

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Address commuter parking near the Herbert Road/Thorndike Street intersection

This recommendation has three parts:

1a. Modify traffic rules to conform to posted signage, by adding the following to Schedule I:

Street	Side	From	To	Regulation
Fairmont St.	NW	50' NE of Herbert	Herbert Rd	2 Hour Parking
Herbert Rd	SW	50' NW of Magnolia	Thorndike	No Parking

1b. Selectmen should organize a community meeting with residents to see if additional restrictions are desirable. These could include 2-hour parking on parts of Herbert, Thorndike, and Fairmont.

1c. Investigate the feasibility of using the Thorndike field parking lot as a commuter lot during the winter months, with all-day parking allowed by permit.

2. One-side parking on selected streets

In early 2007, the Board of Selectmen approved a process for designating streets as one-side parking. This process calls for such a designation to be made either

- upon a finding by public safety officials that two-side parking impedes emergency vehicle access, or
- upon a petition by residents, given sufficient public support in an abutter survey (2/3 in favor with at least 50% responding)

If there is a desire from either public safety officials or residents for one-side parking, it is recommended that this process be publicized and followed. If residents are uncertain about whether one-side parking is desirable, a 6-month trial could be conducted.

3. Review our parking management and enforcement practices

It appears that enforcement practices vary significantly by section of town, with some areas receiving little enforcement of parking regulations. No policy will be effective without adequate enforcement to back it up. This recommendation includes the following steps.

1. Examine current parking enforcement strategies (Traffic Division of Police). This includes the roles of parking enforcement officers and police, with information on when and where they are deployed, and the associated costs.
2. Examine parking tickets issued in FY07 and their distribution in town (Treasurer). Identify issues (for example, tickets challenged because the machines in the municipal parking lot were not working).
3. Assess the amount of enforcement that would be necessary to encourage violators to find legal options, and the staff and funding that would be required to achieve this level of enforcement. Project the amount of revenue that might balance the cost.
4. Develop staffing and budget proposals to achieve an adequate level of enforcement town-wide.

The TAC can manage this activity if given direct support from the Police and the Treasurer.

DISCUSSION

The Town controls a substantial parking inventory (both on and off street) and should manage that inventory in a way that best serves residents and businesses, while not interfering with safe travel.

GOALS FOR PARKING OCCUPANCY

Parking occupancy is the percentage of available legal spaces occupied during a “typical” peak period (without snow). By comparing actual occupancy to the desired maximum levels, areas can be equitably targeted for changes in parking rules.

Recommended daytime maximum target occupancies are shown in Table 1:

Street / Lot description	Occupancy
Parking lots with marked spaces	85%
Streets that are greater than 36’ curb-curb (enough room for two travel lanes and parking lanes)	85%
One-way streets with parking on both sides, or two-way streets with parking on one side that are at least 28’ curb-curb	85%
One-way streets with parking on one side that are at least 20’ curb-curb	85%
Other local streets (typically with a narrow single-lane travel way when parking spaces on both sides are occupied)	50%

The 85% occupancy target is designed to ensure that arriving motorists can usually find an empty space within the block. The “other streets” include most Arlington residential streets, which are typically 26’ wide, and allow parking on both sides. There are several reasons for this lower 50% limit:

- These narrower streets typically have one travel lane, and spaces in the parking lanes need to be left for opposing vehicles to maneuver past each other.
- The narrow travel lane makes driveway obstructions (particularly on the opposite side of the driveway) more likely as parking spaces fill.
- Leaving a substantial number of spaces open will ease fire operations.

The recommended nighttime target occupancy is zero (e.g., the overnight parking ban should be maintained). Reasons include:

- A night-time ban discourages use of the streets for long term storage of vehicles, thus helping to relieve daytime capacity issues.
- It discourages residents from owning more vehicles than they can accommodate (very important when a major snowstorm reduces the on-street parking capacity to zero)
- It simplifies snow removal operations in minor snowstorms, providing a time (overnight) when streets can be cleared, thus restoring parking capacity for daytime use.

TOOLS

Actions to discourage parking should be considered when

- The available traveled way is too narrow for emergency vehicle access, or
- Occupancy exceeds the above-mentioned guidelines.

