

2006 WATERFRONT PARK AND PARKING SURVEY: BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Newburyport Redevelopment Authority is an urban renewal agency created in the 1960s to revitalize the downtown central business district. The NRA owned a significant number of properties and oversaw the preservation and redevelopment of our downtown. The NRA still approves facade changes and signage. The five members of the NRA are volunteers and the board receives no city funding; its only income is parking fees. **The Central Waterfront is the NRA's Final Project** In the early 1980's this property was completely fenced awaiting redevelopment. The city asked the NRA to temporarily open the gates and allow the public to use the lots for parking until the city could build replacement parking. More than twenty years later the two dirt parking lots are still being used for public parking.

In its 2000 survey the NRA asked residents what they wanted to see in place of the two dirt parking lots. The answer was predominantly parkland. The NRA and the City Council developed a feasibility study that concluded that if the city were to build a garage and move parking off the waterfront, the park could be built and maintained by the combination of paid parking and fundraising.

Parking Committee(s) Over the past 10 years, several Mayor-appointed committees have worked to develop a downtown parking plan that includes construction and funding of a parking garage. Several garage options have been identified, each of which would be funded through a combination of parking revenues and state and federal grants. A total of \$6.7 million is currently earmarked by the state and federal governments for building a parking garage in connection with expanding the waterfront parkland. In order to obtain these grants, the city must commit local funds (currently estimated at \$1.6 million) to be paid back by revenues from paid parking.

Your Comments: _____

Paid Parking The NRA has been charging for parking in the two parking lots on weekends in the summer for almost 15 years. Any future development plans (parkland and parking) will be funded, in part, by a paid parking program in these lots. The downtown parking plans developed by the Parking Committees include an expanded paid parking program in other downtown parking lots in order to provide the revenue necessary for ongoing maintenance of the parking lots and the expanded waterfront park. Mayor Moak supports a paid parking program but proposes that the NRA lots be entirely devoted to paved parking (no park expansion), with any surplus parking revenues used for general downtown maintenance activities. Proposals being considered recommend that on-street parking would continue to be free.

The Status Quo is Not an Option Some amount of permanent parking on the waterfront will be part of the final plan. The status quo – dirt parking lots full of potholes and plagued by people blocking others' cars – is not an option. Based on results of the 2000 survey, the NRA has been trying to finish this property as landscaped open space for recreational and cultural enjoyment with parking for 100-140 vehicles.

Why Another Survey? We are asking you, the residents of the city, to weigh in once again on how you would like to see the NRA lots finished. Six years have passed, and although a number of residents, planners and officials have studied the options, it's time to hear from you. Your response will be kept confidential. **The more responses we get, the better we will all know what direction to take next.** There are important decisions to be made, and your opinion is important. Please return this survey with your census or deliver it to the City Clerk's office. We will tabulate the surveys in early March.

How Much Parking Do We Use? NRA counts show that the Riverfest Concert and the Yankee Homecoming fireworks

are the only times when both lots completely fill up. On most summer days approximately half of the capacity of the NRA lots is unused. These counts are consistent with recent parking studies. While the actual counts on weekdays and weekends in August and September tell us that the combined usage of the two waterfront lots does not exceed 215 cars, the NRA looks forward to working with the city to measure the occupancy over the entire 2006 summer season.

Costs and Funding The state and federal governments have actively supported funding a parking garage as part of an overall downtown plan. Based on actual parking demand, we could potentially use these funds to construct a much smaller garage than envisioned in recent plans significantly reducing costs.

While no one knows exactly what any project will cost, we have some general estimates for three options for improving the waterfront lots:

- Option 1: \$1.5 million. The least expensive, but will require replacement parking elsewhere
- Option 2: \$2.5 million. Will not require new parking
- Option 3: \$3.5 million. Will not create additional parkland

The estimates for Options 1 and 2 are updated from recent studies, while the estimate for Option 3 was provided by Mayor Moak.

Rail Trail, Ferry Wharf Way and Visitors' Center No matter what the plan settled on, the NRA is committed to providing space for the Rail Trail, access to the boardwalk along Ferry Wharf Way an historic way through the East Lot, and the Visitors' Center.

2006 WATERFRONT PARK AND PARKING SURVEY

Please select the one answer that best describes what you would like on the the NRA Waterfront Lots. Costs are estimates. See other side for info.

