

JOINT MEETING
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE and
COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE

MAY 17, 2022

A joint meeting of the Planning and Economic Development Committee and Committee on Infrastructure was held Tuesday, May 17, 2022, at 7:26 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber and via Zoom teleconference.

To access Zoom, please refer to the agenda or the City's website for the meeting link.

Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr., and Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr., Co-Chairs, presided.

The roll call was taken with 6 members of the Planning and Economic Development Committee and Committee on Infrastructure were present:

Members of PEDC and Committee on
Infrastructure present:

Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Alderman John Cathey
Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman Ernest A. Jette

Members not in Attendance:

Alderman Derek Thibeault
Alderman Alex Comeau
Alderman Tyler Gouveia

Also in Attendance: Alderman Thomas Lopez

Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director
Jill Stansfield, Parking Manager
Andy Hill, Parking Consultant

Alderman Moran

For the record, Alderman Comeau, Alderman Gouveia, and Alderman Thibeault did notify me that they had other commitments tonight.

I'll turn it over to Director Tim Cummings.

PRESENTATION

- Parking Study

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

Yes, thank you. For the record, Tim Cummings, Director of Economic Development. With me this evening I have the City's Parking Manager Jill Stansfield and our Parking Consultant Andy Hill. I thank everyone for making the time this evening to join us. The reason we're here, we contracted with Desmond Consultants. They are a parking management firm. They specialize in helping municipalities, and colleges, universities, hospitals, and larger institutions with management of their parking facilities. They help with not only the management policies, they also help with the design and construction of various parking assets if need be. We brought Desmond on board a couple years ago right at the start of COVID actually. We held off on the study during COVID and now we've actually initiated the study at the end of the COVID height last summer and when we started that study, we did some outreach to various local stakeholders. One of them was actually this body, the Joint PEDC/Infrastructure Committee and that was in the fall of 2021. It dawned on me recently that this body has changed a little bit after November and in January and so I thought it would be behoove of us to come back before you, especially with some of the newer members of this body to hear directly from the consultant what we've learned, discuss a little bit about what are thoughts are, give a general update, provide you really with an opportunity to ask your questions, and hopefully be an active participant in this parking study that will be culminating in the next few months and will be delivered to the Board of Aldermen and the City at large that will be a guiding document for policies and recommendations as we move forward.

So with that being said we have Andy Hill who has a PowerPoint presentation and if I may Mr. Chair I ask to hand it over to him. Thank you.

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

For the record, my name is Andrew Hill. I'm Director of Consulting Services for Desmond Design Management. Thank you for having me this evening.

I have prepared a presentation that will take you through the work that we've done to-date over the last seven months. It represents about 800 man-hours of labor thus far and we're about two-thirds through our scope of work and what I want to do is bring you up to speed. The easiest vehicle for doing this is really a 5-step approach where we'll talk about what we've heard which will deal with the public participation, part of our scope of work today, what we saw which really gets into the data collection that we've done in some of the early analysis on the data we collected in terms of supply, utilization, turnover, parking the downtown and then we'll talk a little bit about the work that we've done evaluating operations which runs the gambit from looking at policy to how parking is actually actively administered and provided as a public utility here in the City of Nashua, and then close out with some concepts and strategies that were presented last Wednesday at a public forum that we are developing to address some of the issues as we understand them, and then we'll of course have some time at the end for feedback and comments.

Now with that said, I want to be cognizant of this body's time, but I also want to do a thorough job. As we go along if you have any questions, please feel free to interrupt me. I will do my best to address those as we go along. So let's start with what we've heard. We've had a tremendous amount of input and guidance through this process. One of the first things that we did was form the steering committee that you see before you which includes members of this body, as well as private citizens, and city staff. We've met with them periodically throughout the course of this study typically to vet out ideas, present early concepts, go over data collection and analysis here. They've really provided us with insight and given us a bellwether to test some of these things before we put it out for consumption with a larger audience here. We like to say that we're experts in parking. These folks are experts in Nashua so what they're helping to do is keep us on the straight and narrow to make sure that what we're developing is not happening in a vacuum and that hopefully the end product will not only be environmentally sustainable and physically sustainable, but also politically sustainable in supported moving forward.

We've also done a fair number of stakeholder meetings. This represents about 12 to 15 hours of different organized meetings with constituencies here in the City of Nashua. We've had about 70+ people attend these and participant in them and it's given us some insight into issues and challenges here in the city as well. It's also given us an opportunity in some cases to bounce off some preliminary ideas on possible solutions and get feedback from folks on those as well.

One of the things that we did in tandem with a forum that we held last October for the general public is we initiated a fairly extensive survey, an online survey, to get information from folks about what they look for in parking, how they use parking, what the concerns are, what they would like to see come out of this study. I'm not going to read the slide to you. You can see the general response that we received. Statistically we feel this is a pretty strong and valid response. It represents over 1% of total population. In terms of distribution by gender distribution by age, it aligns with the larger statistics specific to the Nashua area per US Census Bureau here. Because it is a parking survey, it was encouraging that 92% of folks indicated they primarily drove themselves to town every day and that 66%, two-thirds, indicated they visited about once a week. We had a good cross-section from every Ward within the city as well as a lot of surrounding neighborhoods. We actually asked two different questions during the course of the survey. One was "what are all the reasons that bring you into downtown"? In response to that question, over half of the folks indicated that one of the reasons they came downtown was to dine. About the same number indicated they also came in as shoppers and then we asked a more narrowing question as to what your primary purpose was for coming down and that allowed us to ask some fairly pointed questions of different interest groups, particularly employees and residents but also diners, shoppers, business owners, etc.

In terms of general takeaways, there was a wealth of interesting information here. These may be useful facts for you folks when you're meeting with the general public here. Despite a lot of concern about the accommodation for residential parking, the initial response were that over two-thirds of residents, at least those responding to the survey, had their parking needs partially completely met on property here and 62% of them park for free as part of their accommodations. Similar with employees, we were heartened to see that over 60% had parking provided by their employer and 65% at no cost to themselves. So that helped define for us the challenges to some degree with that group. The vast majority of time limits that in place across the downtown are generally two hours or less. So it was good to see a 72% of the respondents indicated that that was their typical length of stay that showed some alignment with current stated policy.

In terms of being able to find parking, a little bit of less than half the folks indicated they could find it under 5 minutes; 83% in under 10 minutes. That's a reasonable search time for a market of this size and scope. Three out of four respondents indicated that if they couldn't find parking right in front of where they wanted to go, they would prevail. If they had to go out a block or two, they were willing to do that in order to conduct their business or do what they intended to do when they came downtown. That speaks to the strength and the attractiveness of your downtown.

One of the other questions that we asked is we asked a two-part question. The first part of the question was how close do you expect to park to your destination when you come downtown. The second part of that question was how close do you typically park when you come downtown. We separated these two questions by 4 or 5 other intervening questions so we can sort of scrub the answers, but really what that is, is it is a comparison of expectation to actual practice. When we have come into communities where actual practice is significantly less than expectation, that's usually a problem because it means that people are finding parking but they are not finding it nearly close enough to their destination. In the case of Nashua the inverse was true. On almost a two to one basis here, folks generally found parking that met or exceeded their expectation as far as how close they could get which is a good thing. It means that a lot of folks are coming away with a high degree of satisfaction as far as the distance they have to travel between parking and destination here.

Proximity and security were two of the recurring themes when you asked folks what do you look for when you look for a parking space. When we asked them how do you define what acceptable distances between parking and destination, the two things that were most often cited were 1) personal sense of safety or security, and the conditions of sidewalks. I will tell you the survey tool that we put together had a lot of opportunities for folks to make additional comments to clarify their choices. Some of the recurring themes that we heard around security and sense of safety had to do with panhandling and the presence of homelessness. So those were certainly contributing factors that went into some of these concerns or worries.

There was some feedback that we got that we weren't as heartened by. That first comment I will explain I will explain a little bit later on, but please remember that of over 1,000 respondents only about 15% indicated that when they came into town they usually parked at a private facility. As you'll see in a moment, that's significant disconnect between the actual inventory that you have here in downtown. While three out of four respondents indicated that they would prevail and persist if they couldn't find parking right in front of their destination. One in five indicated if they couldn't find parking within a reasonable time limit of a reasonable distance of their destination within a reasonable time limit, they would actually leave and go elsewhere. So that's an area to be addressed and look for improvement to increase the capture rate.

When we asked folks the things that they felt needed the most address in the public parking facilities that were available to them, atmosphere came in as number one. Safety and security number two, and lighting was number three. If you're wondering what atmosphere is, it's sort of a catch all phrase that we use. It may reference to how the facility looks in terms of condition. It may reference how the facility smells in some cases or it may reference intangibles that weren't covered under the other categories here. Again, this is another place where we had a lot of folks commenting about the presence of people loitering within the facilities here and/or approaching them at different times.

We also asked folks to evaluate the wayfinding system that connected people to the parking, got the drivers off the main thoroughfares and to the parking facilities and once in the facilities into a spot, and then hopefully connected them from those facilities to their ultimate destination. It was a 5-star system with 5 being excellent and 1 being very poor. Overall, 70% of the respondents rated wayfinding passable to very poor. Now a couple of points of clarification on that because we were well aware that the city has already invested quite a bit of money and time into improving the wayfinding system. I will caveat these comments by saying there were a significant number of comments made along the lines of "I am a long-time Nashua resident. I know where to go. I never look at the signage." So I'm going to give it a passing grade because I can't really formulate a learned opinion otherwise. Of the folks that did grade it on the poor/very poor scale, the recurring theme that we heard over and over again was there was a desire to see more signage in the facilities indicating the rules of use, where they could/could not park, under what conditions, and then better signage connecting them once they're parked to their ultimate destination.

The other thing that we asked, and this is a little bit of future program planning, is whether respondents were planning to purchase an electric vehicle in the next 5 years. This is a burgeoning issue in cities across America right now. Currently for every 28 electric vehicles that require charging on the road right now, there is one public charging station and it is the fastest growing segment right now in American auto sales. By 2035, the big three and the number of foreign manufacturers have all indicated they are going over to majority electric vehicle fleet. So as we start looking forward, we certainly want to be cognizant of planning to address those needs as they go forward because chances are the parking facility 15 years from now may be the new gas station. Certainly the respondents had indicated 13% indicated that they were planning on getting an EV. Another 19% indicated they were not sure. So there is reasonable grounds to say that

our final recommendations need to include plans both to install charging stations immediately and then as you talk about planning for new facilities in the future make sure they have the expandable grid that they need in order to support additional stations as they need moving forward. Fun fact for you folks, there is no national recommendation right now for how many charging stations you need to put in a public parking facility. Unlike the ADA laws and rules, there is no fixed ratio. It is something that the entire industry is figuring out as we evolve.

