

# **Downtown Parking Myths, Realities, and Solutions**

**Presenters:**

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# Common Myths About Downtown Parking

**Myth – *People do not like to walk.***

**Reality – Most motorists do not mind parking a block or two away from their destination if there is a dedicated and inviting parking area for them *AND A REASON TO STOP.***

- **When a downtown is clean and well maintained with occupied storefronts, people enjoy the walking experience**
  - **Cooperstown.**
  - **Saratoga Springs.**
- **Walkable downtowns have become trendy.**
- **People WALK IN MALLS!**



**Myth – *People do not like to walk.***



**Myth – *If we build it they will come. “Field of Dreams” approach.***

**Reality – Parking is not a downtown attraction.**

- **Physical improvements must be undertaken in conjunction with economic and quality of life improvements for revitalization efforts to succeed.**
- **Parking is a component to the overall approach.**
  - **promote downtown retail/services**
  - **relieve traffic congestion**
  - **maintain integrity of urban design**



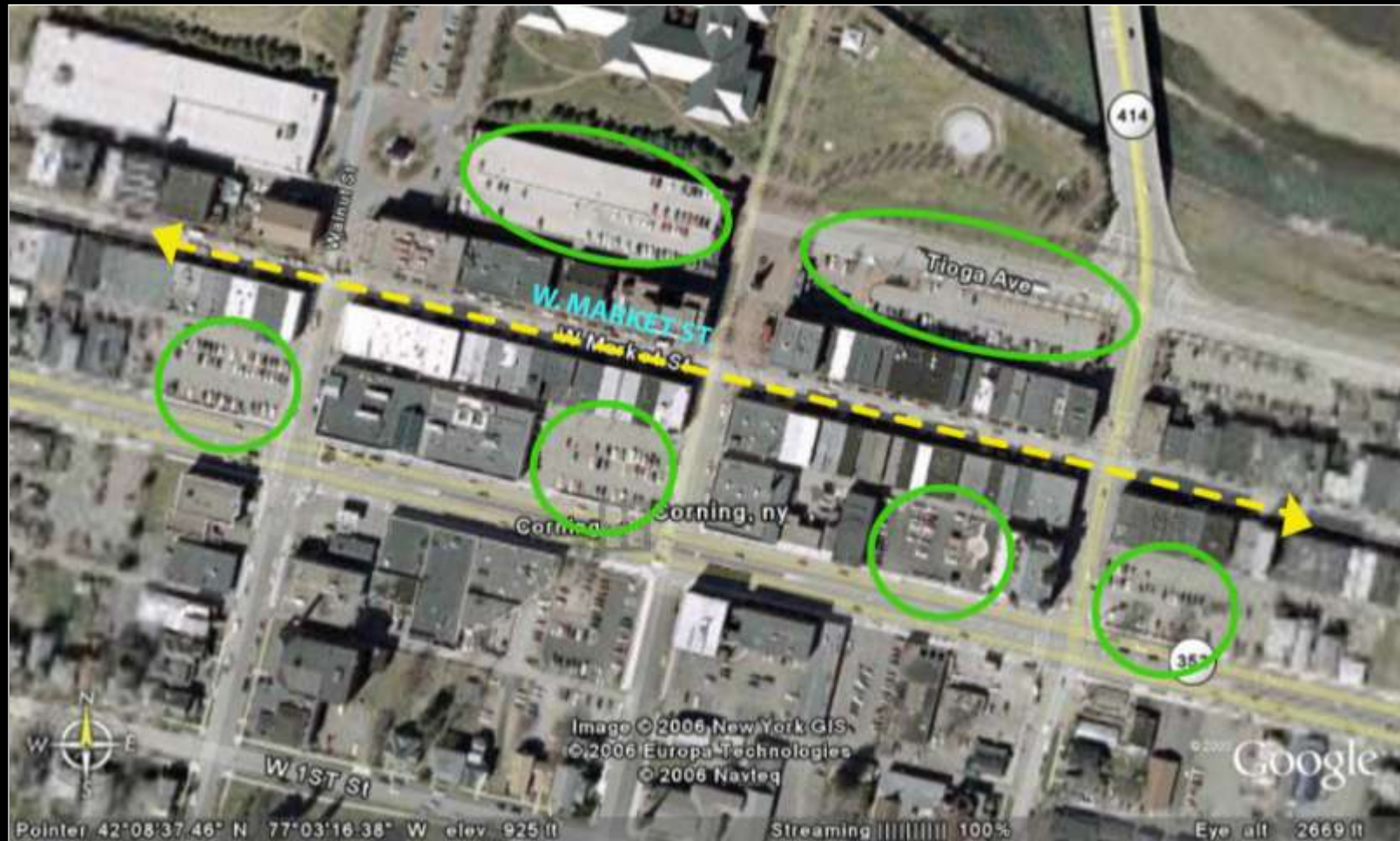
**Myth – *All parking must be in front.***

