environment. The management plan will consider not only “bricks and mortar” capital improvements but management strategies, policies and operational improvements to achieve desired ends. The study methodology in support of the plan development included conducting:

- reviews of the numerous past parking and land use studies and master plans;
- reviews of recent and on-going parking surveys and public outreach efforts;
- supplementary stakeholder interviews and public workshop input;

- an existing inventory of the public and private parking supply;
- updated parking utilization surveys with comparisons to previous surveys;
- limited parking turnover, duration-of-stay, and time stay abuse surveys;
- an evaluation of historical monthly parking use/revenues during the paid parking period;
- an evaluation of existing operational programs and costs;
- a conditions analysis of the parking system's physical and technological assets;
- a review of best management practices; and
- a regulatory and pricing analysis of the parking system.

The public involvement process for developing the plan included two public workshops; the first was held on March 15, 2011 at the Nathaniel Morton Elementary School to assist in confirming plan objectives and principles, reviewing and commenting on study data collection and analysis, and identifying area of concerns and opportunities for improving the parking program. The public workshop included interactive break-out sessions and group discussions and report-outs. A study work session was also held with the Plymouth Center Steering Committee on April 7, 2011 to receive input into the plan.

The second public workshop was held on August 3, 2011 to receive input on the draft study conclusions and alternative improvements. The report was revised several times to address community and stakeholder input and approved by the PGDC Board of Directors for presentation to the Plymouth Planning Board on November 21, 2011 and the Plymouth Board of Selectmen on November 29, 2011.

### **Guiding Principles of the Plan**

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When considering guiding principles for a parking management plan in Plymouth, consideration must be given to the role of downtown parking itself. While parking is no doubt an economic necessity providing an important element of access to Downtown, it must not be viewed as an end in and of itself - meaning, people do not come to Downtown Plymouth to park. They come to work, live, shop, dine; be entertained or to experience the activities and uses that uniquely define Plymouth's town centers and waterfront. Therefore the true role of parking is a supportive one in achieving the Town's vision for its downtown from preservation through redevelopment - much of which can be found in the approved *2007 Public Space Action Plan*.

The following list of guiding principles was specifically developed to guide the decision-making process throughout Plan development. These principles were identified and refined through past studies, agency review, stakeholder interviews, and public workshop and user input. While different stakeholders may disagree on the severity or importance of certain issues, there were shared common values and views that were reduced to principles. They are not intended to



represent a consensus of views, but, because they were frequently referenced in various settings, they represent a “common ground” for policy and decision-makers.

1. **Parking should be considered as a secondary use that supports the primary economic use of land.** Land in the study area is of limited supply and is suitable for high-value primary uses. Using this relatively scarce commodity for surface parking, in certain instances, and especially directly on the waterfront, may represent a missed economic, recreational or open space use opportunity. Park Plymouth currently manages 15 public parking lots that encumber over 10 acres of land in the Downtown and Waterfront Area.
2. **Existing and future parking within the core commercial areas should be sufficient, convenient and fairly priced, commensurate with land value and paid for by users.** Not all land in commercial districts is of equal economic value or in equal demand as often implied by one-size-fits-all downtown parking rates. Pricing should reflect the relative convenience and value of public parking.
3. **Commercial core areas should be reserved for short-term customer and visitor parking to the extent possible. Longer term parkers and employees should use parking within close proximity to these core areas.** User groups vary on their opinions as to whether a distance from origin to destination is reasonable. For example, retail customers will generally consider only a short walk reasonable while downtown employees as a group will consider a much longer walk reasonable.
4. **“Free” or affordable parking for students and low wage employees is desirable if available within a walking distance of the core commercial areas.** Free parking areas in peripheral locations can be an important factor for attracting and retaining lower-wage employees. It may also attract parkers out from the busy retail core – thus expanding the effective parking supply.
5. **On-street public parking is a finite, precious commodity that should be preserved and expanded when feasible to facilitate street-level activities in the core commercial areas.** An on-street metered parking space adjacent to a store is generally far more valuable in terms of retail sales than a parking space on the third floor of a public parking facility. On-street parking and proper turnover of on-street spaces are considered the life-blood of downtown businesses. No stone should be left unturned in an effort to safely expand curbed parking.
6. **The development of structured parking should be considered only after the use of the existing parking supply is optimized and the need is still present.** Structured parking is extremely expensive to construct and operate when compared to surface parking. It should

be considered in conjunction with higher revenue from parking users, relative land values and when constructed, with minimal impact on the Town's historic and walkable character.

7. **Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and non-auto transportation strategies are important ways to increase mobility and visitation to downtown while reducing parking need.** Most parking agencies realize that it is not sustainable to singularly expand parking to meet development needs. Enhancing modal options and connections not only increases mobility but can significantly delay the need and associated cost for constructing additional parking facilities.
8. **You cannot park at what you cannot find.** Wayfinding signage leading from all gateways, lot signage and good parking regulatory signage is essential to a properly functioning parking system.
9. **The core commercial areas should be accessible to all users.** Ideally there is a cost-effective mix of transportation modes for access downtown and for providing access to people of all socio-economic backgrounds and those with disabilities.
10. **Development projects in core commercial areas should share in the cost of their own parking and/or mobility needs.** Full public subsidy of the parking needs associated with private development is not a sustainable strategy. Private development cost-sharing strategies for new public parking facilities or programs that reduce parking need are desirable.
11. **All public parking facilities must be efficient, safe, appealing and well maintained.** Sufficient operating revenues must be dedicated to ensure that the public facilities are well maintained – reflecting the high level of regard the community has for its visitors and regular customers.
12. **The parking agency should provide world-class customer service in the delivery of parking services to make parking a positive element of the downtown experience.**
13. **Customers should be able to pay for parking by cash or credit card.** Requiring customers to carry a sufficient number of coins to accommodate their parking needs does not translate to providing a world-class customer service experience.
14. **Technology must be leveraged to provide enhanced customer service, information and payment options.** Parking technology is changing rapidly – providing the customer enhanced payment, parking information and services options while providing the parking agency with a way to increase revenues and reduce operational costs.

15. **State, federal and other funding sources should be leveraged with parking revenue when possible to off-set costs and expedite the delivery of plan improvements.** Many state and federal transportation and economic development funding grants require local match, which is often in short supply. When these grants can be used to accomplish a desired outcome consistent with this Plan, the use of parking revenue is appropriate.
16. **Parking is dynamic and the Plan must be too.** There must be continual monitoring of parking use and conditions and regular plan updates to ensure that the parking system is being responsive to the community's vision and needs.

### **Existing Parking Supply**

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An inventory of the existing public and private parking supply within the study area was conducted by Park Plymouth staff in 2010. The inventory included a count by street and lot of the public and private (commercial/institutional private lots only) paid and free parking spaces in the study area including an accounting of any regulatory restrictions placed upon them.

The inventory estimate is that there are approximately 4,400 public parking spaces in the study area of which approximately 811 require payment for use and another 518 are restricted use (for time limits, as loading/bus/taxi zones, handicapped spaces, or other restriction) but free. Obviously, most of the restricted spaces and all of the paid parking are located in close proximity to the DWA business district within the study area. The remaining estimated 3,115 public parking spaces, the majority of which are located outside of the business district in residential areas, are free and unregulated.

It is estimated that there are approximately 4,000 private parking spaces located in commercial/institutional parking lots surveyed within the study area. This number would be considerably higher if we were to consider residential driveways, which were not counted. The private off-street parking supply is largely restricted to the business or institutional use of the adjacent private property. The largest supply of off-street private parking is in Cordage Park (1,195) of which 659 served the Old WalMart. Other large size private parking lots are the Radisson's lot located off Water Street (447) and the Benny's Lot on Court Street (249).

**Off-Street Public Parking** – Park Plymouth currently operates fifteen (15) parking lots; nine (9) paid lots comprising 514 parking spaces, five (5) free parking lots comprising 390 car parking spaces and one (1) Bus/RV lot with 16 parking spaces. The number of spaces, meters, time regulations and fees for each lot are provided in Table 1 below and are depicted in Map 1.

It is important to recognize that the number of off-street public parking spaces located in close proximity to the waterfront area is far greater than the off-street public parking spaces serving the immediate downtown area. In fact, there are actually five (5) public parking lots listed

above that are located directly on the waterfront – not including the large state-owned parking lot on the State Pier.

