City of Fall River

Downtown Parking Study, Recommendations & Implementation Plan

December 2024

NELSON NYGAARD

FALL RIVER MASSACHUSETTS

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Table of Contents

Page

Executive Summary iv

1 Project Approach 1-1

2 Existing Conditions Summary 2-4

3 Key Issues and Opportunities 3-14
Projected Conditions & Growth Opportunities 3-17
Parking in the Zoning Code 3-18

4 Recommended Strategies 4-22
Improve the User Experience (A) 4-22
Emphasize Pricing as the Primary Management Tool (B) 4-26
Establish Customer Friendly Enforcement (C) 4-31
Optimize Existing Inventory (D) 4-33
Refine Permit Program and Regulations (E) 4-41
Multimodal Demand Reduction Opportunities (F) 4-41
Restructure Management (G) 4-44
Redefine Parking Requirements (H) 4-46

5 Action Plan 5-50
Short Term – Completed in 0-1 Years 5-51
Medium Term – Completed in 1-3 Years 5-53
Long Term – Completed After 3 Years 5-55

Table of Figures

Page

Figure 1 Map of Study Area 1-3
Figure 2 Parking Inventory 2-6
Figure 3 Pearl Street Parking Garage 2-8
Figure 4 Map of Off-Street Parking by Type 2-9
Figure 5 Parking Utilization: Weekday, 8am 2-11
Figure 6 Parking Utilization: Weekend, 2pm 2-12
Figure 7 Best Practice - Exterior Branding - ParkAlbany 4-25
Figure 8 Parking Pricing Availability Targets 4-26
Figure 9 Parking Enforcement Officers as Downtown Ambassadors 4-32
Figure 10 Clear and Visible Parking Wayfinding, Various Formats 4-35

Table of Tables

Page

Table 1 Recommendations viii
Table 2 On-Street Parking Regulations 2-7
Table 3 Off-Street Parking Facilities 2-8
Table 4 Scenario – Expected Development Projects 3-17
Table 5 Parking Ordinance Comparison 3-19
Table 6 Example Access Management Requirement Scoring 4-47
Table 7 Example Parking Credits Table 4-48
Table 8 Short Term Strategies 5-51
Table 9 Medium Term Strategies 5-53
Table 10 Long Term Strategies 5-55

Appendices

Appendix A – Existing Conditions Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Why This Study

The City of Fall River initiated a comprehensive Parking Study and Management Plan to address the existing conditions and future needs of its downtown area. As the City continues to invest in revitalizing its downtown to better serve both residents and visitors, it acknowledges that sustainable development relies on thoughtful parking strategies. An effective parking management plan, designed to optimize current parking resources without compromising the character of the downtown, is essential for supporting the area's long-term success.

Comprehensive Approach

The strategies presented in this plan represent a new era for parking in Downtown Fall River. Early in the study development process, several goals were identified that will guide this study. These are:

- Assess and optimize the **current parking supply and demand** balance in downtown Fall River to support commercial and residential growth.
- Develop strategies to **efficiently manage existing parking resources** in line with broader community needs and the evolving demands of downtown users.
- Create a **sustainable parking management plan** that supports existing downtown improvement efforts.
- Analyze current parking perceptions and needs to proactively **address challenges** in the downtown parking infrastructure.
- Align parking strategies with previous urban planning initiatives and ongoing efforts to **enhance Fall River's downtown area**.
- Identify opportunities to **improve the accessibility, visibility, and utilization** of both public and private parking assets in the study area.

The Plan offers a new multimodal approach to Downtown parking. The future of Downtown Fall River should combine enhancements in parking policy and overall mobility infrastructure to provide more transportation choices by making it as attractive and accessible as possible to not drive.

Key Findings

The following is a summary of key issues and opportunities as identified through the study process, existing conditions analysis (see Appendix A), field observations and public survey. Capturing the most pressing concerns, challenges, and potential solutions, these provided a basis for the development of recommendations.

Parking Inventory and Utilization

- There is a variety of on- and off-street parking assets in the Fall River study area, including twenty-three public and private off-street parking structures and surface lots encompassing just over 3,000 spaces.
- Private lots significantly outnumber public lot and parking garages. Private parking spaces are over double the amount of public parking spaces.
- Currently approximately 287 parking spaces in the Pearl Street and Third Street garages are not able to be utilized due to required maintenance in those facilities. This number constitutes 44% of the capacity of those garages.
- Metered parking accounts for over half of on-street parking. Unregulated parking is the second most common type. These two categories comprise the majority of available on-street parking in the City.
- This study has found that parking utilization is generally lower in Fall River on weekdays than on weekends. Weekday morning hours see higher utilization rates, with the peak reaching 56.0% at 8 a.m., while the lowest utilization occurs at 2 p.m., with a rate of 52.4%. Overall, on-street parking is more heavily utilized than off-street options, with on-street spaces averaging 56.2% utilization throughout the day, compared to 35.1% for off-street facilities.
- Weekend parking usage peaks in the afternoon, reaching 57.6% at 2 p.m., while the lowest utilization occurs at 8 a.m., at a rate of 53.8%. On-street parking is significantly more utilized than off-street parking on weekends, with a clear preference for unregulated spaces.

Pricing, Regulation, and Enforcement

- The prevailing hourly rate for off-street parking in Downtown Fall River exceeds the on-street fees, with Pearl Street Garage charging $3.00 per hour. The Third Street Garage is reserved for monthly permit holders only, with varying rates depending on the type of permit holder.
- There is little variety of on-street parking time limits within the study area, with most metered on-street parking having a 2-hour limit.
- Enforcement of parking regulations does not align with the parking meter regulations. Typically, parking enforcement activities end on weekdays at 4:00 p.m. and limited enforcement on Saturdays.
- Permits for city owned lots are only applicable in the lot for which they are sold, regardless of normal lot occupancy and are space assigned, which further limits lot/garage utilization.

Management, Organization, and Funding

- Parking within the City of Fall River and Downtown is managed by various departments and decision-making bodies, in addition to the private sector, making it difficult to coordinate amongst various groups.
- While the Traffic & Parking Department oversees the parking management program (i.e., enforcement, on-street parking, signage, permits), facilities management of the off-street parking facilities are not part of their purview.
- There is limited public process for curbside management such as valet parking, outdoor dining and/or loading zones.
- Parking revenues provide a net revenue generator for the general fund and are budgeted to be spent on priorities other than the parking system.
- Parking facility capital improvements are typically funded through the City's Capital Improvement Program, whose ultimate funding sources are inconsistent.

User Experience

- A lack of maintenance of publicly owned parking facilities contributes to their underutilization. The perception of personal safety, understanding of regulations, and attractiveness are all affected negatively when maintenance is chronically deferred.
- One-way street circulation can be an obstacle for first time visitors looking to find parking, especially during special events.
- Limited, conflicting, or confusing parking signage and information for all parking users – including visitors and employees – leads to available parking spaces going unused.

- Information on parking is limited on the official City of Fall River website.

Mobility Barriers

- Pedestrian barriers such as I-195 and its associated ramps and bridges deter visitors from parking in one location and walking to their destination. These barriers limit the safety and appeal of walking between/to local destinations and parking facilities. As a result, people are more likely to drive between destination.

Citywide gaps in alternative transportation infrastructure, including a lack of bicycle facilities and amenities as well as sidewalk and curb ramp deterioration impacting ADA accessibility also deter visitors from using other means of transport, or from parking once if they do drive, increasing competition for parking spaces.

Recommendations

The recommendations in the plan emphasize a need for a performance-based management approach that better utilizes existing parking assets. Improved management of parking will enable Downtown Fall River to unlock development potential and continue to grow sustainably, while reducing overall demand for parking and minimizing traffic congestion.

Implementing these recommendations will not be easy. Collaboration will be needed amongst the various Downtown stakeholders to implement recommendations as a package.

There are strategies, however, that can be implemented quickly, while others may take longer. Some strategies will work well when implemented together but others are dependent on a series of consecutive steps. The initial recommendations that have the potential to be implemented in the next 12 months include those in Table 1:

Table 1 Recommendations

Strategy	Action	Implementation Considerations
Improve the User Experience (A)	Plan Facility Condition Improvements (A1)	Perform a facility condition assessment. From this, develop a maintenance and repair plan. Identify funding sources and schedule work.
	Develop a Security Plan (A2)	Work with community stakeholders to identify most appropriate solutions.
	Coordinate Programs (A3)	Consider future information systems needs as well as future new branding requirements for redesign or incorporation into City website.
Emphasize Pricing as the Primary Management Tool (B)	Adopt Availability as the Primary Performance Measure (B1)	Implement parking data collection program. Consider different performance measures for on-street, general off-street, and permitted off-street spaces.
	Simplify Rate-Setting Authority (B2)	Will require legislation to consolidate operations of on- and off-street facilities. Identify council members with interest in parking issues.
	Monitor Performance (B3)	Assign as a departmental responsibility. Add to work calendar. Explore adding to enforcement officer/ambassador duties.
	Provide a Grace Period, Allow for Validation (B4)	Ensure compatibility of the implementation technique with current and future technology.
Establish Customer Friendly Enforcement (C)	Align Parking Enforcement Mission to City Goals (C1)	Work with City departments and enforcement officers to develop a goal-oriented mission and next steps. Work with officers to identify training and relevant customer-oriented functions.
	Issue No-Charge First Tickets with Information (C2)	Consider enforcement system technology needs for recording and tracking initial no-charge ticket recipients.
	Allow Free or Sponsored Holiday/Event Parking (C3)	Understand parking availability considerations. Outline program limitations and create specific event plans.
Refine Permit Program and Regulations (E)	Allow Flexible Facility Use by Permit Holders (E1)	Emphasize simplicity while responding to unique conditions such as facilities over- and underutilized by permit holders.
Multimodal Demand Reduction Opportunities (F)	Incentivize the Use of Public Transit (F1)	Requires coordination with transit agency, local private employers, and city/county/state social services.
Redefine Parking Requirements (H)	Review Zoning Code Requirements (H1)	Review minimum parking requirements to right-sizing retail and service-based land uses, and enable parking reductions through shared parking calculations
	Define an Access Management Requirement (H2)	Work with Building, Planning, and Zoning to align goals and define access requirement implementation boundaries.

1 PROJECT APPROACH

The City of Fall River initiated a comprehensive Parking Study and Management Plan to address the existing conditions and future needs of its downtown area. As the City continues to invest in revitalizing its downtown to better serve both residents and visitors, it acknowledges that sustainable development relies on thoughtful parking strategies. An effective parking management plan, designed to optimize current parking resources without compromising the character of the downtown, is essential for supporting the area's long-term success.

As Fall River works to enhance its downtown, the parking requirements and perceptions of users are constantly evolving, creating varied demands on the available parking infrastructure. To address these challenges proactively, the City conducted this study to thoroughly analyze current parking needs and perceptions. This planning effort assesses the current parking supply and demand balance, enabling the City to manage its existing parking resources more efficiently in line with broader community needs. A strategic downtown parking management plan will allow Fall River to maximize the potential of its downtown for commercial, residential, and tourism growth.

Project Goals

The City has identified the following goals for this parking study and management plan:

- Assess and optimize the current parking supply and demand balance in downtown Fall River to support commercial and residential growth.
- Develop strategies to efficiently manage existing parking resources in line with broader community needs and the evolving demands of downtown users.
- Create a sustainable parking management plan that supports existing downtown improvement efforts.
- Analyze current parking perceptions and needs to proactively address challenges in the downtown parking infrastructure.
- Align parking strategies with previous urban planning initiatives and ongoing efforts to enhance Fall River's downtown area.

- Identify opportunities to improve the accessibility, visibility, and utilization of both public and private parking assets in the study area.

Study Process

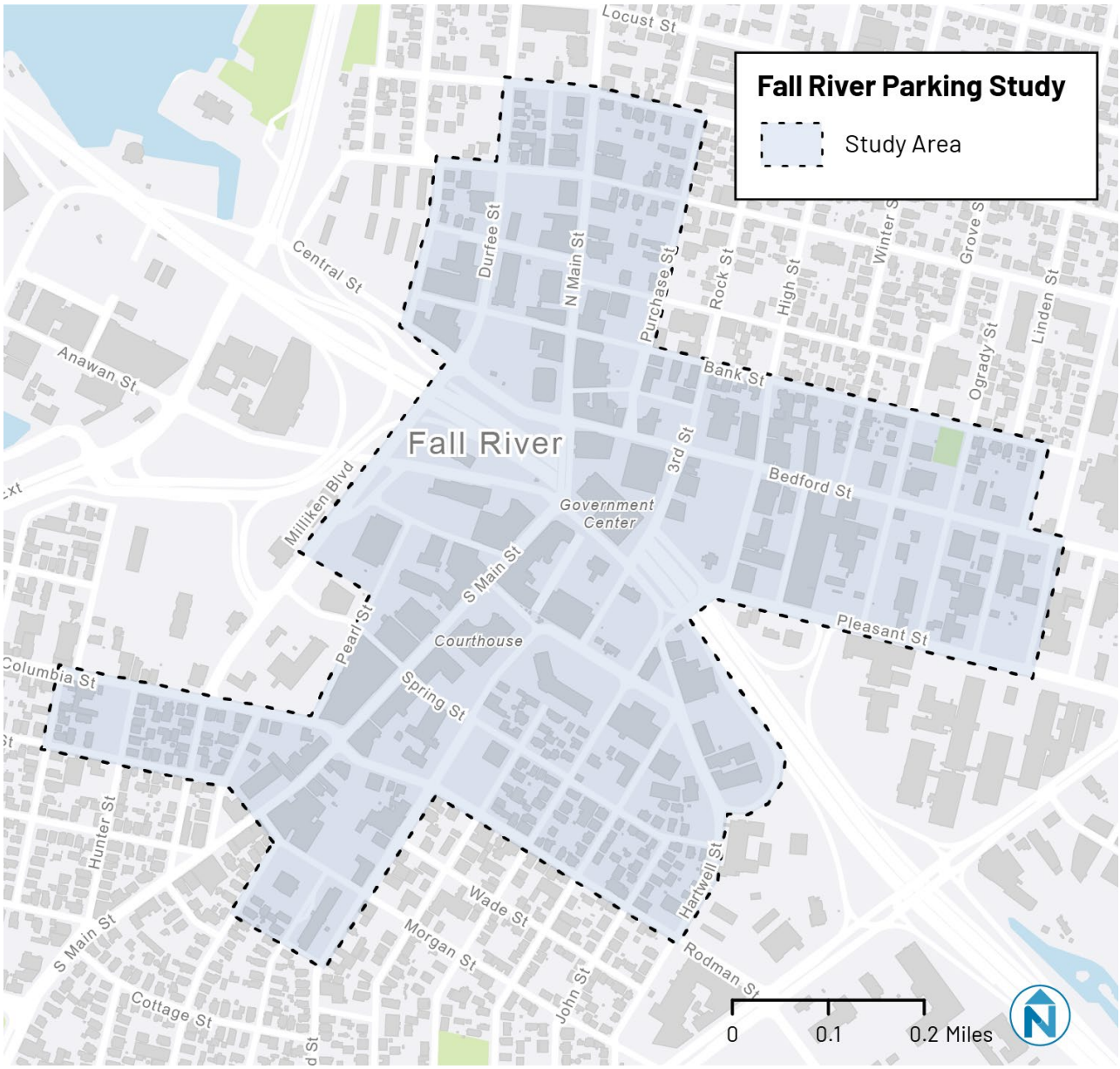
This plan was completed through a series of analytical phases, documenting conditions, identifying and exploring key issues and opportunities, and developing strategic recommendations. Throughout the process, coordination with municipal project leaders, key stakeholders, and the public was integral.

Study Area

The study area encompasses a significant portion of Fall River's city center and is shown in Figure 1. This area includes the City Hall area and major corridors including South and North Main Streets and Bedford Street where a high concentration of commercial, employment, and economic activity is present, and is also in proximity to tourist attractions like Battleship Cove.

This area features a mix of public and private parking assets, spanning on-street parking, surface lots, and multi-story parking structures. By focusing on this important area of the City, the study aims to provide an accurate assessment of current parking conditions and future needs.

Figure 1 Map of Study Area



2 EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

This Parking Study and Management Plan relies on a comprehensive understanding of existing regulations, parking inventory, parking utilization patterns, and policy frameworks to develop strategies which effectively address the needs and goals outlined in the planning process. The Assessment of Existing Conditions and Demand outlined these parameters in the first stage of the study process.

Key Existing Condition Findings

Inventory

There is a variety of on- and off-street parking assets in the Fall River study area, including twenty-three public and private off-street parking structures and surface lots encompassing just over 3,000 spaces. Figure 2 shows the study area parking inventory by ownership. Ownership of these facilities is mixed, with some being owned by the City and others privately-owned, offering varying levels of restricted and public access. Each parking type offers different levels of availability, dictated by its location, ownership, and regulation. This study has made several important findings about the parking inventory that should be considered when determining recommendations for improving the parking system in Fall River:

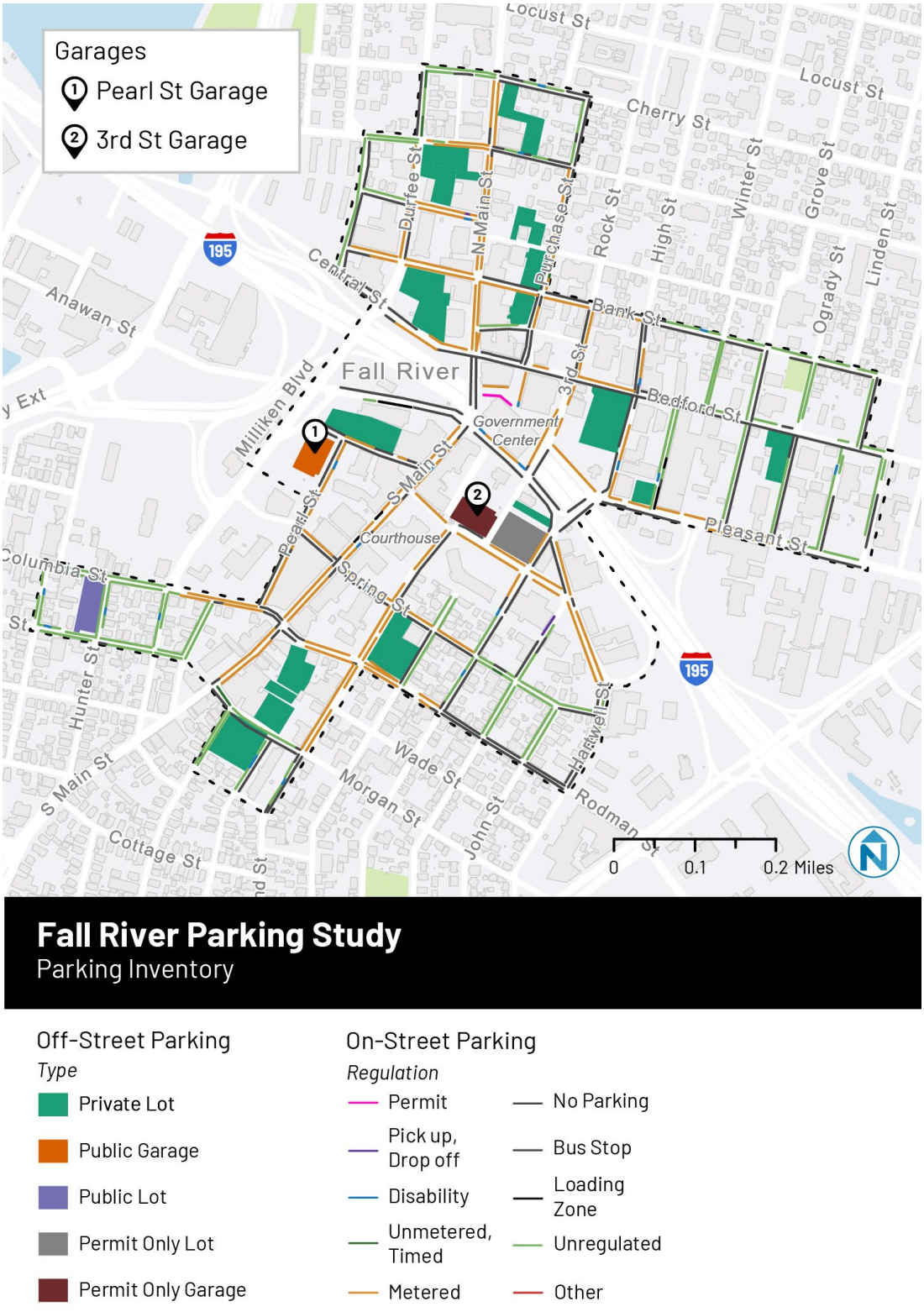
- There is more off-street parking than on-street parking, however, more on-street parking is publicly available than off-street parking.
- Private lots significantly outnumber public lot and parking garages. Private parking spaces are over double the amount of public parking spaces.
- Metered parking accounts for over half of on-street parking. Unregulated parking is the second most common type. These two categories comprise the majority of available on-street parking in the City.

This study's recommendations are informed by the evaluation of both on- and off-street parking. One of the most important considerations for this study's recommendations is the condition of Fall River's parking garages and their ongoing maintenance. Many of the recommendations presented in this study are designed to work alongside repairs made to the Pearl Street and Third Street parking garages, which require significant investment but would enable approximately 287 public parking spaces to be reintroduced to the parking system. This study found the two parking garages are critical to the city's public parking network and incorporated their repair and future use into all other recommendations.

