

September 27, 2007

Report to: Township Committee
From: Marshall Bartlett and Karl Meister
RE: Commuter Parking Project

This report summarizes the results of a series of meetings and telephone conferences beginning in March of 2007. Access to commuter parking is an issue for residents of Harding because we have no train station, and other towns have given us varying degrees of harsh treatment. It is no longer possible to obtain monthly passes in Madison at any price, and even daily parking in Madison has become problematic. In Convent Station, the situation is similar. There is a waiting list for monthly parking. Daily parking is available at \$3.--/day. That situation will become very tight though, as the main parking lot at the Morristown station will be closed for construction of a Transit Village and commuters will try to park at Convent Station. Parking is available in Morristown, but at a certain distance from the train station.

In view of the foregoing, Harding needs to be vigilant in looking out for the needs of its residents with respect to commuter parking. This issue affects not only those who use the train, but the value of homes in Harding. Further, usage of the train will undoubtedly increase over time, as access to Manhattan by car becomes more expensive and more time consuming.

Commuter Parking Rates for Surrounding Towns

Madison

Annual parking permits for residents only:	\$400
Daily rate (only 40 spaces available for residents or non-residents):	\$ 5

Convent Station

Annual parking permits for residents only:	\$300
Annual parking permits for non-residents:	\$600
Daily rate for residents or non-residents:	\$ 3

There is a waiting list for annual parking. Daily parking will be problematic once the main parking lot at Morristown train station closes for construction of a Transit Village.

Morristown

Monthly parking for Lot 3 (town owned):	\$ 55
Monthly parking for Lot 4 (NJT owned):	\$ 50
Monthly parking for Lot 10 (town owned):	\$ 45
Parking for both residents and non-residents No annual parking permits	
Daily rate for each lot:	\$ 3

Lot 4 to close in October for construction of Transit Village. Lots 3 and 10 have waiting lists. A waiting list will be established for the Transit Village. It can be accessed through Standard Parking at (212) 916 3480 attn.: Jose Milla-Leon.

Parking is available at Headquarters Plaza and Dalton Garage. Parking will be available at the Vail Mansion Garage in December. A waiting list is open at the Morristown Parking Authority, (973) 539 4810.

Karl Meister took the lead in setting up meetings with the Borough of Madison, Morris Township, the Morristown Parking Authority, and New Jersey Transit. Marshall Bartlett and Gail McKane attended some of these sessions on behalf of Harding Township. In addition, there have been many telephone calls and requests for information. At the outset, we would like to note that representatives of New Jersey Transit were particularly forthcoming. They share the view that commuter parking is a serious issue for Harding Township and for Morris County in general.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

1. The situation is critical and will get more so as the construction of the Transit Village at the Morristown train station gets under way in October. Of the three stations in Harding's vicinity (Madison, Convent Station and Morristown), monthly parking is available only in Morristown and they are some distance from the train station.
2. Starting 18 months from October of this year, New Jersey Transit plans to have a very significant expansion of the parking in Lot 4D (in the immediate vicinity of the train station) in Morristown. The plan is to build a **Transit Village** with a parking deck, which will offer 415 spaces allocated to monthly commuters and daily parkers. New Jersey Transit fortunately owns parking lot 4D. This means that residents and non-residents will be treated in the same manner. Residents of Harding may wish to get themselves on the waiting list mentioned above. While the parking deck is under construction in Morristown, it is possible to park at Headquarters Plaza and take a shuttle bus to the train station. Further details will be posted at the parking lot.

3. Longer term, **Madison** is considering building a large parking facility somewhere in town (behind movie theater, Cooke Plaza, on top of an existing lot). The Mayor of Madison, Woody Kerkeslager, has indicated that if Harding were to guarantee a specific number of spots, these parking spots would be made available for Harding residents. We feel that Harding needs to monitor this situation carefully. Madison is the preferred location for parking, as indicated in the parking survey we did through the Thumbnail. However, in view of the proposed plans for Morristown, we feel it is inadvisable to be aggressive in committing Harding Township to anything at this time. However, the situation could change.
4. We received 49 responses to the **commuter parking survey**, which appeared in the June Thumbnail. This was a good response. We continue to believe that approximately 100 Harding residents commute by train on a full-time or part-time basis. The responses to the survey expressed a preference for Madison. Morristown is viewed as less convenient, and it is 8 minutes more on the train. Unfortunately, there is no way of arranging for parking at Madison now or in the intermediate term. Madison remains a long-term possibility.