**Table 1: Park Plymouth Public Parking Lots**

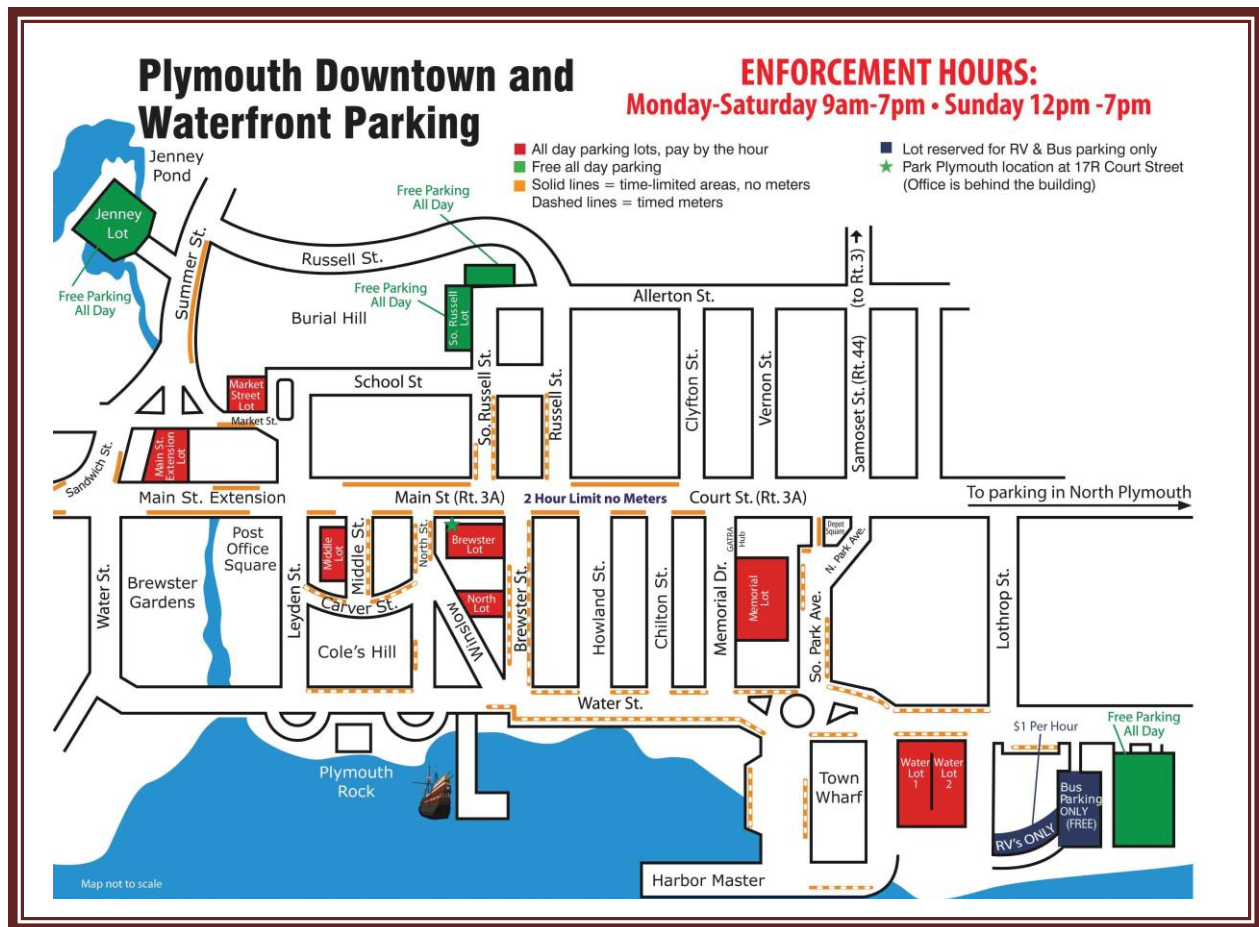
Parking Lot	# of Spaces	Time Limit	Hourly Rate	Meter Type*
Waterfront #1 Lot	120	10 hours	50 cents	2 P&Ds
Waterfront #2 Lot	72	10 hours	50 cents	1P&D
Waterfront #3 Lot	121	All Day	FREE	N/A
Waterfront Comm. Fisherman Lot	19	All Day	By Permit	N/A
Waterfront Bus Parking Lot	16 (bus)	All Day	FREE	N/A
Memorial Avenue Lot	116	10 hours	50 cents	2P&Ds
North Street Lot	33	10 hours	50 cents	1P&D
Brewster Street Lot	23	10 hours	50 cents	21 meters
Middle Street Lot	71	10 hours	50 cents	1 P&D-36 meters
Market Street Extension Lot	24	10 hours	50 cents	1 P&D
Main Street Extension Lot	55	10 hours	50 cents	34 meters
South Russell Street Lot	62	All Day	FREE	N/A
Old Police Station Parking Lot	32	All Day	FREE	N/A
Jenny Pond Lot	111	All Day	FREE	N/A
N. Plymouth Village Parking Lot	64	All Day	FREE	N/A

\*P&Ds” denote Pay & Display multi-space pay stations. All others listed are electronic single-space meters.

**On-Street Public Parking** – Map 1 also provides a depiction of the on-street regulated parking supply in the Plymouth DWA. There are currently 347 single-space electronic parking meters located on the designated streets depicted in Map 1. Most of the on-street metered parking is regulated 4-hour parking with the exception of Town Wharf, which is 2-hour parking. Court Street/Main Street has free 2-hour parking in Downtown Plymouth and free 1-hour parking in North Plymouth Village. Summer St. also has some posted 2-hour on-street parking.

While on-street parking on Middle St., North St. and Brewster St. between Water St. and Court St. is metered, Court Street, Union Street, School Street, Chilton Street and South Park Avenue are unmetered and all except Court Street are unregulated with regard to time limits. School Street, South Russell Street and Union Street currently provide a great deal of free long-term parking to the DWA.

There are designated loading zones, taxi stands and a mix of 15-minute, 20-minute and 30-minute parking dispersed throughout the study area. There are also numerous handicapped parking stalls provided on-street and in the public and private lots.



**Map 1: Plymouth Downtown and Waterfront Area**

**Paid Parking Program** – The Paid Parking Program runs from April 1<sup>st</sup> to November 30<sup>th</sup> each year - meaning that parking meters are removed from service each year on December 1<sup>st</sup> and returned to service on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Prior to 2009, Park Plymouth operated a year-round pay-to-park program. PGDC made the change in 2009 in consideration of the holiday shopping season in December and due to weak demand for parking in January, February and March. Parking enforcement hours are



Mondays through Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and on Sundays from 12 p.m. to 7 p.m., including holidays. On-street single-space electronic parking meters only take nickels, dimes and quarters while the Pay & Display multi-space pay stations located in Park Plymouth’s surface parking lots accept coins and bills but not credit cards.



Park Plymouth also manages a parking permit program, which offers deeply discounted parking permits to important Plymouth constituent groups including residents, merchants, employees, commercial fisherman and boat owners. The permits are good for parking in designated lots during the paid parking season. The permits sell for \$50/year for resident and commercial

fisherman permits and \$100/year for employee, merchant and boat mooring permits – although Park Plymouth has offered these permits at a 50% discount from December through March since the 2010 season. A deeply discounted senior citizen permit (65 years and older) was also offered to Town residents - \$15 during the promotional period and \$25 during the paid parking season.

## **Parking Utilization**

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Park Plymouth staff conducted parking utilization counts for on-street and off-street public parking in the study area during the peak 2010 summer period and compared current utilization rates to both off-peak usage and to utilization surveys conducted in previous years. The parking utilization surveys were conducted for weekday mornings, afternoons and early evening as well as for Saturday and Sunday mid-day peak-periods. The number of permit parkers using off-street public parking was also counted. The tables listing the DWA counts by time period are provided in the Appendix, Exhibit A. A more qualitative review of off-street private parking use was also noted.

Parking utilization by time of day for the summer peak period was then mapped using a color-coded key to show public on-street and off-street parking in the DWA that were either under effective “capacity” – 85% to 100% utilized; “Heavy Use” - 70% to 85% utilized; “Adequate Use” – 55% to 70% utilized; “Underutilized” – 40% to 55% utilized; or “Severely Underutilized” – Under 40% utilized. The color coded maps are provided in the Appendix, Exhibit B.

Parking turnover counts and time-stay abuse surveys were conducted on a limited basis for the 4-hour metered on-street parking spaces on Water Street and the 1- and 2-hour non-metered on-street parking spaces on Court Street in N. Plymouth and Plymouth Centers, respectively. These counts and surveys were conducted as a check on current turnover rates and the appropriateness of posted time limits. Additionally, Park Plymouth’s audited meter utilization and revenue reports were reviewed to assess the seasonality of Plymouth’s parking system.

### **Key Findings – Parking Utilization**

#### **PLYMOUTH CENTER**

Generally speaking, during much of the year, there appears to be an adequate supply of public and private parking in Plymouth Center to satisfy current demand. While free on-street parking on Court Street, Main Street and Sandwich Street remains at a premium and can be limiting to customers and visitors, most of the off-street public parking lots have availability during non-special event peak-parking periods and are generally able to accommodate regular parking permit holders (residents, employees and merchants) as well as cash-paying customers and

visitors. For example, Park Plymouth's two highest use permit lots in Plymouth Center, the Middle St. and Main St. Ext. Lot, rarely fill even during peak periods.

However, it is important to point out that this general assessment is for but a snapshot in time. It is made in the context of the current 2010/11 downtown economy where there are several vacant storefronts and building vacancies downtown including the 20,000 square-foot 1820 Courthouse and adjoining 10,000 square-foot Commissioner's Building as well as the 25,000 square-foot former Registry of Deeds and Probate Court on Russell Street. **It is expected that with the redevelopment and reuse of these buildings and reductions in vacancy rates with an improving economy, there will be a need for additional off-street parking in Plymouth Center.**

This statement is supported by previous studies and by a comparing directly parking utilization rates from counts conducted in 2010 with those conducted near the peak of the economy in 2004 when vacancy rates were low, the Russell Street County buildings were occupied, and the Downtown-Waterfront Area Parking Analysis identified a shortage of between 400 and 600 spaces downtown. While the 2010 summer counts show a modest level of off-street public parking availability during peak periods in lots such as Middle Street and Main Street Extension lots, the 2004 summer counts did not - and depending on the ultimate size, scale and uses within the redevelopment of the Courthouse Corridor, actual parking demand in the central core of downtown could greatly exceed 2004 levels.

While the parking supply in Plymouth Center is generally adequate during much of the year given current demand and a largely vacant Courthouse Corridor, there are several areas downtown that currently reach capacity during certain times of the day and year and other areas that are significantly underutilized. A summary listing of these areas is provided below:

#### **Facilities at Capacity – Plymouth Center**

Free on-street parking areas – simply stated, during peak-periods, there is generally some level of parking availability on regulated streets in Plymouth that have a charge for parking and very little availability on those that do not. As with any commodity that is in limited supply like curbside parking, as demand for it approaches or exceeds that limited supply, the price goes up. If the commodity remains free, then it will be quickly used up and exhausted by the first people who get to it, and there can be no rational distribution to those who might need or want it more. This is the main reason that communities charge for downtown parking. The following streets fall into this category:

- *Main Street/Court Street* – Utilization of the free, 2-hour posted, on-street sections of Main Street/Court Street from Water Street to Samoset Street in Plymouth Center are at capacity most of the day during the peak summer and throughout the paid parking

season. Any open spaces found during busy times fill quickly leaving retail customers little chance of finding parking in close proximity to Main/Court Street destinations.

