

NEW LONDON PARKING & TRAFFIC STUDY



**Prepared By
Upper Valley Lake Sunapee
Regional Planning Commission
77 Bank Street
Lebanon, NH 03766
603-448-1680
For the
Town of New London**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	1
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	1
WHAT WE DID	1
EXISTING CONDITIONS	2
II. PARKING CHARACTERISTICS	3
PARKING OCCUPANCY	5
PARKING USAGE AND LOCAL PARKING STANDARDS	13
III. DOWNTOWN TRAFFIC	16
IV. TRAFFIC SAFETY	18
V. OTHER PARKING ISSUES	19
BARN PLAYHOUSE	19
DOWNTOWNS AND PARKING	20
FIRE STATION – JACK’S COFFEE	21
TOWN HALL	22
VI. RECOMMENDATIONS	23

TABLES • FIGURES • MAPS • EXHIBITS

Table 1:	Parking Occupancy by Space Type and Time of Day
Table 2:	Land Uses within Block Divisions
Table 3:	Parking Occupancy by Block and Type
Table 4:	Comparison of Total Parking Usage and Required Parking Spaces by Block
Table 5:	Comparison of Off-street Parking Usage and Required Parking Spaces by Block
Table 6:	2004 Average Weekday Traffic by Season
Table 7:	Main/Pleasant Street Intersection Traffic Summary
Table 8:	Level-Of-Service Criteria
Table 9:	Parking/Traffic Problems & Countermeasures

Figure 1:	Percentage Total Parking Usage by Time of Year and Day
Figure 2:	Total Parking Occupancy by Time of Day and Type

Map 1:	Study Area
Map 2:	Land Uses in Study Area
Map 3:	Percentage Occupancy by Block and Individual Off-street Lots

Exhibit 1:	On-street parking near Colby-Sawyer College
Exhibit 2:	Van blocks sight distance at Williams and Main Street intersection.
Exhibit 3:	Unorganized parking limits off-street lot capacity
Exhibit 4:	Bus blocks sight distance of vehicle turning on to Williams Street
Exhibit 5:	Main St. parking maneuvers and congestion illustrate need for sidewalks on right side of street.
Exhibit 6:	Bus parking blocks sight distance making vehicle entry onto Main Street difficult
Exhibit 7:	Kearsarge Elementary School--Restrictions prohibit pick-up near school exit and results in pressures on nearby private lots.

I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the New London Parking Study is to assess current traffic and parking conditions in the commercial district and to identify problems and potential solutions.

What we did:

- Compiled existing information, including GIS mapping data layers, tax map parcel layers and any other available survey information.
- Meet with Town Administrator, Road Agent, Town Planner, Zoning Administrator, Police Chief and others to identify issues with traffic and parking in the study area.
- Inventoried parking spaces, identified the number of existing spaces and general locations of parking. This step included an inventory of on-street and off-street parking, including an inventory of handicapped parking facilities. The number of unmarked parking spaces was estimated by using existing site plan requirements.
- Completed four parking occupancy surveys to assess the number and location of parking spaces used on weekdays. Each survey was completed starting at 8 am and ending at 6 pm. Surveys were conducted on July 22, August 20, September 22 and October 21, 2004.
- While determining the study area (see Map 1), Town officials excluded from the occupancy counts several proximate land uses including Colby-Sawyer College, Fire Department, New London Service Station, residential (except where uses were mixed), home based businesses and the Kearsarge Elementary School.
- Evaluated parking conditions at the Barn Playhouse August 25, 2004 matinee performance.
- Performed traffic counts at Pleasant Street, north and south of Main Street; Main Street west of Colby Sawyer entrance; and Main Street, east of Lakeside Road, to measure traffic volumes, once in summer 2004 and once again in fall 2004.
- Performed a turning movement count to determine the Pleasant Street and Main Street intersection performance and identify potential solutions.
- Identified accident locations through data available through the New Hampshire Department of Transportation and the local police department.
- Performed data analysis to determine problems and identify solutions related to parking and traffic within the study area.
- Assessed the availability of parking in relation to existing land use activities and their associated local parking requirements.

