

# Executive Summary

## **Project Background**

As a Primary Service Center for the region, the City of Ellsworth must be able to meet the needs of the resident population of the City, as well as a large “day population” of people coming to work, shop, etc. and many tourists annually. Many of these people find themselves in downtown Ellsworth, which is home to varied businesses, including service providers, restaurants, offices and retail establishments. Convenient parking for residents, customers, visitors and employees is crucial to the viability of the downtown. As such, the residents of Ellsworth have made the support of downtown, including the redevelopment along the waterfront, a priority for the City. An integral piece of this support must be an effective parking management plan.

Even with efficient use of existing parking spaces, as in-fill development is encouraged and occurs within the downtown, additional parking may be needed. A well-thought-out parking management plan, which includes short-range and long-range improvements, can maximize the efficiency of the parking spaces that are currently available. Appropriate parking regulations, flexible parking requirements and standards, and a plan for the financing and management of existing and future parking, including cost-sharing programs or public-private partnerships, are all part of parking management.

As part of the City’s strategy to support and promote the downtown, the City retained Gorrill-Palmer Consulting Engineers Inc. to conduct a parking management study for Downtown Ellsworth. An Advisory Committee was formed, consisting of City Staff and downtown business and property owners. This committee served the role of advisors to Gorrill-Palmer Consulting Engineers Inc. and provided valuable input throughout the study process.

This parking management plan will outline the existing conditions, including deficiencies, parking supply and demand within the downtown, as well as the future needs scenarios, based on anticipated growth and development. The major purpose of this plan is to develop a set of alternatives that will improve the overall parking management and efficiency of Downtown Ellsworth.

## **Study Area**

The study area for the project was bounded by High and Oak Streets to the east, the Union River to the west, Church Street to the north, and Pine Street to the south, and is shown in Figure 1 in Appendix A.

## **Future Development Forecast**

City staff prepared a ten-year build out scenario of future development based on an anticipated mix of uses. While this future development forecast does not specifically include increased residential growth within the downtown area, it should be noted that the City of Ellsworth does wish to encourage a mix of redevelopment that includes a residential component. For the

purposes of this study, the more conservative approach of anticipating all commercial uses for the future forecasts allows for the determination of the highest demand for parking.

## **Parking Management**

Within the focused area of this study, there are 615 public parking spaces, and an additional 458 off-street private parking spaces, not including residential parking. This study only looked at the management of the 615 public parking spaces, which include a mix of on-street and off-street (municipal parking lots) parking. On July 23, 2007, City of Ellsworth staff conducted an hourly count of usage of all public and private parking spaces within the study area, not including any residential parking. This day was chosen as it was reflective of a typical summer day, with court in session. The summary data sheets from this count are included in Appendix B.

This survey showed that within Downtown, average parking demand is at approximately 55-percent of the available supply. However, average parking demand for the public parking is at approximately 65-percent of the available supply, and peak demand for public parking is approximately 77-percent of the available supply. While some locations operate at near full capacity, other locations for parking are underutilized. For example, the City Lot on Water Street averages use of 80-percent of its capacity. Conversely, the on-street parking along Franklin Street sees usage of approximately 30-percent.

When parking demand begins to approach 80 to 90 percent of capacity, the supply begins to seem inadequate. There needs to be some excess parking supply throughout the Downtown to allow for circulation, peak usage, and finding available spaces. There are roughly 90 excess parking spaces available today before reaching that 80-percent threshold, on the average. However, during the peak demand times, there are only approximately 20 excess parking spaces before reaching that 80-percent mark. This excess could easily be consumed by just one or two development projects. The City is taking a proactive approach by anticipating future growth and needs. By having a parking management plan in place, the City of Ellsworth will be ready when future development or redevelopment opportunities come along.

Based on the future development scenario developed by City staff and current zoning ordinance standards, Downtown Ellsworth will see a parking deficit of approximately 85 spaces, assuming 100-percent usage, and not accounting for shared parking. To allow for circulation and finding an available space, the City of Ellsworth should encourage the use of shared parking, along with alternative modes of travel. Depending on the success of these programs, the City may need to create up to 150 additional parking spaces within the next ten years. Given the lack of available land within the downtown, ordinance changes and promotion of shared parking should strongly be encouraged.

An effective Parking Management Plan for the downtown will require a combination of actions including the following:

- Management of Parking Usage - Appropriate balance of short-term (i.e. one-hour or two-hour) parking for customers, clients, etc. and long-term (i.e. day long) parking for employees. There also needs to be an adequate supply of overnight parking for residents, as residential development is encouraged within the downtown.

