

OYSTER BAY PARKING INITIATIVE

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Prepared for:

Oyster Bay Main Street Association

President:

Jerritt Gluck

Executive Director:

Joan Mahon



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1.0 BACKGROUND

The Oyster Bay Main Street Association has commissioned RMS Engineering to develop a parking plan for the hamlet of Oyster Bay and to provide technical expertise and guidance to aid in the development of practical solutions for the parking initiative.

The intent of the plan is to:

- Inventory the existing off-street and on-street parking in the hamlet
- Study existing parking patterns
- Review previously completed parking and hamlet studies
- Incorporate the ongoing efforts of the Oyster Bay Hamlet Parking Committee
- Develop recommendations for improving parking conditions
- Develop practical strategies for the implementation of the recommendations of this plan and prior studies

The previously completed studies incorporated into this plan are the Oyster Bay Hamlet Plan (Town of Oyster Bay, by Frederick P. Clark and Associates, 2001), Oyster Bay, Your Town, Your Future (Oyster Bay Main Street Association, 2001) the Oyster Bay Hamlet Parking Survey (Island Properties, by RMS Engineering, 2001) and the Parking Study of the Hamlet of Oyster Bay Addendum (Oyster Bay Chamber of Commerce, by Edward J. Sharsky Consulting Engineers, 1985).

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Downtown Oyster Bay, like most traditional downtowns, has a limited supply of parking available. This is an inherent challenge of most downtowns, largely because they predate the automobile. Downtowns and their surrounding residential areas were developed in concentrated patterns to allow shoppers and workers to walk to town. With the prevalence of middle class automobile ownership, residential and commercial development began to radiate outward from the centers, allowing for Long Island's post World War II suburban development explosion.

In order to adapt to changing patterns of development, most downtowns, Oyster Bay included, have accommodated automobiles through the creation of municipal parking areas. These parking areas are generally located in the rear of stores and offices, often presenting issues such as accessibility, security and maintenance.

The availability of convenient parking in downtown Oyster Bay is an essential component of successful future development. An adequate supply of parking that is well positioned within the downtown context attracts shoppers and visitors, and ensures continued viability. Without parking which is relatively convenient, downtowns cannot compete with Long Island's regional shopping malls, multiplex theaters and office parks.

3.0 EXISTING PARKING INVENTORY

In order to evaluate existing parking conditions and arrive at a sensible parking plan, the existing parking supply must be estimated. Total parking supply includes all stalls available to downtown users, both publicly and privately owned.

3.1 Off-Street Parking Supply

There are eight Town-owned municipal parking lots in the downtown area (**refer to Figure 1**). According to field inspections performed by RMS Engineering in August 2000, the number of stalls in each lot is as follows:

	<u># of stalls</u>
• Water District/Raynham Hall (north side of W. Main St.) (#O-1)	81
• West Main Street Lot (south side) (#O-2)	41
• White Street Lot (#O-3)	39
• Townsend Square Lot (#O-4)	166
• Town Hall Parking (#O-5)	124
• Town Hall Lot (west side of building)	24
• Fireman's Field (#O-6)	285*
• Summit Street Annex Lot (#O-7)	33

Total Municipal Off-street Stalls: 793 stalls

* 77 of the stalls counted are on the property of the LIRR, for the purpose of this study, they will be included as municipal stalls.

The municipal parking lots in the hamlet are well distributed, with all but Fireman's Field (Lot #O-6), located in the downtown core. Although Fireman's Field is located on the downtown "fringe", it is within a reasonable walking distance from many of the hamlet's stores and offices (**refer to Figure 4**).

It is important to note that private parking lots located within the downtown area are not included in this total. While most downtown businesses do not maintain off-street parking, there are some exceptions, such as, the Fiddleheads center (14 stalls), West Main Street Office (56 stalls), Verelli's (12 stalls), and Fleet Bank (12 stalls). In addition to these private parking lots, there are several small unmarked parking areas located in the rear of various businesses within the Hamlet. For the purposes of this study, it is estimated that there are 150 private, off-street parking stalls within the hamlet.

