

Relationships.
Responsiveness.
Results.



**Town Landing and
Vicinity Parking
Evaluation
Falmouth, Maine**

PREPARED FOR:
Town of Falmouth
271 Falmouth Road
Falmouth, ME 04105

November 2016

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I. Introduction:

The Town Landing Boat launch located at the terminus of Town Landing Road is a relatively small sized paved area that serves several purposes at the ocean's shore (See attached Figure 1). It allows for the launching of larger trailered water craft, provides an area for smaller water crafts launched by hand, provides access to a substantial dock, includes an area for dingy's that mooring owners use to access their moored boats, and it allows access to a pet friendly public beach. The area serves everyone from commercial fisherman to occasional boaters to those who launch kayaks or paddle boards. There are a total of 1,134 moorings altogether in the area, with 303 of those accessed via this dock and the remainder accessed via Portland Yacht Club and Handy Boat.

This small sized, odd shaped, paved area, serves long and short term parkers, as well as those trying to drop off or pick up users/passenger of the boats, and people launching both trailered as well as non-trailered water craft.

This area during the peak summer months, when activity is highest, is monitored by Rangers who answer questions from users, help manage the activity, and write tickets for violations.

The primary focus of this assessment was to evaluate the parking supply and demand not only for the Town Landing but also the surrounding parking areas. In addition, this included observations of site circulation, pedestrian and bicycle use in the immediate area, and a review of the crash history in the area.

II. Data Collection Effort and Results:

The data collection for this assessment consisted of four parts; 1) GP field inventories and observations 2) interviews with the police Rangers and the Harbor Master 3) review of the tickets written by the Rangers 4) Surveys administered by the Town. That data collection effort and results are described in more detail as follows:

Field Inventories and Observations:

GP completed 24 field reviews and parking demand inventories of the Town Landing parking area as well as the Town parking area across from the Town Landing Market and adjacent on-street parking, parking allowed on Mariner Lane, and parking spaces on the Town Landing Road (half way up the hill). The purpose of the site visits was not only to record the occupancy of the parking areas, but to observe the operations of the areas to see how well they were functioning. The observations included pedestrian and bicycle activity.

Parking Supply – There are currently five parking areas in the immediate vicinity that can be used by those accessing the landing. Those areas are described in more detail as follows and shown graphically on the attached Figure 1.

Town Landing Area

As described previously, this parking area is an odd shaped paved parking area that has a wide mixture of activity. There are approximately 10 unstriped spaces on a paved sloped area that are underwater during high tide and cannot be used. Based on discussions with the Harbor Master, we calculated that just in the month of August, 21 of 31 days there would have been a loss of these parking spaces for parts of the day between 7 AM & 9 PM. A summary of the parking in this lot is a follows:

- Residents only
- Daytime Only (No Parking After 10 PM)
- 10 Unmarked (on the sloped pavement), 19 Marked, 2 Police / Emergency Vehicles Only, 1 Handicapped

It should be noted that the striped parking spaces are extremely narrow (approximately 8 feet wide) which seemed during our observations to result in a parking space or two that could not physically be used, because vehicles on either side encroached into the adjacent space. The Town standard for non-compact vehicles is 9 feet by 18 feet.

On-Street on Town Landing Road (half way up the hill)

This parallel parking area is located on the northerly side of Town Landing Road between the Landing and Route 88.

- Residents or Non-Residents allowed
- No All Night Parking. Otherwise not time restricted
- The area is not striped but can accommodate 4 - 5 vehicles, depending on how vehicles park. During most observations, vehicles were parked so only 4 vehicles would fit.

Town Lot (across from Market)

This paved / striped parking lot is oriented as a one-way aisle with angled parking on both sides. The entrance is from Johnson Road and the exit is onto Foreside Road (Route 88). There are spaces designated for trailers along one end of the parking area.