- Development of sufficient spaces to meet the demand both today and in the next 20 years
- Development of a shared parking ordinance including acceptable distances from the uses for such parking
- Enforcement mechanisms
- Wayfinding to facilitate the people finding spaces
- Pedestrian connections to parking spaces including appropriate lighting
- Encourage City employees to car pool and be aggressive in marketing public transportation
- Provide bike racks at City Hall
- Educate Downtown business owners and employees of the importance of parking management, and encourage their participation.

Recommendations for each of these components of the Plan are summarized below, and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4 of the report.

#### *Management of Parking Usage*

The short-term parking should continue to be located closest to the businesses, with employee parking shifted to the perimeters. We recommend that the City dedicate 20 spaces in the City Hall lot for all day parking by employees of the Main Street businesses and that a free permit system be considered in order to ensure that these spaces are being utilized as intended. An additional 24 more spaces, for a total of 60 spaces, should be signed as 2-hour parking. Signage should be installed on Main Street limiting parking to ninety minutes. As an alternative to signage, parking meters could be installed along Main Street to promote the turnover that is critical for the retail businesses within the downtown.

As residential redevelopment continues to be encouraged in the downtown, overnight parking will need to be available to accommodate the residents. A residential parking permit system should be considered to allow overnight parking in the City Hall Lot. In addition, 4 parking spaces for RV and/or tour busses should also be allowed and signed in the City Hall Lot. Alternatively, the City could work with local property owners, primarily churches, to negotiate weekday use of private parking areas for either City employee parking, or RV parking.

While the supply of handicapped parking spaces appears to be sufficient for the uses and needs with the downtown, the locations of such spaces should be reviewed as individual land uses change or develop.

It should also be noted that the discussion of possibly relocating Police, Fire and some County departments to a location outside of the immediate downtown area would also “free up” many parking spaces that are currently used for day-long, employee parking. If this move does occur, the parking demands should be reassessed, in conjunction with an evaluation of the effectiveness of encouraging turnover parking, and more short-term parking spaces may be designated, with a shifting off employee parking.

It was noted that people often use the main City Hall Lot as a “park-n-ride” lot. Noting the need for such a facility, the City should designate a portion of the upper City Hall Lot as a park-n-Ride Lot, with appropriate signage.

#### *Development of Additional Parking Spaces*

The parking demand and supply analysis showed that there are sufficient spaces today to meet the demand, but that approximately 125 spaces are needed within the next ten years. We strongly recommend that one of the first steps in implementing the parking management plan be to pave and stripe the unpaved portion of the City Hall parking lot. This will not only improve the usage of this area, but it will also improve the efficiency of the parking once striping is implemented.

There really is little land area proximate to the downtown area that can be utilized for additional parking. With a strong parking management plan, including appropriate wayfinding signage to underutilized areas, shared parking, and the potential growth and expansion of alternative modes of transportation, the need for additional parking may not materialize in the coming years. However, if a need did arise due to a major business locating or expanding, there appear to be two options for a parking garage. One would be a parking deck over the surface lot on Water Street. The second option would be to construct a parking deck or multi-level structure on the City Hall Lot. However, this central location would also be quite visible from Main Street, City Hall, and many buildings within the downtown. Alternatively, the City could evaluate the potential for a subsurface parking garage below the City Hall Lot.

Careful consideration should be granted to the true need for a parking structure prior to undertaking further discussion and analysis to determine best location, design, and layout of a potential parking structure, in order to maximize efficiency of space while minimizing visual impacts to the surroundings, and maintaining the balance of meeting the needs of the community.

#### *Development of Shared Parking Ordinance*

The City of Ellsworth Land Use Ordinance does currently allow for the joint use of parking facilities. Currently the only requirement is that a legal agreement assuring the joint usage be approved by the Planning Board and City Attorney. It is our recommendation that a parking study conducted by a Professional Engineer, utilizing standard data from the Urban Land Institute, the Institute of Transportation Engineers, or other appropriate resource, should be completed as part of the Planning Board application process. This study should clearly demonstrate that the shared parking facility will provide sufficient spaces to meet the needs of all uses.

#### *Enforcement*

The City of Ellsworth currently maintains seasonal parking enforcement through the Police Department and has a parking fine structure in place. This is an effective tool for the management of public parking, and this program should be continued and enhanced. Dedicated parking enforcement officers should regularly patrol the downtown area, specifically those areas of time-restricted or permit parking, to ensure that these spaces are being utilized as intended.

The City should also consider the creation of a Downtown Parking District, where a portion of all parking fees and/or fines generated within that District are used to provide infrastructure improvements or enhancements within the District.

