

AGENDA
GIG HARBOR CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION
Thursday, May 14, 2026 - 3:00 PM
Community Rooms

This meeting may also be accessed through Zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/93216056382> or by calling (253) 215-8782 and entering Meeting ID 932 1605 6382.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- 1. Public Infrastructure and Risk**
 - a. Staff Report: Public Works Director Jeff Langhelm, PE
 - b. Clarifying Questions
 - c. Public Comment
 - d. Council Deliberation and Direction

- 2. North Creek Culvert Replacement – RSI Next Steps**
 - a. Staff Report: Public Works Director Jeff Langhelm, PE
 - b. Clarifying Questions
 - c. Public Comment
 - d. Council Deliberation and Direction

- 3. Downtown and Finholm District Parking Study Presentation**
 - a. Staff Report: Community Development Director Eric Baker
 - b. Clarifying Questions
 - c. Public Comment
 - d. Council Deliberation and Direction

ADJOURN

PUBLIC COMMENT & DECORUM

PUBLIC COMMENT & DECORUM

The city council wants to hear from the public as much as possible. However, the business of the city must proceed in an orderly, timely manner. The primary purpose of council meetings is to conduct the city's business so we have created a variety of ways the community can make their voices heard. Monday city council meetings are just one opportunity. These guidelines are designed to make sure every person who wants to be heard has both the opportunity to be heard and feels welcome to do so.

We receive comments three ways:

1. During council meetings
2. During council study sessions.
3. Email mayorandcouncil@gigharborwa.gov at any time about any issue. This email goes to the elected officials and leadership at the city.

Public Comment at City Council Study Sessions

We welcome comment at Council study sessions following the staff report and clarifying questions of each discussion item. Comments must be related to the discussion item at hand.

When the mayor calls for public comment, please come forward to the table (or raise your hand on Zoom). When it's your turn, we'll ask you to tell us your name and connection to the issue you want to discuss. You'll then have a maximum of two minutes to speak.

Unfortunately, this isn't a time for dialogue, but a staff person or councilmember may be available to talk with you at a break or after the meeting.

Additional guidelines

- Anyone making "out of order" comments may be subject to removal from the meeting.
- Please address your remarks to the city council as a body and not to any specific individual.
- Please be courteous and not engage in derogatory remarks or insinuations.
- No demonstrations, including clapping, are allowed.

Email

You are welcome to email the mayor and councilmembers about any issue facing the city by writing to the address above. Do remember that council sets the policy direction while city departments execute those decisions. A series of online reporting tools might help you resolve an issue more quickly so check them out too: <https://www.gigharborwa.gov/146/Submit>

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES (ADA) ACCOMMODATIONS

ADA accommodations can be provided upon request. Those requiring special accommodations should contact the city clerk at cityclerk@gigharborwa.gov or (253) 853-7613 at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.



**City of Gig Harbor
City Council Agenda Bill**

Meeting Date: May 14, 2026

SUBJECT: Public Infrastructure and Risk

SUBMITTED BY: Jeff Langhelm, PE, Public Works Director

DEPARTMENT: Public Works

PHONE: 253-853-7630

SUGGESTED MOTION: None

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: City of Gig Harbor elected officials and staff routinely receive requests to add or modify public infrastructure such as streets and parks facilities. These requests can range in complexity from relatively simple (no parking sign, picnic table, etc.) to challenging and detailed (new crosswalk, lane revision, intersection improvements, etc.)

Staff review each request to determine the level of effort necessary to add the requested public infrastructure. For the more complex requests, this effort includes staff assembling a concept, estimated costs, and permitting effort to install such facilities. While staff doesn't want to be a roadblock or barrier to installing these facilities, we do want to be sure elected officials are aware of the impact these requests could have to the city budget, staff time, and risk.

At the May 14 study session, Ashley Jones from the city's risk management pool, Risk Management Services Agency (RMSA), will be presenting an overview of public infrastructure and the risk associated with installing or modifying public infrastructure. This presentation is intended to clarify for council their involvement in responding to these requests and allow council to ask questions related to their involvement. At the conclusion of this presentation council will better understand the processes and standards staff employ to address such requests and the risks associated with installing or modifying public infrastructure.

FISCAL CONSIDERATION: None

Expenditure Required: \$	Amount Budgeted: \$	Appropriation Required: \$
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ATTACHMENTS:

1. RMSA Crosswalk PPP- City Council Mtg 5.14.26

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY: Ensure sustainable future for public services and facilities

RMSA




Risk Management
SERVICE AGENCY

Gig Harbor City Council Meeting
May 14, 2026

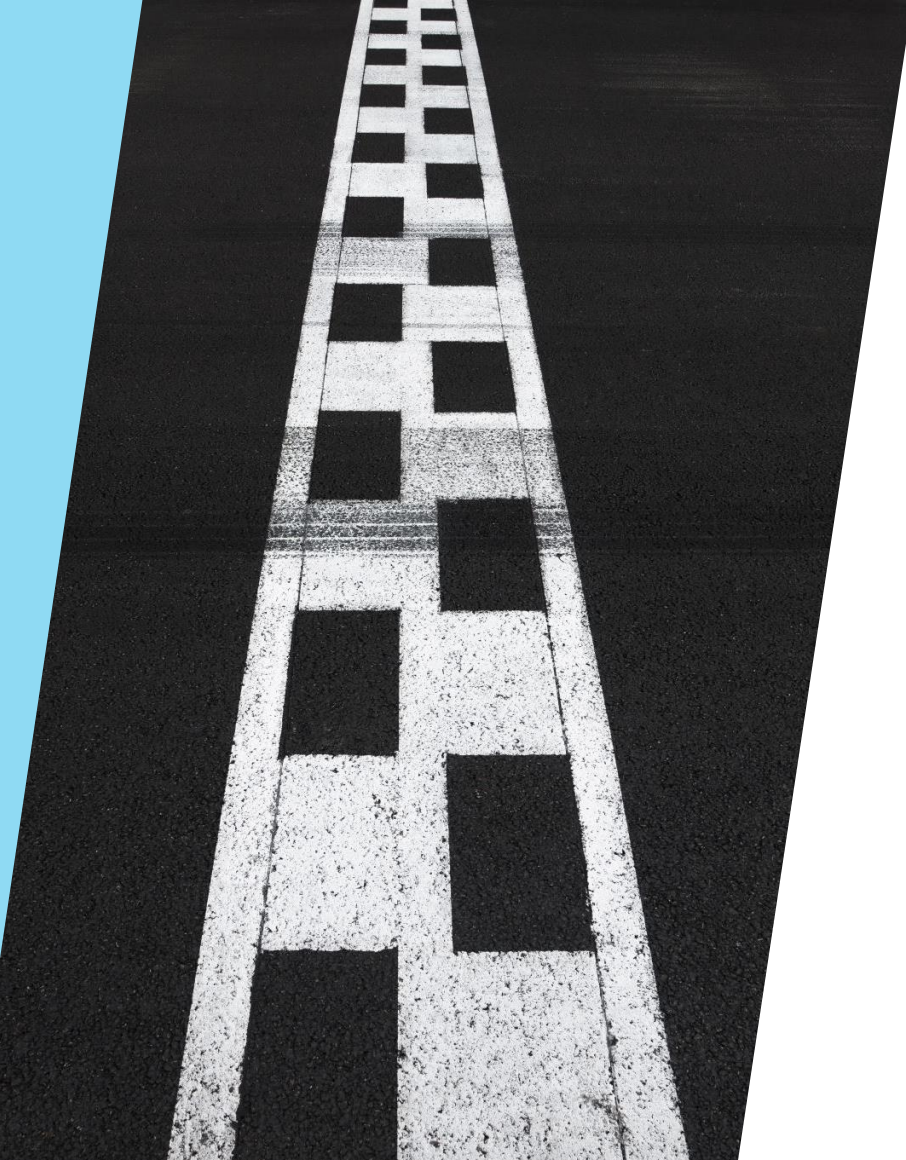


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The information shared during this presentation is for general educational purposes only and is not intended to be legal formal advice. Please consult legal counsel for advice about specific questions.





Crosswalks and the community



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Road design liability



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Considerations when installing a crosswalk





Legal implications



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Communications



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Thank you!



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**City of Gig Harbor
City Council Agenda Bill**

Meeting Date: May 14, 2026

SUBJECT: North Creek Culvert Replacement – RSI Next Steps

SUBMITTED BY: Senior Engineer Steven Demmer

DEPARTMENT: Public Works

PHONE: 253-530-7076

SUGGESTED MOTION:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The purpose of this study session is to provide an update on Remote Site Incubator (RSI) considerations following the [October 30, 2025 study session](#). At the May 14 study session, Staff will summarize key findings from an RSI technical memorandum, and will request Council provide direction for the RSIs as they relate to the North Creek Culvert Replacement project.

Background

The North Creek Culvert Replacement Project will replace an existing 6-foot by 6-foot by 146-foot culvert (constructed in 1970) with a bridge to restore fish passage and improve stream habitat.

City staff and the project consultant coordinated on how to best manage the RSIs with various project stakeholders, including The Gig Harbor Fisherman’s Civic Club and Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). Options were evaluated for replacing the RSIs, including a new RSI facility and a chum salmon acclimation pond. The city’s consultant prepared a technical memo summarizing findings, which are provided below and will be discussed in the study session presentation.

Summary of Findings

Permitting

- The culvert removal project is currently structured to qualify as a Fish Habitat Enhancement Project (FHEP), allowing streamlined permitting of such projects, including exemption from SEPA.
- WDFW’s statutory authority under RCW 77.57 and RCW 77.55.181 does not support inclusion of RSI or acclimation pond facilities within the FHEP project since the scope of the FHEP process is limited to culvert replacements only.

Schedule and Risk

- Additional permitting could extend the project timeline by approximately 6–18 months or more.
- Separating the culvert replacement from any RSI or acclimation pond proposal is the lowest-risk and most defensible permitting strategy. Additionally, the stormwater funding provided for the culvert replacement project is not

appropriate to use for salmon propagation. Separating the two projects will allow the city to engage with a design, permitting, and funding strategy that will focus on the RSI or acclimation pond. Currently, staff does not have costs to separate the two projects.

Water Right and Feasibility

- The existing RSI water right is tied to the current culvert. Removing the culvert will require a water right modification or a new water right. This will require construction of a new well, application for a new water right, and will likely require mitigation. This entire process will likely take a few years to complete and cost in the range of \$1 to \$2 million. Upon obtaining a new water right and constructing a new well, staff would recommend the well be transferred through an agreement to the group that will operate the RSIs.

Site Constraints

- Potential acclimation pond or new RSI locations within the city-owned upstream conservation land are not considered permissible under a conservation covenant funded through Pierce County Conservation Futures that was used to acquire the property.

Funding

- Changes to project scope may affect existing grant funding and eligibility for future grants.
- The project is not likely to be financially feasible without grant support, regardless of the option selected for the RSIs.

Recommendation

Staff recommend separating the culvert replacement project from the placement of new RSIs or an acclimation pond. This will allow the stand-alone fish habitat restoration project (culvert replacement) to continue progressing to construction. The new RSIs or similar fish propagation opportunities can be evaluated separately in the future.

FISCAL CONSIDERATION:

ATTACHMENTS:

1. North Creek Culvert Replacement_RSI_Memo_Final
2. North Creek Culvert Replacement - RSIs_Presentation

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY: Promote environmental sustainability and preserve Gig Harbor's natural beauty

DATE: March 23, 2026
TO: Steven Demmer, City of Gig Harbor
FROM: Steve Seville, PE
SUBJECT: **North Creek Culvert Replacement Project – Water Rights, RSI Operations, and Permitting Considerations**
PROJECT NUMBER: 233-2750-045
PROJECT NAME: North Creek Culvert Replacement

Executive Summary

The City of Gig Harbor (City) is advancing the North Creek Culvert Replacement Project to restore fish passage and improve stream habitat. As currently designed, the project qualifies for a streamlined permitting pathway as a Fish Habitat Enhancement Project (FHEP), allowing expedited approvals and exemption from State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review.

Inclusion of Remote Site Incubator (RSI) or acclimation pond elements would fundamentally change the nature of the project. These elements introduce water diversion, fish production, and floodplain modification, which would disqualify the project from streamlined permitting and trigger additional federal, state, and local review. This would increase permitting complexity, extend the project timeline by approximately 6 to 18 months or more, and introduce uncertainty in approval outcomes.

Recommendation:

Proceed with the culvert replacement as a stand-alone habitat restoration project. Evaluate RSI or acclimation pond concepts as separate future projects.

1. Purpose

This memorandum provides City Council with an evaluation of key considerations related to the North Creek Culvert Replacement Project and the future of the existing Remote Site Incubator (RSI). City staff and Parametrix attended a study session on October 30, 2025, during which Council requested analysis of alternatives to the RSI, including the potential for a chum salmon acclimation pond. Council directed staff to coordinate with local fishermen and prepare this technical memorandum.

The culvert replacement project is designed to restore fish passage and improve habitat conditions. While the project can proceed efficiently under a streamlined permitting pathway, expanding the scope to include fish propagation elements introduces additional regulatory requirements, cost, and schedule risk. This memo outlines those implications to inform Council decision-making.

2. Background

The City, with Parametrix as planning and design lead, is advancing the culvert replacement project on North Creek, located near the intersection of Harborview Drive and Austin Streets. The project will replace an existing culvert with a bridge, eliminate a documented fish passage barrier, and restore



upstream and downstream fish passage. The City intends to permit the culvert replacement as a Fish Habitat Enhancement Project (FHEP) under RCW 77.55.181. The project designs presented to Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) for fish passage barrier removal and replacement with a new structure are consistent with the FHEP process, but final designs and formal approvals will still be required before WDFW can decide that the project qualifies for the FHEP streamline permit process.

At the same location, the Commercial Fishermen’s Civic Club (Club) has historically operated the RSI since the early 1970s. The RSI has relied on a surface water right issued by the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) in 1971 for fish propagation in North Creek. The existing culvert also serves as the current point of diversion for the RSI.

Replacement of the culvert with a bridge will eliminate the existing RSI and its diversion structure, requiring either:

1. A new RSI located in a steel shipping container in Donkey Creek Park; or
2. Maintain chum salmon propagation at DFWs Minter Hatchery, and City working with Harbor WildWatch to enhance educational opportunities associated Donkey Creek Park.

Parametrix, the City, and the Club met on November 7, 2025, to review alternatives to the RSI, and based on this meeting Parametrix and the City started to investigate the potential to establish an acclimation pond in the floodplain areas of North Creek.

Parametrix, the City, and WDFW Regional Habitat Program staff met on January 15, 2026, to discuss these issues and the implications for permitting, statutory authority, and project delivery.

3. North Creek Culvert Replacement Project

This section describes the culvert replacement project and explains why it is well-positioned to qualify for a streamlined permitting process as a FHEP under RCW 77.55.181. The project’s primary purpose is to remove a known fish passage barrier and restore natural stream conditions, which aligns directly with state priorities for salmon recovery. The project will achieve this purpose by replacing the culvert with a bridge, restoring fish passage.

A key consideration for Council is that this streamlined pathway depends on keeping the project focused solely on habitat restoration. Adding features such as an RSI or acclimation pond would change the project’s purpose and likely eliminate eligibility for FHEP streamlined permitting and exemption from State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), This will result in additional review, longer timelines, and increased costs.

3.1 Project Description

The culvert replacement project includes:

- Removal of an existing culvert that currently restricts fish passage,
- Installation of a bridge structure meeting current fish passage design standards,
- Associated streambed and bank restoration to re-establish natural channel processes.

The primary purpose of the project is the elimination of a human-caused fish passage barrier, which is a core activity eligible for FHEP review and approval.



3.2 FHEP Eligibility

RCW 77.55.181 authorizes a streamlined Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) process for qualifying fish habitat enhancement projects, including culvert replacement and barrier removal. Projects approved under FHEP:

- Are presumed to have beneficial environmental impacts,
- Are exempt from SEPA threshold determinations,
- Are not subject to most local permitting and fee requirements (except National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) related floodplain administration).

The SEPA exemption applies only if the project qualifies for and is approved as a FHEP permit pathway by WDFW. If WDFW determines that a project does not meet FHEP criteria, for example due to public safety considerations, impacts beyond fish life, or project scope, the project would instead proceed through the standard HPA process, which may include SEPA review.

WDFW staff advised that excavation in the floodplain to construct an acclimation pond would exceed FHEP scope, thereby disqualifying the culvert replacement project from the FHEP pathway and triggering SEPA and broader local permitting requirements. Inclusion of water diversion infrastructure needed to maintain the RSI will also challenge the applicability of FHEP for the culvert replacement project. Therefore, the culvert replacement project and any future consideration for the RSI should be pursued as separate projects.

The WDFW fish program is currently assessing, inventorying, and analyzing all RSI facilities and associated agreement across western Washington. As additional information becomes available on the RSI program the City may engage WDFW to provide technical support in the assessment of RSI project proposals in the future.