Without their repair, the landscape of Fall River's public parking network changes significantly and the viability of the other recommendations presented in this study becomes less promising.

While public parking is typically the most discussed and prominent resource for downtown businesses, a significant amount of business and entertainment activity is generated by people using privately owned parking. Additionally, when estimating future parking demand, it is necessary to understand how both public and private parking is used by current developments to make accurate projections of how Fall River parkers behave.

Figure 2 Parking Inventory



Regulation

The ways in which parking spaces are regulated, where they are located, and how they operate, impact how they are utilized in any downtown area. The project team documented the ownership, use category, and regulations for all parking spaces within the boundaries of the study area.

On-Street Parking

On-street parking refers to any space along the curb where cars are permitted to park. It can be categorized as either unregulated (with minimal restrictions) or regulated (with specific rules governing vehicle types, drivers, or time limits). Table 2 below details the types of on-street parking and the number of spaces. Metered spaces compose the majority of on-street parking with 687 spaces or 52.1% of all on-street spaces. Unmetered timed spaces also regulate parking by limiting the amount of time a car can be parked in a space. Together, metered and unmetered timed spaces are 53.3% of all on-street parking. Unregulated parking has the second highest number of spaces with 574 or 43.6%. Metered, unregulated, and unmetered timed spaces can be occupied by any vehicle or driver and composes 96.6% of all on-street parking. The remaining 3.1% of on-street parking is reserved for specific uses. This includes Disability spaces, which require a disabled parking placard or plate; Loading Zones, designated for brief loading/unloading of items from adjacent buildings; and Bus Stops, reserved for buses to pick up and drop off passengers.

Table 2 On-Street Parking Regulations

Regulation	Total	%
Metered	687	52.1%
Unregulated	574	43.6%
Disability	24	1.8%
Unmetered Timed	16	1.2%
Loading Zone	12	0.9%
Bus Stop	3	0.2%
Other	2	0.1%

Off-Street Parking

Off-street parking includes all public and private parking in garages and large surface lots (approximately twenty or more spaces – see Figure 4 for inventory map) in the study area. There were twenty-three off-street parking facilities inventoried within the study area (Table 3), described and categorized by facility type, ownership, and rate type below:

Facility Type

- **Parking Garages** are weather-protected parking facilities. There are two active parking garages, Pearl Street Garage (Figure 3) and Third Street Garage, which contain 320 and 325 spaces, respectively. Currently both garages are awaiting structural assessment with long-term closures of their upper levels. In total, approximately 44% of the garages parking supply are unusable.

Figure 3 Pearl Street Parking Garage

- **Parking Lots** are outdoor surface-level facilities. There are twenty-one facilities containing 1,333 spaces or 70% of the off-street parking supply (currently available) and 40% of the overall parking supply.

Ownership

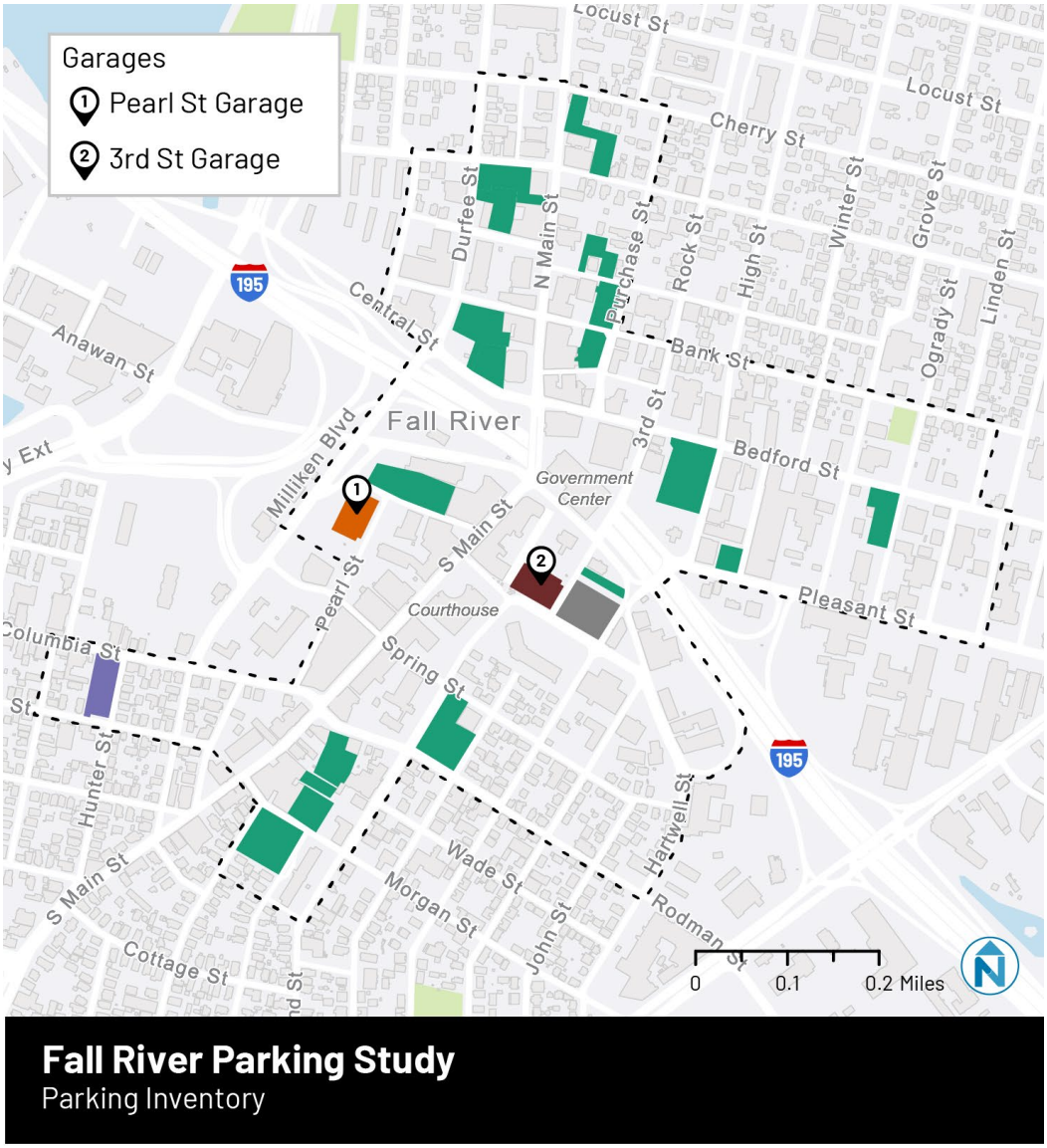
- **Publicly Owned Garages or Lots** are owned by the City. These facilities are typically managed by municipal authorities and are intended to serve the general public. Public lots and garages may have regulated pricing structures and may also offer permits or passes for residents, workers, or visitors.
- **Privately-Owned Garages or Lots** are owned by private landowners or private institutions. These facilities may serve specific buildings, businesses, or residential complexes and may be restricted to certain users, such as tenants, employees, or customers. Private lots often have flexible pricing, sometimes offering monthly or daily rates, and may prioritize profit while managing access to ensure availability for their target users.

Table 3 Off-Street Parking Facilities

	Lot		Garage	
Type	# of lots	# of spaces	# of garages	# of spaces
Private	19	1172	0	0
Public	1	54	1	188*
Permit-only (municipal)	1	107	1	170*

* Currently both the Pearl Street and 3rd Street garages have long-term closures of their upper levels awaiting structural assessment. This reduces the garage spaces by 287 spaces.

Figure 4 Map of Off-Street Parking by Type



Utilization

The survey team conducted hourly parking utilization counts on two weekdays (Tuesday, May 7, 2024, and Thursday, May 9, 2024) and one weekend day (Saturday, May 11, 2024) covering four time periods for both a typical weekday and weekend day. On each typical day captured, data collection began at 8 a.m. with the last survey beginning at 5 p.m. The weekday counts were split up over two days, with the 8 a.m. counts and 11 a.m. counts completed on Tuesday and the 2 p.m. counts and 5 p.m. counts completed on Thursday. The weather on all three days was consistently fair, partly cloudy, and with temperatures ranging from approximately 55 to 70 degrees.

Parking can be defined as being at optimal capacity when there is at least one empty space per block face or along a typical row of parking, ensuring customer access to businesses but also indicating a busy commercial environment. This typically equates to a target of 15% vacancy per block face and 10% vacancy off-street. If any block or parking facility has less availability than the target, it is effectively at its functional capacity. Charts throughout the document provide a dashed line at the 10% vacancy point for reference.

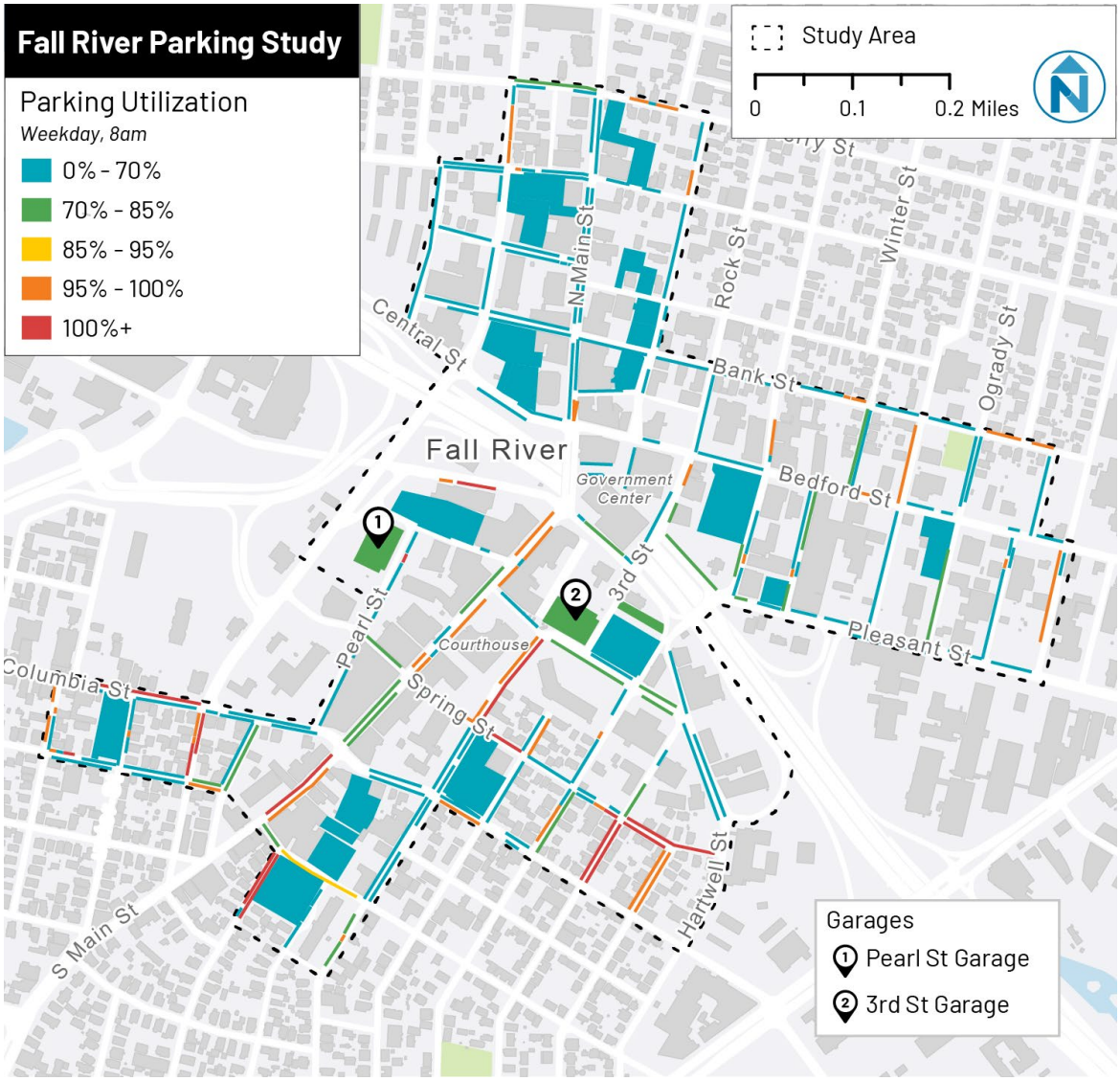
The study team considered the following in selecting dates for utilization:

- Capturing demand from typical activity while schools are in session.
- Weather
- Day of the week - Nelson\Nygaard has found that mid-week days such as Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday represent a typically busier day than Mondays or Fridays.

Weekday

This study has found that parking utilization is lower in Fall River on weekdays (Figure 5) than on weekends. Weekday morning hours see higher utilization rates, with the peak reaching 56.0% at 8 a.m., while the lowest utilization occurs at 2 p.m., with a rate of 52.4%. Overall, on-street parking is more heavily utilized than off-street options, with on-street spaces averaging 56.2% utilization throughout the day, compared to 35.1% for off-street facilities.

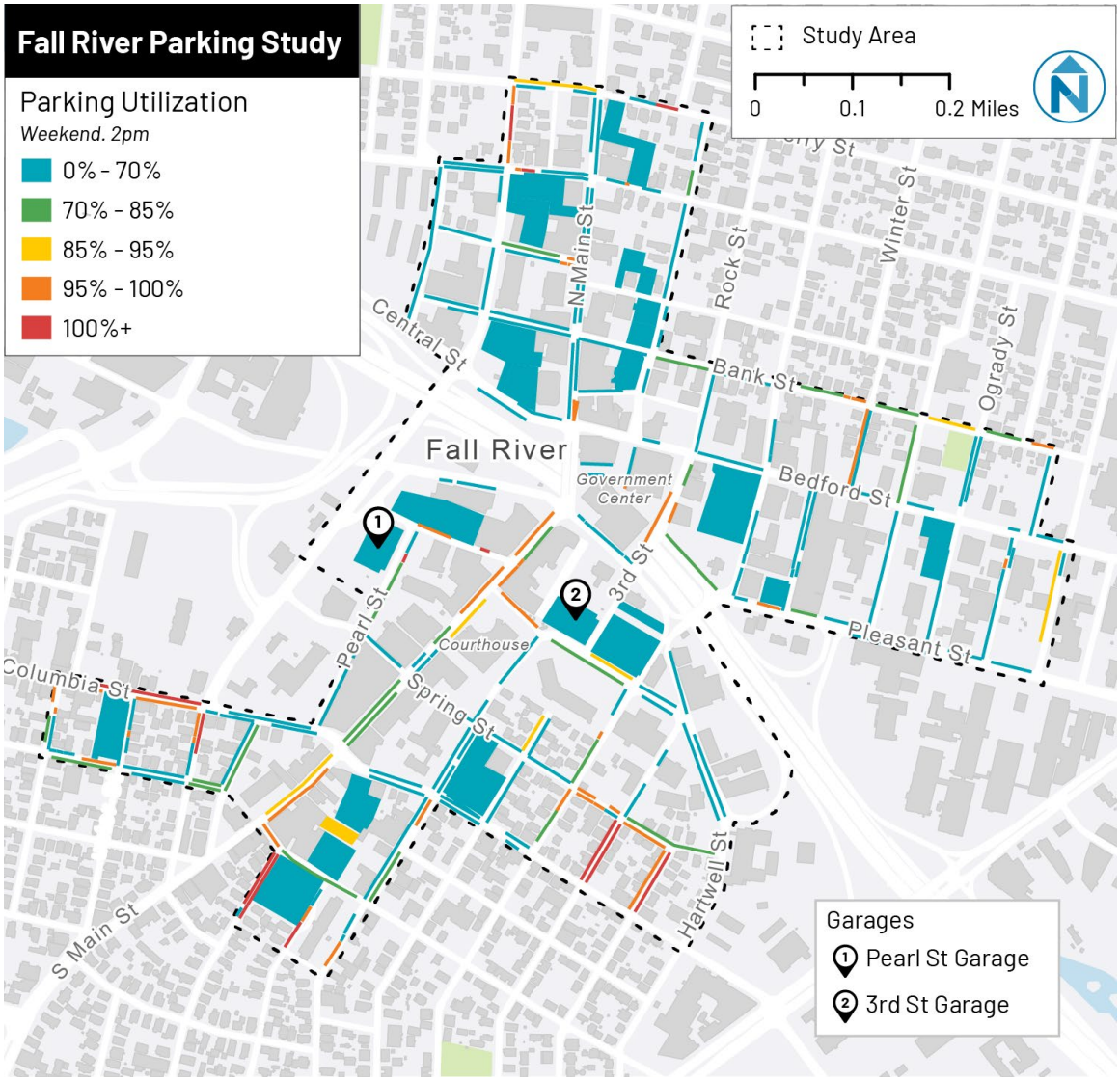
Figure 5 Parking Utilization: Weekday, 8am



Weekend

Weekend parking (Figure 6) usage peaks in the afternoon, reaching 57.6% at 2 p.m., while the lowest utilization occurs at 8 a.m., at a rate of 53.8%. On-street parking is significantly more utilized than off-street parking on weekends, with a clear preference for unregulated spaces.

Figure 6 Parking Utilization: Weekend, 2pm



Public Parking Survey

An online survey aimed at Fall River residents, employees, business owners, and visitors was distributed to the public from July 23, 2024, to September 25, 2024, and collected a total of 393 responses. The survey goals were to:

- Collect information on travel and parking behavior in the study area.
- Provide insight into public perception of parking in Fall River
- Understand the tradeoffs between parking access, availability, price, and location for parking in the study area.
- Identify potential improvements to Fall River's transportation network.

The survey was distributed to the public via social media posts on Facebook from the City of Fall River's official page with key community feedback findings included the following:

- Many survey respondents and stakeholders identified a perceived shortage of parking in Fall River, especially highlighting the deteriorating conditions of existing parking garages. Issues with aging infrastructure, such as poor signage, malfunctioning kiosks, and inconsistent enforcement, contribute to a frustrating parking experience.
- Safety was a top priority, with nearly two-thirds of survey respondents indicating they have avoided certain parking locations due to safety issues. Key concerns included poor lighting, the condition of sidewalks, and safety within parking structures. These factors led to concentrated parking demand in perceived safer areas.
- Community feedback called for better maintenance and repair of existing parking facilities and more accessible parking options, particularly for veterans, elderly, and disabled residents.
- Respondents raised concerns about parking costs and the inconvenience of current payment methods, like kiosks and meters. There was a desire for more user-friendly and reliable systems, as well as calls to make parking more affordable.
- Many community members felt that parking enforcement was too strict, and more than half found signage and road markings to be only "somewhat clear." This lack of clarity contributes to uneven distribution of parking demand, as drivers prefer areas with clearer regulations.

3 KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following is a summary of key issues and opportunities as identified through the study process, existing conditions analysis (see Appendix A), field observations and public survey. Capturing the most pressing concerns, challenges, and potential solutions, these provided a basis for the development of recommendations.

Pricing, Regulation, and Enforcement

- The cost of on-street metered spaces is $0.50 for 30 minutes ($1.00/hour) between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Saturdays.
- The prevailing hourly rate for off-street parking in Downtown Fall River exceeds the on-street fees, with Pearl Street Garage charging $3.00 per hour. The Third Street Garage is reserved for monthly permit holders only, with varying rates depending on the type of permit holder.
- There is little variety of on-street parking time limits within the study area, with most metered on-street parking having a 2-hour limit.
- Enforcement of parking regulations does not align with the parking meter regulations. Typically, parking enforcement activities end on weekdays at 4:00 p.m. and limited enforcement on Saturdays.
- Permits for city owned lots are only applicable in the lot for which they are sold, regardless of normal lot occupancy and are space assigned, which further limits lot/garage utilization.
- Resident parking permits could be issued for the hours between 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. to enable residents to parking in city owned lots and facilities. In order to properly implement, enforcement after 7:00 a.m. would be required.
- City employees with parking placards often occupy premier spaces around City Hall and prevent others from using the spaces to quickly conduct errands inside the building.
- To prevent all day parking around City Hall, signage in the area or the placards themselves can detail the proper purposes and usage where city employees can park and direct them to park elsewhere for all other circumstances.
- Residents with handicap placards have been observed to take over metered spaces where they are not required to pay all day, preventing other users from parking in these spaces. This is particularly the case at the courthouse and Main St. The apartment residents in Borden East and Borden West with handicap placards essentially exercise ownership on metered spaces in the area.

Management, Organization, and Funding

- Parking within the City of Fall River and Downtown is managed by various departments and decision-making bodies, in addition to the private sector, making it difficult to coordinate amongst various groups.
- While the Traffic & Parking Department oversees the parking management program (i.e., enforcement, on-street parking, signage, permits), facilities management of the off-street parking facilities are not part of their purview.
- There is limited public process for curbside management such as valet parking, outdoor dining and/or loading zones.
- Parking revenues provide a net revenue generator for the general fund and are budgeted to be spent on priorities other than the parking system.
- Parking facility capital improvements are typically funded through the City's Capital Improvement Program, whose ultimate funding sources are inconsistent.
- Charging for residents evening permits can offset the need for expanded enforcement hours.
- Leveraging private-public partnerships to create shared parking opportunities, such as the shared Post Office/People Incorporated Lot.

