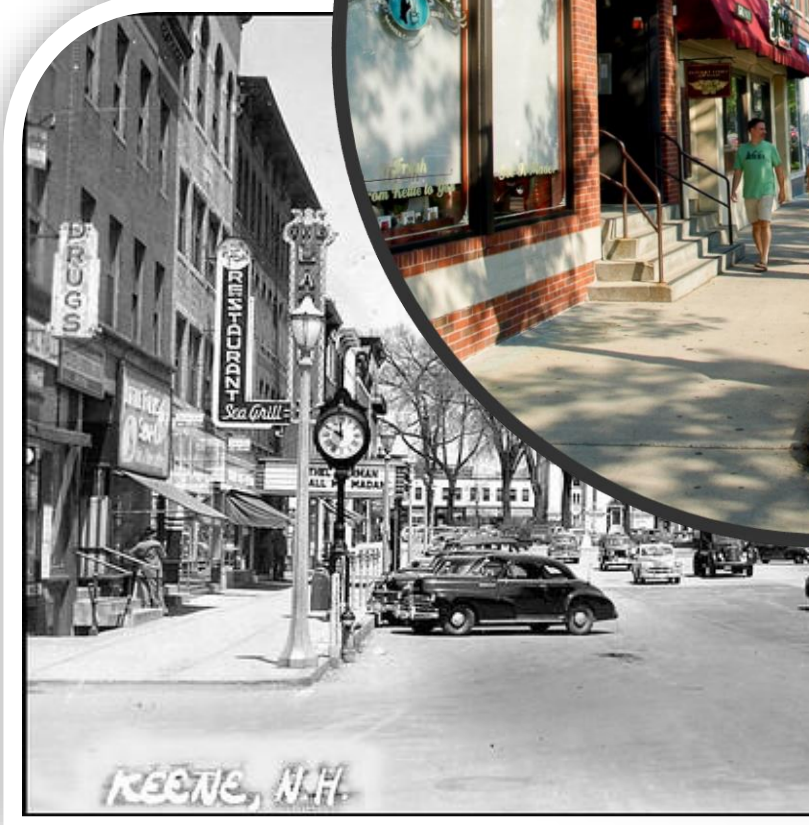




September
2021

STRATEGIC PARKING PLAN



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Special Thanks to Helen Mattson

THE GOALS

City Council Goals:

These City Council Goals that guide our direction.

Goal 1. Manage municipal finances in a manner to minimize the burden to the property taxpayer.

Goal 3. Support Diverse needs of all Keene residents.

Goal 4. To help stabilize and revitalize existing business along with the arts and other non-profit organizations and attract new ones.

Goal 6. Infrastructure - Continue to ensure that Keene's municipal infrastructure supports the varied needs of Keene residents and business.

Goal 7. Public Engagement - Conduct effective, ongoing public communications and engagement with Keene residents and business and with other partners as we negotiate these challenging times.

Goal 8. Make quality housing as affordable available as possible.

Parking Management Principles (best practices):

These ten general principles can help guide planning decisions to support parking management.

1. *Consumer choice.* People should have viable parking and travel options.
2. *User information.* Motorists should have information on their parking and travel options.
3. *Sharing.* Parking facilities should serve multiple users and destinations.
4. *Efficient utilization.* Parking facilities should be sized and managed so spaces are frequently occupied.
5. *Flexibility.* Parking plans should accommodate uncertainty and change.
6. *Prioritization.* The most desirable spaces should be managed to favor higher-priority uses.
7. *Pricing.* In a majority of circumstances, parking facility users should pay directly for parking services.
8. *Peak management.* Special efforts should be made to deal with peak-demand.
9. *Quality.* Parking facility quality (aesthetics, convenience, safety, etc.) is as important as quantity.
10. *Comprehensive analysis.* All significant costs and benefits should be considered in parking planning.

Source: "Parking Management Best Practices," Litman (2006)

We recognize that Main Street and the Parking Program have had to weather, adapt and adjust due to COVID 19 and that some recommendations may be longer term to examine the effects than some, which could be more immediate.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS/ACTIONS:

1. Create a Rental Permit Program

This program would provide 24 hour parking for residents of the downtown as well as employees seeking all day, convenient and cost effective parking options. This will become more critical as we transition into the Form-Based code especially in the Growth and Transition zones.

2. Create Bulk Purchase Permit Program

The purpose of this program is to provide for the opportunity for bulk, long-term purchases of designated day and/or night parking. Bulk leasing of unused public parking is already permitted by the City Code-Chapter 94, but no formal program has been developed. These would be leases with conditions and prices set by the Parking Division and the City Manager and would be limited by the spaces available (if any). Development of this program will allow the City Manager to address this need with the condition that ample metered parking is provided for downtown customers and visitors in addition to monthly rentals.

3. Change Hours of Operation

Parking Services use data (pre-COVID-19) indicates double digit percent increases in parking use when comparing use rates at 4:30 PM and 7:00 PM on Main Street. Just as importantly the morning use is scant. If the intent of parking management is to encourage turnover of parked vehicles so that parking is as available as possible then, it is prudent to shift our efforts to match the actual use and provide spaces. It has been noted that some employees of businesses will use on-street spaces for their parking at 4 PM, as well as some individuals who live in the downtown. With a better cost effective system for both employees and residents, some of that pressure would subside and that space availability would better meet new market needs.

Any change in the hours of operation should be discussed in detail with downtown businesses and users. A start time of 10 AM should be considered as opposed to 8 AM on Main Street. The length of time a space can be occupied should be extended to see if a 3-hour time frame would work more effectively for businesses.

4. Fees

Both ticket fees (tickets are actually intended to create parking opportunity by moving vehicles), as well as the actual fee to park have not kept pace with costs and finance projections, nor with adjacent and similar communities. If fees are not raised and kept current, then there could be a cost to the general taxpayer which would be contrary to adopted City Council goals. In time, on-street parking fees should be raised to \$1.00 and fees in the lots to \$.50. The time limitations, as well as the time for parking operations is to be changed to allow for 3-hour parking on Main Street. Longer-term parking in the lots...8AM – 5PM (9 hours), 6 days per week should remain but there must be a system to promote and accommodate downtown residents and our local workforce. To make it attractive, this rate should not be the same rate charged to the casual public.

5. Pay Stations and Smart Meters

Pay Stations are used at Roxbury Plaza (a street) and Elm Street (and in all city lots) and with the addition of the touch screens they are easy to use. The Parking Officers have recorded no user problems for over one year. We have concerns about the initial cost and ongoing cost for “smart” meters and the recent experience of Concord and Portsmouth would indicate that in some cases, Pay Stations might be the better option. In addition, the pandemic has allowed the City and businesses to experience a greater use of the right-of-way. If meters are removed, we eliminate poles which makes it easier to maintain our streetscape and open the space for other uses such as sidewalk cafes and sales racks.