4. Existing Water Right and RSI Operations

This section summarizes the existing water right that has historically supported RSI operations at North Creek. The RSI operates under a valid surface water right (Permit/Certificate No. S2-00667; Priority Date: November 29, 1971) for non-consumptive fish propagation use. The water right is valid, senior, and specifically authorized for fish propagation, which provides an important foundation for any future fish-related activities at the site.

However, the water right is tied to a specific location and diversion structure. The existing infrastructure may not meet current regulatory standards, and any relocation or modification would require review and approval by the Ecology. As a result, while the water right is valid, its practical use for new or relocated facilities is constrained.

4.1 Water Right Identity and Status

The RSI relies on a valid, senior surface water right issued by Ecology:

- **Application No.:** 23560
- **Permit No.:** S2-00667
- **Certificate No.:** S2-00667 C



- **Priority Date:** November 29, 1971
- **Source:** North Creek (tributary to Gig Harbor)
- **WRIA:** 15 (Gig Harbor)
- **Status:** Active

The right was perfected and certified in the mid-1970s and remains valid under Ecology records.

4.2 Authorized Quantity, Purpose, and Season

- **Instantaneous rate:** 0.25 cubic feet per second (cfs), approximately 112 gallons per minute (gpm)
- **Nature of use:** Non-consumptive
- **Authorized purpose:** Fish propagation
- **Season of use:** November 1 through April 30 of each year

Ecology’s Report of Examination confirms the right was intended for salmon egg incubation and rearing and expressly characterizes the use as non-consumptive.

4.3 Point of Diversion and Conditions

The certificated point of diversion is located at the downstream end of the current culvert, and is officially described as follows:

approximately 1,400 feet east and 50 feet south of the center of Section 6, Government Lot 2, Township 21 North, Range 2 East, W.M., Pierce County.

The permit and certificate impose detailed fish protection conditions:

- Diversion intake must be tightly screened at all times,
- Screen openings must be $\leq 1/8$ inch,
- Approach velocity must be ≤ 0.5 feet per second,
- No dam may be constructed in connection with the diversion.

While the water right was originally reviewed, the above conditions are not met at the current point of diversion and may require additional review to determine if modifications to the current structure and diversion are required.

5. Regulatory Authority and Limitations

The project is currently structured to align with streamlined permitting processes at the federal and state levels. It has received authorization under a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Nationwide Permit (NWP) and is positioned for approval under the FHEP pathway.

State law further limits the ability to include fish propagation facilities within a habitat restoration project. The statutory authorities governing fish protection and habitat enhancement do not provide a pathway for approving RSI or acclimation pond facilities as part of an FHEP project.



The project, which involves modifications to sensitive natural resources, will require permits (or exemptions) at the federal, state, and local levels. To date, the project, as proposed without replacement of the RSI, has applied for and received a permit from the USACE, and is pending approval from WDFW. Both entities accept the Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application (JARPA).

Inclusion of RSI or acclimation pond elements would materially alter the regulatory classification of the project (described below), likely disqualifying it from Nationwide Permit coverage and requiring an Individual Permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers. At the state level, the change would trigger a water right modification review by Ecology and transition the project from FHEP eligibility to a standard HPA process, resulting in SEPA review and expanded local permitting requirements. Collectively, these changes would substantially increase permitting complexity, timeline, and risk.

5.1 U.S. Army Corps Authorization Under Clean Water Act Section 404

The USACE has reviewed the JARPA to determine the dredge/fill impacts to waters of the United States. As a federal entity, the USACE review process also considers the proposed project in the context of other federal laws; particularly: National Historic Preservation Act; Endangered Species Act (ESA), and the Magnuson-Stevens Sustainable Fisheries Act. The USACE also coordinates with Ecology for a 401 water quality certificate and Coastal Zone Management Act consistency, and with relevant Tribes.

The project as described in the JARPA, with limited impacts to the stream and an overall net ecological benefit, was determined to be eligible for a NWP, which streamlines the permitting process. Review and coordination under the statutes listed above has been completed and the USACE has approved the project under NWP 14 (linear transportation projects). This NWP has conditions, such as the discharge of dredged or fill material must not exceed 1/3-acre in tidal waters, among others.

If the project were to be re-designed with RSI intake/outfall structures, floodplain excavation for rearing ponds, and different objectives, the project may no longer qualify for a NWP and an individual permit from USACE would be required. The individual permit review process includes additional steps, such as the following:

- Full alternatives analysis demonstrating how impacts were avoided or minimized
- Public notice + comment period
- Re-initiation of ESA consultation with National Marine Fisheries Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Individual 401 water quality certificate from Ecology
- Re-evaluation by Department of Historical Preservation (DAHP) under Section 106
- Mitigation requirements (TBD)
- Adjusted Project Timeline: adds 6–18+ months to complete the individual permit

5.2 WDFW Authority Under RCW 77.57

WDFW authority under RCW 77.57 is limited to fish protection measures and does not extend to authorizing new propagation facilities. FHEP authorization similarly does not include fish production facilities such as RSI or acclimation ponds.

Chapter 77.57 RCW authorizes WDFW to protect fish life by regulating:



- Fish guards and screens on diversions,
- Fishways at dams and obstructions,
- Flow protection coordination with Ecology.

This chapter is protective and corrective, not developmental. It does not provide independent authority to authorize new fish propagation, floodplain rearing, or streamside incubation facilities.

The only reference to fish cultural facilities (RCW 77.57.050) applies solely as mitigation when a fishway is impractical for a dam or obstruction and does not create a discretionary pathway for new propagation projects.

5.3 FHEP Limitations (RCW 77.55.181)

RCW 77.55.181 authorizes streamlined permitting only for habitat restoration actions such as barrier removal and stream restoration. It does not authorize:

- Fish hatcheries,
- Juvenile rearing or acclimation facilities,
- RSI operations or floodplain ponds whose primary purpose is fish production.

FHEP projects are strictly defined as being solely beneficial for improving natural habitat that supports the production of wild fish. Within these bounds, applicants are not required to undergo SEPA review with the local lead agency, or to secure local permits (other than for floodplain development). However, if the project includes other elements that do not meet these requirements, it will need to go through a standard, more comprehensive permitting process. SEPA review includes a public comment period and can take several months, in addition to processing times for critical area review, mitigation planning, and other local requirements.

6. RSI and Acclimation Pond Considerations

This section evaluates potential alternatives for continuing or replacing RSI functions, including a new RSI facility or construction of an acclimation pond. It also identifies a key constraint: portions of the site are protected under a conservation covenant funded through Pierce County Conservation Futures that was used to acquire the upstream property. This covenant limits allowable development and restricts activities that could impact habitat. Development of an RSI or an acclimation pond would likely constitute a prohibited use, as such facilities could impair riparian functions, alter site hydrology, and adversely affect protected fish habitat. Accordingly, these activities are not considered permissible within the conserved property.

The alternatives considered each involve tradeoffs related to permitting feasibility, cost, and project timing. Both options introduce significant regulatory challenges and would require the City to pause or redirect the current culvert replacement project. This section provides Council with a clear understanding of those tradeoffs and the practical limitations associated with each option.

After discussing with Ecology regarding water right complications (see Section 4) and WDFW regarding RSI permitting complications (see Section 5), the City has considered the options/alternatives summarized below.



6.1 Existing RSI Operation Option

WDFW staff indicated that current agency records do not include a clear permit or agreement authorizing ongoing RSI operations. If historic agreements cannot be produced, the RSI may require new permitting, and the likelihood of authorizing continued operation at the historical scale (approximately 1,000,000 eggs annually) is considered low under current policy and statutory constraints.

RSIs currently supported by WDFW are typically:

- Smaller in scale,
- Temporary or mobile,
- Educational or pilot in nature.

This option would pause all design and permitting efforts for the culvert replacement project and instead focus all design/permitting funding/efforts on (a) creating a new point of diversion and (b) creating a new RSI located in a steel shipping container in Donkey Creek Park. This would reset all permitting efforts existing culvert replacement project and require rejection of any potential grant application opportunities. Additionally, WDFW staff advised that the culvert project and any RSI project be pursued separately. The RSI program in western Washington is currently under review. This process would need to be taken into consideration related to the project schedule, and a new RSI project proposal would need to be developed and submitted under the revised program.

6.2 Acclimation Pond Option

An acclimation pond of approximately 20 feet wide by 30 feet long by 3 feet deep constructed in the North Creek floodplain could support release of approximately 100,000–200,000 chum salmon juveniles, 450 fish per pound (fpp), commonly referred to as “fry” or “small fingerlings”, assuming flows consistent with the existing water right of 0.25 cfs. However:

- The pond would require a new surface water diversion, triggering Ecology water right review,
- New diversion and outlet structures would require fish screening under RCW 77.57,
- Floodplain excavation and pond construction would require a standard HPA and likely SEPA review.

This option would pause all design and permitting efforts for the culvert replacement project and instead focus all design/permitting funding/efforts on (a) creating a new point of diversion and (b) creating a new acclimation pond in the North Creek floodplain located upstream of the existing culvert and on the City’s conservation property, which is restricted per the covenant. WDFW staff advised that the likelihood of permitting an acclimation pond is low, and any such proposal would require review at the Regional Director level.

7. Permit Strategy and Recommendations

The recommended approach is to proceed with the culvert replacement project as a stand-alone habitat restoration effort.

This strategy:

- Maintains eligibility for streamlined FHEP permitting



- Avoids SEPA review and extensive local permitting
- Supports timely project delivery and funding continuity
- Minimizes regulatory risk and uncertainty

RSI or acclimation pond concepts should be evaluated as separate future projects. This would allow the City maintain flexibility, and to explore fish propagation opportunities independently, with appropriate planning, agency coordination, and permitting.

7.1 Culvert Replacement Project

Recommendation:

Proceed with the culvert replacement as a stand-alone FHEP project under RCW 77.55.181.

Rationale:

- The project clearly qualifies as fish passage barrier removal,
- Maintaining FHEP eligibility avoids SEPA and extensive local permitting,
- Inclusion of RSI or acclimation pond elements risks disqualification from FHEP and significant project delay.
- Maintain current and consistent grant applications.

7.2 RSI / Acclimation Pond Project

Recommendation:

Treat RSI re-installation or acclimation pond development as a separate project, with independent planning and permitting.

Key Steps:

- Conduct a pre-application meeting with USACE, WDFW, and Ecology,
- Determine whether historic RSI authorization from WDFW exists,
- If pursuing modification of the water right (e.g., new point of diversion), initiate a water right change application with Ecology,
- Prepare for a standard HPA and potential SEPA review.

8. Conclusions

If the City proceeds with the recommended strategy, the culvert replacement project is well-positioned to advance efficiently under streamlined permitting.

Separating fish passage improvements from fish propagation concepts provides the lowest-risk and most defensible path forward. This approach preserves project schedule and current grant funding strategies while allowing the City to evaluate future fish enhancement opportunities through a more deliberate and feasible process.

By the City proceeding with the recommended project strategy:



- The North Creek culvert replacement is well-positioned for approval under the FHEP pathway if it remains focused on fish passage restoration.
- The existing water right is valid, senior, and tightly conditioned, but relocation of the diversion or change in use will require Ecology review.
- WDFW's statutory authority under RCW 77.57 and RCW 77.55.181 does not support inclusion of RSI or acclimation pond facilities within the FHEP project.
- Separating the culvert replacement from any RSI or acclimation pond proposal is the lowest-risk and most defensible permitting strategy.
- The project would proceed in a timely manner, reduce future construction costs, and continue with the current, consistent city grant applications.





NORTH CREEK CULVERT REPLACEMENT CIP 2305

REMOTE SITE INCUBATOR DISCUSSION

Senior Engineer Steven Demmer

MAY 14, 2026 STUDY SESSION

Purpose of Today's Presentation

- Provide overview of RSI considerations/updates since last study session (October 2025)
- Summarize new findings (technical memo)
- Provide staff recommendation for moving forward





Agenda

Project Background

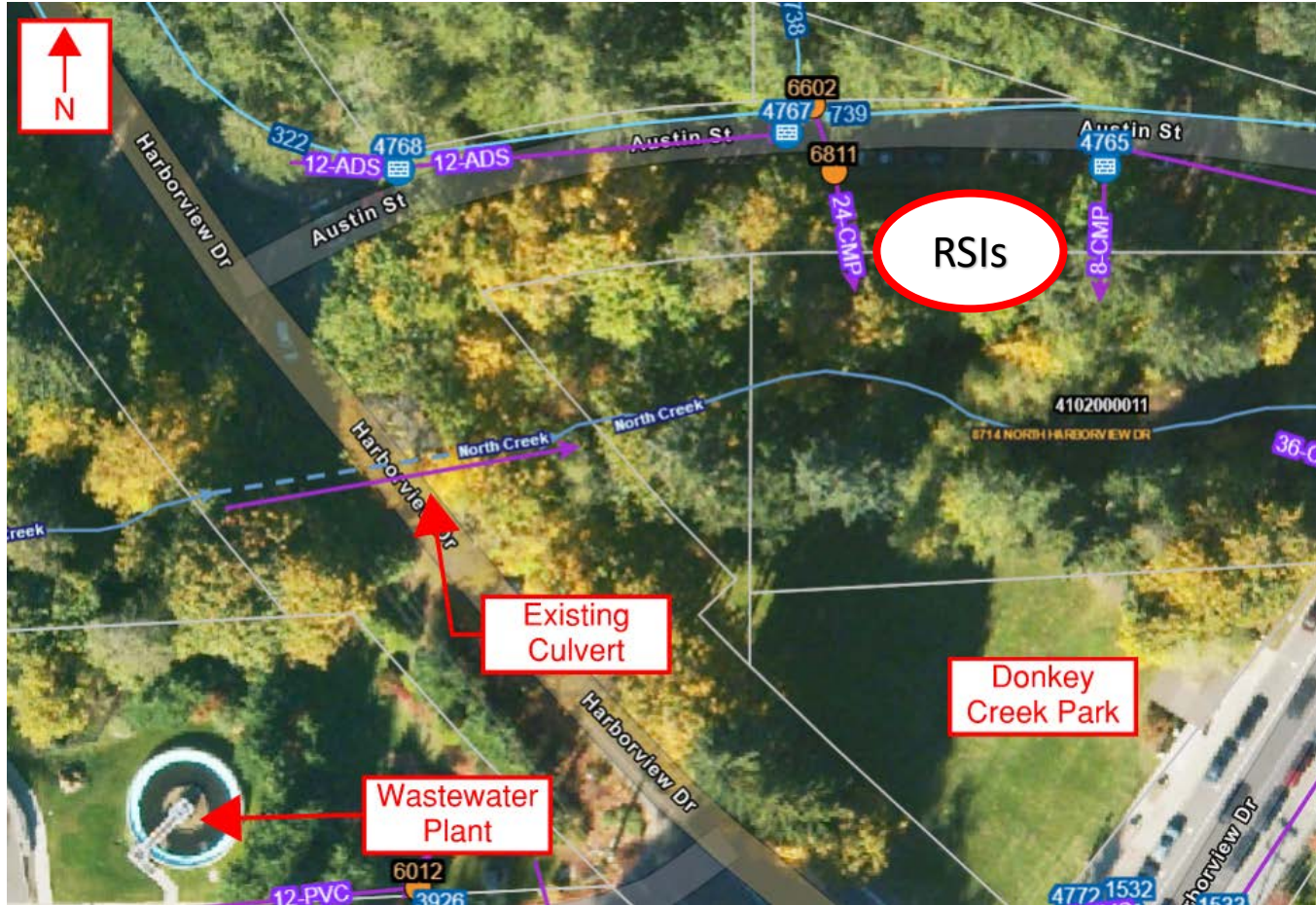
Technical Memo Summary

Staff Recommendation

Next Steps



Project Background



6' X 6' X 146' box culvert (constructed 1970) cataloged as 67% fish barrier by WDFW



Project Background



Left: Flashboard setup pre-2020

Right: Current conditions of flashboard setup

Below: RSI Barrels



Remote Site Incubators

- RSIs originally constructed 1971 – modified flow control valve with removable flashboards
- Water delivery flume & 13 plastic barrels
- Approximately 1,000,000 eggs supplied by WDFW or other sources
- Gig Harbor Commercial Fishermen’s Civic Club – operation and maintenance
- Existing water right to divert water (0.25 cfs)
- Last operated in pre-COVID
- Issues with egg supply and water quality

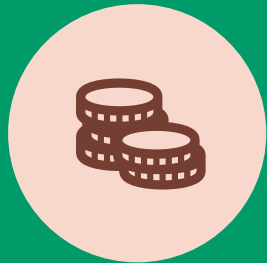
Project Background



Proposed Conditions

- Culvert replacement with 140-LF concrete bridge
- Utility relocations (sewer, water, gas, power, telecom)
- Stream Restoration
- Trail extension through Donkey Creek Park

Project Status



Parametrix Contract
\$1.3 million



Construction Costs
\$7.51 million (2023 dollars, 30% design)



Design Grant
\$350,000 (Brian Abbott/RCO)



Construction Budget
\$9 million (2027, an estimated half will be city funds)



Project Background

Project Permitting

- Project is intended to be permitted as a Fish Habitat Enhancement Project (FHEP)
- Project qualifies for a streamlined permitting process under RCW 77.55.181
- Project would be exempt from State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)
- Not subject to most local permitting and fee requirements (except related to floodplain administration)
- Project received authorization under US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Nationwide Permit (NWP) in January 2026