With parking enforcement comes the need for parking fees and/or fines. A comparison of the parking fine structure for Ellsworth to that of Portland, Lewiston, and Westbrook, shows that while some of the fines in Ellsworth are lower than the average, they are still comparable. It should be noted that if overtime parking becomes a significant problem, and signage and enforcement are not enough of a deterrent, the City may want to consider increasing the fine prior to implementing other measures, such as meters or paid-permit parking. If pursued, the introduction of parking meters or a paid permit parking system would present the need for parking fees.

### *Wayfinding*

One of the best tools for effective parking management is signage. Effective wayfinding allows people unfamiliar with the City to find appropriate parking spaces quickly which improves their experience with the Downtown and minimizes the re-circulation of this traffic as they look for spaces. Wayfinding signs are most effective when they contain a standard logo unique to the area and the message in brief. We recommend that the City develop the logo and that there be two different signs containing the following simple messages; “Public Parking”; “Public/RV Parking”. Signage should also be installed prohibiting overnight parking in the City lots without a permit which would be issued to people residing in the downtown. We recommend that these signs be located as follows:

- At State/Oak directing people down State Street - Public/RV Parking
- At State Street entrance to City Hall Lot- Public/RV Parking
- At the intersection of Oak and Church- Public/RV Parking
- At the intersection of School and Church- Public/RV Parking
- At Franklin and Main-Public Parking sign only since we do not want to direct RV's onto Franklin Street to access the City lot
- At each approach to the intersection of Main and Water Streets- Public/RV Parking
- On Water Street at the entrance to the City's lot by the Ellsworth American- Public Parking

### *Pedestrian Connections*

The downtown should be well lit and connected to the parking areas to facilitate pedestrian movements between them. While an extensive inventory of these connections was beyond the scope of this study, the connection to the Water Street lot to Main Street is via an alley which is not well lit. We recommend that lighting be installed along this connection.

### *Parking for City Employees*

We recommend that the City of Ellsworth implement a rideshare program at least during the summer months but preferably year round for City employees with a guaranteed ride home program through a local taxi service. Employees participating in the rideshare program at least

two times per week should receive preferential parking at City Hall. Parking at City Hall for employees should be limited to 20 spaces with overflow spaces at the City Lot on Franklin Street. On average, there are 15 to 20 spaces available in the Franklin Street, which is approximately 600 feet from City Hall or a three-minute walk. These spaces should be reserved and signed as City employee parking for Monday through Friday, 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM. These spaces would still be available for public use on evenings and weekends. The City should assign an employee such as the assistant planner as the transportation coordinator to promote and manage the rideshare program and encourage the use of public transportation.

#### *Bike Racks at City Hall*

The City should install bike racks in the City Hall parking lot to encourage the use of bicycles both by employees and the public. The City may wish to consider incentives for City employees, such a free cup of coffee, and perhaps working with a local bike shop to offer promotions, such as a drawing for bicycling equipment on a monthly basis.

#### *Educate Downtown Business Owners and Employees*

The City of Ellsworth already has the mechanism in place, through the Downtown Business Association, to promote a parking management plan. Through this group, information can be provided to all business owners in the Downtown that highlights the importance of parking management and keeping the “prime” parking spaces available for customer use. This information could be provided in the form of a brochure, or color-coded schematic map of the Downtown area, highlighting preferred customer parking as well as preferred locations for employee parking, including pedestrian connections.

Upon acceptance or adoption by the Ellsworth City Council, the implementation of this parking management plan will be an on-going process. This plan is also intended to be a dynamic plan for the City of Ellsworth, which should be evaluated on a regular basis, and updated as needed.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### **Project Background**

As a Primary Service Center for the region, the City of Ellsworth must be able to meet the needs of the resident population of the City, as well as a large “day population” of people coming to work, shop, etc. and many tourists annually. Many of these people find themselves in downtown Ellsworth, which is home to varied businesses, including service providers, restaurants, offices and retail establishments. Convenient parking for residents, customers, visitors and employees is crucial to the viability of the downtown. As such, the residents of Ellsworth have made the support of downtown, including the redevelopment along the waterfront, a priority for the City. An integral piece of this support must be an effective parking management plan.

Even with efficient use of existing parking spaces, as in-fill development is encouraged and occurs within the downtown, additional parking may be needed. A well-thought-out parking management plan, which includes short-range and long-range improvements, can maximize the efficiency of the parking spaces that are currently available. Appropriate parking regulations, flexible parking requirements and standards, and a plan for the financing and management of existing and future parking, including cost-sharing programs or public-private partnerships, are all part of parking management.

As part of the City’s strategy to support and promote the downtown, the City retained Gorrill-Palmer Consulting Engineers Inc. to conduct a parking management study for Downtown Ellsworth. An Advisory Committee was formed, consisting of City Staff and Elected Officials, and downtown business and property owners. This committee served the role of advisors to Gorrill-Palmer Consulting Engineers Inc. and provided valuable input throughout the study process.