Possible tools include the following:

- Allow parking on only one-side of the street
- Time-limits
- Pricing (parking meters and/or permits)
- Loosen restrictions in a nearby area whose occupancy is below the target
- Demand management (provide alternatives to driving and parking)

The tools are further discussed in Appendix A. Appendix B contains the process that was voted by the Board in January 2007.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Address commuter parking near the Herbert Road/Thorndike Street intersection

A walking route has existed between East Arlington and Alewife Station for many years, and it is used daily by hundreds of people, a few of whom drive and park in the neighborhood. Figure 1 shows the general area, with the area of interest highlighted in the white box.

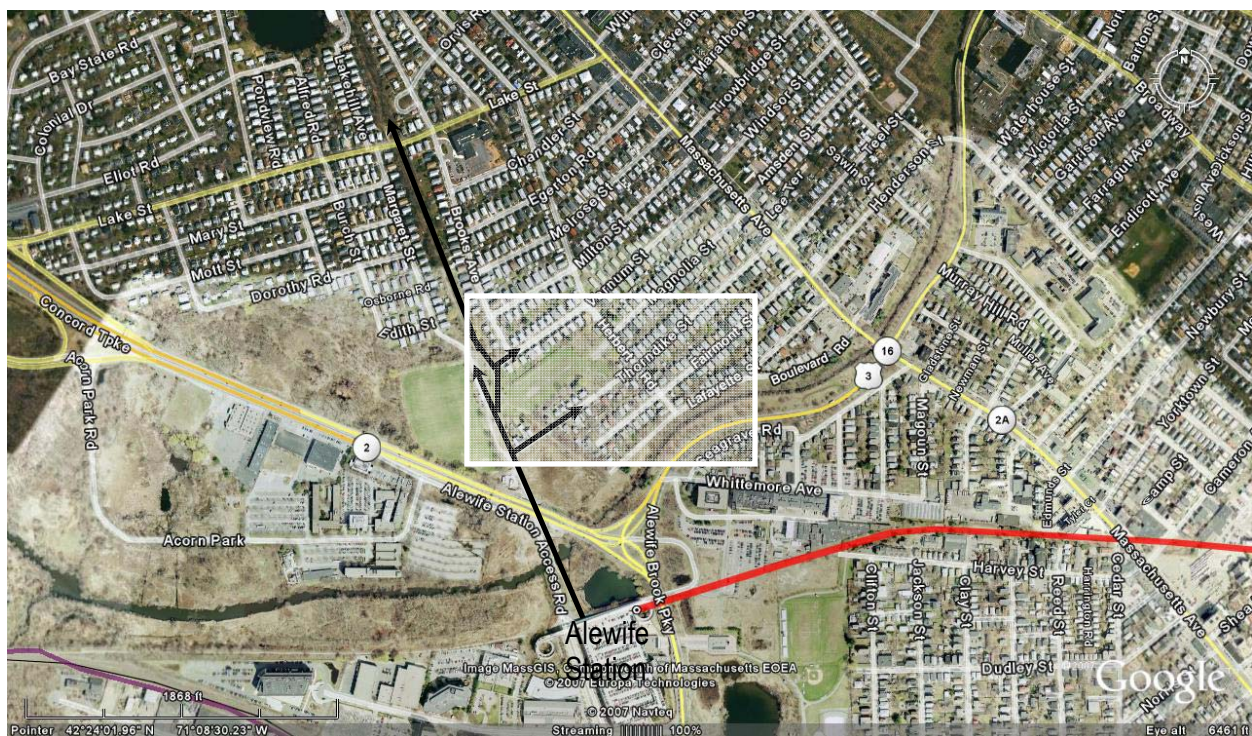


Figure 1 Walking and cycling connections between Alewife and East Arlington

Table 1 and Figure 2 illustrate the current parking restrictions in the area, both as stated in the traffic rules and as posted. A number of restrictions, such as the one-side parking on Herbert and the 2-hour parking at #67 Fairmont (just north of Herbert), are posted but not stated in the traffic rules. On the other hand, the 2-hour parking on the southeast side of Fairmont south of Herbert (dashed line in Figure 2) is stated in the traffic rules but not posted. Figure 3 illustrates signage applied to part of a street