We would recommend an immediate trial of a Pay Station on Main Street in front of City Hall. As detailed in the body of the report, there are suitable locations for Pay Stations based on cost and based on their ability to open up space in the right-of-way for business use. Some areas in Keene are likely suitable now for pay by app; locations such as Lower Main Street by Keene State College. Further review and discussion should take place after the trials of the Pay Station at City Hall and the app only section(s), to determine how many of the meters left after replacement by Pay Stations could be replaced by Smart Meters (if any). In addition, it would be beneficial to conduct a trial of Smart Meters as well in front of City Hall.

6. Overnight Parking and Rental Programs

Evaluate on-street parking outside of the Core and Growth Districts for possible overnight and permit parking opportunities. Implement permit programs for areas where new or existing demand affects neighborhoods and business opportunity. This could be a revised Residential Permit program or a Parking Benefits District or both. The use of a Parking Benefits District in New Hampshire, should it be a desirable path, will have to be evaluated by staff and the City Attorney. This option could be made available to encourage workforce housing.

7. Marketing

Continue to identify new markets, conduct interviews and create dialog with businesses; retail, restaurants, and entertainment interests. Continue to collect and refine data. Develop and implement a communications and marketing plan including signs, website, social media, and other information distribution methods. *Brand* Parking Operations. Continue to educate the public, staff, downtown businesses and the City Council on parking management and costs. It is important for all to recognize the importance of parking for the downtown economy, cost containment for the taxpayers, worker and workforce housing and the environment. Support of the Parking program is effectively support for our main street and our economy.

8. Loading Zones/Curb Side Pickup

Parking Services will continue to review the location of delivery spaces to permit easy stocking of stores and accommodating other business interests such as curbside pickup. We learned from our experience with the onset of COVID 19, keeping businesses open during a pandemic requires there be enough access to curbside pickup locations, clearly not enough is available and those that do exist, are not conveniently located. We know that curbside and delivery have become core needs for our Main-Street businesses. As space numbers are limited, we need to review the number and location of accessible parking spaces as well as curbside to achieve a balance. Accessible spaces must be located/constructed

to meet ADA current standards when we consider main-street construction. We should consider a program, additionally that permits parking of delivery vehicles that wait for delivery calls.

9. Wells Garage

Continue to market the use of the Wells Garage for long-term parking for residents of downtown and the local workforce. Finalize the conversion of the Wells Garage into reserved parking.

10. New Parking Garage

That the Capital Improvement Budget include a FY23 Feasibility Study and Economic Analysis with a potential construction date of FY 29.

FY23 Feasibility Study and Economic analysis

FY25 Preliminary Design and property

FY27 Final Design

FY29 Construction

11. City Code

The ordinances that control parking services are extremely outdated, cumbersome, and difficult for staff and the public to understand. To that end:

- Economic Development staff will work with the City Attorney, Police Chief and Community Development Director to update the code to simplify the text.
- The revision should clarify the role of Parking Services and their authority. The role of Parking Service should be confined to the area of the City where fees are collected to manage the downtown parking system.
- The fees schedule(s) should be simplified as needed and to address new classes of parking requirements and pricing.
- Night parking in the parking system should be simplified so that the public and staff can take advantage of any night parking opportunity.
- There should be provisions in the code that would allow staff to experiment and explore options before any permanent changes are made to the code and in allowing for flexibility to respond quickly to changing needs. The pandemic was a great example of this need. Parking Services will have to become more *flexible* and *agile* to serve the public with greater efficiency.

12. Charging Stations

Consistent with the adopted Sustainable Energy Plan, Parking Management has begun a review of location and funding to add charging stations at city parking facilities.

INTRODUCTION

STRATEGIC PARKING PLAN

This Strategic Parking Plan builds upon the parking issues, direction and recommendations submitted to the City Council, June 06, 2018, and the Keene Parking and Zoning Analysis; findings and recommendations April 2020 created by Nelson\Nygaard consultants. The Nelson\Nygaard report details the possible impact of land use on parking in the proposed extended “downtown,” as well as the anticipated need created by the new “downtown” defined as Form-Based District land uses in conjunction with the Unified Development Code, also known as the Land Development Code (LDC). Parking requirements have changed but the impact of the changes could be felt most in the Downtown Core, Downtown Growth and Downtown Limited. There could be future impacts in the Downtown Edge districts.

WHAT IS A STRATEGIC PARKING PLAN?

A Strategic Parking Plan is a comprehensive framework to articulate and clarify the vision and approach for parking management. Prior discussions have centered on the Central Business District (the so-called downtown where off-street parking provision is not required by the property owner). Parking needs provision and enforcement extends beyond these boundaries (for example Roxbury Street, Elm Street, Adams Street), and there may be additional needs in other existing districts and the newly created Form-Based Districts. This plan outlines various strategies to address complex and varied needs, balance costs, further economic development, City Council Goals and the Master Plan. Any plan, to be truly useful will have to remain *dynamic* and *changeable*. This plan will be used to guide daily decision making for parking-related programs and policies in the coming years, as well as long-term direction and goals. As new parking conditions and opportunities arise, and parking needs change, the plan outlines direction to make parking decisions. Demand will change over time and the Strategic Parking Plan will need to be updated repeatedly as the City grows and changes and technology changes.

WHY REGULATE PARKING?

Parking availability affects the viability of businesses and residences in an automobile dependent society. The main reason we regulate parking is to provide *parking opportunity*; spaces that open up where demand is high on a frequent basis on-street (usually customers and visitors), and parking that is available for longer terms at a reasonable cost or with no fee, to provide parking opportunity for workforce and residents where on-site parking is not available. People expect that parking will be available, located next to where they want to go, and to be cheap. How parking is built and located affects the ecosystem of any downtown. Parking design and availability define the look and feel of a community and its utilization, construction and location have to be in balance with the environment. The true cost of parking is often hidden and it is never free; there is the cost to construct and maintain parking, and there are visual, storm water and heat island costs in addition to huge lost opportunity costs. The consumer pays the “fee” as a pass-through on private property and pays (metered/leased) for parking directly on the street or in public lots. Parking supply is often a key consideration for businesses when they seek to locate in Keene with both employee and customer access important. Customers and visitors can go elsewhere if parking appears to be too limited, is perceived as unsafe, too far away, too expensive, or too inconvenient and that will damage our economic development efforts. When parking is regulated it helps with the flow of downtown visitors. It keeps the flow of new people coming going, while helping make it so employees and residents don’t camp out park for long extended periods of time.

COSTS

The provision of parking on-street and off-street is a significant investment with costs to facilitate and maintain as well as operate. Street parking and parking lots have to be constructed with paving, compensation for storm water, landscaping, sidewalks, lighting and accessibility for the disabled.

Prior discussions about garages have been in the context of Main Street visitors and less on residents and workforce. We should be conducting a feasibility study and economic analysis in FY 23 with a targeted construction in FY 29. Parking garages are presently estimated to cost more than \$25,000 per space depending on the design of the structure, as well as the aesthetic needs of the community. With parking lots there is a lost opportunity cost for the land that could otherwise have been a park, or an employment-generating tax-paying building instead of parking; as well as the maintenance, and operating management expenses.