User Experience

- A lack of maintenance of publicly owned parking facilities contributes to their underutilization. The perception of personal safety, understanding of regulations, and attractiveness are all affected negatively when maintenance is chronically deferred.
- Stakeholders would have a better attitude regarding parking fees if they and their customers experience a clean and secure parking space in return.
- One-way street circulation can be an obstacle for first time visitors looking to find parking, especially during special events.
- Ambiguity related to pricing and enforcement persists as roadside signage is minimal and not always consistent with information displayed on pay stations.
- Limited, conflicting, or confusing parking signage and information for all parking users – including visitors and employees – leads to available parking spaces going unused.
- The daily operation of all types of publicly owned parking facilities, including signage and parking meters, is related to the maintenance program and can contribute to user frustration, and ultimately, to loss of revenue. Direct sources of user frustration include:
  - Conflicting on-street parking meter information
  - Out of order on-street parking meters

  - Inconsistent parking facility operations (e.g., Differing public access and permits)
  - Some garages feature hidden and/or uninviting entrances.
- Information is limited on the official City of Fall River website.

Mobility Barriers

- Pedestrian barriers such as I-195 and its associated ramps and bridges deter visitors from parking in a single location while visiting multiple destinations. These barriers limit the safety/appeal of walking between/to local destinations and parking facilities.
- Citywide gaps in alternative transportation infrastructure, including a lack of bicycle facilities and amenities as well as sidewalk and curb ramp deterioration impacting ADA accessibility also deter visitors from using other means of transport, or from parking once if they do drive, increasing competition for parking spaces.
- Additional on-street parking inventory can be added to the network by narrowing lanes and adding parking to one side. Further analysis is required to look at locations that would serve as good candidates for a redesign and to examine the possible mobility barriers that may present themselves with such a change.

PROJECTED CONDITIONS & GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Development and economic growth are likely to affect the current demand and supply balance as Fall River attempts to attract new businesses, residents, and visitors. The following sections summarize projections of how this combination of new development and changes among existing land uses and building spaces would affect future parking demand.

Growth Scenarios

Examining the Downtown study area, the development growth scenario represents a continuation of existing policy conditions and an assumption that user behavior remains unchanged. Demand is projected based on all development projects within the study area that are either under construction, possessing an approved site plan, or awaiting planning board approval. Table 4 outline the expected development projects in Downtown.

Table 4 Scenario – Expected Development Projects

Project Type	Residential Units	Commercial Sq. Ft.	Required by Zoning/Code	Provided Parking	Status
Residential	27		54	27	Permitted
Residential	36	10,000	72	6	Under Construction
Residential	102		204	105	In Permitting
Residential	35		70	8	Permitted
Residential	72		144	72	In Permitting
Residential	80		160	80	Concept
Residential	30		60	20	Concept
Residential	100		200	100	Concept
Residential	50		100	50	Concept
Total	532	10,000	1,064	468	

Modeled Demand

When the impact of development growth scenario is combined, peak modeled demand per the City's Zoning Code increases by 1,064 spaces for the residential units and approximately fifty spaces for the commercial use.

With 468 parking spaces being required through the planning approval process, the difference between the Zoning Code requirements and the proposed parking spaces is 596 spaces. Through the existing conditions analysis, it has been shown that the parking inventory in Downtown would be able to accommodate the potential parking demand arising from the proposed developments. Utilization of the existing parking supply shows that there is on average during the weekday over 1,000 parking spaces available for use.

PARKING IN THE ZONING CODE

While interviewed stakeholders consider off-street parking requirements to be outdated and inflexible, parking policies in the City of Fall River Code of Ordinances[1] offer positive stepping stones that can be built upon to promote positive economic growth downtown.

- Chapter 86, Article VI, Division 1 of the code creates a Special Permit that allows the reduction or modification of any parking or loading requirement. This has enabled the City to be flexible in approving developments within Downtown.
- No additional parking or loading spaces shall be required for a change of use of an existing structure built prior to the effective date of the Chapter (2013)
- Uses within the Arts Overlay District (AOD) may provide off-site parking Off-street parking may be provided through one or a combination of the following means:
    - On-site, but not located between the street and the front of the building.
    - Off-site, by contract in public or private off-street parking facilities.
    - Parking may be covered or uncovered.

Minimum Parking Requirements

Like parking requirements found in the zoning code, benchmark rates published by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) assume a single demand level for the entire 24-hour day. Neither account for lower demand over the course of the day among different land uses. For example, office space and residential parking demand typically do not overlap, but both are typically calculated individually to arrive at an aggregate peak-demand measure of parking need. Thus, ITE rates will consistently over-estimate demand generated by land uses

[1] City of Fall River Code of Ordinances Chapter 86, Article VI, Division 1
https://ecode360.com/29931172#29931172

developed in a walkable, mixed-use context like Downtown Fall River. Nevertheless, the rates are useful as a comparative starting point to determine and test baseline assumptions. Fall River's requirements should be no higher than ITE rates, and likely should be lower.

Table 5 summarizes key Fall River zoning requirements and compares them to ITE parking demand generation rates for comparable units of measurement. Orange-shaded boxes represent instances where city codes require more parking than comparable ITE rates. Fall River's requirements are higher than ITE rates for a large majority of common land uses.

Table 5 Parking Ordinance Comparison

	Current Requirement[2]		ITE Parking Rate	
Specific Use	Requirement	Unit	Requirement	Unit
One- or Two-Family Residences **Multifamily (3+ dwelling units)**	2	unit	1.41	unit
Places of assembly, including theaters, veterans, fraternal, social, and recreational clubs and organizations not operated for a profit; taxi, bus, and railroad passenger terminals; auditoriums, theaters, bowling alleys and dance halls; sports facilities; places of worship; funeral homes	0.2	seats	0.65	seats
Schools, adult day-care centers, day-care centers, excluding family day-care homes	1	employee	1.40	employee
Hospital, convalescent homes, nursing homes, rest homes or homes for the aged	0.25	beds	3.89	bed
Hotel, motel, bed-and-breakfast, rooming or boarding- or lodging house, tourist home, dormitories, or other non-family residence	1 space per each employee per shift who does not reside on the premises; 1 space per guest	Employee/guest room	0.64	room

[2] Current requirements are aggregated to allow for direct comparison to ITE rates. For example, one visitor parking space per ten apartment units is considered 0.1 spaces per unit for the purposes of the comparison. Note: ksf equals 1,000 square feet

	Current Requirement[2]		ITE Parking Rate	
Specific Use	Requirement	Unit	Requirement	Unit
accommodations, excluding group homes	room; dwelling parking requirements, if applicable			
Fast Food Restaurant	1 space per each employee per shift; minimum of 10 spaces for customers	ksf	7.54	ksf
Restaurants	0.25	seats	0.28	seats
Offices: general, professional, business, banks, medical clinics and laboratories, radio and television stations; offices of nonprofit educational, cultural, or charitable organizations	1.0	employee	0.79	employee
Business engaged in retail sales, rental, repair, servicing, storage and distribution of motor vehicles, trailers, campers, boats, furniture or building materials	1 space per each employee per shift; minimum of 3 spaces for customers	employee	0.97	employee
Business engaged in the manufacturing, processing, assembly, fabrication of products, including research and testing laboratories and facilities	2 spaces per each 1,000 square feet of gross floor area; 1 space for each vehicle used in conducting the business	ksf	0.67	ksf
Business engaged in the warehousing and distribution of goods and materials, including building and construction contractors, equipment and supplies on premises, motor freight terminals, facilities for storing and servicing of motor vehicles used in conducting a business or public transportation, industrial machinery and equipment,	0.67 space per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area up to 15,000 square feet; thereafter, 1 additional space for each 5,000 square feet of floor area beyond 15,000 square feet; 1 space for each vehicle used in conducting the business	ksf	0.37	ksf

	Current Requirement[2]		ITE Parking Rate	
Specific Use	Requirement	Unit	Requirement	Unit
grain, petroleum products and junkyards				
Group homes	1.0	employee	0.79	employee
Family (in-home) day care	1.0	employee	1.25	employee

Source: (1) City of Fall River Code of Ordinances 86-6.1(86-441). (2) Institute of Transportation Engineers. *Parking Generation*. 6th Edition. Washington, DC, 2023.

4 RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

The following is a comprehensive series of parking management strategies recommended to address issues and opportunities identified during the improvement plan development process.

IMPROVE THE USER EXPERIENCE (A)

Plan Facility Condition Improvements (A1)

The City of Fall River should place an emphasis on enhancing the appearance and state of repair of public parking facilities. Parking management should define maintenance standards that lead to an implementation program.

At the present time, there is a limited maintenance and repair program in effect for public parking lots and garages. Fall River should institute such a program to not simply extend the useful lives of these facilities, but also to create an attractive environment that is inviting to visitors. As noted below in Action G1, the establishment of a parking fund may partially fund facility improvements and is highly recommended.

The City should begin the implementation of maintenance standards and a repair program following the ongoing parking facility condition assessment. Recommendations from the assessment should be reviewed and prioritized. A detailed plan to address the identified issues should be developed, and repairs budgeted for and scheduled.

Develop a Security Plan (A2)

The City should emphasize personal safety and security in public parking facilities through the creation of a security plan for each facility. Engage stakeholders to more specifically identify safety issues and potential ways to respond. Security plans should include the following design elements or reassessments to improve visibility and ensure the safety of customers.

- **Lighting**: Lighting should not only illuminate driving and pedestrian areas but eliminate shadows through carefully chosen spacing. This is true of interior and exterior lighting, and also applies to parking lots. Lighting should be adequate in garage staircases. Painting facility walls white can magnify existing lighting through reflection. Lighting type is an important consideration and should provide bright white illumination.
- **Landscaping**: Street trees and shrubs should be trimmed to maintain visibility throughout parking lots.

- **Environmental Design**: All areas behind stairways should be sealed off from the general public.
- **Surveillance**: Closed circuit television systems should be installed and monitored. Advanced security systems are voice activated and automatically pan to the source of noise while notifying security personnel.
- **Call Boxes**: Emergency phones that connect the caller directly to security personnel or panic buttons which sound an alarm and notify security should be installed in public lots, garages, and select on-street locations.
- **Signage**: Security program effectiveness is enhanced if there is signage posted describing the measures in place. Customer comfort is increased, and tools are more likely to be properly used if trouble arises.

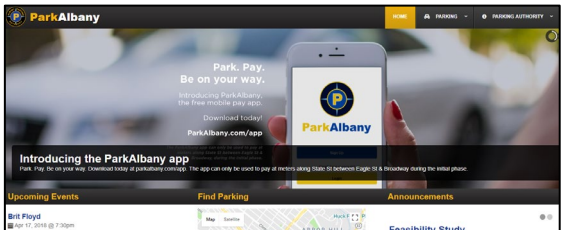
Coordinate Programs (A3)

The Traffic and Parking Department should take a lead role in parking program coordination and should act as a centralized resource that coordinates and distributes information related to parking supply, availability, planning, special programs, event activities, and other resources.

This will be done through physical signage, marketing, and a web-based information program. As such, an official parking website should be compared to best practice parking department websites for layout, ease of use, and thoroughness of content, then updated accordingly. Any website update should also be considered in the context of developing a new parking department brand.

Best Practice – Albany, NY

ParkAlbany, the brand name for the Albany Parking Authority features a best practice parking website containing an interactive facilities map, an integrated mobile app, upcoming events listings, parking suggestions by venue, online payment services, incentive programs, announcements about new test programs, and more.



Improve Condition of Facilities (A4)

Using facility assessments, prioritize and perform facility repairs. Budget and schedule low-cost priority improvements to take place over the next one to three years. Budget and schedule higher-cost improvements to take place over a longer time frame.

Condition assessments, as described in Action A1, should be repeated monthly until all facilities are found to be in a state of good repair, at which point assessments may continue

quarterly. During each assessment, the scope of repair work required at any given facility should be classified into short-, medium-, and long-term categories.

Implement Safety and Security Improvements (A5)

Work to put into practice the initial safety and security improvements identified in the newly developed security plan (A3). Safety and personal security concerns are likely to change over time. Revisit and update the security plan at regular intervals. Simultaneously and over the long term, remain informed of new and potentially more effective technology to address safety needs in Downtown Fall River parking facilities.

Accentuate Branding and Marketing (A6)

Parking facilities should function as a positive, marketable asset for downtown. Facilities may incorporate public art, creative lighting, and theming to enhance the experience for visitors to Downtown.

Parking management should strive to create a clearly identifiable set of public parking facilities, with a branding program that follows the model created by the Viva Fall River brand. This should be accomplished through the use of easy-to-understand program marketing, an integrated signage plan, web-based information, and special event parking programs. Parking management may also take on the role of educating the public regarding management strategies and programs in order to promote downtown as a unique and visitor-friendly regional destination. The location of available parking should be well publicized to improve the perception of parking availability as a positive element of the downtown experience. Figure 7 highlights the example of ParkAlbany as a best practice of exterior branding.

As parking management carries out facility condition assessments, existing signage attached to structures and posted in lots should also be examined to identify and create a plan to replace incorrect, outdated, or unneeded signage and to identify new signage needs. New consistent identification and regulation signage should match the new parking program brand in an effort to enhance the image of the parking system, thereby making parking a more positive and user-friendly experience.

Figure 7 Best Practice - Exterior Branding - ParkAlbany

Participate in Pedestrian Environment Improvement Initiatives (A7)

Parking Management should be included in localized transportation planning efforts. The office should work with city staff to review and evaluate policies related to good urban design principles and parking provision within a high-quality pedestrian environment. These policies include parking zoning requirements, parking design standards, and transit-oriented development parking standards. Effective parking planning that contributes to a quality pedestrian environment requires the configuration of parking infrastructure that supports Downtown Fall River strategic goals and urban design objectives.

Quality pedestrian environments help to reduce the risk of motor vehicle collisions and increase physical activity and social cohesion with direct physical health benefits as well as stress reduction and mental health improvements that promote individual and community health.

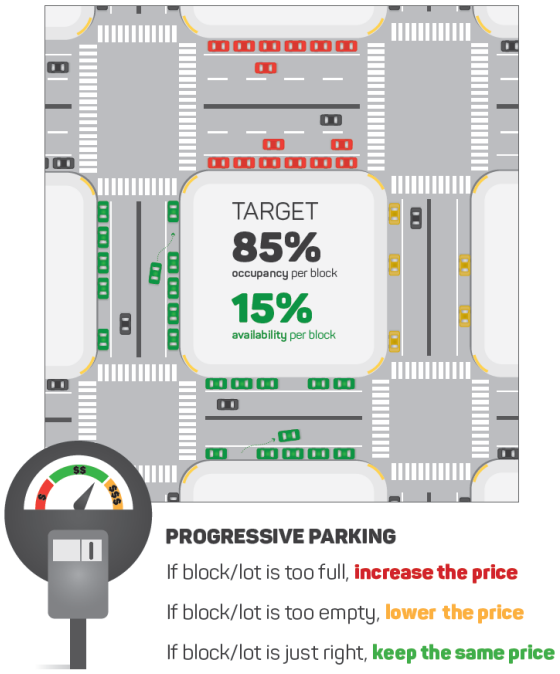
Systems have been devised to aid in the assessment of pedestrian environmental quality. Walking audits for the key intersections and block faces can be used to evaluate the condition and walkability of streets from the pedestrian's perspective, the audit uses a checklist that considers various elements that impact a pedestrian's experience. As a first step in improving the pedestrian environment Downtown, the City should extend that assessment to the entirety of the parking study area to guide and prioritize future improvements.

EMPHASIZE PRICING AS THE PRIMARY MANAGEMENT TOOL (B)

Adopt Availability as the Primary Performance Measure (B1)

Fall River's parking policies should be dynamic to respond to changes in parking supply and demand. Downtown Fall River should formally define **availability** as the primary performance measure for parking management. Availability itself should be defined as the number of empty parking spaces available, at any given time, along individual block faces and within individual off-street parking facilities (Figure 8) graphically shows the performance targets).

Figure 8 Parking Pricing Availability Targets



Define performance targets for the following facility types:

- On-street parking: 15%, or about 1-2 spaces, on each block-face, is recommended as a starting point.
- Off-street, visitor parking: 10% is recommended.
- Off-street, long-term parking: 5% is recommended, with no wait list for monthly permits.

A performance-based approach should also apply to off-street parking rates, for hourly, daily, and monthly parking. For hourly and daily parking, rates should ensure availability of spaces, during peak-demand times, similar to performance goals for on-street parking. For monthly parking, the primary performance target should be the elimination of wait lists at the most desired facilities achieved by increasing the permit rate of those facilities to shift demand to less utilized facilities.

Simplify Rate-Setting Authority (B2)

Currently changing municipal parking fees requires action from City Council. Setting parameters within which the parking manager, or a committee consisting of the parking manager and a subset of Council members, can adjust rates in response to performance

measures would result in a more effective approach for the City of Fall River, one that does not require continually revisiting the legislative process.

As an example, enabling legislation[3] gives the City of Albany Parking Authority power "to fix and collect rentals, fees, and other charges for the use of the [facilities]…" Now known as Park Albany, the organization features a Director of Operations who has rate-setting authority on Park Albany facilities as well as on-street parking meters through a management agreement[4] with the City of Albany.

Monitor Performance (B3)

Parking demand is not a static measure. It is generated by land uses, which change over time. It is also affected by the cost and availability of parking, as well as the availability and appeal of alternative means of access. Within walkable, urban, mixed-use districts, demand should be particularly responsive to changing conditions, including strategic management policies and actions, such as the performance-based pricing strategy outlined above.

The basic steps of a recommended performance-monitoring regime include:

1. Survey key on-street blocks and off-street facilities quarterly. Collect data over at least two weeks. Exclude Mondays, Fridays, and holidays.
2. Identify times and locations of constrained availability (See Action B1 for availability targets for different parking types).
3. Adjust rates, or rate zones, in response to collected data where availability is consistently above or below performance targets.
    a. Initially rate changes may occur every three months until the most effective price point is located.
    b. Notify customers thirty days in advance of proposed rate changes, allowing for a two-week public comment period regarding proposed adjustments.
    c. Once the system settles into a balanced mode of operation, reevaluation and changing of rates would occur annually.

Provide a Grace Period, Allow for Validation (B4)

"Grace periods" for on-street paid parking can help to avoid customer frustration with paid parking systems and payment media. New and infrequent visitors, in particular, face challenges in anticipating and complying with payment requirements. Short grace periods of

[3] ParkAlbany. https://www.parkalbany.com/public-documents/governing-documents-policies/531-enabling-legislation/file

[4] ParkAlbany. https://parkalbany.com/public-documents/annual-reports/329-albany-parking-authority-assessment-of-the-effectiveness-of-its-internal-controls/file

15 minutes at on-street metered parking spaces can make Fall River more visitor friendly, without undermining the effectiveness of performance-based parking rates.

Also, some business owners requested the ability to validate parking. This could be achieved in off-street facilities through the use of scannable vouchers, presented by visitors at exit pay stations, and paid for by business owners via an invoice system or debit account.

Create Tiered Pricing (B5)

Apply differing parking rates to distinct zones, based on demonstrated demand and availability conditions. Distinct zones are conducive to affecting driver behavior, by creating an intuitive environment, in which low-, medium-, and high-cost parking options can be found with minimal search.

Example rate tiers may take the following form:

- **Premium Spaces: $2.00/hour**
  - On-street parking spaces on South Main Street between Morgan Street and Jeremiah V. Sullivan Drive
  - On-street parking spaces on Columbia Street west of Washington Street
- **Base-Rate Spaces: $1.50/hour**
  - On-Street parking spaces on Second Street between Morgan Street and Borden Street
  - On-Street parking spaces on Bank Street
  - On-Street parking spaces on Purchase Street
- **Peripheral Spaces: $1.00/hour**
  - On-Street parking spaces on North Main Street between Bedford Street and Cherry Street
  - On-street parking spaces on Borden Street between South Main Street and Hartwell Street

Proposed rate zones should be calibrated according to ongoing resident and business interests, as well as observed demand. The rate tiers described above would be in effect at all times in off-street facilities while the rate at on-street facilities may escalate for stays greater than two hours. Activity that might conflict with parking in the premium tier (loading, bus parking), should be prohibited.

Pricing strategies for publicly available but privately owned facilities should be coordinated with the city's parking rate tiers. Facilities within certain rate tier zones should be priced the same as public facilities located within that zone. Also, shared parking opportunities may bring additional lots into the publicly accessible inventory. The rate tier zones should be used to price any new shared parking areas as they are integrated into the larger system.

Use Progressive Rates to Keep Costs Low for Short Stays

Progressive rates, which increase the hourly cost for extended parking stays, incentivize shorter stays and more turnover of spaces by making longer stays particularly expensive. Most drivers will opt for a lower-priced off-street space compared with a premium parking space with an incrementally rising cost. To the extent that higher hourly rates for the 3rd, 4th, and 5th hour of parking can bring demand in line with performance targets, the rate for the first two hours can be kept much lower. This can be particularly effective at discouraging use of on-street parking by local employees or business owners, who need to park for extended periods. Payment compliance enforcement tends to be easier than time-limit compliance enforcement as it requires fewer visits to a location by enforcement staff, further underscoring the value of this option for discouraging long-term occupancy of prime on-street spaces.

The City of New Brunswick, NJ has designed on-street meter rates to promote turnover for commercial and retail use following the logic that local businesses rely on the availability of nearby on-street parking.[5] Rates follow the following schedule:

- One to two hours: $1.50 per hour
- Third hour: $2.00
- Fourth hour: $3.00
- Fifth hour: $4.00
- Sixth hour: $5.00
- Seventh hour: $6.00
- Eighth hour: $7.00

Relax Time Limits (B6)

Fall River should ease time limits on metered spaces as pricing policies create more consistent availability. Time limits do not enhance customer experience but instead limit visitors, shoppers, and diners to shorter periods of stay. Turnover and survey data both reflect that many parking users wish to stay longer than the on-street meters allow. Users experience meter violations and associated fines after stretching their outings beyond established limits. Instead of using short time limits to encourage turnover, which often simply encourages "shuffling" by customers and employees, price should be used to manage parking availability. As demand-based pricing is calibrated and begins to influence parking patterns, time limits should ultimately be removed (Refer to action B8 below for initial steps).

