

Winchester Town Center Parking Management Plan

PLAN

Town Center Parking

Winchester has a compact and successful town center. However, the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board have been told repeatedly that the lack of readily accessible parking is hurting retail and restaurant sales and making it harder for clients to reach professional offices and services in the town center.

The key complaints are: not enough parking spaces; complex and confusing parking signs and regulations; oversubscribed commuter lots; commuters and employees using the close-in spaces needed to support retail and restaurant customer sales; broken sidewalks; dirty underpasses; limited enforcement; and a lack of parking garages.

The Boards are concerned that these problems—whether actual or perceived—could result in lost sales and revenue for businesses and contribute over time to a decline in the town center's economic viability that might lead to lower property values and less commercial property tax revenue to support town services. A market study of the town center estimated that Winchester residents spend an estimated \$370 million per year on retail and restaurant services, but of that total, approximately \$265 million per year is spent outside the town.¹ Recapturing even a small portion of the \$265 million could increase revenues for town center businesses and the Town.

Town Center Parking Study

To address these concerns, the Town commissioned a town center parking study to develop information on parking supply and demand in the town center and recommend a parking management plan. As part of the study:

- All parking spaces—public and private, on-street and off-street—in the town center and at Wedgemere Station were inventoried.
- The parking spaces were surveyed on a Thursday and Saturday in November 2009 and again on a Thursday in June 2010 to determine utilization by time of day (e.g., the number of spaces occupied or empty by hour).
- Property owners, merchants, business managers, town officials, school administrators, police officers, parking enforcement staff, residents, and other interested groups were interviewed to identify parking problems and solutions.
- A web-survey asking about parking conditions in the town center was posted on the town web site. Over 300 responses were received, and
- Prior Winchester parking studies and parking management programs implemented in towns similar to Winchester (locally and nationally) were reviewed for lessons learned.

¹ "Downtown Winchester Market and Opportunity Assessment," FinePoint Associates, 2009

Key Parking Study Findings

The consultant concluded that the town center has an adequate supply of public and private parking spaces, but that parking demand is not effectively allocated and managed by the current system of time-delimited parking signs (e.g., 1-hour, 2-hour, and 3-hour parking signs).²

- The town center area has about 3,400 parking spaces. Of this total, 2,100 are public parking spaces and 1,300 are privately controlled; 1,500 are on-street spaces and 1,900 are parking lot spaces.
- The on-street parking spaces along the core commercial blocks of Main Street, Thompson Street, Church Street, Mt. Vernon Street, Converse Place, and Shore Road are full during the noon hours; but overall, only 70 percent of all on-street and lot spaces in the town center area are occupied during the typical weekday. On a Saturday morning, the peak weekend shopping day, only 40 percent of all public spaces were utilized.
- However, the lack of available “front-door spaces” along the core commercial blocks is hurting Winchester’s businesses. When asked “Have you ever failed to find parking and just left?”, 60 percent of survey respondents replied “Yes.”
- On-street interviews, observations, and survey returns suggest that the longer-term parking spaces near the town center are being taken up by early-arriving commuters and many of the short-term parking spaces are being taken up by employees who “space hop” every two hours to avoid a parking ticket and the cost of permit in public lots. High-turnover, high-value, “front-door” parking spaces for shoppers and office clients are not readily available.
- More enforcement will not significantly improve the availability of the convenient front-door spaces without penalizing retail, restaurant, and business customers. Winchester is approaching “regulatory saturation.” Years of ad hoc and reactive rulemaking have resulted in 22 different on-street regulations and 30+ off-street lot regulations—with regulatory signs differing in size, design, wording, allowed parking duration, daytime restrictions, overnight restrictions, permit restrictions, handicapped restrictions, etc. The existing regulations are very difficult to enforce equitably and cost-effectively, and finally
- The Wedgemere commuter rail station lot, a large portion of which is owned by the Department of Conservation and Recreation, is not priced and is overflowing. A license plate survey found that about half the parked cars are registered outside Winchester. Conversely, the Aberjona lot near the Center commuter rail station lot, which is priced, is often underutilized.

² “Winchester Town Center Parking Study (Draft Final Report),” Nelson | Nygaard Consulting Associates, Inc., November 2010.

Parking Management Plan Objective and Guiding Principles

Based on the study findings, the parking study steering committee established a primary objective—to **improve the economic well-being of the town center**—and four guiding principles for development of the town center parking management plan:

- Provide convenient parking for customers, clients and visitors.
- Establish clear Town- and private-employee parking areas.
- Accommodate and price commuter parking areas appropriately, and
- Protect residential neighborhoods from spillover parking.

