



## **TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM #2: PUBLIC OUTREACH**

To: Town of Concord  
From: Nelson\Nygaard  
Date: March 20, 2013  
Subject: Public Outreach

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### **OVERVIEW**

The project team undertook a multi-step public outreach process throughout this study to understand more about the preferences and behaviors of those who utilize, interact with, or have a stake in the parking system in Concord. To collect data of parking needs and preferences, the Town conducted outreach efforts using the following methods:

- Online user surveys, posted on the Town website and email listservs
- Paper tourist surveys, distributed at key visitor locations
- Stakeholder interviews with more than a dozen key stakeholders
- Public open house meetings
- Concord Business Association meeting

Parking supply and utilization data is important to quantitatively document the parking activity in Concord. However, utilization data cannot fully tell the story of the users' experiences of the system – the customer that continues to circle for a spot, the employee that shuffles his car every couple of hours, the resident impacted by long-term parkers out front, and the commuter that gets to Concord early to ensure a spot at the station.

This technical memorandum documents the public outreach process, exploring the outcomes of these efforts and identifying the direct contributions of Concord residents, landowners, employers, employees, commuters, and visitors to the parking management study.

### **Study Areas**

The project team's public outreach efforts varied both to capture overall town sentiment, and to complete more targeted outreach that isolated each activity center. At the Study's initiation, a general public meeting covering all areas and parking related issues was conducted. This meeting was informed by initial parking inventory results and survey data. Meeting participants also had the opportunity to identify key issues in both the Concord Center/Thoreau Depot & West Concord areas. User survey data was collected for both study areas, as participants self-identified which area their responses reflected, with many completing both surveys. Survey results are presented for each area, with similarities and differences highlighted in this memorandum. The stakeholder interviews, and business association meetings generally included both areas, with issues and

opportunities identified and incorporated into each Study Area's recommendations. Once data was collected and recommendations were drafted for each Study Area, two separate public meetings (one for Concord Center and one for West Concord) were held to allow for a more in depth discussion of each area.

## OVERALL KEY FINDINGS

- Concord Center and West Concord are service-oriented town centers, oriented to the customer
- A majority of the business community prefers two-hour on-street time limits for customers
  - 83% of business merchants report that one hour time limits are not enough
  - Most customers report staying for at least an hour
  - Parking tickets are a major deterrent for customer satisfaction
- Customers seek convenience and ease in finding parking; however, employees really care about how close their space is to their job, and may be taking prime customer spaces before customers arrive
- Most drivers to Concord Center and West Concord said they can find “convenient parking” – within a four minute walk of their destination.
- Half of customers report that “convenience” is the most important factor when parking in Concord Center.
- Stakeholders report that price of parking is not an issue in Concord, and that \$0.50 an hour to park on-street is not a deterrent to visiting Concord
- Tourists don't have much trouble locating a parking space once they arrive in town
- Open House participants identified a need for more commuter parking in Concord Center, circulation issues around the Depot, a lack of parking signage, and dangerous intersections
- Most stakeholders did not identify major parking problems, with many reporting that finding a space in Concord Center or West Concord is easy except during the December holiday season
- The business community is interested in a parking management strategy that ties economic development to parking availability

## ONLINE ACTIVITY

This section documents online survey input from parkers in Concord Center and West Concord regarding their parking activities, experiences, perceptions, and preferences. To collect this data, the Town posted two sixteen-question (plus an open-ended response) electronic surveys on its website. 196 respondents filled out the West Concord survey, while 323 people responded to the Concord Center survey. The sections below outline the responses and trends in the survey data for both Concord Center and West Concord.

### Key Findings: Concord Center Survey Responses

Respondents to the survey in general found convenient and free parking in Concord Center. Of all respondents, 73% reported parking in free parking spaces, both in lots and on the street. 77% of respondents parked within a four minute walk of their destination; however respondents also often said that finding parking usually took them longer than on the day that they answered the survey. A majority of those visiting Concord Center (69%) had more than one destination, and 87% of respondents said that they parked only once in the downtown. These two trends together indicate that people are driving to Concord, parking once, and then are able to access multiple activities from that one location.

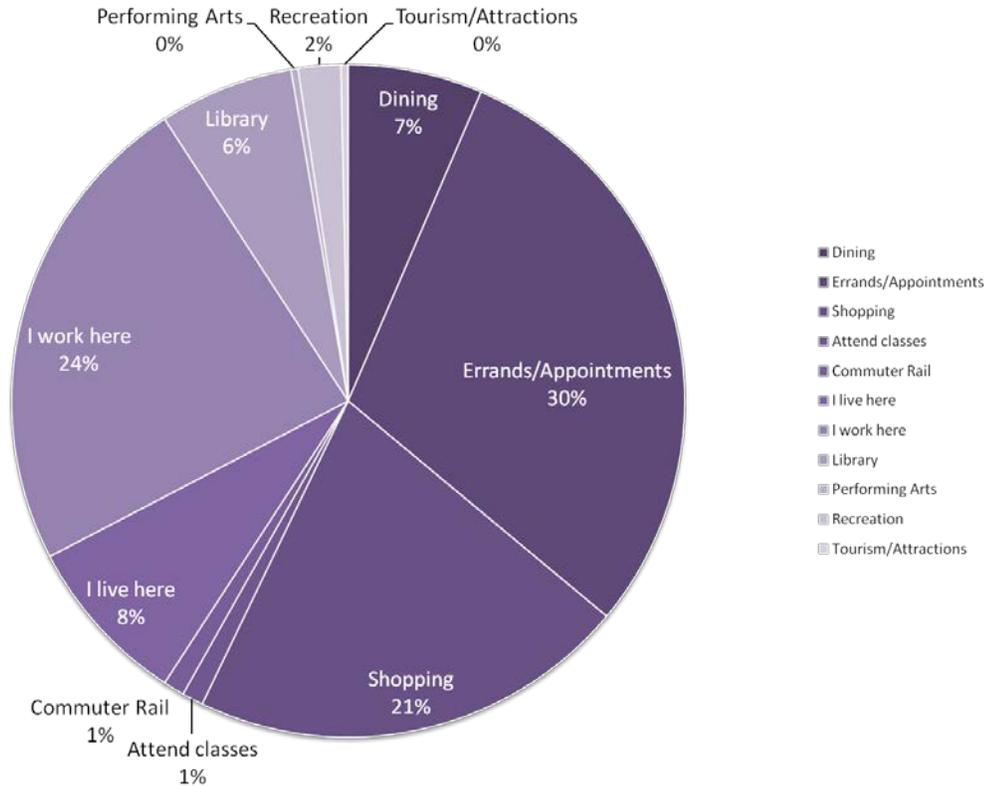
As expected, most employees reported parking for more than four hours, while customers generally stayed in Concord Center for about an hour. A larger proportion of employees (56%) reported parking within one minute of their destination than customers (35%). However, more customers than employee respondents parked on the street at both metered and unmetered spots. Finally, 26% of respondents said that they would pay more to park closer to their destination, while 74% said that they would rather pay less and be farther away from their destination.

The following sections outline the aforementioned trends in more detail, describing user experiences, perceptions and preferences for parking in Concord Center.