Like I said we had a significant amount of responses here. The last two questions within the survey were actually open-ended questions where we asked folks to provide us with their parting concerns, thoughts, challenges, etc. We took all of those responses a little bit under 3,000 of those and we ran them through a program that isolates key words and then converts them into the figure that you see in front of you. That's called a "word cloud". Basically it represents according to the size of the word here how often it was recording within the comments that we heard. So this is the voice of all of the folks who took the time to respond to the survey. As you can see, kind of overriding concerns that we heard over and over again. Right at the top was availability, overnight parking, security, and sidewalks. To a lesser degree, there was concerns about zoning, enforcement, communications, and turnover and then some smaller concerns that represented a smaller number of voices who were raising issues as well. So this gives you the temperature if you will of the constituency that you're serving.

Anybody have any questions on this so far? So that's what we heard, this is what we saw, and this really comes down to data collection. Our work was cut out for us right of the gate. We had 108 blocks to perform our observations over here. We divided those into the six zones that you see here. Those zones were organized to some degree both along the geographic boundaries and then also themes or general concentrations of common land uses here.

Across that area on a perfect day you'd have a little bit more than 13,300 spaces. When we were doing our field observations, we never had a perfect. When we did our initial field observations on October of 2021, the outdoor dining program was going on. There was some significant impacts associated with the Performing Arts Center construction. So the actual number of useable spaces was a little bit less than the 13,309. We did go back out in February 2022 and do a second set of observations up and down the Main Street corridor and the adjacent side streets. The focus behind this was to look at actual utilization once the barriers were down from the outdoor dining program and capacity was expanded up and down Main Street and side streets. We also wanted to gauge the impact of the loss of the School Street lot which had been shut down shortly after we did our October counts and get an understanding for what ripple effect that might have.

You can see the circle at the bottom. Remember the 15% of folks indicated that they generally parked in private parking facilities. 71% of your supply, about 9,800 spaces is in private parking facilities. So there is an overwhelming interest and desire to park either on street or in public off street facilities whereas the majority of your capacity is available in privately held off street facilities. We think that there are a couple different strategies that might be employed where we could unlock some of that capacity - not necessarily bring it into the public realm but at least make it available to a wider group of users and make more use of the capacity that you've got. On a typical day of those 9,800 spaces, maybe 50% of those are utilized at any given time. So that's a lot of capacity sitting empty.

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

Alderman Clemons?

Alderman Clemons

Just a quick question going back – I don't know – you don't have to go back but the Committee can tell me was the Shaw's parking lot included in this?

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

It was not. We stopped at Otterson. So we stopped just short of that at the very southern edge of the Southern NH Medical Center.

Alderman Clemons

Okay. Thank you.

Alderman Cathey

Can you define what Elm Street which is public off street versus private off street is because you've said facilities? I'm thinking there aren't a whole lot of private facilities that I can think of that we park at it's not like Main Street would be private off street, or is that public off street, or what are we talking about?

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

Excellent question. So on street parking is anything that is curbside parking. It's on the street parking. Because those streets are in the public way, we generally default to referring to those as public parking. It's publically accessible and publically owned. For off street facilities, we generally look primarily at ownership but also at access. So who owns the facility and can basically anybody come and use the facility as least within the rules of use? For example, time limits, having to make payments, etc. There are a small number of parking lots here in Nashua that are owned by public agencies but are very restricted or very reserved. The Court House just off of Spring Street during operations hours, there's some signage out there that indicates those are only Court House users. I will tell you in actual practice that Court Houses see significant amount of use after hours and on weekends from a number of other abutting land uses. Same thing with the Post Office here. The parking in front of the Post Office is signed for Post Office customers but it does see use by the general public from time to time especially during the afterhours.

Alderman Cathey

So the public off street would be something like you parked in the CVS lot.

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

CVS lot is held by a private party and the parking is labeled for customers only. So we would determine that or call that private off street parking.

Alderman Cathey

Oh, that's why private is. Okay.

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

We would consider that private off street parking. Public off street parking, again, the two litmus tests - the number one litmus test is ownership. Is it owned by a public agency? Is it purchased by public monies? And the second litmus test is if it's owned by a public agency. Is it publicly accessible at least part of the time? In the case of things like the Court House, you can make the argument that on off hours there is no restriction for the general public to use that. As a matter of fact, we noticed Saturday night mass over at St. Patrick's about half that lot was filled with parishioners who were parking there and walking across the street. The CVS, again, with the signage states customers only. It's a privately owned facility so it would default over at the private off street side. Same thing with Southern NH Medical Center. Ideally all of their spaces are set aside for patients, visitors, and staff.

Alderman Lopez

Yeah I was just thinking public off street parking may be an example would be the giant parking lot behind Wingate's Pharmacy?

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

The parking lot behind Wingate's Pharmacy?

Alderman Lopez

I think it's city owned.

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

Are you referring to the one that sits behind the TD Bank?

Alderman Lopez

No, that's a block over. Behind Wingates, behind Nashua Garden.

Jill Stansfield, Parking Manager

That's the Water Street lot.

Alderman Cathey

You indicated that a majority is private off street and there are people that are looking for that. So is a lot of that these businesses lot we're talking hospitals, CVS because when you said facilities I'm thinking – I don't think there's a lot of garages that you have to pay for that are swanky that you have a membership for. So we're talking mainly business lots that are signed for a specific use rather than to go to a restaurant or whatever?

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

Yeah when we use the word "facilities", we're using it as a cover all so that we don't have to differentiate between lots versus garages. Basically any parking facility that is in private ownership and is somehow signed or otherwise indicated for exclusive use by one group but it's a business, resident's association, or something along those lines, all of that defaults into that private bucket.

Alderman Cathey

Okay, thank you.

Alderman O'Brien

Maybe it's a good point to mention it. Is there not a great difference between let's say a restaurant working out a deal with a neighbor who is no longer using the lot after 5:00 at night so his customers could use that particular lot. But there's a big difference with overnight parking in that particular lot and people got to understand that. It all comes down to who's changing the oil at 3:00 in the morning and staining somebody's tarmac and everything. That has unfortunately occurred.

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

Yeah I mean one of the solutions that we're looking at, and I'll give you a preview, is a concept called "shared parking" which is actually a legal structure that allows two parties to enter in and agree to share the use of a facility to their both common ends. Shared parking is happening in your downtown already. If you want to see it, go to the top of the Elm Street garage on a Friday night and look down to the Santander lot next to the bank. Those folks are not coming in to do banking. All that the shared use structure does is it covers everybody's legal concerns. It shares liability back and forth and it formalizes the agreement.

As Alderman O'Brien so eloquently put it, those agreements have been in place as a verbal agreement in the past here in Nashua and that have been revoked when the property owner could not get compliance from the end users. So part of the challenge of the shared use agreement is who are the two parties that are participating and how do they agree to police their use during the time that they have access to the facility.

Alderman Lopez

The lot you referred to as the Santander lot, I thought that was a Mason's. It's not?

Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director

No it technical it is but it's colloquially referred to as the "Santander lot" because it's leased by them during the day. It's available for their customers but technically that parking lot is owned by the Mason's. You are correct

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

So in addition to establishing a baseline inventory, we also had to get some measures of occupancy as well. Over the next 4 slides on the right-hand side, you're going to see these heat maps. We went out and did counts across all 108 blocks by block face, by facility on a Friday mid-day and a Friday evening in October and then again the following

Saturday at mid-day and in the evening. Weather conditions were fantastic. It was warm. It was temperate. There was a lot of activity out on the street. Interestingly the second day the duck derby was going on so we had a pretty good measure of activity across the area. As you can see by the aggregate numbers there, even with this high level of activity and a great deal of commerce going on at least there's an aggregate. We never got over 50% utilization across the study area. Now that being said, there were certainly individual blocks that we saw that were running at a very high level of capacity. Some of them were parked to capacity here. Where you see the red blocks, those are places that are running right up around 100% full. The orange blocks are running in the 70 to 80 percent. The yellow blocks in the 80 to 90 percents. As a general rule of thumb in the parking industry when you see on-street facilities on block faces that are running around 85%, that is perceptively full. So if I'm coming from say Windham in for dinner for the first time and I'm driving down Main Street even though there may be one empty space sitting there, my impression is going to be that there is no available parking there. Same thing if I pull into the Water Street lot and there are two spaces that are empty because it's about 90% full perceptively, I'm going to perceive that as full. So when we put the yellow or orange on there what we're really doing is flagging those blocks to say if there is development or impacts coming in the future, this is where we could potentially have a problem.

The other thing I wanted to point out is when you talk about, and I'm going to flip to the next slide which shows Friday evening, when you talk about looking at parking problems in an urban setting like this, it's not necessarily a problem if you have one block or two blocks even next to each other which are highly utilized or at full capacity. In fact, that happens on a regular basis. What happens is one block is fully developed and built out and the next block carries the parking supply to offset that. Where you really start to focus or hone in on potential issues is when you have whole clusters of blocks together that are either completely full or cluster of blocks that are reaching that capacity. That's where you could literally have the classic parking problem which is simply not enough parking spaces to go around.

Alderman Cathey

Could you go back one slide? For the record, I know what 73 is, that's Elm Street. I know what 52 is but what is that 98 and 96?

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

98 and 96 are actually predominantly residential areas here that have very limited on-street parking and very limited off-street parking. So it doesn't take much for them to get up around capacity. There are only a hand full of spaces on each one of those blocks that are viable parking spaces to begin with.

Alderman Cathey

For the Elm Street area is that in your - I guess I'm going to say assumption, that's residential people in those blocks of area parking there or is that more for people who were coming downtown and that's the only spot they're finding?

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

I'm sorry which block.

Alderman Cathey

The Elm Street Block 73.

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

Well you have a combination of things. Schools in session so most of the off-street lots in that area are occupied. A lot of the surrounding on-street parking is occupied either by folks who are coming to patronize business or local residents. So the combination of those factors is going to create that kind of excess.

Now would I look at say "boy we need to put a garage there right now"? Not necessarily because if you look at the surrounding blocks, there's available capacity. That available capacity is both in the private side and the public side. So there's a place for people to overflow within a reasonable walking distance. Remember the question I asked, "what's your expectation versus what's your actual practice"? Vast majority of respondents indicated that they would park up to two blocks from their destination. So as a rule of thumb as we looked at this, we looked at each one of these areas and said within a two block radius can you still find some available parking in that area? If you can't, then we're looking at a

situation where we literally got to put more capacity there. Otherwise very often what you're looking at is more of a management issue than an infrastructure issue.

Chairman Moran

For that area that's residential, the majority of the respondents are diners and workers. Do you break down the data set to express if the residents wanted to walk up to two blocks away from their house?

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

We did not drill down to look at that threshold of preference. No Sir.

Alderman Jette

Thank you. I'm sorry I can't read the numbers. So the big red block towards the bottom?