A significant amount of the income from the Parking Fund is directed to the general fund for purposes other than the operation of the system (that is parking services direct cost). Snowplowing and maintenance for lots, the garages, the streets and sidewalks; cleaning, lighting, sealing, resurfacing concrete and asphalt, striping, and signage to ensure that parking spaces are functional and clearly marked; in addition, parking fees largely pay for the maintenance of Main Street including trees and plantings, as well as enforcement outside of the “downtown.” Each space used for parking both on-street and off-street must be maintained to make sure it is safe and accessible in addition to the need to remove snow and ice. Moreover, parking use must be managed to meet the goals of the community and provide parking opportunity. That means there is constant monitoring and administrative management with repairs, collections, enforcement and data collection. Parking technologies such as Pay Stations, smart meters, on-line payment applications have a significant first cost and on-going costs for the *City and the consumer*.

The Parking Fund income has decreased as the character of Main Street has changed with less daily use and of course more so due to the Pandemic. This reflects changing times and the need to adapt our programs to the customer base(s). The City Council did, in January 2019, raise meter, rental and violation fees that had not been increased in many years. While this helped to balance the budget at the time, we are behind in the forecasted projections and compared to other communities. Ideally our rate system should have some mechanism to demand review on a reoccurring basis to adjust and keep pace. To continue to maintain downtown and the parking system, fees have to keep pace or the cost will burden the general taxpayer. When the fee structure gets too far behind, it makes it more difficult for the City Council to adjust these fees.

Presently, we are implementing updated parking enforcement software and have reviewed all known enforcement software as well as various types of “smart” systems. Each of these has a “first” cost which is where we tend to pay attention in the Capital Program and the Operating Budget. The cost that is not normally discussed is the cost that is charged to the customer directly in gateway fees and merchant fees. We really do not have a way to affect the amount charged as “convenience” fees and to be frank, they are clearly part of the provider’s business plan and normal in today’s world. When we talk to these providers, they are amazed at how low our meter fees are, and depending on the transaction, the cost charged for the transaction in convenience fees is by far greater than the fee paid to the City to park. In addition, with our Pay Stations and with *ParkMobile* we have set up a system that permits the purchase of time in 15 minute increments. With the electro-mechanical meters the set-up is based on the coin

used, converted to a time rounded up or down (i.e. divide \$.85 on-street or \$.35 in lots by nickels, dimes, and quarters). Without Pay Stations used universally or smart meters we really cannot take advantage of a pre-paid card that can be issued by the City of Keene nor normalize the time frame set-up across all platforms nor gleam data.

Our present meter fees are \$.85/hr. on-street and \$.35/hr. in the lots. Brattleboro is \$1.00/hr. on-street and 3/hr. \$0.70-\$1.00/hr./ 10 Hour \$0.40/hr., Portsmouth is A-Zone HOURS 1-3: \$2 each hour/4 +: \$5 each hour B-Zone 1-3 hours: \$1.50 each hour/4 hours: \$3 each hour, Concord \$1.00/hr. on-street and \$.50/hr. in the lots. On-street fees should be raised at some point soon to one dollar per hour. If we want to promote parking in the lots, we should consider only a slight increase of the fee, but more importantly, create opportunities for workforce parking at a reduced amount in addition to a section for 24/7 parking for residents. This should be presented in a balanced manner and the division should have the ability to provide a flexible approach as markets change as to location, hours, etc. Rates of course would be set by the City Council. All systems should be set to ½ hour calculating increments and the fees should allow a rational division to match the fee.

PARKING SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Parking Management should be thought of as a system and the City regulated parking system consists of 514 on-street meters, 293 spaces paid at pay stations, 71 leased spaces and 338 reserved spaces (mostly for employees who work downtown), plus 45 accessible spaces, 2 electric car spaces, and 12 official loading/curbside spaces. What should be counted as part of the “system” includes parking that is on private property, but not regulated by the City, which does provide some of the needed parking. There are additional spaces that Parking Services can (and often is called upon to) regulate and should be counted in the system, such as residential permit areas (Elliot Street for example) and time limited areas (usually 2 hr.) such as Adams Street and Spring Street where there is no charge to park. This adds an additional (approximate) 150 spaces.

The historic revenue stream for Parking Services is 36% meters, 13% permits and 4% leases with the balance coming from fines. Lower Main Street client requirements differ from those of Central Square and the Elm Street lot has different clients than Gilbo lot or Wells Garage. There are 156 spaces on Main Street including those on Central Square. A decrease in Parking Services revenue is due to lack of parking activity on Main Street and in the lots due to the loss of Keene State student use, largely caused by the pandemic.

Parking is categorized into on-street and off-street parking. Further, these categories can be defined as City owned off-street public parking, City owned off-street private parking (leased/rented), and City owned on-street parking that can be free, metered or reserved by permit. Privately owned off-street public parking is dedicated to the use of the property but often the excess parking is reserved and/or can be rented, or is simply left vacant. The city could seek to co-create a parking program with private property owners to permit some additional paid parking. In accord with the Nelson\Nygard report, there are 1,647 public spaces and 4,938 private parking spaces at present within the boundary of the expanded Form-Based Downtown. In addition, there are spaces provided and needed beyond the district that are not in the newly expanded downtown.

Parking occupancy rates are an important indicator of the success of a program. Too much parking availability can be as damaging as too little. A low occupancy rate in an area means that there are many spaces unused. Parking at capacity means that the available parking supply needs additional

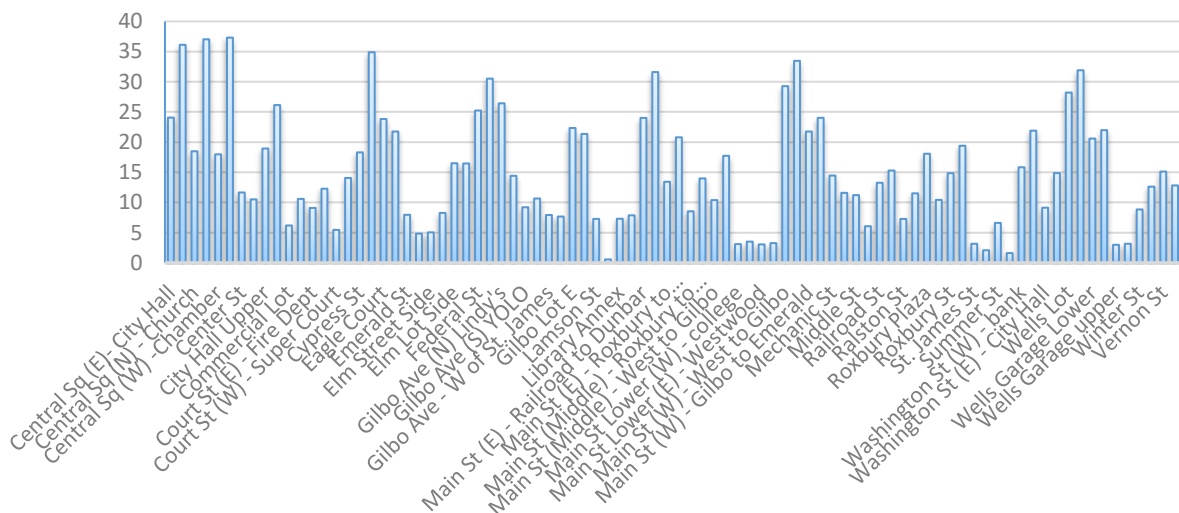
management. Parking is considered “at capacity” when available spaces are 85% occupied. Occupancy fluctuates seasonally, daytime vs. weekly and year to year when businesses come and go.