Total Municipal Off-street Stalls:	793 stalls
Estimated Private Off-street Stalls:	<u>150 stalls</u>
Total Off-street Stalls:	943 stalls

3.2 On-Street Parking

A parking survey completed by RMS Engineering in August 2000 determined that there are 518 on-street (curbside) stalls in the downtown area (see Figure 2 and Tables 3.1 – 4.4). The study area incorporated 23 street segments, all of which were adjacent to or near the eight municipal parking areas. Some of the on-street segments are in the “core” of town, and some are on the “fringe”. In order to determine and evaluate parking supply within the hamlet, each of the 23 segments will be included as a whole. However, the occupancy analysis that follows later in this study will review the on-street parking conditions in both the overall study area (broad scope) and the core (narrow scope) of the hamlet.

The existing supply of parking in the hamlet is represented as follows:

Off-street:	943 stalls
On-street:	<u>518 stalls</u>
Total Supply:	1,461 stalls

3.3 Ratio of Parking to Population

In order to determine a ratio of parking to population (per capita parking), a community population must be derived. For the purposes of this study, the community most likely to frequent downtown Oyster Bay has been approximated based on geographic boundaries and the presence of competing downtowns, such as Bayville, Locust Valley and Syosset. The estimated market area includes the entire populations of Oyster Bay, East Norwich, Oyster Bay Cove, Cove Neck, and Mill Neck, and 50% of the populations of Upper Brookville, Bayville and Centre Island (50% reductions were assumed because the boundaries of these hamlets or villages were outside a reasonable radius from downtown). The population numbers were obtained from the Long Island Power Authority’s 2002 Long Island Population Survey (see Table 5).

The estimated population of the resultant community is 17,645 persons. The ratio of parking to population is derived as follows:

1,471 stalls / 17,645 capita = 0.083 x 1,000 = 83 stalls per 1,000/capita

A table has been included in this study that lists 45 small cities and their rates of parking compared to their populations (from “Parking: The Parking Handbook for Small Communities”, by John D. Edwards, 1994, National Trust for Historic Preservation and The Institute of Transportation Engineers) (**see Table 6**). The following is an explanation, from the Parking Handbook, of this table:

“While smaller towns generally have a greater number of spaces per 1,000 people – 50 to 100+ spaces – communities in the 18,000 to 20,000 population range commonly provide only 40 to 60 spaces per 1,000 people. The reader can see how parking supply in his/her area compares by looking at the number of parking spaces provided by a community of comparable size.”

Therefore, assuming a community of 17,645 persons, the supply of parking in downtown Oyster Bay is comparable to cities of similar populations.

4.0 PARKING STUDY FINDINGS

The parking data included in this plan was originally gathered in preparation for the Oyster Bay Hamlet Plan (Town of Oyster Bay, by Frederick P. Clark & Associates, 2001).

Parking data was collected on both weekdays and weekends, on days with clear, dry weather conditions. The study dates chosen were Thursday June 15, Saturday June 17, Wednesday October 25, and Saturday October 28, all in the year 2000. Counts were conducted in half hour increments from 8:00 am to 9:00 pm on weekdays, and on Saturdays from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm. The quantity of vehicles parked legally and illegally was recorded.

4.1 Off-street Parking

Not surprisingly, Oyster Bay’s municipal parking lots are very active on weekdays. From 10:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., the parking lots were at a minimum of 79% occupancy, with a peak of 93%. The

average overall occupancy during that time frame was 88%. These off-street occupancy figures do not include Fireman's Field (Lot #O-6), as the study confirmed the commonly known fact that is underutilized. During the weekdays, it is between 10% and 43% occupied, with an average occupancy of only 24%. For the purpose of this study, it was removed from the overall capacity figures, as its lack of use statistically misrepresents the data.

On weekends, use of the municipal lots is significantly reduced. Occupancy is fairly constant throughout the day, ranging from 36% to 48%. The municipal lot running between Audrey Avenue and South Street (#O-5) experiences a slight increase in occupancy on Saturday evenings at dinnertime, as it is adjacent to several of the hamlet's restaurants (average of 59% occupancy between 8:00 and 10:00 p.m., 45% for the remainder of the day). Fireman's Field experienced a notable increase of midday parking on Saturday in June, as it is adjacent to one of the points of pedestrian access to Roosevelt Memorial Park (average of 38% occupancy between 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m., 22% for the remainder of the day).