This parking management plan will outline the existing conditions, including deficiencies, parking supply and demand within the downtown, as well as the future needs scenarios, based on anticipated growth and development. The major purpose of this plan is to develop a set of alternatives that will improve the overall parking management and efficiency of Downtown Ellsworth.

### **Study Area**

The study area for the project was bounded by High and Oak Streets to the east, the Union River to the west, Church Street to the north, and Pine Street to the south, and is shown in Figure 1 in Appendix A.

## **Project Goals**

The main purpose of this study is to determine the existing parking supply and demand within the downtown, as well as the future demand, based on anticipated growth and development. This plan will also identify recommendations to manage this parking.

As is to be expected in a vibrant, thriving Downtown, pedestrian and bicyclist activity is widespread. The diversity of uses in the downtown, including residential, office and retail, among others, creates the potential for increased multi-modal travel. The plan for management of parking in the Downtown should strive to encourage the use of all modes of transportation, as well as shared parking between various uses within the Downtown.

All of the recommendations identified and discussed in this document are ideas that are to be considered. This plan is a flexible, dynamic plan that will continue to evolve as the redevelopment of the Downtown continues. It should be viewed as a guiding document that will assist the City of Ellsworth in its continued livability of the downtown.

## Chapter 2

# Existing Conditions

Downtown Ellsworth is home to a variety of uses, ranging from office to commercial/retail to residential. All of these uses combine to create varied and dynamic parking needs. These various uses all have their own typical parking requirements concerning number of parking spaces and time of day of usage, as well as duration of usage. For example, an office likely requires that long-term parking (eight-hours) be available from approximately 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Retail establishments may require more parking spaces than an office, but for shorter durations. Parking for residential uses typically is at its peak in the evening hours.

In order to best evaluate the parking needs within Downtown Ellsworth, an accurate outline of the parking supply and demand is required. In July 2007, City staff surveyed Downtown Ellsworth to determine the parking supply. All on-street parking spaces were counted, as well as all off-street municipal parking lots. This survey also identified all parking restrictions, such as Handicap, Time Limits, etc., by space. The number and type of parking spaces within private parking lots were also counted.

Within the focused study area, there are 159 on-street parking spaces, 456 off-street parking spaces in public lots, and an additional 458 off-street parking spaces in privately owned lots. The tables on the following pages summarize the municipal parking space supply in Downtown Ellsworth.

**Table 2.1: Off-Street Parking Supply – Public Lots**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Type of Space</b>	<b>Number of Spaces</b>
<b>City Lot behind Main Block</b>		<b>8</b>
	Unrestricted	8
<b>City Lot on Water Street</b>		<b>41</b>
	Unrestricted	41
<b>City Lots on Franklin St</b>		<b>40</b>
	Unrestricted	40
<b>City Hall Main Lot</b>		<b>133</b>
	2-Hour	36
	Handicap	1
	20-Minute	4
	Unrestricted	92
<b>City Hall Upper Lot – Paved</b>		<b>31</b>
	2-Hour	30
	Not designated	1
<b>City Hall Upper Lot – Gravel</b>		<b>20</b>
	Unrestricted	20
<b>City Hall Back Lot</b>		<b>32</b>
	Handicap	1
	Not designated	6
	Reserved	7
	Unrestricted	18
<b>Library Lot</b>		<b>9</b>
	Unrestricted	9
<b>City Lot near Library</b>		<b>20</b>
	Unrestricted	20
<b>Court/Jail – Upper Lot</b>		<b>76</b>
	Handicap	4
	Not designated	6
	Reserved	2
	Unrestricted	64
<b>Court/Jail – Lower Lot</b>		<b>33</b>
	Not designated	2
	Reserved	9
	Unrestricted	22
<b>County Building Lot</b>		<b>13</b>
	Reserved	5
	Not designated	5
	Unrestricted	3
<b>Total Public Parking Lot Spaces</b>		<b>456</b>

**Table 2.2: On-Street Parking Supply**

Type of Space	Number of Spaces
Unrestricted	52
2-Hour	63
1-Hour	44
<b>Total On-Street Spaces</b>	<b>159</b>

With this information a detailed eight-hour parking count was conducted. On Monday, July 23, 2007, all parking spaces within the study area were counted and notation was made of which spaces were being used. This day was chosen as it was reflective of a typical summer day, with court in session. It should also be noted that weather conditions for that day were representative of a typical summer day; sunny and clear for most of the day, with light rain later in the afternoon.