- No parking time limit for vehicles
- For trailers, there is one sign posted for a maximum of 48 hours; however, there is a sign above each trailer space that indicates a 24 hour limit.
- 6 spaces for trailers, 6 spaces for residents or non-residents, 16 spaces for residents only

On-Street adjacent to Town Lot

There are striped parallel parking spaces on Johnson Road adjacent to the Town Lot

- No time limit restrictions
- No designation for residents or non-residents
- 4 striped spaces

Mariner Lane

This parking area is on the first street to the north of Town Landing Road. The parking is on a gravel shoulder and is parallel parking only on the southerly side of the road.

- No time limit restriction
- No designation for residents or non-residents
- The area is not striped but can accommodate 8 to 9 vehicles, depending on how the vehicles park.

Summary of parking areas

The attached spreadsheet summarizes the results of the parking inventories. GP focused on sampling weekday time periods and several Saturdays. Based on conversations with the Rangers and Harbor Master, Sundays level of activity was typically between the weekdays and Saturdays.

The results of the inventory identified that although there are some capacity issues during the weekdays, Saturdays were consistently full in some locations from morning until early evening. The busiest locations were the Town Landing area, parking on Town Landing Road, spaces identified for either resident / non-resident within the Town Lot, and spaces on Johnson Road.

Interviews:

GP conducted two separate meetings with one of the police Rangers and two separate meetings with the Harbor Master. These meetings were extremely helpful in identifying and understanding the day to day operations and issues associated with the area. Some of the key items identified from these interviews are as follows (in no particular order):

- Complaints of speeding on the Town Landing Road
- Would like to “square off” parking to allow for more circulation area
- Designated Pick-Up / Drop-Off area needed
- Was not opposed to using property adjacent to Underwood Park. However, this area may be difficult for Rangers to get to on a regular basis to monitor
- If “sloped paved area” were modified, commercial fisherman could use back beach
- Designated space for commercial fisherman would be beneficial. Since commercial fisherman cannot fish on Sundays, these spaces could be used by others on that day

- Would like to see redevelopment of “sloped paved area” so that it is not lost to parking during high tides
- Parking spaces are too narrow and lead to some not being used
- Peak time of the season is between Father’s Day and one to two weeks before Labor Day. (Both these Saturdays as well as Labor Day were included in GP inventories)

Ticket Review:

The police department provided us with tickets that were written for the Town Landing Area. These tickets were then divided into weekday, Saturday and Sunday. The attached bar graph shows the average number of tickets that were issued on a daily basis for those three categories. As can be seen from the attached figure, Saturday was the highest with an average of 5.9 tickets per day, Sunday was second highest with 4.6 tickets per day and a typical weekday was the lowest at 2.5 tickets per day.

All of the information collected and interviews confirmed that overall Saturdays are the busiest, Sundays are second and weekdays are the slowest.

One item that repeatedly came up in talking with Rangers, Harbor Master, and individuals randomly surveyed, was enforcement and tickets. It is GP’s understanding that the tickets for violations are only \$15, and once a vehicle is ticketed, they will not receive a second ticket no matter how long they are parked there during that day. Several individuals I talked with who were parked in violation did not care because they knew the system and thought parking all day for only \$15 was worth it. In addition, the ability to collect on those tickets is restricted and based on the honor system. The Town may want to consider a different approach to the enforcement of parking, which could improve compliance.

Surveys:

The Town of Falmouth administered surveys to both the home owners in the Town Landing area and people who use the Town Landing Moorings. These surveys were used to understand the public opinion on parking use and availability in the area. Both surveys also collected names and email addresses of the participants to distribute the final report and survey results to the interested participants (for privacy, names and email addresses are not provided in this study). Overall, both the home owner and the boat owner surveys show that there is the perception of an adequate parking supply. The following is a detailed summary of the information collected in the home owner and boat owner surveys.

Home Owner Surveys:

The home owner survey consisted of 10 questions that addressed both street specific and neighborhood parking. The survey was sent to 110 addresses and 33 people completed the survey. The general results for each question are as follows. Detailed survey data is attached.