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

That is the Elm Street School.

Alderman Jette

Okay. And the red block above Elm Street, the closest one to Elm Street, isn't that where the Performing Arts Center?

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

No. That is the corner of Hollis and Main where Seven-Star Pizza is.

Alderman Jette

What parking are you referring to the on-street?

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

There is very limited amount of parking on Hollis and then on Maple Street on the other side and very limited off-street parking on that block. So it doesn't take much for that all to become full or overwhelmed if you will.

Alderman Jette

Okay and next to that one there's a yellow, that's the CVS?

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

That's CVS and the lot that Southern NH Medical Center leases from the City.

Alderman Jette

Okay and so those are private. It's really not available to the public.

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

It's not available to the general public. No Sir.

Alderman Dowd

I believe everyone is getting a hard copy of this so it will be easier to read. Is that correct Mr. Cummings?

Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director

Yes.

Alderman Cathey

When you mentioned you know oh we don't really need to put a parking garage on Elm Street right away. I appreciate that. That's helpful. I would like to know if going forward we feel like that area does not need any structure of anything right now because there's a lot of green around that area. I guess I would assume then those people are going to park in residential areas. Does that have any impact on the residents? Have there been – and maybe Jill can answer this question – have there been any complaints from, is there any sort of issues going on with residential parkers who find that people who are not residents or live further away or many blocks away parking in front of their buildings and that becoming a problem or do we foresee that being a problem when we don't address something like a 73 or something like that?

Jill Stansfield, Parking Manager

Jill Stansfield, Parking Manager. So we have had some concerns from the school itself with some of the residents that actually park there overnight. Our office tries to do a really good job of educating folks that may have gotten a ticket or maybe been spoken to let them know that they can park in those parking spots, parking lots at Elm Street Middle School until 7:00 a.m. during school.

But we have had a few concerns in that area that there is actually a good amount of on street parking around the school during the day time. Just so kind of as the map indicates, there is close parking and there is, at least I know from my daughter going to school there, I always see a few open parking spaces in the perimeter of the parcel there.

Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director

So if I may, so I want to back your question up a little bit because I think there's a couple of ways you can answer your question. So immediately when I hear your question, I think yes there is a problem when you want to speak specifically to overnight parking because that is really when you're going to hear about the complaints or the issues.

Alderman Cathey

And that's in my head what I was thinking.

Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director

It comes to "overnight parking" because in that area, and this map doesn't necessarily speak to it, but not in that entire area can you park overnight. Belmont Street I know has been one of the streets where we've heard from residents time and time again about some issues in that area. So when I hear the question, my immediate reaction is it comes down to how you want to manage your overnight parking and we can have that conversation. If you take the overnight parking away from it, then it comes down to how you want to use the land in that red area and that's really up for discussion right now because we know the Elm Street Middle School is going away. That's approximately 10 acres of land and what I would recommend to you is that we make sure that whatever land use does occur on there, we make sure that parking management is part of any further use that occurs on that approximate 10 acres and that would satisfy any of the day time issues that may arise.

Alderman Cathey

Actually when I asked the question, I was thinking overnight because I'm thinking if it's an impacted area and I live there and I got to go to my apartment and park from my building. I've got to go park down the block. I lived in New York and I had that problem and I'd be annoyed.

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

So this just speaks to really daytime occupancy.

Alderman Cathey

Okay.

Chairman Moran

Any other questions? Please continue then.

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

Okay. So one of the things I wanted to assure you is we're not just looking at it at these very macro levels. We also got down to a very micro level as well because we were certainly cognizant that a lot of the claims didn't happen across the study area. They happened almost at the block level or sometimes closer. So in addition to what was happening on a block by block basis, what was happening across the area, we also focused on where we saw issues right down to the individual block face in some cases or the individual facility here. You can see a listing of places, for lack of a better term, we flagged based on our observations on that Friday here. There were several recurring themes that we saw. There were a number of block faces where we had more vehicles parked than there were actually striped allowable spaces here. The one that really stands out in my mind is Eldridge. You have on any given day between 9 and 11 people that are kind of inventing their own space - kind of on the sidewalk but also on Eldridge. As we looked, we did spend quite a bit of time talking with DPW about what they felt their acceptable dimensions were to allow for parking on street and then the safe passage of vehicles as well. I will tell you that Eldridge doesn't meet those dimensional requirements.

A lot of the places where you saw people parked over the striped capacity were places where people were either parking and they didn't have enough room to safely park there. They were engaged in a practice that wasn't according to the signage that was in place either explicitly authorized or unauthorized. So it was a practice that was going on. There were a few examples where we had people were just willfully parking illegally. A lot of these seemed to occur in residential districts here. Similarly where we saw block faces that were running between 85-100% utilization, usually those were in residential districts where you had limited off-street parking, a very dense development around the core of the block itself. So there wasn't a lot of capacity to begin with and there was a lot of demand competing for it.

In terms of off-street impacts here, we found one small public facility that was running 100% in the middle of the day. Every other facility was running at 75% or lower among the public off street facilities. There was one small private off-street facility that was running at 100% and a handful of other ones that were running around 90%. All of them were fairly small. They were attached to a building or an institution that was directly adjacent to them here. What we did not find is endemic impacts like this across the area or necessarily on contiguous blocks. So again it's an issue of management.

Alderman Dowd

I'm looking at your map and on the top right, that's BAE and you've got green in that area. That's COVID. Before COVID and possibly after COVID, every day that lot is completely full. Trust me trying to find a place to park there is near impossible. Right now there aren't that many people in the building because the only people in the building have to be in the building. So at some point that's going to be filled up again.

Jill Stansfield, Parking Manager

I believe this is still the practice and I'm going to ask Director Cummings to confirm this. BAE, I believe, alternates Fridays off. So that just happened to be an off Friday.

Alderman Dowd

Yeah, correct. That will work too. Off Fridays, there's not a lot of people there.

Chairman Moran

I learned that from my patients who go to BAE. I'm like what are you doing here on Friday? It's my day off. Everyone gets it off. Go ahead, sorry.

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

I'm going to piggyback on the observation from Alderman Dowd though because it does bring up one of the things in my industry is dealing with right now which is what does the new normal look like going forward? COVID advanced the acceptance of remote work policies by a span of 20 times what had been accepted before. Prior to the onset of COVID nationally according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 5% or less of the total population worked remotely either full or part-

time. At the height of COVID in April, there was a statistic that came out from the Bureau of Labor Statistics that indicated that 35% of the workforce was suddenly adopting remote work on a full time basis and another 15% were adopting it on a part-time basis. So we made a huge leap there, it's advanced the conversation. There is no consensus right now on whether this is going to be a permanent condition going forward or if at some point in the years coming we're going to revert back to the way we were prior to COVID. We have seen from the industry standpoint, some industries have adopted this a lot more readily than others and made it abundantly clear that they will be engaging permanently in either partial or full hybrid work schedules or remote working opportunities.

When I look at BAE, I understand that the observations that we made may not have been a typical prior to COVID. I can't tell you for sure what it's going to look like post COVID. I know that we had tried to get a meeting to have that discussion with those folks but I digress.

What you're seeing here are the statistics or observations on that following Saturday. Basically a lot of the same places where you saw issues on Friday you saw them also on Saturday and in many cases they were magnified. I will tell that where we saw a growth and either illegal parking or parking up or near capacity here on street, those were primarily in residential districts. Inversely here, we did not see the same level of pressure on any of the off street facilities either publically or privately owned even with the duck derby going on, which did a pretty good job of filling up Water Street and the Elm Street garage because Le Parc Renaissance was closed for that.

Like I said, one of the things we did because we wanted to really understand the impacts, is we went back out in February. Because we had been out on a fairly attractive and active day in October, we tried to target a day where we thought there was going to be a high level of activity in February as well. In this case, that was the Friday leading up to Valentine's Day weekend which is a high level activity day for diners and shoppers. So we went out and did our observations up and down the length of Main Street to understand how demand was accumulating up and down Main Street. That's the 136 spaces across the top that you see in terms of open supply as opposed to the 2021 counts where there were only 57 open spaces going across there. Level of utilization got very high, you were within 16 spaces of being maxed out at 7:00 at night and those empty spaces were either sitting way up by the bridge or way down here by Hollis Street. So there were block faces that were actually chock-a-block full up and down Main Street.

Now the good news is when you run around the corners to the cross streets - Pearl, Temple, Factory. There was some availability there and there was significant availability in the public lots that were half a block in to either side of that. As a matter of fact when you compared the level of utilization we saw in October in those area versus the level of utilization we saw in February, the utilization of those public off-street facilities actually had come down incrementally. So our theory is because the available capacity was there on Main Street more people gravitated over to that place and there was a higher level of utilization there but overall there was still available capacity within half a block distance of walking.

Alderman Cathey

Two questions. The Margarita's lot is that owned by (inaudible)? Is that us? That's BAE too? Now I've only been here since 2017 but I've rarely if ever seen that lot full with cars at all. Maybe up to the guard rails in the middle of the parking lot for some weird reason but maybe I'm wrong or maybe that's not an option.

Alderman Dowd

Margarita's owns some of the parking lot, which I'm sure Director Cummings can attest to but there's a demarcation where it becomes BAE. You don't want to park there during the day because they have a security force and they'll ticket you and have you towed. But at night, they probably don't care.

Alderman Cathey

I should have asked this in the beginning but in the area that was studied, and maybe this is a question for the Director of Parking, are there enough spots for all the residents that live in that area? If every resident owned a car would there be enough spots for everyone to park at night/overnight in the whole area?

Jill Stansfield, Parking Manager

On street?

Alderman Cathey

Yup.

Jill Stansfield, Parking Manager

No.

Alderman Cathey

If you include not on-street, still no?

Jill Stansfield, Parking Manager

Off street, yeah. As Andy has mentioned if we were able to partner with some private entities, we may be able to adopt a shared used type of program where we could potentially have that capacity.

Alderman Cathey

That leaves me to one more question. So is it your observation that one of the bigger issues is the residential parking over people actually patronizing the Main Street downtown area that is going to be the bigger bite we need to take rather than trying to figure out what to do for patrons coming to downtown? Maybe that's a question for Director Cummings.

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

Residential parking is something that certainly from what we understand needs to be addressed currently specifically to the policies that exist currently. Before we undertook this study, we were actually retained by the City to do a fairly extensive study of just the overnight parking policy and program as it stands. There are a number of – we had noted there were a number of obstacles to that not the least of which is because it is right now restrained just to certain streets. The ability to provide enough capacity for all the folks who might be interested in having overnight parking privileges is just geometrically impossible. You can't get enough capacity. There is capacity in the public off-street facilities that are through the area here. We did not do a unit to space count as far as that goes, but the initial calculations that we did make based on general square footage across the area an assumption of what that would translate into the number of residential units would suggest that between the private parking that's provided for residents and the available public capacity that is within that 108 block area off-street, yeah you should have enough room to accommodate all of those users.

