



DOWNTOWN DARIEN PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN



with Fitzgerald & Halliday

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DOWNTOWN DARIEN PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN
Town of Darien, Ct

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OVERVIEW

The following Parking Management Plan (PMP) presents a final set of recommendations from the Darien Downtown Parking Study. These recommendations are based on findings and analysis conducted during a 9-month study, and compiled into technical memoranda. These memoranda are available as appendices to the PMP. The PMP is organized, as follows.

PRIORITIZED STRATEGIES

To help guide implementation, the PMP is organized into three sets of strategies, ranked by level of recommended priority, as follows.

- **Transformative-Change Strategies** – This is a package of highly complementary strategies that offer an opportunity to transform the approach to parking management, and the downtown parking experience.
- **Supportive Strategies** – These strategies are designed to expand upon and complement the effects of the Transformative-Change strategies.
- **Strategies for Further Study** – These strategies either need further development/study, or should be evaluated/re-evaluated for implementation, following implementation of other, key strategies.

At each level of priority, strategies are identified to:

- **Optimize Management** – Strategies to improve the performance and efficiency of the overall system and/or specific components of the system.
- **Expand Supply** - Strategies to add physical spaces, or increase the utility of existing spaces.
- **Reduce Demand/Improve Mobility** – Strategies to reduce parking demand by improving the quality and availability of non-driving mobility options.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

A matrix of implementation factors for Transformative-Change and Supportive strategies, to include the following.

- **Phasing** – immediate, 1st year, and 2nd Year phases (all Further Study strategies would be recommended for subsequent phases)
- **Order of Magnitude Cost** – most recommendations have only nominal costs, for the others a sense of their cost magnitude is provided
- **Coordination Needs/Opportunities** – necessary and strategic partnerships for successful implementation

PRIORITIZED STRATEGIES

TRANSFORMATIVE-CHANGE STRATEGIES

The development of a PMP is an opportunity to substantially reassess the role and functionality of existing parking management practices. It is an opportunity to “step outside” of daily operations, which are necessarily focused on addressing the unending series of, seemingly isolated, issues and opportunities that are a constant condition of public parking systems in vibrant, thriving commercial centers. The top priority of the Downtown Darien PMP, therefore is identifying potential changes that could most improve this daily process, through transformative improvements that create significant co-benefits and allow the overall system to function at a higher level.

The following strategies represent an opportunity for this level of change/improvement.

Optimize Management

Identify Availability as Primary Performance Measure/Objective

- Formally adopt the following as performance targets for management of the downtown parking system.
 - Short-term spaces: 1 or 2 spaces on each block-face, and ~10% of short-term spaces in any Town lot, are available, during common peak-demand times (weekdays at midday, but evenings are also an emerging peak period).
 - Daily Commuter Parking: Spaces remain available, in each location offering a daily parking option, until 8 AM on a typical weekday.
 - Commuter-Permit Parking: Commuter permits are available to any Darien resident within one year of application.

Identify Pricing as Primary Management Tool

- Formally identify pricing as the primary means of managing supply and demand conditions in order to achieve availability targets.
- Implement the following recommendations from the 2013 *SWRPA Rail Station Parking Study Update*.
 - *Increase the daily parking rate from \$3 to \$5 or higher.*
 - *Increase permit prices by 10% each year, until the average time spent on the wait list is less than 1 year.*

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Figure 1 Daily Parking Rates among Darien's Peer Stations



- Charge a premium rate for the two Daily Parking lots that abut the train station.
 - The adjacent private charges \$8 for less convenient spaces.
 - The regional norm for all daily parking is \$7 (the average price for stations pictured above, minus the two Darien stations).
 - If the standard rate is raised to \$5, a price of \$8 seems apt for these premium lots.