Question 1 – “On what street in Falmouth do you live?”

This question generated the following distribution from the 33 participants:

- Kilborn Way: 2*
- Ayers Court: 2
- Foreside Road: 7
- Pitt Street: 2
- East Ramsdell Road: 3
- Town Landing Road: 7
- Ramsdell Road: 3
- Mason Street: 2
- Mariner Lane: 1
- Wescott Street: 1
- Johnson Road: 3*
- Does not live in Falmouth: 1

*One home owner stated that they live on both Johnson Road and Kilborn Road, which is reflected in these numbers

The two streets that generated the most responses were Town Landing Road and Foreside Road.

Question 2 – “Is your street a public or private street?”

Of the 33 responses, 28 responded that they live on a public street, 5 responded that they live on a private street.

Question 3 – “Where do you typically park your car?”

All 33 participants responded that they park their car on their property.

Question 4 – “Where do your guests typically park their cars?”

Most survey participants replied that their guests park on their property; however, six replied that their guests park on their street, and two replied “Other”.

Question 5 – “During this boating season, how often have you, or your guests, had a need to park your/their car(s) on YOUR street and had trouble finding a spot?”

Of the 30 answers to this question, 22 responded that they never had trouble finding parking this boating season.

Question 6 – “During this boating season, how often have you, or your guests, had a need to park your/their car(s) on a PUBLIC street or in a public parking lot and had trouble finding a spot?”

Of the 29 answers, 21 stated that they have never had trouble finding parking on public streets or public lots during this boating season.

Question 7 – “Do you consider parking on your STREET a problem?”

Of the 33 responses, 17 said that parking on their street is not a problem and 7 said that it is rarely a problem.

Question 8 – “Do you consider parking in your NEIGHBORHOOD a problem?”

This question had 12 replies that parking is not a problem, 10 replies that parking is sometimes a problem, and the other 11 responses split among the remaining options.

Question 9 – “Would you like to see more parking created to reduce the parking impact on your street and/or neighborhood?”

There were 18 replies against the creation of new parking and 11 in support of the creation of new parking.

Question 10 – “Do you have any comments or suggestions regarding parking in your neighborhood?”

This question generated comments from 23 people who took the survey. The following is a list of the common themes from the comments.

- Many home owners feel that there is adequate parking to meet the needs of the community
- Several home owners also felt that taking public space to make a parking lot would be detrimental to the community
- Two comments were in support of parking at 260 Foreside Road; however, several other comments were against constructing a parking lot at this location

Although some people surveyed were open to creating additional parking area, overall, the comments appear to reflect that the neighborhood would not be in support of additional parking in the Town Landing area.

Boat Owner Surveys

The boat owner survey consisted of 12 questions that addressed how often parking is utilized and where boaters most frequently park. The survey was sent to 881 email addresses and 142 people completed the survey. The general results of each question are as follows. Detailed survey results are attached.

Question 1 – “Where do you typically access your boat from?”

Most respondents access their boats from the Town Landing Boat Launch; however, 42 use the Portland Yacht Club.

Question 2 – “How frequently do you access your boat in a typical season?”

Most people who responded to the survey access their boats 1- 4 times per week.

Question 3 – “What days of the week do you most often access your boat? Check all that apply.”

The results of this survey question show that Saturdays are the most common day for boat use, with Sundays as the second most common. Boat use is lowest on Mondays and increases throughout the week. This is consistent with both observations as well as the number of tickets written for violations discussed previously.

Question 4 – “How do you typically arrive at your boat launch site?”

Of the 142 people surveyed, 122 answered that they drive and park in the area when accessing the boat launch site.

Question 5 – “If you and members in your party drive to go boating, how many cars typically require a parking space in the area from your party?”

The results of this question show that most groups of people that drive to go boating only require one parking space (93 out of 141 answers). Of the remaining participants who answered the question, 28 said they require two spaces.

Question 6 – “If you, or someone else, drive(s) and park(s) in the area, where do you, or they, MOST TYPICALLY park (check only one)?”