Alderman Cathey

So even if we pass legislation to change the overnight parking program from what it is now, we still wouldn't have enough curbside on sight street parking for all the residents that are in this particular area let alone other areas of the city. We essentially would have to come up with a some sort of share program or some other solutions just for the residents alone not including patronizing businesses, etc.

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

Yeah I think that's fair to say.

Alderman Cathey

I'm just trying to get the big picture here.

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

Well I'll take it a step further because this is something we've worked through in a lot of communities, especially communities with colonial era street grants and an interest in serving the public good by subsidizing substantially the cost of providing on-street parking. The example that comes immediately to mind is I worked in a similar neighborhood to say the French Hill District in Richmond, Virginia called "the fan". Same thing, very narrow streets, very densely populated with residential units here. Interestingly, most of those residential units also came with at least a one-car garage based on the time they were built. We did a survey on the number of those garages that were actually being used for vehicle parking and found that less than a third of them actually had a vehicle parked in them at night. A lot of them were bonus

rooms. A lot of them were offices. A lot of them were storage and part because that was the cheapest way to expand your footprint and the cost of getting a residential parking permit in that neighborhood was not an impediment to folks engaging that. So it's not just a matter of finding the space, it's also a matter of how you're valuing that space that will determine whether people park there or not. I can tell you from having walked through a lot of these neighborhoods late at night during the overnight parking study, not all your privately held parking facilities are parked to capacity at 11:00 p.m., midnight, 1:00 a.m. and that's because they can find convenient parking on the curb right in front of their place. They can get a permit or if they want to roll the dice.

Chairman Moran

Just for clarification on my part, these residential areas that are constantly in the red is it residential parking only signage up over that?

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

In some of them absolutely. Like I said, it's a street by street designation at this point in time. So there are a lot of streets say within the tree street area around Elm Street School that have that designation right now. Some of them have hybrid designations. So as you go down them, you will see signs posted indicating that the overnight hours is overnight permit only and during other hours it's a two hour time limit.

Alderman Jette

Thank you. So I'm not sure I understood the three of you. So my understanding is that the High Street parking garage and the Elm Street parking garage are restricted only from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 or 6:00 p.m. After 6:00 p.m. and before 7:00 a.m., anybody can park there overnight. So are you saying that if the residents in the tree street area for example figured out that they could park there and got over there and desire to park right in front of their building are you saying that there is not sufficient capacity for them to park in the garages? Some of them can park on the street now with permits but are you saying that there's not enough capacity there?

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

No. I mean in terms of the litmus test, a really good way to look at it is what happens during a snow emergency because the requirement is to clear those streets so you can do snow removal. The city's off-street facilities do reach a high level of utilization but they do accommodate folks so that street clearing can go on. So in terms of is there enough capacity for that? At least point in time there appears to be enough capacity to accommodate that movement if/and or where that needs to happen.

Alderman Jette

Okay. Thank you for clarifying that.

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

The other thing that we did when we were doing the observations up and down Main Street is we performed what's called "a license plate inventory". This is a fairly simple exercise that requires an individual at the top of each hour to walk the length of that study area and record the license plate of every vehicle that's parked there and then repeat that process again the following hour. Once we have a full data set - in this case we went out from 8:00 in the morning until 8:00 at night - we went back and analyzed all of that data to identify what a typical length of stay is, how long people stayed as an individual as far as it goes - whether they were in compliance with posted time limits.

One of the things that we also looked at was turn-over. That is how many cars total parked in those "x" number of spaces during the course of the day which gave you an idea of how often those spaces turned over. In a perfect world if everybody parked for two hours only and every space was full in the area from 8:00 in the morning until 8:00 at night, your turnover rate would be six. So it would turn over six times. So you've got a twelve-hour block, every space is turning over two hours, it's a turnover rate of six. What we saw was an average turn-over rate across this area. Across 136 spaces, we accommodated 451 vehicles during the course of that day so about three and a third times. That's a pretty good clip for a mixed-use commercial district. You're seeing a high level of utilization and turn-over there which is good. It speaks to the health of your downtown.

What was not so great is about 22% of the folks that we observed that day were parking over the posted time limits. Sometimes it was an hour, sometimes it was five hours or six hours. Of those 451 cars, 99 of them ended up parking between three and nine hours during the course of that day. We also identified about five percent of the cars that were staying within the time zone, but we engaging in a behavior which I refer to as a shuffle which is they would come out and park at one space for a couple of hours, feed the meter, and then move their car about a block down and feed that meter. When that expired, they'd move again. There's nothing inherently wrong with this other than our observation that very often these are employees and what they are doing is taking away spaces that you probably want to have available for visitors and patrons as they come in and especially those folks unfamiliar with the area that need that level of proximity. So I don't think it's a huge issue, but it's something that we want to highlight as far as it goes that that shuffle behavior is happening in your downtown on a given day here.

In terms of looking at future needs, we really looked at them from three different perspectives - near-term which was everything we anticipated to happen between today and the next three years. There was a lot of information on this that included projects that are already funded as far as roadway realignments, developments that have been permitted or under construction. We also spent a lot of time looking at properties that were vacant and up for sale or vacant and up for lease. In terms of total numbers, right now today to our best estimation there's about a quarter million square feet of existing commercial real estate across the study area that's vacant right now that's waiting for reabsorption. In addition you have a couple of major burgeoning developments that are coming in - the School Street development, the Performing Arts Center. Those inform those projections over the next three years.

When you look at the mid-term - four to six years, some of this is planned. Some of it has been hallmarked in one of the two dozen planning studies that have been done across the area as far as that goes. I wouldn't go as far as saying that it's speculative. It certainly expresses the desire the city has agreed on as to how they would like to grow. As we looked at these, we looked at each one of these and we evaluated them relative to our standing in the market today. What is the likelihood that this space is going to go up for redevelopment in the future would be office versus residential? And then in the longer term, we're really looking 7 to 10 years out and this is where it starts to get a little speculative. There are guidelines, but it's hard to say beyond the strategic plans that have been put in place talking about development across those areas whether they're actually going to come to fruition here.

Going through all of these calculations and projections will keep us here for another couple of hours, so I wanted to really focus a little bit on the short term and the trending that we're seeing. On the left-hand side is a picture of what we were seeing in terms as far as aggregate utilization under current conditions. On the right-hand side we overlaid all the emerging developments that were coming in. What we saw was there were going to be significant clusters of growth and development that were coming in particularly in the Millyard and also in east downtown, the other side of Main Street. We anticipate a lot of growth coming in there. You'll start to see those clustering of blocks that are running in the orange or the yellow that suggest to us that if we're talking about increasing capacity in the future, these are certainly areas that are going to want or require expansion in order to meet those needs over the next three years or so.

I know this is very top of the waves, but I wanted to talk in terms of trending. It's also important to note this because when we start talking about your options for increasing capacity on both private and public property and the vehicles for doing that, these are the areas that we are really kind of focused on in terms of how we can do that within our understanding for how the area is going to grow.

So in addition to all this, again, we also spent quite a bit of time looking at how parking is provided and managed here in Nashua here. You can see these are the general areas of categories that we looked at. We did a fairly deep dive into each one of these. One of the things that we did is we looked at each one of these and we also looked at how things were done in other communities. And this is where the steering committee was very helpful in helping us identify communities that were truly comparable, communities that were aspirational. Some of these made perfect sense because we're in Nashua we absolutely are going to take a look at things in Concord, Lowell, MA, Portsmouth, NH, Manchester, NH. Some of them we feel are pretty close comparables. Missoula, Montana, is not one that people would normally look at and say "boy that's a twin to Nashua, NH" but there's a lot of things that the two communities have in common. Just in terms of population, population density, housing density both are dissected by a river which really makes up a lot of the features in those towns. Both of them have very similar demographics in terms of age and gender here.

Similarly we thought Portland, Maine, was a good comparable to take a look at as well and West Hartford, CT. Places like Albany, Ann Arbor, and Rochester, MN, these were more aspirational. They were communities that we looked at that had very well developed parking systems and when we look at said from a parking perspective where might you want to be in the future here? Those were good places to look at. All of these had in common among all these other characteristics the

fact that they were highly lauded by at least two different publications as being extremely livable or having a high-quality of life much like Nashua. So we wanted to make sure we were looking at communities that were very alike to Nashua from that perspective.

Does anybody have any questions on this before we move on? Okay.

So like I said, it was an exhaustive study. I felt the best way to go over it with this Committee and kind of hit the highlights was to present it like you would a report card. So as you're looking at the various grades here, keep in mind that you're being graded on a curve relative to those other comparable communities as far as best practices. There is nothing that we looked at that we saw that was failing per se. There were areas where we saw the opportunity for improvement. Overall we liked the general policies that you have in place, the SOPs. There are some policies that are a little arcane and language is unclear that can be cleaned up, but overall they did their job at their appointed mission.

General maintenance is definitely in-line with best practices for the industry as to how you take care of assets here. Jill and her department are doing the best they can with limited staffing. There are a number of things that could be potentially outsourced to take that load off of her staff and still maintain the assets that you've got in place. Similarly with ticket adjudication, there are some functions there that can be outsourced to free up the Parking Department staff for higher and better uses. There are some ways that you could change how you process citations right now that would lead to some more efficiencies and actually take some of the load off the Finance Department without inhibiting either the security of transactions or customer service.

The one that I really wanted to highlight is enforcement. Enforcement got a solid "C" and the reason enforcement got a solid "C" is there aren't enough people on staff to enforce the laws that you have on your books right now. The calculations that you see here are labor and time calculations just saying. How much area do you have to cover and how long would it could take you to cover that to enforce all the various laws that are on the books across that area. The bottom line is you need about a 112 hours of labor a week in order to do that. That's three full-time parking enforcement officers. We're not staffed at that right now and if he wanted to deliver that level of enforcement, we need to look at increasing that staffing. We may not necessarily have to look at hiring three people. There are some things that you can do by instituting automated gate systems on the garages that would take the requirement to patrol those to make sure people are paying and make sure that the people parking in there have permits off the table which would reduce that labor. There are some things that you can do with technology that can also help with enforcement here. We're going to get into that in a minute when we talk about new equipment as well, but there are some things you can do to reduce that load. But any way you are going to get around it, the way your system is rigged right now it's very dependent on enforcement and there are not enough people to actually execute that.

Chairman Moran

How many are there now?

Jill Stansfield, Parking Manager

We currently have 4 part-time 19 hours a week enforcement personnel.

(Inaudible)

Jill Stansfield, Parking Manager

Correct. So that would equate to two FTEs, yes.

Chairman Moran

So you need one more by the standard. Does the Police Department have any authority to enforce any of these laws?