4.2 On-Street Parking within Hamlet

During the week, on-street parking occupancy throughout the study area ranges between 40% and 75%, with peak demand occurring at lunchtime (70% occupied between noon and 2:30 p.m.). It is important to note, however, that the study area is geographically broad, and includes many street segments that are outside the downtown core. As a result, the foregoing occupancy figures do not adequately reflect the frustration of downtown patrons attempting to locate a parking stall in front of the most frequently visited stores.

On weekends, on-street parking in the hamlet remained fairly constant throughout the day, ranging from an average of 44% occupancy to an average of 60% occupancy.

4.3 On-Street Parking in the Core Area

For the purpose of this study the "core" area of the Hamlet is defined as follows; Audrey Avenue between Spring Street and South Street; East Main Street between South Street and Church Street and South Street between Orchard Street and Hamilton Avenue. During the week, on-

street parking occupancy core area ranges between 52% and 108%, with peak demand occurring at lunchtime (over 100% of the stalls in this area were occupied between noon and 2:00p.m.), that is to say upwards of 10 cars were parking in illegal parking spots within the core area at the time of the analysis.

On weekends, on-street parking ranged from an average of 77% occupancy to an average of 101% occupancy between the hours of 10:00am and 10:30pm.

In order to further evaluate the on-street parking conditions in the downtown core, a Parking Turnover Study should be completed, which would count not only the number of cars parked in the downtown core stalls, but the duration of each car's parking period. This study would undoubtedly confirm that many on-street stalls in the core of town are occupied for the majority of the day, preventing efficient stall turnover throughout the course of a business day.

5.0 PARKING SUMMARY

A review of the existing parking inventory and parking study counts for the Downtown area reveals that the perceived parking problem in the hamlet is not necessarily based on overall parking supply. Only the off-street lots and on-street segments in the immediate core of town are parked at or near capacity on weekdays. Parking availability is much better outside the core and on the fringe of town on weekdays.

On weekends, both on-street and off-street parking is available throughout the hamlet. (The reduction in weekend parking activity demonstrates the imperfect mix of uses within downtown Oyster Bay: office uses predominate the mix, and there are not enough restaurants and retail stores to attract Saturday "day trippers".)

Therefore, it is clear that the current parking situation in Oyster Bay will improve with the implementation of parking management strategies. While physical improvements will produce a slight increase in the number of stalls, management strategies will accomplish two goals:

- 1) Attract long term users to the underutilized fringe parking areas and;
- 2) Encourage stall turnover in both the on-street and off-street areas within the core area which are parked at or near capacity.

6.0 THE PARKING PLAN

6.1 Physical Improvements

Schematic improvements plans were prepared by RMS Engineering for Fireman's Field and Townsend Square. These plans were presented to the community at an open meeting of the Oyster Bay Main Street Association and refinements were made based upon the community input. Townsend Square was chosen as the starting point for the revitalization and parking initiative. RMS Engineering, along with representatives of the Oyster Bay Main Street Association, the Chamber of Commerce and the Oyster Bay Civic Association, met with the representatives of the Town of Oyster Bay in an effort to achieve a solution that could be implemented in the fall of 2003 (**refer to Figure 10**).

The Town of Oyster Bay has retained an engineering consultant to convert the schematic designs for Townsend Square and Fireman's Field prepared by RMS Engineering to detailed construction documents for a Fall 2003 and Spring 2004 construction season.

The proposed improvements include the goal of increasing the amount of available parking, providing enhanced uniform low impact area lighting, pedestrian friendly walkways, safer vehicular circulation and an overall beautification of the lot. Landscaped islands are proposed within the parking area in an effort to create pockets of shade and to break up the overall expanse of the parking area.

The improvements in the Townsend Square parking lot will set the standard for the continued improvement of the major parking areas within the Hamlet and should be used as a guide for any redevelopment of private off-street parking areas.