The responses to this question indicate that an approximately equal number of people park at the Town Landing Boat Launch and the Portland Yacht Club parking lot. The next two most often used parking lots are the Handy Boat parking lot and the Town Parking Lot at Johnson Road / Foreside Road.

Question 7 – “How often do you have a problem finding a parking space in the parking area you most often use?”

Over 50% of the participants that answered this question said that they have difficulty finding parking less than 25% of the time or never.

Question 8 – “Which parking areas have you or your driver used AT LEAST ONCE to access your boat this season? Check all that apply.”

The most commonly used parking areas are the Town Landing Boat Launch and the Town Parking at Johnson Road / Foreside Road. The Portland Yacht Club and Town Landing Road are the next most commonly used parking areas.

Question 9 – “How often do you have a problem finding a parking space in the parking areas you checked in the previous question (other than the one you use most frequently)?”

The results of this question are very similar to the results of Question 7. Over 50% of people have trouble finding a parking space less than 25% of the time or never.

Question 10 – “Have you ever left the area and not gone boating because you could not find a parking space?”

Approximately 16% of people who completed the survey said they have left the area without boating due to the inability to find a parking space. However, over 80% of people said they have not had this issue.

Question 11 – “If you answered “yes” on the question above, how often has this happened to you this season?”

Of the 23 people who answered “yes” on Question 10, nine said they left once due to inadequate parking, eight people left two times, and six people left three or more times.

Question 12 – “Do you have any comments or suggestions regarding parking to access your boat?”

This question generated comments from 59 survey participants. The following is a list of the common themes from the comments:

- 28 comments were in support of additional parking in the Town Landing area
- 12 comments were in support of increased parking ticket fees and greater enforcement
- Several comments mentioned that they pay to park at the Portland Yacht Club or Handy Boat because parking in the Town Landing area is so difficult

Although some boat owners who were surveyed thought parking in the area was adequate and well managed, there were some that appear to reflect the perception of a lack of parking for boaters in the area.

III. Pedestrian / Bicycle Observations:

Based on our observations this area experiences significant pedestrian / bicycle activity. This is due to the corner store, people walking to / from the boat launch area, and pedestrians / bicycles that are just out in the general area. One of our observations, and a significant concern, is that there are no pedestrian accommodations from the market area at the top of the hill to the bottom of the hill and the boat launch area. Town Landing Road is relatively narrow with approximately 10-11 foot wide travel lanes and approximately 2 foot wide paved shoulders. There does not appear to be room on either side of the road to widen to provide a paved sidewalk.

We recommend the Town add additional pedestrian signs to remind drivers of pedestrian activity, provide some form of pedestrian pavement markings or striping on the pavement, and keep vegetation from encroaching on the roadway which pushes pedestrians further into the road.

IV. Crash History:

GP obtained the crash data from MaineDOT for the period of 2013-2015, the most recent period available at the time this was prepared (attached). The latest three year history is what MaineDOT uses to identify and classify High Crash Locations (HCL). In order to evaluate whether a location has a crash problem, MaineDOT uses two criteria to define a HCL, both criteria must be met in order to be classified as a HCL.

1. A critical rate factor of 1.00 or more for a three-year period. (A Critical Rate Factor {CRF} compares the actual crash rate to the rate for similar intersections in the state. A CRF of less than 1.00 indicates a rate of less than average) **and:**
2. A minimum of eight crashes over the same three-year period.

Based on the MaineDOT crash history, there are no high crash locations in the immediate area.

In addition to identifying high crash locations, we also reviewed the history to identify if there were any reportable crashes associated with pedestrians or bicycles. There were no pedestrian or bicycle crashes in the immediate area reported in the three year period from 2013-2015.