The counts were conducted hourly, beginning at 8:00 AM and ending at 4:00 PM. Within the public lots and on-street where parking duration is limited, vehicle license plate information was also collected. This information was used to determine vehicle turnover rates to help determine the adequacy of current parking restrictions and time limitations. The following tables summarize the typical parking demand. The count data sheets are included in Appendix B.

These counts show that the public lots, on average, are used more extensively than the on-street parking. The eleven public parking lots averaged 71-percent occupancy during that count, versus slightly less than 50-percent occupancy of the on-street parking spaces. However, as is the case in most areas, some public lots operate at much closer to capacity than others. Also, some locations experience near full usage of the on-street parking spaces, while other spaces go mostly unused all day.

**Table 2.3: Average Usage of Municipal Parking Lots**

Location	Type of Space	Number of Spaces	Average Number of Spaces Used
<b>City Lot behind Main Block</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>
	Unrestricted	8	5
<b>City Lot on Water Street</b>		<b>41</b>	<b>33</b>
	Unrestricted	41	33
<b>City Lots on Franklin St</b>		<b>40</b>	<b>20</b>
	Unrestricted	40	20
<b>City Hall Main Lot</b>		<b>133</b>	<b>98</b>
	2-Hour	36	23
	Handicap	1	0
	20-Minute	4	1
	Unrestricted	92	74
<b>City Hall Upper Lot – Paved</b>		<b>31</b>	<b>25</b>
	2-Hour	30	25
	Not designated	1	0
<b>City Hall Upper Lot – Gravel</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>
	Unrestricted	20	12
<b>City Hall Back Lot</b>		<b>32</b>	<b>23</b>
	Handicap	1	0
	Not designated	6	1
	Reserved	7	6
	Unrestricted	18	16
<b>Library Lot</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>
	Unrestricted	9	7
<b>City Lot near Library</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>
	Unrestricted	20	16
<b>Court/Jail – Upper Lot</b>		<b>76</b>	<b>58</b>
	Handicap	4	2
	Not designated	6	3
	Reserved	2	2
	Unrestricted	64	51
<b>Court/Jail – Lower Lot</b>		<b>33</b>	<b>22</b>
	Not designated	2	0
	Reserved	9	7
	Unrestricted	22	15
<b>County Building Lot</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>
	Reserved	5	3
	Not designated	5	4
	Unrestricted	3	3
<b>Total Public Parking Lot Spaces</b>		<b>456</b>	<b>326</b>

**Table 2.4: Average Usage of On-Street Parking Spaces**

Type of Space	Number of Spaces	Average Number of Spaces Used
Unrestricted	52	21
2-Hour	63	28
1-Hour	44	26
<b>Total On-Street Spaces</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>75</b>

Looking at the data by sub-areas provides additional information. For example, the City Lots on Franklin Street and the gravel portion of the City Hall Upper Lot average around 50 to 60-

percent occupancy, while the remaining lots tend to average around 70 to 80-percent of their capacity. This variation holds true for the on-street parking as well. While the Main Street spaces average about 60-percent occupancy, the spaces along Water Street, Franklin Street and Hancock Street average approximately 30-percent occupancy. This variation in parking demand is likely due to a combination of factors, including concentration and intensity of uses in some areas, as well as type of uses, parking needs for various uses, and ease of finding the parking.

Overall, within the immediate Downtown area of Ellsworth, parking supply today is sufficient for current development levels. Typical parking demand for public spaces is around 65-percent of the available supply. When parking demand begins approaching 80 to 90 percent of the capacity, the supply begins to seem inadequate. There needs to be some excess supply throughout the downtown to allow for circulation and finding available parking spaces. There are roughly 90 excess parking spaces available before reaching that 80-percent threshold. This excess could be consumed by just one or two developments within the Downtown. The City is now at a critical stage in planning and preparing for the future of its Downtown.

# Chapter 3

## Future Parking Demand And Recommendations

City staff has completed a thorough assessment of potential redevelopment in the downtown. The majority of this development would come in the form of conversion of uses, and in the expansion of some existing uses, such as The Grand Auditorium or other performing arts initiatives. A sampling of this development, projected to occur within the ten-year horizon of this study, could result in the following breakdown of uses and typical parking needs:

**Table 3.1: Parking Requirements for Anticipated Downtown Growth**

Development Area	Size	Parking Spaces Required
Waterfront Area (Morrison/RF Jordan Lot)	10,960 s.f. commercial area; 1.46 ac. Public square	+/- 50 (Up to 46 new spaces created in waterfront area)
Grand Auditorium and/or other performing arts initiatives	Expand from 483 to 950 seats in three performance areas	317 (total) 156 (due to expansion)
Main Grind/Hancock Oil	Possible seasonal farmers market	+/-9 (including lost spaces)
Fernald Building (114 Franklin St)	Mixed-Use redevelopment	12 (mix of retail and office space)
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>227</b>

This mix of development results in an overall parking deficit of approximately 85 spaces, assuming 100-percent usage. If we include between ten to twenty percent excess, approximately 150 additional parking spaces would be required within the Downtown in the next twenty years. However, this does not account for any shared parking among new and existing uses.