[5] New Brunswick Parking Authority. https://www.njnbpa.org/parking-info/on-street-parking-and-meters/

Progressive pricing (pricing that increases as stays lengthen), discussed above, promotes turnover even as time limits are relaxed or removed.

Adjust Pricing Schedules (B7)

Time limits and pricing structures that do remain should be simplified and consistent. All on-street pricing should fall within the three-tiered structure recommended previously. All downtown on-street meters should operate during a consistent period of 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Based on demand observations, and in order to allow for greater availability of premium spaces, off-street pricing time periods should match or include fewer hours than on-street metering.

A sample paid parking operations schedule for Fall River is as follows:

- 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday on all metered streets
  - End two-hour time limits at 4pm, recognizing the longer stays typical of evening trips and relying on progressive pricing to encourage turnover.
- 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. Monday through Friday in all available lots and structures
  - Pricing in nearby lots should be lower than that of nearby on-street parking spaces.
  - Current weekend off-street pricing should be eliminated to incentivize use of these facilities in the short term, noting that as demand increases and/or facility improvements are made, Saturday pricing may be reinstituted.

It is critical that parking signage be updated to accurately reflect meter and lot prices and time limits as designated. Clear signage allows visitors to rapidly process the parking environment and make appropriate decisions according to their visit type.

As the development of evening destinations increases and demand dictates, the City may consider gradually extending the pricing period to 8:00 p.m. during normal days of operation.

Coordinate Rates with Private Facilities (B8)

Coordination between public and private parking operators is necessary to align pricing strategies and spread demand efficiently across the available parking supply. The more that private, publicly accessible parking operators can be brought in line with municipal strategies for rate tier zones and progressive pricing, the more efficiently the parking system will operate. The appearance of a single parking system with a simplified and standard set of rates likely to raise the level of user satisfaction among visitors to Downtown Fall River.

Best Practice – Oak Park, IL

The Village of Oak Park, IL manages about 8,000 parking spaces, 1,000 of which are privately owned but managed by the Village.

Privately-owned but publicly available parking is prevalent in the village center. This shared parking method includes nearly 30 different parking lots and landowners. The shared parking is managed in an equal fashion to the publicly owned facilities.

Source: Urban Sustainability Directors Network Convening. May 2015. https://www.usdn.org/uploads/cms/documents/2015usdnc

ESTABLISH CUSTOMER FRIENDLY ENFORCEMENT (C)

Re-orienting enforcement policies and practices, in conjunction with updating regulations and parking management practices, can be very helpful in reaching the City of Fall River's parking goals. The enforcement team should be re-oriented to support:

- The creation of a customer-oriented parking system;
- Development of sensible and reasonable parking regulations that are easy to understand and easy to manage;
- Modernization and adoption of new parking technologies; and
- Establishment of a data-driven, flexible parking system that can adapt over time.

Enforcement's role must change to support a customer-friendly policy. Parking enforcement operations should help to ensure and enforce parking availability and broader parking management goals and not be punitive or deter customers and visitors away from Downtown Fall River. The particular policies and programs to consider are described below.

Align Parking Enforcement Mission to City Goals (C1)

Enforcement is part of an integrated parking system. The standards and protocols of enforcement staff should be evaluated and better aligned with City goals. Fall River should

train its parking enforcement officers to be focused on encouraging appropriate parking behavior through friendly assistance and providing directions, as opposed to diligent ticket writing. Providing parking enforcement officers with uniforms that identify them as representatives of the city rather than simply enforcement officers is an important part of creating a department that is seen in a positive light by customers (Figure 9).

Figure 9 Parking Enforcement Officers as Downtown Ambassadors

Similarly, continued coordination is essential between the parking enforcement staff and parking management within the City of Fall River Parking enforcement staff should participate in regular meetings with the City to serve as a feedback loop for better management of parking resources. This would include things like identifying areas of confusion to customers, locations where availability is poor, areas where regulations should change, etc. Parking enforcement officers are a vital resource to identify patterns and influence policy.

Issue No-Charge First Tickets with Information (C2)

A first ticket free (per calendar year) policy can be applied for non-safety violations, such as overtime or missing a meter payment. Issuing a first-time warning is friendlier to users and could serve to change public perception of parking.

First-time offenders could receive a flyer with information about how they could avoid a future violation such as where more economical long-term parking is located, what the rules and regulations are, where to find free parking, and any upcoming events that may impact parking availability. In concert, the City could adapt its parking violation tickets to provide similar information. As parking technology is upgraded, it will be easier to track and catalogue initial versus repeat offenders.

Allow Free or Sponsored Holiday/Event Parking (C3)

In order to further reinforce a customer-friendly atmosphere, the City could consider holding free parking days during the holiday shopping season or during special events. Lost revenue may be recovered through a local business or agency sponsorship. In Lancaster, PA, a mix of the parking authority, the Downtown Investment District, and the City's Office of Promotion combine to sponsor free two-hour parking at metered spaces during the week leading up to Christmas.[6] Implementation may be handled through branded meter covers, signage, and online promotion.

Utilize a Progressive Fine Structure (C4)

Rather than setting a high citation fine to punish parking violators, Fall River could consider increasing citation fees for multiple offenses. A fine structure that differentiates between a first offense and a fourth offense is also more welcoming to parkers as it rewards good behavior while deterring repeat offenses. For example, the citation rate could double with each repeat offense. This strategy will go hand-in-hand with upgraded technology, tracking payment compliance of a certain license plate in a zone rather than instantaneous meter compliance, which will simplify the tracking of repeat violations.

OPTIMIZE EXISTING INVENTORY (D)

Improve and Coordinate Information Systems (D1)

Signage should clearly convey parking rates, regulations, and restrictions, while also directing drivers' attentions to less obvious parking options. Wayfinding, signage, and information should be designed and deployed to address three, distinct opportunities to inform drivers of their options.

- **Before Arrival**: Making parking information available for visitors and customers before arriving will allow parkers to plan their trips ahead of time and find parking with ease. Initially a static map including key customer information should be made available. As the ability to monitor real-time availability in off-street facilities is implemented, occupancy information should be provided online.
- **Upon Arrival**: Signage should be clearly visible, designed consistently, placed in strategic locations, and should provide clear guidance to and from parking locations. Off-street lots should have easy-to-read identification entrance signs and exit signs, including information on regulations. Regulation signage should contain accurate

[6] City of Lancaster, PA. https://www.lancasterparkingauthority.com/2024-holidays/

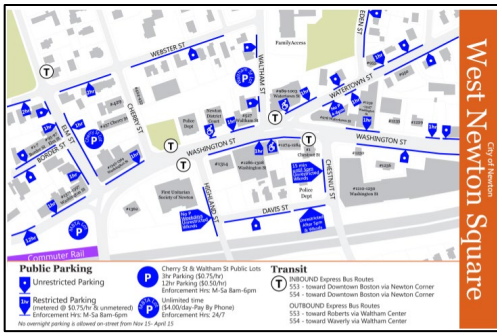
information regarding rates and hours of operation and should be consistent with rates and hours displayed on pay stations.

- **Post Arrival**: Providing clear pedestrian signage helps to create and promote a "park once" district, allowing customers to feel comfortable walking to multiple locations on foot. Signage also allows parkers to easily find their destination and parked vehicle at either end of their trip.

A single, simple map posted on the City website, merchants' websites, and at key activity centers will provide a consistent informational guide. The map should show on-street spaces and meter locations, off-street parking, as well as rates and hours of operation. Off-street parking lots and garages should be branded consistently on the website as they are on site. Any future parking shuttle map may be combined with a parking map to show the connectivity between both services.

Best Practice – Newton, MA

West Newton Square map shows parking and transit routes, plus identifies major destinations.



Nationally, many towns have adopted the traditional MUTCD D4-1 sign (green letters on a white background), as pictured in Figure 10. Other towns have made use of "blue P" signage that stands apart from other roadway signs and contributes to a local branding opportunity. Regardless of the parking signage format chosen, all parking signage should be consistent, highly visible, and provide direct wayfinding to public parking facilities. It is critical that the signage structure is easy for first-time visitors to understand and use. Rather than signage that tells parkers where they cannot go, this signage is welcoming and helps parkers figure out where parking is available to them. Parking signs should mimic the branding of any and all online parking maps or materials made available to promote immediate recognition among visitors.

Figure 10 Clear and Visible Parking Wayfinding, Various Formats

Upgrade Technology and Payment Systems (D2)

Parking management technology has come a long way since standard meters were introduced nearly a century ago. Many recent meter innovations have dramatically changed the operations and management of parking, both for the user and the operator. Upgrades in technology have increasingly enhanced customer and visitor parking experiences, made more efficient use of enforcement personnel, and simplified the evaluation and monitoring of parking utilization. While the City has implemented a limited update of the single-space meters with multi-space kiosks, there are still a large number of coin-operated meters within Downtown.

Convenient parking technology eases the burden of payment for the customer, and several options are available. Fall River should consider options that:

- Make payment easy and convenient
- Use technology to pay by coin, debit/ credit, and smartphone
- Reduce distance between pay stations
- Can offer a grace period option
- Offer "virtual" permits, using license plates not stickers or hangtags

- Make enforcement easy
- Integrate with enforcement equipment

Smart Pay Station technology provides several potential advantages over traditional, coin-operated, single-space meters, including:

- Ability to support multiple payment systems;
- Reduced visual clutter as a single pay station can replace 8-10 traditional meters;
- Expanded payment options, including smart card, credit card, and paper bills;
- Expanded data collection and distribution options; and
- Expanded options to increase revenue, compliance rates, and enforcement efficiency.

Implement a Pay by Plate System

Pay by Plate technology is recommended as it supports multiple payment methods, does not require a return trip to one's vehicle, and expedites enforcement verification.

Once a parking customer parks and locates a parking kiosk/meter, they enter their vehicle license plate identity. The plate identity is linked with a digital record of payment and recorded in a central database.

Enforcement of Pay by Plate does require some form of a live communication device in the field. This is normally done using License Plate Recognition handheld units or vehicles.

Key Elements

- Can make use of coins, bills, stored value cards and credit cards.
- Supports two-way communication to allow the operator:
  - to receive payment transaction and trouble alarm information
  - to perform rate and time changes
- No need to stripe parking spaces or display space numbers. License plate numbers in the database indicate proof of payment, not stalls, which can result in a 5 to 10% gain in parking spaces.
- Capable of operating by utilizing solar power.
- Pay by Plate is the only pay station technology at this time that can be enforced using license-plate-recognition systems.

Potential Drawbacks

- The system requires the customer to enter the vehicle license plate number. For first time users and visitors this will require a significant learning curve as well as a very detailed marketing and education component.
- While Pay by Plate utilizes live communication technology, because there is no assigned parking space or stall number required, the system is not capable of giving real-time occupancy data.

Allow Payment by Phone

Mobile-phone payment supports and is compatible with Pay by Plate systems. Pay by Phone offers convenience to visitors, allows them to avoid dealing with hard currency and is shown to increase compliance and reduce resistance to demand-based parking rates. An extension of Pay by Plate, Pay by Phone may be used for parking systems that employ meters or pay stations and can be applied to on-street parking as well as lots and garages. Pay by Phone can also help integrate privately owned facilities into a shared system by offering a standardized payment method.

Using a mobile phone application, parking purchases are made by dialing, texting, or scanning the ID number or QR code for the parking space or zone and purchasing the amount of time desired. First-time users must set up an account, including license plate and credit card information. Once registered, subsequent parking sessions can be paid for with a few taps on the phone. One of the most popular features of PBP is the benefit of receiving text messages when the time one has paid for is about to expire, followed by the option to add more time with a few taps of the screen. Additionally, systems can be set up so that drivers only pay for the time they actually parked.

The convenience of Pay by Phone for both the customer and the parking provider is a significant factor when considering implementation. However, parking zones that allow Pay by Phone will still require pay stations that accept cash and credit cards for those customers who do not own or choose not to use a smartphone.

Pay by Phone system providers typically charge a small fee for each transaction. This fee may be passed on to customers in the form of a higher base fee rate for users of the Pay by Phone service.

Fall River should consider pay by phone implementations already in place in nearby cities such as Providence, RI; New Bedford, MA; Brockton, MA; and Worcester, MA, all of which have adopted mobile payment systems for parking. Coordination with these municipalities when deciding on a system provider would allow visitors to take advantage of phone application compatibility within more of the South Coast Region.

Facilitate Shared Parking Agreements (D3)

Shared parking is the co-location of off-street parking in a single location that serves the parking demand for multiple land uses. Shared parking is particularly valuable in walkable, mixed-use centers in which small, private lots tend to be overwhelmed with demand when their associated land uses are busy, and significantly under-utilized much of the rest of the time. Fortunately, such districts also present two distinct, cross-supportive shared-parking opportunities that can reduce parking supply needs while providing more destinations with “overflow” parking resources.

The Parking Director or Facilities Manager should be tasked with identifying shared parking opportunities and reaching out to the relevant development owners. This individual would facilitate shared parking agreements in the downtown area and would serve as a resource for other private-to-private sharing arrangements.

Overcoming Implementation Barriers

Viable sharing arrangements often fail to materialize due to a lack of initiative among those seeking more capacity, or to liability concerns among those with excess capacity. Cities can play a vital role in realizing these potential capacity gains by engaging these parties, actively exploring the following options.

- Liaise between business, property, and lot owners with recognizable opportunities for mutually beneficial arrangements.
- Initiate negotiations by providing an independent perspective on issues and opportunities, identifying shared-benefit opportunities, and helping to address common concerns.
- Negotiate agreements, including identifying strategic agreement components such as:
  - Compensation in the form of increased lot maintenance, lot improvements, added security, etc.
  - Restricting access to the shared parking, via permits, to area employees to reduce risk and increase accountability.
  - Defining any added security or enforcement measures necessary to ensure that the primary uses of the lot are prioritized.
- Stepping in to remove stubborn barriers to viable arrangement, when feasible.
  - This commonly includes assuming liability insurance costs related to the agreements.
  - Commercial general liability policies carrying a $2 million aggregate limit and typical to shared parking agreements cost approximately $425-$750 annually.

Augment the Publicly Accessible Supply with Privately Owned Facilities

Another important type of shared parking arrangement involves private lot owners joining the municipal system. Facilities receive identical branding and payment options as publicly owned facilities and are included in all system information systems. Lots may be made available at all hours or solely outside of hours reserved for private facility permits holders.

In order to make better use of underutilized private parking facilities, the City should work with lot owners to integrate those facilities into the public parking system. The City should develop an in-house capacity to advance shared parking agreements, provide educational

and negotiating support to potential sharing partners on topics such as liability, leasehold structure, preservation of development rights, maintenance improvements, safety and lighting improvements, appropriate signage and markings, etc.

Best Practice – Omaha, NE

Park Omaha launched the Park Omaha Partners program to "*boost the number of public parking spaces and help visitors easily locate them in the popular downtown area.*"[1] The program provides a user-friendly, online process for property owners to offer their unused spaces, at a specified schedule, to the Park Omaha network through a shared parking agreement. The process begins with an online application.

Accepted Partner locations are added to the Park Omaha interactive map. An expanded map view also provides information on rates, hours of operation and payment options. Park Omaha identifies these facilities as "*partner*" facilities and distinguishes them from Park Omaha facilities in its maps and informational materials. As partner facilities, private lots are given official signage/iconography with a distinct logo that identifies them as part of the parking system, while indicating that hours of access, rates, and other regulations may vary from standard Park Omaha facilities. The copyrighted branding helps to prevent unapproved private lots from using the same design and calling themselves Park Omaha Partners.

The Park Omaha App facilitates payment. Partner facilities are given a unique payment-zone designation to use this mobile-payment system, allowing drivers to pay for parking exactly as they would in a City facility. Payment revenue goes directly to the facility owners, allowing private facility owners to monetize their excess parking without having to set up payment systems. This has been a critical component in recruiting new partners to the program.

Use Technology to Incentivize Shared Parking

Pay-by-phone options have the potential to expand the sharing of privately-owned parking lots in urban centers. Private lot owners have used this payment option, typically used to facilitate payment for metered on-street parking, to monetize their off-hour capacities. Once a pay-by-phone service provider is established, owners of private lots can work with that provider to set the hours and rates for public use of their lots, with payment revenue going directly to the lot owner.

This can be particularly effective for lot owners whose primary parking needs are confined to weekdays, allowing them to monetize their excess capacity during evenings and weekends, when public parking demand can be significant. It also provides an opportunity to expand "effective" parking capacities, in support of general downtown vitality and economic development, where the need for more parking options is greatest. This has been used

effectively in places like Asheville, NC with no involvement from the City, and in places like Omaha, NE, where the City has used this technology to build a Parking Partners program of shared private facilities, specifically to avoid building additional municipal parking garages.

Install Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (D4)

The availability of electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure carries environmental and economic benefits. Market research by ChargePoint suggests that EV charging stations increase the length of stay of retail customers.

Charging sites are no longer limited to off-street parking facilities. Seattle Department of Transportation is piloting permission of curbside charging station installations in the public right-of-way. Stations are publicly accessible while existing parking regulations continue to apply.

In Massachusetts, several funding programs support the installation of EV infrastructure which aim to advance the state's clean transportation goals. The Massachusetts Electric Vehicle Incentive Program (MassEVIP) provides incentives (covering up to 80% of project costs) for various EV charging projects, including public access, workplace, and multi-unit dwelling chargers. Through these programs, entities like municipalities, workplaces, and housing developments can receive rebates to cover a portion of the cost of installing EV charging stations. Additionally, the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) offers technical and funding assistance to public and private entities for deploying EV charging infrastructure. For Fall River, leveraging these resources and integrating such infrastructure could provide more sustainable options in the city.

Expand On-Street Parking Inventory (D5)

Undertake a review of applicable streets where additional on-street parking could be implemented through narrowing of lanes and changes in circulation patterns. Additional on-street parking could provide spaces within the residential areas of Downtown or in commercial areas with options for metered spaces.

REFINE PERMIT PROGRAM AND REGULATIONS (E)

Allow Flexible Facility Use by Permit Holders (E1)

The parking manager should consider changes to the rules which force monthly permit holders to park in a single assigned facility. These changes would enable permit holders to utilize other facilities. This practice would be seen as customer-friendly by those unable to find a space in the public lots during periods of high utilization as they would no longer be forced to pay a daily parking fee in a different facility or risk incurring a parking violation fine. Should overcrowding arise in other facilities, parking management should consider varying monthly permit rates dynamically to promote the use of less-utilized facilities, as discussed in Action B1.

Investigate Overnight Resident Parking Permits (E2)

Overnight resident parking permits could be introduced to enable Downtown residents the ability to park within City owned lots and garages between the hours of 6:00pm and 7:00am. Expanded enforcement would be required to ensure compliance during the morning hours and these services could be offset by charging a fee for these permits.

City Employee Parking Placards (E3)

Currently some city employees receive parking placards that enable vehicles to be parked at meters at no charge for emergency uses. Often these placards are being used in the vicinity of City Hall for extended periods of time and reducing the availability pf spaces for City Hall visitors. Enforcement of the placards and further education of city employees is needed to encourage the correct usage of the placards.

MULTIMODAL DEMAND REDUCTION OPPORTUNITIES (F)

Incentivize the Use of Public Transit (F1)

Reducing financial barriers to using transit reduces parking demand among local employees, while also making local jobs easier to access. The City should work with Southeastern

Regional Transit (SRTA) and RIPTA and other major downtown employers to providing free or discounted transit passes to their employees in an effort to reduce cost-barriers to transit commuting. Cities like Boulder, CO and Ann Arbor, MI have used parking revenues to fund such programs, and reduced drive-alone mode shares well below regional averages.

The multiple transfers required to access Downtown Fall River from many neighboring communities poses a significant barrier to increasing regional employee transit ridership. While increasing the number of direct transit options to Downtown Fall River is an important long-term strategy to reduce parking demand, it is unlikely that the majority of regional visitors and employees will be able to experience this type of transit service in the short term.

Improve and Expand Bicycle Parking and Repair Facilities (F2)

Adequate bicycle parking, including indoor facilities for commuters, can provide cyclists with reassurance that they can always find appropriate and convenient parking when traveling to, or within, Fall River.

Bicycle repair facilities can also make cycling a more reliable transportation mode for residents and visitors and reduce barriers to owning and maintaining a bike.

Fall River should consider implementation of the following:

- Install permanent multi-bicycle parking racks in all off-street parking facilities. Install single bicycle racks on each block within the study area.
- During non-winter months, remove one on-street parking space from service along Main Street and replace with bicycle parking facilities. Observe and record usage for future calibration and expand program as necessary.
- Install a permanent self-service bicycle repair station that includes an air pump, screwdrivers, wrenches, and levers.

Bikeshare

Bikeshare programs promote bicycle use for short trips, by making a shared pool of bicycles available to the public, and pricing usage to encourage turnover. Fall River may consider partnering with a private bikesharing operator. Such a bicycle infrastructure expansion would make downtown Fall River more accessible to those making short trips, especially from nearby destinations and the train station, and would make more remote parking locations more accessible to employees, residents, and visitors.