### Concord Center: Survey Respondents by User Group

As shown in Figure 1, most survey respondents are employees (24%) or those running errands/shopping (51%). Of the respondents, about three quarters (73%) drove alone, while 18% drove with others, for a total of 91% arriving in Concord Center by car. The majority of respondents reported a Concord home zip code.

Figure 1 Survey Respondents by User Group



### Concord Center: Reasons for Choosing a Parking Space

For both customers and employees, the location and ease of finding a parking spot are important in deciding where to park, as shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3.

Figure 2 Parking Preference- Customer

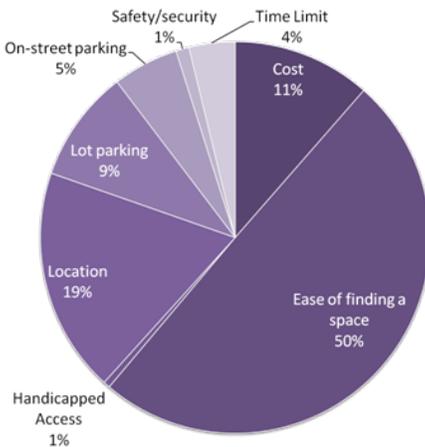


Figure 3 Parking Preference - Employee



The ease of finding a parking spot is more important to customers, while the location is more important for employees. Cost and the ability to park in a lot are also important to both groups. In fact, overall, 79% of respondents parked in free parking spaces. 26% of employees and 13% of residents in Concord Center have their own designated parking spot.

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked whether they would rather pay less and park farther away from their destination or pay more but be closer. In Concord Center 26% of respondents said that they would pay more to park closer to their destination, while 74% said that they would rather pay less and be farther away from their destination.

Figure 4 Parking Choice - Customer

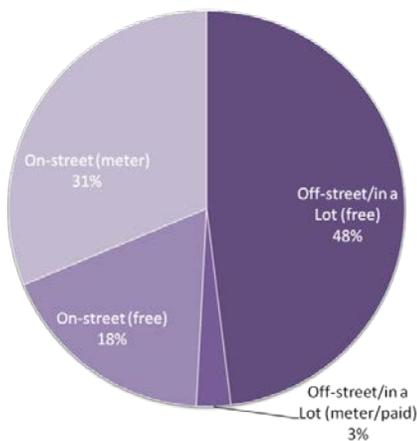
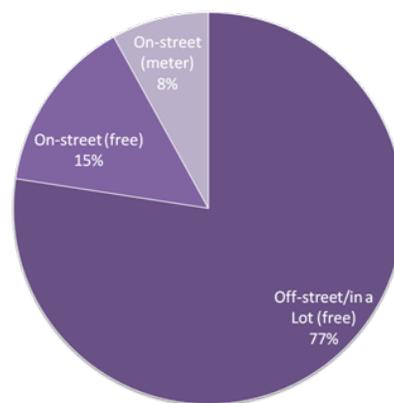


Figure 5 Parking Choice - Employee



### Concord Center: Length of Stay

Figure 6 shows that almost one-third of customers are staying longer than one hour. Two-thirds stay longer than 30 minutes. The one-hour on-street time limit may not be long enough for many customers.

Figure 6 Length of Stay

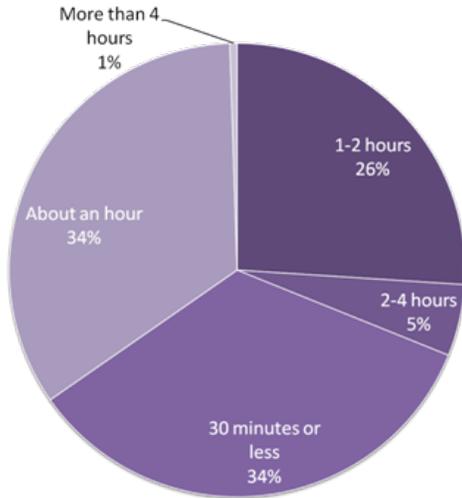
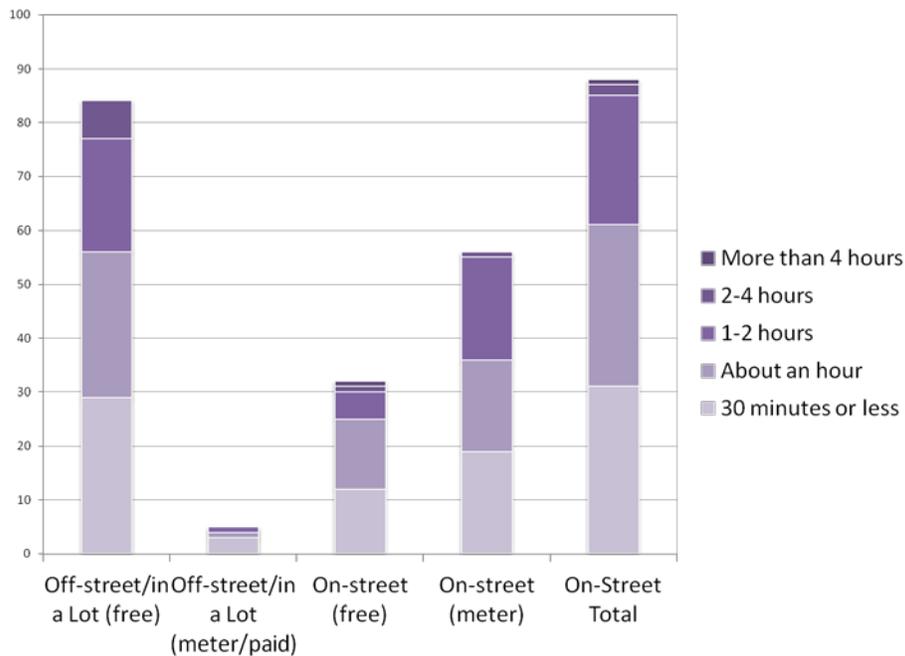


Figure 7 shows that most customers parked in free lots or at metered on-street parking. Customers that reported staying in Concord for two to four hours used a parking lot rather than on-street parking, while the proportions of short-term parkers (one hour or less) for both on-street and lot parking were similar.

Figure 7 Length of Stay and Location - Customers



### **Concord Center: Key Comments from Survey Respondents**

- “I have chosen not to go downtown in anticipation of tough parking situations.”
- “I have no problems in Concord Center. I park in the free lots and walk, or I park on the street before the meters need money.”
- “I’ve lived in town over 20 years, and the only time I could not find parking was during a parade or a special event.”
- “As a shop owner I continually see my customers running out of my shop panicked to get to their meter to feed it or move their vehicle.”
- Respondents like the 12 minute free parking option.
- Many respondents noted parking overflow issues around Emerson Playground.
- Several respondents requested more bike racks.
- Many respondents noted commuter parking overflow issues in the Thoreau Depot area.
- Several respondents feel that one hour parking limits hinder their experiences downtown.