RESULTS OF MEETINGS

1. We held two meetings in **Madison** during the month of April. The first was with Woody Kerkeslager by himself. At the second, he included his Township Administrator Raymond Codey, and we brought Gail McKane. Woody explained his desire to build a major parking facility somewhere in Madison, possibly in the interior of the block behind the movie theater, or at Cooke Plaza, or on top of one of the existing lots. He handed out interesting material on plans for Madison. He stated that storeowners and local merchants are in favor of the parking facility, but he needs the approval of the Borough Council. He said that he would like to discuss a proposal under which Madison would earmark a certain number of parking spaces for residents of Harding, if Harding would guarantee a specific number of parking spaces. This guarantee would be used to help Madison with financing the new parking facility. If Harding residents did not purchase the specified number of spots, then Harding would be obligated to purchase them. They are interested in similar arrangements with Florham Park and Chatham Township.

Apparently, State funding is available through NJDOT for the construction of a parking facility. The funds would be available through a Local Aid Grant. This could be pursued, if we decided to proceed with the Madison alternative.

In the meantime, the Borough Council of Madison has expressed an interest in pursuing a parking project, and a follow-up meeting has been scheduled for September 28 with the Mayor, the Borough Administrator and two Council

members of Madison. The meeting will also be attended by the Administrator of Florham Park. Harding will be represented by Marshall Bartlett, Gail McKane and Karl Meister.

2. At the beginning of May, we met with Bob Nace (Mayor) and Richard Watson (Vice-Mayor) of **Morris Township**. They said that residents are opposed to a parking deck at Convent. As far as they are concerned, the parking is fully built out at Convent. They want to include non-residents. They concluded that space was available for non-residents for 2007-2008 (albeit with a waiting list). However, they did not have many suggestions of ways in which they could help residents of Harding. They did mention that residents of East Hanover and Morristown use the Convent Station parking lot as non-residents in the same manner as residents of Harding.

In August, we also contacted St. Thomas More Church, which is located directly at Convent Station. The church leases half of its large parking lot to Morris Township for commuter parking. The other half is for church parking, and is not at all full during commuting times. We inquired whether it could be made available for Harding commuters under an arrangement similar to the one they have with Morris Township. The answer was no, because the church needs the parking space for special events such as large funerals.

3. On June 21, Karl Meister met with Gregory (Greg) Deal of the **Morristown** Parking Authority, based on the suggestion of the Mayor of Morristown. Attached as Exhibit A is the report of that meeting prepared by Karl Meister dated July 11.
4. On July 19 Karl Meister and Marshall Bartlett met with John del Colle, Jim Lothian (real estate) and RJ Palladino (planning) of **New Jersey Transit** at the NJT offices in Newark. Marshall Bartlett had previously spoken with Rae Hutton of this same office. New Jersey Transit does want to help, and John del Colle made every effort to inform us of NJT's plans for Morris County. At this meeting, we learned, in some detail, about the plans for the new parking deck in Morristown. New Jersey Transit made it clear that they understand Harding's problem, and they will treat residents of Harding like anyone else with respect to all parking lots owned by NJ Transit. They do own the semi-circle lot in front of the Madison train station, but this is full by 6:30 AM every weekday. NJT did help Morris Township with paving the lot at Convent Station some years ago. This may give us an argument, but the present Mayor of Morris Township did not bring up this fact for discussion. Finally, as noted above, NJT does own lot 4D in Morristown, which may be a big help. NJT feels there is not much they can do with regard to parking lots owned by towns. NJT would be willing to explore a park and ride facility in Harding, but we are not currently interested in pursuing this alternative.