Providence's Shared Micromobility Program integrates electric scooters and bicycles into its urban mobility strategy. This program was launched in 2018 and promotes safe, convenient

access to short-distance travel, helping riders navigate the first and last miles of their commutes. The city partners with multiple providers, such as Spin, Bird, and Veo, ensuring a range of options while enforcing strict safety, maintenance, and operational standards. Additionally, the program encourages community feedback and offers discounted rates for low-income users. Fall River could adopt similar strategies to create a micromobility system that enhances local transportation options and promotes bicycling within the community.

Prioritize Pedestrian Crossing Safety (F3)

Improving the pedestrian environment, particularly street crossings, is a high-impact way to increase safety and walkability. Smaller intersections offer shorter walking distances, a more connected network, and added public spaces. Another important benefit of a more connected walking network is that a driver's final destination is easier and more pleasant to reach on foot from parking facilities and vice versa. Additionally, better lighting and safer crossings make parking assets feel more accessible. Making intersections easier to cross can allow for the same vehicle throughput but in a much safer and more walkable environment. Finally, encouraging walking to and from parking facilities has the simple benefit of adding to foot traffic, which in turn creates a more comfortable and safe environment.

Considerations for improving the walking environment include:

- **Bumpouts** – At intersections where there is nearby on-street parking, extend the curb of the sidewalk into the parking lane to slow traffic, decrease crossing times, and increase pedestrian visibility.
- **Raised Crossings** – A raised crossing in an intersection makes pedestrians more visible to vehicles as well as slowing traffic. Raised crossings are not advised for streets used as transit routes per New York State Department of Transportation guidance.
- **Enhanced Streetscaping** – Trees, benches, and other street features encourage walkers to linger on the street, creating a more active environment. Moreover, these improvements add to the richness of the streetscape and help to calm traffic.
- **Leading Pedestrian Interval** – At signalized intersections, a Leading Pedestrian Interval allows those who are walking to begin crossing the street before the vehicular traffic signal changes to allow parallel traffic to proceed. This ensures that walkers are visible in the crosswalk when traffic begins moving.
- **Minimize/Close Excess Curb Cuts** – Every driveway is a potential conflict point between people walking and people driving. Consolidating curb cuts reduces these conflicts and provides a safer, simpler, more comfortable walk.
- **Pedestrian Island/Refuge** – Giving pedestrians a place to pause in the middle of a large intersection can make the intersection easier to cross. Lanes are slightly narrowed, lowering the speed at which vehicular traffic flows comfortably.

- **Maintenance** – Regularly re-stripe pedestrian markings like crosswalks with bright, reflective paint in high visibility patterns such as ladder, continental, or diagonal.
- **ADA Compliance** – Ensure curb cuts are ADA compliant and push buttons use the latest technology.

Many of the concepts could be implemented on an interim pilot basis and could be analyzed for construction feasibility in the long-term. The list of improvements was developed from a pedestrian safety and circulation perspective, but have the potential, when paired with roadway reconfiguration, to create significant additional on-street parking in Downtown Fall River.

RESTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT (G)

Establish and Manage a Parking Fund (G1)

Net revenue from the on-street meter fees, off-street hourly fees, permits, and parking citations should be dedicated to a **Parking Fund** that would be used to invest in parking-related improvements in the downtown. These funds can be used for parking facility upgrades, new signage, multimodal improvements, and a host of other possibilities, many of which are included in this document. The City should advertise to parkers that net parking revenues are being used to invest in the downtown.

When parking revenues "disappear" into the General Fund, patrons (and downtown businesses) are typically less likely to support a paid parking system. If Fall River's merchants, customers, and residents can clearly see that the monies collected are invested in physical improvements downtown – alleyways, plantings, facade improvements, security officers, bicycle racks, and more – they become more likely to support parking policies that generate tangible benefits for downtown Fall River.

A number of different organizational structures can be used to establish and oversee a Parking Fund. The Fund could be managed by a new Parking Authority, Parking Division, Parking and Transportation Advisory Committee, or a local business association, with support from City staff. Additionally, the Fund could be established as a financial entity (somewhat like an assessment district), which would require by ordinance that parking revenues generated in downtown be spent in downtown. Under this arrangement, the Fund would be managed and housed within an existing City department.

It is important to note that in order to develop support for parking management changes, local stakeholders should provide input in developing parking policies and overseeing Parking Fund reinvestments and expenditures.

Consolidate Organizational Structure (G2)

Vertical integration of parking functions has been identified as a best practice in parking management organizational structure. More typically, municipal parking organizations across the U.S. employ a horizontally fragmented organizational structure. Fall River is no exception. Parking staff officially work for the Department of Traffic & Parking, the Facilities Department, and the Police Department. In conjunction with a specific Parking Fund, a Parking Division could be expanded to include a dedicated Parking Manager to coordinate Citywide parking activities including enforcement and operations, transportation demand management, public education, and monitoring and reporting.

Improve Parking System Reporting and Tracking (G3)

The City should work within its parking system to enable and improve the use of:

- **Daily Reporting** — Create systems and standards for regular parking data reporting. Summary parking utilization and transaction data should be available directly to the City through an online portal. Access to this data stream is a key element to implementing demand-based pricing.
- **Payment Tracking —** Create systems for accounting for parking payments. Currently, reporting does not include details such as how many permits were sold by type. With a new system, payments for permits and hourly parking should be tied to the facility in which the person parked and the permit type purchased.
- **Technology Implementation —** The City should develop a technology implementation plan that lays out new management tools to be introduced within City owned garages and lots. An implementation plan would include a timeline to implement tools such as new payment technology, as well as entrance and egress technology that would improve facility management. The technology should be capable of daily reporting and payment tracking.
- **Flexibility in Management of Pricing —** With systems in place for daily reporting and payment tracking, the City should create a protocol for implementing demand-based pricing in coordination with the equipment. This would allow the City to better manage parking demand to meet the Availability Goals.
- **Staffing at Peak Times —** Though the implementation of new technologies will lower the need for staffed lots and garages, there should be a plan for an attendant to be present at the most utilized facilities at peak times to assist customers.
- **Short- and Long-Term Maintenance —** The City should work to develop and adhere to a maintenance plan for both the immediate, short, and long terms. The plan should clarify responsibilities, funding sources, and clauses for unforeseen elements.
- **Parking System Reinvestment —** The City should work with all parking operators to develop upgrade and investment plans for publicly available parking facilities,

including improvements to access areas, such as alleys and sidewalks. Specific upgrades, and the timeline to implement these upgrades, should be included in the plan.

REDEFINE PARKING REQUIREMENTS (H)

Fall River should redefine parking requirements as well as review zoning code requirements so that most parking provides access benefits that go beyond the development site. This will allow for private and public investments to shift away from parking where and when alternatives such as transit, cycling, and localized pedestrian activity become more relevant and effective. This approach provides a range of options for developers to meet requirements that focus on parking solutions in the near-term as well as longer-term mobility-based solutions to the same parking issues. Developers would be able to choose to:

- Provide publicly accessible on-site parking, which will be credited toward (or even decrease) requirements, depending on how it is managed and how broadly accessible the spaces are. Shared spaces are more valuable to the community than dedicated private spaces.
- Provide on-site mobility amenities such as bike parking or car-share vehicles which may lessen the need for vehicle ownership, reducing the parking provision requirement.
- Provide amenities (E.g., free/discounted bus passes, vanpool program) designed to manage transportation demand and appropriately price parking in order to encourage other modes of travel. These agreements would also reduce the parking provision requirement.
- Pay an impact fee per parking space which funds district-level investments, including public parking, mobility, and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) benefits.
-

Review Zoning Requirements for Parking (H1)

Under the City's current zoning ordinance, development in the City is required to provide a minimum number of off-street parking spaces. As highlighted within this study, parking in Downtown Fall River has areas of underutilization, meaning that in general, there is more parking capacity than needed by specific developments. To address the gap between capacity and demand, Fall River could address underutilized and oversupplied parking by reducing minimum parking requirements, right-sizing retail and service-based land uses, and allowing parking reductions through shared parking calculations. These strategies could be key priorities if the City wanted to continue to encourage development activity within Downtown.

Define an Access Management Requirement (H2)

The above framework can be used to establish a requirement that shifts away from parking toward a requirement to manage the project's access needs and impacts, measured by an Access Management Requirement (AMR) score. Any development or conversion would be required to meet a score calculated using a use-based formula, an example of which is shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Example Access Management Requirement Scoring

Land Use	AMR Points Required
Multi-Family Housing	1 to 3 per dwelling unit, increasing by # of bedrooms
Offices	1 per 200 sq. ft. to 1 per 400 sq. ft.
Medical Facilities	1 per 4 Planned Bed sites, or 1 per 300 sq. ft.
Standard Restaurant	1 per 4 seats, plus 1 per employee on largest shift
Retail and Service	1 per 150 sq. ft.
Drinking & Entertainment	1 per 4 persons based on building's maximum capacity

Developers would be able to meet the AMR score through any combination of:

- On-site parking (see Table 7 for example parking space credit structure)
- Bonus TDM measures or mobility amenities
- Impact Fee Payments

The City of Cambridge, MA, has established a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) ordinance that applies to various types of development projects.[7] The requirements differ based on the scale and impact of the development, ranging from small residential buildings to larger commercial establishments. Developers can meet their TDM obligations through a combination of strategies, including reduced on-site parking, implementation of mobility amenities, and contributions to local transportation improvement funds. This flexible approach allows for tailored solutions that address the specific access needs and traffic impacts associated with each project.

[7] Cambridge Municipal Code Chapter 10.18 - Parking and Transportation Demand Management Planning, Parking Space Registration

On-Site Parking Credits

On-site parking spaces included in a proposal are credited toward the AMR, according to how those proposed spaces will be managed. Management approaches that facilitate shared-parking efficiencies increase the project's credits toward an AMR. Those that reduce these efficiencies decrease the project's AMR score. Spaces that are not automatically included in tenant rent or purchase price, but rather priced dynamically, receive more credits toward an AMR. Rather than assigning a "hard cap" on parking, spaces in excess of the project's baseline AMR actually decrease the AMR score, thus necessitating increased TDM commitments, fee payment, or inclusion of public parking. While this adds flexibility in how much parking can be provided, it adds a "cost" to each space built above the AMR, in the form of public-benefit contributions.

Table 7 Example Parking Credits Table

Created Space Type	Definition	Credits Toward AMR
Reserved Spaces	For use by tenants only	-0.25
Accessory Spaces	May be used by customers/tenants, but are not reserved	0.75
Public Spaces	Privately owned and operated, but publicly accessible	1.0
Priced Spaces	An hourly fee charged on site	0.25 (additive)
Municipal Spaces	Spaces added to and included in the municipal parking system	1.5
Excess Spaces	Additional spaces greater than minimum parking requirements	-0.75 (additive)

Demand-Management and Mobility-Amenity Credits

AMR deficits can be satisfied through the provision of an approved TDM/Multimodal package that includes an assortment of measures including those described in Strategy F. The AMR value of a TDM/Multimodal package can vary, and the number of applicable packages/credits may be capped. AMR scoring for TDM proposals should be tailored to the individual programs available in Fall River. For example, given the lack of reliance on Southeastern Regional Transit Authority services for most of Fall River's commuters, subsidized transit passes for employees may not score as highly as providing car share memberships or vanpool programs to employees. Scores for each TDM initiative should be oriented around the relative importance of that TDM strategy to the community.

Impact Fee Credits

Any remaining AMR deficit should be met via cash-in-lieu payment, which can be used to fund public parking, demand-management, or mobility resources. Impact fees per space vary

based on the appraised value of parking in a community. A typical impact fee for a city like Fall River; a dense but small urban city center located away from a major regional center, often served by commuter rail or other express transit, may vary between $6,000 and $22,000. Other similar communities with impact fees include:

- Kirkland, WA: $6,000 per space
- Rochester, MI; $13,000 per space
- Lake Forest, IL: $22,000 per space

Fall River should conduct a parking value appraisal to set impact fees appropriately. These fees can easily be factored into developer funding strategies and streamline the permitting process as variances become less common. Funds received via the impact fee program should be earmarked for parking improvement programs such as public parking facility repairs, signage improvements and redesigns, technology upgrades, multimodal system improvements, and other parking system improvement projects, as desired.

5 ACTION PLAN

Many parking strategies proposed for Fall River cannot be implemented overnight, nor can they all be implemented concurrently. There are strategies, however, that can be implemented quickly, while others may take longer. Some strategies will work well when implemented together but others are dependent on a series of consecutive steps.

The Action Plan is a roadmap that supports the strategies outlined in Chapter 4. Each table corresponds to a time frame for implementation. Individual actions are categorized based on the eight primary strategies identified in Section 4. Implementation considerations and relative cost are indicated for each action while community priority, as expressed though the prioritization exercises at public open house events, is signaled for applicable actions. The Action Plan is a living document to be used by Fall River staff and partners to help inform decisions.

The Action Plan is organized via the following structure:

- **Time Frame**
  - Short Term = completed within one year (Table 8)
  - Medium term = completed over the course of one to three years (Table 9)
  - Long term = completed over the course of more than three years (Table 10)
- **Strategy**
  - The eight overarching strategies, as outlined in Chapter 4 are identified for the specific action.

Within this structure, the Action Plan includes the following for each sub-strategy action:

- **Actions**
  - The specific steps to move towards or implement recommendations.
- **Implementation Considerations**
  - Select factors to be evaluated and/or integrated into decision-making and roll out of Actions.
- **Relative Cost**
  - Level of investment required for implementation.
    - Actions marked with a single $ symbol represent the lowest cost actions, those that can be carried out by current staff.
    - Additional $ symbols represent increases in investment (added labor or capital improvement) required to carry out those actions. Actions whose relative cost is indicated by $$$$ are the most expensive and require a high level of capital and operational investment.

Table 8 Short Term Strategies

Strategy	ID	Action	Implementation Considerations	Relative Cost
SHORT TERM – COMPLETED IN 0-1 YEARS				
Improve the User Experience	A1	Plan Facility Condition Improvements	Perform a facility condition assessment. From this, develop a maintenance and repair plan. Identify funding sources and schedule work.	$$
	A2	Develop a Security Plan	Work with community stakeholders to identify most appropriate solutions.	$$
	A3	Coordinate Programs	Consider future information systems needs as well as future new branding requirements for redesign or incorporation into City website.	$$
Emphasize Pricing as the Primary Management Tool	B1	Adopt Availability as the Primary Performance Measure	Implement parking data collection program. Consider different performance measures for on-street, general off-street, and permitted off-street spaces.	$
	B2	Simplify Rate-Setting Authority	Will require legislation to consolidate operations of on- and off-street facilities. Identify council members with interest in parking issues.	$
	B3	Monitor Performance	Assign as a departmental responsibility. Add to work calendar. Explore adding to enforcement officer/ambassador duties.	$$
	B4	Provide a Grace Period, Allow for Validation	Ensure compatibility of the implementation technique with current and future technology.	$
Establish Customer Friendly Enforcement	C1	Align Parking Enforcement Mission to City Goals	Work with City departments and enforcement officers to develop a goal-oriented mission and next steps. Work with officers to identify training and relevant customer-oriented functions.	$

Strategy	ID	Action	Implementation Considerations	Relative Cost
SHORT TERM – COMPLETED IN 0-1 YEARS				
	C2	Issue No-Charge First Tickets with Information	Consider enforcement system technology needs for recording and tracking initial no-charge ticket recipients.	$
	C3	Allow Free or Sponsored Holiday/Event Parking	Understand parking availability considerations. Outline program limitations and create specific event plans.	$$
Optimize Existing Inventory	D5	Expand On-Street Parking Inventory	Undertake a review of applicable streets where on-street parking inventory could be added.	$
Refine Permit Program and Regulations	E1	Allow Flexible Facility Use by Permit Holders	Emphasize simplicity while responding to unique conditions such as facilities over- and underutilized by permit holders.	$
	E2	Investigate Overnight Resident Parking Permits	Review the operational requirements for implementing a overnight resident parking program.	$
	E3	City Employee Parking Placards	Implement annual renewal of city employee parking placard program with mandatory education sessions	$
Multimodal Demand Reduction Opportunities	F1	Incentivize the Use of Public Transit	Requires coordination with transit agency, local private employers, and city/county/state social services.	$$
Redefine Parking Requirements	H1	Review Zoning Code Requirements	Review minimum parking requirements to right-sizing retail and service-based land uses, and enable parking reductions through shared parking calculations	$
	H2	Define an Access Management Requirement	Work with Building, Planning, and Zoning to align goals and define access requirement implementation boundaries.	$

Table 9 Medium Term Strategies

Strategy	ID	Action	Implementation Considerations	Relative Cost
MEDIUM TERM – COMPLETED IN 1-3 YEARS				
Improve the User Experience	A4	Improve Condition of and reopen Facilities fully	Implement lower cost facility improvements in maintenance and repair plan in order to fully reopen parking garages. Repeat periodic condition assessment.	$$$
	A5	Implement Safety and Security Improvements	Implement initial pressing safety and security improvements identified in security plan. Continue to revisit and update safety concerns.	$$$
	A6	Accentuate Branding and Marketing	Coordinate branding with other City departments and standards. Explore the model utilized by Viva Fall River branding. Coordinate with other signage management.	$$
Emphasize Pricing as the Primary Management Tool	B5	Create Tiered Pricing	Contingent on performance monitoring and analysis to ensure availability targets are achieved.	$
	B6	Relax Time Limits	Requires effective demand-based pricing and monitoring in place.	$
	B7	Adjust Pricing Schedules	Update signage as appropriate. Coordinate with performance monitoring.	$
	B8	Coordinate Rates with Private Facilities	Engage private operators during evaluation of price rate adjustments.	$
Establish Customer Friendly Enforcement	C4	Utilize a Progressive Fine Structure	Ensure compatibility with future enforcement technology to ensure accurate tracking of offenses, including any no-charge tickets.	$
Optimize Existing Inventory	D2	Upgrade Technology and Payment Systems	Ensure back-end software connectivity. Consider compatibility with all future parking initiatives.	$$$

Strategy	ID	Action	Implementation Considerations	Relative Cost
MEDIUM TERM – COMPLETED IN 1-3 YEARS				
	D3	Facilitate Shared Parking Agreements	Identify and prioritize locations in proximity to Downtown destinations and those with availability in high-demand areas. Key considerations: insurance, lease length, rate, maintenance, lighting, security, signage, enforcement.	$
	D4	Install Electric Vehicle Charging Stations	Understand unit cost and grant matching requirements. Identify facilities for installation that serve multiple user groups. Coordinate with facility improvement projects.	$$
Multimodal Demand Reduction Opportunities	F2	Improve and Expand Bicycle Parking and Repair Facilities	Coordinate with improvements at transit stops, off-street parking facilities, and other area improvements. Coordinate with downtown stakeholders.	$$
	F3	Prioritize Pedestrian Crossing Safety	Select physical improvement location based on walking safety/higher walking demand. Assess feasibility with Engineering. Coordinate with other area improvements (streetscape, repaving, etc.).	$$$
Restructure Management	G1	Establish and Manage a Parking Fund	Consider the organizational structure required to establish and oversee such a fund. Understand fund enabling legislation and general fund impacts. Engage stakeholders to help determine reinvestment priorities.	$
	G2	Create a Vertical Organizational Structure	Evaluate the need for/ability to support additional staffing and budget.	$
	G3	Improve Parking System Reporting and Tracking	Assign as a departmental responsibility. Add to work calendar. Explore adding to enforcement officer duties.	$$

Table 10 Long Term Strategies

Strategy	ID	Action	Implementation Considerations	Relative Cost
LONG TERM – COMPLETED AFTER 3 YEARS				
Improve the User Experience	A4	Improve Condition of Facilities	Implement higher cost facility improvements in maintenance and repair plan. Repeat periodic condition assessment.	$$$$
	A5	Implement Safety and Security Improvements	Continue to address concerns as they change over time as an ongoing task. Stay informed of and consider purchase of new technology.	$$
	A7	Participate in Pedestrian Environment Improvement Initiatives	Ensure parking management is included in all transportation and city planning. Prepare to potentially physically reconfigure parking infrastructure access.	$$$
Optimize Existing Inventory	D1	Improve and Coordinate Information Systems	Work with City departments to coordinate with other signage management. Develop maintenance plan. May need to conduct existing signage inventory first. Collaborate with local businesses to map businesses and parking locations.	$$$