Existing Conditions

New London has a vibrant downtown with many commercial and residential uses. The Town's population grew almost 3-times larger over the last 50 years, an increase of 2,632 residents. The 2000 population totaled 4,116 and it was estimated that the 2003 population was 4,289 by the Census Bureau.

No fixed route transit service exists in New London. Most commuting is by single-occupant vehicle (62%), followed by carpooling (13.6%), walking (13.2%), and working at home (10.9%). New London has a low percentage of commuters using single occupant vehicles, New Hampshire as a whole had about 82 percent drive alone. The largest employers include the New London Hospital and Colby-Sawyer College.

Communities often have staffing limitations that require parking to be dealt with in a piecemeal manner. In New London, the various parking responsibilities are spread over several departments. The police handle parking enforcement, planning and zoning address permitting, public works handles maintenance, and fees and fines are set by the governing body. It is typical for communities of this size; however, it poses challenges to managing an effective parking system.

II. PARKING CHARACTERISTICS

There are 928 estimated parking spaces within the study area. Seventy percent of all Downtown parking is private and 30 percent public. Seventy six percent of the spaces are off-street parking lots and 24 percent are on-street parking, which is typical for downtown areas. This equals 226 spaces per 1,000 of New London's year 2000 population. Smaller communities generally provide a higher number of spaces, compared to larger communities, in their downtowns, about 50-100+ spaces per 1,000 people. The relationship between parking spaces and population provides one way to compare one community to another; however, it is important to note that this comparison does not consider what is the optimal number of spaces.

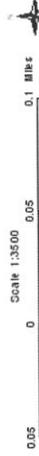
There are few restrictions on parking within the study area. Some parking spaces in the Library lot have a 10-minute restriction and some of the Seamans Road on-street parking has a 3-hour limit but currently is not marked.

Within the study area there are 28 handicap parking spaces, 25 off-street and 3 on-street.

Some of the off-street parking lots are shared among businesses, for example the Lake Sunapee Bank lot shares with the Kidder Office Building and a day care facility. There are other examples of shared arrangements in the Downtown; however, most parking lots serve only one building.

Map 1 depicts the study area and general location of existing parking supply.