V. Circulation:

GP observed the lower Town Landing Boat Launch parking area for the purposes of evaluating the site circulation. As identified previously, the area is odd in shape due to the restriction of the shore line. This odd shape and the fact that the area is relatively small to begin with complicates site circulation. There are several types of users all trying to access the same space at the same time. There are:

- Commercial fisherman
- Leisure boaters trying to drop off or pick up people / supplies for the day
- Leisure boaters trying to launch or take out their boats
- People trying to access the beach
- People trying to launch or take out smaller water crafts such as Kayak or paddle boards
- People trying to park for some other reason

Based on our observations, this area is dysfunctional due to the lack of adequate space to accommodate or organize the area in any meaningful way. The Rangers do a good job with what they have to work with, but the area is too restrictive.

The options to improve site circulation could include; increase the size of the area and / or reduce the number of parking spaces to allow more room for circulation. Increasing the size of the area would require more evaluation given the environmentally sensitive nature of being on the ocean. Given that the number of parking spaces is already under capacity during peak times, removing spaces would require additional parking elsewhere.

VI. Conclusion and Alternatives:

Conclusion

Based on this evaluation, there are some inefficiencies in the existing parking operations and there appears to be a need for additional parking spaces during peak time periods. The inefficiencies include areas that are not operationally adequate, ticketing system that does not discourage improper parking, and parking limitations that could be revised. The need for additional parking, primarily on Saturdays, was confirmed during observations as well as by some of the respondents to the surveys. Although the deficit does not appear to be significant, there does appear to be a deficit. One thing to keep in perspective in deciding which alternatives, if any, to pursue, is how often is there an issue? The issues appear to be primarily on Saturdays during the peak summer months, with occasional Sundays a slightly less problem and weekdays not really an issue.

In addition to the parking, there is a definite need for some form of pedestrian accommodations for people walking on Town Landing Road.

Alternatives

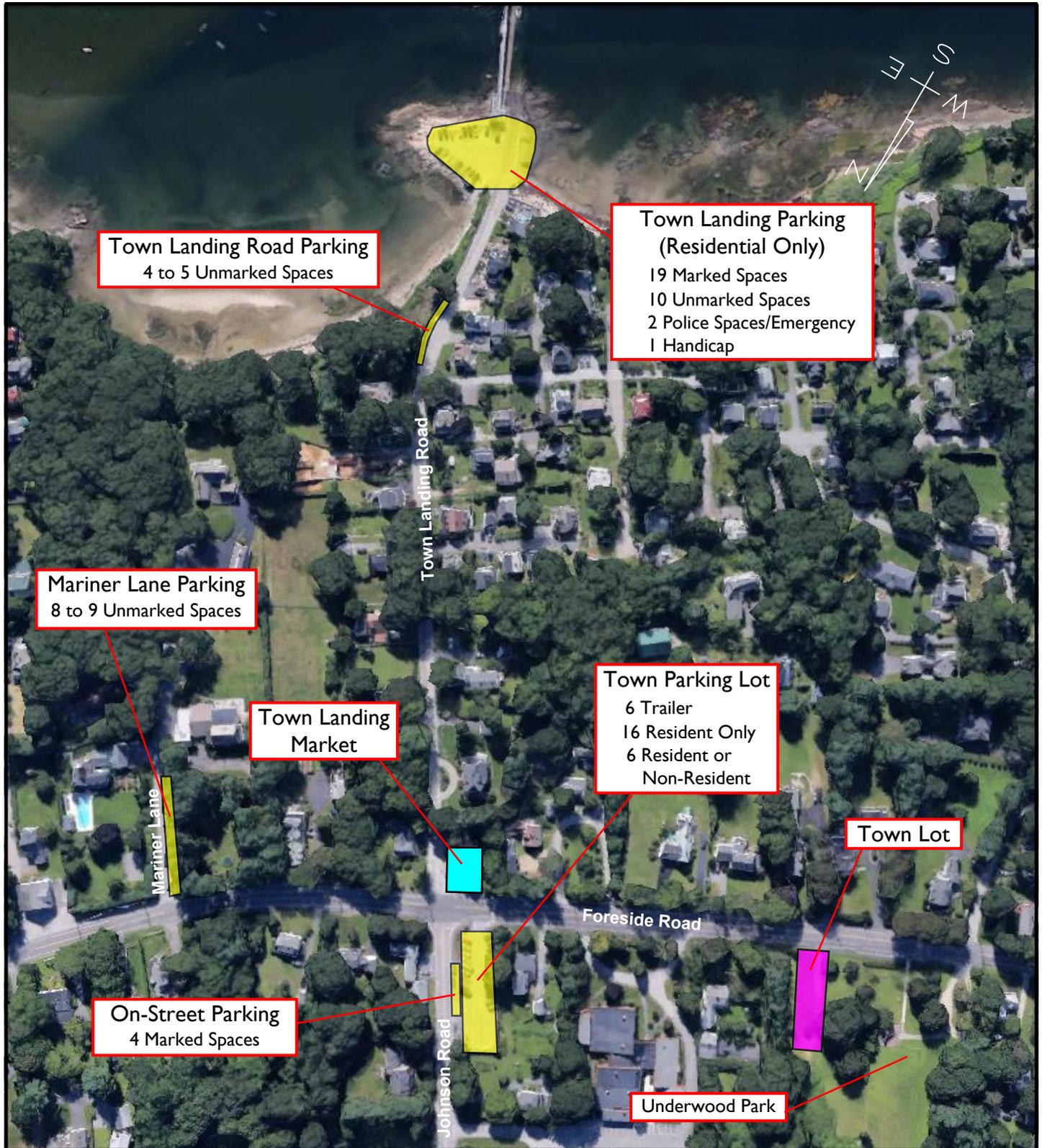
Based on considering all of the information from this evaluation, we offer the following alternatives / recommendations for the Town's consideration. The alternatives identified assume that the vacant undeveloped Town lot adjacent to Underwood Park is available for use.