Parking turnover describes how often a parking space becomes available during an hour/day/week/month. Our metered turnover rate is a two hour limit on-street (limited three hour) and a nine hour limit in the lots. Reserved parking is quarterly paid and allows the use of the space 6 days a week, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Actual lease spaces allow 24/7 use of the space by the lessee and they pay taxes. rules and restrictions are put in place to support parking goals such as turnover or access however, they should not be the single focus of a program. We do have economic development goals. Enforcement is used to ensure that rules and restrictions are observed, but enforcement is costly and over enforcement can create a negative image for the City.

As we learned during the surge of COVID 19, we have huge mix of users of Main Street Parking. Some business owners and their employees park on Main Street taking up space that should be available for customers. The needs of services such as hairdressers is very different from an office, restaurant or store. We have to provide for residents as well as visitors and regular customers. Most businesses (especially the restaurants) do not open until 10:00 AM or 11:00 AM and restaurants do not close until late in the evening. The time for the regulation of parking on Main Street should be shifted so that early parking on the street is permitted without a fee until 10:00 AM and a fee charged until 6:00 PM (at least) to provide turnover, as well as discourage employee parking on Main Street. We should extend the time limit to 3 hours to help with pedestrian circulation. We should encourage walking in our beautiful downtown. Shifting the time also makes it so the retail doesn’t carry all the weight of the parking topic. A time shift makes it so when the downtown is busy at night due to visitors dining out or enjoying a show are able to get spots because people have to still keep moving and not stay parked all night.

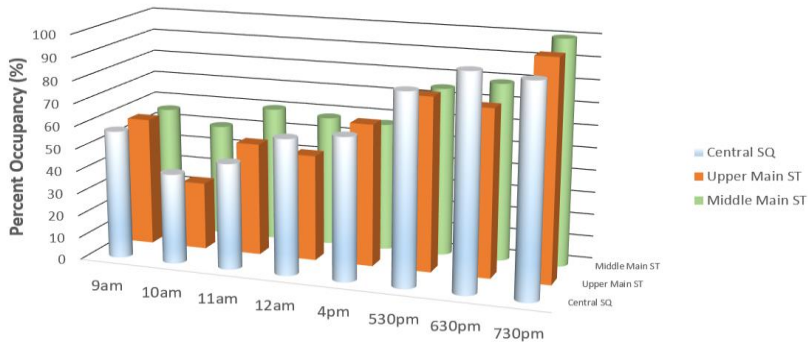
The average percentage of use where all usage is less than 40%.

AM and PM Street Count of All Meters - System Average Use - 2020



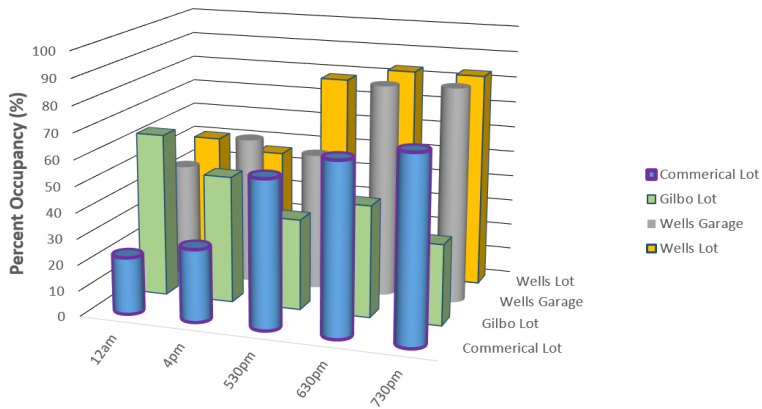
This is based on a hand count prior to COVID 19 and it shows the shift to more afternoon and evening demand on Main Street and it tracks visitors who come to dine and shop.

Parking Utilization Trends – Central SQ/Main ST



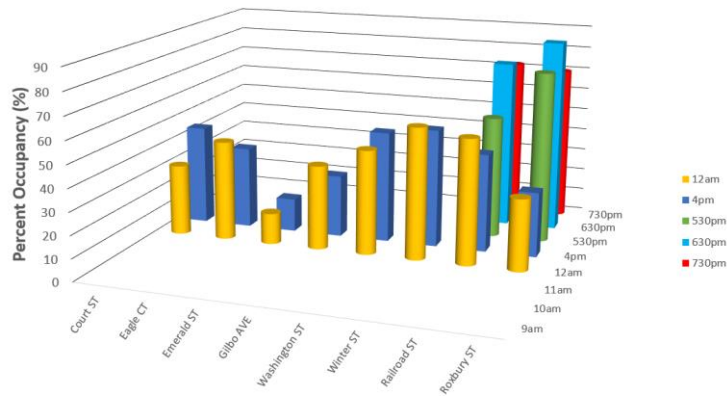
Parking Demand exceeds 85% at 5:30 and 6:30 PM on Central Square, Upper and Middle Main Street at 7:30 PM prior to COVID 19.

Parking Utilization – Lots



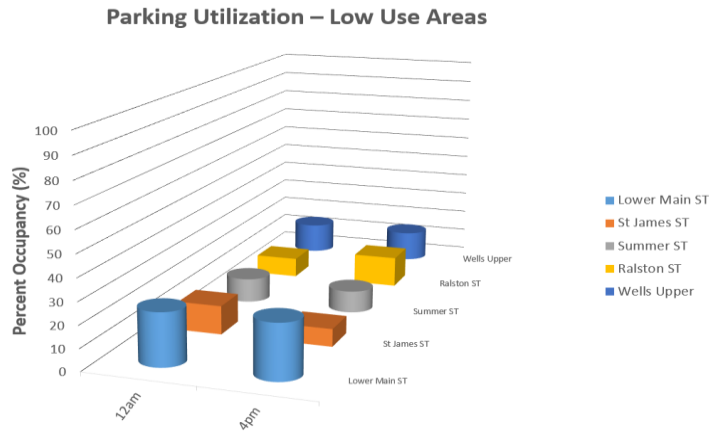
Pre COVID 19 Parking Demand exceeds 85% 6:30 and 7:30 PM at Wells Lot and Wells Garage Lower, Commercial lot increases use but does not reach the 85%.