Tim Cummings, Director Economic Development

Your question you just said "do they have the authority?" The answer is yes but do they? The answer is no. So 90% of parking management is done through Parking Enforcement. The Police Department on average typically doesn't do any type of parking enforcement.

Alderman Dowd

It's a double issue. One - they're short-staffed to begin with to cover the city with the officers they have and two - once it was transferred by Board of Alderman actions from them to Tim Cummings, they wanted no part of it.

Alderman Jette

That's not a reflection on Director Cummings.

Alderman Clemons

The police would just to be clear too though, the police will come to resolve issues surrounding parking. So I know that like for example like there's been times when I as an Alderman will get a phone call because somebody is parked opposite somebody's driveway and they can't get in, etc. My answer is always to call the police and they will come down and adjudicate the situation and they do. So they deal with those situational things, but they're not going overnight and give people tickets and things like that.

Alderman Cathey

Thank you. Two questions. One would be what is the break-even if I assume we're missing revenue. We need to hire someone to capture that revenue. What is the net revenue to us to do that or even if we're going to put on gates in the parking garage, which is more technology which more expense, there's got to be a break even there for cost versus what we would gain out of that long-term. Do we know what those numbers are? I don't need them right now. I'm just curious.

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

We do know how to derive those numbers. We haven't done those calculations yet primarily because we're still in the concept stage. So once we get down to some final solutions that we feel have public support and we can endorse, that's when we start to go through that cost benefit calculation.

Alderman Cathey

The other question I had was on the previous side you said towing is untenable. I would like that to be more specific just so I understand tow trucks can't get into where they need to or what are we looking at here?

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

You're looking at a current contract that does not necessarily serve the city's best interest. Towing right now is subcontracted out to private agencies. Relative to best practices, a number of the terms within that contract don't align with what you commonly see in other communities and certainly don't align with best practices. For example every tow that is executed under the current contract, the City actually pays for. This is countered to common and best practice which is usually to put that cost onto the vehicle owner not to have the municipality pay that cost to have that car removed.

Alderman Cathey

Can we recoup that cost?

Jill Stansfield, Parking Manager

So in some instances yes we do. If the vehicle owner decides to reclaim their vehicle, they will have to come to City Hall, pay the fine, the tow fee, and they will be given an authorization release form to go pick up their vehicle but in many cases that doesn't always happen.

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

Because if that doesn't happen and the vehicle is deemed abandoned and goes to auction, the towing company actually has the rights to those fees from the auctioned vehicle.

Chairman Moran

Geez how frequently does that happen?

Alderman Lopez

How nice of them.

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

I don't think it happens very frequently, but again as I look at the terms of this relative to other contracts I looked at in the past, these are not advantageous terms.

Chairman Moran

When are these contracts up?

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

The contract is going up for rebid shortly. Is that correct?

Jill Stansfield, Parking Manager

We're going to be putting an RFP out in the coming month or so.

Chairman Moran

I remember when I used to live in Lowell, the tow truck drivers used to be on the hunt to tow your car and you'd have to pay them directly to get it back. I just haven't had that experience.

Alderman Clemons

What does it take to have a car towed by the City? I know that there are private lots that have their own people that they contract out with you know and they have their own rules and what not. But what does it take to be – what do you have to do to get your car towed by the City because I would imagine that - can you describe a situation where that may happen?

Jill Stansfield, Parking Manager

So a couple different reasons. Driveway obstruction is actually one of them. We try not to do that unless it's a situation where we can't resolve it with officer involvement. Scofflaw which is over \$200 in tickets is another one and we have quite a few people that actually have hit that a few times and another one is abandonment.

Alderman Jette

What was that?

Jill Stansfield, Parking Manager

Vehicle owners who have hit that threshold multiple times.

Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director

What Parking Manager Stansfield means by that is it's a strategy that they undertake where they know that they can park for a certain amount of time until they get \$200 in fines and then they'll either pay or unfortunately their car will get towed depending on the situation, They will drop back down and then they'll go. What she means is there's repeat offenders.

Alderman Clemons

How many repeat offenders in that case do we have if you have to take an estimation? Is it a significant number or is it a

handful of people?

Jill Stansfield, Parking Manager

I probably see about five a month.

Alderman Clemons

Is it the same five people every month or?

Jill Stansfield, Parking Manager

Yeah.

Alderman Clemons

Okay so it's not like its....because it's been presented to me – and Mr. Chairman if I can go on – so it's been presented to me in the past that, and I agree to some extent, that some of the parking fees are a tax on the poor and I get that. But on the other hand, I'm wondering how extensive that is and so I think it's good to hear that it's only a handful of people that really it's happening to. I'm not saying that the folks who did get a ticket now and then even if it's once a month, that's \$120. That's a lot of money for some people and I get that but I guess the more egregious ones I guess was what I was more interested in. I guess it's good to hear it's a limited number of people.

Jill Stansfield, Parking Manager

So the other thing I wanted to mention to you is the City does have quite a few abandoned vehicles towed. These are vehicles that are left on the public right away. Our office isn't always involved in those. Those are largely handled by the management of the Police Department. I do handle the towing invoices so I see that, so if I had to break it up it would be about a 50/50 split between the amount of tows that are our office actually conducts in conjunction with the Police Department and about 50% that are abandoned related tows that we may not have had involvement in.

Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director

So the abandoned tows is a good example of where we pay out and no one is going to be paying us back. So there's a problem there that we want to kind of highlight. Before we go too far down the path of talking about the towing situation. I would be remiss not to point out that we have one contract that has to satisfy the needs of many different departments and it's very complicated. It's very hard. You have the Police with their priorities. You have Jill Stansfield with parking management with her priorities. You have DPW and DPW priorities. So we're trying to balance all of these various priorities with one contract. So some of the terms you're hearing about, they came about with best of intentions and came about probably because there was a need at a time and what we're pointing out now is we'd like to kind of reconcile with best practices that we're seeing in the industry. So I wanted to provide that additional context because I think it's helpful so the public understands that we weren't just blind to the situation. It's a situation that has evolved over time and it's a very nuanced issue.

Alderman Clemons

Just in regard to the RFP that you're doing. I would hope that no matter what we do that the practice be is that the City is at least informed about what's going on because the last thing, while I agree that yeah the City probably shouldn't be paying these costs up front and then reimbursing, I still think that the City still holds a responsibility as being the one who called the tow truck to know what the cost is because you also don't want someone else on the other end to take advantage of somebody. So having that communicated back "yes", yes we towed this car and this is what we're going to charge that person so that when that person goes if they don't get charged that or they call the City and they say hey I was charged \$300, it should have been \$200 that there is some accountability. I guess I would look for that from the City when that comes forward.

Chairman Moran

I take it, and I don't like this idea at all, I think keeping essential services under the City umbrella is very important to me

and others in the City but contracting out ticketing that has an expense in itself. Do we know what other cities pay cost wise to like (*inaudible*) or whatever?

Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director

What I would say is not so much the ticketing but I would want to just remind the group here this evening is we actually run parking at a surplus. Both of these accounts – so there's two separate accounts - parking enforcement and parking operations. Parking enforcement we cover our costs and then there's additional monies left over. The question you asked earlier is what's that breakeven point? How much more money are we going to need to be able to bring in so we cover the cost of that new labor is what we need to reconcile right now because we already know we bring in more but do we bring in enough which would be a modeling exercise of how much we currently bring in, and how much we think we'd bring in based on additional citations being written, and reconciling that and seeing if that is something that we could do.

And then we have the parking operations which is the lease payments. That is not enforcement money. That's meter revenue that comes in and that goes to paying for parking maintenance and again COVID a little different times, but pre-COVID times that always ran at a surplus and then some additional monies was transferred to a Downtown Improvement Committee group that worked on improving the areas that actually had to pay for parking. So I wanted to get that out there because I don't want anyone to think that the City of Nashua is running parking at a deficit. It's not running in the red.

Chairman Moran

I'm hoping that people are hearing that. If we could bring in more revenue for things like downtown improvements if we were able to fill that need. Hopefully with more part-time people to limit your fringe benefits.

Alderman Dowd

Yeah I think we're getting stuck and not going through the overview. There is going to be a report and a lot of these things that need to be resolved will be actions to be taken later. So I think we should continue on with the overview.

Chairman Moran

I agree even though how exciting this all is to me personally.

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

So continuing on. Overall again, we felt that for the most part we were meeting industry standard. The Parking Department was doing the job as well as any of their peers here. There is one area that I do want to highlight. When we looked at equipment maintenance, this was really specific among other things to the meters that are scattered throughout the area. The meters that you have right now are primarily coin operated meters. They are well beyond what their typical planned service life would be. They have a very limited number of features associated with them. They could be upgraded. This is what the future looks like in terms of parking meters. These are smart meters. They refer to them as smart meters for a number of different reasons: 1) they take debit cards, and credit cards, as well as coins. They also can integrate with the pay by cell system so there is a lot more convenience and opportunities there. A lot of them include features that allow actual occupancy monitoring as well. So in the upper left-hand side, those are a couple of smart meters in Burlington, Vermont, and just below the meter head you'll see two sponge-like appendages that are hanging off the meter pole. Those are actually sonic sensors and they determine whether there is a vehicle parked in each one of the spaces that are serving those meters. Those sensors can not only talk to the meters and let parking enforcement know if somebody has overstayed the time they paid or if they parked and did not pay, which makes for more efficient enforcement but they can also push that information out to applications websites, handheld apps, etc., that give folks real-time occupancy information as well. So it's sort of the next level, if you will as far as both providing better support and efficiency for enforcement, more opportunities for payment, and better services to the constituency by being able to inform them where availability exists.

In the lower left-hand corner that is another variation on smart meters. The box that you see is, again, that's actually a magnetic-sensing technology that actually detects the metal in the vehicles frame. Then at the very top, the semi-oval shaped thing with two green eyes sticking out of it here is a type of meter that actually uses cameras. You can see the small cut outs below that about half way down on either side of the fin running that. Those are cameras that are actually shooting either side and they use spacial detection to determine whether someone is parked in those spaces. A lot of

communities have also used pucks which sit in the middle of the slab and detect the presence of the vehicle above by magnetic resonance. There's a couple examples of those right in the middle of the page here that represent those pucks and they work the same way. They communicate to the meter and then they can also communicate to other sources. These items have gotten more and more affordable as time goes on. When it comes to swapping out the meter that you have got for an upgrade version of what you got versus one of these, the different can literally be a couple hundred dollars per meter head. So technology is starting to get more and more affordable, offers more and more efficiency, and more and more features.

The other recommendation that we would have in terms of equipment maintenance is if you do this, most companies will also now offer you a contract to service the equipment. So again, that's something where we could take some of the Parking Department staff who are spending time doing that off of the table, let them task to higher and better uses, and subcontract this out to somebody else. The reason that I keep talking about trying to free up the Parking Department staff to do other things is we talked about this a minute ago, we've got four part-timers doing about 20 hours a week is that correct?