A spot survey of parking between Water Street and Samoset Street showed that approximately 10% of vehicles at any time were in violation of the 2-hour posted limit and in certain areas downtown employees were found to be moving their vehicles every two hours to avoid the posted time restriction despite consistent enforcement efforts by Park Plymouth. Turnover of Main Street spaces south of Water Street was not nearly as good – because of less enforcement coverage there, which was increased in 2011.



- *School Street* – there are approximately 25 free on-street parking spaces with no time limits that are located on the west side of School St. that are virtually 100% used each weekday by downtown employees. Vehicle parking is allowed on the opposite side of the street from the public sidewalk, which is unusual – done in part because of the 5 or so more parking spaces realized on the west side as there are no driveways there.



- *Chilton Street* - there are approximately 22 free on-street parking spaces with no time limits that are virtually 100% utilized on weekdays and weekends during the summer and shoulder periods – many by employees and waterfront visitors. Parking meters that once lined the street (meter posts are still there) were removed a couple of years ago over strong opposition to the meters. The result is that Chilton Street acts as a free parking lot for long-term parking during certain periods of the peak season.



- *South Park Avenue* – the 5 free unrestricted curbside parking spaces adjacent to the businesses on the south side of the street are often used all day long on weekdays by employees – even though the Memorial Hall Parking Lot is located just a block away.

Brewster Street and Market Street Paid Lots – Park Plymouth’s two smallest parking lots: the Brewster Street Lot (23 spaces) and Market Street Extension Lot (24 spaces) are often at or approaching capacity throughout the paid parking season. Permit holders generally comprise



more than 50% of the total spaces in these lots well situated for retail customers. Fortunately, there are other public lots that do not generally fill located in close proximity to these lots.

### **Underutilized Facilities – Plymouth Center**

South Russell Street and Jenney Grist Mill Free Lots – The three free public off-street parking lots that serve Plymouth Center are significantly underutilized. Two of the three lots - a 61-space and 26-space lot – located at South Russell Street near Allerton Street adjacent to the Plymouth County Commissioner’s Building are virtually unused throughout the week and weekend, which has largely been the case since the relocation of the Courthouse. The other lot - the 110-space Jenney Grist Mill lot is well used on weekends and during special events but far less used during the week except at the lunch hour when it is generally more than half used.

North Street Paid Lot – this paid public parking lot is usually only about 1/3 filled or less during peak daytime periods with the exception of special events, arts center events or in the later evening after parking enforcement ends.

Russell Street and Summer Street – the 4-hour metered parking on Russell Street adjacent to the vacant 1820 County Courthouse is poorly used throughout the paid parking season. Parking demand for the free 2-hour time limited parking on Summer Street in front of the John Carver Inn is also weak.

### **NORTH PLYMOUTH VILLAGE**

Parking utilization counts in North Plymouth show that there is ample on-street and private/public off-street parking (free public parking lot serving the village) to meet current demands. Park Plymouth operates a free 64-space public parking facility on the north end of the village that virtually never approaches capacity with the exception of major church services at St. Mary’s and special events. Duration of stay counts conducted by Park Plymouth indicate that there are several parkers staying over the one hour posted period on Court Street. Several of the abutting land uses (restaurants, salons, dentist office, etc.) support customer visits/stay that exceed one-hour but are less than two-hours. Park Plymouth conducted a survey of the downtown businesses in late 2010 and found that of the 16 businesses that provided responses, ten (10) indicated a desire to change the on-street time limit to 2-hours, four (4) stated that it didn’t matter whether it was 2 hours or 1 hour, and only two (2) wanted to retain the 1-hour time limit.

### **PLYMOUTH WATERFRONT AREA**

Parking demand in the waterfront area is very seasonal in nature compared to Plymouth Center - attributed in large part to some of the seasonal uses and fact that many businesses close on

the waterfront in the off-season. Parking occupancy rates in the high-season along the Waterfront area are very low in the morning but by noon on weekdays and weekends reach extremely high levels that continue generally through and well into the evening hours. The actual observed peak period for waterfront parking is after enforcement ends on a weekday or Saturday evening.

Unlike Plymouth Center, current parking demand in the Waterfront Area exceeds the current supply during the peak season. Usually all of the lots would be full or near full during the lunch time or dinner time periods observed in good weather. Frequently during these times, people unable to find a conveniently located parking space will unlawfully park in parking islands, on grass or even in NO PARKING areas on street.

Evidence of the increased demand along the waterfront is two private lots that are charging for flat-rate parking – one in a lot adjacent to Isaac’s Restaurant and one in the lot at Citizen Bank. The flat-rate charge in these lots has been observed to be twice (\$10/day) Park Plymouth’s all day rate at 50 cents/hour (\$5.00/day).

It is important to note, that while the public parking facilities have very limited availability during peak periods there are several private parking lots that are empty or underutilized. The lots adjacent to the Village Landing and south of Citizen Bank are well used most days as are the lots directly adjacent to the Radisson, Isaac’s Restaurant and others. However, closed-off, empty private lots exist adjacent to vacant sites at the former 1620 Restaurant, the former Revere Copper site, and at a former industrial site on lower Howland Street.

### **Most Facilities are at Capacity in Season – Plymouth Waterfront Area**

As previously noted, virtually all of the off-street public parking located in the Waterfront #1 (in front of Lobster Hut), Waterfront #2 (in front of East Bay Grille), the free Waterfront Lot (north of the Bus/RV parking lot), and to a lesser extent the Memorial Avenue Lot are at or approaching capacity during the afternoon and evening hours in season. In fact, if you eliminate the morning weekday periods during the summer, the three paid waterfront area parking lots (Memorial, Waterfront #1 and Waterfront #2) on the days counted were approximately 90% utilized through the other weekday periods and on the Saturday and Sunday periods. Considering that effective capacity is considered 85% this is quite remarkable.

It is interesting to note that the Waterfront Free Lot actually had a higher demand during the daytime than the Waterfront #2 Lot, which is posted 50 cents/hour and located closer to the restaurants and the Wharf area. The Waterfront Free parking lot is used by employees who do not purchase an employee permit, by people who sit and watch the Ocean – especially at lunch, by people who park and walk or jog in town and by visitors when no parking is available in the paid lots.

The Waterfront #1 Lot in front of Lobster Hut is the highest demand lot as it is central to the desired waterfront land uses. However, most every day, cash paying retail customers and waterfront visitors who cannot find a parking space in the lot are forced to park further away – in some cases all the way to the free parking lot and walk a good distance back to the shops and restaurants – while some 30 to 40 employee permit holders who regularly park in the lot all day have the short lot. Generally speaking, it is not acceptable to displace short-term customer parkers with long-term employee parkers in public parking lots close to retail/restaurant areas.

The 19-space Commercial Fisherman’s Parking Lot on the waterfront was also heavily used throughout the paid parking season primarily because it provides space for 49 Commercial Fisherman permit holders. Sometimes these permit holders spill into the Waterfront #1 Lot when the Commercial Fisherman lot fills. After 5 p.m. the lot opens up to other Park Plymouth permit holders, but is not well used.

With regards to on-street parking, the 4-hour metered parking along Water St. and the 2-hour metered parking on the Wharf are also at capacity during most days and evenings in season. The free state-owned parking areas in the semi-circles adjacent to Plymouth Memorial State Park, Plymouth Rock and the waterfront are virtually always filled – generally with state employees. Union St., which provides a good amount of heavily-used unrestricted free parking is poorly demarcated for parking on the east side - leading to a great deal of unlawful parking.

### **Underutilized Facilities in Season – Plymouth Waterfront Area**

There are a few off-street facilities other than the vacant private sites previously mentioned that are underutilized during peak times. Two of the sites are privately controlled while the third is a Park Plymouth lot.

Bus/RV Parking Lot – In 2010, Park Plymouth split this publicly-owned lot for oversized vehicles by providing six (6) metered (\$1/hr.) parking spaces for exclusive RV use and leaving the remaining ten (10) spaces free for exclusive bus use. Parking occupancy counts and revenue audits revealed that the exclusive RV spaces were not well used throughout the season (with the exception of around special events and holidays) but the bus spaces were very well used. As such, in 2011 all of the spaces were returned to free bus or RV use.

Radisson Remote Parking Lot – this privately-controlled part of the Radisson lot that is located furthest from the building and leased from the State generally has plenty of availability other than during large Radisson functions and events. It is sub-leased to the East Bay Grille for the purpose of remote employee parking.

225 Water Street Remote Parking Lots – there are two privately owned surface parking lots with a total of about 75 spaces located across the street from 225 Water Street and just north

of Park Plymouth’s Free Waterfront Parking Lot. These spaces are not well used. They primarily serve customer parking for the nearby dentist office and overflow parking from the 225 Water Street buildings. They are in close proximity to Nelson Beach whose parking is often at capacity since the park was expanded in 2009/2010.