- Relocate the 6 trailered parking spaces from the current upper Town lot to the undeveloped Town lot adjacent to Underwood Park. The existing parking area could then be restriped or reconfigured for approximately 10 to 12 more vehicle parking spaces. Since the trailers are typically parked for at least a day, they are longer term parking with very low turnover. The parking at the undeveloped lot could be gravel and does not have to be striped paved spaces since it is expected to only be used during peak summer months of the year. This area could also be shared with the adjacent Underwood Park, as well as for people wishing to park and then walk or bicycle in the area. Shifting the parking to the undeveloped lot would require walking an approximately 400 feet more than currently.
- Restripe the lower Town Landing parking area for wider parking spaces (potentially 9 feet). On the face of it this would seem to reduce the number of available parking spaces. However, as identified previously herein, the existing narrow spaces during the busy times result in unused space because of encroachment of vehicles from one space into another. So although there may be fewer striped spaces, functionally they would not lose any.

- Modify the sloped paved area at the landing – The paved sloped unmarked parking area is un-useable during high tides, which reduces the parking supply and puts additional demand on the remaining spaces. Gorrill Palmer has field reviewed the area with the Harbor Master and it is our opinion that reconstruction / modifications could be made to that area that would not only improve the aesthetics of that portion of the landing, but would create parking spaces that would not be lost during high tides while still allowing for access to the adjacent beach for launching of smaller water crafts. The modifications would also improve the environmental impacts to the landing. In addition, other edges of the landing may be able to be modified such that circulation could be improved. This entire area is highly sensitive and would require environmental approvals prior to construction..
- Reassess parking ticket structure – The existing ticket violation is \$15 and is only issued once per day per vehicle. This means that a vehicle can park at the landing in the morning, spend the day occupying the space and only have to spend \$15, with no concern of getting booted or towed. In addition, it can be difficult for the police to collect the fee from the ticket and relies on the honor system. In random interviews, more than once the person being interviewed admitted to doing exactly that, and thought it was a ‘bargain” to park all day in a prime spot for only \$15. The Town may want to consider reassessing their fee structure, and enforcement options such as booting or towing. We recommend that if pursued, signing in the area be improved to clearly state the parking requirements and possible outcomes for violations.
- Time Limit on Spaces – Currently, other than not overnight, there are no time restriction on parking. This allows for vehicles to park at the landing and stay for the day. Typically, for highly sought after parking spaces, there is a time limit on the parking. It would seem to be a better use of parking spaces to restrict the parking to blocks of time, such as two to four hours. If vehicles are going to be there for the day, they can drop off passengers and equipment at the launch and park in a satellite lot and walk back down.
- Pedestrian / Bicycle Accommodations – As stated previously, there are no pedestrian or bicycle accommodations on a steep narrow road where significant pedestrian / bicycle activity was observed. We recognize that the right of way may be narrow and the opportunity for formal accommodations may be limited. With that in mind, we recommend the Town consider; additional signage reminding drivers of the pedestrian / bicycle use in the area, maintaining vegetation along the road such that it does not encroach which requires pedestrians to walk further into the road, striping along the road to indicate where pedestrians should walk and reminding drivers they need to share the road.