Downtown Ellsworth contains a mix of retail, restaurant, entertainment and office uses. The parking demand for each of these uses peaks at different times of the day. For retail uses, the typical peak for parking is early to mid-afternoon, typically between 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM. However, for the restaurants, the typical peak for parking occurs in the evenings, between 7:00 PM and 9:00 PM. Office uses tend to have two peaks, between 10:00 AM and 12:00 PM, and again between 2:00 PM and 4:00 PM. Performing Arts spaces tend to peak between 6:00 PM and 10:00 PM, long after the retail and office uses have peaked. These offset peak demand times allow for the shared use of the parking supply, while accommodating users of varied uses.

Typical zoning ordinance parking supply ratios are based on the peak parking demand of each use. When there are uses with differing peak demand times within the same general area, providing parking to accommodate 100% of the peak demand for each use results in excess supply. The Urban Land Institute's publication *Shared Parking* provides both seasonal and hourly factors for a variety of land uses. These factors can be applied to the peak ratios found in the zoning ordinance to obtain an overall factored peak demand.

Given the lack of available land for surface parking, the encouragement and promotion of shared parking should be considered in the future. In practice, the concept of shared parking is already being realized in Downtown Ellsworth. Based on existing land uses, and applying the parking space ratios from the land use ordinance for each individual use, Downtown Ellsworth would need approximately 1,750 parking spaces, both public and private. However, peak parking demand showed 659 occupied parking spaces, including both public and private spaces, out of the 1,073 available spaces. Updates to the land use ordinance should be considered, to more strongly encourage the use of shared parking. Currently the only requirement is that a legal agreement assuring the joint usage be approved by the Planning Board and City Attorney. In addition to the current requirements, a parking study conducted by a Professional Engineer, utilizing standard data from the Urban Land Institute, the Institute of Transportation Engineers, or other appropriate resource, should be completed as part of the Planning Board application process.

# Chapter 4

## Parking Management Plan

An effective Parking Management Plan for the downtown will require a combination of actions including the following:

- Management of Parking Usage - Appropriate balance of short-term (i.e. one-hour or two-hour) parking for customers, clients, etc. and long-term (i.e. day long) parking for employees. There also needs to be an adequate supply of overnight parking for residents, as residential development is encouraged within the downtown.
- Development of sufficient spaces to meet the demand both today and in the next 20 years
- Development of a shared parking ordinance including acceptable distances from the uses for such parking
- Enforcement mechanisms
- Wayfinding to facilitate the people finding spaces
- Pedestrian connections to parking spaces, including appropriate lighting
- Encourage City employees to car pool; be aggressive in marketing public transportation
- Provide bike racks at City Hall
- Educate Downtown business owners and employees of the importance of parking management, and encourage their participation.

Recommendations for each of these components of the Plan are discussed below:

### *Management of Parking Usage*

The short-term parking should continue to be located closest to the businesses, with employee parking shifted to the perimeters of the downtown area. Currently, the parking inventory showed that of the 44 spaces on Main Street, 6 were occupied for more than 2 hours at a time which may be an indicator that these spaces were being utilized by people other than store customers. We recommend that the City dedicate 20 spaces in the City Hall lot for all day parking by employees of the Main Street businesses and that a free permit system be considered in order to ensure that these spaces are being utilized as intended. These spaces should be at the rear of the lot closest to Main Street.

Also, an additional 24 spaces, for a total of 60 parking spaces, should be signed as parking limited to 2-hours. Signage should be installed on Main Street limiting parking to ninety minutes. As an alternative to signage, parking meters could be installed along Main Street to promote the turnover that is critical for the retail businesses within the downtown. However, meters should only be considered if signage and enforcement are not effectively promoting the parking turnover desired in a downtown.

As residential redevelopment continues to be encouraged in the downtown, overnight parking will need to be available to accommodate the residents. A residential parking permit system should be considered to allow overnight parking in the City Hall Lot. This permit system would provide the available overnight parking, in appropriately signed and designated spaces in the City

Hall Lot, for downtown residents. In addition, given the number of seasonal tourists and recreational vehicles that visit downtown Ellsworth, 4 spaces for either RV or tour bus parking should also be allowed and signed in the City Hall Lot. These RV / tour bus spaces should be along the perimeter of the parking lot, to minimize maneuvering through the lots. This parking should be signed to restrict overnight RV parking.