**PARKING PERMIT PROGRAM UTILIZATION**

In 2011, Park Plymouth sold a total of 1,739 permits. 1,460 (84%) of which were sold to Plymouth residents. 554 of the resident permits were sold to senior citizens at a discount. 146 permits were employee permits (employees who reside out of town). A 4-year break-down of permit sales by type is provided in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Parking Permit Sales by Type (2008 – 2011)**

PERMIT TYPE	2011	2010	2009	2008
Downtown Resident	105	86	96	73
Plymouth Resident	1355	1,038	648	136
Merchant	44	38	37	24
Employee	146	134	99	60
Commercial Fisherman	60	49	43	44
Mooring	9	1	4	5
Commercial Loading	13	2	0	0
Use of Space	7	5	5	4
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1739</b>	<b>1,353</b>	<b>932</b>	<b>346</b>

As represented in Table 2, the Parking Program has been very successful almost tripling in permits sold from 2008 to 2009, growing by 45% from 2009 to 2010, and 28.5% from 2010 to 2011. Outreach and promotion has been extensive through direct mail promotions, tax bill inserts, and website and other media advertising. The potential also exists for combining the parking permit with other Town-issued resident stickers like beach stickers and dump passes to expand sales.

All permits are regularly \$50/year with the exception of the employee, merchant and boat mooring permits, which are \$100/year and senior permits (to Plymouth residents) which are \$25. Since 2009, permits have been sold at 50% off during a December 1 to March 31<sup>st</sup> promotional period except for the Senior Permit, which was sold for \$15. 90% of the permits were sold during the promotional period last year.

Generally speaking, permit parking is working well during the peak periods surveyed in June and July. There is a good mix of permit usage by location and regular customers (employees, residents, merchants, etc.) have a good value option and incentive to park at a variety of off-street locations freeing up on-street spaces for visitors/customers.

However, the permit program has now grown to where long-term permit parkers (i.e. employees) are starting to displace cash paying customers in some of the more retail-oriented lots on a regular basis. Table 3 provides a break-down of permit utilization in all Park Plymouth paid lots during the summer weekday mid-day period.

As you can see, during the summer weekday mid-day peak-period, approximately 2/3 of the parkers in the paid public lots are cash payers with the other 1/3 permit holders. A much higher percentage of permit holders are found in the downtown lots as opposed to the waterfront lots as would be expected. The very small lots at Brewster St. and Market St. Extension regularly fill to capacity during peak-summer periods and are displacing cash-paying retail customers. The same is true for the Waterfront #1 Lot. As the permit program continues to grow and the number of off-street spaces remains finite, this trend will increase.

**Table 3: Permit Parking Utilization in Park Plymouth Parking Lots  
2010 Summer Weekday Mid-Day Peak Period**

(Counts conducted on a sunny Thursday in late June, 2010 between noon and 1 p.m.)

PAID PUBLIC PARKING LOTS

PARKING LOT	TOTAL SPACES	TOTAL SPACES USED	AVAILABLE SPACES	PERMIT HOLDERS	CASH PAYERS
Brewster Street	23	23(100%)	0	14	9
North Street	34	15(44%)	19	10	5
Middle Street	70	54(77%)	16	26	28
Main St. Ext.	53	46(87%)	7	29	17
Market St. Ext.	24	24(100%)	0	15	9
Memorial Lot	115	83(72%)	32	18	65
Waterfront 1	143	139(97%)	4	37	102
Waterfront 2	72	43(60%)	29	7	36
TOTALS	534	427 (80%)	107(20%)	156(36%)	271(64%)

**Parking Seasonality and Pricing**

As stated earlier, the Park Plymouth Program was changed from a year-round pay-for-parking program in 2008 to a seasonal 8-month (April 1st to November 31st) pay-for-parking program in 2009. At that time, parking along the Waterfront was reduced from \$1/hr. to 50 cents/hour while the rate in Plymouth Center remained unchanged at 50 cents/hour. The decision to

shorten the paid parking season was taken after the PGDC reviewed utilization of monthly parking.

In 2008, the combined parking meter revenue for the four months of January, February, March and December represented just 11% of the total revenue for the year. Historically, meter utilization typically dropped by nearly 100% from November to December – as many waterfront area businesses closed for the season – and more than doubled from March to April. In contrast, the 4-month period June through September provided 66.0% of total annual meter revenue in 2009 and 67.9% in 2010. While Park Plymouth no longer charges for parking from December through March, lawful parking and time limits are still enforced to ensure safety and turnover of spaces.

Since 2009, Park Plymouth has maintained a flat rate of \$0.50/hour everywhere it charges for parking regardless of demand (waterfront vs. downtown) or the type of public facility (on-street vs. off-street). Typically, the supply of, and demand for public parking is considered in setting price. This allows the consumer to make an economic choice in deciding where to park and helps regulate use of a scarce resource.

In many New England coastal communities, waterfront parking carries a substantially higher seasonal user price than non-waterfront downtown parking – primarily because it is in limited supply and demanded far more by the seasonal visitor (see Table 4 below) than other parking. Theoretically, on-street parking should also carry a higher price than less convenient off-street parking. While Plymouth’s downtown hourly parking rate of \$0.50/hour is within the range of rates found in similar size communities in New England, its waterfront rate is not.

**Table 4: Public Metered Parking Rates in other Coastal New England Communities**

Onset, MA	\$2.00/hr.**
Hampton, NH	\$1.50/hr.**
Boston, MA	\$1.25/hr.
Providence, RI	\$1.25/hr.
Newburyport, MA	\$1.00/hr.*
Newport, RI	\$1.00/hr.**
York, ME	\$1.00/hr.**
Portland, ME	\$1.00/hr.
Portsmouth, NH	\$1.00/hr.
Salem, MA	\$0.75/hr.***
<b>Plymouth, MA</b>	<b>\$0.50/hr.**</b>

\*Weekends only rate

\*\*Seasonal rate

\*\*\*In 2012, some on-street rates will be as high as \$1.50/hr.

A higher on-street parking price also provides an incentive for longer-term parkers to use off-street facilities. While current pricing for on-street and off-street hourly parking is set at the same rate (\$0.50/hr.), the deeply discounted resident, merchant and employee permits offered by Park Plymouth provide the pricing incentive discussed above.

## **Transit Services in the Downtown-Waterfront Area**

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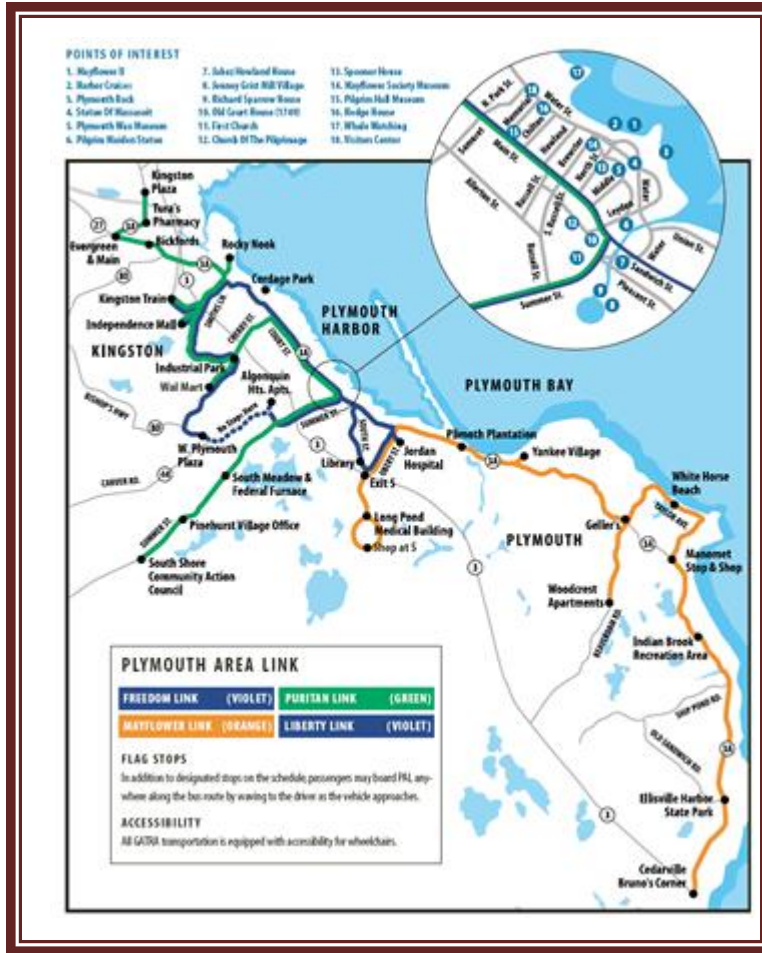
A successful transit system is of the utmost importance to the sustainability of the parking system because it reduces the demand for costly structured parking. A viable public and private transit system can delay or eliminate in some cases the need for structured parking and spur redevelopment by reducing parking requirements of new development.

The study area is served by GATRA's local bus service known as the Plymouth Area Link (PAL), which is operated by the Plymouth & Brockton Street Railway Company. The PAL service is comprised of four basic routes/links: "Mayflower", "Pilgrim", "Freedom" and "Liberty" – as depicted in Map 2. All four routes serve Plymouth Center pulsing on the hour from the GATRA Hub (bus shelter next to Memorial Hall) on Memorial Avenue.

The services generally run hourly or every two hours depending on the route, Mondays through Fridays with less frequency and service provided on Saturdays. Regular fares are \$1.00/ride and 50 cents/ride for seniors (60+), Medicare card carriers, the disabled and students - children 6 and under ride free. 31 day, 3 day, 1 day and 10 ride passes are also available.

The Mayflower link provides service every two hours with direct connections between Downtown Plymouth, Jordan Hospital Plymouth Plantation, White Horse Beach, Manomet, Ellisville and Cedarville. The Pilgrim link provides hourly service connecting Downtown Plymouth with Plymouth Rock, the Public Library, Jordan Hospital, Exit 5 P&B Center, the Shops at 5 and the Long Pond Medical Center. The Freedom Link provides hourly service connecting Downtown Plymouth with Cordage Park/Plymouth Train Station, the Kingston Train Station, Independence Mall, the Industrial Park and West Plymouth Plaza. Finally, the Liberty Link provides hourly service connecting Downtown Plymouth with the same locations as the Freedom Link but in the opposite direction.

