

Brunswick Downtown Parking Audit: Results

August 16, 2016

Audit Overview

The purpose of the 2016 Downtown Brunswick Parking Audit is to take inventory and understand current usage of parking downtown. Parking audits have been conducted in years past, but not recently in the height of the summer season since new developments downtown have changed the parking options available. The audit was conducted over six one-hour shifts the week of July 25-29, 2016 (see Table 1 for shift rationales). Volunteers divided up portions of the downtown area (Map 1) and recorded the vehicles occupying all types of commercial and public parking on streets and in parking lots. Parking types in downtown Brunswick include all day, 3hr, 2hr, 1hr, 30 minute, 15 minute, long term, disability, loading zone, and bus stops. This study did not include residential parking, as our primary interest is in spaces being used by vehicles coming to the downtown area to visit for business or leisure.

1. Monday, 10 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First morning time audit • Delivery trucks and loading zones
2. Tuesday, 3 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First mid-afternoon audit • MSMT matinee
3. Wednesday, 6 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music on the Mall • Early MSMT parking
4. Thursday, 7 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSMT evening show • Curtis Memorial event • Bowdoin Music Festival event • Weekday dinner crowd
5. Friday, 12 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers Market • Lunch crowd
6. Friday, 7 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MSMT evening show • Weekend dinner crowd

Table 1. Shift rationales for the Downtown Brunswick Parking Audit July 25-29.

Summary of Results

Parking Type	Total Spaces	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thur.	Fri.	Fri.
		7/25/16 10 AM	7/26/16 3 PM	7/27/16 6 PM	7/28/16 7 PM	7/28/16 12 PM	7/29/16 7 PM
Public Total	987	54%	59%	63%	54%	69%	51%
Private Total	1557	43%	48 %	46%	35%	50%	33%
Grand Total	2544	46%	51%	48%	37%	53%	35%

Table 2. Percent vehicle occupancy in public and private parking spaces in Downtown Brunswick, July 25-29, 2016.

The 2016 Parking Audit results are comparable to the findings of similar studies in years past. In aggregate, neither public nor private parking was used to full or even near-full capacity during all audit hours (Table 2). When considering the total usage over the week-long audit, the heaviest usage is found in public street parking and lots on Friday at noon, which are just shy of 70% full (Table 2). That being said, throughout every shift of the audit, specific lots and streets had full to oversubscribed usage (Table 3). This reveals how parking is used differently in different times of the day in different locations. Some locations such as certain blocks on Maine St. or the Bank St. Municipal Lot were virtually always full,

while others such as some private lots on Park Row and the Genesis Community Loans Lot were virtually never full. Others such as the Hawthorne School Lot and the CEI lot were busy during business hours, but had plenty of space available in the evenings. For more specific data on street and lot usage during the audit hours, please refer to the Audit Result Maps.

It is important to note how public parking is consistently more occupied than private parking. Many private lots with a large parking capacity sit empty at night while their businesses are closed. Other businesses have very large lots that are disproportionate to the client base they serve. For example, during the summer months, the large lot at Hawthorne School is rarely filled except for special events. Public parking is generally very full in some locations and fairly open in others (Figure 1). This is likewise the case for public street parking; many locations on Maine St. in direct proximity to popular businesses are always occupied, while some streets with open, all day parking such as Union St. and