Parking Utilization – Side Streets off CSQ/Main ST



Pre-COVID 19 Parking Demand exceeds 85% 6:30 and 7:30 PM at Railroad Street and Roxbury Street.

Pre COVID 19- Wells upper, St. James, Summer, Ralston and Lower Main are low use.



DOWNTOWN

Downtown is a term that is used in various contexts that mean different things and of course have different meanings to people. Most people assume “Downtown” is Main Street. For City Council Licenses, “Downtown” refers to Central Square, Railroad Square, Main Street to Marlboro Street, Court Street to Vernon Street, Washington Street to Vernon Street, West Street to Federal Street, Roxbury Street to Roxbury Plaza, and Gilbo Avenue to St. James Street. Public Works for its work and maintenance plans has another definition. We must consider that the Form Based Downtown has changes from the former Central Business District (CBD). The CBD becomes the Downtown Core, Downtown Growth and Downtown Limited districts. For the Core and Growth district, the City of Keene will be required to provide parking for all uses including residential. As the uses change from offices, stores etc. the dynamics of need will change from a system, that provide parking movement (and turnover) during the days to one that has to accommodate 24/7 parking needs in addition to visitors and workforce. To accommodate these changing markets and needs we need to address them directly as well as creatively. We need to recognize that market forces change all of the time, so flexibility is paramount.

GARAGE

Effective September 2021 the City of Keene has adopted a new Land Use Code. To simplify the issues this raises, the former districts in and adjacent to the former Central Business district have changed, as have the allowed uses and mixes of uses. Off-street parking requirements are modified, but for the most part, parking supply remains with the City of Keene. As part of the Community Development Departments initial review of Land Development Code uses, Nelson\Nygaard-consultant completed a Parking and Zoning Analysis with findings. The Nelson\Nygaard report details the possible impact of land use on parking in the proposed extended “downtown,” as well as the anticipated needs created by the new “downtown.” The thoughts were current to the time of the report (June 2020) based on known uses and development direction. The report did not directly address the need for a parking garage but did recommend that one could be located on Gilbo Avenue should the uses and possible densification require one.

When conversations about the need for a garage have taken place in the past, the driving need for parking in a garage has been visitor over-flow from Main Street as well as events such as could occur at the Colonial. Parking for visitors is tight as is the needs of our workforce. When the City converted the Wells Garage over to the rental of spaces, it filled immediately and there continues to be interest and a waiting list. A garage on Gilbo Avenue is close to our theaters as well as restaurants, stores, where people work and live...very desirable. A good mix of daytime and nighttime uses. Modern garages can be much more than just parking spaces. The spaces can be demand parking by app and reserved, tickets for shows could be packaged, parking for on call deliveries...a range of options.

Staff has looked at differing garage options in the past for the use of Commercial Lot, Gilbo Lot and other lots in the Gilbo Avenue Corridor. The potential users, the site and the size matters in addition to the cost. We recommend that the Capital Improvement Budget include a FY23 Feasibility Study and Economic Analysis with a potential construction date of FY 29.

CHOICE

Everyone wants to park right next to where *they* want to go, no matter if it is for work, home, business or pleasure. In addition, they want to park *there* as long as they want at little or no cost. The reality is that parking options that meet these criteria are limited and do not exist even in shopping centers. When options are limited then a decision is made that balances cost and comfort compared to proximity by the parker. Most parking systems capitalize on that decision modified by the target market (that is the consumer). Demand profiles vary and change over time, which have clearly been changed by the reductions at Keene State and with COVID 19, as well as the business mix on Main Street, in addition to the consumers comfort with technology. Technology is rapidly changing this market, but it does have direct *consumer* cost. Employees want to park where they work, but if parking is not provided by the employer then employees, when provided with a comfortable path with reasonable or no cost, will walk to a more distant parking spot.

Today, we have little control of the cost of technology where our system is frankly quite small, and the consumer pays access and merchant fees on top of the metered fee. There are different needs depending on the type of employee and time of day parking. An employee (or for that matter a business owner) working in an office during daytime hours has very different needs than a nighttime restaurant worker. Customers and visitors have a variety of demand profiles.

It is estimated that about half of the people who park on Main Street may be first time visitors to New England, have heard about Keene or have come to view the Wall Dogs murals. Some customers come to shop, but most come for entertainment and for the restaurants, clearly reflected in the shift to later opening and closing times. Some come to work or to access personal services. For on-street parking on Main Street, we have to recognize the changes in business and their needs, as well as address the varying needs of all or our downtown users as these uses change. Once again *flexibility* and *adaptability* are required.

As more mixed uses are allowed (LDC and Stay, Work, Play) more and more people are living in the downtown. This need is very different from employees and customers. Employees have needs for parking especially those who are in the service industry that are very different from residents and visitors. This is why targeted parking for workforce is vital as well as parking for residents. Workforce parking, as well as some resident parking should be located in discrete areas at the Gilbo lot. Wells

Garage is now mostly leased and quarterly rental. Covered 24/7 parking is a huge asset. This garage is being converted into 100% rental to service businesses and residents of the downtown, in addition to Roxbury Plaza and Norway Avenue.

Finally, yet importantly, are the services needed for contractors, loading zones/curbside pickup to serve businesses and parking places for persons with disabilities. Loading zones/curbside pickup have become vital as lifelines for businesses during the COVID 19 pandemic for merchandise pick-up. As business models have changed we suspect that this need is permanent. These requirements are different and in different areas of downtown in various quantities and times. Presently there are not enough loading zones to support the present businesses for deliveries and curbside pickup. There are limited opportunities for the parking of service vehicles (such as contractors). Based on our review of the (filed by the Access Board, never adopted) ADA draft standard for the Rights-of-Way (PROWAG), there is likely twice as much accessible parking as would be required by the draft standard (and what would be required on private property) and most do not meet the standard as they are presently constructed. We should convert some of these to loading/curbside parking and provide PROWAG compliant parking.

Technology, Smart Meters, Pay Stations, Electric Vehicle Chargers.

The City of Keene has made significant investments in parking devices and technology. History shows how the system has evolved over time with meters installed in the first time in 1947, the very first parking meter was installed in Oklahoma City in 1935. Most of our meter housings date from that era, but some were purchased as other systems were modernized. In 1985 - 1986 the city conducted a “free parking experiment” (which cost the city \$55,000) when meters were removed at the request of downtown merchants and then at their request the meters were returned. However, the basic parking philosophy and business model has remained the same from the beginning, the housing for the meters is the same and the only change was the replacement of the mechanical systems with electro-mechanical systems. The only other change for payment was the installation of Pay Stations and the use of a parking app (ParkMobile).

Currently, 514 parking spaces have traditional electro-mechanical meters, and 293 parking spaces are managed with Pay Stations. The parking meters are not electronic and do not take credit cards, but parking can be paid for with a mobile phone using the ParkMobile App, the ParkMobile website or with a credit card at the Pay Stations. However, none of the true advantages of smart-meters (or Pay Stations) are available in the existing meters.