6.2 Future Considerations:

A. Parking Lot Reconfigurations & Improvements

The remaining municipal parking lots in the downtown area should be reconfigured when it is determined that a more efficient layout is possible. The installation of landscaped islands and better lighting will increase the attractiveness of these parking areas to both patrons and employees. In addition, sidewalks and pedestrian walkways/plazas leading to and from parking areas should be improved with consistent “street furniture” (i.e. benches, trash receptacles) to make the walk between the parking areas and the pedestrian’s destination more convenient and attractive.

- 1. White Street (#0-3):** The White Street parking area is in a serious state of disrepair. The lot is well suited to serve the retail stores located along the north side of East Main Street and the Doubleday Senior Center, however due to the undesirable condition offers little value to alleviate the on-street congestion. It should be evaluated for reconfiguration, the potential exists to work with the major land owners who border the lot to establish rear access to the retail stores, to merge the small parking area located behind 11 & 17 East Main Street with the municipal lot and to convert the narrow driveway from East Main Street to that lot to a pedestrian walkway. The possibility also exists for the reconfiguration of the westerly portion of the lot if the now abandon Uve’s Restaurant and the adjacent vacant parcels are redeveloped. The Town should encourage any future development to be situated in the northerly vacant parcel and the parking to be constructed to the south in order to serve as an expansion of the White Street parking lot (**refer to Figure 12**). This type of Public/Private partnership provides an ideal way for both the Town and developer to benefit.
- 2. Town Hall Parking Lot (#0-5):** The Town Hall parking lot is provides one of the best locations in the center of the Hamlet to park and enjoy shopping or patronizing one of the eateries. The problem is the fact that during the weekdays the lot is full of Town Hall employees either by use of restricted parking stalls or by utilizing spaces for the entire day. This is true not only of the Town employees but of employees of the other businesses in the Hamlet. With the redevelopment of the Fireman’s Field lot the Town should reduce the number of restricted spaces, increase the number of Visitor spaces and free up the remaining

spaces for patrons of the Hamlet. In addition, the Town should entertain the idea of expanding the on-grade parking area to the north by acquiring property on the south side of Hamilton Avenue. The existing vehicular entrance off South Street could be closed and converted into a pedestrian plaza with seating, landscaping and sculpture, and the vehicular access relocated to Hamilton Avenue (**refer to Figure 11**).

3. **Raynham Hall Lot (#0-1):** The Raynham Hall/Water District Parking area creates a great opportunity to provide a pedestrian connection from the historic landmark to the businesses along Audrey Avenue. The initiative taken by Island Properties to design the improvements and the Town's responsiveness in constructing those improvements should be complimented.
4. **West Main Street Lot (#0-2):** The West Main Street lot is a small parking area tucked behind the retail and business uses on West Main Street, Orchard Street and South Street. To the west of the municipal lot is a small private parking area for the Verelli's Market. Consideration should be given to tying the two parking lots together to form a more efficient parking area and to expand and define the pedestrian access point to the parking area (**refer to Figure 13**).
5. **Summit Street (#0-7):** The Summit Street lot behind the Italian American Hall provides another opportunity for the Town to encourage an adjacent landowner to expand the parking lot and share the increased space with the adjacent businesses. The potential exists for an entrance or exit (vehicular and/or pedestrian) from the parking lot onto South Street. The pedestrian walkways should be tied into the proposed pedestrian walks being redeveloped as part of the Townsend Square improvements (**refer to Figure 14**).

B. Create Connections and Attract Users to the Fringe

Fringe parking lots, notably Fireman's Field, should be improved with landscaping, striping and lighting to encourage usage. Existing pedestrian walkways leading from parking areas to the downtown (especially the walkway adjacent to the Post Office) should be improved with sidewalk repairs, lighting and painting or resurfacing of the adjacent walls (**refer to Figure 8**). Additional pedestrian walkways should be constructed whenever possible. The proposed improvements to the

Fireman's Field parking area include the construction of bulb outs and a defined pedestrian crosswalk between the Post Office and the westerly entrance to Town Hall. The bulb out and cross walk (potentially improved with raised brick pavers to permanently define the pedestrian path) would result in safer pedestrian travel by reducing the distance necessary to cross the wide intersection. Other suggestions include naming the Post Office walkway, and the construction of arches at both ends to better define its location.