Jill Stansfield, Parking Manager

Yes.

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

But they're not just doing it exclusively enforcement. My calculations were assuming that's all those three full time equivalent folks were doing. These folks are doing meter collections, and enforcement, and meter maintenance, and sometimes snow removal as well. So I'm looking for ways where we can take the things that could be subcontracted at reasonable cost out to private agencies so that the remaining staff that we have can be tasked at those higher and better uses specific to the Parking Department.

Alderman Jette

In that photo, the two things in the middle, I don't know if I heard you correctly, did you refer to them as "pucks" because I'm wondering are they snow plow resistant?

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

The one at the very bottom is. The one at the top is typically adhered to a space very often an off-street space where you don't have to worry about snow plowing. The one below that you actually have to drill a hole in the pavement. You put the detector into the pavement and then you usually seal it with an epoxy over the top so that the snow plow doesn't hit it. Several years a very large city to the south of us did a pilot using this type of technology. They used the flush mounts rather than the ones that actually went into the pavement because they were assured by the manufacturer that the plow would go right over the top of them. In March, a lot of these were discovered in several different snow plows around the city. The alternate version that goes into the ground has been recommended now in northern climates where you're having to do a lot of plowing.

Alderman Jette

Thank you.

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

Continuing on with the report card here. You'll see that where we have rates and fees noted, we're doing a C- on this and this is why we're doing a C- on those particular factors. There has not been a rate increase in the City of Nashua since 2011 and in terms of what the City is collecting relative to just other communities within northern Massachusetts and northern New Hampshire puts them at a much lower end of the scale here. So certainly you want to provide parking at a very affordable basis. There are some strategies where you can price assets to make them accessible to folks who are very restricted and then price other assets so that if folks want to be much closer to a destination they have the ability to pay that slightly more premium price to do that. You accommodate both groups without discriminating against others. The point of this slide is just to point out there is opportunity and there is basis to make an argument for a rate adjustment based on market standard certainly because it hasn't been adjusted since 2011. Just keeping pace with rising inflation, there's an argument to be made as well.

I'm not going to go into the full – were' not - let me make this very clear to you folks and anybody in the public listening tonight. We're not in any position to make recommendations right now because there are a couple of other factors that we need to work into our map before we're ready to make a recommendation on rate adjustments. One is what are the costs that we need to cover in the future based on recommendations we're making? And the other one is what are we hoping to achieve with our pricing structure? Increasingly, more and more municipalities are considering that second question when they talk about adjusting rates and they talk about setting rates. What do we want to achieve? Do we want to make one area that's overburdened right now a little bit more available and another area that's under-utilized more attractive? Can we manipulate prices to balance out that supply and demand? If you've got a community that's really committing to more sustainable transportation modes, do we want to put travel by single occupant vehicle on a more even footing with less convenient opportunities that are out there for biking, or transit, or something along those lines here? These are all things that go into that question as well. Again, we're not in the position yet to define all of those things or opine on those that we could come out with a rate recommendation. We just wanted to put the facts out in front of this Board as they stand currently.

One of the things that's always tough whenever you talk about a rate adjustment is how to do it and whether it's fair, equitable, and transparent. The policy that I found that I really liked again is from a close comparable to Nashua - the City of Missoula. In Missoula, the Parking Commission is the agency that provides parking as opposed to the Parking Department. They've had issues with years and years on how to roll out rates in a way that was transparent, fair, and equitable. What they actually put into their code now is the process that you see here which requires the city staff do a fairly extensive study of what the overhead is, what the current levels of utilization are, what other communities are doing, what other costs need to be covered, what are the objects that they're trying to achieve. They put that in an official study that then goes out to each impacted stakeholder for review ahead of time. There is a public session with the Commission scheduled for folks to come in and discuss it. After they've had a chance to review it and once they have had that public hearing, then there is a decision made whether to advance forward but the critical thing is that the public is informed each step of the way and has the ability to respond to these and also to understand why these cost changes are being requested.

Final two items here - access control security. There are some things that the City can consider to improve that. In terms of snow emergencies, we studied this quite a bit. Right now Nashua is doing about everything they can do as far as notifying people ahead of time where there's a snow emergency, making them aware of where they can go. The biggest challenge that we see in Nashua right now is just finding reservoirs where folks can off of the street and park during a snow emergency. They don't have to be cleared themselves. One of the things that other communities do, I'll give you an example, Salem, Massachusetts, realized they had a lot of parking associated with some of the city parks that are within walking distance of their different neighborhoods and that parking was not going to be utilized during a snow emergency for the most part and they put those lots in play so they could clear the streets. There are some reservoirs that you have in your area. The only one downtown that doesn't look like it's being highly utilized or highly employed right now is the Crown Street lot that could potentially become a reservoir as well to get folks off. Beyond that if you were to create a new reservoir, it would be some distance out of town and then we need to start working through the dynamics of shuttling folks back and forth if you were going to go down that road.

In terms of safety and security, there are some really simple things to do. Lighting improvements are one of the things that can very quickly improve both perception and actual security and safety here. Jill's department is already looking at some pilots that they can do to get more efficiency out of lighting that is in place in some of the facilities. Some of the facilities, especially the surface lots, are still running over the old high pressure sodium. Those are the ones that you see on the left that give the orangeish hue. High pressure sodium is great because it's low energy and its long life. It's bad because it's a terrible quality of light that creates a lot of shadows. So one of the things that we would recommend and we'll work with the City to figure out how we implement this and what the cost is moving toward LED or metal halide fixtures which have more uniform light, brighter lighter, and give a better appearance here to folks.

A lot of folks talked about the desire to see the garages secured. There are certainly lots of options that are out there. There is grading that can be put around the grade level of the garage to prevent folks from going through the openings. There is fencing you can put around the lots. On the lower right hand corner, that's actually Lowell, Massachusetts, that instituted the fencing. You can put in high-speed doors. On the far right hand side this is a system that has been used in a number of garages in Boston where you are issued a bar code. It's on your ticket and it can also be on your phone and you use that to actually scan the pedestrian access in and out of the facilities. These are great as far as securing the facility. I can tell you it's a double-edge sword because the better job you do at securing the facility, the more people will look at it and perceive the area as intrinsically unsafe because you've done such a great job at security the facility. The number one thing that you can do that doesn't necessarily give that appearance is that you can look at scheduling staff or personnel in the facility so that there is a physical presence there. Folks find that just as comforting as they do high-speed

overhead door because they feel like there is at least a witness there. In other communities one of the ways that they've done this that sort of killed two swords is that they put all the janitorial staff working in the facilities on the overnight shift as opposed to the day shift. The facility is emptier so it's easier to clean and you have people that are active within the facility at a time when activity is at an ebb so it helps with perception and safety.

I will warn you. It is always tempting to say we can put in more call boxes. Call boxes are another thing that just contribute the perception of safety. The more you put them in, the more people perceive that you must be in an unsafe place if you've got all these call boxes.

So this brings us to some other general concepts and strategies that we wanted to vent with you tonight. We've laid out a lot of problems and a lot of challenges. We think that there might be some opportunities for addressing those. We talked about the cluster of development that we anticipate coming into the Millyard and the upper end of downtown east of Main Street here. In terms of introducing more capacity on property that is public owned, there are a lot of concepts that we're vetting and playing with. One of them could be potentially introducing angle parking to Main Street here which would create more capacity there. Potentially about a 60 space net gain for between \$2 – 3 million dollars. This one really needs to be vetted out with DPW, and traffic, Engineering because this would mean potentially losing a couple travel lanes in each direction and we would need to weigh that out relative to these benefits to figure out what the political and actual impact practical costs of this might be.

The High Street garage is a good facility. It's slated for some improvements right now, but it is a dated facility. Garages don't age well and at some point in the future you may have to look at replacing that. If you do, you could replace that and incorporate the footprint of the Factory Street lot sits on which is directly adjacent to it. Getting more efficient footprint, being able to bring in a facility that has state-of-the-art design features that make it look more secure, airy, better lighted, more durable as far as that goes. Potentially if you went with a five-story structure on this site, that's about 224 new spaces of new capacity that you could introduce to the area but at a substantial cost. It's going to be between \$16 - 17.5 million dollars to do that and it's going to be a long construction period because you have to do demolition and then reconstruction onsite.

In terms of things that are less costly and quicker gains, you have significant change of grade for both the Water Street deck and the Pearson Avenue lot. The Water Street lot and Pearson Avenue lot you could put supported decks where there is a change in grade there so that folks could park on top of the supported deck and underneath the deck as well. They are small gains - 20 spaces in one, 34 spaces in the other but at a significantly lower cost. Both of these, by the way, would work very well with the Riverfront plan that's in place right now which calls for loss of public parking capacity at Le Park Renaissance and other places. Then if you want to go to the east side of Main Street, the one parcel that we looked at that could support structured parking is the Spring Street garage and that could get you another 250 spaces give or take at a lower cost and a shorter construction period than the High Street option. Again, these are all options that you've got on public *prime* property.

There's a lot of development happening in the area, potential development, based on the studies that we've looked at. Some of these studies like the recently completed ImagiNashua 2021 actually call for potential construction of some of these sites. I want to make it very clear to the members of this body as well as the folks out in the public, the blue square in the middle is a typical footprint that you need for an efficient parking structure. Its 210 feet long by 120 feet wide. It sits over about three quarters the length of the Elm Street garage. We took that parcel and we laid it out and other areas across the City that could potentially add to the footprint to support that. That doesn't mean we're recommending these. It doesn't mean that the City is planning on these. It just means these are all places where you could introduce structured parking as part of a public private venture and you have the efficiency of the footprint to do that. P3 is the way most Municipalities are doing major parking expansions these days. These are all examples of municipalities that have been very successful with this. The structures of these agreements can vary widely with everything from the private developers really working as the design/build construction agent, and then the city purchasing out a portion of the project at the end of project completion, to a complete partnership where private entities and public entities create a special purpose entity to go all the way from design build through financing and operation PRN. There are a lot of different ways to do this, but it is a way for the City to partner with private agencies to get public infrastructure they need and also facilitate the development that they're looking for to reinvigorate the downtown.

The other thing that we looked at was are there any other ways to incentivize the private sector to look at partnering or contributing to either parking infrastructure or infrastructure downtown. The first thing we did was we looked at other communities and how they've done this. Their policies typically follow one or two categories - it's either a carrot, or an incentive for somebody to do this, or it is an incentive for somebody to do this to avoid something unpleasant - the stick if you will. The most common option on the carrot side is there are communities out there that will offer tax abatements if

somebody includes “x” amount of parking with their project, or they build transit shelters as part of their project, or they introduce a car share program, or bicycle facilities. The other way that it gets done very often is communities will institute parking minimums and then say we’ll waive those requirements if you introduce these aspects here. This is being done in a lot of the comparable communities in pieces and parts and what it does is it creates an opportunity for the private sector to provide some of the infrastructure that’s needed to sustain any type of movement toward sustainable travel and allow the City to really focus then on bigger costs items that you need, bike lanes, motorcycles, etc., etc.