Map 1
New London Traffic and Parking Analysis:
Study Area



Study Area/Parcel Boundary*

On-Street Parking

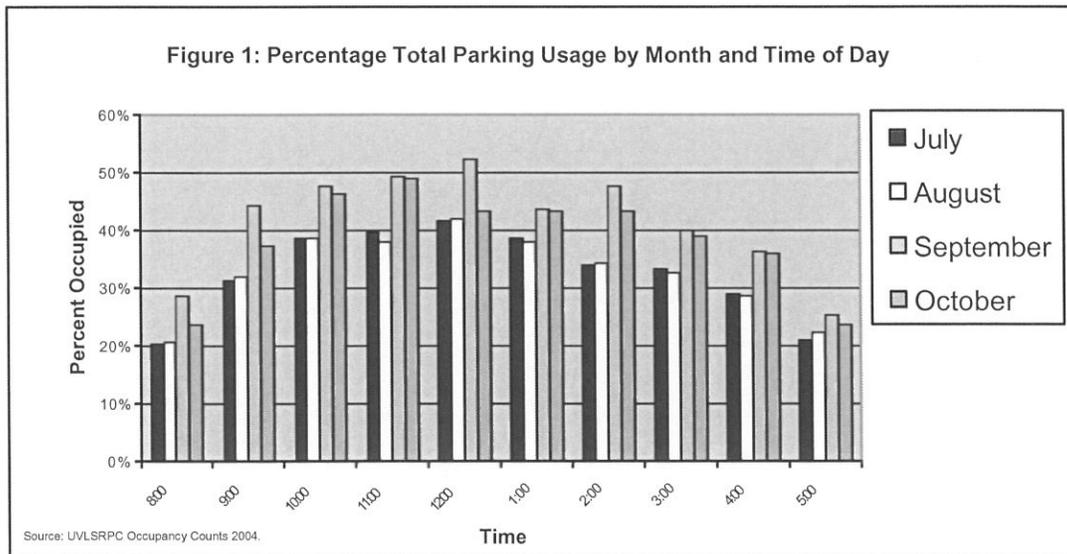
Off-Street Parking

Undesignated Parking

Residential

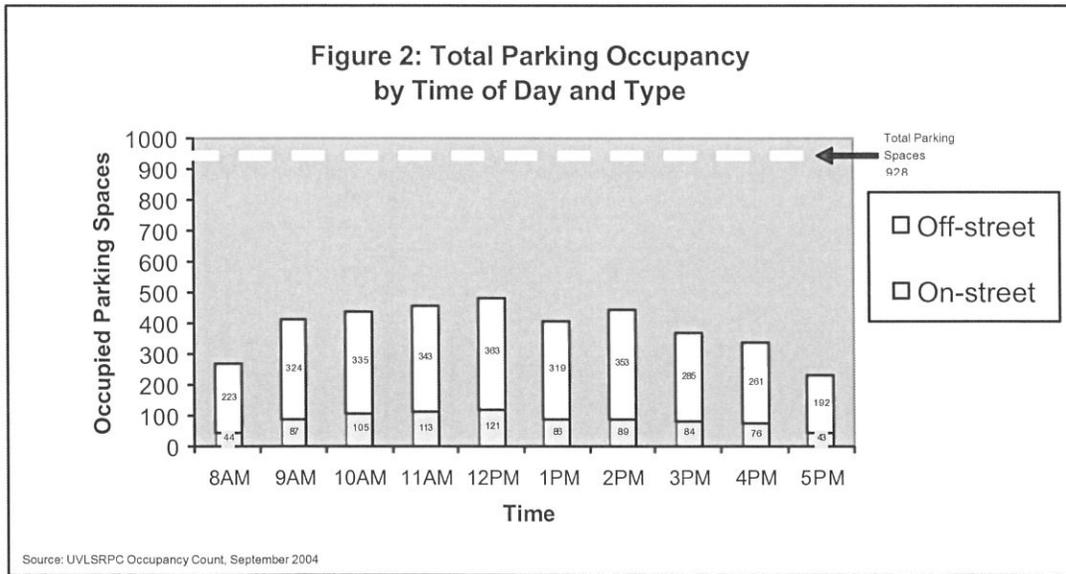
Parking Occupancy

Parking occupancy counts were taken in July, August, September and October for a total of four counts to assess parking usage. Parking occupancy was counted for each hour of the day from 8a.m. – 6p.m. The highest parking usage was in September. In general, there is higher parking demand in the fall, presumably due to the influx of college students and the start of public schools (see Figure 1).



The most notable change in seasonal parking characteristics is the increase in occupancy of on-street parking near the Colby campus. No vehicles used on-street parking in this area during the July and August occupancy counts.

The pattern of parking occupancy is shown for the September count in Figure 2 for on-street and off-street parking spaces.



Parking occupancy was low in the early morning and continued to rise until it peaked sometime around the noon hour. It then slowly declined. Total occupancy ranged from 25-52 percent; the highest hour of parking usage was at 12 noon during the September count. However, there were relatively heavy demands from 9AM to 2PM. The peak total on-street parking was 55 percent. The numbers of vehicles in each type of space (public/private lots & on-street) over the course of the September count can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Parking Occupancy by Space Type and Time of Day								
Time	Public Lots		Private Lots		On-Street (public)		Total Spaces	
	No. of Parkers	Percent of Spaces *	No. of Parkers	Percent of Spaces *	No. of Parkers	Percent of Spaces *	No. of Parkers	Percent of Spaces *
8:00	12	21%	211	32%	44	20%	267	29%
9:00	43	75%	281	43%	87	39%	411	44%
10:00	47	82%	288	44%	105	48%	440	47%
11:00	46	81%	297	46%	113	51%	456	49%
12:00	38	67%	325	50%	121	55%	484	52%
1:00	27	47%	292	45%	86	39%	405	44%
2:00	42	74%	311	48%	89	40%	442	48%
3:00	39	68%	246	38%	84	38%	369	40%
4:00	21	37%	240	37%	76	34%	337	36%
5:00	9	16%	183	28%	43	19%	235	25%