Simplify the Regulatory-Geography of Short-term Parking Options

- To make it easier for drivers to anticipate where their “right-fit” parking options are located, based on how much time they need, and how much convenience they desire, modify current time-limit regulations, so that they vary as little as possible from the following.
 - Boston Post Road: 1-hour parking
 - Side streets (connecting to Boston Post Road): 2-hour parking
 - All other streets – 4-hour or 6-hour parking
 - Town lots: 2-hour parking, with 3-hour spaces clearly marked toward the periphery

Monitor Performance

- Implement the following monitoring program to track the effectiveness of new management strategies, and of the overall PMP as it evolves.
 - Weekly visual assessments of availability along Boston Post Road and high-demand side-street blocks during midday peak-demand period (1 PM), as well as the emerging evening peak period (6PM).
 - Quarterly system-wide counts of:

- All on-street spaces and lots during midday peaks
- All short-term lots during midday peaks
- All commuter lots/areas (permit and daily) at mid-morning and mid-afternoon

Expand Supply

Increase Oversell at Leroy West

- Issue 20 more permits to this lot.
 - 2015 occupancy surveys indicate capacity to increase the “oversell rate” of permits (permits sold/spaces available).
 - At no time during hourly, mid-week surveys were there less than 66 empty spaces (out of 216) in this lot with a notoriously long wait list.
- Monitor utilization, by counting empty spaces at least once per week.
- If peak utilization remains consistently below 80%, consider issuing 10 more permits.

Expand On-Street Supply in Key Locations

- Redesign the intersection of Boston Post Road and Tokeneke Road.
 - This need not involve any physical changes to Boston Post Road, which may make it one of the more viable opportunities to also improve pedestrian crossing conditions along this street.
- Add on-street parking in front of shops along Tokeneke Road
 - This will also shorten crossing distances and improve visibility for crossing pedestrians.
 - This will also help address the physical and psychological barriers that separate the areas of downtown on either side of the railroad tracks, making more parking more viable for more users and purposes.

Figure 2 More Parking and Safer Walking without any Changes to Boston Post Road



Image Source: Google Maps

Expand Off-Peak Resident Parking Options

- Allow residents to park in Town-managed short-term lots, using their Town-issued permits to exempt them from time limits, between 4PM and 10AM.
 - These lots offer ample capacity outside of the weekday, midday peak-demand period.
 - These hours coincide with when resident parking demand is highest, and likely when residents most strongly desire convenient parking options, such as when returning home late at night.
 - As customer parking demand continues to increase during evening periods, this option can be restricted to certain locations, preserving the locations most favored by customers for short-term parking only.

Expand Daily Parking Options

- Allow daily parking after 10AM in all commuter-permit lots.
 - This expands the strategy currently employed at Leroy West.

Reduce Demand/Improve Mobility

Improve Non-Driving Commute Options by Embracing TDM

From the 2013 SWRPA Rail Station Parking Study Update.

- Embrace TDM policies/programs to better manage parking resources through reduced demand.
- Identify a local champion for TDM and mobility improvements. This can be someone from the local business community who understands the value and potential to improve customer access. This could include someone on the Parking Committee.

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- Engage CT Rides to help develop a TDM program for downtown employees. CT Rides offers a reward program, trial transit passes, cost calculator, trip planning software, and guaranteed ride home, across the state. Engage this TDM partner to explore options for developing an enhanced program for downtown Darien.
- Explore a Bus Pass program. One of the most-consistently effective, district-level TDM benefits is the provision of fee or deeply-discounted, unlimited-ride bus passes to local employees. CT Rides may be able to help explore the possibility of such a program in Darien.

Improve Pedestrian Crossings

From the Action Plan for Revitalization of Downtown

- Construct safer crosswalks, curb extensions or bulb-outs.
- Implement traffic-calming measures.

From the Route 1 Corridor Study

- Provide curb extensions, pedestrian crossing upgrades, and high-visibility un-signalized crossings to increase pedestrian safety and access
- Provide better pedestrian signals at all signalized intersections.

- Facilitate Park-Once by making it easier, safer, and more effective for customers to cross all downtown streets.
 - A particular and sustained focus should emphasize the need to do something about the limited number and poor-quality of Boston Post Road crossings.
- Identify improvements that can provide important improvements, with minimal impact on Boston Post Road vehicle traffic, including:
 - Pedestrian signals;
 - Curb extensions that do not encroach upon travel or turning lanes, such as where curbside parking is located near intersections.
 - Crosswalks at all legs of each intersection

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Figure 3 Curb-Extension Opportunities in Parking Lanes: Corbin Drive (left) and Center Street



Images source: Google Maps

SUPPORTIVE STRATEGIES

Optimize Management

Enforce Time-Limits with License Plate Recognition System

- Use the Town's purchased devices/system to track vehicle parking activity across the full parking system.
 - This can make it virtually impossible for drivers to dodge time limits by moving their cars every two or three hours.