City of Fall River

Downtown Fall River Parking Study Existing Conditions

August 2024

NELSON NYGAARD

FALL RIVER MASSACHUSETTS

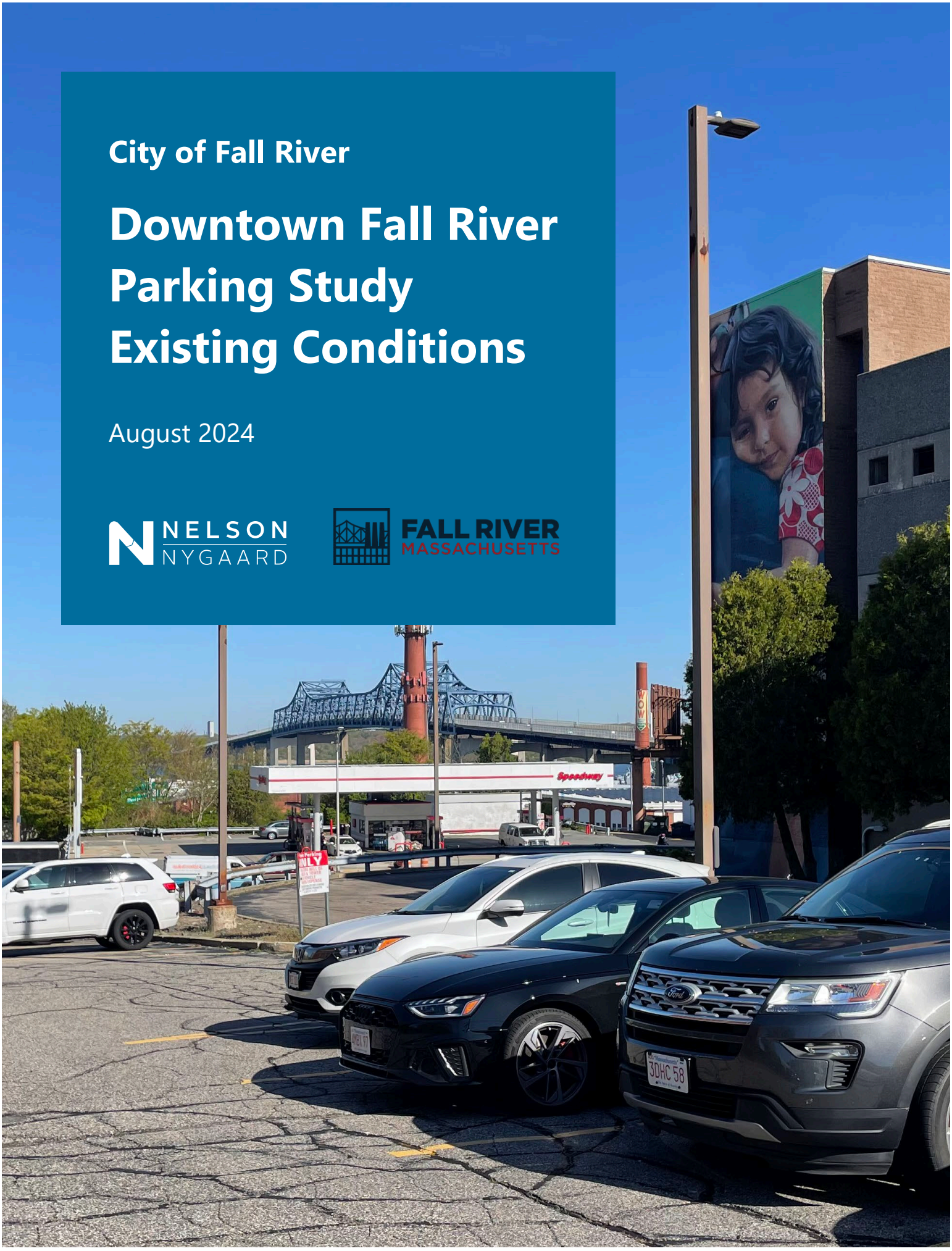


Table of Contents

Page

Introduction....1
Parking Inventory....5
Parking Utilization....10
Public Engagement....18
Initial Needs Assessment....22
Next Steps....32

List of Figures

		Page
Figure 1	Map of Study Area	2
Figure 2	Parking Inventory	6
Figure 3	South Main Street, On-Street Parking	7
Figure 4	Pearl Street Parking Garage	8
Figure 5	Map of Off-Street Parking by Type	9
Figure 6	Spatial Parking Utilization Color Code	11
Figure 7	Empty Parking Spaces at the Third Street Parking Garage	12
Figure 8	Parking Utilization: Weekday, 8am	13
Figure 9	Parking Utilization: Weekday, 11am	13
Figure 10	Parking Utilization: Weekday, 2pm	14
Figure 11	Parking Utilization: Weekday, 5pm	14
Figure 12	Parking Utilization: Weekend, 8am	15
Figure 13	Parking Utilization: Weekend, 11am	16
Figure 14	Parking Utilization: Weekend, 2pm	16
Figure 15	Parking Utilization: Weekend, 5pm	17
Figure 16	Third Street Parking Garage	18
Figure 17	Community Pop-up Event at HealthFirst Farmer's Market	19
Figure 18	Temporary Structural Support in the Pearl Street Garage	23
Figure 19	Level Closure at Third Street Parking Garage	24
Figure 20	Garage Signage	25
Figure 21	Parking Kiosk Signage	26
Figure 22	Lack of On-Street Signage	27
Figure 23	Parking Meter Information Removed	28
Figure 24	Pedestrian Level Wayfinding – Fayetteville, AR	29

List of Tables

		Page
Table 1	Summary of Previous Plans	3
Table 2	On-Street Parking Regulations	7
Table 3	Off-Street Parking Facilities	9

INTRODUCTION

The City of Fall River has initiated a comprehensive Parking Study and Management Plan to address the existing conditions and future needs of its downtown area. As the City continues to invest in revitalizing its downtown to better serve both residents and visitors, it acknowledges that sustainable development relies on thoughtful parking strategies. An effective parking management plan, designed to optimize current parking resources without compromising the character of the downtown, is essential for supporting the area's long-term success.

As Fall River works to enhance its downtown, the parking requirements and perceptions of users are constantly evolving, creating varied demands on the available parking infrastructure. To address these challenges proactively, the City is conducting this study to thoroughly analyze current parking needs and perceptions. This planning effort aims to assess the current parking supply and demand balance, enabling the City to manage its existing parking resources more efficiently in line with broader community needs. A strategic downtown parking management plan will allow Fall River to maximize the potential of its downtown for commercial, residential, and tourism growth.

Project Goals

The City has identified the following goals for this parking study and management plan:

- Assess and optimize the current parking supply and demand balance in downtown Fall River to support commercial and residential growth.
- Develop strategies to efficiently manage existing parking resources in line with broader community needs and the evolving demands of downtown users.
- Create a sustainable parking management plan that supports existing downtown improvement efforts.
- Analyze current parking perceptions and needs to proactively address challenges in the downtown parking infrastructure.
- Align parking strategies with previous urban planning initiatives and ongoing efforts to enhance Fall River's downtown area.
- Identify opportunities to improve the accessibility, visibility, and utilization of both public and private parking assets in the study area.

Study Area

The study area encompasses a significant portion of Fall River's city center. This area includes major corridors such as Main Street and Bedford Street where a high concentration of commercial, employment, and economic activity is present, and is also in proximity to tourist attractions like Battleship Cove.

This area features a mix of public and private parking assets, spanning on-street parking, surface lots, and multi-story parking structures. By focusing on this important area of the City, the study aims to provide an accurate assessment of current parking conditions and future needs.

Figure 1 Map of Study Area

Previous Plans

This section offers an overview of previous plans, studies, and policies related to parking and transportation within the City. Reviewing these documents aims to build on existing knowledge and ensure that the parking study aligns with past initiatives and complements ongoing efforts to enhance the City.

Table 1 Summary of Previous Plans

Plan	Notes

Downtown Urban Renewal Plan (2019)	• 20-year plan for the revitalization of downtown
	• Purposed to identify current conditions that have been obstacles to investment, determine the needs of the downtown and the goals for its redevelopment and define actions to do so.
	• Overarching goals include:
	  ○ Reuniting two halves of the downtown severed by I-195
	  ○ Create a spine of North and South Main Street
	  ○ Addresses the "Missing teeth" that are underutilized buildings in development areas

Activating South Main District Strategy (2021)	• An informational appendix that provides demographic and spatial information about the South Main District in Fall River and strategies to revitalize the district. • Provides best practices and guidelines for activating outdoor areas. • Includes public engagement survey data. • More than half of all respondents stated they either work in the area, go to restaurants in the area, or both. • 47.17% of survey respondents probably would not recommend living in Fall River

Downtown Fall River Walk Audit (2021)	• Memo detailing observations from the downtown Fall River Walk Audit
	• Opportunities for improving walking are organized into two sections of the walking route and further broken down by streets.
	• Several multiple needs were identified, including:
	  ○ More and better open spaces and destinations for drawing people in
	  ○ Better lighting, seating, and trash maintenance
	  ○ Buffers between walkers and moving traffic.
	  ○ Safe intersections and more visible crosswalks
	  ○ More infrastructure for cycling, such as bike lanes and bike parking

Fall River Zoning Ordinances (2018)	• Provisions of Massachusetts and Fall River Law concerning the zoning and land sue in the City of Fall River • Includes lengthy section of definitions for development and land use terms • Table of dimensional regulations and table of uses are attached to Zoning Ordinance • Establishes districts and zoning map for the City. • Includes SFR districts, Central and Mixed-Use Business Districts, and several development districts, such as a Waterfront and Transit-Oriented Development District (WTOD), Open Space/Recreational District (OS). Housing Development Overlay District (HD), and a Research and Development Overlay District (RDOD) • Further explanations of purpose and regulations for each district are detailed. • WTOD are not permitted to be taller that six stories or 80 feet and have minimum parking ratios between 0.6 and 1.5 depending on the use. • RDOD allows for greater flexibility and creativity in the development in the development of industrial and commercial sites and encourage compatible development within the entire overlay district
Rapid Recovery Plan (2021)	• Report with an overview of the Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Funding Assistance Program and recommended approach to attain funding. • RRP was part of a strategy to stabilize and grow the Massachusetts economy following the economic impacts of COVID-19, investing $774 million in efforts to get people back to work, support small businesses, foster innovation, revitalize downtowns, and keep people in stable housing. • Provides a framework and guide that outlines funding needs relative to the priority projects, funding best practices, targeted funding programs, and grant pursuit strategies. • 125 Massachusetts communities have participated in the Rapid Recovery Plan program and have created their own Rapid Recovery Plans • There is funding assistance available from RRP to help municipalities identify funding resources, application requirement, and other key aspects of the application. • There are four levels of community support and funding assistance available, ranging from self-directed to intensive review and rounds of edits and comment on application materials

PARKING INVENTORY

Inventory Findings

To comprehensively understand the dynamics of parking in Fall River, all on- and off-street parking assets should be evaluated, including private parking. While public parking is typically the most discussed and prominent resource for city center businesses, a significant amount of business and entertainment activity is generated by people using privately owned parking. Additionally, when estimating future parking demand, it is necessary to understand how both public and private parking is used by current developments to make accurate projections of how Fall River parkers behave.

Inventory Overview

The study area encompasses substantial on- and off-street parking assets, including twenty-three distinct public and private off-street parking structures and surface lots. These facilities are a mix of City-owned and privately-owned, each offering varying levels of restricted and public access. Establishing the concept of "access" is crucial in any parking study, as it defines who can use a parking space at any given time. The two broad categories of access, irrespective of ownership, are outlined below:

- **Publicly Accessible** parking is available to any member of the public, often but not always for a fee. This parking is signed and clearly open so that any user understands that it is publicly available.
- **Restricted** parking is limited to certain groups, such as permit holders, employees, and/or customers.

These terms will be revisited often, especially in utilization analysis, to better understand effective supplies and true parking availability.

On-street parking is also available on many streets throughout the study area. A large portion of this is unregulated parking, which is found throughout most of the study area and along residential and local streets while the more limited metered parking is located around the core of the study area.

Throughout Downtown Fall River, there are 3,047 spaces across its on-street and off-street inventory. More than 1,300 on-street spaces are governed by unique regulations which dictate the type of vehicle or driver permitted to use the space. These include Metered, Unregulated, Disability, Unmetered Timed, Loading Zones, and Bus Stop spaces. Nearly 1,700 off-street parking spaces are distributed among various off-street lots and garages throughout Fall River. The study area contains three public lots accessible to all drivers. In contrast, there are 18 private lots that are generally reserved for tenants or employees in a

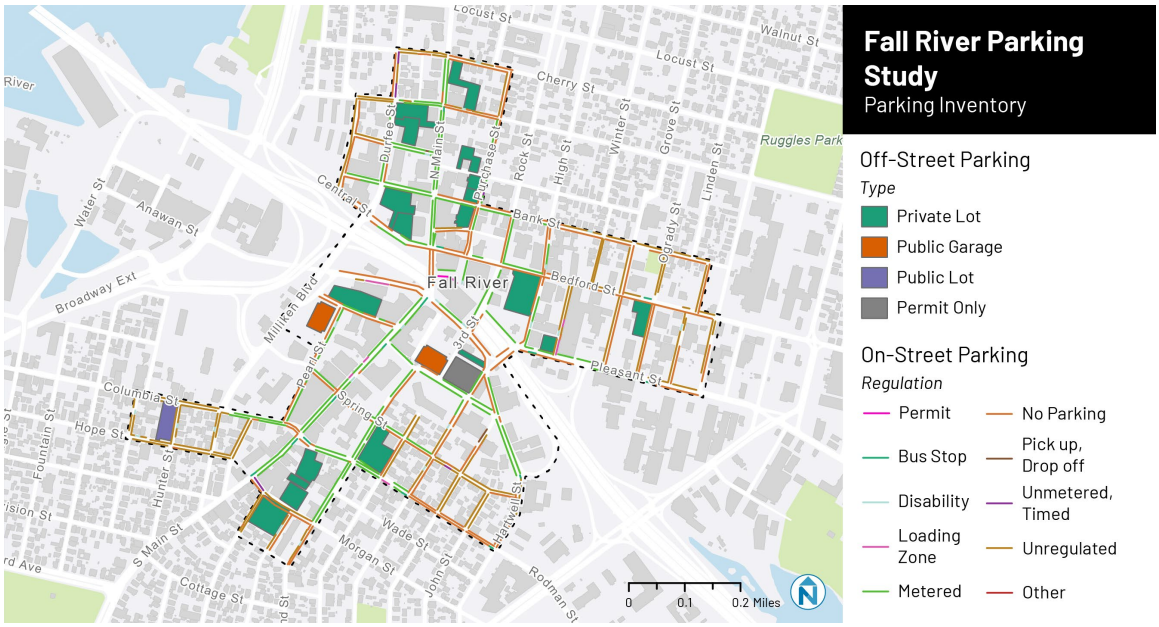
building. Public garages are large, multi-level, weather-protected structures that offer additional parking options. There are two public garages in the study area; one of which offers hourly and daily parking for the general public, while the other is restricted to monthly permit holders.

This section details the supply and regulations of parking assets in the study area. The inventory is based on data collected on-site by the project team in May 2024. This data was compiled to create a comprehensive database of all parking assets in the study area, which was then geo-coded to spatially display the existing parking assets, as illustrated in Figure 2.

PARKING INVENTORY: KEY FINDINGS

- There is more off-street parking than on-street parking, however, more on-street parking is publicly available than off-street parking.
- Private lots significantly outnumber public lot and parking garages. Private parking spaces are over double the amount of public parking spaces.
- Metered parking accounts for over half of on-street parking. Unregulated parking is the second most common type. These two categories comprise the majority of available on-street parking in the City.

Figure 2 Parking Inventory



Parking Regulations

The ways in which parking spaces are regulated, where they are located, and how they operate impact how they are utilized in any downtown area. The project team documented the ownership, use category, and regulations for all parking spaces within the boundaries of the study area.

On-Street Parking

On-street parking refers to any space along the curb where cars are permitted to park. It can be categorized as either unregulated (with minimal restrictions) or regulated (with specific rules governing vehicle types, drivers, or time limits). Table 2 below details the types of on-street parking and the number of spaces. Metered spaces compose the majority of on-street parking with 687 space or 52.1% of all on-street spaces. Unmetered timed spaces also regulate parking by limiting the amount of time a car can be parked in a space. Together, metered and unmetered timed spaces are 53.3% of all on-street parking. Unregulated parking has the second highest number of spaces with 574 or 43.6%. Metered, unregulated, and unmetered timed spaces can be occupied by any vehicle or driver and composes 96.6% of all on-street parking. The remaining 3.1% of on-street parking is reserved for specific uses. This includes Disability spaces, which require a disabled parking placard or plate; Loading Zones, designated for brief loading/unloading of items from adjacent buildings; and Bus Stops, reserved for buses to pick up and drop off passengers.

Figure 3 South Main Street, On-Street Parking

Table 2 On-Street Parking Regulations

Regulation	Total	%
Metered	687	52.1%
Unregulated	574	43.6%
Disability	24	1.8%
Unmetered Timed	16	1.2%
Loading Zone	12	0.9%
Bus Stop	3	0.2%
Other	2	0.1%

Off-Street Parking

Off-street parking includes all public and private parking in garages and large surface lots (approximately twenty or more spaces) in the study area. There were twenty-three off-street parking facilities inventoried within the study area, described and categorized by facility type, ownership, and rate type below:

Facility Type

- **Parking Garages** are weather-protected parking facilities. There are two active parking garages area, Pearl Street Garage and Third Street Garage, which contain 320 and 325 spaces respectively. Currently both garages are awaiting structural assessment with long-term closures of their upper levels. In total, approximately 44% of the garages parking supply are unusable.
- **Parking Lots** are outdoor surface-level facilities. There are 21 facilities containing 1,333 spaces or 70% of the off-street parking supply (currently available) and 40% of the overall parking supply.

Figure 4 Pearl Street Parking Garage

Ownership

- **Publicly Owned Garages or Lots** are owned by the City. These facilities are typically managed by municipal authorities and are intended to serve the general public. Public lots and garages may have regulated pricing structures and may also offer permits or passes for residents, workers, or visitors.
- **Privately-Owned Garages or Lots** are owned by private landowners or private institutions. These facilities may serve specific buildings, businesses, or residential complexes and may be restricted to certain users, such as tenants, employees, or customers. Private lots often have flexible pricing, sometimes offering monthly or daily rates, and may prioritize profit while managing access to ensure availability for their target users.

Table 3 Off-Street Parking Facilities

	Lot		Garage	
Type	# of lots	# of spaces	# of garages	# of spaces
Private	19	1172	0	0
Public	1	54	1	188*
Permit-only (municipal)	1	107	1	170*

* Currently both the Pearl Street and 3rd Street garages have long-term closures of their upper levels awaiting structural assessment. This reduces the garage spaces by 287 spaces.

Figure 5 Map of Off-Street Parking by Type

PARKING UTILIZATION

Utilization Findings

This section documents and analyzes parking utilization counts for the entire study area, providing a snapshot of the time and location of parked cars for typical days. The survey team conducted hourly parking utilization counts on two weekdays (Tuesday, May 7, 2024, and Thursday, May 9, 2024) and one weekend day (Saturday, May 11, 2024) covering four time periods for both a typical weekday and weekend day. On each typical day captured, data collection began at 8 a.m. with the last survey beginning at 5 p.m. The weekday counts were split up over two days, with the 8 a.m. counts and 11 a.m. counts completed on Tuesday and the 2 p.m. counts and 5 p.m. counts completed on Thursday. The weather on all three days was consistently fair, partly cloudy, and with temperatures ranging from approximately 55 to 70 degrees.

Parking can be defined as being at optimal capacity when there is at least one empty space per block face or along a typical row of parking, ensuring customer access to businesses but also indicating a busy commercial environment. This typically equates to a target of 15% vacancy per block face and 10% vacancy off-street. If any block or parking facility has less availability than the target, it is effectively at its functional capacity. Charts throughout the document provide a dashed line at the 10% vacancy point for reference.

The study team considered the following in selecting dates for utilization:

- Capturing demand from typical activity while schools are in session
- Weather
- Day of the week - Nelson\Nygaard has found that mid-week days such as Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday represent a typically busier day than Mondays or Fridays.

This section analyzes weekday temporal and spatial patterns and provides a sample of parking utilization of different facilities by type, ownership, and accessibility, followed by the same analysis for a weekend day. Although this data is incredibly valuable in highlighting how parking functions in the study area, it is equally valuable to understand how users perceive the system. The visitor who can't find the adjacent available spaces because they are hidden around the corner still feels a crunch in prime locations regardless of overall capacity. Utilization is just one piece of the puzzle; additional analysis of regulation, safety, signage, technology, and more will yield valuable additional insights.

Spatial Analysis of Parking Utilization

An important part of understanding how parking is managed in any downtown is being able to see how various parking facilities and segments of on-street parking interact with each

other throughout the course of a day. A chart of hourly utilization rates for one specific location is valuable, but seeing how that location behaves among others located nearby can reveal patterns and trends not evident in numbers alone. The lot which is completely full may be right around the corner from another lot that has plenty of availability at that same time.

To develop the spatial analysis, the parking utilization data collected during the parking counts was geo-coded to be displayed on a series of maps. The maps show the use of each parking facility by color-code, as explained below:

Figure 6 Spatial Parking Utilization Color Code

- **"Cool" teal** refer to utilization of under 70% occupancy. When a resource is underutilized, especially during peak periods, it should be viewed as having excess capacity and strategies for encouraging use should be considered. Blue facilities are extremely underutilized and are good candidates for specially designated overflow parking during events and for long-term parking.
- **"Ideal" green** refers to blocks and facilities with 70 to 85% utilization and represent actively used resources. It is a "functionally full" sweet spot that is well-used but usually a space can be found. The nearer utilization levels approach the high end of this range, the more efficiently they are being utilized and nearing functional capacity. Change in regulation or pricing is not necessary.
- **"Warning" yellow** refers to utilization between 85 and 95% and is considered slightly over-demanded. While fully maximizing efficiency, the on-street parking or off-street facilities are full or near full, giving the impression of a lack of parking. Use discretion to consider deploying measures to reduce demand. Make changes if consistently in this category over many time periods or if facilities this occupied are adjacent to 95%+ occupancy facilities.
- **"Critical" red** denotes parking facilities that are overly full, meaning that cars may circle to find a space, double-park, or park illegally. Resources that consistently perform at this level indicate that demand exceeds capacity. Strategies to reduce demand are highly encouraged.