Table 1 Current Parking Restrictions

Street and abbreviation on Fig. 2	Side	From	To	Restriction as Stated in Traffic Rules	Posted Restriction
Brooks Ave (B)	Both	Lake St	Varnum St	2 Hour Parking 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.	2 Hour Parking M-F 9 - 5
Fairmont St (F1)	Both	Herbert Rd	Dead End Southerly	2 Hour Parking	Only posted on NW side
Fairmont St. (F2)	NW	#67	Herbert Rd	None	2 Hour Parking
Herbert Rd (H1)	SW	Near Magnolia	Thorndike	None in Schedule I	No Parking
Thorndike St (T1)	Both	Herbert Rd	Private Way, Southerly	2 Hour Parking	2 Hour Parking
Varnum St (V)	Both	Brooks Ave	Herbert Rd	2 Hour Parking 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.	2 Hour Parking M-F 9 - 5

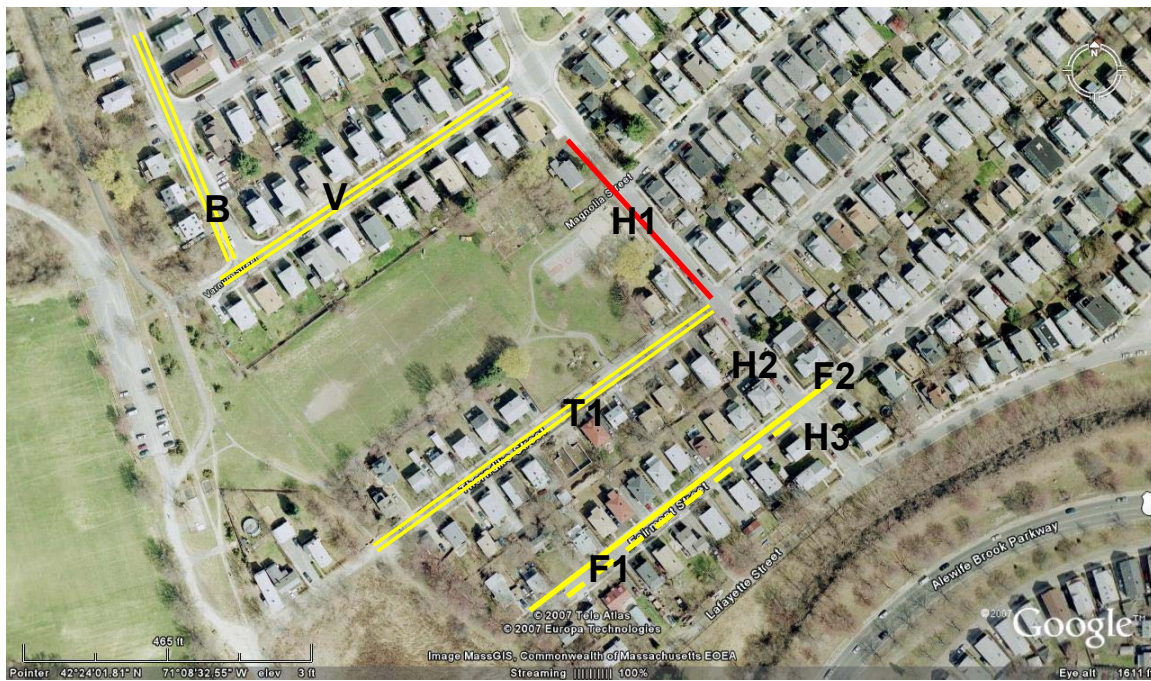


Figure 2 Current Parking Restrictions (Yellow: 2 hour, Red: no parking)



Figure 3 Two Hour Parking Sign

The number of commuters parking appears to be highest at the southeast end of Herbert, and possibly on the section of Thorndike just north of Herbert. Accordingly, it might be desirable to extend the current two-hour parking zone as shown by the dashed lines in Figure 4. Such an extension should only apply during weekday business hours, similar to the current restrictions on Varnum Street and Brooks Avenue.

On Thorndike Street (T2 on the map), a natural break point for the two-hour zone would be

- On the southeast side, at the fire hydrant at number 64
- On the northwest side, at the handicapped parking space at 59/61. (The two-hour zone would not include the handicapped space.)

The two-hour zone would thus extend approximately 400 feet, or about 1/3 of the distance between Herbert Road and Mass. Ave.



Figure 4 Possible Two-Hour Parking Zone Extension

A 2005/2006 parking survey, sent to all households in the area, asked residents where they supported

- Two-hour limit on all parking, or
- Two-hour limit, but permits will be available to local residents and businesses to permit limited all-day parking

Residents were mostly opposed to the first option (flat two-hour limit) but were generally in favor of the second option (two-hour with exception by permit) (Figure 5 and Figure 6).