As we all know the world has changed; business models and the businesses themselves have evolved to on-line and digital methods. Parking systems and their business models must change and are changing to adapt to that world. No matter what we think about our system (that is, not wanting to change it) we are forced to adapt to sales using cards or the internet, as well as digital enforcement. This is what is sold for equipment and systems and is what the majority of the public wants. The tools we have for business management and parking management include hardware and software. The hardware we use includes computers, phones, mobile phones/printers, and meters (meters on a pole or multi-stations, also called Pay Stations or kiosks). The software includes back office software to manage tickets i.e., number of tickets issued, payments, and appeals, leases and rentals and the interface with payment systems (banks, merchants of record, credit card companies), and they have to interface with internal

systems such as the City's finance system, and with the meters (at this time only the Pay Stations) and the officer's enforcement systems.

Parking management internationally is evolving towards *completely touchless systems* where all the reservations (rentals e.g.) or payments of a space are made on a mobile phone or the internet and not with the use of hardware like meters or multi-stations. Mobile parking apps are no longer alternative methods of payment and have become mainstream to being fully-equipped, one-stop-shop service providers. *ParkMobile*, the app used in Keene, is now available in the center console display units of all new model BMWs. *Passport*, another pay app is integrated with Google maps. From the center display of the car, users can now find, reserve, and pay for parking (depending on the system). The modern parking operation is evolving into an end-to-end digital operating system to unify parking management. Unified systems, permit the management of mobility operations, including parking, enforcement, permits, and payments, as well as reservations and open space availability. These integrate fully with Smart City concepts.

Passport enforcement software was selected as the software vending for the management of violations and they do provide a payment app. Some communities allow the uses of multiple payment systems; there are advantages for the consumer, and for the City. One concern should a vendor cease operations how that could affect the system. There are also differences for the consumer as well with different pricing models. Both Manchester and Portsmouth allow the use of two methods, one an app, the other a device. Staff will examine this issue in more detail to see what benefits could be accrued to City operations as well as the consumer.

One aspect of a unified digital system is the ability to extract data. We know, based on the use of the Pay Stations and the *ParkMobile* App, the time purchased and the amount paid. With the coin system we only know what was paid. We do a hand count once a week to get a percentage occupied, but it is only an estimate and it does not track all dates, all times. A digital system would allow the public to know what space is vacant so that they could choose in less time and provide the City with real-time data.

Payment Mechanisms:

There are clear advantages to Pay Stations and Smart Meters.

PayStation Advantages

Electronic payment.

Coins are accepted.

Less equipment to maintain, less overall operational and first cost.

More payment options, increases convenience for parkers.

Eliminates meter posts/heads that blanket city streets.

Eases maintenance of streets and lots.

Helps to create more space for the use of the sidewalks, adds to economic sustainability.

Saves time and improves efficiency of monitoring – no need to monitor each meter and collect cash from each meter.

Data.

Pay Stations record each transaction associated with a parking transaction by recording the number plate.

Easy to find

Disadvantages

Acceptance was an issue especially with one unit. There are 11 units in use today and with the addition of the touch screen fronts we have had no issues for well over a year.

When a station goes down, while rare, all of the spaces regulated by the PayStation go down.

Electronic Meter Heads Advantages

Electronic payments.

Coins are accepted.

More payment options increases convenience for parkers.

Data.

Parking meters record each transaction associated with a parking transaction recording the number plate.

Disadvantages

There is a higher upfront cost and ongoing cost to replace and keep the meters we have on the streets today.

Adds to street clutter and street and sidewalk maintenance costs.

We often have to replace poles and heads when struck by snow removal operations.

Lost street-scape opportunities and on street business expansion.

Communities in New Hampshire that have recently had new meters placed have been having problems with their operation, quality and warranties.

Pay-by-Phone (that is an area where parking payment is only by phone)

Advantages

Electronic payment - this would be for designated areas (note: our system does allow pay by phone now where we have meters, as well as Pay Stations).

Low or no capital costs - no meters to buy.

No operational costs - Except for the software, most of which is paid via convenience fees.

Increases convenience for parkers.

This is the direction that all cities are moving in.

Up-to-date Parking Management software integrates with parking apps as well as Pay Stations.

If completely pay-by-phone, we remove a safety and accounting issue with coins.

Covid safe

Disadvantages

Acceptance by some users.

No coin use.

Advertisement of availability

The introduction of new parking technology, *ParkMobile* and Pay Stations in particular has provided more payment options for patrons and efficiency for the Parking Services Division. All of the technology described has to integrate with the projected replacement software that the Parking Services Office is proposing for Parking Management. Permit management software platforms streamline documentation collection, expiration and payment tracking with real time data from vehicle interactions to make parking transactions easy and accessible. Drivers can pay for parking using apps they already use.

Upgrading to PayStations instead of meters would also make it so we can store our old meters and use them for parts when we run into issues. At this time, we do not have any replacement meters at all. This will help us save money and make it possible to fix broken meters at a faster rate.

The Problem:

We have moved and will continue to move to a digital system...all businesses do. All the meters on poles are electro-mechanical. The problem is that these units are no longer produced, and we cannot find parts or replacements and we are out of replacements. Our system is beginning to fail. We have to make changes to the system but there are considerations to be evaluated.

In the parking industry, the suppliers of hardware and software have adopted models of equipment production and cost structures that we have no control of, and as we are a very small system, we do not have much negotiating clout. The models all consider a “first” cost and an “annualized” cost, and this is true for meters, Pay Stations, back office software and enforcement hardware and software. Whenever there is a transaction there is a charge either to the City or to the customer (sometimes both). When someone makes a payment there is a charge to use the system, as well as a charge by the bank or credit card company to the customer’s account. This is really no different than what we all pay now using a bank card at the grocery store or with an on-line purchase at Amazon...we just may not overtly see it.

Payment Systems:

The cost to use payment systems for Keene Parking spaces today is:

Processing Fees in person through Point and Pay is \$2.00 up to \$80, anything over \$80 is 2.45%

EB2Gov – on line payments is \$1 for every \$50

Pay Stations and *ParkMobile* is \$.45 mostly...but *ParkMobile* has different rates if you pay with *Pay Pal*, *Pay Wallet*... for most customers it is \$.45

At this time, there are 11 Pay Stations in use that control 293 spaces compared to the 514 meters on poles. These stations are in lots except for Roxbury Plaza, which by city code is actually a street and Elm Street (and that station serves Elm Street lot as well). We did have an issue with one Pay Station that was located at Central Square West. At least part of the problem with that station was set-up and part of the problem was rough handling by patrons. We know we have a crisis looming with the meters as they continue to break down and the lack of parts availability and no more replacements, we have to decide our future path now.

Here are the anticipated costs based on current data:

Smart Meters- replace 513*includes 10% added spare meters

Purchase cost-	\$487,993.95- if reuse of existing housing-\$301,307.29
Annual Cost-	\$38,550.00
Plus \$.13 per transaction...	\$5,850.00 Est. paid by city, or customer, plus all card fees.