Recommendations

Consistent with the guiding principles, the following strategies are recommended to improve parking management in the town center:

Provide convenient parking for customers, clients, and visitors

- Provide free one-hour parking in the commercial center (around Main Street, the Rotary, and the Common) to serve customers and clients running short errands.
- Provide free 90-minute parking in the municipal center (around Town Hall) to serve residents and visitors with business in Town Hall, patrons of the Library, and seniors attending functions at the Jenks Center, and
- Provide pay-parking areas for those who want to park for longer periods of time.

Establish town-center employee parking areas

- Sell all-day parking permits to town-center employees who are willing to pay for parking that is close to the center (in the Cullen and Waterfield lots).
- Provide free, all-day parking permits to town-center employees who are willing to park a few blocks from the center (in the Shore Road, Mt. Vernon, and Aberjona lots).
- Designate staff parking areas near the Town Hall, Library, and Public Safety Building for municipal employees whose jobs require frequent day-time travel, and
- Designate school parking areas around the Lincoln and McCall schools to provide staff parking and create safer student drop-off and pick-up areas.

Accommodate commuter parking by selling permits

- Sell all-day parking permits to Winchester-resident commuters who are willing to pay for parking that is close to the commuter rail stations
 - In the Waterfield and Aberjona South lots for the Winchester Center station, and
 - Along Bacon Street for the Wedgemere station.
 - (DCR owns the Wedgemere station lot; the Town cannot sell permits for the lot.)

Protect residential neighborhoods

- Provide free all-day-parking permits to town-center residents living on streets within restricted parking zones.
- Provide free overnight-parking permits to town-center residents for town lots.
- Promote shared-parking agreements allowing town-center residents to park overnight in privately controlled lots, and
- Designate resident-only parking areas as needed to minimize all-day employee, commuter, or student parking from spilling over into residential neighborhoods around the town center.

Re-signing and re-stripe the town center parking areas to create additional parking spaces

- Develop design guidelines and standards for all parking signs, parking pay-stations, and parking way-finding signs.
- Re-sign public on-street and Town-lot parking areas so that they can be located, accessed, and used safely and efficiently.
- Re-stripe public on-street and Town-lot parking areas to create additional parking spaces where possible.
- Add/relocate handicap accessible parking spaces close to the accessible building entrances and on accessible routes to buildings.
- Re-pave and re-light the Waterfield and Aberjona South lots after completion of the station reconstruction and river-widening projects.

Implement a public information and outreach program

- Develop and implement a public information and outreach program to inform residents, customers, employees, and visitors about the location, pricing, and regulation of parking in the town center; provide specific instructions and demonstrations on how to apply for permits, use pay stations, and comply with or appeal enforcement actions.

Parking Zones

The proposed parking zones, which are mapped in Figures 1 and 2 and listed in Table 1, are as follow:

- **Red Zone**
 - Includes core commercial-area streets in the town center.
 - Allows one-hour free parking:³
 - Enforced 800AM to 600PM Monday to Friday.
 - Enforced 900AM to 200PM on Saturdays.
 - Free parking/no enforcement on Sundays and holidays.
 - Available to all customers, clients, visitors, employees, and residents.
- **Pay-Parking Zone**
 - In the commercial center, includes the Shore Road lot, Laraway Road lot, Waterfield lot, the Aberjona North lot, and the Aberjona South lot.
 - Allows pay-parking at \$0.00 for the first hour, \$0.50 for the next hour, and at escalating hourly rates for longer periods:
 - Enforced 800AM to 600PM Monday to Friday.
 - Enforced 900AM to 200PM on Saturdays.
 - Free parking/no enforcement on Sundays and holidays.
 - Available to all customers, clients, and visitors who want unrestricted parking for more than one hour.
 - In the municipal center, includes the Mt. Vernon Street lot (except the spaces adjacent to the Jenks Center that are under the control of the Jenks Center administrator), and the Town Hall/Library lot (except the spaces in the lower lot that are under the control of the Town Manager);
 - Allows pay-parking at \$0.00 for the first 90 minutes, \$0.50 for the next hour, and at escalating hourly rates for longer periods:
 - Enforced 800AM to 600PM Monday to Friday.
 - Enforced 900AM to 200PM on Saturdays.
 - Free parking/no enforcement on Sundays and holidays.
 - Available to all customers, clients, and visitors who want unrestricted parking for more than 90 minutes.
 - At the Wedgemere commuter rail station, includes the Wedgemere DCR/Town lot.
 - Allows pay-parking at a flat rate of \$4.00 per day:⁴

³ May include short-term parking (e.g., 15 minutes) in a few, very high turn-over locations.