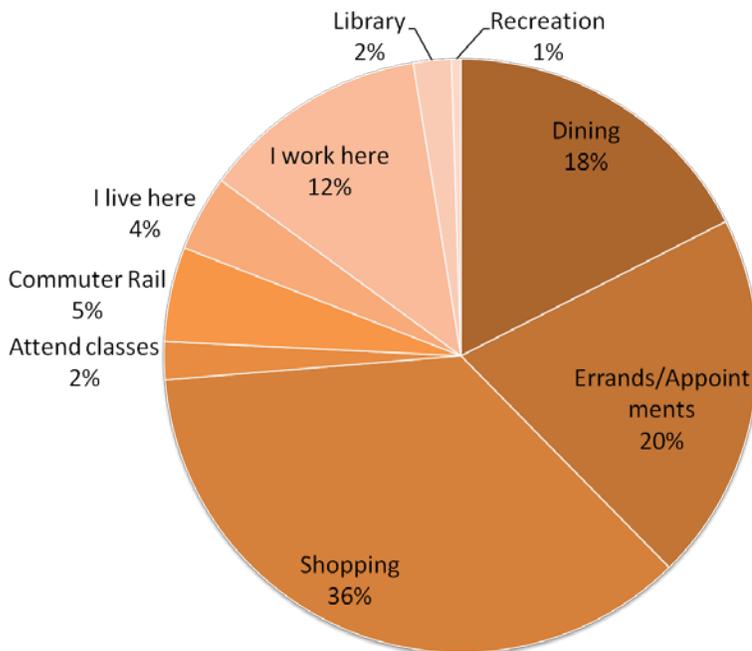
## Key Findings: West Concord Survey Responses

Survey respondents in West Concord were concerned with the ease of finding and location of a parking spot, but were generally able to find spots within a four-minute walk. Many respondents, particularly employees (84%), were able to park right in front of their destination or within a one-minute walk. However, no employees paid to park on the street, while 42% of customers paid for metered on-street parking.

A majority of those visiting West Concord (69%) had more than one destination, and 86% of respondents said that they parked only once in the downtown. These two trends together indicate that people are driving to West Concord, parking once, and then are able to access multiple activities from that one location.

### West Concord: Survey Respondents by User Group

Figure 8 Survey Respondents by User Group



Three-quarters of respondents go to West Concord to shop, dine, and run errands, as shown in Figure 8.

### West Concord: Parking Location and Length of Stay

Figure 9 shows that no employees paid for parking in West Concord, while a significant number of customers (42%) paid to park on-street in metered spots.

Figure 9 Customer Parking Locations

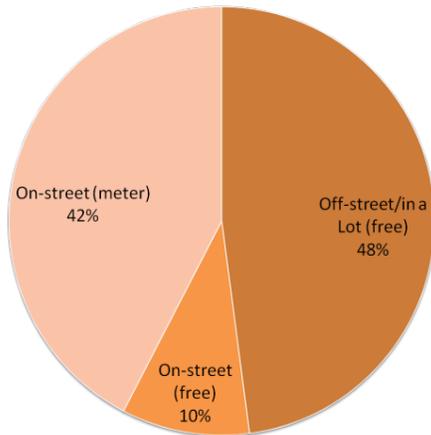
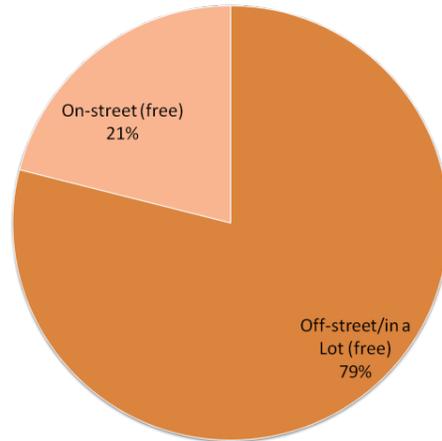


Figure 10 Employee Parking Locations



More employees are parking off-street, but they are also parking closer to their destination than customers (Figure 11 and Figure 12). Most people driving into West Concord could find “convenient parking” – within a four minute walk of their destination. In fact, a large proportion of respondents were able to park right out front or within one minute of their destination.

Figure 11 Customer Parking Locations

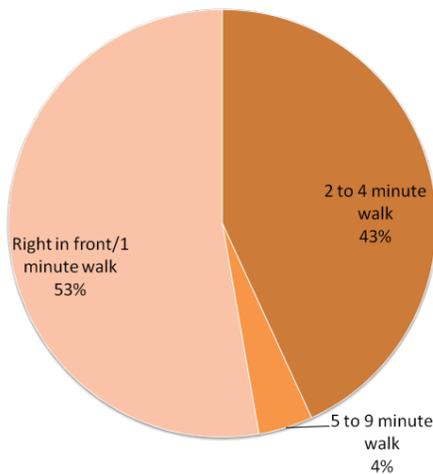


Figure 12 Employee Parking Locations

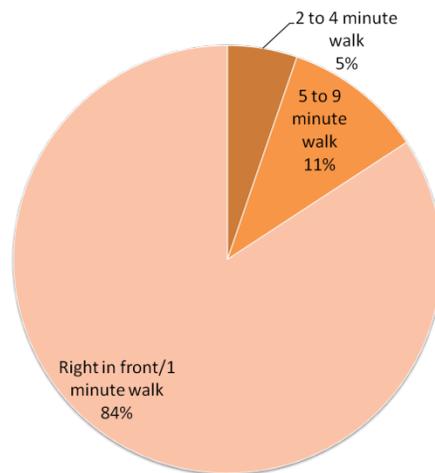
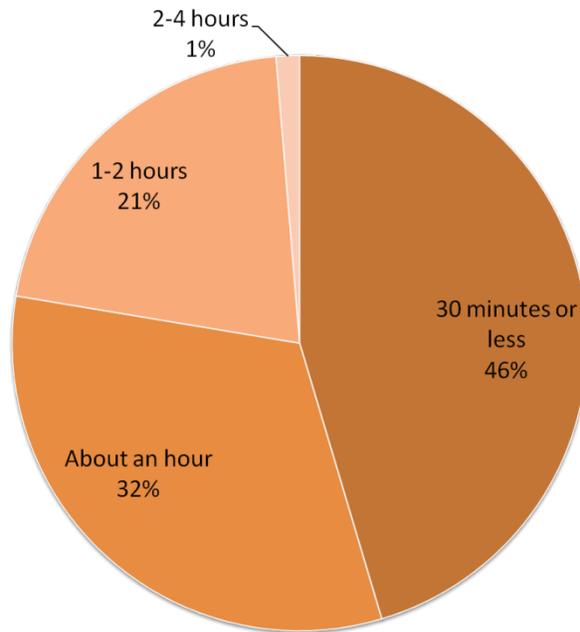


Figure 13 shows that many customers (78%) stayed for less than one hour.

Figure 13 Customer Length of Stay



### West Concord: Reasons for Choosing a Parking Space

Figure 14 and Figure 15 show that for both customers and employees, the location of and ease of finding a parking spot are important in deciding where to park. However, while the ease of finding a parking spot is important to more customers (44%), the location is more important for employees (30%). Forty-percent of employee respondents and 25% of resident respondents have their own designated spots in West Concord.

Figure 14 Parking Choice - Customer

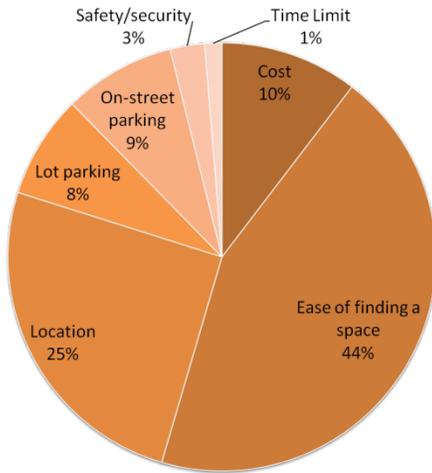


Figure 15 Parking Choice - Employee



At the end of the survey, respondents were asked whether they would rather pay less and park farther away from their destination or pay more but be closer. In West Concord, 76% of respondents said that they would rather pay less and park farther away, while the remainder (24%) said that they would prefer to park closer. The breakdown was similar amongst employees and customers in the area.