We thought it would be prudent to compare this estimate to replacement of the meters with PayStations.

Pay Stations- replace 513 meters with either 52 or 35 Pay Stations

This comparison is less straight forward because Pay Stations can replace anywhere from one meter to fifteen. The rule of thumb is you replace either 10 or 15 meters with one station.

Purchase cost-	One per 10 = \$ 352,090.00
	One per 15 = \$ 234,726.67
Annual cost-	One per 10 = \$ 40,092.00
	One per 15 = \$ 26,728.00

this includes communication fees, but there is still a charge to the customer to use a card or an app and at this time it is \$.45 per transaction.

Staff did look at the Pay Station location issue in more detail. We do not think every location is suitable for a Pay Station based on the following criteria:

- a) the location should be one that has considerable street maintenance issues or would provide more on-street space to allow use of the right of way for sales or seating.
- b) There must be enough street space to allow for the siting of a Pay Station, meet ADA, etc.
- c) There has to be a reasonable amount of meters replaced to warrant the cost.
- d) There should not be another mechanism to provide the service that would be more effective such as mobile app only spaces (at least at this time).

There are places where it makes sense to replace the meters with PayStations due to access or number. These estimates below assume that the west side of lower Main Street adjacent to Keene State College, would be an app only payment section, as well as Ralston Street with a total of 51 spaces paid by app only.

Pay Stations - replace 234 meters with 26 Pay Stations

Purchase cost -	\$ 178,100.00
Annual cost -	\$ 20,280.00

this includes communication fees, but there is still a charge to the customer to use a card or an app and at this time it is \$.45 per transaction.

229 old meters could be left in place (not replaced) with an abundance of spare meters in storage to allow a future purchase or an evolution to an app payment system. We would lose data and the ability of direct card use, but of course, pay by app is still available.

Or we could replace these meters with Smart Meters...

Smart Meters - replace 229 meters *includes 10% added spare meters

Purchase cost -	\$ 221,138.41 - if reuse of existing housing - \$134,877.57
Annual Cost -	\$ 17,175.00

Plus \$.13 per transaction...
card fees.

\$ 3,250.00 Est. paid by City, or customer, plus all

We would recommend an immediate trial of a Pay Station in front of City Hall to assess acceptance and to be able to troubleshoot any evolving issues with a station on Main Street. We recommend that the system evolve into pay by app and Pay Stations with the cost of Smart Meters so high, and with technology evolving to apps...Additionally, we are experimenting with pay by app only sections due to the lack of replacement meters.

Electric Vehicle Chargers:

In 2019, the City of Keene committed to a 100 percent renewable energy transition. All energy that Keene uses for electricity will come from renewable sources by 2030, and all energy used for heating, cooling, and transportation will come from renewables by 2050. The Energy & Climate Committee, with input from the public, developed a Sustainable Energy Plan, which adopted by the Keene City Council by unanimous vote on January 21, 2021. In 2015, ground transportation in Keene accounted for almost half (46%) of all greenhouse gas emissions. The majority of these emissions were generated by on-road gasoline use (84%) followed by on-road diesel use (16%). Electric Vehicles (EVs) are becoming more widely available and affordable, it is important to begin increasing the adoption of EVs to ensure that a majority of passenger vehicles on the road in 2050 are EVs or other alternative vehicles that use renewable energy sources.

According to the adopted Sustainable Energy Plan, one of the priority implementation strategies and actions includes the installation of EV charging stations (level 2 and fast-charge) in on-street parking areas and in public parking lots or structures.

EV Charging Infrastructure:

There are 3 charging locations within the City of Keene, including two "Level 2" charging ports in the Commercial Street parking lot (available for a parking fee of \$1.49/hour), two "Level 2" charging ports at the Fairfield Kia Dealership, and one "Level 2" charging port at the Antioch University New England campus. There are no DC fast charge stations ("Level 3" charging stations) in Keene. However, within 20-30 miles of Keene, there are a number of charging stations and charging ports, most of which are along the Route 91 corridor between Brattleboro and Putney across the Connecticut River in Vermont, including 4 public DC fast charging locations. There are 13 "Level 2" charging locations within 20 miles, and 16 additional "Level 2" charging locations within 30 miles of the City. According to the adopted Sustainable Energy Plan, the City of Keene should develop a plan to deploy Level 3 public EV charging infrastructure using grant funding and/or public-private partnerships. By providing DC Fast Charge stations in or near Downtown Keene, the City will help accelerate the shift to EVs and ensure the City does not discourage business from tourists and other visitors who drive EVs. Parking Management has begun a review of location and funding.

Implementation Steps

Implementation Steps	
✓	Identify priority locations for public EV charging stations. Assess EV ownership trends and regional/local travel data to identify areas where there will likely be demand for EV charging infrastructure.
✓	Choose a specific location and type of charging equipment. The specific location and type of charging equipment will impact utilization and installation costs. The selected location should be convenient to drivers, in close proximity to an existing electrical panel that has the capacity to handle the additional load required for EV charging, have network access (if “smart” chargers are planned), and should meet lighting and accessibility requirements. The selected EV charging equipment (e.g. Level 2, DC fast charge, etc.) should be chosen to best meet the needs of the intended users.
✓	Determine the project budget. There are two components to EV charging station costs: the capital costs of installing the equipment, and ongoing operations and maintenance costs. Capital costs are comprised of hardware, permitting, and installation and will vary depending on the charging level, site characteristics, and equipment features. Operation and maintenance costs include electricity costs, maintenance and repair of the EV charging equipment, and network and charging session fees (i.e. cost of cellular/Wi-Fi network and back office support).
✓	Secure funding. Identify potential partners and grant or other funding (e.g. Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust funds) to reduce the cost burden on the City and local taxpayers.

DEMAND FOR OVERNIGHT AND ON-STREET PARKING

PARKING BENEFIT DISTRICTS

Recent interest in overnight on-street parking has resulted in an evaluation of City practices and regulations by Parking Services. With new housing development probable, and changes to city code (LDC) it is likely we could see that interest grow and frequent use the right-of-way for parking. We know that this was an issue with the proposal for the Hundred Nights Shelter to purchase 80 Roxbury Street in October 2020. Any use of the right of way should include consideration of overnight on-street parking during winter maintenance periods and how that would be accomplished including enforcement.

City code currently restricts how (and where) vehicles are allowed to park on the street, i.e. *“On the travel portion of any roadway so as to obstruct the movement of traffic in the travel lane.”* This general restriction limits on-street parking in many areas with narrow streets. This restriction along with the winter maintenance overnight parking ban between November 1st and April 1st makes right-of-way use problematic.

In some of the districts near “downtown” and in the proposed Core, Growth and Transition districts there are residential properties that do not have adequate on-site parking. These are properties that could be expected to have increased density pursuant to the LDC, as well as promoting “live/work/play parking” can limit development. One way to address this need without constructing facilities, is by creating an on-street parking system. We have the framework of one with the “special residential parking district.”