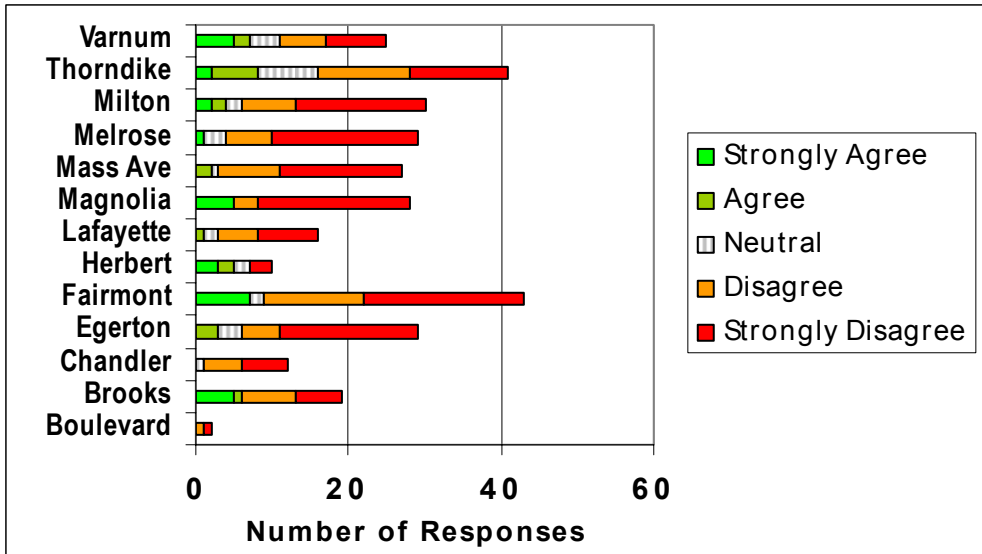


Figure 5 Responses to a proposed two-hour limit on all parking

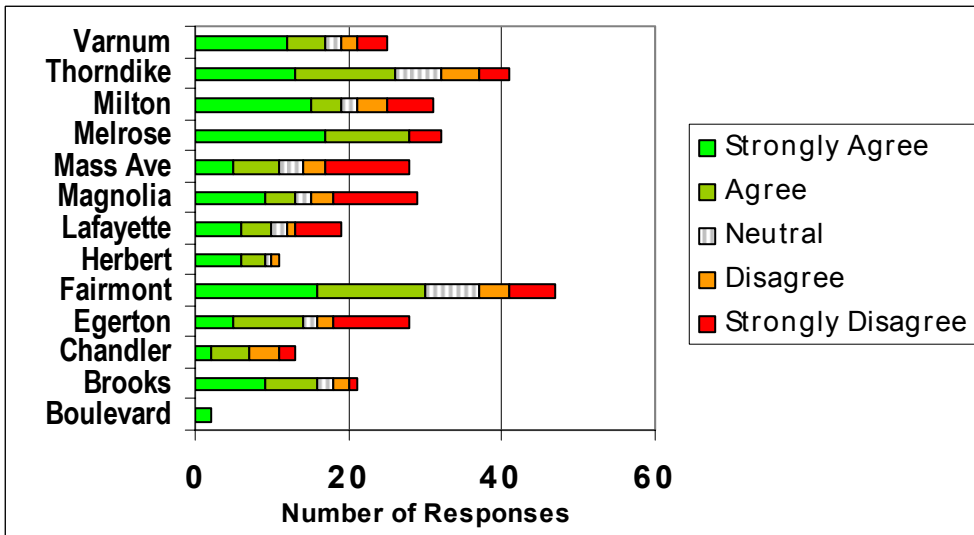


Figure 6 Responses to proposed two-hour limit, with exceptions by permit available to local residents and businesses

2. One-side in parts of East Arlington

In early 2007, the Board of Selectmen approved a process for designating streets as one-side parking. This process calls for such a designation to be made either

- upon a finding by public safety officials that two-side parking impedes emergency vehicle access, or
- upon a petition by residents, given sufficient public support in an abutter survey (2/3 in favor with at least 50% responding)

If there is a desire from either public safety officials or residents for one-side parking, it is recommended that this process be publicized and followed.