Adopt Enforcement Best Practices

- Introduce incremental fines.
 - This will be a particularly valuable complement to other changes in management practices, including the use of LPR noted above.
 - Incremental fines help reduce wariness among drivers unfamiliar with new or established parking regulations, while setting fines for repeat violations high enough to ensure optimal compliance rates, overall.
- Start with a "courtesy" ticket (no fine), that includes detailed information on parking options, pricing, and regulations, as well as information on the escalating fine schedule for repeat violations.
- Combining these two components would look something like the following.
 - The first ticket in any 12-month period does not incur a fine;
 - A second violation within 12 months would be fined at the current level; and
 - Subsequent violations would go up substantially, perhaps doubling each time.

Improve/Expand Existing Wayfinding and Information

- Brand and sign short-term lots to signal Park Once opportunities, by adding clear messaging to attract and encourage visitors.
- Use similar branding and signage to distinguish shopper/customer spaces from employee parking spaces within short-term lots.
- Add messaging to commuter-permit lots and daily-parking lots to identify free, public parking on evenings and weekends.

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Figure 4 Minor Changes in Lot Sign Could Help Visitors Quickly Identify “Right Fit” Options

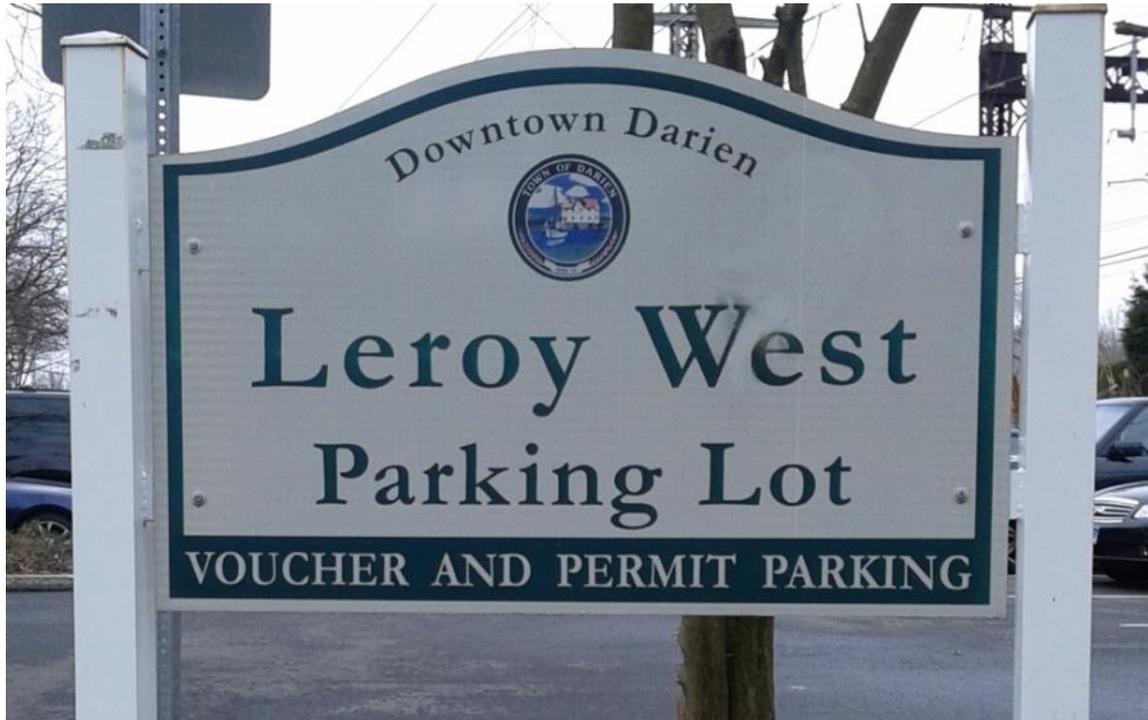


Image Source: Flickr User Ryan Janek Wolowski

Invest in Pedestrian Wayfinding

- Reinforce the Park Once concept through signage that encourages walking, particularly for secondary trips after a parking space has been found and occupied.
 - The same signage can also encourage more secondary trips by directly promoting nearby destinations throughout downtown.