Source: UVLSRPC Occupancy Count, September 2004. * Percent total spaces in each category

Review of the September occupancy data at a more detailed level shows the areas within the Downtown that have the highest usage during the highest observed hour (12noon). The Downtown was broken up into 7 blocks according to street intersections to allow the evaluation of usage by area (See Table 2 and Map 2 for land uses in each block). Both on and off-street parking was aggregated by block to determine location-specific occupancy rates. Table 3 shows the percentage of parking occupied by block and type of parking. Sufficient parking exists if usage is 90-95 percent or less of spaces available. This is defined as the "effective parking supply." It is important that the parking supply include a sufficient "surplus" in excess of the necessary spaces to allow for vehicles moving in and out of parking stalls and to lessen the time to search for the final few available spaces.

According to these results, the highest usage is Block 7, from Seamans Road to Colby east entrance, which had 75 and 63 percent occupancy. However, this area and its neighboring blocks are below capacity, indicating that adequate parking supply exists. Higher occupancy levels in block 7 can be explained by: 1) Usage of on-street parking in block 7 increased dramatically in the fall with the influx of



Exhibit 1: Unused in the summer, on-street parking near Colby-Sawyer is used relatively heavily during the academic season.

Colby students; 2) the only off-street parking in block 7 is at the Baptist Church, which happened to have an event during the noon period resulting in 75 percent occupancy of their lot.

Map 3 depicts the percentage occupancy levels by block and individual off-street parking lots.

Table 2: Land Uses within Block Division

BLOCK 1	MAP/Lot #
NL Orthodontistry, Jillson Insurance, Sage's Interiors	073 002 000
Peter Christians and gift shop	073 077 000
Nichols	073 078 000
Hodan	073 079 000
Jacks, Tatewell Gallery, Vessels & Jewels	073 080 000
Foremost Builders	084 064 000
BLOCK 2	
Wildberry Bagel	073 081 000
Chadwicks Funeral Home	084 065 000
Caldwell Banker, Dead River, Sheer & White, Chadwick & D'anto	084 063 000
Telecom	084 061 000
Hutchens	084 062 000
BLOCK 3	
NL Agency	084 070 000
Old Hampshire Design	084 069 000
North Country Flooring, Farmer's Wife	084 060 000
Ellen's Decorating	084 059 000
Morgan Hill Bookstore	084 068 000
BLOCK 4	
Kearsarge Council on Aging	084 075 000
Dentists	084 072 000
Kidder Building, Timeless Kitchens, ASLPT (rear lot)	084 073 000
McSwiney & NE Camera	084 056 000
Country Homes	084 055 000
Tracy Library	084 054 000
BLOCK 5	
Day Care	084 085 000
Lake Sunapee Bank	084 087 000
Lake Sunapee Group	084 088 000
Kidder Office	084 086 000
NL Inn	084 089 000
Info Booth /Town Parking lot	084 009 000
Woodcrest	084 008 000
BLOCK 6	
Town Hall	084 090 000
Four Amigos	084 004 000
CB Coburn	084 003 000
Police Department	085 002 000
Aesthetics/Pizza	084 001 000
Lemon Twist	085 045 000
Colby Maintenance Building	084 005 000
Village Green, Gourmet Garden, Babson Group and Crossroads	085 044 000
Clinic	085 005 000
BLOCK 7	
Baptist Church	085 032 000
Law Offices	085 037 000

Map 3
 New London Traffic and Parking Analysis:
 Percentage Parking Occupancy
 by Block and Off-Street Lot



	Study Area/Parcel Boundary
	On-Street Parking
	Off-Street Parking
	Undesignated Parking
	Residential

	Percent Occupancy During Peak Count
	0 - 25%
	26 - 50%
	51 - 75%
	76 - 100%

*Some parcel boundaries were modified to distinguish between upper and lower parking areas.