One-side parking in this neighborhood may be difficult politically, for two reasons:

1. Street-widths are marginal for two-sided parking, so the argument regarding emergency vehicle access could go either way. We defer to the judgment of fire officials. That said, we support the posting and enforcement of the rule against parking too close to an intersection, both for traffic visibility and for emergency vehicle access.

2. The 2005/2006 East Arlington parking survey showed that residents were divided on the desirability of one-side parking. Figure 2 shows that residents were significantly divided on the issue:

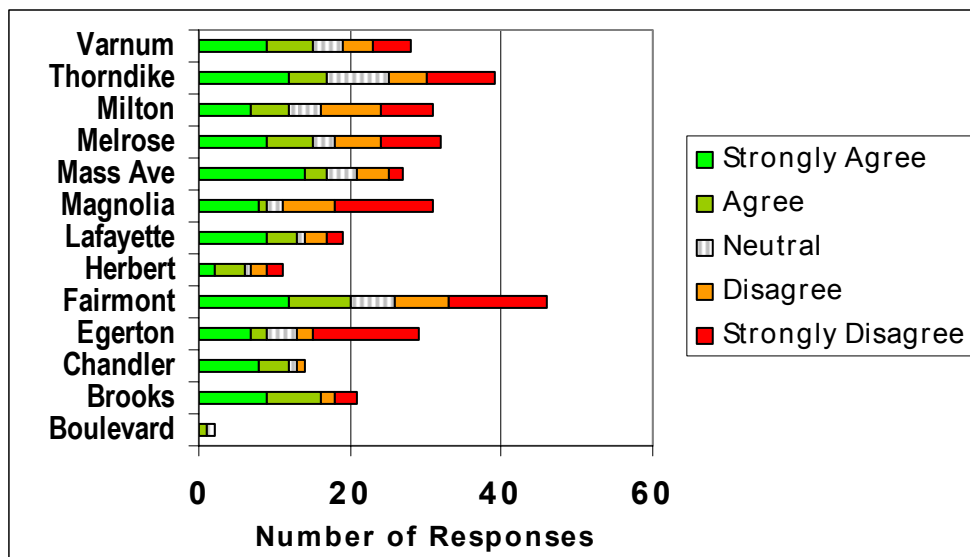


Figure 7 Resident Responses to Survey Question on One-Side Parking

The same survey also indicated strong opposition to one-side parking with the side alternating each year, and strong support of the 20' rule for intersections.

3. Review our parking management and enforcement practices

In the absence of effective enforcement, changes in parking policies will be ineffective. Accordingly, we recommend that the Town review enforcement practices and administrative structures, with a view towards making them more effective and fair to residents and businesses.

This recommendation includes the following steps.

1. Examine current parking enforcement strategies (Traffic Division of Police). This includes the roles of parking enforcement officers and police, with information on when and where they are deployed, and the associated costs.
2. Examining parking tickets issued in FY07 and their distribution in town (Treasurer). Identify issues (for example, tickets challenged because the machines in the municipal parking lot were not working).
3. Assess the amount of enforcement that would be necessary to encourage violator to find legal options¹ and the staff and funding that would be required to achieve this level of enforcement. Project the amount of revenue that might balance the cost.
4. Develop staffing and budget proposals to achieve an adequate level of enforcement town-wide.

The TAC is willing to take a management role in this activity if given direct support from the Police and the Treasurer.

¹ For example, if a legal overnight space rents for \$40 per month, and the fine for overnight on-street parking is \$25, this suggests that overnight parking would need to be enforced at least once every 2-3 weeks on each street, to encourage the habitual violator to find and use a legal alternative.

APPENDIX A: POLICY TOOLS

The following is a list of tools that might be used:

PARKING RESTRICTIONS NEAR INTERSECTIONS AND DRIVEWAYS

Town bylaws (Article V, Section 1) currently prohibit parking

(g) In front of any private road or driveway or within three (3) feet on either side thereof, moreover on the opposite side of any driveway in such a manner as to inhibit the entry or departure from same....and

(o) Upon any street or highway within twenty (20) feet of any intersecting way, except alleys.

These restrictions are intended to ensure that there is:

- Sufficient room to maneuver in and out of driveways.
- Sufficient visibility for drivers at intersections.
- Sufficient room to turn at intersections (especially for larger vehicles such as fire, oil or garbage trucks).

These existing bylaws are often disregarded by motorists. Furthermore, the 3-foot clearance may not be sufficient if the driveway is narrow, and the opposite side restriction is vague, and is thus likely to be violated.