Figure 5 Pedestrian Wayfinding in Grand Rapids, MI



Create a Downtown Parking Map

- Include all streets that have on-street parking, and all lots that offer public parking, each marked according to time restrictions and any parking rates.
 - Also include facilities that provide public parking during evenings and weekends, such as the 1020 Boston Post Road (Merrill Lynch) building's lot.
- Identify bike routes to downtown and bike parking locations.
- Disseminate maps in print, web, and smart phone app forms.

From the Route 1 Corridor Study

- Develop a Bicycle Facilities map for posting on the Town website that illustrates bike routes and locations of bicycle parking in Darien.

Expand Supply

Promote Employee Parking on Old Kings Highway South

- Exempt drivers with a Town-issued employee parking permit from time limits on this street.
 - The Town recently improved the delineation of parking spaces along the south side to encourage use of these spaces.
 - Promoting use of these spaces by downtown employees with permits parking could shift employee parking demand out of the Center Street municipal lots thereby freeing up spaces in the Center Street lots for customers/shoppers.

Reduce Demand/Improve Mobility

Expand Bike Parking

- Explore options for expanding and improving bike parking at Darien Station. This will require cooperation and negotiation with Metro-North, but should ultimately increase ridership, creating a shared benefit/interest in success.

From the Route 1 Corridor Study

- Install bike racks at community facilities, in the Central Business District, and at Darien Station.
- Develop new, short-term, bike-parking facilities at: Town Hall, the police department, the post office, Mather Fields, on Route 1 near Corbin Dr and near Center St., behind the movie theater, adjacent to municipal parking lots

From the Action Plan for Revitalization of Downtown

- Provide bike racks, and identify routes to connect to outlying neighborhoods.

Pursue Car-Share to Reduce Resident-Parking Demand

- Engage with commercial car-sharing companies to gauge interest in opportunities to locate within Town-managed lots, or in on-street spaces, and identify means of making downtown more viable for these services.
 - Access to car-share services has been consistently demonstrated to reduce average household vehicle-ownership rates, particularly in areas with access to transit and other alternative mobility options.

STRATEGIES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Optimize Management

Expand Pricing as a Management Tool for Customer Parking

- Introduce pricing as a short-term management tool by allowing drivers to pay to overstay time limits in Town lots.
 - This can be done simply, by allowing drivers in these lots to pay the going daily rate via the pay-by-phone option currently available to daily-lot users.
- Price on-street parking when the constraints currently limited to the midday peak period consistently expand into afternoon and evening periods.
 - Pricing on-street parking has been recommended in previous studies, including the 2007 Parking Study and the 2013 Route 1 Corridor Study.
 - 2015 occupancy surveys, confirming a very short period of constraint during the “lunch hour” rush, do not indicate this to be a high priority today.

Adopt a Parking Benefit District Funding Model

Figure 6 Promoting a Parking Benefit District Approach



- Collect all parking revenue into a fund dedicated to maintaining the parking system, and to mobility and demand-reduction opportunities. This will help to:
 - Ensure that that parking activity generates funding to support parking maintenance and management.
 - Promote the fact that parking revenue directly funds local area improvements.

- Ease resistance to future, demand-based/availability-focused rate increases.
- Identify the types of improvements likely to be made possible through this fund, including:
 - Traffic-calming to ensure that the area can be safely and effectively accessed via walking, cycling, and transit;
 - Streetscape, lighting, and other pedestrian enhancements;
 - Bike/scooter parking that can improve active commuting and reduce parking demand; and
 - Signage, wayfinding, and information investments.

Identify Pricing as Primary Management Tool

- To allow for strategic, periodic adjustments to parking rates, seek price-setting authority for the Parking Committee.

Expand Supply

Expand On-Street Supply in Key Locations

- Explore options for Grove Street.
 - The street is 30' wide (curb-to-curb), which doesn't really allow for parking on both sides and 2-way traffic.
 - Nonetheless, there are options worth exploring that could help make this street feel more oriented to walking and the “park-once” commercial environment of downtown, including those listed below.
 - Create a two-way “yield street” by alternating parking on either side of the street, which creates a slower-speed environment by “jogging” the travel lanes and making street crossing feel shorter.
 - Convert most of the street to 1-way and add parking on both sides.
 - Stripe a 4' wide median with planters at the corners, creating 9' travel lanes and an 8' parking lane on one curbside. This would help slow traffic and provide pedestrian crossing refuges along this emerging retail street.
 - Add curb extensions at the corners. If nothing else is done, this would help shorten crossings to new retail destinations, as well as any new homes and offices, emphasizing the pedestrian-oriented, park-once environment in this emerging extension of downtown.