To accommodate this reassignment of parking spaces in the City Hall Lot, City employees should be encouraged to park further from City Hall. On average, there are 15 to 20 spaces available in the Franklin Street, which is approximately 600 feet from City Hall or a three-minute walk. These spaces should be reserved and signed as City employee parking for Monday through Friday, 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM. These spaces would still be available for public use on evenings and weekends.

It should also be noted that the discussion of possibly relocating Police, Fire and some County departments to a location outside of the immediate downtown area would also “free up” many parking spaces that are currently used for day-long, employee parking. If this move does occur, the parking demands should be reassessed, in conjunction with an evaluation of the effectiveness of encouraging turnover parking, and more short-term parking spaces may be designated, with a shifting off employee parking.

It was noted that people often use the main City Hall Lot as a “park-n-ride” lot. Noting the need for such a facility, the City should designate a portion of the upper City Hall Lot as a park-n-Ride Lot, with appropriate signage.

#### *Development of Additional Parking Spaces*

The parking demand and supply analysis showed that there are sufficient spaces today to meet the demand, but that approximately 125 spaces are needed within the next ten years. We strongly recommend that one of the first steps in implementing the parking management plan be to pave and stripe the unpaved portion of the City Hall parking lot. This will not only improve the usage of this area, but will also improve the efficiency of the parking once striping is implemented.

There really is little land area proximate to the downtown area that can be utilized for additional parking. With a strong parking management plan, including appropriate wayfinding signage to underutilized areas, shared parking, and the potential growth and expansion of alternative modes of transportation, the need for additional parking may not materialize in the coming years. However, if a need did arise, for example due to a major business locating or expanding, there appear to be two options for a parking garage. One would be a parking deck over the surface lot on Water Street. In addition to being proximate to the Waterfront, the Water Street lot is only about a two-minute walk from Main Street. The second option would be to construct a parking deck or multi-level structure on the City Hall Lot. This lot is very centrally located and would provide easy access for customers, employees, visitors, and residents. However, this central location would also be quite visible from Main Street, City Hall, and many buildings within the downtown. A parking structure here, while able to provide a sufficient number of parking spaces in very close proximity to many uses, would also likely obstruct views of City Hall. Alternatively, a below-grade parking structure may be feasible under the City Hall Lot.

The true need for a parking structure should be carefully considered prior to undertaking further discussion and analysis to determine the best location, design, and layout of a potential parking structure, in order to maximize efficiency of space while minimizing visual impacts to the surroundings, and maintaining the balance of meeting the needs of the community.

#### *Development of Shared Parking Ordinance*

The City of Ellsworth Land Use Ordinance does currently allow for the joint use of parking facilities. This provision is Article XI., Section 11.02, G. Joint Parking Facilities. Currently the only requirement is that a legal agreement assuring the joint usage be approved by the Planning Board and City Attorney. In addition to the current requirements, a parking study conducted by a Professional Engineer, utilizing standard data from the Urban Land Institute, the Institute of Transportation Engineers, or other appropriate resource, should be completed as part of the Planning Board application process. This study should clearly demonstrate that the shared parking facility will provide sufficient spaces to meet the needs of all uses, based on the variations of peak parking demand by either time of day, day of week, duration of need, etc. The City Council should revise the Land Use Ordinance to reflect this additional requirement for the encouragement of shared parking.

#### *Enforcement*

The City of Ellsworth currently maintains seasonal parking enforcement through the Police Department and has a parking fine structure in place. This is an effective tool for the management of public parking, and this program should be continued and enhanced. Dedicated parking enforcement officers should continue to regularly patrol the downtown area, specifically those areas of time-restricted or permit parking, to ensure that these spaces are being utilized as intended.

With parking enforcement comes the need for parking fees and/or fines. A comparison of the parking fine structure for Ellsworth to that of Portland, Lewiston, and Westbrook, shows that while some of the fines in Ellsworth are lower than the average, they are still comparable. The following table provides the comparison of parking fines between the Cities of Ellsworth, Biddeford, Lewiston and Westbrook.