PARKING RESTRICTIONS NEAR MARKED CROSSWALKS

In many jurisdictions, there are significant restrictions on parking (up to 50 feet) on the approach to a marked crosswalk. This is designed to ensure pedestrian/motorist visibility. These restrictions do not currently exist in Arlington. In the absence of curb extensions, we would recommend a ban on parking for a minimum of 20 feet on the side of approaching traffic in heavily traveled areas.

OVERNIGHT PARKING BAN

The town currently prohibits overnight parking on public streets. This provides the following benefits:

- Provides a time when streets can be cleared of snow at night, making it less necessary to impose a daytime snow emergency, and enabling snow to be removed more thoroughly.
- Discourages residents from owning (and having to find parking for) a larger number of vehicles than can be accommodated on their properties.
- Discourages use of the streets for long term storage of vehicles.
- Allows emergency vehicles easier access and better visibility in the dark.
- Allows better visibility for policing the streets at night.

Relaxing the overnight parking rules will encourage greater vehicle ownership (thus jeopardizing the Town's nascent efforts at car-sharing), will likely aggravate daytime parking capacity problems, and will make snow removal more complicated.

The overnight parking ban has the disadvantage of forcing many residents to park their vehicles in situations that block other vehicles in narrow private driveways overnight.

PARKING ON ONE-SIDE OF THE STREET

Ten feet of clear pavement is typically required for a vehicle to pass on a straightaway (more on a curve). Many residential streets are only 25' wide. Where cars and/or trucks are parked on both sides, this often leaves barely enough room for vehicles to pass. One-side parking provides the following benefits:

- Ensures that ten feet of clear pavement is made available for vehicles to pass.

- Provides additional maneuvering room for driveway entry and exit.

One-side parking has the following disadvantages:

- Reduces the available parking supply
- By leaving a wider through lane, may encourage speeding on the street.
- Creates uneven parking privileges between different sides of the street.

Considerations in determining the side where parking should be allowed include the following:

- Prefer the side with fewer intersections, driveways and fire hydrants
- On a one-way street, prefer the right side (eases driver egress in snow)
- Prefer the side opposite the overhead wires (eases fire operations)

TIME LIMITS ON PARKING

The imposition and enforcement of time limits reflects the view that short term parking should take priority over long term parking. Time limits are typically 1 to 2 hours. The benefits are that:

- Short term parking serves a greater number of people with the same parking space.
- An enforced time-limit discourages all-day commuter parking, thus leaving spaces open for short-term (business customer) parking.

A disadvantage is that time limits require some effort (two passes) for enforcement.

NO PARKING AT A PARTICULAR TIME OF DAY

Another policy intended to discourage all day parking is a short-duration ban on all parking at some time during the day (for example, 10 – 11 AM). The advantage of this approach over a time limit is that it only requires one pass for enforcement. Although not seen in Arlington, this technique is used to discourage commuter parking in parts of Winchester.

A disadvantage is that there is no parking allowed for the designated short-duration.

PARKING METERS

Parking meters provide the following benefits:

- They can be used to support either short term or all-day parking.
- Rates can be set to ensure that a few spaces generally remain available for business customers.
- With a short time limit, they provide for short term parking with only one pass required for enforcement.
- Revenue.

They have the following disadvantages:

- Capital and maintenance cost.
- Inconvenience to users of payment (although, today, this can be minimized through the use of payment stations and smart cards).
- May encourage business parking on residential streets without meters.

DEMAND MANAGEMENT: BUSINESSES AND SCHOOLS

Currently, the Town is subsidizing business employee parking by allowing them to park at no charge on residential streets. However, shifting the cost of parking to employees can result in a significant reduction in solo driving to work. Therefore, there is potential for reducing the demand for student and employee parking among businesses and schools. The following steps should be considered:

a. Work with the Chamber of Commerce to ensure that employers are doing what they can to encourage travel by means other than solo auto. For example, in a community meeting for the East Arlington parking study, it appeared that many of the businesses were not aware that they could provide transit passes to their employees with pre-tax dollars.

b. Impose a charge on parking permits that reflects the true cost of the parking space. Examples of actual charges include:

- Lexington: \$225 - \$250 per year for business parking, (~\$20/month)
- Arlington Center: \$40 per month, recently raised from \$25
- Cambridge: \$200 - \$300 per month at commercial garages near Harvard and Kendall

c. Offer discounts on permits to businesses that are (a) taking demand management actions, such as offering transit passes pre-tax or (b) making their on-site spaces available to others during evening hours, to relieve the pressure on residential streets in the evening.

