



TOWN HALL
4 Boltwood Avenue
Amherst, MA 01002-2351

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
(413) 259-3040
(413) 259-2402 [Fax]
planning@amherstma.gov

MEMORANDUM

TO: Select Board

FROM: Jeff Bagg, Senior Planner

RE: Downtown Parking Forum

COPY: John Musante, Town Manager, and David Ziomek, Director of Conservation and Development

DATE: December 12, 2014

On September 23, 2014, the Select Board and Planning Board co-sponsored the first in a series of forums about parking downtown. The event, which was facilitated by the Planning Department, brought out residents, business owners, and representatives from the Business Improvement District, the Chamber of Commerce, and others. Approximately 40 people were in attendance. The feedback on the forum – and support for exploring the issues around parking downtown - has been largely positive!

The primary goal of the first forum was to provide a basic overview of the existing parking system and to start a discussion. The presentation included an overview of the existing parking system, review of recent studies, and the creation of a website for new and historic information about parking. After the presentation, extensive public comments were heard and recorded. A wide range of comments, issues, strategies, and recommendations were identified.




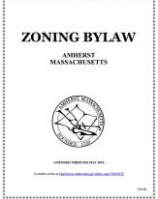

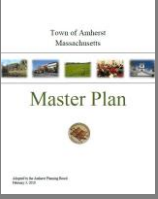
The second forum will occur in mid/late January. The tentative goals for this forum are:

- To identify and review all the issues, concerns, and information gathered
- Begin to group these items into categories
- Outline and identify preliminary goals and strategies for major issues
- Allow community members, business owners, Board members, and others to help identify, rank, and prioritize action items

The intended outcome of the second forum will be to begin solidifying a set of goals and strategies to start addressing some of the issues related to downtown parking. This step will include beginning to identify the scope, timeline, and process for certain steps and the appropriate regulatory or legislative body responsible for the work.

SEE OVER...

The following is a chart showing some of the general categories and issues beginning to take shape after the first forum:

Metering/Rates 	New Parking Supply 	Signs/Education 	Review/change regulations 	Enforcement/Management 	General/Broad concepts 
<p>Create different rates depending on location</p>	<p>Review/consider whether a new parking facility is needed; whether developers should provide parking</p>	<p>Parking is hard for visitors to find</p>	<p>Review/revise Municipal Parking District</p>	<p>Review/consider management of private lots</p>	<p>Existing data from 2008 may be outdated</p>
<p>Deter/prohibit meter feeding</p>	<p>Review/consider creation of a new parking facility</p>	<p>Signs for some public and private lots are hard to find and confusing</p>	<p>Review/revise Town Center Permit system</p>	<p>Re-establish the Parking Commission</p>	<p>What kind of downtown do we want?</p>
<p>Use new technology/smart phone app</p>	<p>Review/consider adding to Boltwood Garage</p>	<p>Promote use of Town Center Permit spots after 5:00 p.m.</p>	<p>Review/revise winter parking ban</p>	<p>Create a designated parking official</p>	<p>Consider parking is an integrated system</p>
<p>Make payment more predictable/pay when leaving</p>	<p>Review/consider expanding Town Center Permit areas</p>	<p>Better identify long-term and short term parking meters</p>	<p>Review/revise current on-street parking regulations</p>	<p>Lack of enforcement of winter parking ban</p>	<p>Parking is important to success of downtown</p>

DISCLAIMER:
 This represents the major issues raised.
 These and numerous other issues will be further outlined for the second forum.

As part of this update, please let me know if you have any other issues or concerns related to parking downtown that you did not hear identified during the first forum.