- Enforced 800AM to 600PM Monday to Friday.
- Free parking/ no enforcement on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays.
- As required by state and DCR policy, available to all Winchester and non-Winchester commuters on a first-come, first-served basis.
- **Orange Zone**
 - Includes the Cullen, Waterfield, and Aberjona South lots.
 - Allows orange-permit parking:
 - Enforced from 800AM to 600PM Monday to Friday.
 - Enforced 900AM to 200PM on Saturdays.
 - Free parking/ no enforcement on Sundays and holidays.
 - Available to all Winchester residents with preference given to town-center employees and Winchester-resident commuters.
- **Yellow Zone**
 - Includes the Shore Road, Mt. Vernon, and Aberjona South lots, and on-street parking spaces along designated portions of Vine, Elmwood, and Park Streets and Dix and School Streets.
 - Allows yellow-permit parking:
 - Enforced from 800AM to 600PM Monday to Friday.
 - Enforced 900AM to 200PM on Saturdays in designated areas.
 - Free parking/ no enforcement on Sundays and holidays.
 - Available at no cost to current employees of Winchester town-center businesses and Jenks Center volunteers (*12 permits to be managed by Jenks administrator*).
 - Available at no cost to residents living on Yellow Zone streets (*one permit per registered vehicle*).
- **Green Zone**
 - Includes the Winchester High School lots, the Ciacia Field lot, the on-street spaces along Skillings Road west of the WHS driveway/Shore Road, and the McCall Middle School lots.
 - Allows permit-only parking:
 - Enforced from 800AM to 200PM Monday to Friday.
 - Free parking/ no enforcement on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays.
 - Available at no cost to faculty and staff. Permits to be allocated according to policies established by the School Committee and respective school principals.

⁴ Pending discussions with DCR. The minimum rate for MBTA lots along the Lowell Line is \$4 per day.

- Available for a fee to students. Permits to be priced and allocated according to policies established by the School Committee and the WHS principal.
- Includes the designated portions of Mystic Valley Parkway and Main Street adjacent to the Lincoln and McCall Schools.
 - Allows permit-only parking before 900AM and general parking after 900AM with the following special restriction: passenger loading/unloading only between 800AM and 900AM and between 200PM and 300PM in the designated school bus loading zones and pick-up and drop-off areas:
 - Enforced Monday to Friday during the school year;
 - Free parking/no enforcement on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays.
 - Available at no cost to faculty and staff. Permits to be allocated according to policies established by the School Committee and respective school principals.
- **Purple Zone**
 - Includes the on-street parking spaces along the south side of Bacon Street adjacent to the Wedgemere commuter rail station.
 - Allows permit-only parking:
 - Enforced from 800AM to 400PM Monday to Friday.
 - Free parking/no enforcement on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays.
 - Available to Winchester-resident commuters only.
- **Unzoned Areas/Other Regulations**
 - Skillings Road (excepting Green Zone) – no parking before 900AM.
 - Mystic Valley Parkway between Waterfield Road and Manchester Road – no parking before 900AM.
 - Snow emergency routes enforced as posted.
 - No parking, handicapped parking, temporary closure, and construction zones enforced as signed.