GATRA also provides Dial-a-Ride paratransit services for eligible people with disabilities who are unable to access the fixed-route bus system due to their disability. The PAL System carried approximately 100,000 riders in 2010 and is growing steadily - about 17% since 2009.



Map 2: Plymouth Area Link (PAL) Bus Service Route Map

### America’s Hometown Shuttle

The Plymouth & Brockton Street Railway Company operates America’s Hometown Shuttle, a seasonal trolley in Downtown Plymouth. The trolley runs daily every 2 ½ hours from 10 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. seven days a week from mid June through Labor Day and includes a driver-guided tour with connections to DWA hotels and tourist destinations as well as transfer connections at the Memorial Avenue GATRA Hub and the Exit 5 park and ride facility (connections to P&B intercity services). All-day passes are \$15 for adults, \$7.50 for ages 5 to 11 and free for children under 5. One-way tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5.00 for ages 5 to 11 and free for children under 5. The Trolley Shuttle’s success has largely been as a tourist attraction and tour – not as a mode of transport in moving people from an origin to a destination. In 2011, the trolley carried 1,723 passengers.





## **Feasibility Study of New Downtown Transportation Center**

Given the amount of service and system transfers that occur at GATRA's current hub (Memorial Avenue Bus Shelter), the potential for significant ridership growth, and need for better transit amenities and information, the agency initiated a site location study in January 2011, in partnership with the Town of Plymouth and the PGDC, to locate and construct a Multimodal Transportation Facility with supporting parking in the downtown area. The Downtown Transportation Center would safely accommodate current and future downtown transit and trolley transfers and modal connections to taxis, bicycles, pedicabs, pedestrians and automobiles - potentially through a self-park facility. Vastly enhanced parking, transit and visitor information services along with complimentary commercial development could be provided at the facility. The project is 80% funded by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) through GATRA with the remaining 20% local match split evenly by the Town and PGDC.

In the first phase of the study, the consultant, working through GATRA, identified a need for seven bus bays to provide adequate current and future storage for buses serving downtown Plymouth. The consultant also conducted a thorough parking/land use analysis and determined that the downtown and waterfront area was short approximately 600 parking spaces in the peak period, which was consistent with the findings of the *2004 Downtown-Waterfront Area Parking Analysis*.

In the second phase of the study, nine candidate sites for the new facility were screened down to two sites based on a comprehensive engineering and planning review and with input from an advisory committee and the general public. The two final candidate sites (the Memorial Hall Parking Lot and the 1820 Courthouse Corridor) were then evaluated to determine the optimum site to accommodate the desired program and the Memorial Hall site was selected. The site selection process was presented to the Board of Selectmen and the public in December 2011.

In the final phase of the study planned for completion in early 2012, engineering and financial feasibility will be studied and conceptual designs for the facility provided. It is anticipated that FTA funding could be used to off-set the cost of constructing a significant portion of the structured parking within the Transportation Center. This funding would be sought with a determination of engineering and financial feasibility and Town approval.

## **MBTA Commuter Rail**

Another major purpose for creating a better downtown transit link and hub is the anticipated expansion of future rail passenger service to the Plymouth MBTA station located on the Old Colony Line in North Plymouth near Cordage Park just a mile north of Plymouth Center. The MBTA re-introduced service on this line in 1997. The primary area commuter connection is to the Kingston Station however, the Plymouth Station does offer connections to very limited

MBTA service into Plymouth – not suited to the commuter. The result is that the station carries very few passengers. In 2008, the Kingston Station, which offers much more service, averaged 1,135 in-bound boardings, which was the 16<sup>th</sup> highest of MBTA’s 131 commuter rail stations in the state. The Plymouth Station averaged only 85 boardings, which ranked 119<sup>th</sup> in this category.



However, with future transit-oriented development planned for Cordage Park it is hoped that more trains will connect the station to its terminus at South Station.

At that time, a more timely and convenient express bus service connection between the station and Plymouth Center will be warranted. As stated earlier, a very good dedicated bicycle rail trail already exists to connect the station to Plymouth Center.

### **Inter-City Bus – Plymouth & Brockton**

The Plymouth and Brockton (P&B) bus company provides inter-city commuter bus services in the region. P&B serves park & ride locations in Sagamore, Plymouth (Route3/Exit 5), Kingston and Rockland with its final destination in downtown Boston and Logan Airport. P&B has service leaving Plymouth heading towards Boston and as early as 4:05 a.m. with 30 minute service running for most of the day. P&B’s commuter bus ticket sales in Plymouth alone are about 50,000/annually.

## **Other Parking & Transportation Challenges and Opportunities**

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In addition to the findings from the parking use studies, there are a number of other parking and transportation challenges and opportunities that have been identified through parking system performance analysis, stakeholder interviews, public meeting input and customer suggestions as follows.

1. **Customers cannot currently pay for parking in Plymouth by credit card in public lots or on-street except by purchasing an annual parking permit (not available to out-of-town visitors unless they are employees).** Studies have shown that customers stay longer in parking spaces when paying by credit card and overall revenues and customer satisfaction increase. Also, because exact change is no longer needed, expired meter violations go down. Following a 2008 installation of credit-card-accepting pay and display meters on-street the City of Portsmouth, NH experienced a 4% increase in meter revenue with a 10% decrease in violations.

2. **There are currently no parking promotional programs offered to retail customers to show appreciation and to create goodwill and loyalty.** With the exception of providing free parking in December during the holiday shopping season. Park Plymouth’s heavily discounted and successful parking permit program is an excellent way to acknowledge the importance of merchants, employees and visiting residents to the downtown and waterfront area but no discounted or validated parking promotion is offered to the retail customer during the paid parking season.
3. **A common complaint from downtown parkers is that they are often issued tickets within just a few minutes of the meter expiring.** While the frequency of this happening cannot be confirmed, nothing seems to anger a downtown visitor more than receiving a \$15 ticket on a 50 cent or one dollar fare within a few minutes of an expiring meter.
4. **On-street parking and destination wayfinding signage is poor.** You cannot park at what you cannot find. While the architecturally-designed parking lot signs at the entrances to all of Park Plymouth lots are quite good, the directional signage to the lots and to most destinations from the gateways is equally poor. For those visitors that find the public lots, most provide little or no visitor information.
5. **On-street parking regulatory signage and parking pavement markings are poor.** Many on-street regulatory signs are sun-faded, missing or outdated. Pavement stall markings are inconsistent in treatment and quality. Pavement markings on certain streets such as Court Street in Plymouth Center are inconsistent and confusing to visitors.
6. **Not all ADA parking spaces are in compliance.** While there appears to be a good supply of handicapped parking spaces both in the lots and on-street, several stalls are not located or not signed/marked in compliance with state law. The current handicapped parking violation rate is set at the state’s minimum fine of \$100.
7. **Special event parking in Plymouth is challenging.** Plymouth holds dozens of major special events in the downtown and waterfront area each year. Because most of the Park Plymouth off-street lots are located within the event areas – they are often at capacity early or difficult or impossible to reach. Many attendees will try to come downtown to park in their lots of choice only to have to backtrack.
8. **Large free peripheral public parking lots remain underutilized.** A common complaint is that you cannot find parking on Main St./Court St. in Plymouth Center most times and on Water Street during peak times. However, the large peripheral free parking lots at Jenny Grist Mill and off South Russell St. remain underutilized even when street parking is at capacity. Improving utilization of these lots is a challenge.

- 9. Numerous private parking lots remain vacant and closed off or underutilized during peak periods.** Several of these private lots are development parcels for sale while others are simply underutilized – in certain cases they may represent an opportunity for PGDC/Park Plymouth to enter into a lease or shared-lot agreement for their public use.
- 10. Parking pricing is inconsistent and does not always reflect demand.** In general, pricing that appropriately reflects the demand for competing facilities will help regulate the use and availability of public facilities. During the high season, the supply of parking on the waterfront is regularly unable to meet demand, which is not generally the case in Plymouth Center yet the pricing is the same. Waterfront parking in Plymouth is priced far below waterfront parking in similar coastal communities (for example: Newport, RI \$1.00/hr and Onset, MA \$2.00/hr.). Also, some of the connecting streets between Court St. and Water St. charge for parking (Brewster St. and North St.) while others that are at capacity are free (Chilton St. and S. Park Ave.). Parking pricing as currently structured in Plymouth is contributing to the lack of parking availability on prime streets.
- 11. Parking safety violations fines are set at the same levels as overtime parking fines.** Parking safety violations such as double parking, parking within an intersection, and parked in the wrong direction are more serious violations than an expired meter or overtime parking violation – however, the fine amount is currently the same \$15.
- 12. Parking Lot Maintenance needs improvement.** Lot maintenance from litter pick-up to snow removal after storms needs improvement. Physical features such as pavement markings and lighting can in some cases be improved.
- 13. Parking on Union Street between Bradford Street and Water Street is disorganized and poorly signed/marked.** It is not unusual to see cars parked both parallel and head-in to the buildings on the north side of the street. It is unclear where parking is prohibited and stall markings are non-existent.
- 14. Free-Parking within the state-owned semi-circular driveways along the waterfront are poorly signed/marked and dominated by all-day employee parking.** This prime waterfront space should be dedicated to short-term customer/visitor parking and tour bus and other drop-offs.
- 15. The dominant land use by far for Plymouth’s waterfront is storing cars.** Park Plymouth can continue efforts to expand surface parking and alter pricing to meet demand, however, the highest and best use of this land is not car storage. A properly located parking structure in relatively close proximity to the waterfront will allow the Town to convert some of the surface parking to more suitable waterfront uses. Several previous

parking studies have identified the Memorial Avenue Parking Lot as the prime candidate lot to accomplish this.