5. About July 10, Cindy Phillips, Planning Board Administrator, compiled the results of the survey, which had been in the June Thumbnail. Attached, as Exhibit B is the summary of the results. 49 people took the trouble to respond. We believe that this is a good response, and is consistent with our estimate that about 100 Harding residents use the train. The comments to the survey are interesting. There is a general feeling that Madison is “unfriendly” to nonresident parkers, that there is inadequate parking at Madison, but that at the same time Madison is overall the best location for most residents of Harding, with Convent Station coming in second.

Possible Follow Up Items

1. The college of St. Elizabeth is right across from Convent Station. We could have discussions with them.
2. Honeywell’s headquarters is about half a mile up the track (toward Morristown) from Convent Station. We could see if they would be willing to build a parking facility, but it would be a long walk to the station.
3. There are other parking lots in Morristown beside Lot 4D, but in our judgment too much walking would be involved. However, in an extreme situation, these other lots would merit consideration.
4. We need to plan for an article in either the Observer Tribune or the Thumbnail or both.

EXHIBIT A

MORRISTOWN COMMUTER PARKING FACILITIES

Meeting on June 21, 2007 with Gregory (Greg) Deal, Field Manager of the Morristown Parking Authority. Updated Sept. 27,2007

Overall Assessment: There is plenty of parking available, albeit at some walking distance from the train station (3 – 4 blocks). The parking lots at the train station are filled and one of them will be closed down completely in October, for the construction of a Transit Village by NJ Transit. Once completed, that facility will contain some 600 – 700 parking spaces. Details should be obtained from NJ Transit. (contact: John D. Del Colle, Regional Manager, NJ Transit (973) 491-8073).

Facilities in Immediate Proximity of Train Station

#4: Next to train station
198 spaces, 125 daily, 173 permit (100 issued), fee: \$50/month
Owned by NJ Transit, operated by Morristown Parking Authority (MPA)
Will be closed in October for construction of Transit Village.

#3: At train station
211 spaces, back of station: 124 spaces owned by MPA, 40 daily, fee: \$55/month
front of station: 55 spaces owned by NJ Transit, fee: \$55/month
Full, has waiting list of some 400 going back to 2004 (not updated recently).

#10: Morris Street
179 spaces, 40 long time meters; owned by MPA, fee: \$45/mos.
Full, has waiting list.

Facilities in Walking Distance from Train Station

Headquarters Plaza:

600 – 700 spaces available; call Standard Parking (212) 916-3480, Jose Milla-Leon for information. Note: They will also run waiting list for Transit Village

Dalton Garage:

200 – 300 spaces available; owned and operated by MPA
fee: \$100/mos. Spaces available.

Maple Avenue Garage (formerly Epstein's)

Under construction; will have 800 spaces; completion early 2008.

Vail Mansion Parking

Under construction; will have 225 spaces: 125 reserved for residents
100 reserved for public
Completion: December 2007; MPA has waiting list (973) 539-4810

Attached is a map showing the location of the aforementioned parking facilities.

7/11/2007revised 9/27/07: KHM

EXHIBIT B

Parking Survey Results

Number of Respondents: 49

Of those respondents, 43 currently use area parking facilities. The breakdown of usage is as follows:

17 Respondents park only at Convent Station

- 5 days a week: 7
- 4 days a week: 2
- 3 days a week: 2
- 2 days a week: 3
- 1 day a week: 3

17 Respondents park only at Madison

- 5 days a week: 8
- 4 days a week: 2
- 2 days a week: 7

4 Respondents park at both Convent Station and Madison, approximately 3-4 times a week.

5 Respondents park at Chatham, Morristown or Basking Ridge, approximately 2-3 times a week.

6 of the respondents do not currently use the parking facilities. Of those 6 respondents, 3 would use the parking facilities if offered.

Comments/Suggestions

Construct a new parking garage for Township residents.

Parking spaces at the Madison and Convent Station are rare. Many residents park at the Stop & Shop instead.

General non-resident parking situation in Madison is “unfriendly.”

Not all resident only parking spaces are used at the Madison station.

Out-of-town parking spaces at Madison are usually filled by 6:30 A.M.

General consensus is that additional parking at Madison would be preferable, followed by Convent Station. No real interest in parking at Chatham, Morristown or Basking Ridge.

Several respondents who currently park at Convent Station indicated that previously parked in Madison but stopped because they were unable to find a space.