How this works now, is the City Council receives a petition representing a majority of the residences within an area requesting to be designated as a special residential parking district and upon approval by the City Council, passenger motor vehicles whose gross weight is less than or equal to 5,000 pounds displaying authorized municipal residential parking permits can park on the street. The streets that have

been designated by city code are Adams Court, north and south sides, Appleton Street, both sides, Bruder Street, north side, Elliot Street, south side, for a distance of 120 feet east of Main Street, Wilcox Terrace, east and west sides; all near Keene State. Hancock Street, both sides (off of Marlboro Street); Hamden Drive east and west sides, and Iceland Circle (near Keene High and Crossway Church), north and south sides. There is some free parking, but two hour limited parking is on Spring Street...parts of Washington Street and parts of Court Street and some unregulated. There is open parking on Center Street and part of Summer and Elm Streets.

A Parking Benefit District is an area where some of the parking revenues raised are then reinvested back into the district for a wide range of transportation-related improvements. To some extent, this is how the Parking Fund operates today where income is used to support operations and maintenance as well as provide some funding for Main Street maintenance, landscaping and improvements. Funds are used to purchase and operate meters/Pay Stations (if required), invest in walking and biking infrastructure, or pay for improvements such as street trees, benches, and lighting. Reinvesting parking revenue within a specific district cannot only help better manage parking supply and demand, but can also support economic development, and neighborhood revitalization efforts.

Finally, Parking Benefit Districts can also increase the supply of affordable housing. On-street parking often is controversial when targeted for housing on private property. Most cities require new housing to provide enough off-street parking. These parking requirements can increase the cost, may not be available in retrofit situations and can reduce the supply of housing.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING PLAN

The main service provided by Parking Services is parking availability. That availability changes over time as does the cost, and how we “park” is core to the health of Main Street’s economy. Main Street itself does not have a branding or marketing regime, nor does Parking Services. In order for the public to understand what the role of Parking Services is and to be able to become aware of openings, specials, announcements, as well as creating a feedback loop, must be developed as part of a Downtown Marketing plan. We need to outreach in multiple ways including social media, paper marketing, radio marketing, and word of mouth. Visiting businesses and talking to residents and visitors can help us gauge the best ways to communicate. Education on the parking fund can be added to our marketing and communications plan.

The parking fund has many layers to it that our community is unaware of. Parking Funds go towards the beautification and maintenance of our Downtown. We need to continually educate our City Council members, our tax-payers and downtown community. Many people do not understand that the “fees’ (rental, meters and fines) that they pay to park help with benches, landscaping, plowing, crosswalks, lighting, etc. Helping educate on the parking fund may shed a light on what it is the parking department does overall in helping keep our downtown vibrant. Parking is also more than writing tickets, most people visiting our community reach out to our staff when they have questions about our area. Our staff stays up-to-date on relevant tourism information for our community and can leave a great lasting impression on people visiting.

When visitors come to Keene for events, dining and shopping our City Parking Services team is often the first line of contact (and sometimes the only contact with a city employee). As ambassadors for the City of Keene, we stay current in what is happening in regards to activities, detours/construction, bathrooms,

and City of Keene ordinances. Our team greets guests and residents in a friendly and knowledgeable manner. This is important because it can leave a lasting impression on visitors and help encourage them to come back to Keene.

CITY CODE

Chapter 94 Article III is the code section that defines the methods and means for Parking Services (in addition to Appendix B for some of the fees). This article is imbedded into a code chapter related to Traffic, Parking and Public Ways. Most of the chapter relates to policing of the streets by the Police Department. With the removal of Parking Services from the Police Department there are connections that no longer make sense, questions about authority, as well as expectations of what Parking Services does beyond the metered section of the system. In addition the Article is old, poorly written and is not clear in the intent that City Council had. There is very little authority for Parking Services to try alternative ways to address parking which is vital if we are to be nimble and creative.

Two Examples:

Sec. 94-94. - Restrictions. **Remember the Airport is in Swanzey**

(g) Dillant-Hopkins Airport.

(1) Parking at the Dillant-Hopkins Airport shall be limited to customers of the Dillant-Hopkins Airport or its tenants, lessees, and other users of the facility and shall be in the designated paved parking area north of the terminal building only. Each vehicle shall be parked within the lined spaces provided therefor. No vehicle shall be left parked and unattended adjacent to the sidewalk in front of the terminal building for any reason whatsoever. Any vehicle left parked and unattended in violation of this subsection may be towed away at the expense of the owner thereof, and a reasonable charge for such towing shall be a lien upon the vehicle to be paid before the towing company selected by the airport director to do such towing shall be required to surrender the vehicle.

(2) No unregistered vehicle shall be left standing or parked on any portion of the Dillant-Hopkins Airport property. No registered vehicle shall be left continuously for longer than 15 days. Vehicles in violation of this subsection may be towed away at the expense of the owner thereof, and the reasonable cost of such towing shall be a lien upon the vehicle and shall be paid by the owner before the vehicle shall be surrendered to him by the person towing at the direction of the airport director.

Sec. 94-95. - Snow and street maintenance period.

(c) The prohibitions described in subsections (c) through (f) of this section shall not apply during the period from May 1 through October 31, except that no vehicle shall be left continuously **in any city-owned parking lot for longer than five days**. Any vehicle that is left in any city-owned parking lot and/or that is unregistered may be towed as stated in [section 94-154](#) pertaining to enforcement practices.

Nothing in this exception to parking prohibitions will prohibit the public works department from closing all or parts of any parking lot for maintenance, as long as the parking lot has been signed to notify users of the parking lot of the closing at least five days prior to the closing of the parking lot for maintenance.

(d) No vehicle shall be left standing on the city-owned Elm Street parking lot between the hours of 12:01 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. in the morning on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Exceptions: This Elm Street lot prohibition shall not pertain to the spaces specifically designated for overnight permit parking.

(e) No vehicle shall be left standing on the city-owned Gilbo Avenue parking lot west of St. James Street and Commercial Street parking lot between the hours of 12:01 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. in the morning on

Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday; and no vehicle shall be left standing on the Gilbo Avenue parking lot east of St. James Street between the hours of 12:01 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. in the morning on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Exception: This prohibition shall not pertain to the space rented to Vermont Transit or its successor organization or the spaces specifically designated for overnight permit parking. This exception shall terminate automatically upon the termination of the monthly rental by Vermont Transit or its successor organization.

(f) No vehicle shall be left standing on the city-owned Wells Street parking structure **between the hours of 12:01 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. in the morning on Tuesday and Thursday**, except in the spaces specifically designated for overnight permit parking.

Just one example of this poorly written section, this is for snow removal, yet the bottom deck at wells is covered and the section allowing five days has been misused and was in the code for Keene State Students who parked in the dirt lot (free) that is now the COOP and its parking .