### West Concord: Key Comments from Survey Respondents

- “I don't mind the rate per hour for meters after the first 12 minutes, but I would like to be able to use dimes and nickels if I don't have a quarter or to purchase less time.”
- “My actual most important consideration is being able to park once and walk around, rather than having to move my car from private lot to private lot as I go from store to store.”
- “I can generally find a space close to where I am going and I don't see a problem.”
- “I do avoid W. Concord when I think it'll be too crowded to find a parking place.”
- Many respondents noted that parking signage is lacking and/or confusing.
- Multiple respondents perceive that parking on both sides of Commonwealth Ave near Concord Tea Cakes and the West Concord Supermarket is challenging because the road is narrow.

## TOURIST SURVEYS

Concord is home to many tourist attractions, including the Concord Museum, Minuteman National Historical Park, Walden Pond State Reservation, and several other historic and recreational attractions. Many of these tourists stop in Concord Center to patronize the local shops, check-in at the Visitors Center, or park to get on the Liberty Ride. Tourist activity is particularly important to Concord's economy, particularly local businesses that support these larger tourist destinations. Ensuring that when tourists drive to Concord, they have easy to find, convenient parking is important.

When identifying specific parking issues in town, both the project team and stakeholders identified tourist season (Spring, Summer, and Fall weekends) as having high parking demand. The lack of visible signage and parking information available to tourists were also identified as concerns.

To better understand tourist parking issues, the project team distributed a short survey specifically-oriented to tourists and visitors to the Town of Concord. The printed surveys were displayed at the Visitor Center, town libraries, the Town House, and several retailers, including Reasons to be Cheerful, Nashoba Bakery, and Main Street Cafe. Seventy respondents completed the survey.

As shown in Figure 16, almost three-quarters of respondents knew where they were going to park when they entered Concord, and the remainder figured out where to park after they arrived.

Figure 16 Did you know where to park?

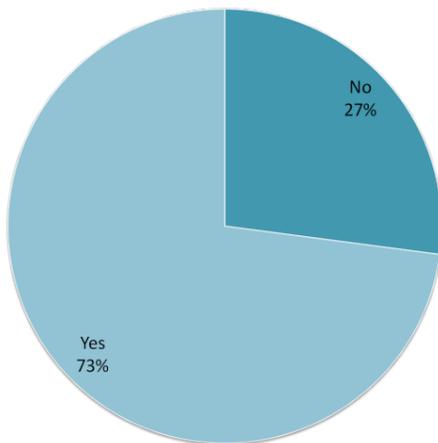
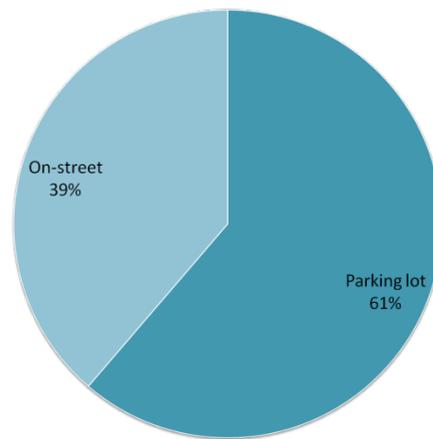
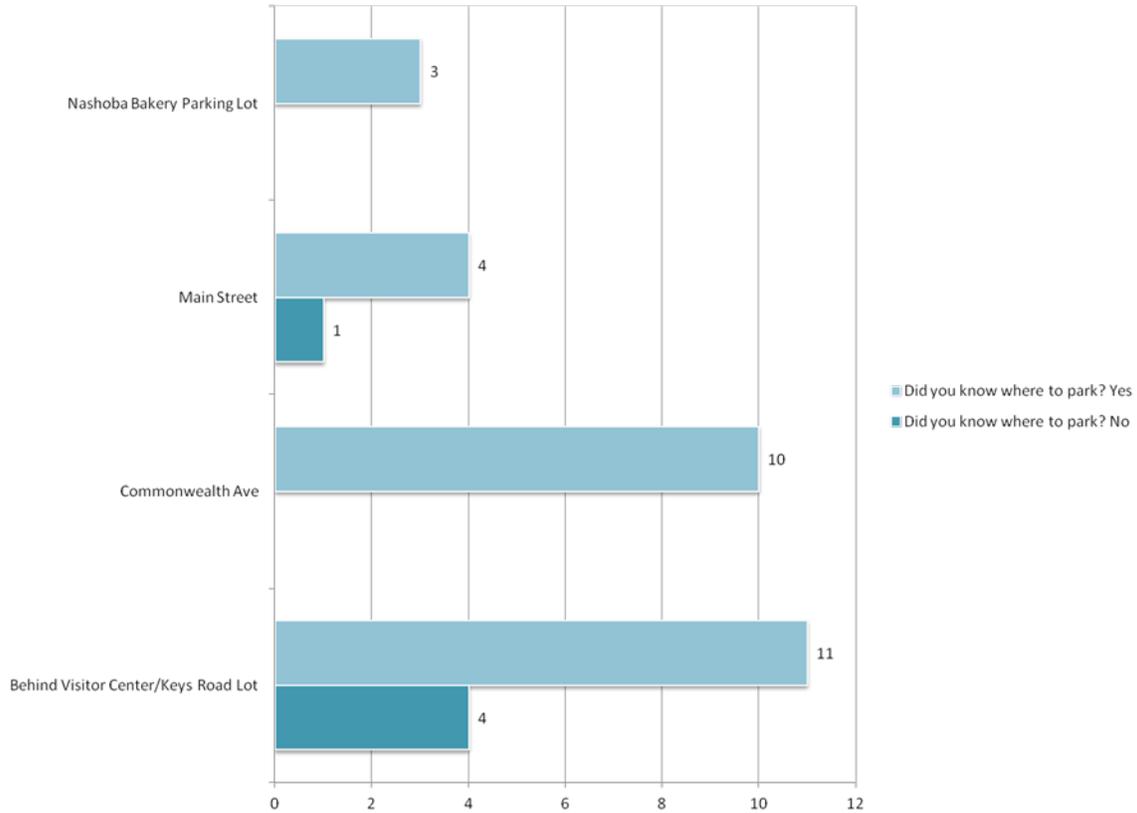


Figure 17 Parking location



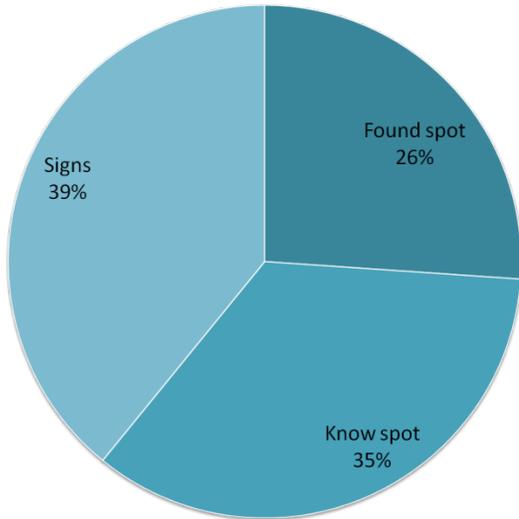
Most visitors to Concord parked in an off-street lot, while 39% parked on-street (Figure 17). As shown in Figure 18, the four most frequent parking locations for visitors to Concord were the Nashoba Bakery parking lot, Main Street, Commonwealth Avenue, and behind the Visitors' Center. Respondents who were unsure of where to park mostly parked in the Keyes Road lot behind the Concord Visitor Center. The visitors who knew where to park also parked in the Keyes Road lot, as well as on-street.