One of the ways this has been done just very top level here in other communities is they institute market specific parking minimums within an area and then they basically offer a whole series of waivers. If you are willing to support a design that makes the most efficient use of parking through shared use or if you’re willing to negotiate a contract with an adjacent property who is willing to share their property to meet your requirement, those are ways you get waivers. You can introduce car share services, transit incentives, bicycle initiatives. Some cities have gone as far as actually offering in lieu of option. So if you don’t want to build the parking required by the minimum, you can actually buy out of that. It goes into a fund that the community then uses to make parking or transit improvements in the future here. Again, this is just one way to do it. We wanted to present the idea out there. If Nashua is interested in getting the private sector more involved in developing parking or transportation infrastructure, this is one of the mechanisms to do that.

Does anybody have any questions on this before we move on? We’re getting close to the end folks, I swear.

We talked about this earlier - the idea of shared use. Shared use falls into one of two categories. There is the shared use where you put a lot of complimentary land uses on the same parcel and build a very efficient parking facility that serves all of them particularly well. That’s on the right-hand side. So rather than building something that serves just housing, or just restaurant, or just office you can find something that is adequately sized to serve each one of them collaboratively during the course of the day.

There is also the option to execute shared use agreements that will allow other parties or even the general public to come in and use the facility from time to time. On the lower left-hand corner, there’s an example of Boston’s specific shared use. This is a very aggressive policy and not one we’re recommending for Nashua.

Thing again. We talked about this a little bit earlier. The critical thing about executing any type of shared use agreement is to make sure that all of these things are addressed within the agreement so that the rights of each party are protected going forward. We’ve actually already had conversations with a couple of private property owners talking about this type of structure. The concept that we floated was the City would be your partner. They would be in charge of policing the use of your facility and making sure that it is clear when you need it get clear for your users. At least in concept, it was something that they were open and amicable to discussing here. This could be one of the tools available to help address a lot of these overnight parking issues because while we have very limited capacity on-street, there is substantial as we discussed before in private facilities off-street and those private facilities are scattered all over the City. So there are a lot of resources out there if we can find a way to unlock them.

We talked a little bit about the meters and their ability to do occupancy monitoring. There are other systems that are coming along rapidly. Most of these work off of spacial identification. The system that you see up on your screen is very popular in Asia and Europe. We’re starting to see more installations here in the States. It’s a simple camera that gets mounted at the bottom of a light fixture and it uses spacial recognition to shoot over a surface lot, or down a street, and it can actually identify where there are cars parked or not parked in the spaces, take that information, and relay it out to a hand-held app or a website so that you can provide real-time availability. This helps with way-finding; it helps with customer service, and it helps with efficiency of use.

We also talked a little about the need to do a better job of connecting pedestrians to parking once they are out of the car. These are all examples of signage packages that have been done from comparable communities. In the upper right-hand side, that’s Plymouth, Massachusetts. On the left-hand side, that’s Bastrop, Texas, and right in the middle is a figure that Durham, New Hampshire, uses so that when folks get of their car and start becoming a pedestrian they can locate where they are, where their destination is, and in the case of Bastrop, they actually have these kiosks all over the City so when you’re in between parking destination you can look at this and reference where you parked, where you’re headed, and get oriented as well. It creates a stronger connection.

The other comment that we heard was folks saying that they really wish there was better signage identifying where they can park. The maroon sign in the middle is from Battle Creek, Michigan, and it’s a very simple but very effective program that meets the regulations that you see on the sign on the wall with striping that’s actually on the garage itself. So you know when you’re looking at a green-striped parking space that that is hourly parking during standard hours of use. You

know when you're looking at a blue-striped space that that's reserved parking Monday through Friday. If it's a Saturday or Sunday, you're golden. You don't need to worry about it. It's a very simple sign system that addresses that need. Thank you so much. I know the hour is late, but I appreciate your attention and your feedback. That is the subtotal of my presentation.

Chairman Moran

Any comments or questions we haven't addressed already throughout the presentation?

Alderman Jette

I don't want to keep everyone. I know you said you're like three quarters of the way through this thing so if I should wait until you complete the thing. Basically my question is as anecdotally as somebody that works downtown and comes downtown during nights and weekends, I see a difference between the weekdays Monday through Thursday and then Friday night, Saturday, and Sunday. During the week, I see plenty of parking. I don't see that there's a parking problem at all. But on a Friday night or Saturday night, parking seems to be at a premium.

I know you said we have 13,000 parking spaces available and yet we hear criticisms when we went through the barrier thing people kept telling us there's not enough parking. I don't know how to reconcile that and then you told us about how we can increase capacity by building new garages and new things. So I've come up with the question why do we need to increase capacity if there is already an abundance of capacity and why are people perceiving a lack of parking when you say there is plenty of parking? Do you have any comments about that?

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

Yes. So in terms of the perception of adequate parking during weekdays during adequate parking on weekends, I think there are several things that are working to create both those perceptions. One of them is I think you have a higher threshold as far as acceptable walking distance during daylight hours than you have during evening hours. I think folks perception of what acceptable distance is from their destination changes substantially. We certainly see this supported by the utilization counts that we saw up and down Main Street and the adjacent side streets. Some of that I think is a security issue, which could be addressed through like I said an improvement in lighting and other features. Some of it needs to be addressed by improving the walking environment and you've had any number of studies that have addressed that and made recommendations as far as how to improve that but improving those connections, making the area more welcoming so that you're being judged in terms of the same distance whether it's Friday night, a Thursday afternoon. Introducing more residential into the area would certainly help with that as well - more eyes you have on the street, the more folks are going to feel comfortable that they don't have to park right in front of their destination and it's safe to go around the corner. So I think that is definitely part of that disconnected perception right there.

In terms of expanding capacity, at some point in the future especially if you continue to waive parking requirements in downtown, there will come a time where the City will need to build more capacity. We're not saying that's the solution. That's part of the solution and it may be a solution at some point in the future. I think in the shorter term changing how you approach way finding, how you approach partnership with the private sector in order to get more use out of these existing assets are probably the two lowest hanging fruit on the tree. I will also tell you that there are always going to be folks who feel that any parking that is not at the front door is not adequate parking. We're going to try and design the most accommodating system for the most number of people, but I can't tell you today that we're going to satisfy every constituent to 100% of their desires.

Alderman Jette

Thank you.

Chairman Moran

Any other questions?

Alderman Cathey

Thank you. Actually the biggest complaint that I've seen, or has been expressed to me personally, or in the social media is having to use the app or the kiosks especially for older patrons of downtown. So while I find the app fairly intuitive to

use, others may not, or they might not know where the kiosks are which I think is also some of the confusion. Have you guys at all discussed I don't know maybe education strategies for how to use the app, or how to use the kiosk, or how to sort of bridge that gap because that has been the complaint I've seen the most is the pay by phone app or finding a kiosk.

Andrew Hill, Director of Consulting Services, Desmond Design Management

My answer is actually, especially when you're dealing with an older population, don't try and force them that way. Instead introduce the smart meters which will still accept coins if that's what they're concerned about but it will also allow other types of payment to be made. Rather than trying to bend folks who or probably or may already be struggling with technology. If I may be direct and honest here, my mother who I love to death is one of these older folks that has a resistance to learning technology. Having spent some time with her, the question is not always how do I get her to come up to that speed but how do I introduce things that work to her level and also serve other populations.

Alderman Cathey

Thank you.

Chairman Moran

Any other questions? With that, thank you so much Mr. Hill for being here. Director Cummings and Parking Manager Stansfield do you have anything else to add?

Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director

I do actually if I could for a moment. I would like to hear from you all is there's any particular thoughts, concerns, ideas expressed during this presentation that we should be well aware of? We've hit on a lot tonight but I look at this as a two-way street and so I would welcome your input. I would welcome your feedback because ultimately we're two thirds of the way through. We want to finish this study. My goal is to start rolling out some policy recommendations and I'd like some guidance.

Alderman Clemons

So I know a couple years ago you had introduced or actually Alderman Laws introduced legislation to increase the lease fees and the Board at the time rejected that because I think that they were a little too expensive. I think one of the things that we want to keep in mind I think as those go forward is what are the expenses? How much do we have to raise them by to cover those expenses and to maintain them in the future but also though keep Nashua at a competitive edge where we're not charging what Manchester is charging? We're not charging what Lowell is. We're at that competitive lower advantage and so I think that I think is something I would look for going forward. So yes recognizing yes those have to go up but be competitive, be lower, be explicitly lower and I think hopefully we can do that.

I think the other thing to is that as far as the on-street meters go, I like the idea of those hybrid meters. I know that we're getting through a critical point. We were at a critical point years ago when we took all those units out of the library lot because we needed them for supply for other areas. So I know that's got to be even worse now. So my thought is that those hybrid meters where they have a little bit of everything, you can put a coin, the credit card, do the app, whatever, that is I think is probably the best way to go in my opinion in the City and also on Main Street getting something that's very similar but like where the old kiosks kind of work or alternatively kiosks that are similar to that all through downtown. I would recommend, in my opinion, that that would be what I would look for. Those are my two take-aways.

Chairman Moran

I would concur. One of the things that I've run into, and I think I'm a bit tech savvy, is using the pay for app in my phone and one day I got a ticket. No I have a minute left. I literally had a minute left. I appealed it and it turned out I was off a digit on my license plate. I can only imagine if someone over the age of a certain demographic how frustrating that would be. I made that mistake having grown up with technology. So switching to meters that have an all pay options to be great.

Jill Stansfield, Parking Manager

We just recently implemented some new policies within my office. With the technology that we have, our ticketing

software along with the pay by phone app, we can actually pull up each location. So let's say we were at Railroad Square, we can actually pull up the app and see the plates that are paid. So I just recently this in my office very much like for the reason you're bringing up so we can educate folks and not ticket. In the case where that is happening, we're now going to issue a warning as opposed to a ticket right off the bat. Because we've had a lot of those instances recently which made the appeal level go up, just very, very small errors that you wouldn't even know. For example a license plates here in New Hampshire, you have the first 3 digits. It looks like there is a space between those first three digits and the last four and so we've seen a lot of that. So what we're doing now is we're actually our enforcement group is going out and checking the location first, checking the plates that are paid and if they see a plate where most likely mistakes were made, we're going to issue a warning as opposed to a ticket. So I just wanted to mention that because I do remember your appeal so we are looking...

Chairman Moran

And that was before I was an Alderman by the way.