**16. The parking impact of a redeveloped 1820 Courthouse corridor will be considerable.**

One only has to compare parking utilization rates for public facilities last taken in the summer of 2003 when the Courthouse and Probate Court were in full use to those taken in the summer of 2010 to see the impact of these largely vacant buildings and the economy as a whole. Utilization rates for the streets and lots around the courthouse as far as the Middle St. lot were considerably higher in 2003 than 2010.

**17. Facilitation of transit service connections, transfers and information is extremely limited in the downtown area.**

The town cannot realize the full mobility benefits of its bus and rail system without integrating those services and schedules – perhaps at a centralized location downtown that would also provide visitor services information and ground transportation options to get around Plymouth post-arrival via walking, biking, pedi-cab, taxi-cab, trolley, etc. The current transit hub/shelter on Memorial Drive is insufficient to allow for growth in the public transit system.

**18. There is not currently a strong continuous transit link between Boston South Station and the Downtown Plymouth and Waterfront Area.**

Whether by train or intercity bus, the local bus system on the Plymouth end does not provide well timed and publicized convenient transfers to and from Downtown Plymouth.

## Recommended Parking Improvements

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The Plymouth Parking Management Plan is intended to act as a guide for public policy decisions and investments into the parking and transportation system of the Plymouth Downtown-Waterfront Area and North Plymouth. The Plan was developed in consideration of previous parking and economic development studies and master plans, current and projected future parking needs and considerable public input. The recommended improvements listed below are designed to address the deficiencies, needs, challenges and opportunities identified in previous sections. These improvements must in all cases support the approved *2007 Public Space Action Plan* initiatives and be consistent with the Plan's set of guiding principles that will form a lasting framework for future decision-making.

The types of recommended improvements provided fall into several categories including innovative technology and customer service enhancements, ways to increase the effectiveness of the existing parking supply, transit and demand management strategies, and development of new parking. Cost estimates for near-term projects are provided where possible along with revenue enhancements to cover the cost of the improvement when necessary. Several initiatives are already underway and are so noted.

In summary, the major initiatives coming out of the study process are as follows:

- Upgrade parking technology to provide customers the ability to pay by credit card at all metered parking spaces.
- Convert Pay-and-Display parking to more convenient Pay-by-Space parking in all off-street lots.
- Expand the parking supply geographically to accommodate a successful and growing parking permit program and provide incentives for employees and other long-term parkers to park further from retail core areas.
- Increase the fees for waterfront parking to a level within the range of fees charged in other New England coastal communities and to reflect current demand for underwriting the cost of new parking technology and expanded off-street parking.
- Improve the overall appearance and maintenance of off-street parking lots.
- Locate a multi-modal transportation facility in the downtown and expand and improve transit services and connections to park and ride lots, intercity bus, the MBTA rail system and other transportation facilities and services.
- Leverage federal funding in support of the multi-modal facility to offset the significant cost of expanding transit services and constructing a new parking facility downtown.
- Continue planning, engineering and financial studies of potential new off-street, mixed-use parking facilities at the Memorial Hall Parking Lot, within the Courthouse Corridor and at the Main Street Extension/Market Street Lots.

A more detail description of initiatives is provided below by category.

#### Innovative Technology/Customer Service Enhancements

Parking technology is advancing rapidly in the areas of revenue control and payment systems, enforcement and information technology. Taking advantage of these technological advances provides a real opportunity to improve customer service and efficiency. Recommendations include:

#### **1. Provide customers with multi-payment options for parking including credit card, pay-by-cell phone and cash at all metered locations by 2013.**

This was easily the most frequent issue raised throughout the public involvement process. Requiring customers to pay for parking at most locations with only nickels, dimes and quarters is inconvenient and unacceptable. How many people are carrying the 8 quarters

necessary to park on Water Street for the 4-hour limit provided? For a community serving a very large visitor and tourist customer base, it is most important that credit cards be accepted in all instances. Studies show that customers stay longer at meters that accept credit cards and parking violations go down. These meters also notify parking management when they are down or need servicing, which significantly reduces customer complaints.



In 2011, Park Plymouth bid out and awarded the purchase and installation of new solar powered, credit card enabled, multi-space parking pay stations for its off-street lots (photo of unit shown to right). The new pay stations are scheduled to be installed and ready for operation on April 1, 2012.

Park Plymouth also tested new credit card enabled, solar powered “smart” meters at 34 parking spaces on Town Wharf in 2011 as a potential future on-street application (photo of unit shown to right). The meters were tested from August through November at \$1/hour – a rate required to offset the purchase and ongoing transaction fees associated with credit-card enabled on-street meters. The pilot was very successful and the credit cards were very well received. Customer utilization of the metered spaces increased as did the average duration of stay and Park Plymouth received no complaints regarding the credit-card meters or the increased rate.



The next step is to bid out, purchase and install new credit card enabled, solar powered “smart” meters for on-street spaces where demand warrants at least a \$1/hour meter fee (See Item #8 under recommended *Transit and Demand Management Strategies* below).

2. **Convert off-street Pay-and-Display lots to Pay-by-Space lots to increase customer satisfaction by:**
  - I. **Eliminating the need for customers to return to their cars with a display slip after paying for parking.** With pay-by-space, they will simply key in the number of their parking stall at the pay station and go on their way. No need to return to the car.
  - II. **Allowing customers to add time remotely to their meter from any other pay station in town.** With pay-by-space, customers parked on one side of town who may be shopping in another part of town can extend time at any pay station location by simply keying in their space number and extending the time with payment.

- III. **Allowing registered customers to pay for, or extend their parking by cell phone.** The new pay stations with pay-by-space parking will allow customers paying by credit card to receive automated messages when their meter is about to expire and to extend their time by cell phone. Future technology upgrades could allow customers to register for a pay-by-cell phone service and be allowed to see available parking spaces in real time via cell phone applications.

Implementation of Recommendation #2 will occur with the purchase and installation of the new pay stations and meters in Recommendation #1.

3. **Add a 5-minute Grace Period to all parking meters and pay stations to eliminate the potential for receiving an expired meter violation within just minutes of a meter expiring.** A 5-minute grace period was installed on all single space meters in 2011 and will be introduced at the new off-street pay stations in 2012.
4. **Introduce New Parking Loyalty Program for Merchants.** In conjunction with new off-street parking pay stations, merchants will be able register to purchase pay station tokens/coupons for parking from Park Plymouth at a discount and provide them to their customers as an incentive to return. The cost of this program is nominal and will be implemented in 2012/13 with the purchase of new pay stations and in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce.
5. **Implement an online permit renewal program that will allow all permit holders to renew and pay for their annual parking permits conveniently online rather than by visiting the Park Plymouth offices.** Currently residents can renew online by credit card but not employees, merchants, seniors and others who must currently present some form of documentation in-person for permit. The cost of this program is nominal and can be implemented in 2012/13.
6. **Implement an online parking citation appeals process** to improve operational efficiency and customer service by providing a more convenient way to appeal a parking citation than requiring them to manually fill out an appeals form in the Park Plymouth Office. The cost of this program is nominal and will occur in 2012.
7. **Work with the Town of Plymouth to investigate the potential for integrating or linking the Park Plymouth parking permits with other Town permit/sticker programs.** A universal single permit could provide one-stop shopping convenience to the customer and increase the value and sales of permits. Resident permit databases could be merged to ensure that all Town/Park Plymouth accounts are paid by an individual before a permit is issued. Park



Plymouth staff will meet with Town Officials to discuss joint partnership opportunities in 2012.

- 8. Integrate enforcement technology with new multi-space pay stations technology to monitor parking compliance remotely and dramatically improve the efficiency of parking enforcement.** Park Plymouth enforcement staff currently have hand held ticket writers that can be linked to the new on-street smart meters and off-street pay stations so that when they enter the parking lot they will be able to see an image of the parking lot by space number including who has paid and who has not in real time. This will increase efficiency by directing enforcement only to cars in violation. The cost of this program is nominal and can be implemented in 2012/13 with purchase of new pay stations.
- 9. Consider using a Mobile License Plate Recognition (LPR) system to more efficiently enforce unmetered, 2-hour time limits on “Main Street” and improve turnover for businesses.** Park Plymouth is still using the “tried and true” method of manually chalking tires to enforce time limited parking. This method is time consuming, costly and inefficient. Turnover counts indicate that manual chalking alone on Court/Main Street is not creating appropriate turnover rates. Enforcement vehicles with side mounted cameras and LPR technology are now being used by municipalities to enforce un-metered, time limits on “Main Street” to increase parking turnover. They also have the side benefit of identifying stolen and unregistered vehicles. A pilot program should be undertaken in 2013/2014 at no cost to Park Plymouth to determine cost/benefit.
- 10. Consider implementing real-time, electronic signage for the Waterfront Lots.** Due to the linear nature of the waterfront lot locations people tend to drive through the most southerly lot searching for parking and then if they do not find any available they will search the second lot and if necessary the third and then the fourth. By providing real-time electronic information on space availability to the customer, parking searches will be more efficient and safe. This technology and application should be investigated as part of the Town’s planned Wayfinding Signage Study for the Downtown-Waterfront Area.

#### Increase the Effectiveness of the Existing Parking Supply

It makes good economic sense to maximize the use of what you already have in terms of parking supply before developing new, more costly facilities. In most cases these improvements are low-cost management and operational strategies that will allow the existing parking supply to serve more people.

- 1. Change parking time limits in certain locations to better serve abutting land uses and customer needs.** Based on utilization and turnover studies, there are several streets where

posted time limits or current regulations are recommended to change. These changes should go into effect in 2012 unless otherwise noted.