Town Landing Parking Areas

Figure No. 1



TOWN LANDING PARKING STUDY FALMOUTH, MAINE

Design: ET Scale: NONE
Draft: LAN Date: SEPT 2016
Checked: RED File Name: 3187-PARKING LOCATIONS

Town Landing and Vicinity Parking Study Inventory

Day of the Week	Town Landing Area	On-Street on Town Landing Road	Town Lot			Johnson Road - On Street	Mariner Lane
			Trailer	Resident	Either		
Capacity of Area	28*	4**	6	16	6	4	8***
Weekday							
Aug 9 - 11:00 AM	16	4	4	6	6	1	1
Aug 9 - 12:00 PM	21	2	5	9	6	1	0
Aug 9 - 1:30 PM	23	3	6	10	4	1	0
Aug 10 - 3:30 PM	9	1	3	5	2	1	1
Aug 11 - 10:00 AM	14	5	2	7	5	3	0
Aug 11 - 3:30 PM	32	4	2	15	3	3	0
Aug 12 - 3:00 PM	22	2	4	9	3	3	1
Aug 16 - 10:00 AM	16	3	4	7	5	3	2
Aug 16 - 12:00 PM	19	4	3	10	6	3	3
Aug 16 - 3:30 PM	16	3	1	6	4	2	2
Aug 17 - 10:00 AM	12	3	2	3	1	2	4
Aug 17 - 1:00 PM	14	3	2	4	5	3	2
Saturday							
Aug 6 - 7:30 AM	14	1	2	5	4	0	3
Aug 6 - 4:00 PM	23	4	3	7	4	2	2
Aug 20 - 9:00 AM	18	4	4	15	6	4	9
Aug 20 - 2:30 PM	26	3	2	16	6	4	9
Aug 27 - 8:30 AM	23	0	3	6	6	3	3
Aug 27 - 10:30 AM	24	4	4	8	6	4	3
Aug 27 - 12:00 PM	31	4	4	15	6	4	5
Aug 27 - 4:30 PM	28	5	4	18	6	4	7
Aug 27 - 5:30 PM	28	5	4	16	4	3	6
Sept 3 - 9:30 AM	28	5	5	12	6	4	2
Sept 3 - 10:30 AM	27	4	6	16	6	4	6
Sept 3 - 3:30 PM	30	5	7	18	6	4	8