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Figure 7 Making Most of Grove Street 1-Way Would Allow More Parking, Improve Pedestrian Conditions

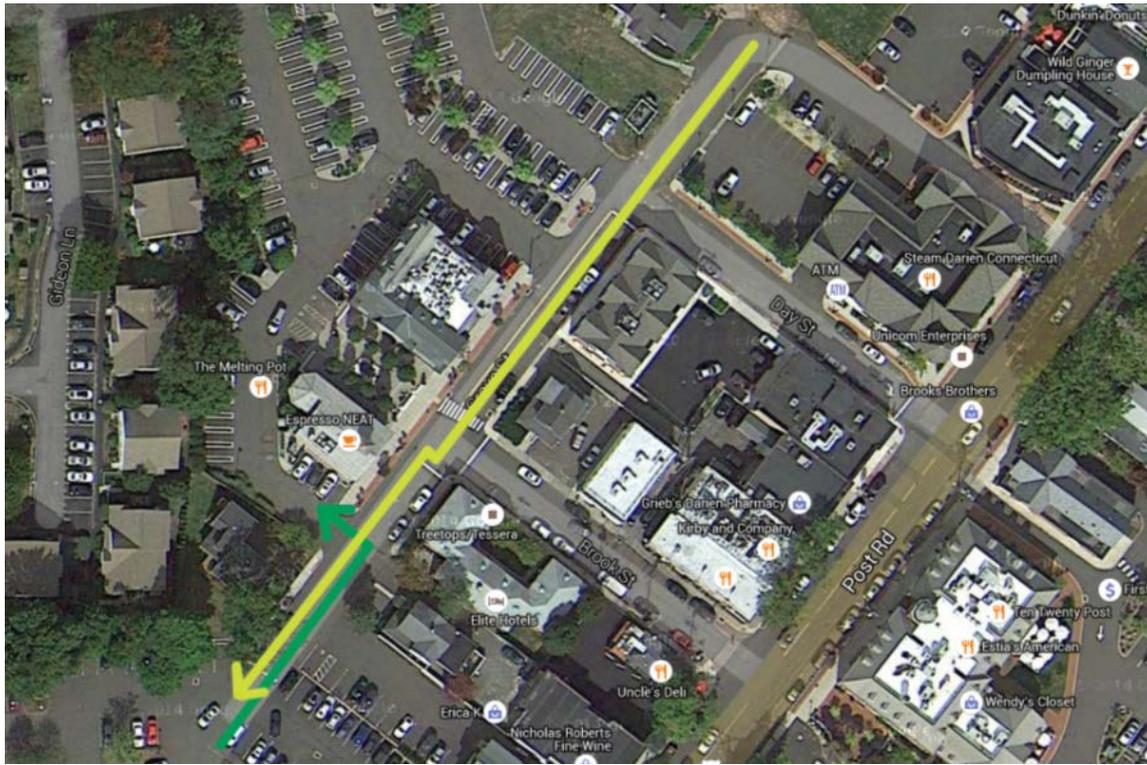


Figure 8 A Redesign Could Make Grove Street Feel More Like a Neighborhood Shopping Street



Revise Zoning Strategies

- Update the 2007 Parking Study to develop a clear, sustainable strategy for continuing past success as more and more downtown land, including existing surface lots, is redeveloped.
- This strategy should:
 - Ensure that minimum parking requirements do not discourage desirable forms of downtown redevelopment.
 - Discourage private, “accessory” parking facilities.
 - Encourage shared parking provision at larger developments, which will help promote infill development on smaller parcels.
 - Allow developers to fund public parking, in lieu of providing parking on-site.
 - Update bike parking requirements to include incentives for providing additional tenant and public bike parking, and access to showers and changing facilities.
- Develop a Strategic In Lieu Fee Rate
 - This would make it feasible for smaller projects to be built with no on-site parking, preserving their full lot for higher-value uses and avoiding inefficient, sidewalk-disrupting driveways along downtown streets.
 - At the same time, the fee increments would make it less likely that larger projects would use this option, making use of their larger parcel sizes to perhaps engage the Town about developing a public parking facility to meet their parking requirements.