- Convert 1-hour on-street parking in North Plymouth Village to 2-hour parking to reflect parking needs of abutting business, reduce time limit citations and satisfy the vast majority of N. Plymouth business owners (per survey).
- Convert 15, 2-hour on-street parking spaces on Summer Street adjacent to the John Carver Inn to designated 4-hour parking to improve utilization and allow permit parkers to be exempt from the time limit.
- Convert the 25, all day parking spaces on School Street to 4-hour parking and allow permit parkers to be exempt from the time limit. When School Street is reconstructed (not currently scheduled), move the parking from the west side (cemetery side) to the east side (sidewalk side) for safety.
- Convert 14, 2-hour on-street parking spaces in Depot Square to 4-hour parking to improve utilization.
- Convert 5, all-day parking spaces on South Park Avenue to 2-hour metered spaces to improve customer access to abutting businesses.
- Convert 34 metered 2-hour spaces on Town Wharf to 3-hour or 4-hour parking to accommodate longer visits on the waterfront given restaurant and shopping uses there.
- Eliminate parking meters on Russell St. and South Russell St. west of the vacant 1820 Courthouse building until such time that they are again warranted. Maintain the 4-hour time limits and allow permit parkers to be exempt from the time limits.
- Convert 22 all-day parking spaces on the south side of Chilton Street to 4-hour metered parking and issue parking permits to residents of the street allowing them to park in the spaces all day. This action will increase use of these spaces and make regulations on Chilton Street consistent with Brewster Street.

## **2. Add on-street parking spaces where feasible.**

- Consider making Howland Street a one-way street between Court Street and Water Street and adding 16 new 4-hour metered parking spaces on the north side and issuing downtown resident permits to abutters allowing them to parking in the spaces all day. In November, 2011, residents requested this by petition. This recommendation has been reviewed by the Plymouth Traffic Task Force Committee who has requested that Park Plymouth hold a public meeting with residents and businesses on the street.

- Convert 4 underutilized handicapped parking spaces on the south side of south Russell Street adjacent to the cemetery to all day parking spaces. There are already other handicapped spaces serving this area.
- Add 8 all-day on-street parking spaces to the south side of Russell Street between Sever Street and Allerton Street where the street is currently posted NO PARKING but the street widths are sufficient to allow on-street parking. This recommendation has been approved by the Plymouth Traffic Task Force Committee.
- Better organize on-street parking on the northeasterly side of Union Street between Bradford Street and Water Street to improve safety and use.
- Consider making Court Street and Water Street 1-way pairs between Sandwich Street and Samoset Street to improve traffic flow and expand on-street parking, sidewalks and sidewalk café opportunities. This will be studied as part of the *Special Events Traffic Management Plan for Plymouth* under development by the Old Colony Planning Commission and scheduled for completion in 2012.

**3. Add off-street public parking spaces through reconfiguration of existing lots, lot leases and shared lot agreements.** As previously noted, numerous private parking lots planned for redevelopment are currently closed off while others are open for private use but underutilized during peak parking periods. These lots represent great opportunities for securing private spaces for public use.

- **Amend the existing parking lot agreement between the PGDC and Sovereign Bank to increase the number of spaces leased in the Brewster Street Lot by 11 from 23 metered parking spaces to 34 spaces.** This lease amendment has been executed and will go into effect in January 2012.
- **Expand Park Plymouth's Waterfront Parking Lot located across from Lothrop Street by 6 spaces by removing a rotting wooden shelter and paving/stripping the new spaces.** This project was completed in 2011 by the Town and paid for by the PGDC as part of a lot safety improvement that included lighting upgrades, drainage improvements and new sidewalks.
- **Seek to secure from the State when it comes up for bid in 2013, the large underutilized parking lot on MBTA right-of-way currently leased by the Radisson.** This lot, which is currently used for event overflow and valet parking could be better utilized as a public lot while still maintaining its current functions to the Radisson and valets.

- **Seek to secure shared-lot agreements for underutilized parking lots located near demand areas.** Potential examples include the back lot of the Morton Elementary School (in summer after the school year ends), St. Peter’s Church Lot (when there are no services), and numerous empty private throughout the DWA.
- **Secure lease agreements on the two underutilized private parking lots located across from 225 Water Street to allow geographic expansion of waterfront parking and the permit program, and to provide overflow parking for Nelson Park.** Park Plymouth has reached verbal agreement with the lot owner to secure a lease agreement for public use of the roughly 75 spaces in these two lots starting in 2012.

**4. Better Utilize On-Street and Off-Street Public Parking by expanding the permit parking program.** The permit program has grown rapidly over the last 4 years. In 2011, the Waterfront 1 Lot (in front of Lobster Hut) filled daily in good weather with many employee permit holders – forcing cash-paying customers to park further away from the restaurants and shopping areas. Park Plymouth is projecting that it will have over 2,000 permit holders in 2012 and capacity of its off-street parking system will be further tested. To remedy these impacts and to improve the utilization of the on-street and off-street parking supply, it is recommended that the permit parking areas expand outward to:

- **The Waterfront Lot across from Lothrop Street** - this free lot was recently upgraded with improved lighting and safety features. The lot will be metered but open for employee and other permit parkers to relieve pressure on the paid waterfront lot that is now filling to capacity.
- **Summer Street, School Street, Russell Street, South Russell Street (west of the 1820 Courthouse entrance) and the South Russell Street parking lots.** These streets and lots are already providing a good deal of free all-day employee parking. Making the streets 4-hour time limited parking and including them as permit parking areas will provide capacity needed to grow the permit program, while moving longer-term parkers outward of the downtown core.
- **Introduce and market a new discounted permit for parking only at the North Street Parking Lot to improve use of this lot.** The new permit was introduced in 2011 at one-half the cost of a resident permit, which allows parkers to park in any lot. Twenty (20) North Street permits were sold and average peak season lot usage increased from about 30% to over 50%. More marketing and promotion is planned for 2012.
- **Consider Incentives and Disincentives for moving longer-term permit parkers to lots outside of the prime retail district areas.** Park Plymouth has historically been able to

allow permit holders access to any of their off-street parking lots regardless of location with flat-rate pricing. However, as the permit program continues to grow and lots approach capacity, pricing and other strategies should be considered to provide incentives and disincentives to long-term parkers to use facilities that are a short-walk to the DWA thus freeing up space for customers in parking lots located in prime retail areas. No restrictions are planned for 2012.

#### **5. Better Utilize On-Street and Off-Street Parking by Regulation, Policy Change and New Programs.**

- **Secure an Agreement with the State Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to allow Park Plymouth to enforce the 2-hour posted parking spaces serving Plymouth Memorial State Park and Plymouth Rock** to eliminate all-day employee parking abuse and ensure that visitors have access to these historic resources.
- **Eliminate the “2-hour shuffle” of employees on Sandwich Street/Main Street/Court Street by prohibiting employees and long-term parkers from moving their car a few spaces every 2 hours to avoid time-limit citations.** This action will free-up spaces for customers and short-term visitors.
- **Color code and label meter poles to match color-coded meter stickers that reflect the 15-minute, 2-hour and 4-hour time limits so customers can see the time limit as they approach the meter.**
- **Expand Parking Enforcement Hours to 9 p.m. (for lawful parking only) from Memorial Day to Labor Day.** After meter and enforcement hours end at 7 p.m., unlawful parking becomes a major issue – especially on the waterfront where cars can be found parked on grass, on streets posted NO PARKING, in handicapped parking spaces without placards, and in fire lanes. Expanding parking enforcement until 9 p.m. for lawful parking (meters still end at 7 p.m.) will substantially increase safety.
- **Bring all regulatory signage up to date to properly enforce the Updated 1954 Traffic Rules and Orders as well as other signs that are missing, damaged or outdated.** In 2011, Park Plymouth updated the Town’s parking regulations in the above-noted document. In doing so, over 100 signs were identified that need to be replaced or posted and are included in the Appendix as Exhibit C.
- **Relocate the existing Bus/RV parking lot off the waterfront to a more suitable location.** The Bus/RV lot provides a valuable layover service to tour buses and school buses that bring in tens of thousands of visitors to Plymouth each year. However, the layover can occur in a lot near, but not on, the waterfront. Park Plymouth will continue

to search for a more appropriate location so that this lot can be converted in the short-term to car parking (40+ spaces) and to a more suitable use in the longer-term.

### Transit and Demand Management Strategies

According to the National Parking Association (NPA), the average cost to construct a structured parking space in 2010 was over \$16,000/space. Therefore it stands to reason that any measure or strategy that reduces the demand for parking while bringing people into the downtown and waterfront area should be of priority to the parking management organization. From a sustainability standpoint, we cannot build our way to a balanced system.

Plymouth is fortunate to have a robust tour bus industry that brings tens of thousands of visitors to Plymouth each year without their cars. We need to do all that we can to sustain, promote and increase this type of visitation while improving ground transportation options (bikes, pedicabs, taxis, trolleys, etc.) for these visitors.

The regional and intercity bus system is also bringing a substantial number of visitors to the downtown each year however, these numbers can be increased substantially through a variety of measures. The following transit and demand management strategies focus on the need to leverage other modes of transportation in getting people to the DWA and providing modal options for getting them around once they arrive.

- 1. Construct a Transportation Center Downtown.** In 2011, GATRA, the Town of Plymouth and PGDC completed a federally-funded site location and feasibility study that identified the Memorial Ave. site and the Courthouse Corridor as potential sites for constructing a transit center that would provide 7-sheltered bus bays, transit ticketing and services, enclosed waiting areas and real-time bus schedule information. All GATRA routes would pulse on the hour from the facility with service to and from most of Plymouth and connections to intercity services at P&B and the MBTA stations at Kingston and Plymouth. In late 2011, the Memorial Hall lot was identified as the preferred site for the new facility. In early 2012 a conceptual design of the new facility will be completed. Federal design funding could then be sought in 2012. In other areas of the state where new facilities have been constructed for passengers, transit ridership has increased.
- 2. Increase the frequency and improve connections on existing GATRA bus routes serving the downtown and waterfront area.** GATRA reworked many of its routes over the past year and realized a 10% increase in Plymouth ridership in 2010. More needs to be done to streamline and synchronize routes, increase headways and expand to new opportunities. A fixed-route transit study of the PAL System is recommended.