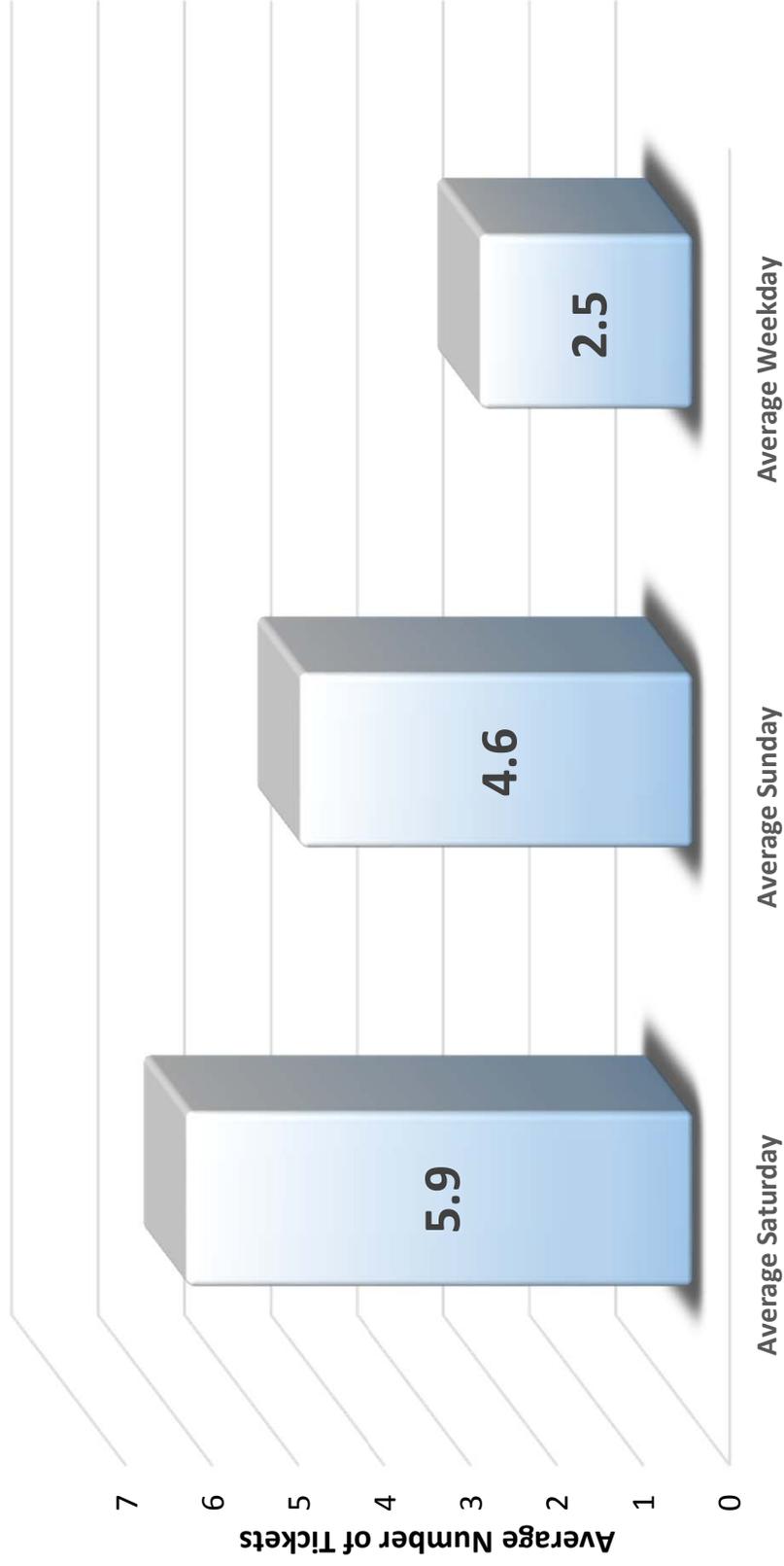
Fully Occupied

* Includes 10 Unmarked and 19 Marked but does not include 2 Emergency and 1 Handicapped for this evaluation we considered 28 at capacity, because narrow parking spaces and encroaching vehicles kept all the spaces from being used.

**This area is unstriped and although can sometimes take 5 vehicles, most of the time vehicles park so only 4 fit

***This area is unstriped and although can sometimes take 9 vehicles, most of the time vehicles park so only 8 fit

Average Number of Parking Tickets Issued per Day June 1, 2016 to September 1, 2016



Town Landing - Falmouth, Maine