Figure 18 Where did you park?



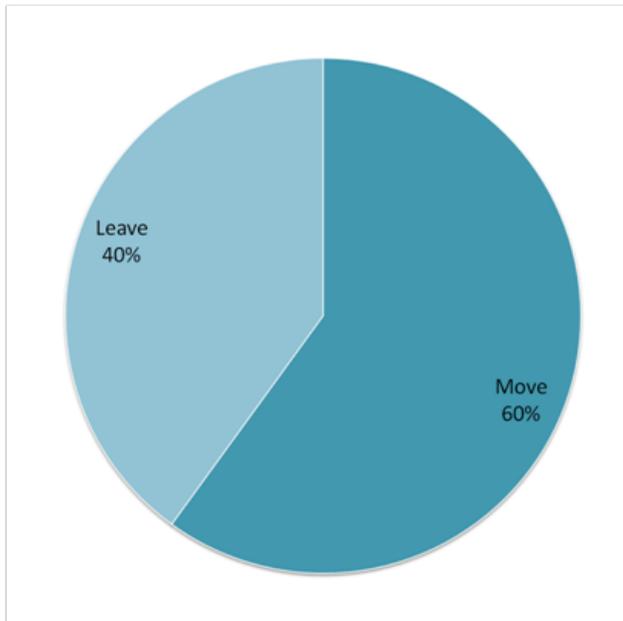
Of the total respondents, one-third answered an open-ended question that asked to explain how they found their parking spaces. Responses fell into three general categories: “I knew where to park,” “I followed the signs”, and “I just found a spot.” Figure 19 shows the distribution of responses, which was fairly even amongst the three responses. Of the respondents who didn’t know where to park when they got to Concord, about half said that they followed signs; the other half did not mention signage in their search for a space. However, of those who said that they did not know where to park, most parked in a visitor lot – either at the Keyes Road lot behind the Visitor Center or at the North Bridge Visitor Center.

Figure 19 How did you find a parking space?



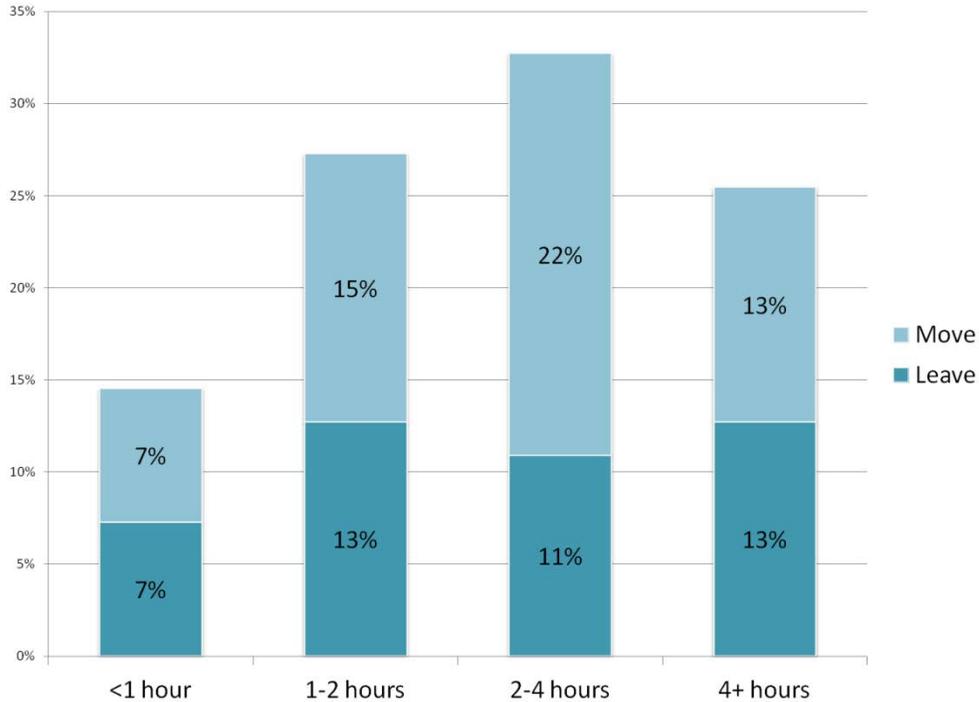
When asked if visitors planned on parking multiple times in Concord, respondents also split fairly equally between indicating that they would move their car throughout the day or leave it parked in one spot. Of those that indicated that they were visiting multiple destinations in Concord, 60% indicated that they would move their car (Figure 20). It is worth noting that several tourist destinations in Concord are not within walking distance of each other, but are within reasonably short biking distances. Also, the Liberty Ride service provides transportation to several of the main tourist destinations.

Figure 20 Will you move your car?



As Figure 21 shows, visitors staying in Concord for more than two hours report being more likely to move their car. Most shorter-stay visitors, those that planned to stay for less than two hours, indicated that they would leave their car in one spot.

Figure 21 Length of Stay and Space Shuffling



### Tourist Survey: Key comments from Survey Respondents

- “Bakery website included directions but no signage indicated there was parking off Winthrop St. We have also parked in the lot at the West Concord rail stop; however the signage was unclear.”
- “I followed the signs to find parking.”
- “Parking is very convenient.”
- “I always find a space on Commonwealth.”
- “Most spaces taken by illegal train commuters!” – Parked behind Debra’s Natural Gourmet.

## STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The project team conducted nearly 20 stakeholder interviews in person during the Spring and Summer of 2012. The Town identified stakeholders, including business owners, landowners, employees, and residents in Concord Center and West Concord. Interviewers used a general template of questions as the basis for the interviews, but the primary goal was a free flowing exchange about parking and an understanding of their specific experiences with the transportation system in Concord.

The list of interviewees is below:

- Chris Hart, developer and property owner
- John Boynton, developer and property owner
- Cynthia Wood, resident
- Jim DiGiovanni, developer and property owner
- Paul Mahoney, architect, resident
- Sally Schnitzer, town boards/committees, resident
- Carrie Flood, Emerson Umbrella, resident, Town boards/committees
- Sue Felshin, resident and West Concord master planning
- Sharon Spaulding, property management/property owner
- Don Kingman, Concord Academy Facilities Manager
- Stephanie Stillman, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director
- Barryn Carlton, Concord Police Department
- The Colonial Inn
- Merchants: Concord Cheese Shop, Twin Seafood, West Concord Supermarket, Quilt Shop, Debra's Natural Gourmet, Barefoot Books

Interviewees answered a series of questions regarding their employees (how many, how they get to work, whether or not they need a car during the day, where they park, and parking concerns), their customers (parking and length of stay), opinions on general parking needs and concerns, and other suggestions and ideas on how to improve parking and access to and within Concord Center and West Concord. Individual stakeholder responses were kept confidential, but several common themes emerged, which are summarized below into issues and opportunities.