3. **Continue to promote bike and sidewalk projects, trolley services, taxis, pedi-cabs and other ground transportation options to promote a “Park Once” concept for the Downtown-Waterfront Area.** These circulator downtown transportation services are very important to visitors who arrive to Plymouth without their cars. They also reduce the number of additional discretionary car trips that occur after people visit and park. The goal should be to create an environment where once you park your car you don’t think about it until you are ready to leave.
4. **Explore opportunities to increase utilization of the Route 3/Exit 7 Park & Ride lot for intercity transit** – The Exit 7 P&R lot is grossly underutilized while at the same time the Exit 5 P&R served by the Plymouth & Brockton bus is at capacity during certain summer days.
5. **Explore partnerships that will bring car sharing and bike sharing/rental companies to Town.** Many communities have partnered with car sharing companies like ZipCar to provide them spaces for their cars in lots and garages around town. Car sharing has been proven to reduce auto ownership and dependence and reduce parking demands in downtown areas. Bike sharing in Europe has been around for a long-time and is now making in-roads into the U.S. Boston has recently rolled out a new program.
6. **Provide contracted public valet services during special events and encourage regulated private valet for restaurants to better utilize public and private off-street parking.** Park Plymouth successfully introduced public valet during the Maritime and Waterfront Festivals in 2011 to better utilize off-street parking during special events. Park Plymouth also regulated two private valets in 2011 for the purpose of providing a service that moved vehicles from busy on-street areas to underutilized private and public lots, which effectively expanded the parking supply.
7. **Develop a Uniform Signage and Wayfinding Package.** Park Plymouth upgraded its architecturally designed paid and free parking lot signage in 2010 as well as its parking directional signage to its lot from Court/Main Street and Water Street. However, a much more comprehensive uniform signage and wayfinding package is needed. The wayfinding system should lead from all gateways into the Downtown-Waterfront Area and North Plymouth and include directional information for attractions and destinations beyond just parking. Park Plymouth should partner with the Town on this broader effort.
8. **End “One-Size Fits All” Pricing Strategy for Paid Parking.** Park Plymouth’s general pricing strategy has been to deeply discount resident, employee, merchant and other constituent group parking (which tends to be longer-term parking) through permits while charging the

shorter-term visitor a significantly higher hourly rate. It is the shorter-term parker that is covering most of the costs of running and maintaining the parking program. This strategy, which is not unique to Plymouth or tourist/downtown areas has worked well since the advent of paid parking in Plymouth.

However, the hourly parking rate in the Downtown-Waterfront Area was made constant several years ago at \$0.50/ hr. when the waterfront area rate was reduced from \$1.00/hr to a below market rate of \$0.50/hr. to match the downtown area rate. This constant rate pricing does not consider whether a space is on-street or off-street, in high or low demand, or whether it is peak or off-peak season. This “one-size fits all” parking structure is contributing to the lack of availability on prime streets, inconveniencing visitors when they cannot find prime parking and leaving remote parking areas underutilized. The situation is made far worse by leaving the highest demand, most valuable street (Main/Court St.) free, which results in the street being at or approaching capacity nearly always.

As a first measure, it is recommended that Water Street, the Memorial Hall Parking Lot and all public parking east of Water Street be raised to \$1/hour from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Park Plymouth piloted 34 credit-card enabled smart meters on Town Wharf in 2011 at \$1/hr. and found that not only was there no decrease in use from \$0.50/hr. but that actual visit times increased substantially. As stated earlier, Park Plymouth received no complaints about the rate increase during the pilot. The \$1/hour rate is at the low range of what is charged for waterfront parking in other communities and the increased revenue derived from the rate increase will be needed to pay for the purchase and installation of new credit-card enabled pay stations in the lots and credit-card enabled smart meters on the street.

As a second measure, it is recommended that the “free” parking condition on Main Street/Court Street be reevaluated with the financial feasibility studies for new off-street parking facilities in the proposed Transportation Center on the Memorial Hall Parking Lot.

### Development of New Structured Parking

The desire and need for new structured parking in Plymouth is well documented over the past 50 years. Most recently, the 2004 *Downtown-Waterfront Area Parking Analysis* identified a parking shortage downtown of between 400 and 600 spaces, and in 2011, an independent parking supply and demand study conducted by McMahon Associates as part of the *Multimodal Transportation Facility Feasibility Study*, found the peak parking shortage to be approximately 600 spaces based on current land uses and parking demand.



Regardless of what the actual shortage number is for the current condition, it is clear that the current parking supply will be unable to meet the parking demands of future development and redevelopment. The Town's master planning included in the *2007 Public Space Action Plan* and for the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and beyond identifies numerous areas for redevelopment including the waterfront, the courthouse corridor and many currently vacant commercial lots. Redevelopment of the waterfront alone will result in a significant loss of on- and off-street public parking spaces in an area that is currently at capacity during many months of the year.

The *2007 Public Space Action Plan* recognized that no one parking facility could address all of the unmet current and future parking need in the Downtown and Waterfront Area, which is why more than one facility location was identified. A major theme of this approved plan was to replace some of the acres of off-street surface parking along the waterfront with structured parking closer to Downtown to allow waterfront redevelopment while providing some benefit to downtown.

It is recommended that three of the five sites proposed for parking facilities in the *2007 Public Space Action Plan* that would support development projects included in the plan, advance for future consideration (planning, engineering and financial feasibility studies):

- Memorial Hall lot
- Courthouse Corridor (more broadly defined than just the Registry of Deeds bldg.), and
- Main/Market St. lots.

**Memorial Hall Parking Lot** – The recommended preferred site in the *2011 Multi-modal Transportation Facility Feasibility Study*, the Memorial Hall Parking lot has been identified as a prime location for structured parking in virtually every parking-related study over the past 50 years. In the 2011 site selection study it was identified as the least expensive site by far to develop for structured parking of all the sites reviewed. The estimated construction cost of the facility is \$15,000/space as compared to \$20,000/space at the Main/Market St. Lots and \$40,000/space at the Middle Street lot for example. The Courthouse Corridor site, given topography and geometry of the site, may have construction costs somewhere in between the Main/Market and Middle St. lots.



Another key consideration is how much “surplus” or “net new” parking spaces a lot can provide. Most of the lots in the DWA are very small for parking structures and could not

provide a meaningful number of net new parking spaces over the surface spaces they already provide – especially when considering the parking need for first floor retail/commercial use that would likely be required. Of the lots reviewed, the Memorial Hall Lot would provide by far the most net new parking spaces over and above what is already provided and would potentially be required of onsite development.

The Memorial Hall lot is recommended as a garage site in the 2003/04, 2007 and 2011 studies previously mentioned. It can be adequately screened by buildings and is the only Park Plymouth parking lot that truly serves both the waterfront and downtown area.

**Courthouse Corridor** – A finalist site in the *2011 Multi-modal Transportation Feasibility Study*, the corridor was not selected because of physical design constraints that prevented efficient transit operations and facilities. However, it is strategically located for off-street parking. Off-street parking within the corridor is critically important to the redevelopment and reuse of unoccupied buildings in the corridor. Given the topography and parcels that are publicly owned, the key will be whether any supplemental structured parking above and beyond what is required of existing uses and redevelopment can be provided and whether it can be provided closer to Court Street than Allerton Street so that it is useful to Plymouth Center.



The lot is the most central parking lot in the downtown area and parking could also serve Burial Hill and the surrounding neighborhoods. When a vision for development of this parcel is established and development studies finally occur, PGDC/Park Plymouth must be an integral partner in the planning process.

**Main St. Extension/Market St. Parking lots** - A public-private partnership for developing this lot for a mixed-use facility with structured parking advanced several years ago only to fall apart in financing. A project could be designed to provide structured parking on site that supports the proposed development, replaces the public parking spaces that currently exist, while providing a modest amount of supplemental parking spaces to Plymouth Center. Within the 2011 Multi-Modal Facility Study, the consultant found that of Plymouth Center’s small parking facilities (Brewster St. Lot, North St. Lot, Middle St. Lot and Main St. Ext./Market St. lots) only the Main St. Ext./Market St. lot was of sufficient size and configuration, and had sufficient access to be developed efficiently and affordably for public parking. Given its



prominent location and the fact that it is not screened by buildings, it may be best suited as a mixed-use development with parking and again, the number of net new parking spaces it could provide to Plymouth Center would need to be determined.

### **Parking Garage Feasibility**

As stated earlier, parking structures are very expensive to construct and operate. Off-street public parking garages are seldom able to pay for themselves. On-street meter revenue is often needed to off-set the operating and capital costs of public parking garages. As such, regulation and pricing of on-street and off-street parking should work within a complimentary system or program.

Several policy issues and initiatives identified in this Plan related to on-street and off-street pricing and regulation will be required to ensure that a new facility is appropriately utilized and funded, including but not limited to:

- Metering the free parking on Main Street/Court Street and the side streets identified in the Plan between Main Street/Court Street and Water Street;
- restricting employees from parking in retail area parking lots;
- expanding downtown resident parking only areas on streets west of Main Street/Court Street; and
- increasing the cost of permit parking.

In 2012, the *Multi-modal Transportation Facility Feasibility Study* will explore the financial feasibility of constructing and operating a parking garage at the Memorial Hall parking lot. These pricing and regulatory changes will need to be considered within the context of a parking program that can adequately support the new downtown parking garage.