**Reality – People will park where parking is provided.**

- **Traditional downtowns have a grid pattern that often allows for rear lot parking behind the main street businesses.**
  - **Market Street, Corning, NY**
  - **Broadway, Saratoga Springs, NY**
  - **Front Street, Port Jervis, NY**
- **Communities must use proper design:**
  - **Signage**
  - **Lighting**
  - **Access**



**Myth – All parking must be in front.**



**Myth – *Everyone is entitled to free parking.***

**Reality – Every space entails a cost for developers, owners, tenants and tax payers.**

- **Parking fees are actually factored into rents, lease fees, sale prices, and taxes.**
- **There is nothing wrong with charging for parking:**
  - **Time limits**
  - **Permit Parking**
  - **Meters**





**Myth – *It's difficult to find parking in downtown.***

**Reality - Rather than focusing on how many spaces you have, think about how they relate to the downtown.**

- **Signage - Can people find them?**
- **Connectivity - Are they easily accessible?**
- **Location - Are they located in a safe place?**
- **Walkability and Accessibility - How direct is the pedestrian path to get to them?**
- **Design and Aesthetics - Is it a pleasant experience?**

**Myth – *Parking should be equally available everyone.***

**Reality – It is essential to segment parking motorists into different groups and prioritize them accordingly.**

- **Customers and shoppers are the highest priority. They generate the greatest benefit with the highest turnover and the lowest costs.**
- **Other visitors, residents, employees, and park-and ride commuters follow in importance.**
- **Employees and owners should park the furthest (i.e. Macy's).**



**Myth – A Parking problem is a BAD thing!**

**Reality – A parking problem may be indicative of GOOD things.**

- **Flourishing businesses.**
- **Customers/Visitors/Tourists.**
- **Well used or needed services.**
- **Vibrant and active downtown.**



**Myth – *Parking ratios must be provided according to the ITE Manual.***

**Reality – These manuals often create a larger than needed supply of private parking.**

- **Professional manuals base demand on single-use suburban sites, where ample free parking exists and few or no alternatives to driving are provided. The highest peak demand observed is then used to set the minimum.**
- **Technical Parking exercises can use the manuals as a guide but must make adjustments based on the unique character of the community (i.e. snow, shared parking, mass transit, government employees).**

**So you think you have a parking problem...**

**...what's next?**

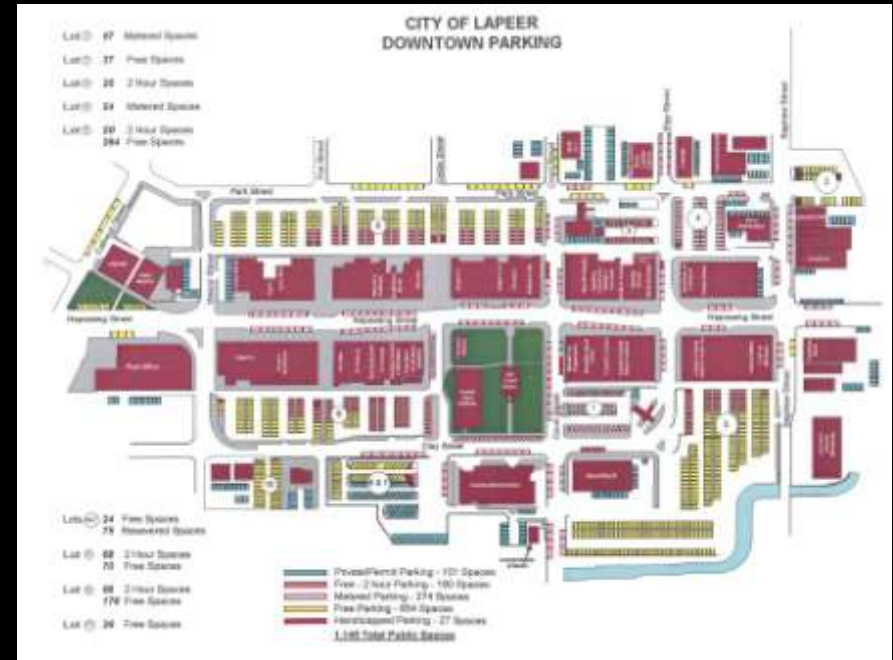
## Downtown Parking Study to Address:

- Is there enough available parking?
- Is the parking being used efficiently?
- What will be the future need for parking based on the build-out potential?
- What parking management strategies should the municipality pursue?