Figure 1. Map of Town Center Parking Zones

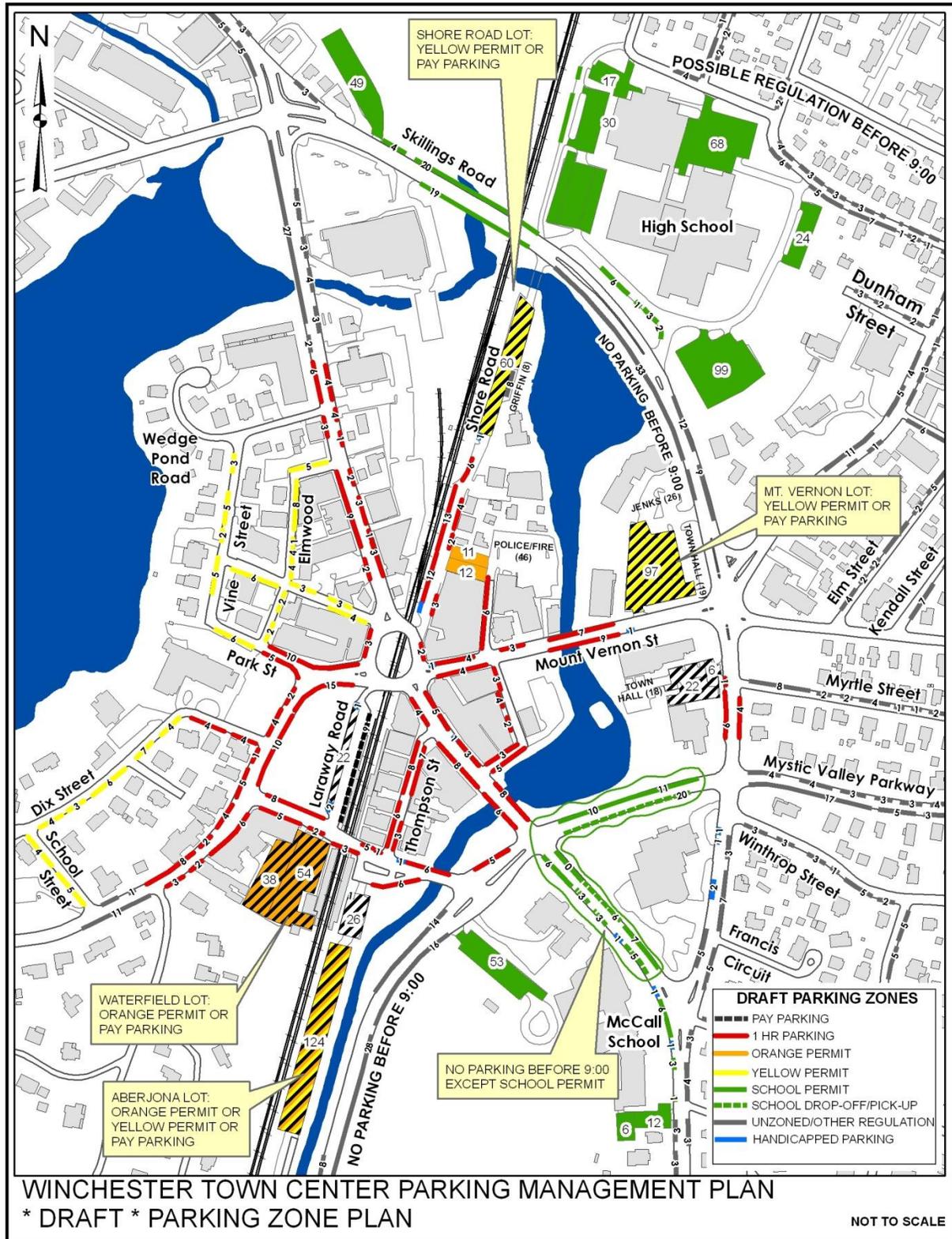


Figure 2. Map of Wedgemere Station Parking Zones

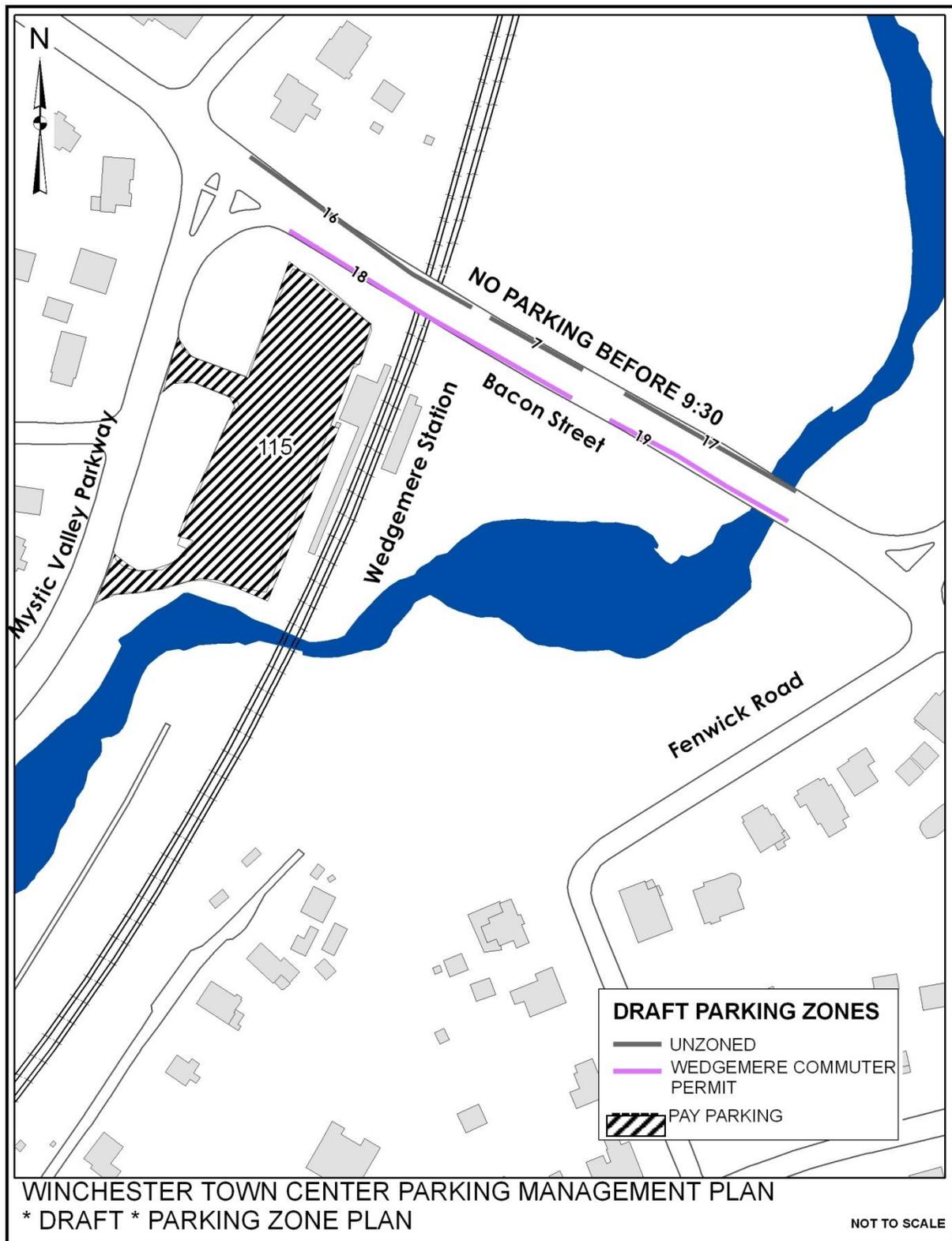


Table 1. Parking Zones

Location	Free	Permit	Pay-Parking
Town Center	Red Zone¹ <i>All parkers</i>	–	–
Cullen Lot	–	Orange Permit² <i>Town center employees</i>	–
Waterfield Lot	–	Orange Permit² <i>Town center employees & Winchester-resident commuters</i>	Pay-Parking <i>All parkers</i>
Aberjona South Lot	–	Orange Permit² <i>Town center employees & Winchester-resident commuters</i>	Pay-Parking <i>All parkers</i>
		Yellow Permit³ <i>Town center employees</i>	
Shore Road Lot	–	Yellow Permit³ <i>Town center employees</i>	Pay-Parking <i>All parkers</i>
Mt. Vernon Lot	–	Yellow Permit³ <i>Town center employees; Jenks Center volunteers⁴</i>	Pay-Parking <i>All parkers</i>
Laraway Lot	–	–	Pay-Parking <i>All parkers</i>
Aberjona North Lot <i>(opposite Post Office)</i>	–	–	Pay-Parking <i>All parkers</i>
Library Lot <i>(upper lot between Town Hall and Library)</i>	–	–	Pay-Parking <i>All parkers</i>
Wedgemere DCR/Town Lot	–	–	Pay-Parking <i>All parkers/commuters</i>
Wedgemere/Bacon Street <i>(on-street spaces, south side only)</i>	–	Purple Permit⁵ <i>Winchester-resident commuters</i>	
School Lots <i>(and designated on-street spaces)</i>	–	Green Permit⁴ <i>Faculty and staff, students</i>	–
Jenks Lot <i>(dedicated spaces next to Center)</i>	Reserved⁶ <i>Staff and visitors: 26 spaces</i>	–	–
Griffin Museum <i>(dedicated spaces in front)</i>	Reserved⁷ <i>Staff and visitors: 8 spaces</i>	–	–
Town Hall Front Lot <i>(section of the Mt. Vernon lot facing Skillings Road)</i>	–	Town Permit⁸ <i>Municipal employees: 19 spaces</i>	–
Town Hall Rear Lot <i>(lower lot between Town Hall and Library)</i>	–	Town Permit⁸ <i>Municipal employees: 18 spaces</i>	–
Police/Fire Lot	–	Town Permit⁹ <i>Municipal employees: 63 spaces</i>	–