Project Background

October 2025 Study Session

- Council requested that staff to meet with Commercial Fishermen's Civic Club (Club) to discuss options in lieu of RSIs
- Follow up with technical memo discussing recommendations
- Come back to another study session (today)



Technical Memo Summary

November 7, 2025
Meeting with Club



- Investigating potential to establish an **acclimation pond** in the floodplain/conservation areas of North Creek
- City-owned conservation land upstream of Donkey Creek Park
- Acclimation pond of 20'x30'x3' deep could support release of approximately 100 – 200K chum salmon juveniles



Technical Memo Summary

Acclimation Pond Implications

- Conservation land funded through Pierce County Conservation Futures.
- Restrictive covenant prohibits any activity that could impact habitat, impair riparian functions, alter site hydrology, and adversely affect protected fish habitat
- Development of RSI or acclimation pond within conservation land **are not permissible under the covenant.**



Technical Memo Summary

Acclimation Pond Implications – Federal Permitting

- Project likely would **no longer qualify** for an NWP through USACE
- Individual permit would be required through USACE
- Adds 6 – 18+ months to complete individual permit
- Existing permit from USACE would become invalid



Technical Memo Summary

Acclimation Pond Implications – State Permitting

- Acclimation pond would **disqualify project** from streamlined FHEP permitting process
- Project would no longer be SEPA exempt and would be subject to all local permitting requirements
- The pond would require a new surface water diversion, triggering Ecology water right review and, if allowed, approval would take 18 months or more and would require a new water source
- **WDFW advised that the likelihood of permitting an acclimation pond is low. Such proposal would require review at the Regional Director level.**



Technical Memo Summary

New RSI Installation

- New RSI installation would be smaller in scale than what is currently at North Creek
- Temporary/Mobile
- Located in Donkey Creek Park



Technical Memo Summary

New RSI Installation

- All permitting efforts for the project would be reset
- Similar to pond, new RSIs would require a new surface water diversion, triggering Ecology water right review that would require a modification or a new water right and, if allowed, approval would take 18 months or more and would require a new water source
- **WDFW staff advised that the culvert project and any RSI project be pursued separately**



Technical Memo Summary

New RSI Installation

- WDFW fish program is currently assessing, inventorying, and analyzing all RSI facilities across western Washington
- Will provide additional information as it becomes available
- There is a **high risk of proceeding with new RSI installation** as this may not be supported by WDFW moving forward



Technical Memo Summary

Grant Funding (RSI & Pond)

- Current design grant – RCO would need to review how the inclusion of a facility is appropriate. May result in city backpay to RCO if project is redesigned
- Project would no longer be eligible for construction grant funding opportunities
 - Brian Abbott Fish Barrier Grant – May 2026 Deadline (application already finalized)
 - PSAR Large Cap Grant – Pre-application already submitted
- **City would likely not be able to fund project without grant support**



Staff Recommendation

- Proceed with culvert replacement project as standalone project
 - Maintains streamlined permitting
 - Supports timely project delivery and funding continuity
 - Minimizes risk
- Evaluate RSI or acclimation pond concepts as **separate future projects**
- Recommendation aligns with our consulting firm's Director of Salmon Recovery and the project's permitting authority (WDFW)



Next Steps

Educational Opportunities

- Harbor Wild Watch & Salmon Chum Fest
- State of the Watershed
 - Annual meeting open to public
 - Untapped resource for education in the region
 - Staff driven (Pierce County, Pierce Conservation District, City of Gig Harbor)
 - Opportunities for Club interaction
- Educational signage and/or art in honor of prior RSI use





Thank You

Steven Demmer
Senior Engineer

sdemmer@gigharborwa.gov





**City of Gig Harbor
City Council Agenda Bill**

Meeting Date: May 14, 2026

SUBJECT: Downtown and Finholm District Parking Study Presentation

SUBMITTED BY: Eric Baker

DEPARTMENT: Community Development

PHONE: 253-530-7073

SUGGESTED MOTION:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The Waterfront District is the heart of Gig Harbor. Its working waterfront, small businesses and community heritage draws residents and visitors throughout the year. Activity peaks in the summer months with numerous community festivals, music and events. As with similar downtowns, parking availability is point of discussion. In early 2025, Council contracted with Fehr & Peers for a Parking Study of the downtown from Finholm past Soundview. This Study was focused on what parking issues may exist, where they are most acute, the source of any issues and propose a suite of actions for future discussion.

The Study studied parking capacity of public and private properties in Finholm and the Downtown with separate assessments for each. It assessed both number of spots occupied and the length of occupancy thought select weekends and weekdays. Generally, the study found that while spots we often available, they spread throughout the District or may not be the type of spot (e.g. on a hill, parallel) that people are most comfortable with. The Study then developed a suite of strategies for consideration in the near and long term. These included expanded wayfinding signage, shared parking with churches and other businesses, on-street time limits, paid parking, on-street parking permits and expanded ADA parking opportunities.

FISCAL CONSIDERATION: This section details the financial issues involved in the issue before Council, if applicable. It can include only the information contained in the table below or it can include additional financial information.

Expenditure Required: \$ 0	Amount Budgeted: \$ 0	Appropriation Required: \$ 0
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ATTACHMENTS:

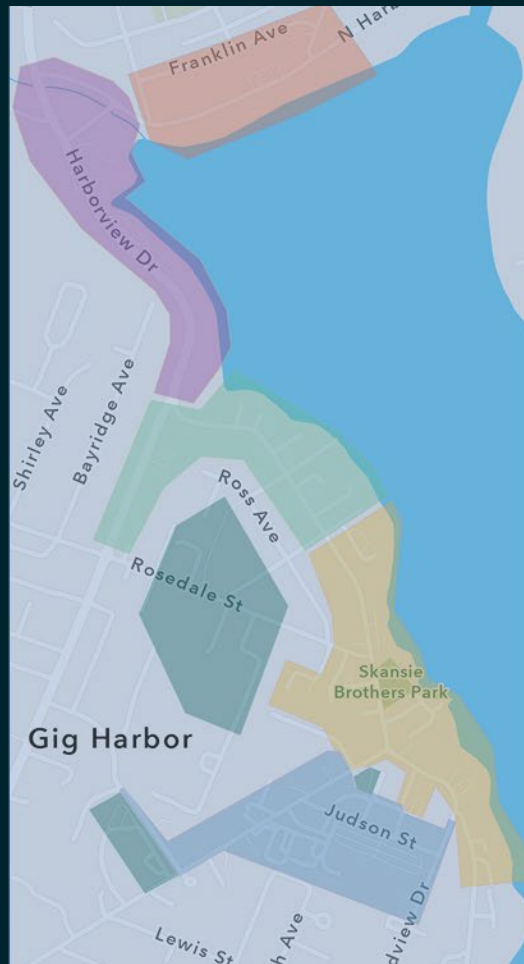
1. Gig Harbor Parking Report_Final_May2026

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY: Maintain small town character and historic preservation while growing responsibly

Promote and enhance a dynamic and robust economy

Gig Harbor

Downtown and Finholm District Parking Study



Prepared for:
City of Gig Harbor, WA

Submitted on:
May 1, 2026

Fehr & Peers

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1. Executive Summary

This report provides a comprehensive overview of parking conditions within Gig Harbor’s waterfront districts—Downtown and Finholm. In August 2025, detailed parking surveys were conducted by a collaborative effort between the City’s volunteer team and the professional survey firm IDAX, contracted by Fehr & Peers. These efforts were built upon historical data from previous surveys, enabling a clear and comprehensive understanding of current parking availability, demand, and challenges. The resulting findings serve as a foundation for recommended parking management interventions, aiming to optimize parking supply, effectively manage parking demand, and improve access for residents, employees, business patrons, and regional visitors.

Downtown is divided into five distinct areas — Downtown, Judson, Millville, Museum, and Churches, while the Finholm district consists of a single area with the same boundaries. Parking lots serving churches are considered separately due to their unique usage patterns. The study evaluates three types of parking: on-street spaces, off-street public lots, and off-street private lots. Key parking demand generators such as marinas, the Downtown Farmers Market, and commercial zones along Harborview Drive were prioritized for data collection, to capture peak activity and ensure that both tourist and local business demand were accurately represented. **Table E1** below provides the overall parking-related numbers for the study area in terms of inventory and usage as measured during the parking survey in August 2025.

Table E1: Summary of Parking Occupancy – 2025 Parking Surveys

Study area	Total number of available spaces			Occupancy at 1 PM on Thursday			Occupancy at 1 PM on Saturday		
	Total	On-street	Off-street	Total	On-street	Off-street	Total	On-street	Off-street
Downtown	719	141	578	471	124	347	379	125	254
% Occupancy				66%	88%	60%	53%	89%	44%
Finholm	260	91	169	173	62	111	148	55	93
% Occupancy				67%	68%	66%	57%	60%	55%
Judson	788	121	667	375	68	307	209	41	168
% Occupancy				48%	56%	46%	27%	34%	25%
Millville	225	93	132	109	74	35	89	56	33
% Occupancy				48%	80%	27%	40%	60%	25%
Museum	330	92	238	106	39	67	145	40	105
% Occupancy				32%	42%	28%	44%	43%	44%
Churches	518	0	518	85	-	85	18	-	18
% Occupancy				16%	-	16%	3%	-	3%
Combined total	2,840	538	2,302	1,319	367	952	988	317	671
% Occupancy				46%	68%	41%	35%	59%	29%

Notes:

- Percentage highlight legend:
Red – Above 85% benchmark. Yellow – Above 50% occupancy. Blue – Below 50%.
- Survey hours were 7 AM – 7 PM. Survey was carried out on August 21 and 23, 2025.

Key takeaways from the occupancy surveys

1. Of the 538 on-street parking spaces in the study area, the highest occupancy was 68% at 1 pm on Thursday. Though this was less than the industry-accepted threshold of 85%, occupancy was high in Downtown and Millville areas at 88% and 80%, respectively. Judson and Museum areas offered more availability during peak hours, though this may also be because they are further away from the main areas of commercial activity.
2. Off-street parking, consisting of public lots, church parking, and parking attached to private businesses, was heavily underused, with 59% of the 2,840 spaces empty during peak hours on Thursday. While Downtown and Finholm had 60% and 66% occupancies, respectively, Judson, Millville, Museum, and Church areas all had between 16% to 46% occupancy. Parking spaces in private properties and those serving marinas stayed mostly empty all week, but especially on Saturday when offices were closed.
3. Church parking lots, totaling over 500 spaces across four churches, remain over 80% vacant on both survey days (though likely more occupied on Sundays).
4. The survey indicated that employees did park in the residential neighborhoods adjacent to commercial activity along N Harborview Drive. For example, Franklin St, parallel to N Harborview Drive in Finholm, saw higher occupancy during business hours.
5. A study of on-street durations revealed that nearly three-quarters of people parked for less than 2 hours on both survey days.

To summarize, on-street parking was highly occupied overall, though areas outside of the commercial spaces saw less occupancy. Most people also parked for shorter durations of up to 2 hours. Among off-street lots, the publicly accessible ones were generally occupied, while private parking spaces were much emptier, especially on Saturday. Parking at churches was rarely used at all, though they likely experience more occupancy on Sundays.

1.1.2. Recommended Parking Management Interventions

The above findings confirm ongoing concerns among residents and visitors about perceived shortages and highlight the importance of making better use of available resources rather than expanding supply. In response, several parking management interventions are recommended, drawing also from prior annual parking surveys. They include improving employee parking strategies, utilizing private lots which currently serve complementary needs, enhancing wayfinding tools, and promoting greater awareness of parking options to ensure balanced and efficient access for all users.

These strategies are expected to help maximize parking efficiency, unlock underused off-street lots, and ensure access for employees, customers, and visitors. The interventions are grouped into three categories: Supply Enhancement, Demand Reduction, and Parking Experience Enhancement. **Table E2** below provides a summary of recommendations the City selected for greater consideration, based on a presentation by the consultant team and discussion with the project stakeholders.

Table E2: Seven Interventions Selected by the City for Greater Consideration

Parking management intervention	Expected benefits	Potential challenges	Cost	Timeline
<p>Shared parking between businesses Complementary land uses in the waterfront area are ideal for businesses to share parking spaces for visitors and employees.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the need for total number of parking spaces. • Improve usage of existing parking supply. • Support a more walkable waterfront neighborhood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Downtown, many uses overlap more than expected, so there could be limited eligibility. • Property owners may hesitate to share spaces they do not fully control. • Contracts can be time-consuming to negotiate, and to enforce. • Businesses worry about parking shortages during busy periods. • Managing who can park where (and when) can be difficult. • Customers will need clear directions on finding these spaces. 	Low	Medium-term
<p>Shared parking with churches Parking lots in the three bigger churches near the waterfront are mostly empty except on Sundays. They are ideal for multi-hour and daily parking for nearby able-bodied employees and long-term visitors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar benefits as for shared parking between businesses. • Cheaper solution to acquiring parking spaces for public usage. • Reduction in circulation of cars in the waterfront area. • Promote walking for visitors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can add hundreds of public parking spaces to the waterfront area. It's an efficient solution that does not build more surface lots. However, more parking incentivizes driving. The City should pair this with interventions that reduce parking demand, like pricing and encouraging use of other modes of travel. • Upon implementation, it will be the City's responsibility to enforce the hours designated at the church lots for public parking. 	Low	Quick
<p>On-street time limits Time limits are the simplest way to control on-street parking, increasing turnover, activity, and availability. Only 2% of 538 on-street spaces near the waterfront have time limits. This report highlights uneven usage of parking that can be optimized through time limits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase availability of parking in the highest-activity, most-needed blocks of the waterfront area. • Reduce unnecessary driving. • Promote business activity by increasing parking turnover. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spillover effect on neighboring streets if supporting interventions – permit parking, paid parking – are not also implemented. • Confusion among drivers about limits if signages are not clear. • High cost of enforcement if not recouped through pricing. • Crucial to communicate benefits to curbside businesses in terms of more patronage. For residential streets, win-win situation of controlled employee parking. 	Medium	Medium-term
<p>Paid parking Pricing, which is responsive to occupancy levels across time and areas, is effective in distributing drivers based on needs and urgency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recover the cost of implementing parking demand and management interventions. • Address selective overuse of sought-after parking spaces, and correctly price parking on valuable public land. • Reduce unnecessary driving. • Reinvest surplus money into neighborhood transportation improvements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses may push back if they perceive that the added cost for customers will reduce footfall. Communicating the long-term benefits of pricing will be crucial for the City to build trust with businesses, employees, and residents. • Though tiered pricing will efficiently distribute drivers based on the urgency of need, it can be inequitable for lower income or non-able-bodied people who cannot park further away. The City can explore the creation of exemptions of permits based on demographic needs. 	Medium	Medium-term

Parking management intervention	Expected benefits	Potential challenges	Cost	Timeline
<p>On-street parking permits Permits restrict parking on applicable streets for everyone except those who purchase them, like residents of that street, their visitors, and employees working in nearby businesses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent spillover parking from waterfront into residential streets. • Allowing waterfront employees to purchase permits will support their longer-term parking needs on less busier streets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents may feel that they are being charged for a hitherto free public good. The City will need to acknowledge the status quo, while showcasing the benefits of better parking management in the form of greater availability, reduced driving, and safer streets. Furthermore, the City should highlight the contribution of parking revenue to multi-modal improvement projects in the same areas. • To address inequities, the City can introduce discounts for low-income residents and those with qualifying disabilities and other conditions. The City can also reward residents who forego permits by providing credits for other non-auto travel options. 	Low	Medium-term
<p>ADA parking spaces Only 1.3% of the 538 on-street spaces in the study area are ADA. Federal recommendations are for at least one ADA spot per 25 spots along a block perimeter. At the very least, the waterfront area needs 21 (4% of total) ADA spots.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet the needs of an ageing population. • Support outside visitors belonging to older or disabled population groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City will need to carve out exceptions to time limits and paid parking for ADA-eligible visitors who need parking closer to their destinations. 	Low	Quick
<p>Wayfinding Wayfinding improvements encompass all visual and informational tools a City can use to guide visitors to the option that suits their parking needs, and educate visitors and residents alike about how parking works in an area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual hints will ensure success of newer parking interventions — like time limits, paid parking, shared parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scope of improvements is wide — including physical additions like signages, online and offline maps, and cohesive branding to point visitors to parking options. • The City would benefit from creating a dedicated Parking Manager to oversee the host of wayfinding and other interventions, without which continuous quality management will remain difficult and ad-hoc. 	Medium	Medium-term

2. Introduction

This study presents a comprehensive summary of existing parking conditions in six study areas (“areas”) within Gig Harbor’s two waterfront districts, Downtown and Finholm (see **Figure 5** for a map of the study area). It documents comprehensive parking surveys conducted by a mix of the local volunteer team and a survey firm, IDAX, contracted by Fehr & Peers for this project in August 2025. The purpose of these surveys was to establish a clear understanding of existing parking conditions across the areas, building on top of similar surveys conducted in previous years by City’s volunteer team. The findings inform the parking management interventions in the second half of this report. The interventions have been crafted to help the City of Gig Harbor with:

1. Optimizing parking supply
2. Effectively managing parking demand
3. Improving access for residents, employees, business patrons, and regional visitors

2.1. About Gig Harbor

Gig Harbor is a small, waterfront town in Washington. It is in the Puget Sound region, an hour drive to the Southeast of Seattle. The City’s waterfront area supports various marine activities and consequently houses various marinas and docks.