# Four Components of a Downtown Parking Study:

1. Inventory of existing conditions within the study area.
2. Examination of downtown parking requirements.
3. Development of a realistic build-out scenario.
4. Formulation of conclusions & recommendations.



# Inventory of Downtown Parking

## Inventory includes:

- Parcel identification number.
- Owner & address information.
- Type of Use.
- Floor area/Floor Area Ratio.
- Parking counts.

## Tools for the Inventory include:

- Assessment Records.
- Property Maps (GIS).
- Field Survey.
- Zoning Code.





# Sample Downtown Inventory: The Village of Johnsville

## Inventory of Existing Land Use and Floor Area

Land Use	Floor Area in Square Feet	Dwelling Unit	Percentage
<b>Residential</b>		<b>76+ units</b>	
Office	41,817		13.8%
Restaurant	32,247		13.8%
Retail	184,973		61.0%
Vacant	16,093		5.3%
Bank	16,588		5.5%
Civic	6,330		2.1%
Warehouse	5,132		1.7%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>303,180</b>	<b>76+ units</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*Residential unit number are approximate and not a part of the floor area ratio.

# Examine Downtown Parking Requirements

To assess Surplus or Deficiencies, compare to zoning requirements

<b>Residential</b>	<b>2 spaces per dwelling unit.</b>
<b>General Business</b>	<b>1 space per 200 square feet.</b>
<b>Professional Offices</b>	<b>1 space per 100 square feet.</b>
<b>Restaurant</b>	<b>1 space per 75 square feet.</b>
<b>Bank</b>	<b>1 space per 100 square feet.</b>
<b>Warehouse</b>	<b>1 space per 1,700 square feet.</b>

# Examine Downtown Parking Requirements

## Assessing Existing Conditions

### Study Area – Northern Gateway

Land Use	Floor Area Dwelling Unit	Parking Required	Parking Avail.	Surplus / Deficit
Residential	21 Units	42.00	42	
Office-Gen.	12,514'	38.50		
Office-Med.	959'	3.84		
Restaurant	8,740'	124.86		
Retail	55,740'	159.26		
Total:		368.46	331	-38

# Develop a Realistic Build-out Scenario

## A. Assessing Future Parking Needs

- Evaluate Economic Development Trends.
- Inventory of Vacancy Rates.
- Parking Requirements of vacancy space if occupied by highest and best use permitted by the zoning requirements.
- ITE Parking Generation Manual (adjust for demographics and weather)

## B. Recommendations for future Parking Needs

# Formation of Conclusions

- Study Results.
- Short Term & Long Term Goals.
- Goal Strategies.
- Cost Estimates.
- Funding Assistance.



**Houston....we have a problem!**

## **Potential Downtown Parking Solutions**

# Potential Downtown Parking Solutions

## *Seven Principles for Parking Solutions*

Kent Robinson Ph. D., St. Cloud State University, Minn.

1. Understand the proper role of parking in downtowns.
2. Strategically Locate Parking Facilities.
3. Value the utility of on-street parking.
4. Emphasize quality design.
5. Make better use of existing spaces.
6. Control the total volume of downtown parking spaces.
7. Plan for parking comprehensively.

# Potential Downtown Parking Solutions

## *Seven Principles for Parking Solutions*

**Kent Robinson Ph. D., St. Cloud State University, Minn.**

**Principle One - Understand the Proper Role of Parking in Downtown.**

**Develop solutions that focus on creating a downtown setting that is compact, walkable, and interesting.**

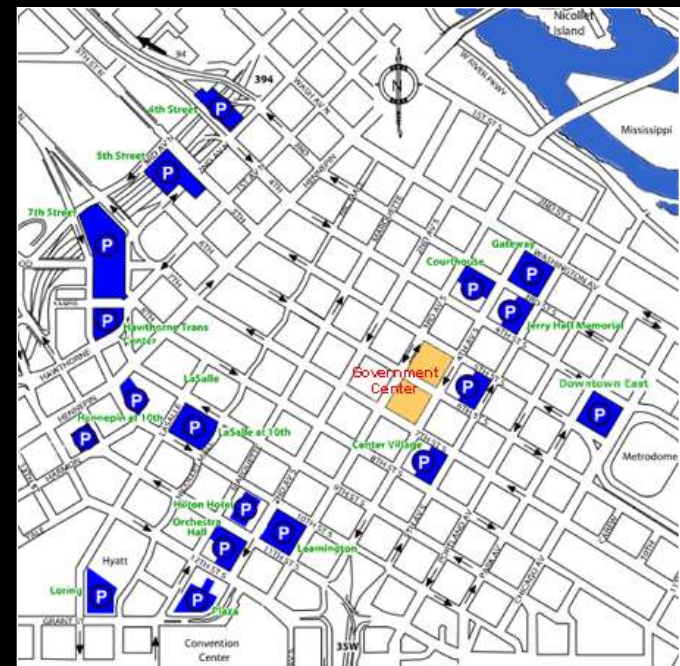
- **In-fill development with safe, clean sidewalks and curbing.**
- **Parking accessibility has the potential to set the tone for the rest of the downtown experience for visitors.**