Notes: ¹One hour free parking. ²Orange permit rate to be set by BOS. ³Yellow permits free (or at nominal cost) to current town-center employees. ⁴Up to 12 free Yellow permits available to Jenks Center volunteers through Jenks administrator. ⁴School Committee and school administrators responsible for allocating spaces and setting fees. ⁵ Purple permit rates to the set by BOS. ⁶Jenks Center administrator responsible for allocating spaces. ⁷Griffin Museum administrator responsible for allocating spaces. ⁸Town manager responsible for allocating spaces. ⁹Police and fire chiefs responsible for allocating spaces.

How Would It Work ...

If you are...	and you want to...	Then you would park in...	and pay...
Business owner or employee working the town center	Go to work	Employer's private lot	Rate set by employer
		Orange Zone lot	Orange Zone rate
		Yellow Zone lot	Free with valid permit
Retail customer	Shop	Red Zone for errands under one hour or Any pay-parking area for as much time as you choose to buy	1 hour free
Restaurant customer	Dine		\$0.00 for first hour, \$0.50 for next hour with escalating rates for longer periods
Bank customer	Make a transaction		
Medical patient	Visit doctor or dentist		
Sales/service person	Meet with client		
Tourist	Tour town center	Griffin lot (8 spaces)	Free
Griffin Center visitor	Tour museum	Red Zone	1 hour free
		Any pay-parking area for as much time as you choose to buy	\$0.00 for first hour, \$0.50 for next hour...
Town employee	Go to work	Town Hall Front lot (section of the Mt. Vernon lot facing Skillings Road)	Free with valid staff permit
		Town Hall Back lot (lower lot between Town Hall and Library)	
		Public Safety lot (police/fire only)	
School Department employee	Go to work	Green Zone faculty lots and designated on-street spaces	Free with valid staff permit
Student	Go to school	Green Zone student lots/ on-street spaces (WHS area only)	Rate set by School Committee

continued ...