	Monday 10 AM	Tuesday 3 PM	Wednesday 6 PM	Thursday 7PM	Friday 12 PM	Friday 7PM
Street	Cabot St. Middle St. School St.	Cabot St. Cleaveland St. Federal St. (N) Gilman Ave. Lincoln St. Maine St. (N) Middle St. Park Row Potter St.	Dunlap St. Federal St. (N) Lincoln St. Maine St. (all) Middle St. Park Row School St.	Dunlap St. Gillman Ave. Lincoln St. Maine St. (N, S) Middle St. School St.	Cabot St. Cleaveland St. Cumberland St. Gilman Ave. Lincoln St. Maine St. (all) Middle St. Park Row School St.	Federal St. (N) Gilman Ave. Maine St. (N, S) Park Row School St. Station Ave.
Lot	Ft. Andross Municipal Lot Fire Station Municipal Lot Library Lot St. Paul's Lot Tontine Mall Bank St. Municipal Lot	Ft. Andross Private Back Lot Ft. Andross Municipal Lot Fire Station Municipal Lot Tao Yuan Restaurant Municipal Lot Bath Savings Bank Midcoast Walk- in Clinic Eaton Peabody Tontine Mall	Mill St. Municipal Lot Gilman Ave. Private Lot Tao Yuan Restaurant Tontine Mall Camden National Bank Richard's Restaurant Bank St. Municipal Lot Norway Savings Hawthorne School Bull Moose Municipal Lot	Mill St. Municipal Lot Gilman Ave. Private Lot Tao Yuan Restaurant Camden National Bank Bank St. Municipal Lot Frontier Lot	Ft. Andross Municipal Lot Mill St. Municipal Lot Gilman Ave. Private Lot Fire Station Municipal Lot Tao Yuan Restaurant Bath Savings Bank Library Lot Eaton Peabody Bowdoin Cleaveland Lot Tontine Mall Bank St. Municipal Lot Bull Moose Municipal Lot	Mill St. Municipal Lot Gilman Ave.Private Lot Tao Yuan Restaurant Bath Savings Bank Scarlett Begonias Bank of America Asian Garden Richard's Restaurant Bank St. Municipal Lot Center St. Cycles

Table 3. Parking areas 80% or more occupied during audit times July 25-29.

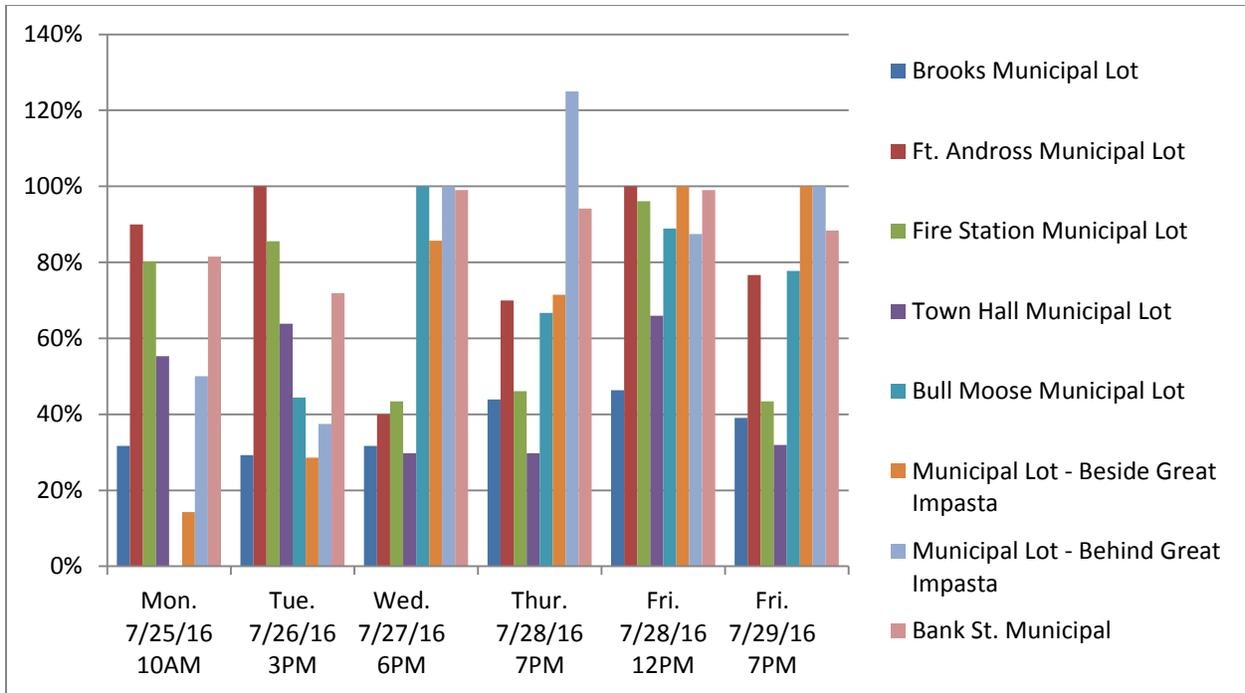


Figure 1. Public Lot Occupancy in Downtown Brunswick, July 25-29. No data collected for Bull Moose Municipal on Monday July 25.