Alderman Lopez

Just an idea for follow up in terms of figuring out those shared use opportunities. I know I was walking through the hospital today because I had to get a blood test and I heard a nurse going through the orientation and her trainer was literally telling her and so when you work late overnight, park in this lot because there's better camera visibility and security's looking in on that. It's not the one that I thought it was. It was not the big tall thing. They were telling them to park in the surface lot. So there may be large parking partners downtown in that area that have practices that we might want to be aware of when we're looking at how to share spaces. Clocktower comes to mind or some of the other housing programs that are right in proximity.

When I was a resident at Clocktower, I was encouraged like oh if you have a guest, you can always just have them park in Renaissance Park. So knowing how other partners might be using public spaces or like deliberately impacting the flow might be an area to look at. I was under the impression that the Pennichuck garage might be used for some City events or accessible for weather emergencies. I don't know if that's the case but can we find out if that isn't being done if there's a way to start using that to maybe make it a little bit easier for places when we do have winter emergencies, and duck derbies and stuff.

Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director

If I may Mr. Chair. So that question has been asked of Pennichuck. Pennichuck has expressed an openness. They haven't committed to anything but they've expressed an openness in the surface parking lots around their building, not necessarily the garage itself but they wanted to get settled first so when this question first arose, it was when they first moved it. Clearly, they're in and settled now so I'd be happy to revisit the question with them. I think it would only be off-hours when they're not using it but that is something that they have expressed a willingness to talk through.

Alderman Lopez

Oh when you're having that conversation, can you see if they're interested in maybe rolling the Christmas decorations over a little next holiday.

Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director

Sure, no problem. Happy to.

Alderman Cathey

Thank you Mr. Chair. I will concur with the issues of safety. Actually when my wife worked here in City Hall her car was broken into in the middle of the day in the garage. So I know that when people say safety, I don't scoff at that because we've had it happen. So I know that that - I'm a little okay with making it look like it's an unsafe garage by making it safe because things have happened in that garage and I would much rather prefer have that over the having it the other way around where it's just an open garage. I think that might get people to park there more frequently and then that speaks to the way finding. When we started having the extended outdoor dining and people were complaining about parking or finding parking, this, that, and the other thing, I said I've never actually looked for the blue parking signs because I know where the parking is. I live here. So when I was driving down Main Street around town, I was like I'm going to look for

what I can find and there aren't a lot of them. So I'm like that makes sense that obviously when you go to Boston, there's giant big blue "Ps" everywhere. We don't need maybe necessarily that but it would be nice that there was something that was large enough that people said yeah parking, cool let's do that, and then having some of the signage as well would be definitely helpful in what we're looking for. So the way finding for me is kind of important because you got to know where we can park.

And also I don't know about you guys. You've lived here a long time. I've only lived here since 2017 and I still get confused about what lots I can park in and which ones I cannot because when you say like this street lot and this street lot, I'm like I don't even know it existed. Didn't know I could park there. So I don't know how you overcome that gap but maybe that would be helpful.

Unidentified Male Speaker

Yeah, definitely. Great. Thank you.

Alderman Lopez

I think if you made it through the last two years, you got like a multiplier.

Chairman Moran

Any other comments, advice?

MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO ADJOURN

Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director

I had one thing. I had one none parking...

Alderman O'Brien

I will yield my motion. Only for you.

Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director

Thank you Alderman O'Brien. I have one thing that's none parking related. I actually wanted to take the opportunity to ask the group about if I may. So it only has come up recently because we're in budget season and we're thinking about how to use the monies available. Some of you may recall, the City of Nashua worked really hard with a private sector entity to move forward a development. There was an easement in place that needed to be removed. This was all up on Amherst Street. We the City received some compensation for that. It was an unplanned \$50,000 that came in. There was an appetite at the time by the Planning Board and by others that that money be used on downtown arts initiatives - murals and the like to help improve the downtown. We never used those monies and so my question is, is we're at a point and I wanted to know because I'm sensitive to the idea of wanting to be fiscally responsible with the money and not misspend it but is there still a sense that we should be looking to use that \$50,000 for the purposes of art and the downtown?

Alderman Clemons

No. I think we should save that money for some other use.

Alderman Cathey

I would concur given the temperature/tenor of the City right now with budgets and all kinds of things. I think that let's just put that aside and figure out if we need something. I mean obviously meters are \$100 a head. We could put in a bunch of smart meters right then and there with that money. So I think obviously spending it towards some of these infrastructure improvements would be better.

Alderman Jette

So I understand my fellow Aldermen having the reaction they did but could help us, could you explain what the source of that money is? Wasn't there the easement you're talking about wasn't it a facade easement? We're talking about the old Country Tavern restaurant building. There was a debate whether it was historical or not and there was something about...it's all vague in my mind.

Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director

There wasn't a debate as to whether it's historical or not. I think people recognized that it was historical but what the City had was an easement that on the façade that needed to be released so redevelopment could occur on this site. The City granted that release of the easement conditioned on the fact that we got compensation. There was a few other things, but the main thing was a \$50,000 one-time to the City. So that has now occurred. The transfer has taken place. The release of easement has happened. We took in \$50,000 and it's sitting in our coffers in unanticipated revenue. At the time, there was this sentiment expressed and represented to me by various parties including some members here on the Board of Aldermen and explicitly by the Planning Board that we should use it for the arts and culture in the downtown. How was still to be determined. We could figure that as we went but that was murals is I know a strong sentiment here in the community so I could only imagine that some of the monies would go towards murals.

So that was where the conversation left off so we haven't progressed any further. That \$50,000 will just roll into the general fund. Unless someone remembers it along the way, it will essentially go away. So just wanted to now that we're coming up to the end of the Fiscal Year ask the question before it clears out to the general fund.

Chairman Moran

I would love to see that and maybe Alderman Lopez can remind me of the program that it's either your department or Director Sullivan's department runs with homeowners who need a loan like a water heater or something. We are hoping to increase it when we actually get the Block Grant just a few thousand dollars because of inflation but that's not enough given inflation. People use that every year to its max but I'm just one of fifteen.

Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director

So if I'm understanding you correctly, you're suggesting maybe a use for that unanticipated \$50,000 is to help support the Community Development Block Grant, the CDBG Program particularly for homeowners.

Chairman Moran

Yes, correct because we're going to see property tax increases because of the revaluations. If this is something that can help reduce some costs for low and moderate income folks in the City.

Alderman Clemons

Thank you. I'll be brief. One of two things. One is I think we can find a use like Alderman Cathey suggested or Alderman Moran suggested where it's going toward something that is going to be beneficial right now in a functional sort of way. I'm a big proponent of the arts. I support the arts, but I think right now in these times we're living in I think there are more important things that we need to be spending money on.

Two - in regards to it lapsing, we should look into if we can't get it appropriated in time. If we can't figure out between now and June 30th what we want to do with it which I think we can but if not, we should escrow it so that we have more time so that it doesn't lapse in and I would recommend that you approach the Mayor to have that included as an escrow.

Alderman Jette

So I vaguely remember the discretion about whether or not to release that façade easement. It was Chairman O'Brien's Committee - the Infrastructure Committee that dealt with that I think at least partly and I would like to go back and research what the conversation was. I kind of think this is not just found money. It was money that was paid to release the façade easement and the façade easement was to preserve the historical appearance of that building. The façade easement was an agreement by the owner of the building that the exterior of the building would stay the same because of its historical we liked the way it look and we'd like to keep it that way. So they wanted to tear the building down to build a gas station now.

Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director

Can I stop you right there? I just want to be clear. So what you're referencing is actually when the restaurant went in. So it was to allow when the restaurant wanted to go in there the condition was yes the restaurant you can operate there, but we would like because at the time the political sentiments were, we want a façade easement so we know that the exterior won't change. So that's how that came into place and then fast-forward to the development now that you're talking about, it was the sentiment expressed, let's release the easement, have the new development go in, and that's how the \$50,000 arose.

Alderman Jette

So my thinking is we ought to make sure and go back and see what that conversation was when we released the façade easement because I'm thinking that the money shouldn't be used for parking meters or some other utilitarian purpose as laudable as that might be. I think there are a lot of other things that the City needs that might fit more with the façade easement to begin with like historical buildings that may need help. Like the Hunt Building, the Court Street building, and things of that nature. I think it's a conversation. I think we ought to research and have a longer conversation before we decide what to do or not do with that money.

Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director

I think absolutely and one of the ways you would want to use the money just like you suggested with CDBD, or parking meters, if you wanted to use it for historical preservation of some sort that would absolutely be another use that you could look at using the \$50,000 for. I would add that to the list.

And to Alderman Clemon's point, I absolutely agree with you. I will work toward setting aside that money so you and others can decide how you'd like to use that money.

Alderman Lopez

I would favor another member or either a committee that's joint conventioning but I would favor at least getting more information and trying to take a slightly longer approach. I first of all take some issue with the suggestion that was introduced that we set aside \$50,000 for murals because if I was in that meeting and I knew there was \$50,000 of mural money, I probably would have brought up something about the rail trail murals ever getting touched again. I knew that the process was underway but I thought for some reason, and maybe this is my memory being a little foggy again extra credit for the last two years, I thought we were looking at it as a potential funding contribution to the Performing Arts Center for some reason. I may have just misunderstood that, so I'd like to know what my own reasoning was when we were in the Infrastructure Committee and this was introduced like basically in the middle of an adjournment so it's sort of very last minute to say yeah I know what to do with \$50,000.

I was going to bring up the Court Street Theater and the pending O'Keefe things as like I find it unlikely that we ever thought we'd actually spend \$50,000 on murals. It was much more likely that we'd be looking at something a little bit more substantive and we do have needs.

That being said, Alderman Moran is right about homeowner's improvements and that type of thing as well. So I think it's an opportunity that we should look at carefully and not start making judgments on at the end of a very long meeting.

Alderman O'Brien

Thank you. Mr. Chairman I would like just basically to say I understand everybody has a lot of want and personal desires. Everybody's got a favorite pet project but gentlemen and ladies, keep in mind we're eight weeks from the end of our Fiscal Year. So you take the meetings, the budget, this, and that. It would be the yeoman's duty to get it done. I cannot agree more that what Alderman Clemons to put this into a separate account and then set up a night, bring your own baseball bats, and we'll decide how to divvy it up. But the thing is right now, we should be discussing how we can save this money and if that's what we want to do. I want to give the conversation focus here.

Chairman Moran

Everyone has had very valid points.

Alderman Cathey

I think Alderman O'Brien was kind of on the money. I just wanted to say, let's save it. I would not favor anything other than some sort of ROI. That doesn't mean necessarily we get revenue back but some sort of need rather than or something I don't like the arts but we have a lot of needs so let's save it and then we'll address it.

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO ADJOURN
MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared closed at 9:56 p.m.

Alderman John Cathey
Committee Clerk Pro Tem