# Potential Downtown Parking Solutions

## Principle Two - Strategically Locate Parking Facilities

- Back lot parking behind the main street buildings.
- Clearly mark parking so people can find it through good directional signage and/or way finding system.
- Avoid locating parking facilities in heavy pedestrian corridors.



# Potential Downtown Parking Solutions

## Principle Three - Value the Utility of On-Street Parking.

- **Maintain on-street parking as much as possible.**
- **On-street parallel & angled parking provide perceived advantages of visibility, accessibility, and safety.**
- **Regulate on-street parking to prevent parking nesters (e.g. 2-hours to 90 minutes).**



# Potential Downtown Parking Solutions

## Principle Four - Emphasize Quality Design.

- **Parking Areas should be generously landscaped and well-maintained.**
- **Landscaping should be designed to include a visual buffer between the parking area and adjacent sidewalk.**
- **Include visual amenities to help make the transition from driver to pedestrian a positive experience.**



# Potential Downtown Parking Solutions

## Principle Five - Make Better Use of Existing Spaces.

- Develop a parking educational campaign to inform the public of the whereabouts of typically unused parking spaces.
- Encourage shared parking facilities for users that experience peak parking demands at different times.



# Potential Downtown Parking Solutions

## Principle Five - Make Better Use of Existing Spaces.

- Ways to get the message out include directional signs, publicizing parking locations on websites, brochures, newspaper advertisements, and through individual downtown businesses to distribute information to employees and customers.



# Potential Downtown Parking Solutions

## Principle Six - Control the Total Volume of Downtown Parking Spaces.

- **Establish Parking Maximums Rather Than Parking Minimums (too much parking discourages people from walking downtown).**
- **Self-contained parking should be avoided for a traditional downtown because it discourages visitors from passing by other downtown businesses.**

# Potential Downtown Parking Solutions

## Principle Seven - Plan for Parking Comprehensively

**Any Parking Solution Should Be Evaluated For Its Impacts On:**

- **Traffic Patterns & Flow.**
- **Pedestrian Experience.**
- **Density Levels.**
- **Parking Coverage Rates.**
- **Activity Patterns.**
- **Aesthetic & Historical Qualities.**
- **Sense of Place.**



# Case Studies - City of Port Jervis



## FRONT STREET IMPROVEMENT

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR PORT JERVIS, NEW YORK | OCTOBER 2003



- |   |                             |                       |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Cross walks                                  | 7. Fountains/plazas         | 14. Pedestrian bridge |
| 2. Proposed building elevations                 | 8. Mixed-use building       | 15. Added restaurant  |
| 3. Surface parking with one level below or side | 9. Proposed public use mall |                       |
| 4. Mixed-use mall                               | 10. Public drop-off         |                       |
| 5. Beach strip                                  | 11. Entry gateway           |                       |
| 6. Green grade                                  | 12. Vertical element        |                       |
|   | 13. Stacking ramp           |                       |



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# Case Studies - Village of Hoosick Falls





# Case Studies - Village of Fort Edward



VILLAGE OF FORT EDWARD - FOCUS AREA

ROUTE 4 CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN | OCTOBER 2004

- HIGH VISIBILITY CORRIDORS
- PRIMARY AREA OF IMPROVEMENTS
- POTENTIAL (INFO)

Laberge Group

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# Case Studies - Town of Fort Edward



TOWN OF FT. EDWARD  
 COMMERCIAL IMPROVEMENTS PROTOTYPE SHEET  
 ROUTE 4 CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN | OCTOBER 2004

SCALE

1" = 40'



# Case Studies - Village of Manchester



# Case Studies - Village of Manchester



## Conclusion

**The goals for many of our downtowns include high density, to be compact & pedestrian friendly, to have a strong sense of place, to take advantage of historic and cultural features - all these elements need to be supported by the planning for parking.**

**“There should be a comprehensive plan for the downtown, where parking is one of the key ingredients.” - *Kent Robinson***

# Conclusion



Questions  
&  
Answers  
Thank You!