The **Downtown** district is the commercial hub of the city, and in the summer is also home to the weekly Waterfront Farmers Market every Thursday.¹ Further north, the **Finholm** district is smaller with more restaurant activity.

2.1.1. Demographics

Gig Harbor has a population of 12,079 with 5,239 households. The median age of the residents in Gig Harbor is 47.6 years old with 30.8% of the population being 65 years of age or older. The median household income in Gig Harbor is \$106,042. Thus, **the City’s population is older and wealthier than the average population in Washington.** The town is primarily white and English-speaking, with the next largest demographic being Hispanic or Latino peoples.

Figure 1: On-street Sign with Directions to the Waterfront Area



¹ [Gig Harbor Chamber of Commerce - Visit Gig Harbor](#)

2.1.2. Economy

Gig Harbor serves as a commuter town for surrounding cities. Inside the city, healthcare, social assistance, and technical services are major employers of the labor force. Most of the businesses are small, with 37% having only between 1–4 employees.²

The waterfront area relies heavily on tourism during the summer. The city features a wide range of activities available during the summer such as boating and hiking, which attract visitors from the surrounding areas. This is supported by the fact that about 30% of all customers come from outside of the city limits in the summer compared to only about 15% in the winter³. Because of this, **traffic in Downtown Gig Harbor fluctuates throughout the year with peaks during the summer months.**

2.1.3. Transportation

The commuting patterns of Gig Harbor are car centric. Most workers drive alone to work, with only 3.6% of workers walking and 0% reportedly biking to work. Almost a fifth (17.6%) of residents work from home.

As part of the City's Comprehensive Plan⁴, the City has adopted a policy (TE-2.15) to proactively address the transportation needs of planned developments by prioritizing equitable access for all community members. This includes exploring the feasibility of parking management programs, shared parking strategies, and/or subsidized transit pass programs, with an emphasis on supporting low-income and historically underserved communities. Overall, Gig Harbor does not have deficient parking supply, however, improved management of existing spaces will help distribute parking demand more evenly across areas.

The Comprehensive Plan's policy TE-3.5 states that the City should work with the Harbor property owners to determine an effective parking plan, including establishment of local parking improvement district for the Harbor.

For the Harbor area, the City adopted a policy (HB-8.5) to develop a balanced parking strategy for the Harbor that supports economic development by providing adequate visitor and commercial parking while ensuring residents have accessible and convenient parking options to foster a vibrant community atmosphere. To achieve this, the city adopted an implementation strategy (HB-J) to develop an innovative parking strategy for The Harbor that supports economic development with adequate visitor and commercial parking.

² [Gig Harbor Chamber of Commerce – Gig Harbor Economic Dashboard \(2025\)](#)

³ Waterfront Alliance License Plate Survey

⁴ City of Gig Harbor Comprehensive Plan, April 2025

3. Study Background

3.1. Previous surveys (2010-2024)

The City of Gig Harbor has conducted parking studies along the waterfront twice a year, every year, since 2010. These biannual studies took place in winter (March) and summer (August) to account for the seasonal influx of tourists in the summer months that place a strain on parking. The studies were performed by volunteer members of the Gig Harbor Waterfront Alliance.

During each study, volunteers collected parking occupancy counts along 26 road segments throughout the Downtown district. Occupancy sweeps were conducted every two hours from 7 AM to 9 PM. To keep data organized and to reflect real-world patterns, the waterfront was split into five areas from North to South: Finholm, Museum, Millville, Downtown, and Judson. The volunteers also surveyed private and public off-street parking lots.

3.1.1. Results from Previous Surveys

The earlier parking surveys highlight parking trends going back to 2010. Some key trends are as follows:

- Public parking spaces are occupied at higher rates on the weekends than on weekdays.
- Parking usage has fully rebounded since the COVID-19 pandemic, reaching the same summer usage levels as 2019.

Figure 2 shows parking occupancy for the 5 areas as surveyed on the Saturday of the summer 2024 round. Figure 3 shows occupancy levels for each area at 2 time points – 7 AM and 1 PM, on both Thursday and Saturday during summer 2024.

Figure 2: 2024 Parking Occupancy Levels by Area – Saturday, Summer 2024 Survey

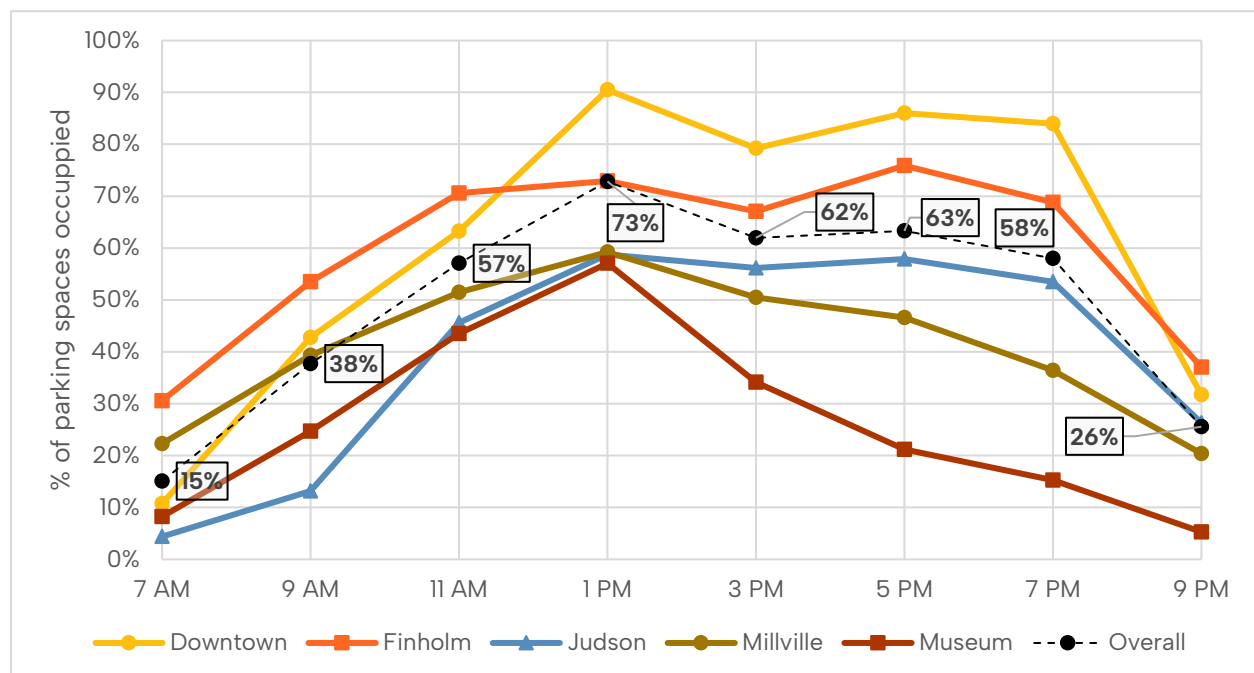
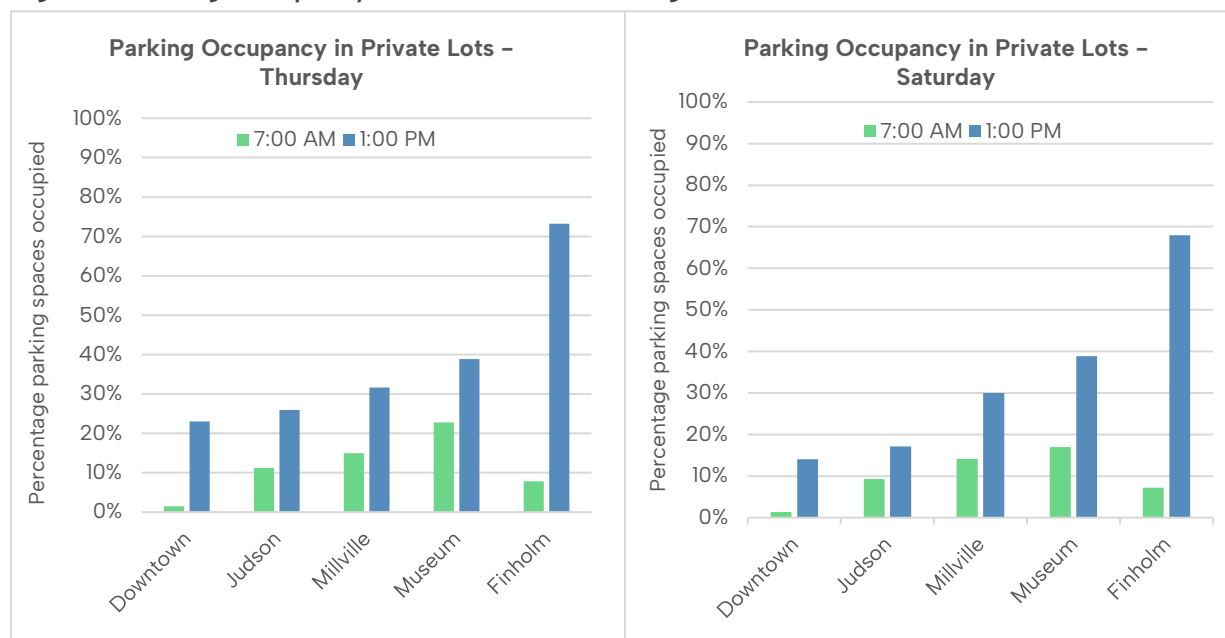


Figure 3: Parking Occupancy Levels at Private Parking Lots in Summer 2024



Key observations:

1. During the summer, usage of parking during peak hours has stabilized post-pandemic at an average of 52%. The Downtown and Finholm areas experience the highest levels of parking demand, while being high in all five areas at 1 PM on Saturday.
2. Parking utilization drops off sharply after 7 PM in Judson, Millville, and Museum but stays within 10% of the 1 PM peak in Downtown and Finholm even at 7 PM.
3. Private parking lots see higher use on weekdays, but even during the 1 PM peak, many do not get above 70% usage. Of the private parking spaces in the Millville and Museum areas, over 60% of spaces were available during the 1 PM summer peak in 2022.
4. To summarize parking demand trends, Downtown and Finholm areas have historically seen the highest parking demand with the most constrained parking supply. While surrounding areas may have available parking, these parking spaces may be inconvenient and/or unknown to drivers. For example, in summer of 2024, the Judson, Millville, and Finholm areas still had 28% available parking during the 1 PM peak.
5. While on-street parking remains near capacity during peak seasons, existing private parking facilities are not being fully used, with occupancy typically below 75% utilization. A few businesses which reached above 75% utilization were gyms and several restaurants. As surveys were not conducted during the evening hours, comparison with public parking past 1 PM is not possible. This is important because many businesses may see increased activity in the evening hours, such as local restaurants.
6. The survey involved separate observations for church parking lots, but they were only surveyed on Thursdays and Saturdays. The maximum utilization during peak weekday hours in the summer was 23%, which indicates these lots do not see heavy use outside of weekend services. However, because evening data is unavailable, the impact of evening services or community events is unknown.

3.1.2. Areas for Further Exploration

- While the previous parking data is broken down by road segment, the surveys do not indicate if the motorists are parking in front of their destinations or farther away. Therefore, it is difficult to

understand if higher parking occupancy rates are due to localized demand or spillover demand from other nearby locations⁵.

- The studies only take a snapshot of parking demand every two hours, which does not include information about the duration of stay for the vehicle. This type of data would assist the team in determining if parking demand is generated by local employees or visitors, or local residents performing errands around town. This information is important because efficient parking treatment is tailored to demand. Employees may need longer-term parking, while tourists may be fine with short-term parking.

3.2. Study method for the 2025 Survey

3.2.1. Geographic scope of the project

The geographic scope for the parking study spans the two districts – Downtown and Finholm. Downtown is further split into five areas, while Finholm district and study area share the same name and boundaries. Note that the four churches which were considered as part of the previous parking studies, are treated as a separate “study area” in Downtown; the purpose being that parking usage on church lots differs significantly from other types of lots. Thus, the six areas, as shown in **Figure 5**, are:

In Downtown district:

1. **Downtown:** Located in the southeast portion of the waterfront, this is its busiest commercial area. It ends at Dorotich Street on the northern end.
2. **Judson:** While not situated along the waterfront, Judson (centered around Judson Street) serves as an extension of Downtown, especially by providing crucial on-street parking spaces.
3. **Millville:** North of Downtown, this part of Harborview Drive is more residential and less commercial. However, it contains access points to marinas.
4. **Museum:** This area is centered around Harbor History Museum along with a few restaurants. It is situated below Finholm and above Millville.
5. **Churches:** Technically not a contiguous area, this category includes parking lots of the 4 main churches located in and behind Downtown.

In Finholm district:

6. **Finholm:** Mostly anchored by Anthony’s restaurant, Finholm has various other businesses. The parallel Franklin Avenue is also included in this area to include use of on-street parking by visitors and workers of Finholm.

Three types of parking spaces were part of the study:

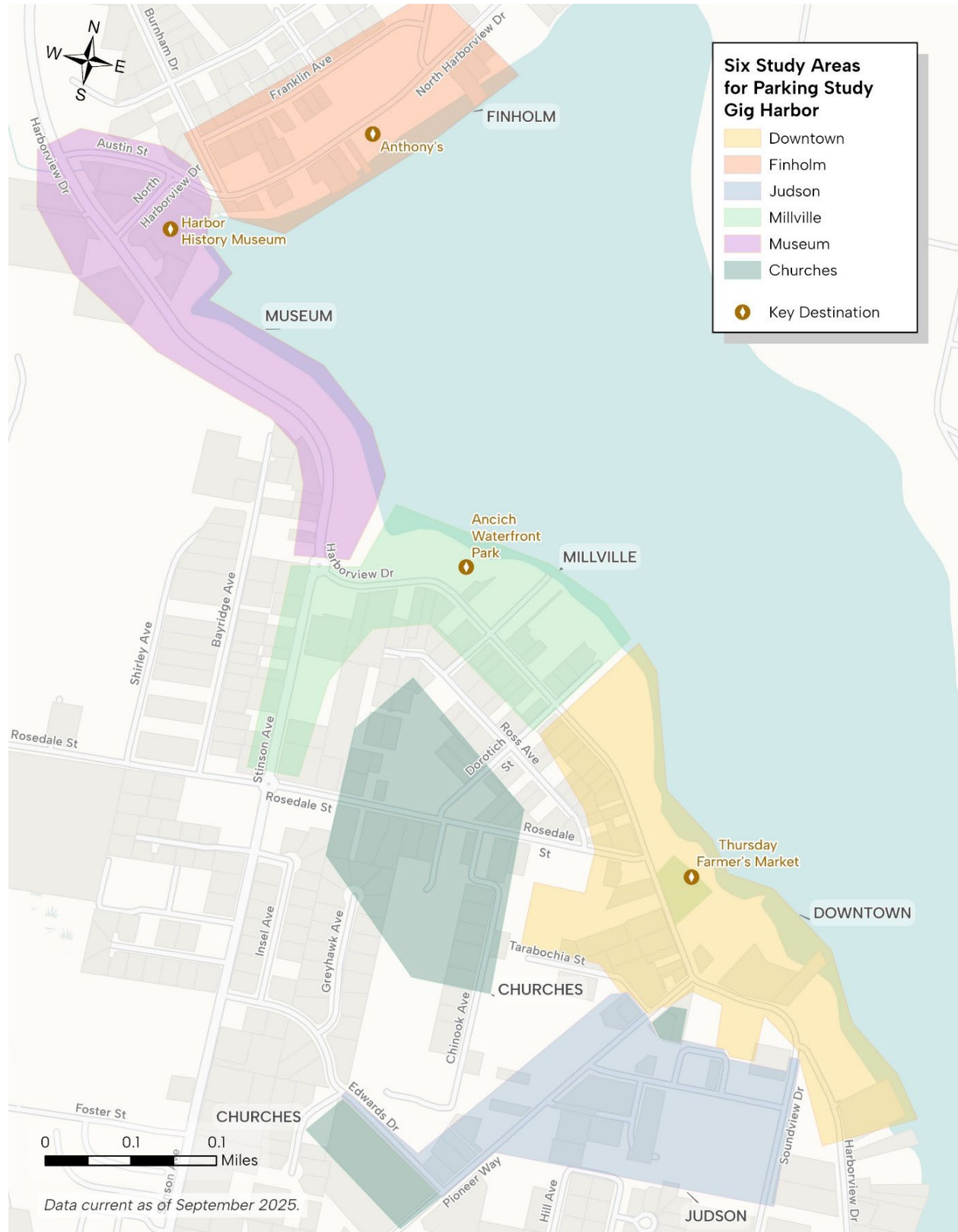
1. On-street parking
2. Off-street public lots
3. Off-street private lots

Figure 4: Pavement marker indicating arrival to the Finholm District



⁵ For example, this report mentions the phenomenon of employees parking on neighboring residential streets (like on Franklin Ave).