DEMAND MANAGEMENT: RESIDENTS

A number of steps can be taken to discourage long-term parking demand among residents:

a. Continue enforcement of the overnight parking ban. Any exemptions to the overnight ban should be accompanied by a fee at least as high as that charged for parking in a municipal lot.

b. Work with a car-sharing organization, such as ZipCar, to bring car sharing into the neighborhood. This provides residents with an alternative to car ownership.

APPENDIX B: Process for Implementation Voted in January 2007

A change in parking policy on a particular street should come from one of several sources, the Town, as part of a comprehensive plan for parking which includes that street, public safety officials, or abutters. The processes for public safety and abutter-driven changes are outlined below.

1. Public safety officials. They may find that the current parking situation does not permit safe travel on the street, especially for emergency responders such as fire trucks. Since the first obligation of the Town is the safety of residents, such a finding can and should result in the appropriate restriction (such as one-side parking), whether or not the abutters request it. However, it would still be desirable to obtain abutter support.

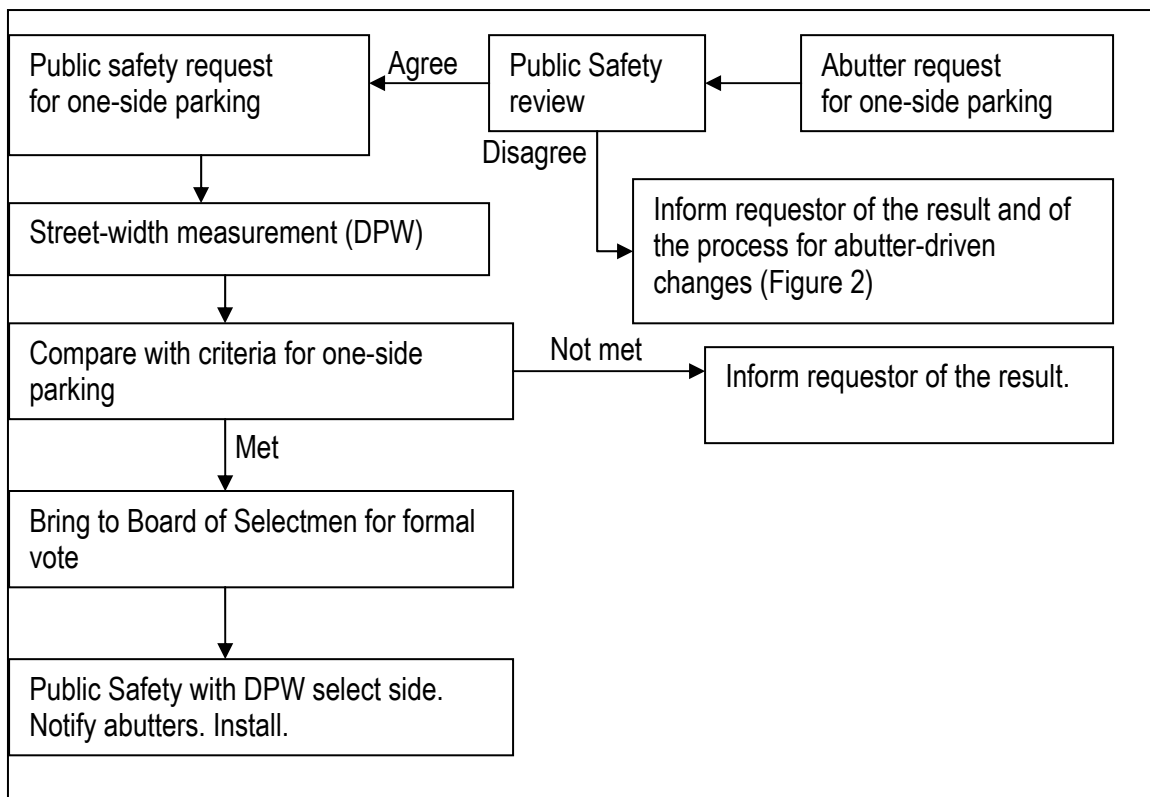


Figure 8 Process for Public Safety Driven Changes

3. Abutters. Abutter-driven policy changes should conform to the following guidelines to ensure strong neighborhood and/or business support and to minimize spillover effects.