Figure 7 Empty Parking Spaces at the Third Street Parking Garage

Study Area Parking Utilization: Weekday

The following section presents an analysis of parking utilization patterns in Fall River during weekdays, with data captured at various times throughout the day. The figures below illustrate how parking demand fluctuates between on-street and off-street options, highlighting key trends and peak usage periods.

Figure 8 Parking Utilization: Weekday, 8am

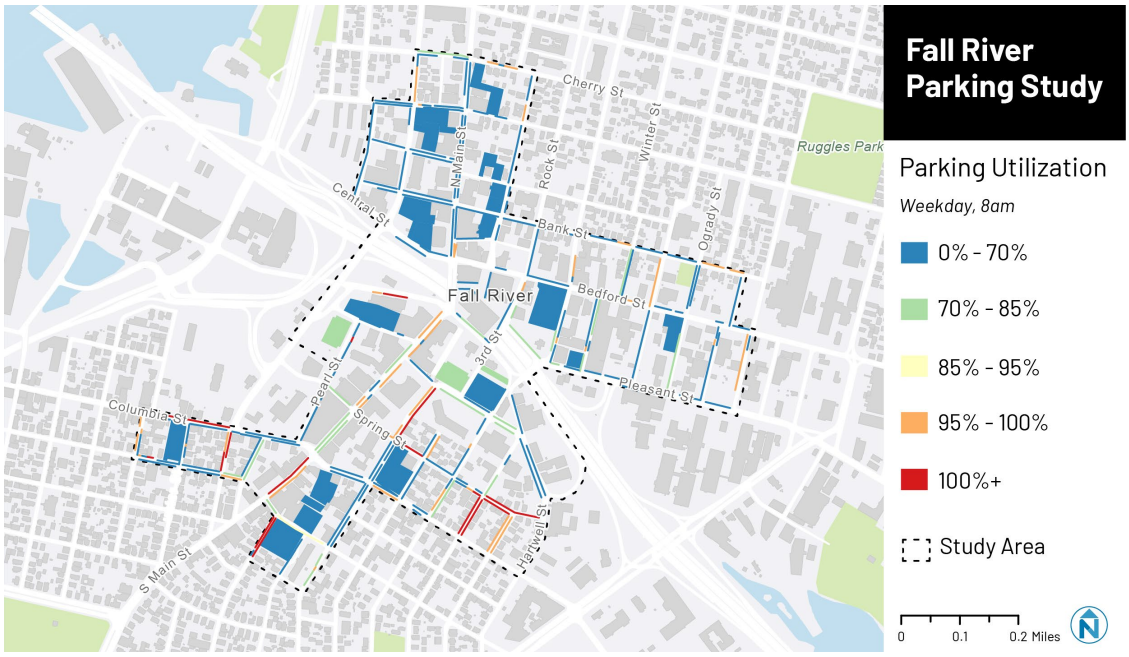


Figure 9 Parking Utilization: Weekday, 11am

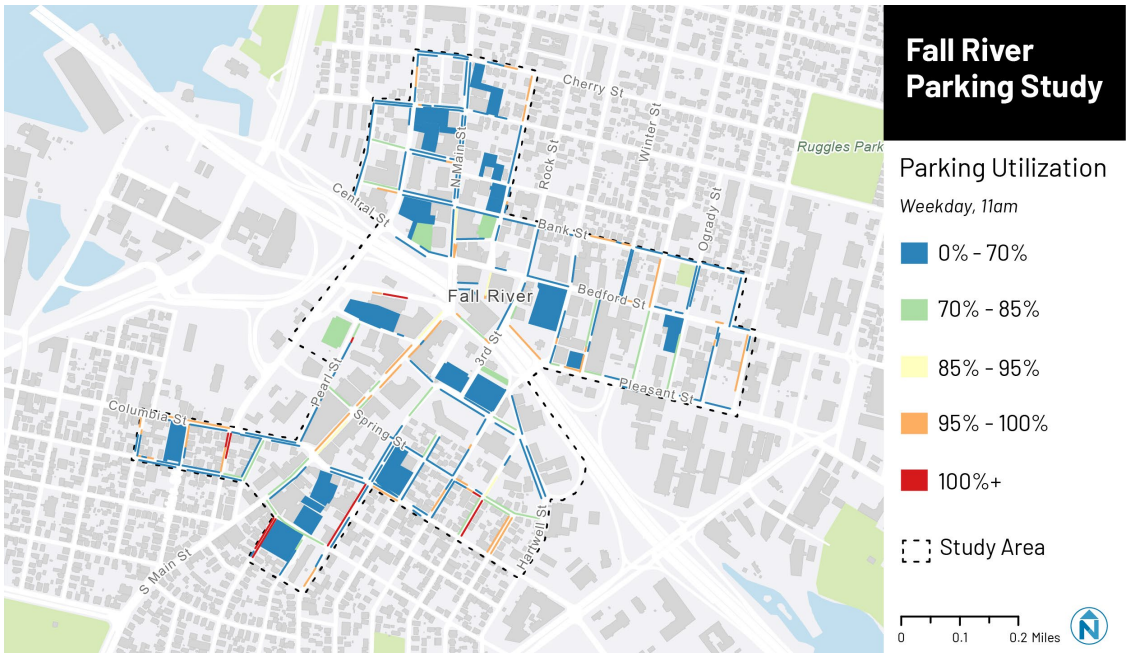


Figure 10 Parking Utilization: Weekday, 2pm

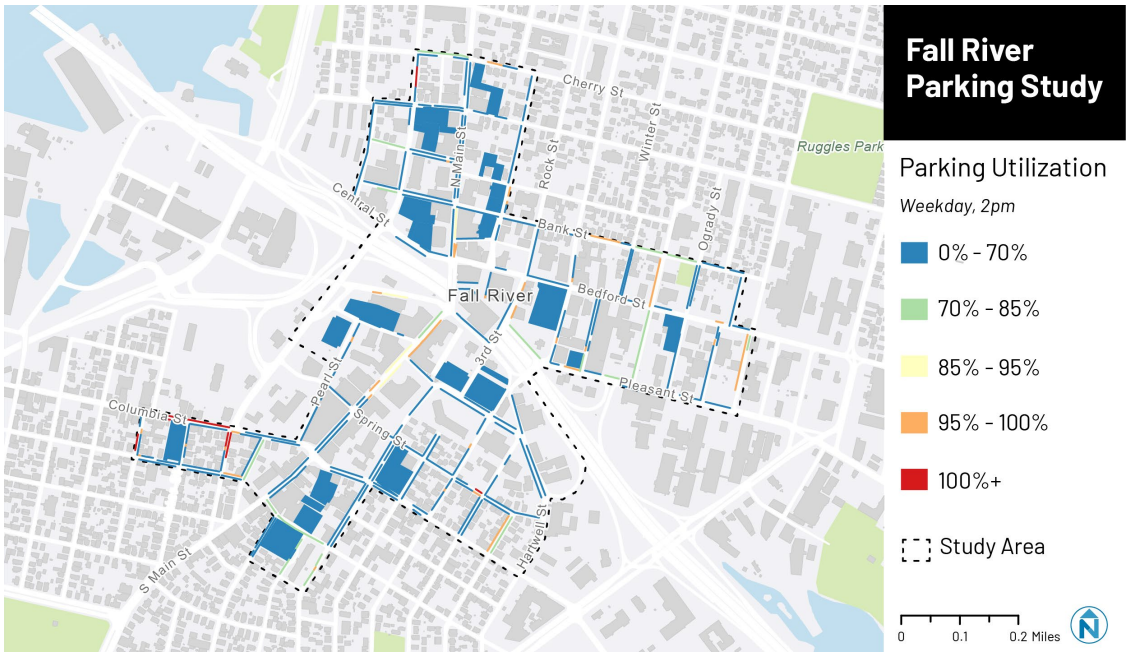
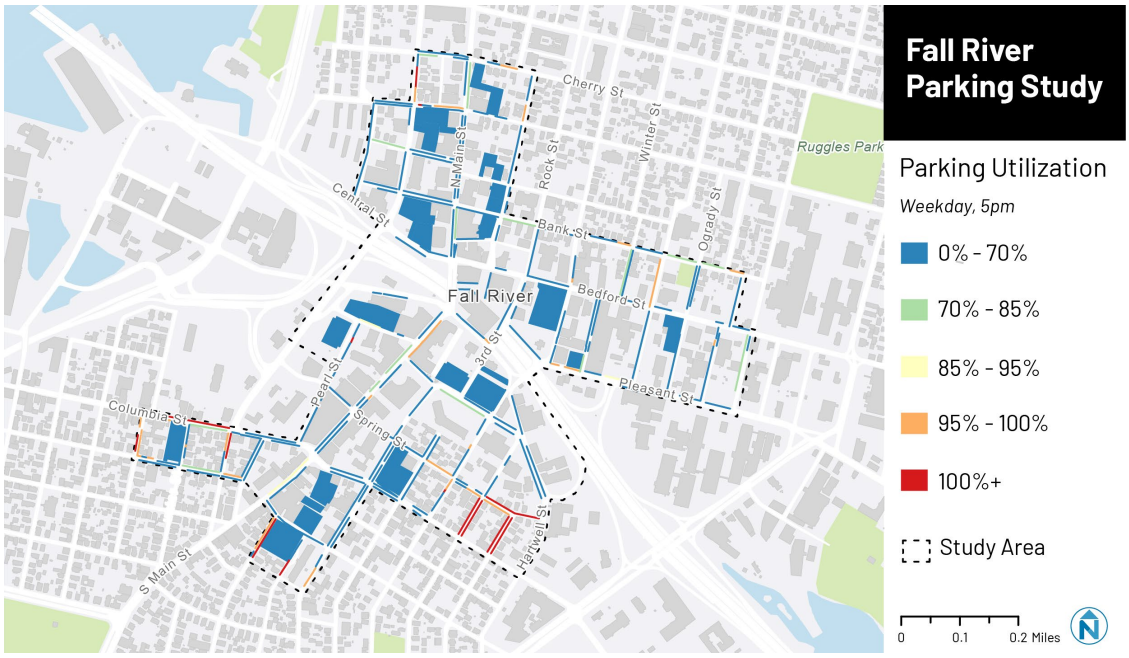


Figure 11 Parking Utilization: Weekday, 5pm



Weekday Utilization Patterns

There is generally lower parking utilization in Fall River on weekdays than on weekends. Morning hours see higher utilization rates, with the peak reaching 56.0% at 8 a.m., while the lowest utilization occurs at 2 p.m., with a rate of 52.4%. Overall, on-street parking is more

heavily utilized than off-street options, with on-street spaces averaging 56.2% utilization throughout the day, compared to 35.1% for off-street facilities.

- **On-Street:**
  - Average weekday utilization: 56.2%.
  - Highest average utilization: 67.5% at unregulated spaces.
  - Peak utilization at unregulated spaces: 75.6% during the 5 p.m. period.
- **Off-Street:**
  - Average weekday utilization: 35.1%.
  - Highest average utilization: 48.1% at public garages.
  - Peak utilization at public garages: 74.7% during the 8 a.m. period.
  - Private facilities average weekday utilization: 34.6%.
  - Public facilities average weekday utilization: 22.5%.

Study Area Parking Utilization: Weekend

The section below provides an overview of parking utilization patterns on weekends. The figures illustrate the increased demand for parking, particularly in the afternoon, and the preference for on-street and unregulated parking spaces compared to off-street facilities.

Figure 12 Parking Utilization: Weekend, 8am

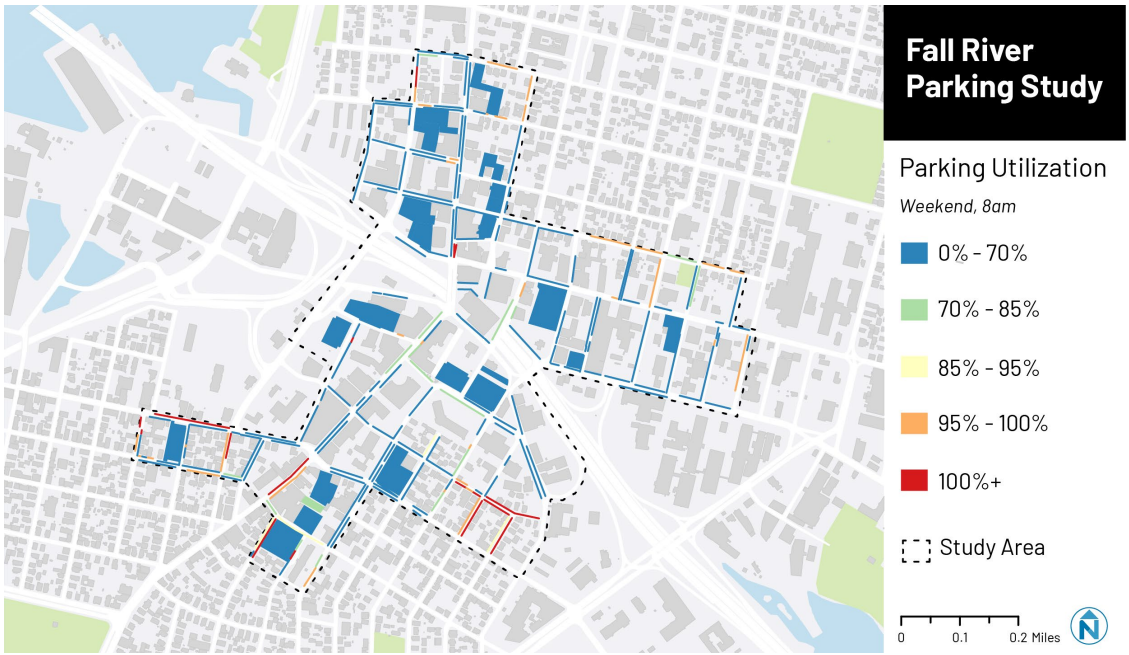


Figure 13 Parking Utilization: Weekend, 11am

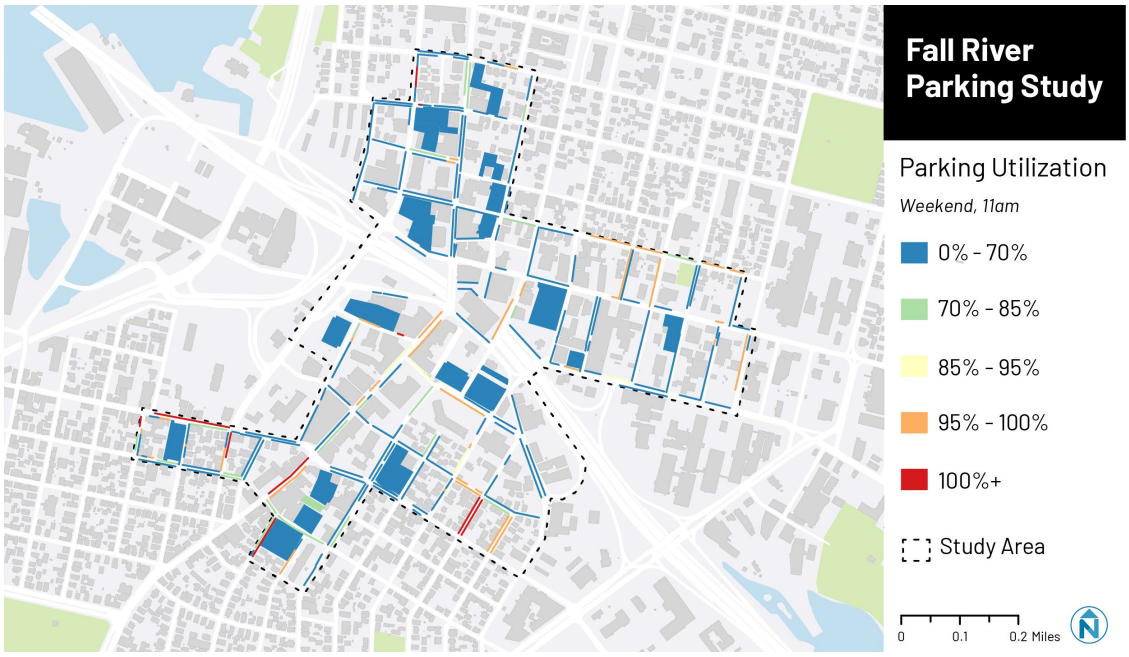


Figure 14 Parking Utilization: Weekend, 2pm

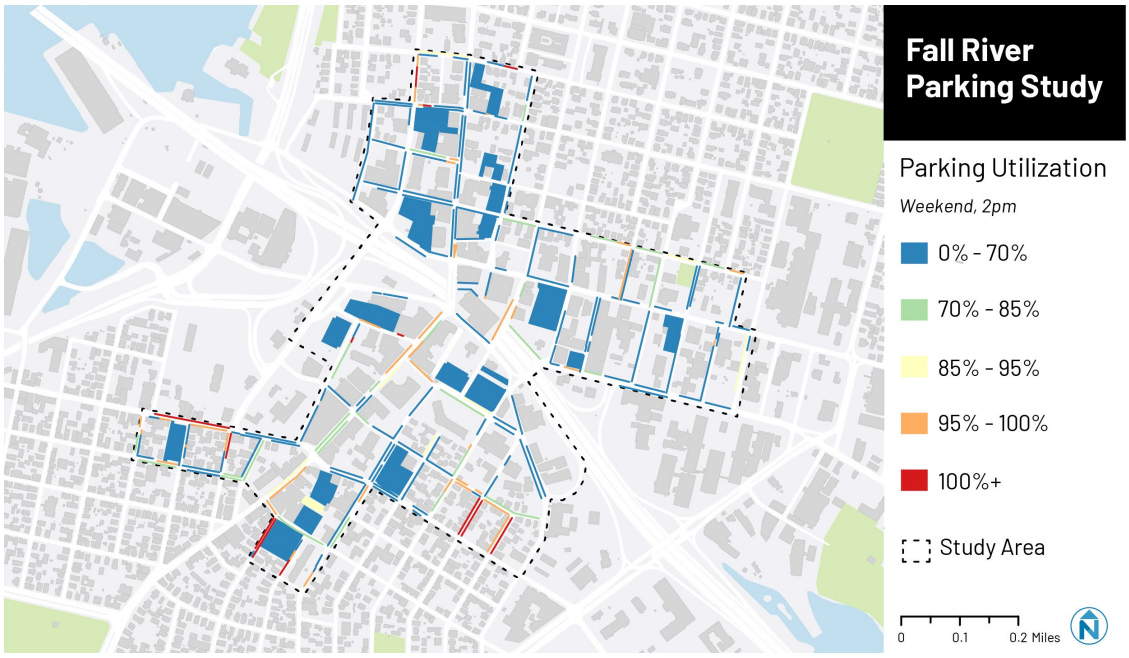
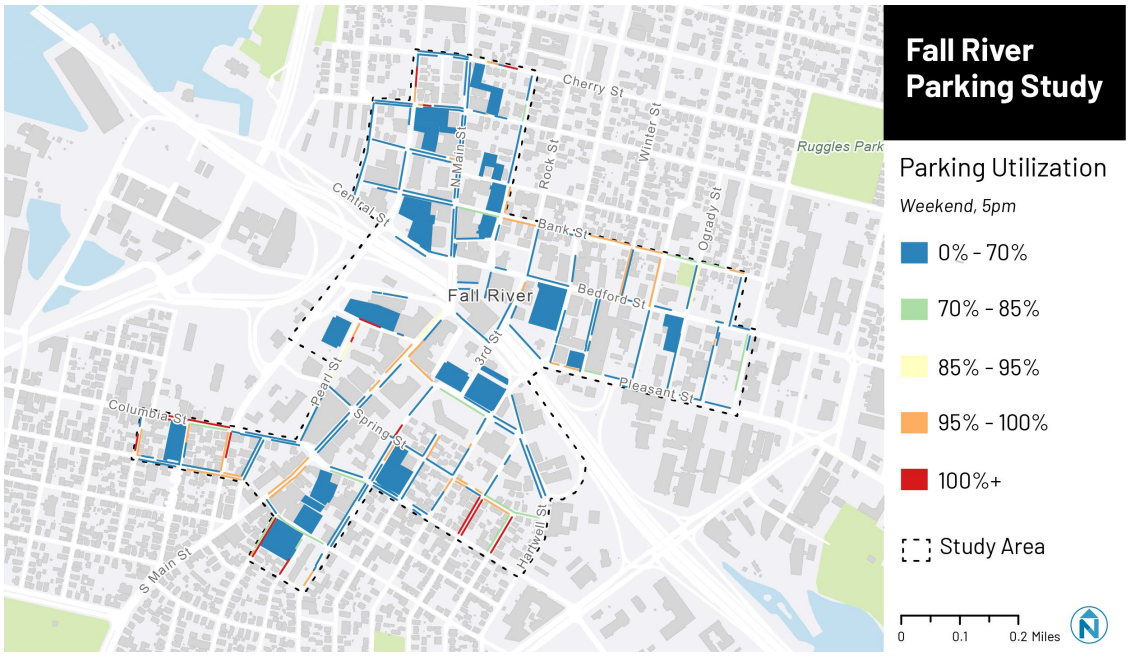


Figure 15 Parking Utilization: Weekend, 5pm



Weekend Utilization Patterns

During weekends in Fall River, parking utilization is generally higher than on weekdays. Weekend parking usage peaks in the afternoon, reaching 57.6% at 2 p.m., while the lowest utilization occurs at 8 a.m., at a rate of 53.8%. On-street parking is significantly more utilized than off-street parking on weekends, with a clear preference for unregulated spaces.