## Stakeholder responses:

### Issues:

- Commuter parking is not addressed in Concord Center. There are many empty spaces nearby (e.g. Concord Crossing) but these areas/lots do not allow commuters. Depot has 20 spaces for commuters, first-come, first-serve, and Crosby's has a section in its lot dedicated to commuters.
- Most small businesses in Concord Center have a spot or two behind the building that is dedicated to owner/employee parking, which is self-enforced.
- Traffic issues negatively impact access to parking, including the Thoreau/Sudbury intersection traffic signal not synchronized and left turn lanes without dedicated signal phases, plus no rights on red allowed.
- Thoreau/Depot area lacks foot traffic to support merchants.
- Last two rows of Walden Lot parking is dedicated to employees, although signage indicates two-hour parking.
- Thoreau Street at Main Street consists of unregulated parking, used by employees and commuters who park all day.
- Too much private parking in West Concord limits availability.
- Concord Academy employees parking too close to the library; parking around the library can be difficult.
- Tour buses drop off passengers on Main Street and then there is no clear signage/direction for the driver on where to park the bus.
- There is no on-street handicapped parking in West Concord.

### Opportunities:

- General
  - Introduce a special use permit for reduced parking restrictions
  - Add bicycle parking
  - Increase meter time limits from one hour to two hours
  - Improve signage to off-street lots
- Concord Center
  - Introduce more on-street parking on Walden Street
  - Eliminate one-hour parking on Middle Street
  - Provide additional parking around Monument Square
- West Concord
  - Restripe the commuter lot at West Concord Station
  - Create municipal stairs to access the Community Center lot
  - Improve access behind Nashoba Brook Bakery to Winthrop Street parking lot
  - Change triangle intersection at Commonwealth and Laws Brook road to roundabout
  - Improve pedestrian access to the three-hour spaces in the commuter lot
  - Utilize former car dealer lot in West Concord for commuter parking

- Advertise free MBTA lot usage on weekends

## **PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE: MAY 2012**

On Wednesday, May 9, 2012, local residents, business owners, and employees were invited to participate in a hands-on "Parking Open House" designed to gather as much qualitative input as possible in both Concord Center and West Concord. The purpose of the open house was to introduce the study to the general public. The general study area boundaries for Concord Center and West Concord were reviewed, and the public gave feedback of what should and should not be included. For example, after this meeting, the Concord Center study area was expanded to include the Concord Museum. The project team also presented the study efforts to date, which included an initial parking inventory and some preliminary online survey results.

A majority of the meeting time was to gather feedback from the public, including identification of issues, opportunities, and concerns. The open house included several interactive components:

- Parking priorities voting exercise
- Parking needs and opportunities map mark-ups
- Background information presentation and discussion

About 20 stakeholders participated in response to newspaper articles and email invites distributed by the Town.

### **Parking Priorities Voting Exercise**

Open House participants were invited to "vote" for the parking-related priorities that were of greatest concern to them. Faced with over a dozen typical parking issues, participants were allotted six "votes" that could be used to prioritize one or more issues (shown in Figure 22 and Figure 23).

#### **Overheard at the Open House:**

- "One hour on-street time limits work well"... "One hour on-street time limits are not enough."
- "Employee parking encroaches in residential areas."
- "Customer access is the most important."
- "Commuter parking is not addressed in town."
- "Unofficial employee parking exists in the back of the Post Office lot."
- "Need more bicycle parking."

Figure 22 Priority Voting Results: Concord Center

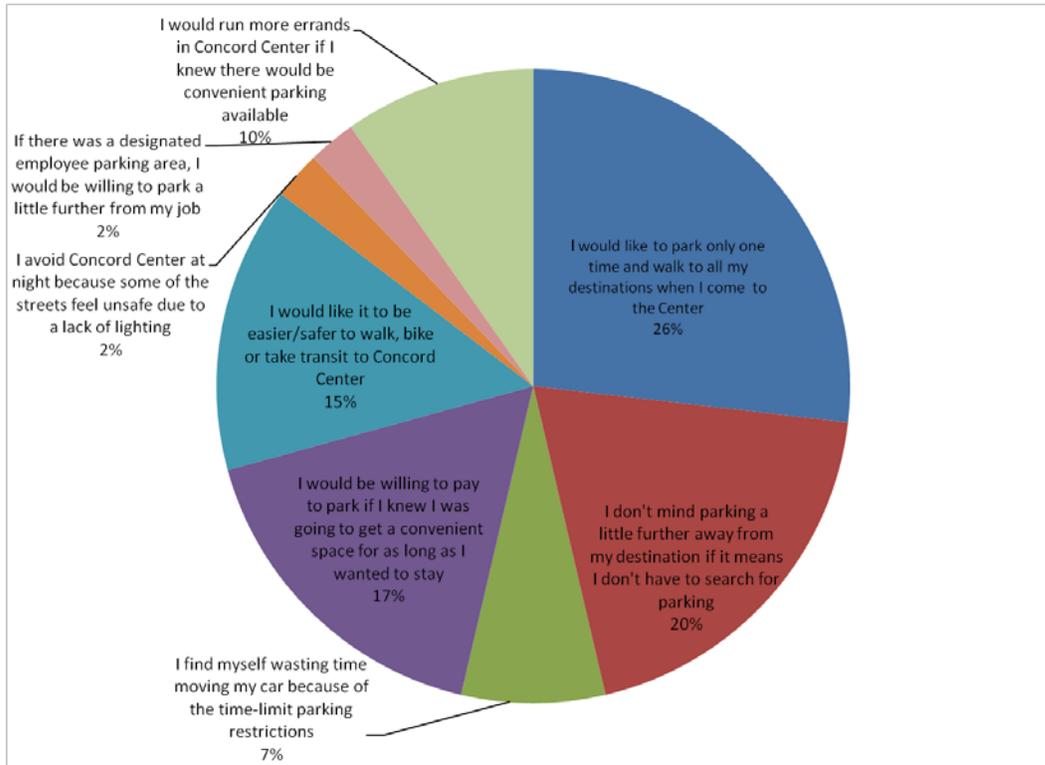
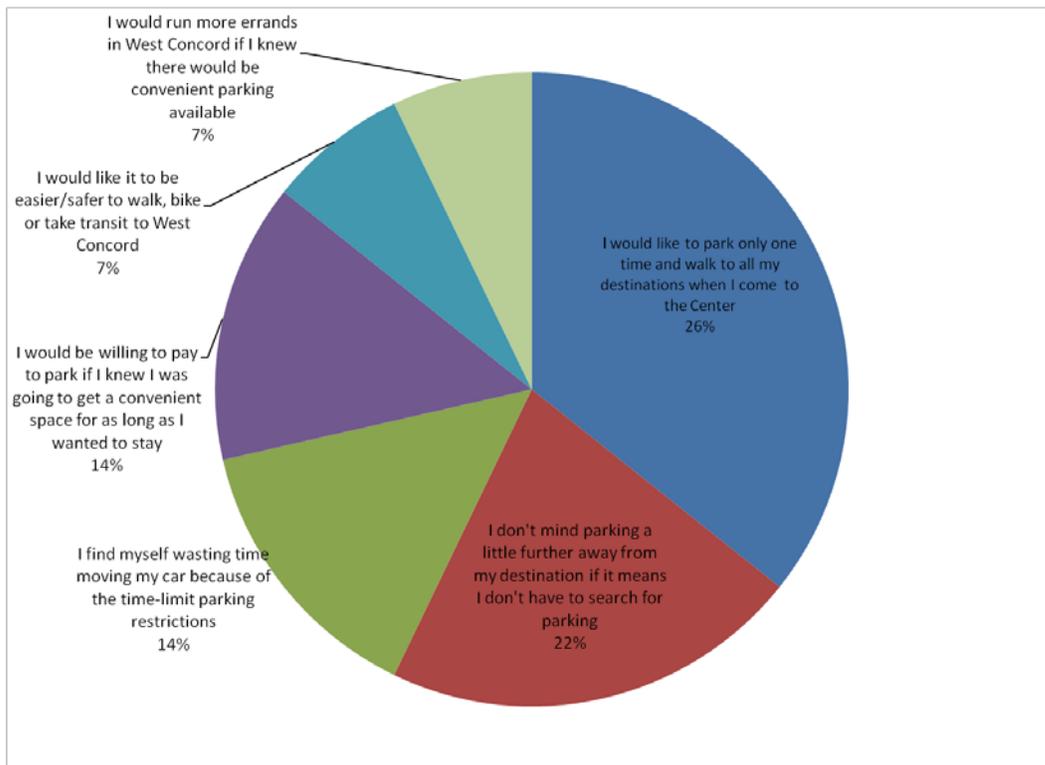