C. Investigate Existing Circulation

Suggestions have been made in the past to enact a one-way vehicular flow pattern through part of the downtown to increase on-street parking capacity through the use of angled stalls. The streets that have been identified are the loop formed by Audrey Avenue, Spring Street and West Main Street, west of South Street. This suggestion has merit, but further study of this proposal is recommended, which is outside the scope of this study.

Traffic calming measures, such as roundabouts and intersection bulb-outs, have been proposed throughout the hamlet to improve pedestrian and vehicular circulation. These measures also have merit, and also require further evaluation. Bulb-outs, which create safe pedestrian crossings at intersections while protecting on-street parallel parking stalls and creating larger turning radii for emergency vehicles and delivery trucks, are cost-effective improvements in downtown areas. The creation of bulb-outs should be considered in the next phase of the Parking Initiative and implemented soon after the completion of Fireman's Field.

6.3 Management Strategies

Parking management in Downtown Oyster Bay is an essential component of this Parking Initiative. As previously stated, supply is not the main problem in the hamlet, but rather, ineffective use of the existing parking.

The evaluation of existing parking conditions revealed that both on-street and off-street parking availability in the core of downtown Oyster Bay is often limited, especially during the weekday "lunch" period. The study also indicated that fringe parking areas, such as Fireman's Field, are relatively

underutilized. Therefore, to address the current parking shortages, implementation of parking management strategies are warranted.

The following management strategies will increase the availability of existing parking and allow for limited growth:

- A. Encourage Parking Stall Turnover** - All of the municipal parking lots studied are currently unrestricted. In order to increase the availability of the stalls closest to the stores for shoppers (short term users), it is recommended that time restrictions (30 minute, 2 hour or unrestricted) be placed throughout the parking lots, with the exception of Fireman's Field (**refer to Figure 5**) Employees of downtown stores and offices (long term users) would be prohibited from parking in on-street stalls in the downtown core. With the exception of disabled persons, employees should be required to park in the portions of the parking lots that are furthest from the buildings or in fringe parking lots, such as Fireman's Field. This will increase on-street availability in front of stores for customers (short term users). Business owners should designate perimeter stalls of private lots for employee use. The Town of Oyster Bay should reduce its number of stalls designated for employee use in the Town Hall Parking Lot (#O-5), and require employees to park in Fireman's Field.
- B. Installation of Parking Meters** – Preliminary research indicates that the technology in this area has advanced significantly, through the use of digital meters, simplified collection and computerized enforcement. If implemented properly, an On-Street Parking Meter System would be self-financing and cost effective. If it is determined after further research that a full system should not be installed at this time, a trial program should be implemented (**refer to Figure 6**). The trial area should coincide with the core area defined geographically as: Audrey Avenue between Spring Street and South Street; East Main Street between South Street and Church Street and South Street between Orchard Street and Hamilton Avenue. This core is highly utilized during the peak time periods on the weekdays and all day on Saturday (**see Tables 4.1 – 4.4**).

- C. Enforcement** – Enforcement is a critical component of a successful parking plan. Time restrictions placed in off-street lots and the on-street meters would need to be diligently enforced in order to encourage proper parking space allocation. In addition, aggressive enforcement would raise revenue through fine collection. After notification of merchants and property owners, the Town, in cooperation with the Nassau County Police Department, should initiate a strict enforcement program.
- D. Signage** - A detailed signage and pavement-marking plan should be prepared and implemented to assist patrons of the hamlet to the various parking areas. Municipal parking signs and pavement markings must be consistent, visible and informative, directing drivers to the rear of stores, offices and fringe parking areas. Signage should be supplemented with the use of colorful banners, which will also serve to soften the appearance of utility poles. The banners should be designed to compliment the Kiosks installed this summer by the Main Street Association.
- E. Loading Plan** - In order to increase the available supply of on-street parking and improve vehicular circulation throughout the business area, a plan for commercial off-street loading areas should be developed. Loading should take place only in off-peak hours, and should occur in the rear of stores, when possible. There are several locations within the hamlet where valuable on-street parking is taken up by (all-day) loading restrictions. New spaces could be created in these spots with restricted or short time limits such as 15-minute or ½ hour parking in addition to creating “no parking” times set aside for the deliveries.