Figure 5: Six Areas for the Parking Utilization Study



The primary demand generators in the study area include the marinas, the Downtown Farmers Market, and dense commercial areas along the North Harborview Drive adjacent to the Waterfront.

To assess the influence of these locations on parking demand, the study prioritized data collection in these areas. Surveys were conducted during summer season to capture peak activity levels to ensure that demand for the farmer’s market and seasonal tourist-oriented businesses was fully represented.

3.2.2. Survey Method

Key Definitions

1. **Study area:** Henceforth, “study area” and “area” will solely concern the 6 areas – Downtown, Finholm, Judson, Millville, Museum, and Church, shown in **Figure 5**. This study will not be exploring areas and parking outside of the 6 areas.
2. **Public and Private off-street facilities:** In this document, “public” and “private” in the context of parking refers specifically to the ownership type of the surface lot or structure. It does not categorically give any indication about who can or cannot access that space. For example, a parking lot shared by a commercial block could be owned by the property owner but would be accessible to patrons of businesses located in that block.
3. **Parking inventory:** This is the total amount of parking available through on-street spaces and in off-street facilities. Conducting counts at off-street facilities is straightforward as there’s clear delineation between adjacent spots. For on-street sites, if there are no markings then the rule of thumb is to count one space for every 20 feet of curb length in the parking zones. Furthermore, this process also includes classification by type of parking spaces, such as time-restricted spaces, loading zones, ADA spaces etc.
4. **Parking Occupancy Rate:** Parking occupancy rate is calculated by dividing the total number of spaces occupied during a specific time period by the total number of spaces available.
5. **Average occupancy:** Occupancy of parking spaces in this document is reported separately for on- and off-street spaces. This is different from taking the average of, say, each off-street facility’s occupancy to create the overall average.
6. **85% parking threshold:** This level of occupancy in a parking zone is an industry-wide benchmark for optimum occupancy to balance parking demand and supply. At this level of occupancy, the supply of parking is efficiently used and at the same time, there is a minimal shortage of parking⁶.
7. **Turnover:** For each on-street parking space, the turnover factor is the number of unique vehicles that occupied that space within the survey period. This survey was 11 hours long, from 7 AM to 6 PM, with a count for on-street parking space taken every hour. For example, a turnover factor of 3.0 would indicate that three unique vehicles parked in that spot during the observed time period. Data was calculated using a combination of video and manual observation of vehicles parked.
8. **Dwell Times or Duration of Stay:** This term is used to describe the span of time a vehicle was observed to be parked in a parking space. This analysis is also used to summarize percentage of vehicles observed to be parked under an hour, between 1–2 hours, 2–3 hours, or for more than four hours.

Survey Limitations

There are two limitations in the survey owing to a limited budget. Firstly, on-street parking counts were carried out at an hourly basis from 7 AM – 6 PM. This may affect the interpretation of turnover rate (discussed in Section 5.4), it is not possible to know how many minutes a car was parked, if it was parked for less than an hour.

⁶ The High Cost of Free Parking, Donald Shoup, 2011

Secondly, off-street lot counts were conducted only at 7 AM, 1 PM, and 7 PM, as they house a much larger number of parking spaces distributed throughout the study area. This limitation may cause the study to miss a peak parking hour, not at those time points. The chances of this are less likely, since on-street parking peaks around midday too.

Study Process

Figure 6 shows the process as defined to achieve the objectives defined in the Introduction section.

Figure 6: Project Process



4. Existing Parking Infrastructure

For this study, a complete inventory of parking spaces was carried out in the six study areas on Thursday and the following Saturday in August 2025. **Table 1** shows a summary of the parking spaces, while **Figure 7** shows the same information visually. Out of 2,852 parking spaces, 2,312 or 81% of the spaces are located in off-street parking lots. The off-street parking lots are usually attached to a business, office building, shopping plaza, or a church. Only 4 out of 79 lots are owned by the city. In addition, the city owns and maintains 540 curb-side parking spaces. **Table 2** shows the distribution of parking inventory by area.

Note: This survey does not include parking inside single-family homes.

Table 1: Total Parking Inventory in the Study Area

Parking type	No. of locations	No. of parking spots	Percent of overall parking supply
On-street	Not applicable	538	19%
Off-street	79	2,312	81%
Public off-street	4	85	3%
Private off-street	75	2,227	78%

Figure 7: Share of Parking Types in the Study Area

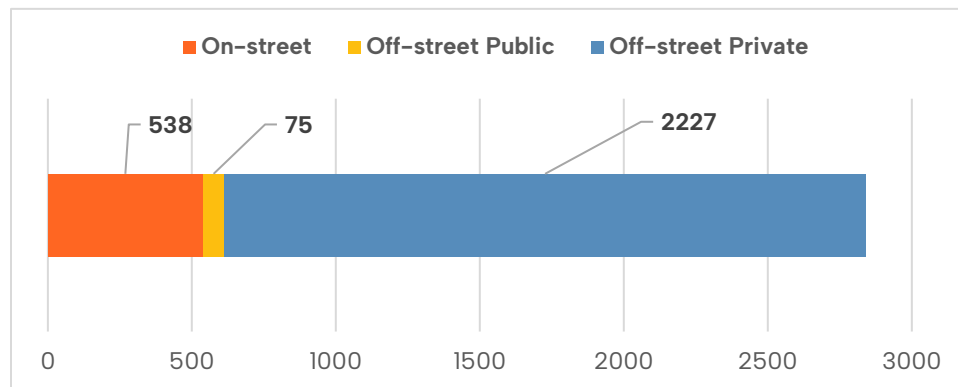
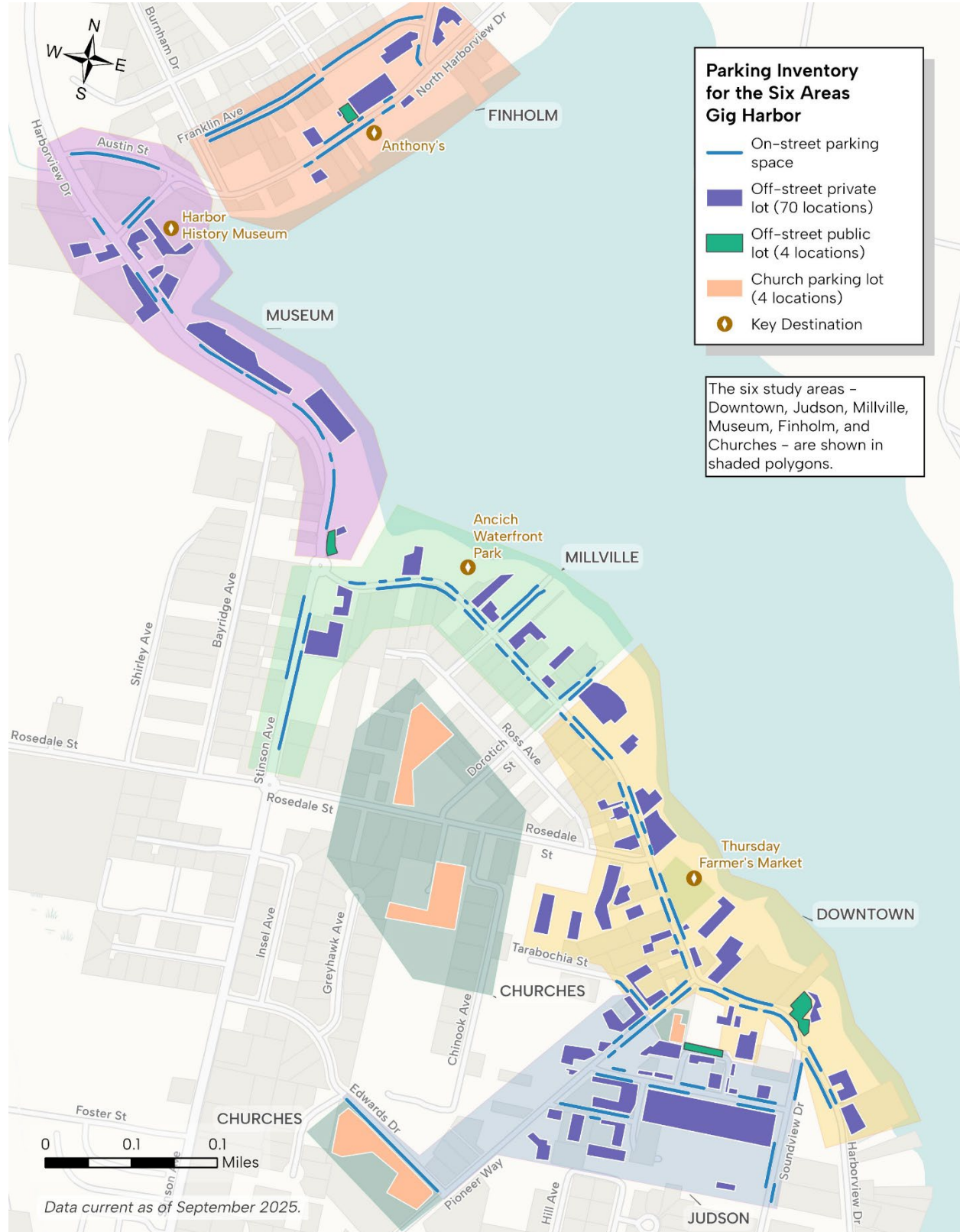


Table 2: Parking Inventory by Area

Area	Off-street: Private	Off-street: Public	Off-street: Church	On-street	Total
Downtown	545	33	0	141	719
Finholm	153	16	0	91	260
Judson	648	19	0	121	788
Millville	132	0	0	93	225
Museum	231	7	0	92	330
Churches	0	0	518	0	518

Figure 8 below is a map of the on- and off-street parking spaces in the six study areas.

Figure 8: On and Off-Street Parking Locations Surveyed in the Six Areas



Considering the table and map above together, Downtown and Judson are the two biggest areas in terms of parking with more than 700 spaces in each area. This is likely because, unlike Millville, Museum, and Finholm, they are less linear along the waterfront and have a lot of commercial development.

The combined area of the four churches supplies more than 500 parking spaces. This is an important fact to note as this project considers the idea of shared parking to meet the city’s burgeoning demand for space, a strategy the City has implemented on a smaller basis with the LDS Church’s parking lot and shuttle combination for the farmers’ market.

4.1. On-street parking inventory

There are 538 city owned on-street parking spaces available in the five areas, as shown in the map in **Figure 9**⁷. A few things to note are:

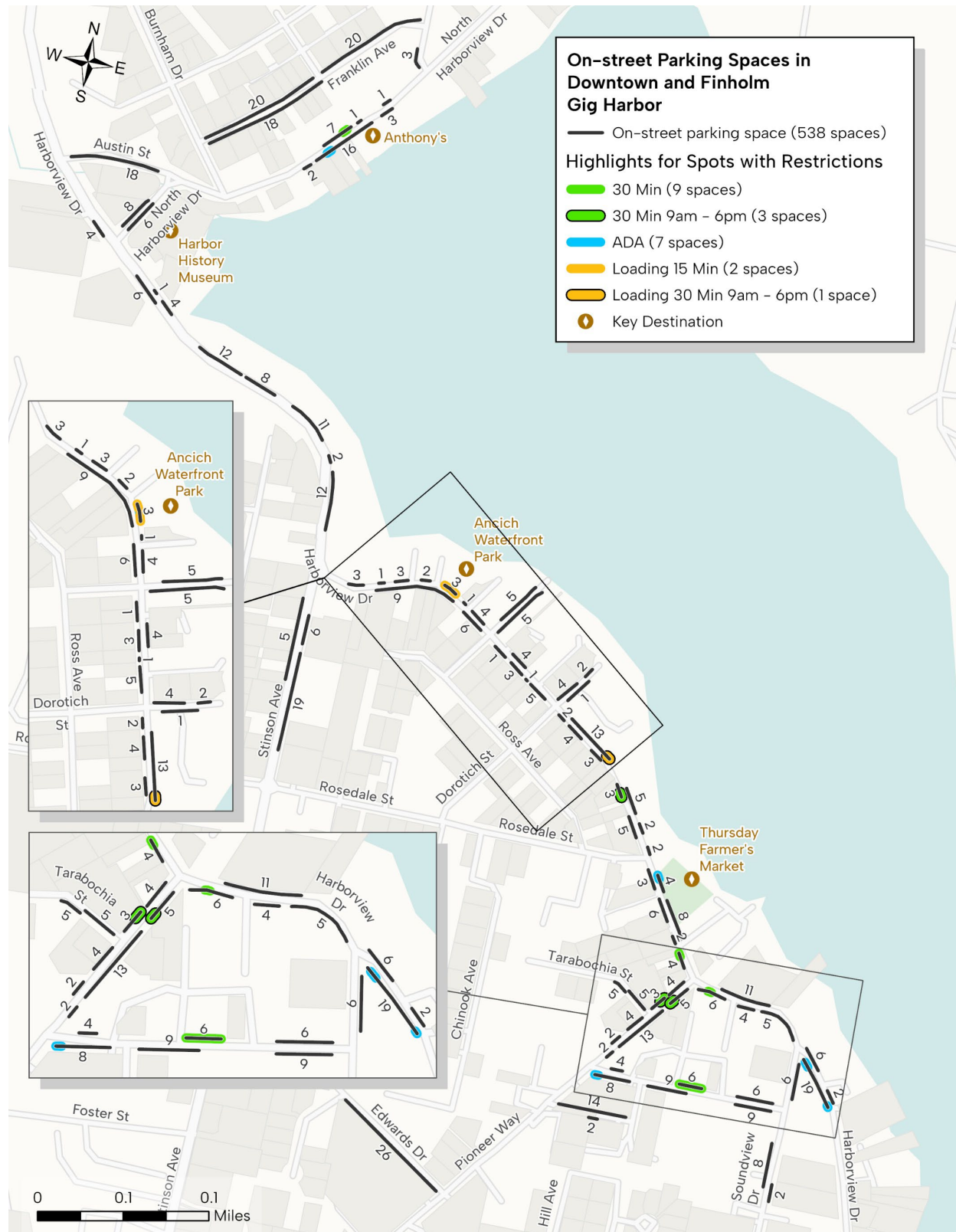
1. **On-street segments:** As shown in the map, the individual parking spaces are grouped into segments based on physical differentiators. In other words, a segment of continuous on-street spaces ends every time it is broken up by a driveway entrance, a no-parking curb space, the end of a block, or an intersection. This separation is done to reflect the possible real-world behavior of a driver looking for parking. The number next to each segment indicates the number of parking spaces.
2. **Restricted spaces:** Crucially, the map also calls out parking spaces with restrictions like 30-minute parking, loading zones, ADA spots etc. **Table 3** below provides a count of these spaces. Out of the 540 total spaces, only 26 or 4.8% have some sort of restriction, while the rest are free to park throughout the day and the week. Owing to the small number, the distribution of these spaces is quite uneven, being present mostly in Downtown and Judson, along with a few in Finholm area.
3. **Thursday farmer’s market:** Note the location of the farmer’s market in Downtown. Eight on-street spaces adjacent to the park are restricted for vendors and the market shuttle drop-off zone which affects the usage of parking in that area on Thursdays.

Table 3: On-Street Parking Inventory by Type

Parking space type	No. of Spaces	Percent of Total
Unrestricted parking	512	95.2%
Time restricted – 30 min	12	2.2%
Loading zones	7	1.3%
<i>Loading zone</i>	4	0.7%
<i>15-min loading zone</i>	2	0.4%
<i>30-min loading zone</i>	1	0.2%
ADA spaces	7	1.3%
Total spaces	538	100.0%

⁷ The “Churches” area has only off-street locations, hence it is not considered in this section.

Figure 9: On-Street Parking Inventory



4.2. Off-street parking inventory

Off-street parking facilities are composed of a few City-owned, publicly available lots, and many privately-owned and operated lots that are on the properties of businesses, shopping centers, restaurants etc. **Note that currently, the private lots are exclusive to the businesses they serve or are adjacent to, and none are paid alternatives to free public parking, as is common in many cities.**

Table 4 presents a summary by area, and **Figure 10** shows their locations, with the number inside showing the supply of spaces. Similar to what was noted for on-street parking, Finholm, Museum, and Millville areas have few parking locations. They are either smaller (Finholm), more residential (Millville), or very linear (Museum). The majority of the commercial activity takes place in Downtown and Judson, and this is where most of the parking lots reside too. The churches are away from the waterfront.

Table 4. Off-Street Parking by Area

Area	Number of lots	Number of parking spaces
Downtown	26	578
Finholm	8	169
Judson	21	667
Millville	8	132
Museum	11	238
Churches	4	518
Total	78	2,302

Figure 11 shows in inventory of parking lots categorized by the land use of the properties they are attached to/reside within.