Figure 23 Priority Voting Results: West Concord



## Parking Needs and Opportunities Map

During the Open House, participants were offered large printed maps of Concord Center and West Concord study areas on which to make notes of areas that need attention or have opportunity for improvement. Figure 24 and Figure 25 show compiled comments from participants during this exercise.

Below is a selection of the comments from the parking needs and opportunities mapping:

- Concord Center
  - Concord Crossing parking lot is underutilized.
  - Consider four hour parking at the Thoreau/Depot area to get rid of commuter parking.
  - Hard to do a loop to find parking on Thoreau Street.
  - Lighting and crossings difficult for Recreation Center.
  - Need more commuter parking.
  - Improved parking needed for Concord Museum.
  - Is the lot behind the Christian Science Center available to the public? Could it be?
- West Concord
  - Very wide curb cut at Nashoba Bakery; pedestrian-vehicle conflicts.
  - Make off-street parking shared so that you don't have to move your car and when businesses are closed others can use the parking lots.
  - Generally more bike racks are needed.
  - Not enough employee parking.
  - Residents are unaware of three hour spaces in commuter lot. Need signage?
  - Can we expand behind store parking opportunities like in Lexington? It seems these areas are underutilized.

**CONCORD PARKING MANAGEMENT STUDY | PUBLIC OUTREACH - FINAL DRAFT**  
Town of Concord

Figure 24 Parking Needs and Opportunities Map: Concord Center



Figure 25 Parking Needs and Opportunities Map: West Concord



## CONCORD BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP MEETING

The Concord Business Partnership invited Concord Planning Staff and the Nelson\Nygaard consultant team to present an update of the Concord Parking Management Plan at their regular meeting on Wednesday, September 5, 2012. The presentation included an overview of the study and data collected, plus an opportunity to preview the Initial Draft Recommendations in advance of the ideas being presented to the public. Approximately two dozen members of the Concord Business Partnership, including prominent business leaders and property owners attended the meeting.

Included below is a summary of comments received from the Concord Business Partnership on the presentation and the Initial Draft Recommendations.

- The group made two points regarding the data collection times: The December/Holiday season is when a lot of people have the worst time finding parking. Also, the Walden Grill was closed in May/June.
- In conjunction with the recommendations, there was a suggestion to add an outreach program to business owners that would help guide their employees to proper parking.
- A conversation about whether parking meters/fines would generate ill will ensued. It was pointed out that part of the idea of eliminating time limits is allowing people to park for as long as they like and are willing to pay for, which should prevent ill will that tickets due to time overruns can generate.
- The group discussed parking as a part of the economic development strategy for a business district. In particular, Nelson\Nygaard highlighted that an effective parking management system makes a hierarchy of spots available for those who need them.
- Nelson\Nygaard explained that the GIS and parking utilization data created as part of the project will be a good basis to work off of in the future. Nelson\Nygaard also built in land use data, including vacant land, into the database. The group discussed the importance of putting criteria in place now to measure the impact of the parking management changes.
- Bicycle parking is a concern among members of the Concord Business Partnership. Currently, people lean their bicycles up against buildings. Members expressed a desire for more bike racks, particularly near Debra's Natural Gourmet. Marcia explained that the Town can only put bike racks on public land.
- Debra of Debra's Natural Gourmet explained that parking is an important concern of hers, as she competes with the free parking at Whole Foods. Seniors who want to visit Debra's will leave if they cannot park close to the store.
- Walkability was also a concern of the group. One member pointed out that the town's "Walk Score"<sup>1</sup> is quite good, and that on-street parking can contribute to traffic calming. Another indicated that a focus on walkability in West Concord would be beneficial as there are currently dead zones on Commonwealth Avenue. Marcia indicated that the future Cultural District in Concord/West Concord would help create an atmosphere that invites people to keep coming back.
- The group discussed parking signage in the study area. One concern was that consolidating signage would confuse parkers. Nelson\Nygaard explained that the goal was to make the whole system more understandable.
- The group discussed the idea of maintaining or expanding very short-term (10 min) parking options. It was explained that parking should be priced to create availability, and

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<sup>1</sup> Walk Score is an online resource that measures the "walkability" of addresses. [www.walkscore.com](http://www.walkscore.com)

adjusted accordingly. The idea is to maintain 85% utilization, which means on average one space per block should be available. Creating multiple regulations to address specific users leads to confusion amongst potential customers.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS: OCTOBER 2012

The Town of Concord invited the public to attend two community meetings in October. The Nelson\Nygaard consultant team presented an update of the Concord Parking Management plan on these occasions. The first meeting focused on issues and opportunities in Concord Center, and the second focused on West Concord. The Town held both meetings at its offices at 141 Keyes Road.

The meetings were scheduled to present a summary of the study to date, including the parking inventory and utilization maps and charts, the final survey results, and present the preliminary recommendations. The primary purpose of the meetings was to have a substantial discussion on the preliminary recommendations, and the attendees were invited to participate throughout the entire meeting. Both meetings boasted engaging conversation and debate over the ideas presented.

Below is a summary of comments and concerns from the public on the presentation and Initial Draft Recommendations.

### Concord Center

The Concord Center meeting was Tuesday, October 23, 2012. There were approximately 25 attendees.