- On-Street Parking:
  - Average weekend utilization: 59.7%.
  - Highest utilization rate: 74.9% at unregulated spaces.
  - Peak utilization for unregulated spaces: 78.6% during the 5 p.m. period.
- Off-Street Parking:
  - Average weekend utilization: 20.0%.
  - Public lots have the highest off-street utilization rate at 46.3%.
  - Peak utilization for public lots: 58.9% during the 2 p.m. period.
  - Public lots average weekend utilization: 46.3% (higher rate than private lots and garages).
  - Private lots average weekend utilization: 16.6%.
  - Public garages average weekend utilization: 10.6%.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Engagement Findings

The public engagement process was a critical component of this project, aimed at gathering insights from stakeholders and community members to inform the development of parking strategies in the study area. Through stakeholder interviews, community pop-up events, and an online survey, the project team sought to understand the challenges, needs, and preferences related to parking in downtown Fall River.

Stakeholder Interviews

Figure 16 Third Street Parking Garage

The project team spoke with several community stakeholders to better understand the existing parking challenges and needs in the study area. The stakeholder interviews revealed several concerns regarding the state of parking in the City, particularly around the management and maintenance of parking garages. Many stakeholders highlighted the aging infrastructure of the garages, which were originally donated to the City and have since faced deteriorating conditions. Issues such as poor signage, malfunctioning kiosks, and inconsistent enforcement of parking regulations have contributed to a frustrating experience for residents, employees and visitors. Additionally, safety concerns, particularly related to unhoused community members in the garages, have further impacted the perception and usability of these facilities.

Financial management of parking revenues was another key issue discussed during the interviews. While parking fees are collected, the funds currently go into the general fund rather than being reinvested specifically into the maintenance and improvement of the parking infrastructure and parking programs. Stakeholders expressed the need for a more dedicated approach, suggesting that parking revenues should be used to upgrade lighting, security measures, and overall maintenance. Moreover, there is a call to reexamine parking fees and potentially introduce a residential permit program to better manage parking in dense residential areas.

Looking forward, stakeholders emphasized the importance of comprehensive planning to address parking challenges, especially as the City anticipates growth and the arrival of commuter rail services. There was a consensus that if the current parking garages were to close or continue to deteriorate, the city's parking situation would worsen. To prevent this, stakeholders recommended exploring options such as privatization of the garages, developing shared parking agreements with businesses, and fostering better communication between City departments to create a more coordinated and effective parking strategy.

Community Pop-up Events

The project team conducted three in-person pop-up events over two days on Wednesday, July 31st, and Thursday, August 1st. These events took place at the HealthFirst Farmers Market, the Fall River Public Library (selected as a last-minute alternative due to rain; originally planned for the Summer Evening in the Park at Griffin Park), and in the lobby of City Hall. Participants were encouraged to provide feedback on the interactive boards, allowing attendees to mark areas of concern on a study area map or share open-ended feedback, and provide additional feedback via the online survey.

Figure 17 Community Pop-up Event at HealthFirst Farmer's Market

Community feedback highlighted a need for improved safety, better utilization of space, and more equitable parking solutions in Fall River. Concerns primarily focused on challenges with the existing parking structures and a general perceived lack of parking throughout the study area. There's also a call for more and continued accessible parking options, particularly for veterans, and elderly and disabled residents. Public transit, while seen as a potential solution, is often considered too costly and inconvenient.

Key Takeaways:

- Community feedback included tearing down old garages, building new ones, and/or addressing safety concerns within existing structures.
- Improved lighting and safety in parking areas are top priorities.
- Suggestions included converting existing curb uses on streets to increase parking and using vacant lots for public parking.
- More ADA spaces and free parking areas are needed.

- Better enforcement and planning are required for snow removal.
- Improved and more affordable transit could help alleviate parking challenges.

Survey

An online survey aimed at Fall River residents, employees, business owners, and visitors was distributed to the public from 7/23 to 1/30 and collected a total of 397 responses. The survey goals were to:

- Collect information on travel and parking behavior in the study area
- Provide insight into public perception of parking in Fall River
- Understand the tradeoffs between parking access, availability, price, and location for parking in the study area
- Identify potential improvements to Fall River's transportation network

The survey was distributed to the public via social media posts and distribution by city staff. Many survey respondents accessed the survey through Fall River's Facebook page and subsequent sharing of the original post.

ENGAGEMENT: KEY FINDINGS

The following is a summary of the most prominent issues and opportunities described by stakeholders and community members from the various public engagement efforts conducted as part of the project's process of informing developing parking strategies.

Parking Garages

Across stakeholder interviews, pop-up events, and the online survey, Fall River's parking garages were a focal point in the community's concern on parking issues. The current condition of the city's two parking garages and the limited supply of parking as the garages await repairs has prompted community members to call for action on these facilities. Throughout the public engagement process, feedback on the parking garages have included both expediting repairs or expanding the construction of more garages and the demolition of the garages to make way for more productive uses.

Enforcement

Parking enforcement is another prominent concern amongst the Fall River community as community members reported enforcement often does not align with current parking regulations. Feedback across engagement efforts include enforcement activities ending early and not addressing improperly parked vehicles in certain parts of the day. Other feedback

includes the inconsistency of enforcement, as community members have reported that enforcement is both too harsh when issuing tickets and too lax by letting vehicles in violation of parking regulations go.

Safety

Community members call for increased safety measures around Fall River and at parking facilities in order to feel more comfortable when visiting downtown and finding parking. At least 60% of survey respondents reported they avoid parking in certain places and avoid walking to their destinations due to safety concerns. Proposed solutions include improved lighting, open lots, and increased security presence. Other proposals include reducing parking and making the city more walkable to protect pedestrians from cars.

Accessibility and Mobility Barriers

Accessibility is a nuanced but important issue in Fall River as various community needs highlight issues with the city's parking supply. Several respondents have described great difficulty in finding accessible parking around town and at key destinations. This issue is compounded by various mobility barriers pedestrians face where sidewalk and road conditions discourage walking to and between destinations, increasing the need for parking on-site at certain destinations. Community members have also noted that vehicles with handicap placards disproportionately occupy metered spaces that are available to all vehicles. Vehicles with these placards do not have to pay at the meters and often stay parked in these spaces for long periods of time,

User Experience

Several aspects of the parking experience were highlighted by community members during the public engagement process. Signage and parking information are particularly an issue, as community members have reported that signage detailing parking regulations is often confusing or hard to understand while parking information in general is difficult to access. Additionally, metered parking and its pricing and payment is another component of the parking experience many community members take issue with. Feedback includes both making all parking free as well as limiting free parking in order to clear out supply more regularly. Parking meters were also reported to be outdated or not operational and some community members have proposed moving parking payment to a digital platform.

INITIAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Proactive Facility Maintenance

A parking facility that is perceived as clean, safe, and inviting is an asset for any parking system in maintaining a high level of user satisfaction as well as providing a consistent parking supply. Since the City's receipt of the Third Street Parking Garage and Pearl Street Parking Garage, there has been a gradual decline in the facilities infrastructure and the need to close the top levels of the garages. With this loss of supply the public parking system will struggle to function cohesively and spread demand to meet availability.

Due to the continued closure of the upper levels of the garages, incorporating 287 spaces, an immediate recommendation would be to undertake a comprehensive structure assessment to fully ascertain the existing condition of the facilities to inform a short- and long-term maintenance plan.

Outside of the structural assessment, solutions include cosmetic repairs within facilities as well as on-facility signage that is highly recognizable as part of a system that is committed to the customer experience. Signage in general plays a critical role in the perception of system quality as will be described in the following section. All lighting and structural elements should be in a state of good repair. Elevators, if applicable, should be clean and modernized. Striping and pavement quality should be revisited at regular intervals.

Figure 18 Temporary Structural Support in the Pearl Street Garage

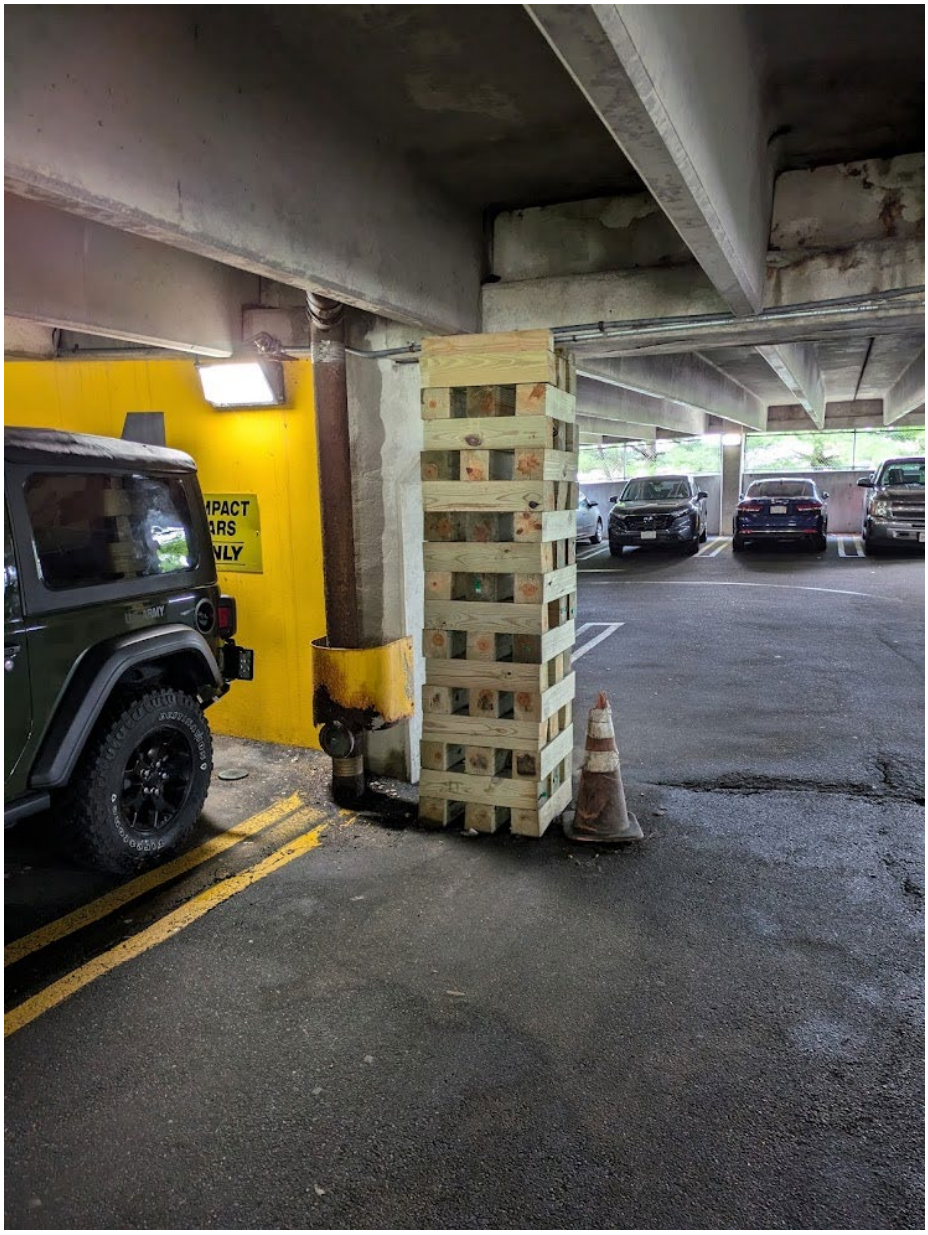


Figure 19 Level Closure at Third Street Parking Garage

The level of maintenance resources allocated should be reflective of a system that is perceived as well-managed, dependable, and customer oriented. Additionally, parking facilities, including payment kiosks and meters, represent a significant investment. Protecting this investment through a proactive maintenance program and ensuring ongoing smooth operation is a better path toward recouping that investment than requiring a greater secondary investment due to larger facility state of repair issues.

Effective Information

Signage is an important element of parking management. Providing clear identification of parking facilities, both on- and off-street, aids in understanding where it is acceptable to park and where it isn't. Having clear guidance for visiting patrons, who may be wary of parking in facilities that they are not accustomed to, is a crucial component of their experience.

Existing signage is difficult to understand, both on public and private property. Figure 20 below shows existing parking signage that is either inconsistent, confusing, or both.

Figure 20 Garage Signage

Figure 21 Parking Kiosk Signage

Figure 22 Lack of On-Street Signage

Figure 23 Parking Meter Information Removed

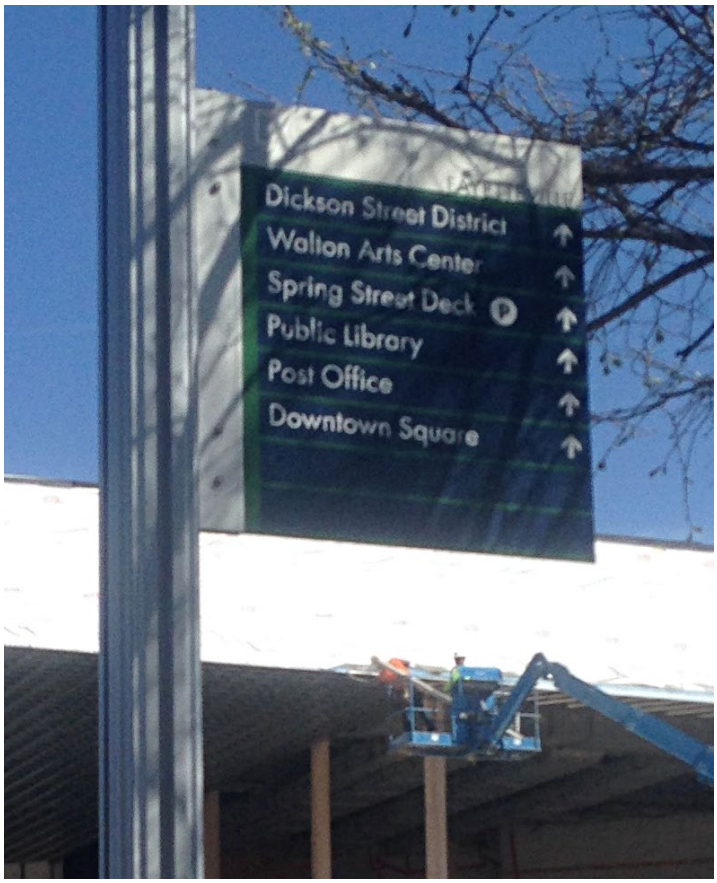
Signage should clearly convey parking rates, regulations, and restrictions, while also directing drivers' attention to less obvious parking options. Wayfinding, signage, and information should be designed and deployed to address three, distinct opportunities to inform drivers of their options.

Before Arrival: Making parking information available for visitors and customers before arriving will allow parkers to plan their trips ahead of time and find parking with ease. Having a single, simple map posted on the city's website, merchants' websites, and posted at other activity centers, will provide a consistent informational guide. Off-street parking lots should be consistently branded on the website as well as on site.

Upon Arrival: Signage should be clearly visible, designed consistently, placed in strategic locations, and should provide clear guidance to and from parking locations. Off-street lots should have easy-to-read identification entrance signs and exit signs, including information on regulations.

Post Arrival: Providing clear pedestrian signage helps to create and promote a "park once" district, allows customers to feel comfortable walking to multiple locations on foot. Signage also allows parkers to easily find their destination and parked vehicle at either end of their trip.

Figure 24 Pedestrian Level Wayfinding – Fayetteville, AR



Nationally, many towns have adopted the traditional "blue P" signage. This is easy for first-time visitors to understand and use. Rather than signage that tells parkers where they can't go, this signage is welcoming and helps parkers figure out where parking is available to them.

Performance-Based Pricing

Parking policies should be dynamic to respond to changes in parking supply and demand. Fall River should consider formally defining *Availability* as the primary performance measure for parking management rather than emphasizing revenue generation. Availability is defined as the number of empty parking spaces available along individual block faces and within individual off-street parking facilities. Availability targets should draw from the definition of optimal occupancy defined in the chapter on utilization. Too much available parking would indicate either a local or system wide oversupply.

The effectiveness of a performance-based pricing strategy depends upon regular performance measurement–utilization and availability during peak-demand times–that informs rate-adjustment options. Fall River may also consider a tiered rate system that responds to performance monitoring. Coordination between public and private parking operators is also necessary to align pricing strategies and spread demand efficiently across the available parking supply.

Fall River should consider easing time limits as pricing creates more consistent availability. Time limits do not enhance customer experience but instead limit visitors, shoppers, and diners to shorter periods of stay. Survey data and stakeholder input both reflect that downtown workers, a major parking user group, wish to stay longer than many regulations allow. Many employees experience meter violations or are forced to engage in a purpose-defeating 'shuffle' at arbitrary intervals. Instead of using short time limits to encourage turnover, price should be used to manage parking availability.

Progressive rates that increase over time incentivize efficient turnover of spaces by making longer stays particularly expensive, while shielding short-term parkers from some of the cost of performance-based rates. This can be particularly effective in discouraging use of on-street parking by local employees or business owners, as incremental costs add up for frequent parkers. Employees would be guided to longer-term off-street facilities due to a lower hourly rate and perhaps a daily maximum rate.

"Grace periods" for paid parking can avoid customer frustration with paid parking systems and payment media. New and infrequent visitors, in particular, face challenges in anticipating and complying with payment requirements. Very short grace periods of 15 minutes or less can make Fall River more visitor friendly, without undermining the effectiveness of performance-based parking rates.

Revised Permit Program

The City may wish to consider introducing more flexibility into both the user experience and the parking management process by allowing monthly permit holders to park in any or

multiple public facilities. Currently, the City of Fall River sells parking permits to residents, students, and downtown employees in all of its public lots except the Third Street Parking Garage and Third Street surface lot. At the time a permit is purchased, the recipient must specify the designated facility in which they plan on parking for the length of the permit. The permit holder is allowed to park in that assigned facility, but none of the other lots operated by the City that allow permit parking.

In lots close to City and county office buildings where demand is high, parkers can face limited space availability on especially busy days due the Third Street Parking Garage and surface lot being for permit holders only (including leased spaces for service vehicles of the United States Postal Service). On a daily basis not all permit holders are utilizing their assigned spaces, especially on weekends and evenings. By changing the rules to allow all permit holders to park in any publicly owned garage or lot, more spaces for transient daily or hourly become available.

Shared Parking Agreements

Shared parking is the co-location of off-street parking in a single location that serves the parking demand for multiple land uses in a mixed-use context. Shared parking is particularly valuable in walkable, mixed-use centers, like Downtown Fall River, in which private lots tend to have demand when their associated land uses are busy, and significantly under-utilized much of the rest of the time. Fortunately, such districts also present two distinct, cross-supportive shared-parking opportunities that can reduce parking supply needs while providing more destinations with "overflow" parking resources.

Shared parking agreements with adjacent or nearby property owners with under-utilized parking or different peak demands would enable current and new land-uses with demand for more parking spaces to develop without having the cost-burden or land requirement for new parking. Two types of shared parking arrangements could work in Fall River: business-to-business shared parking agreements and public-private shared parking agreements.

NEXT STEPS

Strategic Plan for Operations and Development

Operational Procedures/Management Policies

The team will attempt to identify the best parking management solutions for fall River Revised policies may include a range of employee and residential parking programs, specific regulations for commuter parking, and a variety of pricing strategies for on and off-street public parking spaces. These strategies or suites of strategies will consider the following elements:

- Advanced parking payment technologies (pay-by-phone, meter types)
- Optimization of information systems (signage, wayfinding, real-time availability)
- Pricing strategies geared toward target occupancy rates
- Parking regulation and zoning changes (including shared parking partnerships)
- Operational and structural changes (including administration, and personnel)
- Non-motorized strategies (including bicycle and pedestrian facilities/amenities)
- Funding Resources (including In-Lieu fees, business improvement districts, tax increment financing)

Focus on the User Experience

Advanced technologies and information systems aid not only in improving system performance, but also in facilitating the user experience, which can in turn result in further satisfaction with and use of the parking system. The team will focus on technologies themselves to illustrate relative strengths and weaknesses for particular applications.

In addition, strategies that are not directly related to parking facilities can create a more welcoming and comfortable experience for visitors. This can include lighting improvements, safety call-buttons, downtown ambassadors, and/or a system to evaluate the quality of the pedestrian environment in various locations such as the Pedestrian Environmental Quality Index.[1]

Legislative Strategies

The team will analyze Fall River's existing zoning regulations and how development controls, such as minimum parking requirements, can be updated to ensure adequate off-site parking is provided for new development while also encouraging economic development and

[1] Center for Occupational and Environmental Health. http://www.peqiwalkability.appspot.com/

investment in the downtown. These strategies may include exceptions for properties within a certain radius of public off-street facilities in order to maximize their use before building new parking. Likewise, credits toward parking provision can be offered to property owners who enter agreements to use other private facilities.

Analysis of Future Demand

The study team will take into account the potential parking demand impacts from new developments expected in downtown Fall River. Existing land use and projections will be based on information provided from the City and other stakeholders in the study area, plus potential development scenarios based on vacant sites, sites identified for redevelopment, and development permitted through existing zoning. The team will utilize a parking model that is very effective in integrating existing conditions with future demand in complex, mixed-use, downtown environments.

The team will then proceed to identify and evaluate potential locations for conversion and consolidation of existing publicly managed facilities as well as identify prime privately owned facilities for potential integration into the public system.

Final Parking Plan

The team will compile material from this report as well as the Strategic Operational and Development memo into a final Fall River Downtown Parking Plan.

The final plan will include:

- Study process and background
- Study findings
- Specific implementation recommendations and new policy strategies
- An implementation plan for immediate, short- and long-term actions
- Financial impacts of recommended strategies