Potter St. are rarely full. The frustration that comes with trying to find parking in the most congested areas of the town would be alleviated if drivers were encouraged to find and use these frequently available spaces that are just a block or two removed from their points of interest.

Due to the localized nature of parking congestion, some oversubscription could be addressed through private shared parking agreements. There are many lots in close proximity to one another that have reverse schedules of parking demand. Private owners such as St. Paul's church and Tao Yuan or Frontier and other Ft. Andross businesses could arrange to share parking after-hours in order to alleviate some of that parking pressure (Figures 2 and 3). These private agreements have been successful with businesses such as the Brunswick School District (Hawthorne administrative lot) and a Park Row business, and would serve to better distribute the parking burden throughout the available spaces.

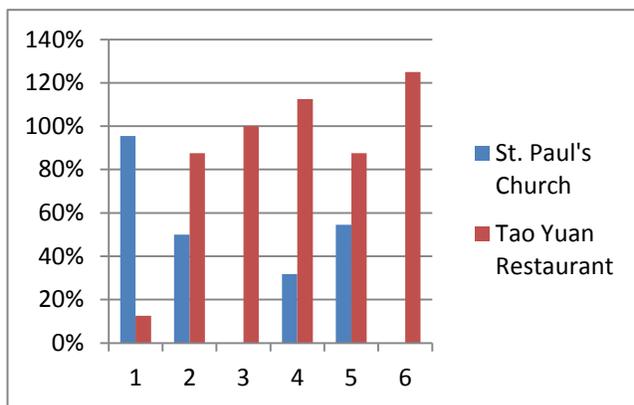


Figure 2. Parking at St. Paul's and Tao Yuan July 25-29. Numbers 1-6 refer to the audit shifts consecutively from Monday (10am) to Friday (7pm).

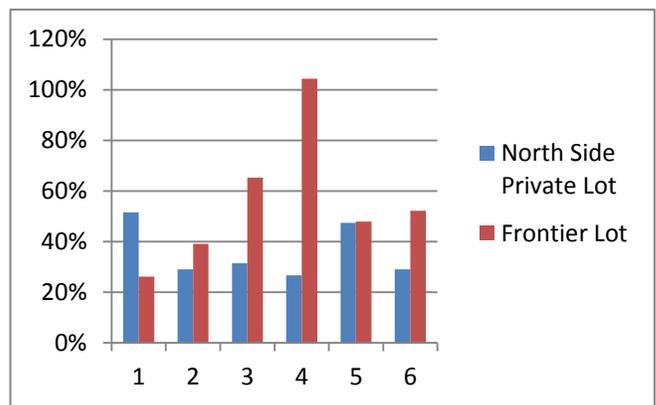


Figure 3. Parking in Ft. Andross July 25-29. Numbers 1-6 refer to the audit shifts consecutively from Monday (10am) to Friday (7pm).

Conclusion and Notes

It is clear from the parking audit, that while parking in the downtown is busy, Brunswick is not in the midst of a parking crisis. There are plenty of spaces for use at all hours of the day that can be capitalized on by encouraging visitors and employees in the downtown to park in less central locations, and by successful shared parking agreements. Moving forward, the Town of Brunswick and downtown stakeholders would alleviate the felt pressures of parking by focusing on how to use the available parking most effectively.

It should be noted that this audit is not a perfect representation of parking in the downtown. Survey errors such as varied timing and pace of the survey, misinterpretation of instructions and parking locations, and spaces obstructed by dumpsters or construction could not always be accounted for. For example, Monday a survey error resulted in missing data for parts of Maine St. However, this audit still gives a helpful glimpse of the general experiences of drivers parking downtown.

To continue addressing the issue of parking in response to the results of this audit, the Planning Department hopes to create a “Secret Parking” brochure highlighting the underused parking spots in Brunswick. The Planning Department has also partnered with Bowdoin College to host a Common Good Day project conducting an “Origin and Destination” survey to ask pedestrians about their journey to the downtown and distribute the “Secret Parking” brochure.