- The group commented on the time-series utilization maps, suggesting that parking seems more utilized at the Library and Emerson Playground than the data showed.
- In response to the idea of extending on-street metered span of service from 6pm until 8pm, attendees explained that in the evening, the people parking on-street are residents, not employees, that are parking to go to restaurants and bars or to meetings at the Town House.
- The group expressed concerns about parking in front of the Town House. Residents like the short-term spaces available directly in front of the Town House. Many people make short stops there, and it is important that some of those spots be available. Consultants explained that if demand is managed appropriately, there should always be one space available on each block.
- On Thoreau Street near Main Street, there was some concern about employees and commuters parking on-street all day. There was an issue with parkers blocking driveways, but paint lines have helped with that problem. There was a suggestion to make those spaces two-hour parking, but then the issue was brought up about where residents living near this stretch of Thoreau Street should park.
- Meeting attendees expressed concern that metering more spots would cause spillover. Consultants explained that this parking plan is comprehensive, meaning that surrounding residential streets are included in the study and that spillover and expected impacts will be accounted for with recommended methods to address the problem.
- The group discussed commuter parking and how to best manage demand with the available supply. A question was asked about what the Town is trying to achieve with

regards to commuter parking. Currently, commuters park in the Crosby's Lot, some spaces in the lot at the Depot, on Cottage Lane, and other residential side streets. Meeting attendees observed many Acton and other non-Concord parking stickers in commuter lots. Meanwhile, there is empty parking in other adjacent private commuter lots. There was some interest in sharing underutilized parking lots with commuters. The group also discussed moving the commuter express bus outside of Crosby's to another location, but were unsure of where the other location could be. Finally, commuters benefit the town in that they use local shops. It was also noted that the nearby town of Lincoln is now charging for commuter parking.

- When the idea of shifting some commuters from parking at the Concord Center station to West Concord came up, attendees pointed out that crossing Route 2 is currently a barrier and that commuters would be unlikely to want to cross Route 2 to get to West Concord.
- Recommendations relating to Emerson playground elicited important feedback from the group. One recommendation from the consultants was to create more openings in the fence that surrounds the Playground, so that the parking demand would be more evenly spread on the surrounding streets. Most attendees did not want to see more entrances.
- The suggestion of potentially adding on-street parking on some of the streets surrounding the Playground got mixed reviews from attendees. Others expressed frustration when there was parking on both sides of the street, as cars would drive too quickly and the road was too narrow to accommodate fast traffic. As a result, parking was removed on one side of some of the surrounding streets, which explains why today, most streets are technically wide enough to accommodate parking on both sides of the street, but only have legal parking on one side.
- Another recommendation for the streets around Emerson Playground was to stripe the roadway areas where vehicles can and cannot park. Attendees expressed concern with parking enforcement, and there was debate on the merits of striping parking lines where people can park around the field. Others suggested a possible time restriction for the area. Finally, there was some concern for safety on Everett, Stow, and Fielding Streets during sporting events, where cars drive very quickly up and down the street, and often park blocking driveways.
- Others expressed the sentiment that there are no problems with parking around Emerson Playground, and that during game times, the area is going to be busy with cars and people regardless of any parking management solution.
- Attendees agreed that the public parking signage needs updating. The group agreed that streamlining and updating signage in the area will require working with private landowners on a property by property basis. Signage should become easier to understand, and therefore easier to abide by the rules.
- The group was in favor of introducing new and more appropriate bicycle parking in Concord Center. Attendees were receptive to the idea of introducing an on-street bike corral and discussed the possibility of using "historic-looking" bicycle corrals.
- On a more general level, the group discussed zoning strategies for Concord. Attendees were interested in continuing to apply the concept of shared parking in Concord and requested a shared parking curve using Concord's zoning requirements.
- Attendees explained that the Town often exercises its review using special permits rather than underlying zoning requirements as written. Some attendees expressed frustration with this, as the zoning code is not used often, and needs to be updated.

- Attendees expressed that the face and information in the plastic bubble on meterheads can be difficult to read, and that signage on the street is not consistent (others noted that implementing new signage can be difficult, as efforts need to be coordinated with the HDC).
- A question was asked about parking for electric vehicles. The Town's Director of Planning and Land Management indicated that this is part of a separate effort and that there will initially be three places to charge electric vehicles in Concord. There was a related suggestion that parking for electric vehicles be free of charge.
- The group also discussed the idea of having different sized spaces for different sized cars. The consultants noted that if the Town removes the single head meters and replaces them with multi-space meters, then no on-street parking space designations are needed, and that more often, more cars can fit into curbside space.
- There were also requests to exempt handicapped drivers from paying for parking meters.
- The group expressed a desire for transportation demand management strategies in the final report.
- Meeting attendees also discussed tour bus parking. Currently, tour buses often pick up and drop off on Keyes Road. The group discussed the merits of designating specific pick up and drop off locations, as well as specific areas for tour bus parking. It was suggested that this may be hard to control, but at the least, there should be an open line of communication with tour bus companies.

## West Concord

The West Concord meeting was Thursday, October 25, 2012. There were approximately 25 attendees.

- One attendee highlighted the impact of the Thoreau Elementary School, just south of the study area, that could have on parking in West Concord. The streets in that area are closed during school hours. In particular, Pleasant and West Streets – both included in the study – are problem areas for spillover parking from the school.
- The group highlighted Central, West and Pine Streets, where the Conservatory, church and commuter spillover parking is an issue. Double-parking during pick-up and drop-off is also an issue. In particular, at the corner of Central and West Streets, when large vehicles are parked buses cannot get by. Attendees agreed that the Conservatory needs parking in afternoon hours only.
- Some attendees pointed out that the utilization map of parking spaces on the north side of Commonwealth Avenue is not helpful, as there are only two segments shown for the block between the railroad tracks and Laws Brook Road. One large segment is not helpful to understand exactly where people are parking.
- The group also discussed parking at Rideout Playground. Some drivers use the playground parking lot to turn around. In particular, one concern was that people park on the north side of Law's Brook Road for games and often block driveways in addition to the sidewalks. Another concern was that yellow striping at the lot is currently confusing and inefficient.

- Attendees expressed concern at the lack of handicapped parking in West Concord. There are no on-street handicapped parking spaces in West Concord. The consultants noted that on-street handicapped spaces are usually allocated by request.
- The group also discussed the three hour free spots available in the West Concord commuter lot, and that generally, the public, even residents do not know that they exist. Some meeting attendees were unaware of the spots.
- Some attendees expressed concern that eliminating Saturday meter collection would lead employees to park in spots intended for customers. The group agreed that proper communication could curb this potential problem.
- Multiple parties agreed that many people want to park for three or more hours in West Concord, and that there are no public parking spaces available for long-term parking, except at the MBTA commuter parking lot.
- The group discussed the possibility of leased public parking in the 55 Winthrop Lot, which would likely require an agreement between the property owner and the Town.
- Walkability and pedestrian access was also a concern of the group. Attendees requested that the report identify where connectivity for pedestrians is an issue as well as where underutilized spaces are. In particular, there was a request to evaluate the idea of turning underutilized spaces into green space ("parking spaces").
- The group discussed how to regulate surrounding residential streets since there is spillover commuter parking. There was concern about having too many people parking on the residential streets of speeding, blocking driveways, and two-way access. One suggestion of "odd-even" parking, where parking would alternate on different sides of the street, was discussed but most attendees agreed that it would not properly address the issues. Residents report that commuters park on Central Street and Pine Street.
- There was general discussion that there is confusion about where you can and cannot park in West Concord. Attendees were unclear if library patrons can park in the Harvey Wheeler parking lot. Others expressed concerns that currently school buses use the lot to turn around.