How Would It Work ... (continued)

If you are...	and you want to...	Then you would park in...	and pay...
Winchester-resident commuter using Winchester Center Station	Travel to Boston or Lowell	Waterfield or Aberjona South lots	Orange Zone rate
		Unrestricted spaces within walking distance	Free
Winchester-resident commuter using Wedgemere Station	Travel to Boston or Lowell	Wedgemere DCR/town lot	Wedgemere pay-parking rate
		Wedgemere Bacon Street spaces	Purple Zone rate
Jenks Center visitor	Attend function	Jenks lot (26 spaces)	Free
		Skillings Road	Free after 900AM
		Mt. Vernon lot pay-parking area	\$0.00 for 90 mins, \$0.50 for next hour...
		Red Zone	1 hour free
Library visitor or volunteer	Visit library	Red Zone (in front of Library)	1 hour free
		Town Hall/Library lot	\$0.00 for 90 mins, \$0.50 for next hour...
		Mt. Vernon lot	
		Unrestricted spaces within walking distance	Free
Town-center Resident	Park near residence during daytime	Yellow Zone	Free with valid permit
	Park overnight	Designated Town lots	

Parking Systems

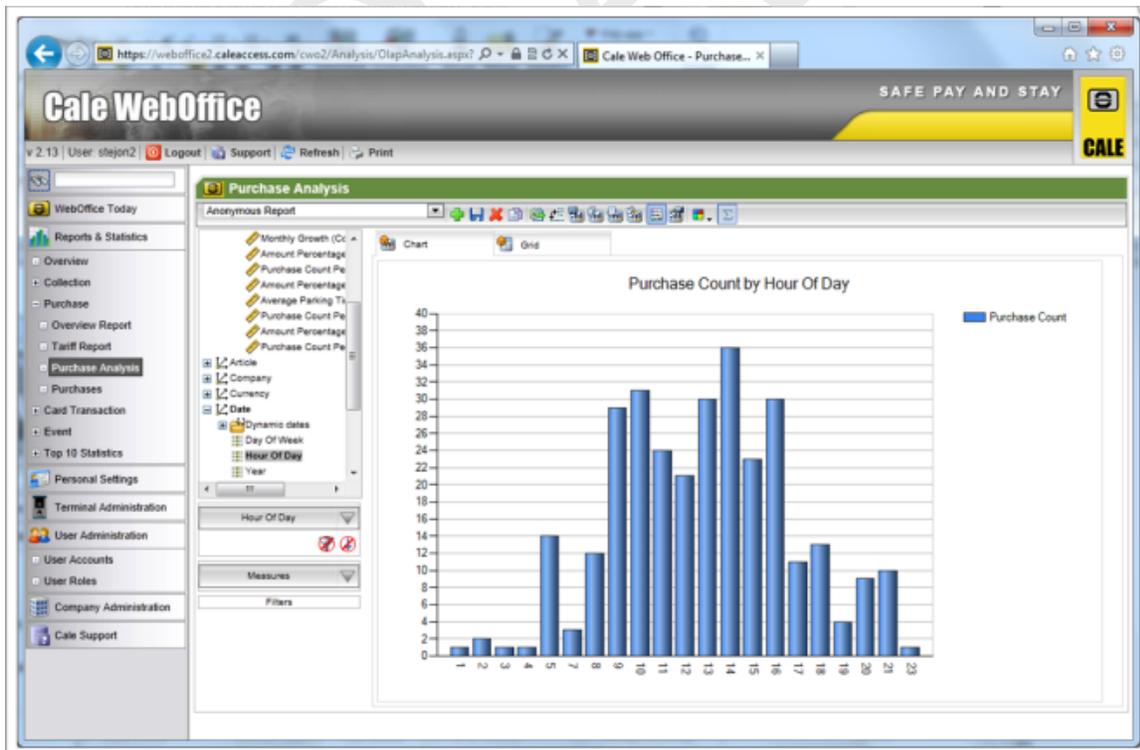
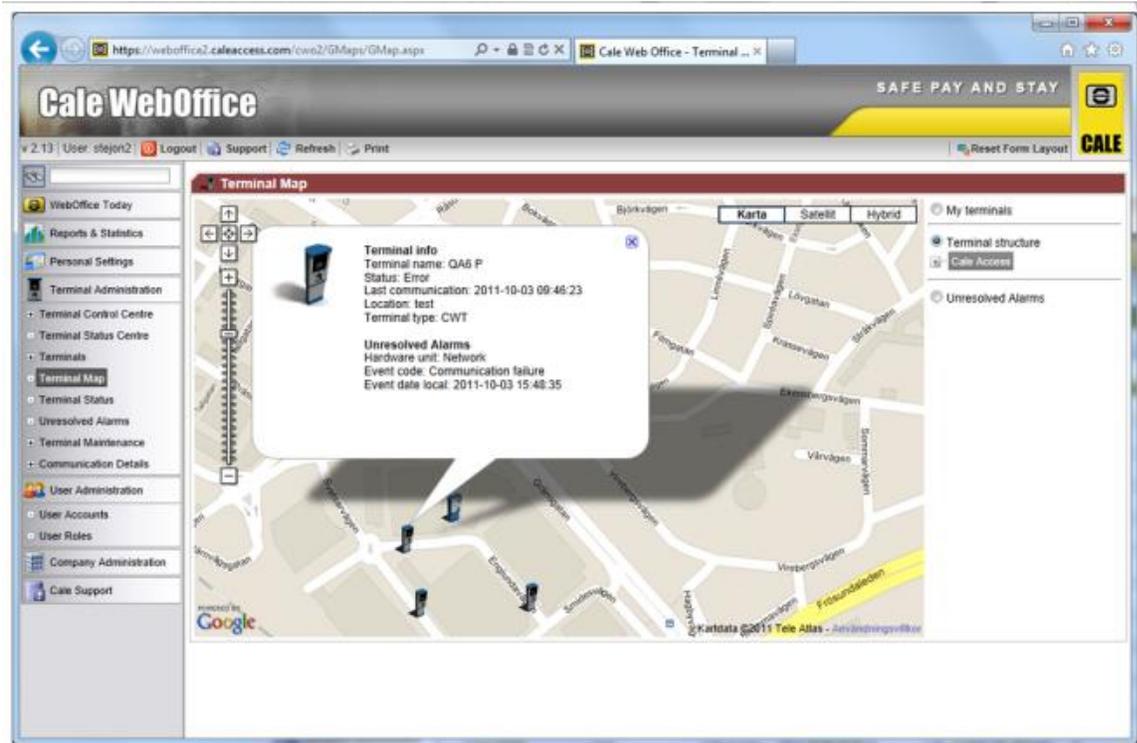
Contingent upon compliance with the Town’s purchasing regulations and determination of “best buy” options, the parking study steering committee recommends the following types of systems:

Pay-Parking Stations

- Standalone, solar-powered, small footprint, ADA-compliant, black or dark green box.
- Lighted panel, display screen.
- Pay-and-display
 - Pay using credit card/smart card reader or coin acceptor (no bills, no change).
 - Display dated and time-stamped receipt on inside of driver’s door window.
- Pay-by-space
 - Pay using credit card/smart card reader or coin acceptor (no bills, no change).
 - Dated and time-stamped receipt optional.
- Wireless communications; security alarms; programmable.
- Modular, plug-and-play unit maintenance.
- *Examples below for illustration only....*



- Software for monitoring, managing, and diagnosing the operation of pay-parking stations.
- Examples below for illustration only....



Permits

- Preprinted and numbered windshield sticker; sticker placed on the inside of the windshield above the MA inspection sticker.
- Apply on-line or at town office for permit.
- Nominal application fee to cover cost of sticker, verification of residence or employment in Winchester, processing, and mailing of sticker and receipt.
- Pay by cash, credit card, or electronic funds transfer through Town’s “online service.”
- Option for automatic quarterly renewal with approved credit card.
- Permit serial number blacklisted if permit is not renewed, fee is not paid, or if permit is reported lost or stolen, etc.
- *Examples below for illustration only*



Enforcement Equipment

- Handheld barcode reader (options for wireless, GPS, camera...).
- Handheld ticket printer (can be integrated with barcode reader).
- Red Zone enforcement –
 - On first pass, scan the barcoded ID on the MA inspection sticker, timestamp and store data.
 - On second pass, re-scan the barcoded ID, timestamp, match on ID, and calculate “under time limit/over time limit...”
- Permit enforcement –
 - Scan barcoded permit ID or barcoded ID on the MA inspection sticker, match to current permits list (“permit is good/not good”).
- *Examples below for illustration only*



Parking Administration⁵

Option A – Less Centralized Administration

- Town Manager and Board of Selectmen
 - Provide oversight, review and approval of the parking management program, rates, etc., and
 - Designate town official responsible for parking program.
- Town Clerk's Office
 - Provides online and walk-in permit application service ("one-stop shopping window"),
 - Verifies residence and/or employment in Winchester, and
 - Provides parking program information to the public.
- Treasurer's Office
 - Processes permit fee payments, fine payments, and pay station cash receipts,
 - Maintains parking permit account and payment records, and
 - Adjudicates appeals of tickets.
- Police Department
 - Enforces parking regulations and issues tickets for violations,
 - Maintains pay stations, and
 - Retrieves and delivers cash boxes for deposit.
- Engineering
 - Plans layout of parking spaces, pay stations and signage and coordinates review with Design Review Committee, Police, Fire, DPW, and Planning.
- DPW
 - Supervises vendor installation of pay stations and maintains parking space markings, signage, etc.
- Planning
 - Staffs parking management committee (all participating departments), which is responsible for periodic review of and reporting on the parking management program and development of proposals for modification of the program.

