



ARLINGTON REDEVELOPMENT BOARD

TOWN HALL ARLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02476

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TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Redevelopment Board
RE: Walker Parking Study
DATE: January 13, 2010

The Walker Parking Study of July 1, 2009 was commissioned as part of the Commercial Development Strategy conducted by the Town. The Walker Parking Study has provided us with valuable information with which to look at parking. We now know that:

- There are roughly 96 legal parking spaces along Mass. Ave. in the East Arlington commercial area (between Elmhurst and Varnum (south side) and Harlow and Windsor (north side))
- There are roughly 600 spaces within a block of Mass. Ave. on residential streets
- There are approximately 250 off street, privately and publicly owned spaces within ¼ mile of the East Arlington commercial area.
- Peak demand for spaces could be as high as 300 spaces. Peak demand is on the weekends, driven by movie and restaurant patrons.
- Employees compete with customers for limited spaces.

The Walker Parking Study encourages better use of existing parking spaces in the commercial district. It recommends reserving the spaces closest to stores for customers (discretionary users), while employees and residents are urged to park farther away (mandatory users). It further recommends compelling employees to park off Mass. Ave. by use of meters along Mass. Ave.

The Redevelopment Board has reviewed this study and agrees with many of its findings, principally that parking in this and our other commercial districts could be allocated more efficiently, saving Mass. Ave. spaces for customers, in order to support business growth and vitality. However, we stop short of recommending that meters should be installed right now. We believe that the Town should try some less expensive and easier to implement options immediately and study their results. First steps might include:

- Use of shared parking in off street lots
 - Explore use of off street parking for customers and employees, such as Trinity Baptist Church, and the lots behind Cambridge Savings Bank, and Summit House (231 Mass. Ave.). The Planning Department has begun to do this.

- Explore use of the Hardy and Crosby School lots for employees and customers on evenings and weekends. This could be particularly useful if targeted to movie and restaurant customers.
- Require parking time limits and increase enforcement
 - Designate Mass. Ave. spaces for time limited parking to encourage turnover.
 - Increase enforcement of time limits if necessary, to encourage turnover.
 - Allow all day parking for employees in designated areas off Mass. Ave.
- Consider valet parking as an option for certain businesses with high parking demand, such as the movie theater and restaurants
- Form a local parking committee of residents, businesses, and property owners to monitor parking needs and suggest solutions.

Although the study recommends metering along Massachusetts Avenue and instituting a resident permit parking program, we do not support those recommendations at the current time and believe that further study should be done to determine whether those programs are needed and would be effective.

The ARB supports a series of changes that are easy and inexpensive to implement be undertaken right away and monitored for success. These measures include promoting the use of shared parking arrangements, revising time limits (and ensuring enforcement) in certain high-volume stretches of Massachusetts Avenue, and encouraging restaurants and the Capitol Theatre to offer valet parking or other means so that parking lots at the Hardy and Crosby Schools are utilized. We also believe that a Parking Committee made up of representatives of the Town (Planning, DPW and Police), business owners, and local residents should be formed to act as a liaison between the neighborhood and town officials, reporting on the success of these measures and offering suggestions for further changes if needed.