☐ MOSTLY EXPANDED PARK, WITH LIMITED PARKING

Create 50 to 100 parking spaces. Estimated cost: \$1.5± million. Will require new parking.

☐ MIX OF EXPANDED PARK AND PARKING LOTS

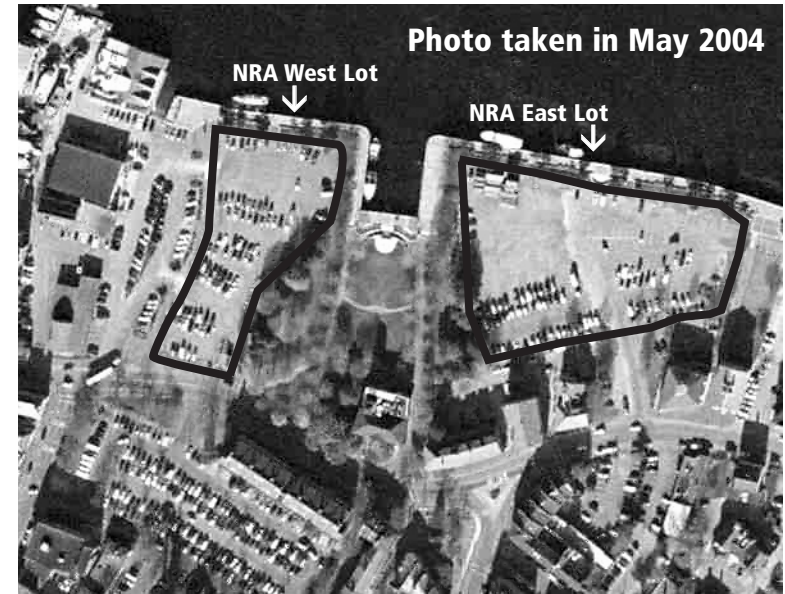
Create up to 200 parking spaces. Estimated cost: \$2.5± million.

☐ ENTIRELY PARKING LOTS

Create the maximum number of spaces possible: 400±. Estimated cost \$3.5± million.

Funding – How should your selection be paid for: (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newburyport tax revenue | <input type="checkbox"/> Grants, fundraising, etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Preservation Act (potentially available for park) | <input type="checkbox"/> Downtown off-street parking revenues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |



How often are you downtown? (Check ONLY ONE) ☐ Daily ☐ Several times a week ☐ About once a week ☐ Several times a month ☐ Once a month or less

Why do you go downtown? (Check ALL that apply) ☐ I live downtown ☐ I work downtown ☐ Shopping, banking, business services ☐ Restaurants, coffee shops, etc.
☐ Library, City Hall, etc. ☐ Entertainment (music, theater, movies, etc.) ☐ Boardwalk, recreation, walking, etc.
☐ Other: _____

When are you downtown? (Check ALL that apply)

Weekdays (Mon – Fri, before 5 PM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
Weeknights (Mon – Thu, after 5 PM)	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
Weekends (Friday night through Sunday)	<input type="checkbox"/> Daily	<input type="checkbox"/> Often	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes

How do you get downtown? ☐ Drive a car/truck ☐ Walk ☐ Bike ☐ Other: _____

If you drive downtown, where do you typically park? (Check all that apply)

Parking spaces provided by landlord, employer, or stores	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekday	<input type="checkbox"/> Weeknight	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekend
On-street parking spaces	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekday	<input type="checkbox"/> Weeknight	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekend
Waterfront lots (on either side of Waterfront Park)	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekday	<input type="checkbox"/> Weeknight	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekend
Other public lots: Green Street, Library, Prince Place	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekday	<input type="checkbox"/> Weeknight	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekend
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekday	<input type="checkbox"/> Weeknight	<input type="checkbox"/> Weekend

How long have you lived in Newburyport? ☐ Less than 5 years ☐ 5 to 15 years ☐ 15 to 25 years ☐ All or most of my life

What ward do you live in? ☐ Ward 1 ☐ Ward 2 ☐ Ward 3 ☐ Ward 4 ☐ Ward 5 ☐ Ward 6

If it did not add to the Newburyport taxpayers' bill, would you like to see a parking garage somewhere in the downtown area? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, where should it be built? _____

Please return this survey with your Census Form or mail or deliver it to the City Clerk's Office in City Hall, 60 Pleasant Street