Figure 9 How an Incremental In Lieu Fee Works for Projects of Various Sizes/ Parking Requirements

# of Spaces Required	Per Space Fee @ \$5,000 + (\$1,000 X # of Spaces)	Total Fee
1	\$6,000	\$6,000
2	\$7,000	\$14,000
3	\$8,000	\$24,000
40	\$45,000	\$1,800,000
50	\$55,000	\$2,750,000

Seek Joint Development Opportunities

From the 2007 Parking Study

- The Commission in conjunction with the Board of Selectmen should explore opportunities for more public-private partnerships to take advantage of some of the underutilized private parking in and near the downtown in a manner that benefits all the stakeholder parties.

- Coordinate with developers of larger projects/sites to explore options for incorporating a Town-managed public parking facility into the project.
 - As more of the downtown is redeveloped, there will be fewer opportunities to convert rear portions of development sites to Town parking lots.
 - Public-private partnerships on larger projects, however, could replicate the efficiencies of this practice.
 - Advantages to the Town include:
 - Continuing the practice of sharing the cost of developing public parking with private developers, even as land opportunities for surface parking become scarce;
 - Updating this practice in a way that supports a gradual reduction of surface parking in downtown, thus supporting greater walkability, more destinations, and sustainable growth; and
 - Ensuring that parking built at larger developments is available to support nearby infill projects that lack site area to build on-site parking or donate land to the Town for public parking.
 - Advantages to developers include:
 - More parking, at a reduced per-space cost, compared to what they could economically provide on their own;
 - Outsourcing the management of on-site parking; and
 - Supporting growth and development at smaller, nearby parcels, adding to the appeal of their own projects.

Explore Public Valet to Expand Short-Term Parking Capacity

- Explore locations that might be suitable for a public valet.
 - Suggested candidates include Boston Post Road, Grove Street, as well as side streets such as Day, Center, and Brook.
- Use fees for the service to help introduce the concept of pricing the most convenient customer parking options.

Explore Park-&-Ride Valet to Expand Daily Commuter Parking Capacity

- Explore options to expand the effective capacity of commuter lots by providing valet service at e at Darien Train Station
 - The Leroy East lot might be an ideal location to set aside for valet-only, tandem parking for such a service, expanding the effective-capacity of this lot, which is located near-enough to station entrance and exits to make valet feasible.
 - Another option would be to setup a valet service within the Leroy West, providing drop-off and pickup near the entrance, while using tandem parking to maximize the effective capacity of the back area of this lot, which tends to be underutilized.

Reduce Demand/Improve Mobility

Add Bus Stop Amenities

From the Action Plan for Revitalization of Downtown

- Provide well-appointed bus or transit stops with shelters and good signage

From the Route 1 Corridor Study

- Add transit-stop amenities to enhance the user experience and encourage more transit use for downtown trips.

- Install state-of-the-practice bus shelters that provide essential service information.
- Focus on the specific amenities recommended in the Route 1 Corridor Study, particularly the following.
 - Seating, lighting, and clear signage
 - Route and connecting service information
 - Bike and moped parking
 - Waste baskets
 - Landscaping, artwork, and other aesthetic enhancements

Pursue Bike-Share to Reduce Resident-Parking Demand

- Coordinate with local bike advocates to engage vendor/operators, such as B-Cycle, Social Bicycles, viaCycle, CycleHop, and Zagster¹ to help determine market-readiness for their services, and to identify local improvements that could improve their viability.
 - Technology improvements are making smaller-scale bike share systems more operationally and economically viable, making vendor-operated systems effective in commercial centers similar to downtown Darien.