Six land use categories are used, as defined below:

1. **Restaurant / Hospitality:** Restaurants, cafés, breweries, and lodging
2. **Commercial / Retail:** Businesses offering goods or personal services
3. **Office / Professional service:** Banks, insurance, consultants, real estate, or other business/professional offices
4. **Recreational:** Marinas, docks, boatyards
5. **Church:** The 4 churches
6. **Public parking lot:** Parking lots open to all public for free

Table 5 below uses the categories to quantify the total number of parking spaces provided by each. Owing to large shopping centers and churches, Commercial / Retail and Churches categories each have more than 500 parking spaces. There are nearly 500 spaces used along the waterfront by marinas and related services. These categories and the number of spaces is useful for assessing the supply against the needs.

Table 5: Off-Street Parking Inventory by Land Use

Land use category	Number of parking spaces	Land use category	Number of parking spaces
Restaurant / Hospitality	233	Recreational	495
Commercial / Retail	566	Church	518
Office / Professional service	355	Public parking lot	75

Figure 10: Off-Street Parking Inventory in the Six Areas

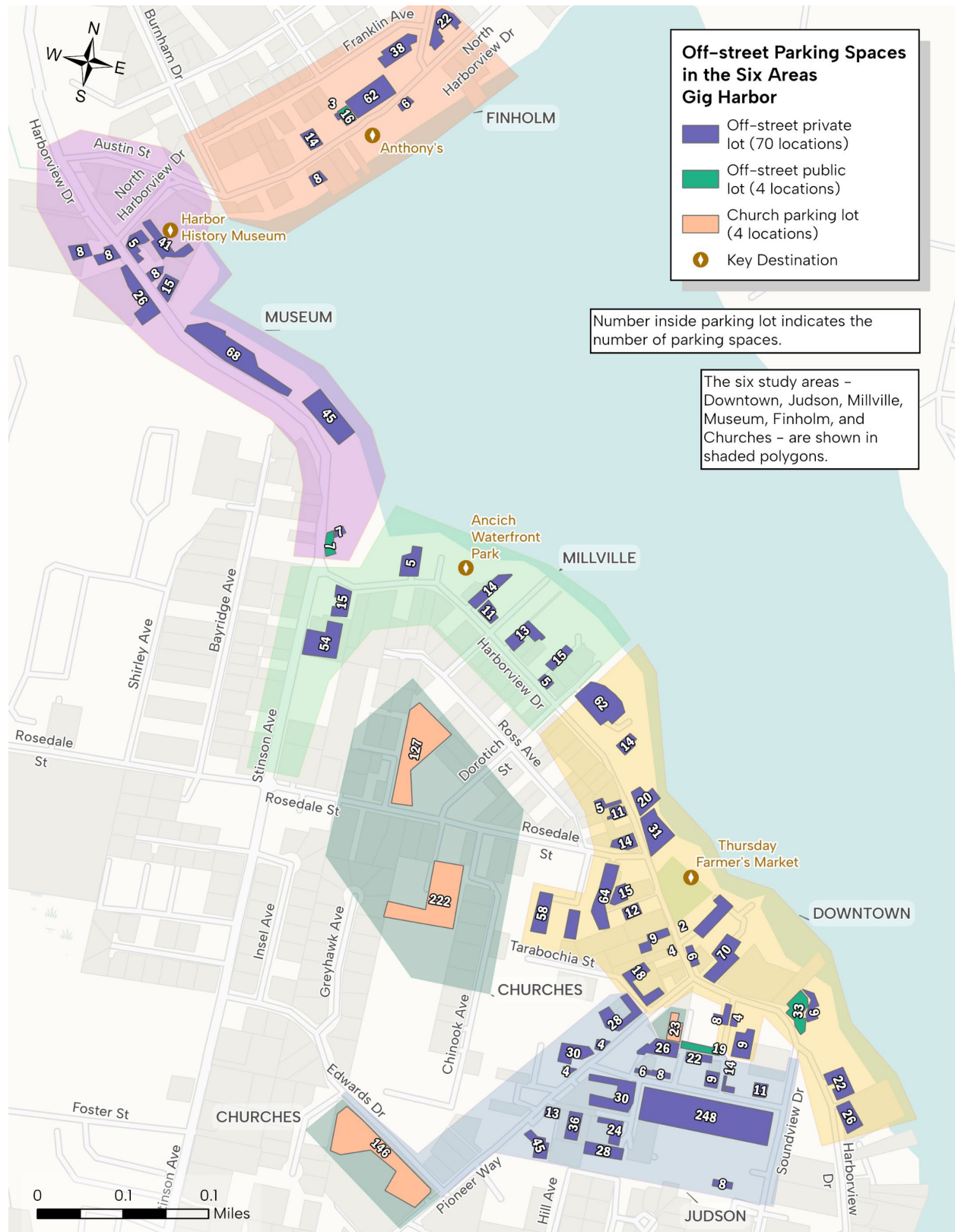
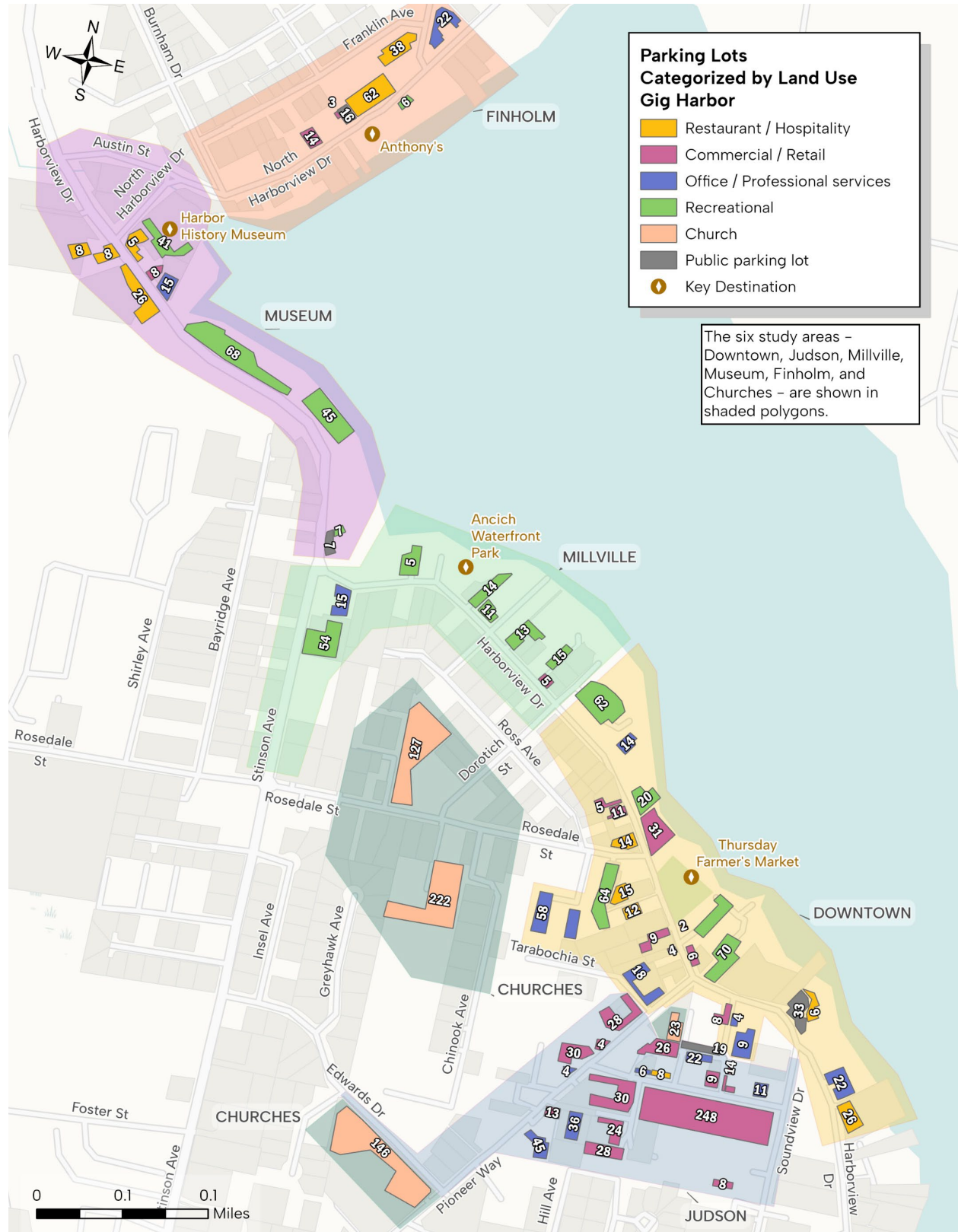


Figure 11: Off-Street Parking Lots Categorized by Land Use



4.2.1. Public parking lots

There are four publicly available parking lots within the overall study area with a total of just 75 spaces. **Parking at all public parking lots is free and unrestricted.**

Table 6 shows a summary of the lots, ordered from north to south on the map, the number and types of stalls, and presence of a few amenities. Notably, only Maritime Pier Lot has ADA-designated parking spaces.

Figure 12: Entryway to Adams Ave Public Parking Lot



Table 6: Public Parking Lots

Public lot name	Parking spaces	ADA stalls	EV stalls	Restrooms
Finholm Stair Climb Lot	16	0	1	Yes
Harborview Drive Lot	7	0	0	Yes
Maritime Pier Lot	33	2	2	Yes
Adams Ave Lot	19	0	0	No

4.2.2. Private parking lots

Figure 13: Signage indicating customer-only parking for a restaurant



Private parking lots make up 78% of all parking supply in the six study areas. They range

greatly in size from just two spaces at Gig Harbor Brewing to 248 spaces at Peninsula Shopping Center. A median or typically sized lot has 15 parking spaces, usually serving private businesses such as restaurants, local good stores, banks, and offices. Figure 13 shows an example of a signage indicating dedicated and restricted parking for a restaurant. Apart from the Shopping Center, three out of the four churches have between 120 to 220 parking spaces each, perhaps meeting the higher demands they experience on Sundays, though this has not been measured.

Saturday closure: Unlike public lots, private lots are usually exclusive to the property they are located in. Thus, if the business on such a

property is closed for operations on Saturday, the parking lot is likely to see lower occupancy too. Based on City data, of the 1,670 spaces in parking lots (excluding churches and public lots), 436 (26%) are housed in lots that are closed on Saturday. **The effect of business closure on parking occupancy is further explored in Section 5.3.4.**

5. Results of the 2025 Parking Survey

5.1. Overall Parking Occupancy

Since the goal of this project is to understand parking demand patterns during peak usage times, the maps in this section show parking occupancy when it is highest overall. However, as a reminder, a limitation is that while on-street locations were surveyed every hour from 7 AM to 6 PM, off-street locations were surveyed at only 7 AM, 1 PM, and 7 PM.

Figure 15 and Figure 16 show the occupancy levels for all surveyed parking spaces during maximum overall occupancy, at 1 PM, on Thursday and Saturday. **Though they are visualizing parking demand, what the maps really reflect is commercial activity.** People driving to the waterfront area search for parking nearer to the businesses, workplaces, parks, marinas, and events that they want to visit. Thus, there is a general correlation between occupancy levels of on-street and off-street parking. On the other hand, areas with a marked difference in occupancy – where on-street spaces are more occupied than off-street ones – indicate the presence of parking restrictions. In the case of this study, that mostly refers to private parking lots attached to businesses and marinas which do not allow parking for non-members.

This difference is especially noticeable on Saturday, when workplaces are more likely to be closed. In Downtown, even though on-street parking is mostly occupied at 1 PM, many private lots are less than 25% occupied.

While these two figures present a visually detailed look at occupancy levels, **Figure 17** presents a simplified look for the busier day, Thursday. A parking segment or lot is shaded red if it is more than 50% occupied at 1 PM and shaded blue if more than 50% empty. **The goal of the maps is to highlight the fact that parking supply far exceeds parking demand when considering both on- and off-street parking even on the busiest days for the waterfront area.**

Figure 14: Nearly empty on-street parking spaces on Edwards Dr outside the United Methodist Church on the left, also with empty parking spaces (not shown in image)



A detailed discussion of parking occupancy is presented separately for on-street and off-street parking in the following two sections.