**Table 4.1: Comparison of Parking Fines**

<b>Parking Violation</b>	<b>Ellsworth</b>	<b>Biddeford</b>	<b>Lewiston</b>	<b>Westbrook</b>
Parking exceeding time limit	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$15.00	\$20.00
Parking in taxi stand, bus stop, or loading zone	\$25.00	\$15.00	\$20.00	\$40.00
Parking all night	\$25.00	\$10.00	\$20.00	\$20.00
Parking double	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$20.00	\$40.00
Parking too near fire hydrant	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$30.00	\$60.00
Parking in prohibited area	\$25.00	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$40.00
Parking on wrong side of street	\$25.00	\$10.00	\$20.00	\$20.00
Parking too near cross or corner	\$25.00	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$20.00
Parking in fire lane	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$20.00	\$60.00
Parking in crosswalk	\$25.00	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$40.00
Obstructing snow removal	\$25.00	\$10.00	\$25.00	\$60.00
Parking in handicapped space (State Legislation \$200)	\$50.00	\$100.00	\$75.00	\$40.00
Parking in front of public or private driveway	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$20.00	\$40.00
Other	\$25.00			\$20.00

It should be noted that if overtime parking becomes a significant problem, and signage and enforcement are not enough of a deterrent, the City may want to consider increasing the fine prior to implementing other measures, such as meters or paid-permit parking.

The City should also consider the creation of a Downtown Parking District, where a portion of all parking fees and/or fines generated within that District are used to provide infrastructure improvements or enhancements within the District.

If pursued, the introduction of parking meters would present the need for parking fees. A suggested fee structure for metered parking is as follows:

- All meters have a two-hour maximum to help eliminate confusion;
- Twenty-five cents for every 30 minutes

For permit parking, monthly or yearly parking rates would likely be the easiest to implement. A quick survey of various communities with parking garages or surface lots for paid parking shows that monthly parking rates vary from \$35.00 to \$48.00 per month in Lewiston-Auburn, and from \$65.00 to \$110.00 per month in Portland. Suggested rates, based on 2006 data, are as follows:

- Monthly parking rates:
  - \$35.00-\$40.00 per month
- Yearly parking rates:
  - \$325.00 per year

### *Wayfinding*

One of the best tools for this to happen effectively is signage. Throughout most of Downtown, adequate signage is already installed. However, improved wayfinding signage could help encourage the use of some the under-utilized public parking lots, and on-street parking, such as

Franklin Street, Water Street, Hancock Street, and School Street. In addition, clear, consistent time-restriction signage will help create the turnover parking desirable for retail, restaurant, and other commercial uses throughout the downtown. Wayfinding is a very important element of any parking management plan. Effective wayfinding allows people unfamiliar with the City to find appropriate parking spaces quickly which improves their experience with the Downtown and minimizes the re-circulation of this traffic as they look for spaces. Wayfinding signs are most effective when they contain a standard logo unique to the area and the message in brief. We recommend that the City develop the logo and that there be two different signs containing the following simple messages; “Public Parking”; “Public/RV Parking”. We recommend that these signs be located as follows:

- At State/Oak directing people down State Street - Public/RV Parking
- At State Street entrance to City Hall Lot- Public/RV Parking
- At the intersection of Oak and Church- Public/RV Parking
- At the intersection of School and Church- Public/RV Parking
- At Franklin and Main-Public Parking sign only since we do not want to direct RV's onto Franklin Street to access the City lot
- At each approach to the intersection of Main and Water Streets- Public/RV Parking
- On Water Street at the entrance to the City's lot by the Ellsworth American- Public Parking

Signage should also be installed prohibiting overnight parking in the City lots without a permit which would be issued to people residing in the downtown.

#### *Pedestrian Connections*

The downtown should be well lit and connected to the parking areas to facilitate pedestrian movements between them. While an extensive inventory of these connections was beyond the scope of this study, the connection to the Water Street lot to Main Street is via an alley which is not well lit. We recommend that lighting be installed along this connection.

#### *Parking for City Employees*

We recommend that the City of Ellsworth implement a rideshare program at least during the summer months but preferably year round for City employees with a guaranteed ride home program through a local taxi service. Employees who rideshare should be rewarded with a preferred parking at City Hall and perhaps coupons for free cups of coffee or other incentives. Parking at City Hall for employees should be limited to 20 spaces with overflow spaces at the City Lot on Franklin Street. The City should assign an employee such as the assistant planner as the transportation coordinator to promote and manage the rideshare program and encourage the use of public transportation.

#### *Bike Racks at City Hall*

The City should install bike racks in the City Hall parking lot to encourage the use of bicycles both by employees and the public. The City may wish to consider incentives such a free cup of

coffee and perhaps working with a local bike shop to offer promotions such as a drawing for bicycling equipment on a monthly basis.

*Educate Downtown Business Owners and Employees*

The City of Ellsworth already has the mechanism in place, through the Downtown Business Association, to promote an effective parking management plan. Through this group, information can be provided to all business owners in the Downtown that highlights the importance of parking management and keeping the “prime” parking spaces available for customer use. This information could be provided in the form of a brochure, or color-coded schematic map of the Downtown area, highlighting preferred customer parking as well as preferred locations for employee parking, including pedestrian connections.