¹ <http://nabsa.net/bike-share-equipment-vendors-service-providers/>

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

Strategy	Phase	Action	Cost Factors	Coordination Needs
Identify Availability as Primary Performance Measure/Objective	Immediate	Set Availability Targets	Staff Time Only	DPW
	2nd Year	Increase Daily Rates	Staff Time Only	Board of Selectmen
Identify Pricing as Primary Management Tool	2nd Year	Increase Commuter Permit Rate	Staff Time Only	Board of Selectmen
	2nd Year	Create a Premium Daily Rate	Staff Time Only	Board of Selectmen
	2nd Year	Create a Premium Daily Rate	Staff Time Only	Board of Selectmen
Simplify Time Limit Geography	1st Year	Modify time-limits by location	Staff Time + New Signage	DPW
Monitor Performance	1st Year	Weekly visual assessments	Enforcement Staff Time	DPW, Enforcement
	1st Year	Quarterly system-wide counts	Enforcement Staff Time	DPW, Enforcement
Increase Oversell of Leroy West Permits	1st Year	Issue 25 more permits	Staff Time Only	DPW, Enforcement
	1st Year	Monitor Utilization	Enforcement Staff Time	DPW, Enforcement
	2nd Year	Consider issuing more if significant capacity remains	Staff Time Only	DPW, Enforcement
Expand On-Street Supply in Key Locations	1st Year	Redesign corner of Tokeneke/BPR	\$60K*	ConnDOT, DPW, Police
	2nd Year	Add spaces on Tokeneke Road		
Expand Off-Peak Resident Parking Options	Immediate	Allow resident-permit use of short-term lots in off-peak	Staff Time + New Signage	DPW
Expand Daily Parking Options	Immediate	Allow daily parking after 10AM in all commuter-permit lots	Staff Time + New Signage	DPW
Improve Non-Driving Commute Options	Immediate	Identify Local Champion	Staff Time	Local Businesses
	Immediate	Engage CT Rides	Staff Time	CT Rides, Local Businesses
	1st Year	Explore a Bus Pass program	Staff Time Only to Explore ‡	CT Rides, Local Businesses
Improve Pedestrian Crossings	1st Year	Add parking spaces + curb extension on Tokeneke Road	\$60K*	ConnDOT, DPW, Police
	2nd Year, Ongoing	Address BPR Crossings, engage ConnDOT	Staff Time Only	ConnDOT, DPW, Police
Enforce Time-Limits with LPR	1st Year	Deploy/use already-purchased devices	Staff Training Time	DPW, Enforcement
Adopt Enforcement Best Practices	2nd Year	Introduce incremental fines	Revenue-Neutral [∞]	DPW, Enforcement, Board of Selectmen
	1st Year	Start Fines at \$0	Revenue-Neutral	DPW, Enforcement, Board of Selectmen
Improve/Expand Existing Wayfinding and Information	2nd Year	Brand and sign short-term lots	\$5-10K/ facility for install **	DPW
	2nd Year	Distinguish shopper/customer spaces from employee parking	\$5-10K/ facility for install **	DPW
	1st Year	Identify free, public parking on evenings and weekends	\$2 -5K per facility	DPW, ConnDOT
Invest in Pedestrian Wayfinding	2nd Year	Develop signage that encourages walking, Park Once	\$500 - 3K††	DPW

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Strategy	Phase	Action	Cost Factors	Coordination Needs
Create a Downtown Parking Map	1 st Year	ID all public parking options, by regulation	\$5-15K	DPW, Town Website Administrator
	2 nd Year	ID bike routes and bike parking locations		
	2 nd Year	Disseminate in print, web, and phone app forms		
Promote Employee Parking on Old Kings Highway South	Immediate	Exempt employee-permit-holders from time limits	Staff Time Only	DPW, Enforcement
	Immediate	Promote as alternative to Center Street lot	Staff Time Only	Local Businesses
Pursue Car-Share to Reduce Resident-Parking Demand	Immediate	Engage companies	Staff Time Only	ZipCar, Car2Go, Hertz, etc.
	1 st Year	ID means of attracting and expanding presence	Staff Time Only	ZipCar, Car2Go, Hertz, etc.

* Includes: High-Visibility Crosswalk, Countdown Signal, Audible Signal, and Curb Extension (see Traffic Calming Cost Estimates appendix)

‡ Cost to operate similar program in Ann Arbor is ~\$700K. At ~7,500 pass-holders, this amounts to just under \$100 per pass-holder, and ~\$0.90 per ride (reduced car-trip, parking action).

∞ Cost of lost first-time-ticke revenue should be offset by increasing rates for recidivist infractions

** Design Fee likely to be much higher, and highly variable. This aspect should be put out for competitive bid.

‡‡ see: walkyourcity.org/documents/WYC_Getting-Started.pdf