Figure 15: Overall Peak Parking Occupancy on Thursday at 1 PM

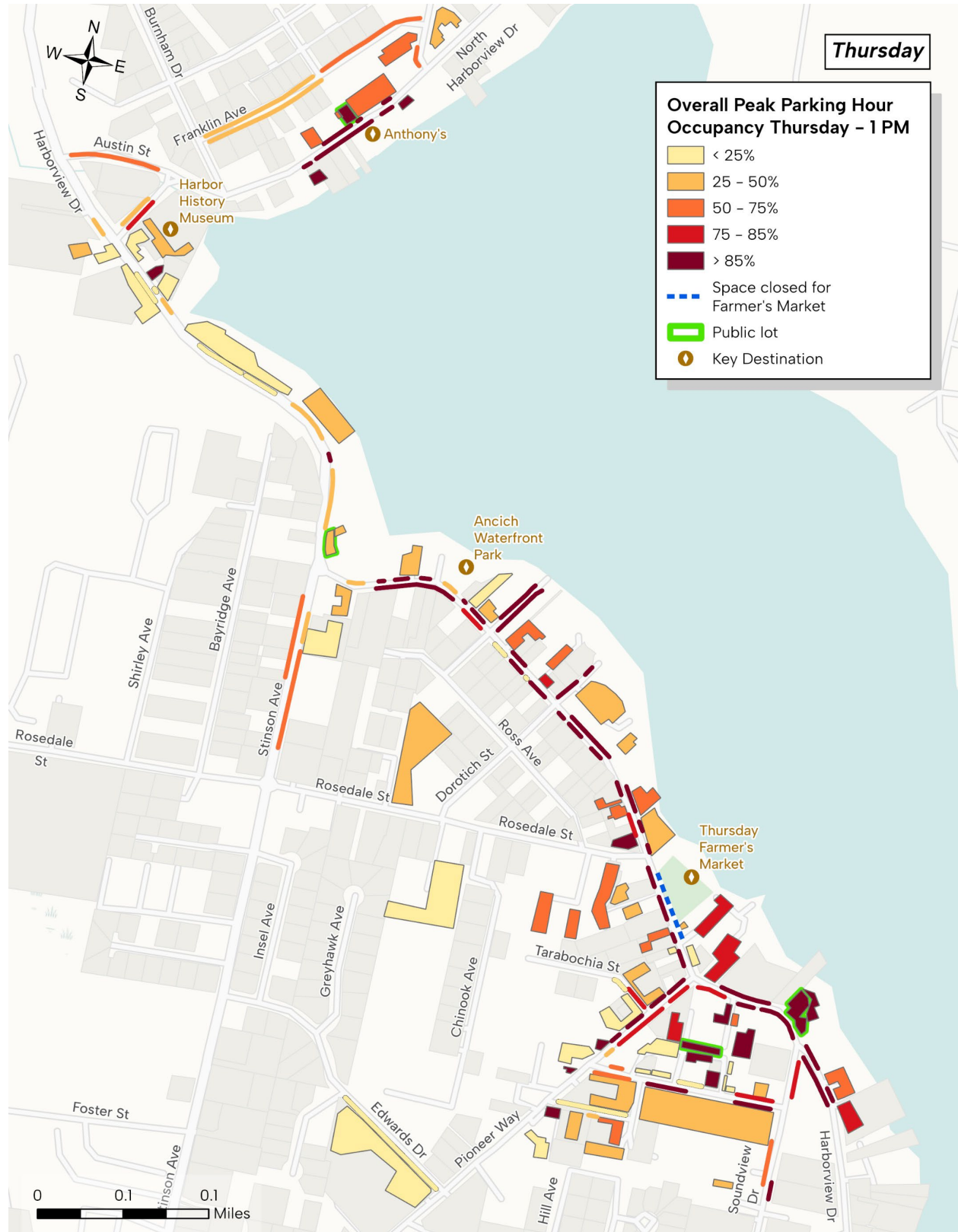


Figure 16: Overall Peak Parking Occupancy on Saturday at 1 PM

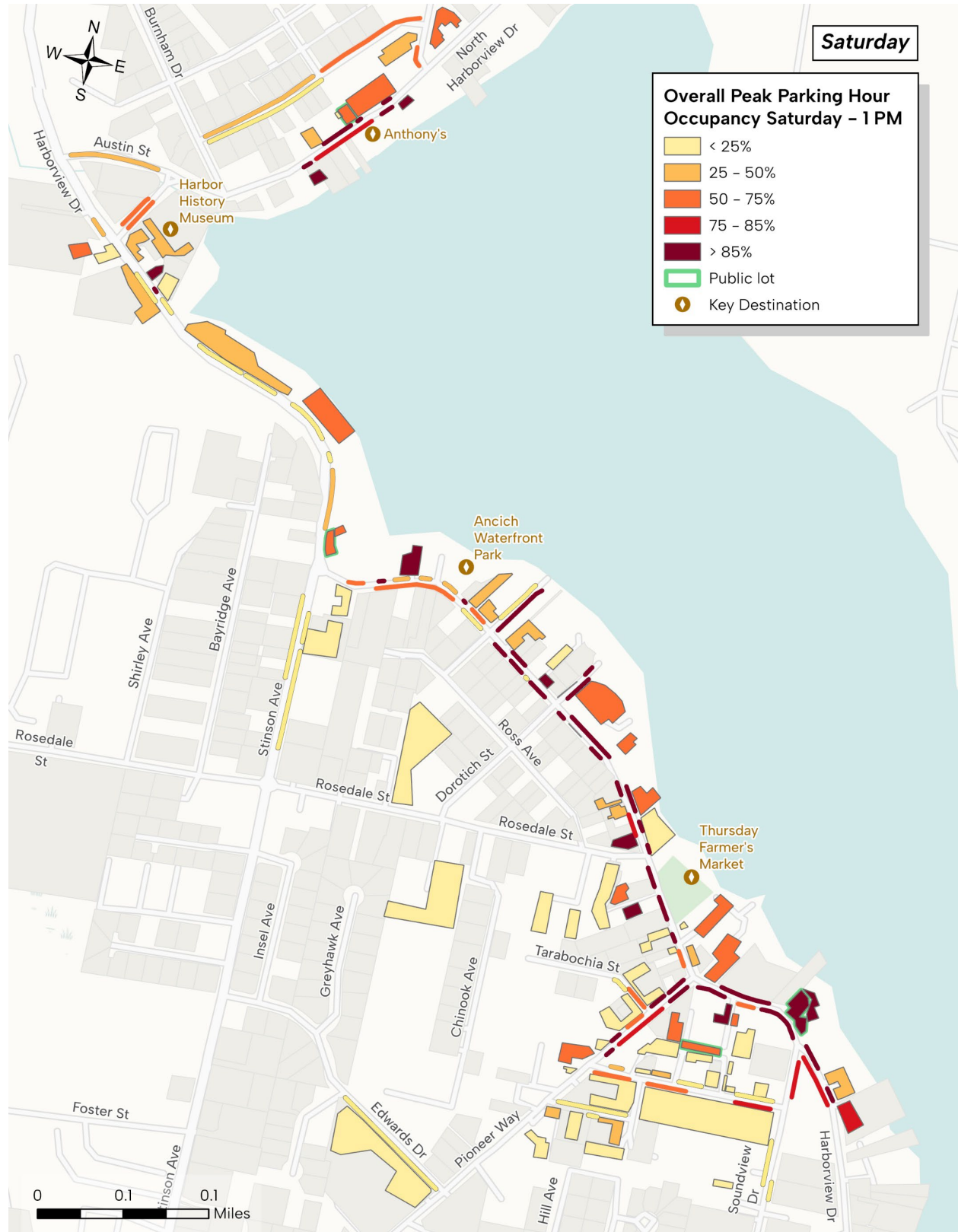


Figure 17: Peak Parking Occupancy on Thursday at 1 PM – Summary Version



5.2. On-street parking occupancy

Figure 19 on the following page shows the on-street occupancy levels for Thursday, while **Figure 20** shows the same for Saturday. Note that the peak parking occupancy for on-street is different from that for the combined occupancy maps earlier – on Thursday, maximum spaces were occupied at 12 PM while Saturday at 11 AM. Both maps also indicate the locations of the restricted parking spaces to give further context to occupancy levels.

Key observations:

1. The general pattern is of high occupancy on both days in Downtown, Judson, and Millville areas, with medium occupancy in Finholm, and low occupancy in Museum.
2. Thursday is a busier day for parking than Saturday. For lower Downtown, this can be attributed to the Thursday farmer's market which is a popular draw for locals (**Figure 18** shows the signages blocking off on-street spaces for the farmer's market shuttle). On the other hand, Saturday experiences sustained activity too due to the presence of visitors from the surrounding regions.
3. Two road segments, Harborview Dr north of Stinson Ave and Edwards Dr further down in Judson, show low levels of usage during the peak hour. Both have parking that is more than a thousand feet away from a primary attraction, such as the Farmer's Market. This additional distance may be a barrier for those searching for parking, especially given the challenging topography.
4. City staff have indicated that Franklin Street, which is primarily a residential street parallel to N Harborview Dr in Finholm, is known to be used by employees of stores located in that area. This may be a reason for the slightly lower occupancies there on Saturday.
5. For a few parking segments on both maps, occupancy is higher than number of spaces. This is because a 20 ft distance is equated to space for one car in inventory. When smaller cars park next to each other, the number of perceived spaces may go up.

Figure 18: Signages for the Thursday Farmer's Market shuttle service and the supporting no parking zone.



Table 7 below splits the data from the maps by area. Millville and Judson had significant variation in the overall occupancy levels at peak hours between Thursday and Saturday. The other areas saw less variation across the two days.

Table 7: On-Street Peak Parking Hour Occupancy on Thursday and Saturday

Area	Inventory	Occupied spaces Thursday 12 PM	Occupancy % Thursday 12 PM	Occupied spaces Saturday 11 AM	Occupancy % Saturday 11 AM
Downtown	141	124	88%	125	89%
Finholm	91	62	68%	55	60%
Judson	121	68	56%	41	34%
Millville	93	74	80%	56	60%
Museum	92	39	42%	40	43%

Figure 21 shows the occupancy throughout the day for each area in absolute number of spaces occupied. Though Downtown (141 spaces) and Judson (121 spaces) both have a greater number of parking spaces than the other areas, Judson sees much less on-street occupancy, indicating that either people may not be aware of the spaces available there, or may prefer to walk less to visit businesses along the waterfront.

Figure 21: Number of On-Street Parking Spaces Occupied by Area

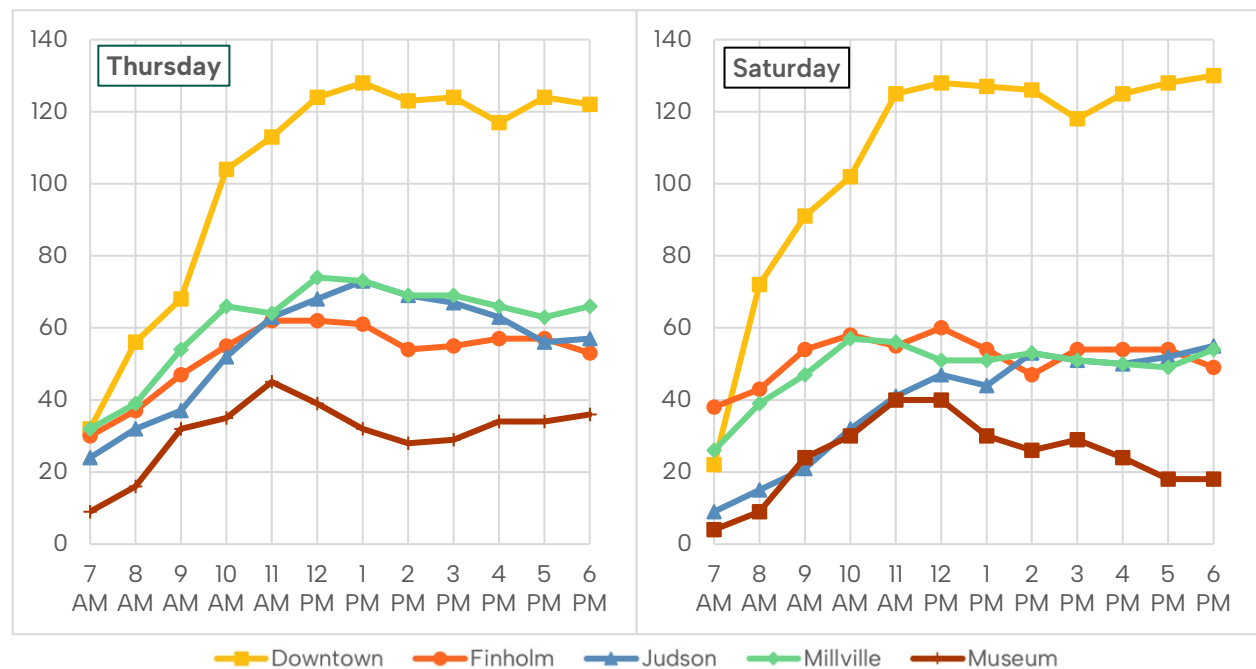
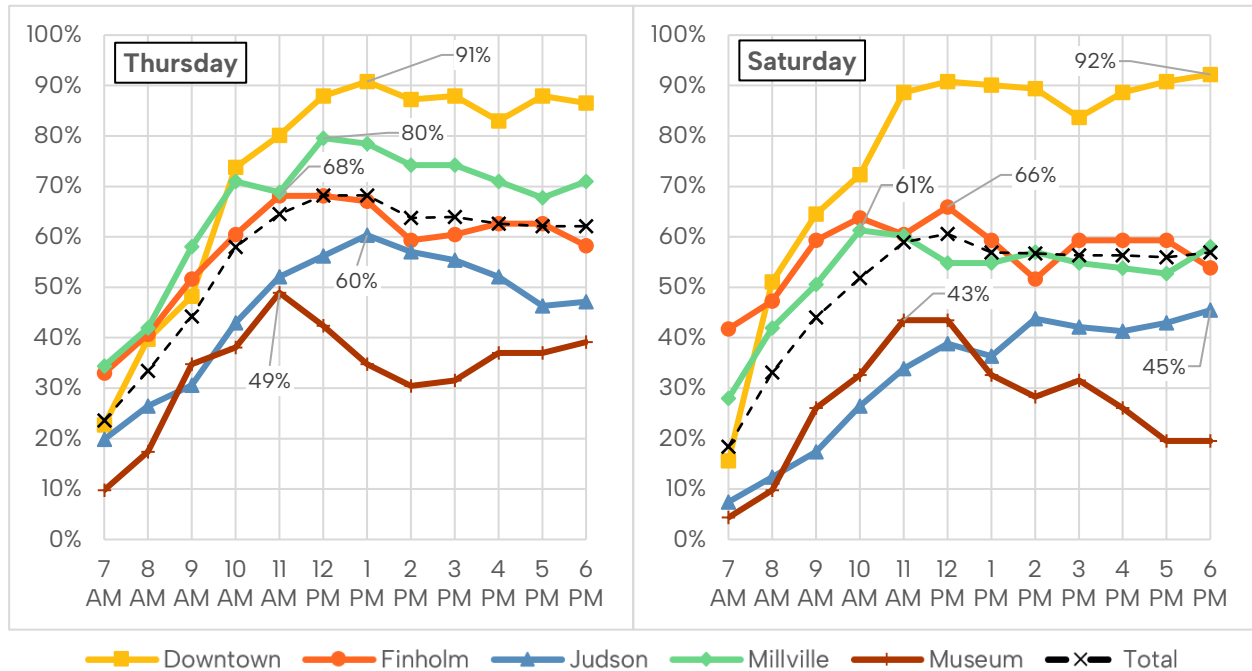


Figure 22 shows the same information in percentage to allow comparison between the areas. The percentage charts also show the overall occupancy percentage at on-street spaces. Finally, the highest occupancy percentage for each area is called out to highlight the time of the day each saw maximum occupancy.

Combined, the data in the figure below show the difference in parking trends between Thursday and Saturday. On Thursday, all areas witness peak parking occupancy during mid-day, with the more commercial areas having a second peak in the evening. On Saturday, however, Downtown and Judson see more parking at 6 PM, while the smaller and less commercial areas have mid-day peaks.

Figure 22: Percentage of On-Street Spaces Occupied by Area



Referring to the 85% industry benchmark for parking, it is also notable that all areas except Downtown stay below 85% occupancy at all times. Thus, at least from that definition the waterfront area is not parking deficient, providing credence to the goal of efficient management and redirecting cars to empty spaces throughout the study area.

5.3. Off-street parking occupancy

Unlike on-street spaces, off-street lots have restrictions in terms of who can park and when. Section 4.2 presented data on the number of parking spaces available in different land use types and the number of spaces closed on Saturday.

5.3.1. Spatial Distribution of Occupancy – Peak Parking Hours

Figure 23 shows the distribution of occupancy levels across all off-street parking lots during the peak parking hour, 1 PM, on Thursday. Figure 24 shows the same for Saturday at 1 PM. Parking lots containing more than 50 spaces are labeled. Both maps also highlight the locations of the public lots.

Key observations:

1. Despite the higher supply of off-street spaces compared to on-street ones, occupancy is much lower for off-street parking. Of the 78 total locations, 43 were less than 50% occupied on Thursday and 51 on Saturday, at 1 PM on both days.
2. There is a higher density of parking activity in lower Downtown on Thursday, likely reflecting the spillover demand of the Farmer’s Market and employees parking in dedicated lots for workplaces.
3. Parking lots right next to the waterbody are generally catering to the various marinas, serving members but not the public. Consequently, occupancy in these lots is higher on Saturday than on Thursday, when more people are likely to be working.

Figure 23: Off-street Peak Occupancy – Thursday at 1 PM

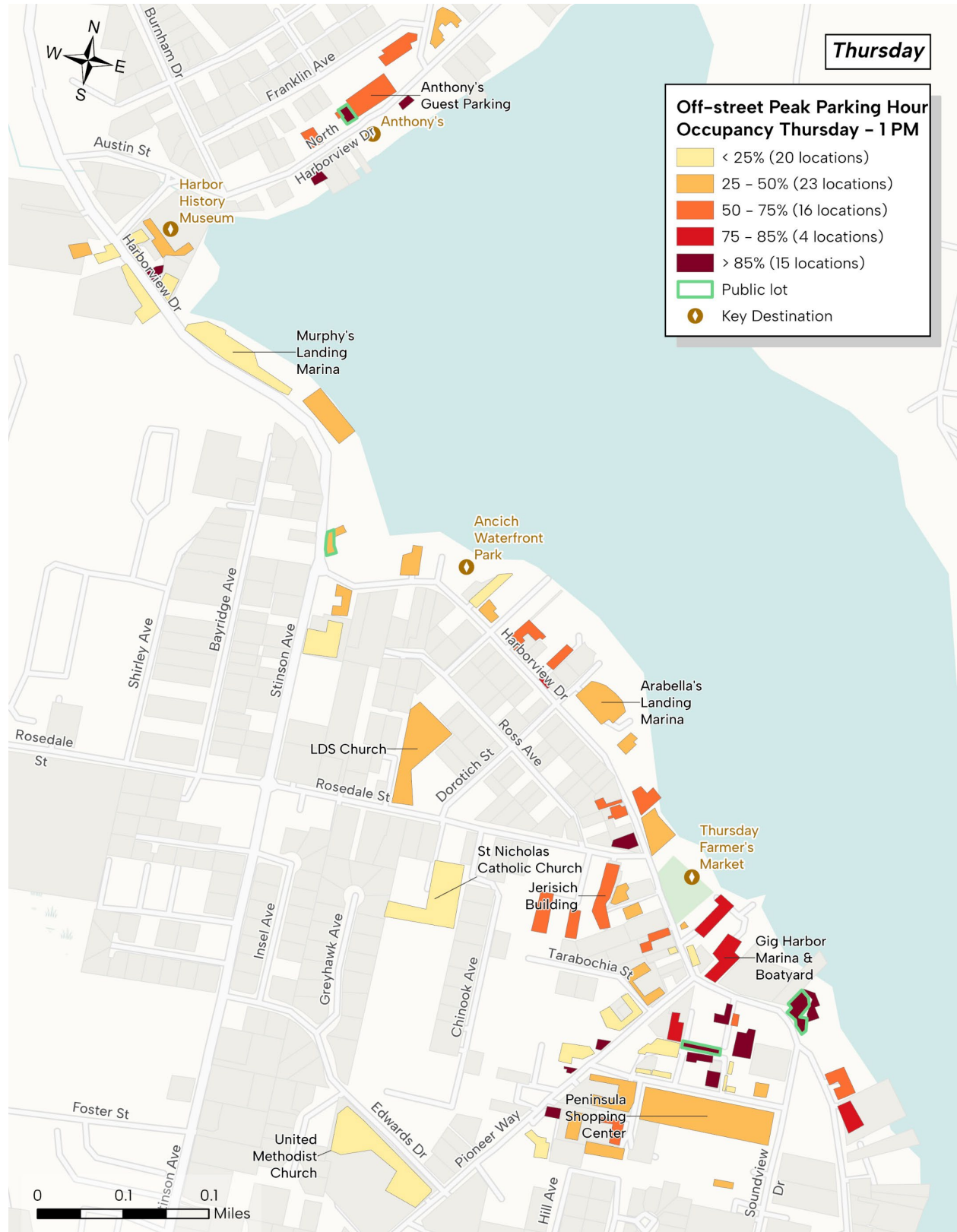


Table 8 below splits the data from the maps by area. In the earlier section, it was seen that on-street parking saw consistent demand on both days and throughout most of the areas. The table below showcases the different trends and patterns observed with off-street parking.

Key differences in off-street parking between Thursday and Saturday:

1. Downtown, Finholm, Judson, and Churches experienced significant reduction in parking occupancy during the peak hours from Thursday to Saturday.
2. On the other hand, Museum area saw a respectable increase. Millville did not see much change and remained low, reflecting its more residential makeup.
3. In particular, the parking lot at LDS Church on Rosedale St doubles as parking for people going to the Thursday farmer’s market. The city runs a dedicated shuttle from this church to the market for this purpose. This is likely the reason for higher occupancy on Thursday than on Saturday.