- a. The area affected will cover at least 20 households or business addresses, and at least an entire block.
- b. Options available for abutter-driven changes include:

- One-side parking (which may be proposed for only part of a block, if physical conditions warrant).
 - Time limits
 - Prohibition on parking at a certain time of day.
- c. In a neighborhood where parking restrictions (such as time limits) already exist, a new time limit or time-of-day prohibition should adjoin an area where such a restriction already exists.
- d. Given the higher speeds and heavier traffic volumes of collector and arterial roadways, if a restriction designed to prevent all-day parking is applied to a local residential street, the same restriction should also be applied to any connecting collector or arterial located within a block of that residential street.

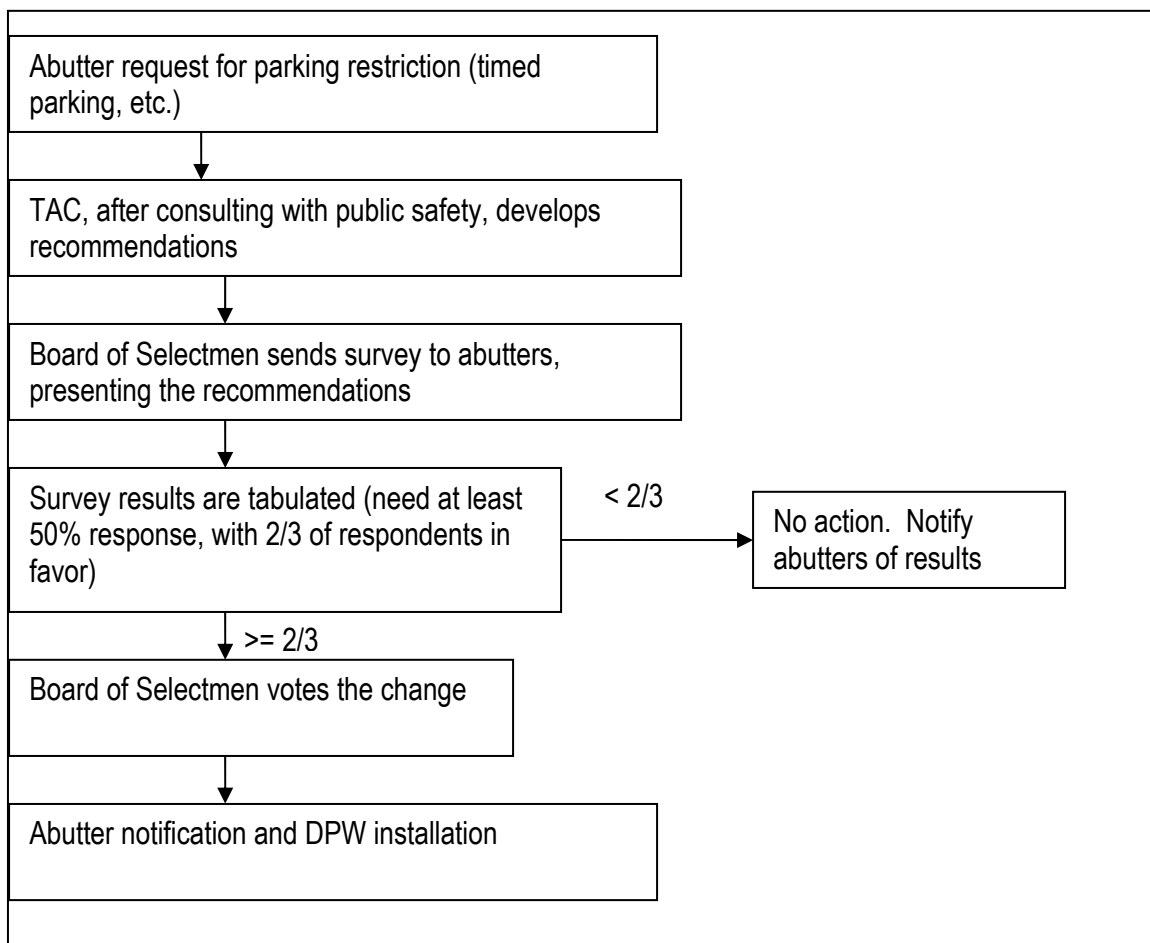


Figure 3 Process for Abutter-Driven Changes