Option B – More Centralized Administration

- Town Manager and Board of Selectmen
 - Provide oversight, review, and approval of the parking management program, rates, etc., and
 - Designate town official responsible for parking program.
- Police Department Parking Office
 - Provides online and walk-in permit application service ("one-stop shopping window"),
 - Verifies residence and/or employment in Winchester,
 - Processes permit fee payments, fine payments, and pay station cash receipts,
 - Maintains parking permit account and payment records,
 - Enforces parking regulations and issues tickets for violations, and
 - Maintains pay stations; retrieves and delivers cash boxes for deposit.
- Treasurer's Office
 - Adjudicates appeals of tickets.

⁵ To be determined by the Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen.

- Town Clerk's Office
 - Provides parking program information to the public via town website, etc.
- Engineering
 - Designs layout of parking spaces, pay stations and signage and coordinates review with Design Review Committee, Police, Fire, DPW, and Planning.
- DPW
 - Supervises vendor installation of pay stations and maintains parking space markings, signage, etc.
- Planning
 - Staffs parking management committee (all participating departments), which is responsible for periodic review of and reporting on the parking management program and development of proposals for modification of the program.

Option C – Contractor Administration

- Town Manager and Board of Selectmen
 - Provide oversight, review, and approval of the parking management program, rates, etc., and
 - Designate town official responsible for parking program.
- Contractor
 - Provides online and mail-in permit application service,
 - Verifies residence and/or employment in Winchester,
 - Processes permit fee payments, violations, fine payments, and pay station cash receipts,
 - Maintains parking permit account and payment records,
 - Installs and maintains pay stations, and
 - Retrieves and delivers cash boxes for deposit.
- Police Department Parking Office
 - Enforces parking regulations and issues tickets for violations.
- Treasurer's Office
 - Adjudicates appeals of tickets.
- Town Clerk's Office
 - Provides parking program information to the public via town website, etc.
- Engineering
 - Plans layout of parking spaces, pay stations and signage and coordinates review with Design Review Committee, Police, Fire, DPW, and Planning.
- DPW
 - Maintains parking space markings, signage, etc.
- Planning
 - Staffs parking management committee (all participating departments), which is responsible for periodic review of and reporting on the parking management program and development of proposals for modification of the program.

Parking Regulations

To be consistent with the parking management plan, the Town's regulations governing parking should be amended to provide:

- **Parking-Space Ordinance** – A vehicle shall be deemed to have been parked beyond the maximum period of time allowed if the vehicle has not been moved to a different street upon or before the expiration of the posted parking time limit. This provision shall not apply to vehicles displaying a valid disabled-veteran plate, handicapped-person plate, or handicapped-person placard, as defined in Section _____. *(Draft)*
- **Overnight Parking in Town Lots** – Town-center residents who do not have access to off-street parking may apply for a permit allowing them to park overnight—from 600PM to 800AM—in designated Town lots. *(Draft)*

Shared Parking Policies

The Town encourages shared parking agreements among town-center businesses, residents, and owners of privately owned and managed off-street parking lots that provide for the shared use of parking spaces; e.g., daytime use by business employees and overnight use by residents and restaurant customers, etc. *(Draft)*

Parking Program Implementation⁶

Implementation will require a series of coordinated actions including:

- Public meetings to review and refine draft plan.
- Public hearings before the Board of Selectmen.
- Standards for sign design and sign- and pay-station placement to ensure visibility, accessibility, ADA compliance, compatibility with town center image, etc.
- Field surveys to determine the most appropriate –
 - Size and layout of on-street and parking lot spaces.
 - Extent and cost of any needed re-striping.
 - Number, location, and type of new or replacement parking information and regulatory signs, and
 - Number and location of pay stations.
- Cost estimates and benefit/cost analysis to determine the most advantageous make/buy/lease options for services and equipment.
- Final review, public hearing, and approval by the Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen.
- Town meeting authorizations and appropriations where required.

⁶ For additional details see “Winchester Town Center Parking Management Plan – IMPLEMENTATION.”

- Public bid, selection, and contracting for equipment and services.
- Construction and installation.
- Public information and outreach program, and
- Performance monitoring, evaluation, and adjustment of zones, prices, regulations, equipment, and services based on market demand and enforcement needs.

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