Table 8: Off-Street Peak Parking Occupancy on Thursday and Saturday

Area	Inventory	Occupied spaces Thursday 1 PM	Occupancy % Thursday 1 PM	Occupied spaces Saturday 1 PM	Occupancy % Saturday 1 PM
Downtown	578	347	60%	254	44%
Finholm	169	111	66%	93	55%
Judson	667	307	46%	168	25%
Millville	132	35	27%	33	25%
Museum	238	67	28%	105	44%
Churches	518	85	16%	18	3%

Figure 25 below illustrates the typical difference in parking usage between public lots (left) and private lots reserved for an adjoining business (right).

Figure 25: (Left) A fully occupied public parking lot, (Right) An underused parking lot used by a local business



5.3.2. Parking Occupancy Trends by Area

The figures below help to provide more insight into the spatial patterns. **Figure 26** shows the absolute parking numbers for each area over the day, and then **Figure 27** allows comparison by showing the percentage occupancies.

Figure 26: Off-Street Parking Occupancy Numbers by Area

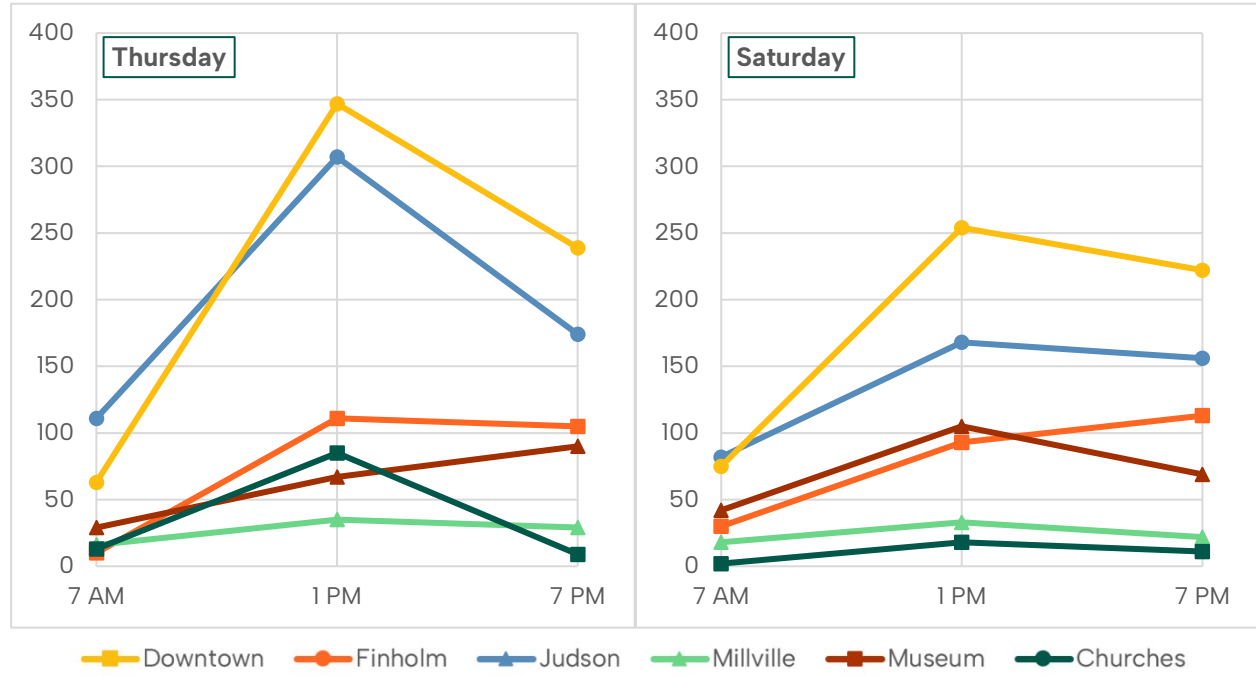
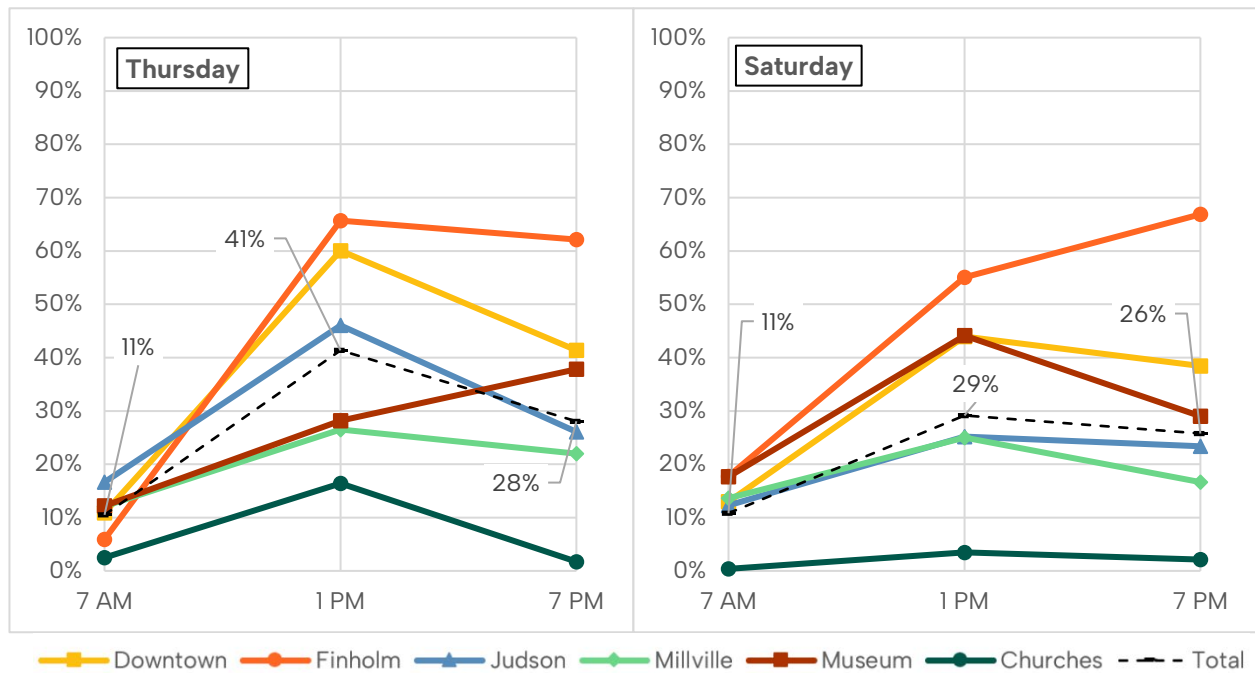


Figure 27: Off-Street Parking Occupancy % by Area

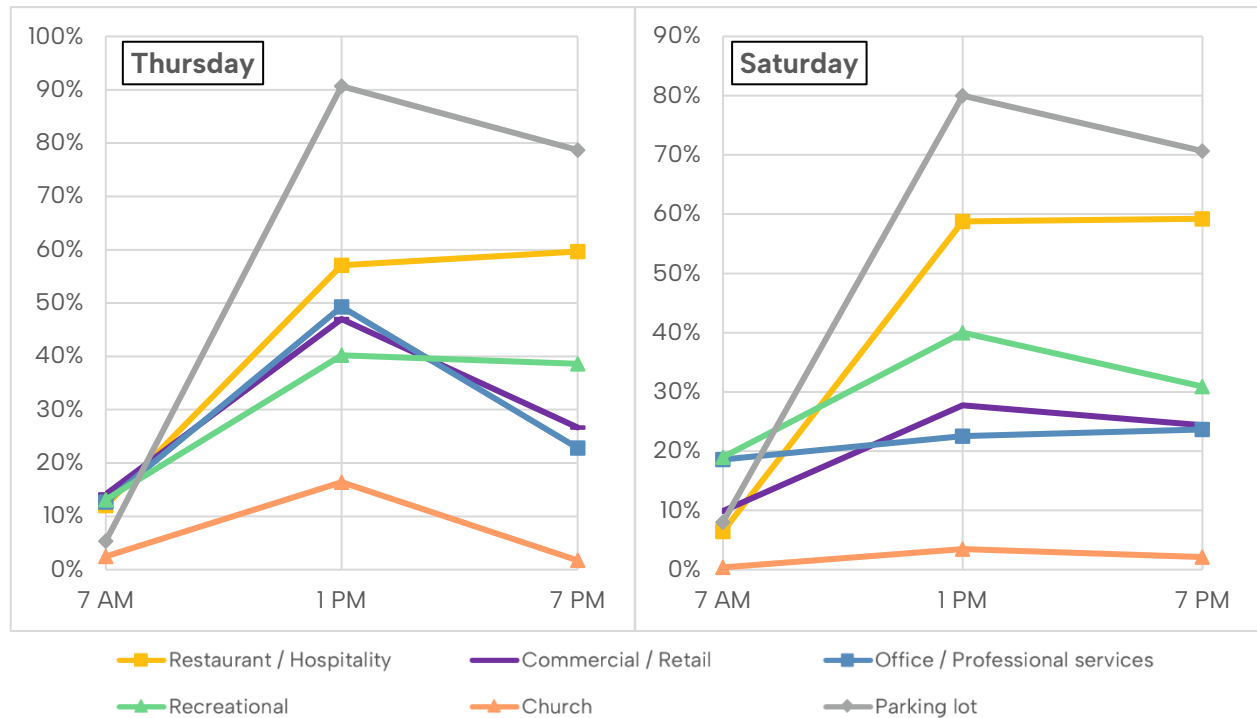


Thursday: Occupancy in all the areas, except Museum, peaks around noon. In Museum, it increases slightly into the evening. **Saturday:** The only behavioral difference to Thursday is that it is Finholm which witnesses the continuous increase in occupancy throughout the day.

5.3.3. Parking Occupancy Trends by Land Use

Based on the land use categorization of the private lots in Section 4.2 and Figure 11, **Figure 28** further helps highlight the points following the charts.

Figure 28: Off-Street Parking Occupancy % by Land Use



1. Public lots have high demand during peak hours, likely because they serve visitation needs not met by parking lots in other land use types. Furthermore, compared to parking on the street (which usually requires parallel parking), it is easier for most people to park in the off-street lots.
2. Though the waterfront area is a key destination for marinas and boating activities, the Recreational category in the figure indicates that the parking lots serving them see low occupancy even in the busy summer season. This is likely because they're available only to members and not to other people interested in accessing the waterbodies.
3. Office / Professional services are clearly oriented towards weekday occupancy by workers. On Saturday, they sit mostly empty, even as public lots and on-street parking continue to experience high usage levels.

5.3.4. Effect of Weekend Business Closures on Occupancy

As first mentioned in Section 4.2.2, if a business is closed on Saturday, then it is likely that the parking lot serving that property is also not being occupied, at least not at the levels observed on a weekday. This would have the effect of lower parking occupancy on Saturday, and it is important to note here for accurate interpretations of the data.

As shown in **Table 9**, of the 70 private lots, 47 (67%) are open on Saturday and 21 are closed. The Saturday hours of 2 lots are unknown. Owing to the closure, occupancy at closed lots on Saturday is lower than that at open lots on Saturday by 9 percentage points. This is even though the reverse is true on Thursday, lots which would be closed on Saturday are 3 percentage points more occupied.

Table 9: Occupancy of Private Parking Lots split by Saturday Status

Saturday status	Number of private lots	Number of parking spaces	Occupancy at 1 PM – Thursday	Occupancy at 1 PM – Saturday
Open on Saturday	47	1234	46%	38%
Closed on Saturday	21	436	49%	29%
Unknown	2	39	33%	5%

Table 10 adds important context to this trend. As expected, all the restaurants and nearly all the recreational lots are open on Saturday. On the other hand, nearly a third of the commercial locations and two-thirds of the office lots are closed on that day.

Table 10: Saturday Status of Private Lots by Land Use Type

Land use type	Open on Saturday	Closed on Saturday	Unknown
Restaurant / Hospitality	13	0	0
Commercial / Retail	15	7	1
Office / Professional services	5	10	1
Recreational	13	2	0

5.4. On-street Turnover

5.4.1. Dwell time

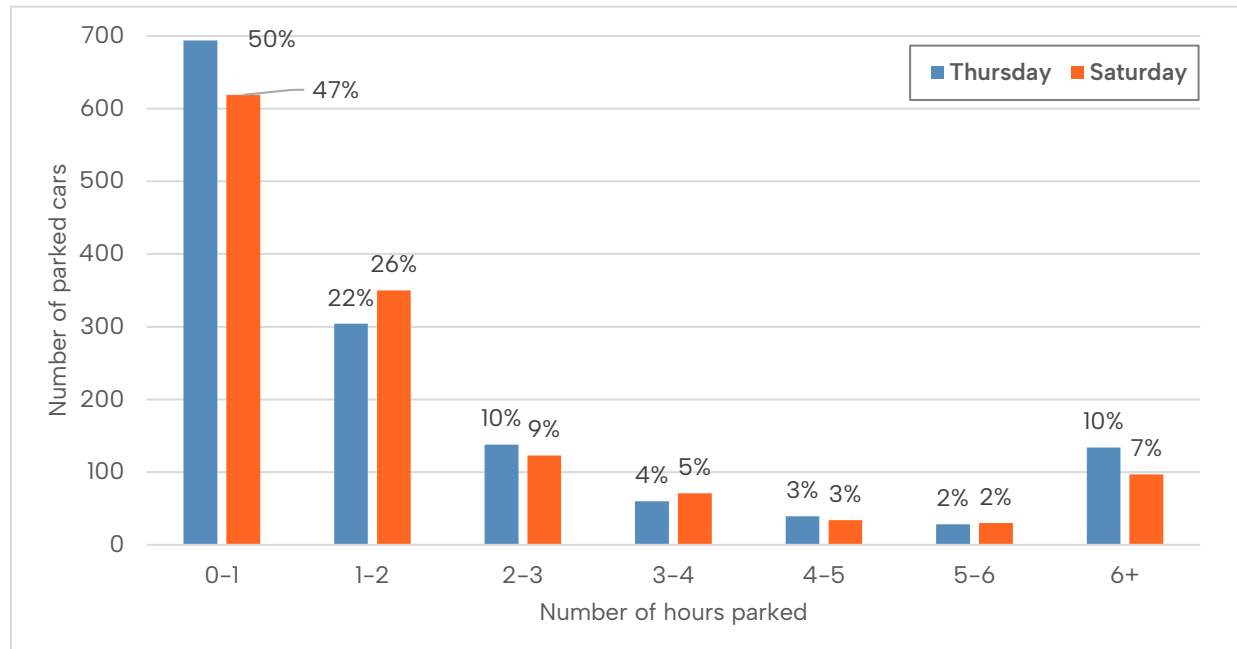
Dwell time is the amount of time a car was observed to be parked. For this survey, dwell time is collected only for on-street spaces. Furthermore, since the survey counts were carried out hourly, the dwell time categories are hourly too, from 0-1 hours to more than 10 hours.

Figure 29 shows a distribution of dwell times for both Thursday and Saturday, with a decreasing trend on both days. Dwell time of more than 6 hours has been combined into one column to highlight the parking behavior of residents and employees, as opposed to that of tourists, visitors, and commercial activity.

In total, 1,397 and 1,324 cars were observed to be parked on Thursday and Saturday, respectively. **On both days, nearly half of the cars parked for less than an hour in an on-street location** (as indicated by the percentage callouts). Nearly a quarter of the cars parked for between 1-2 hours. After that, the number of hours reduced continuously.

There is a small difference in the parked hours between the two days, with a slightly bigger percentage of cars parking for a longer duration on Saturday. 10% and 7% of the cars parked for more than 6 hours on Thursday and Saturday, respectively. Typically, the main external factors that would affect dwell times are parking time restrictions and paid parking, neither of which are implemented in the study areas.

Figure 29: Dwell Times for On-Street Parked Cars on Thursday and Saturday



5.4.2. Parking Turnover Factor

The turnover factor is an indicator of how efficiently the parking spaces are being used. One caveat for using this definition for this study is that the turnover rate is available at the segment level (see Section 4.1 for a brief discussion about on-street segments) and not the individual spot level, owing to limited time and budget for parsing through the data.

The turnover factor ranged between 0.25 and 7 for on-street spaces within the study segments surveyed during a 12-hour period. As illustrated in **Figure 30** and **Figure 31**, street segments experiencing an average turnover factor below 2.0 per space during the 12-hour period typically served no more than two vehicles per space within that segment, which may be attributed to factors such as less desirable curbside locations or extended parking durations by residents or employees. Conversely, segments with a turnover averaging above 2.0 per space demonstrate more efficient parking utilization, accommodating multiple vehicles within the same time frame.

Segments within the Downtown, Millville, and Finholm areas showed varying levels of parking space utilization during a 12-hour period, with segments serving multiple vehicles and accommodating customer and visitor trips of less than 2 hours. Some segments in these areas had an estimated turnover factor of 3.0 cars per hour or lower, which suggests longer parking durations, likely due to employees or residents using street parking.

Several segments in the Museum area had a turnover ratio below 2.0, suggesting that parking spaces were more available in these areas, possibly due to reduced land-use activity and low desirability for parking along these segments.

Figure 30: On-Street Parking Turnover Rate - Thursday

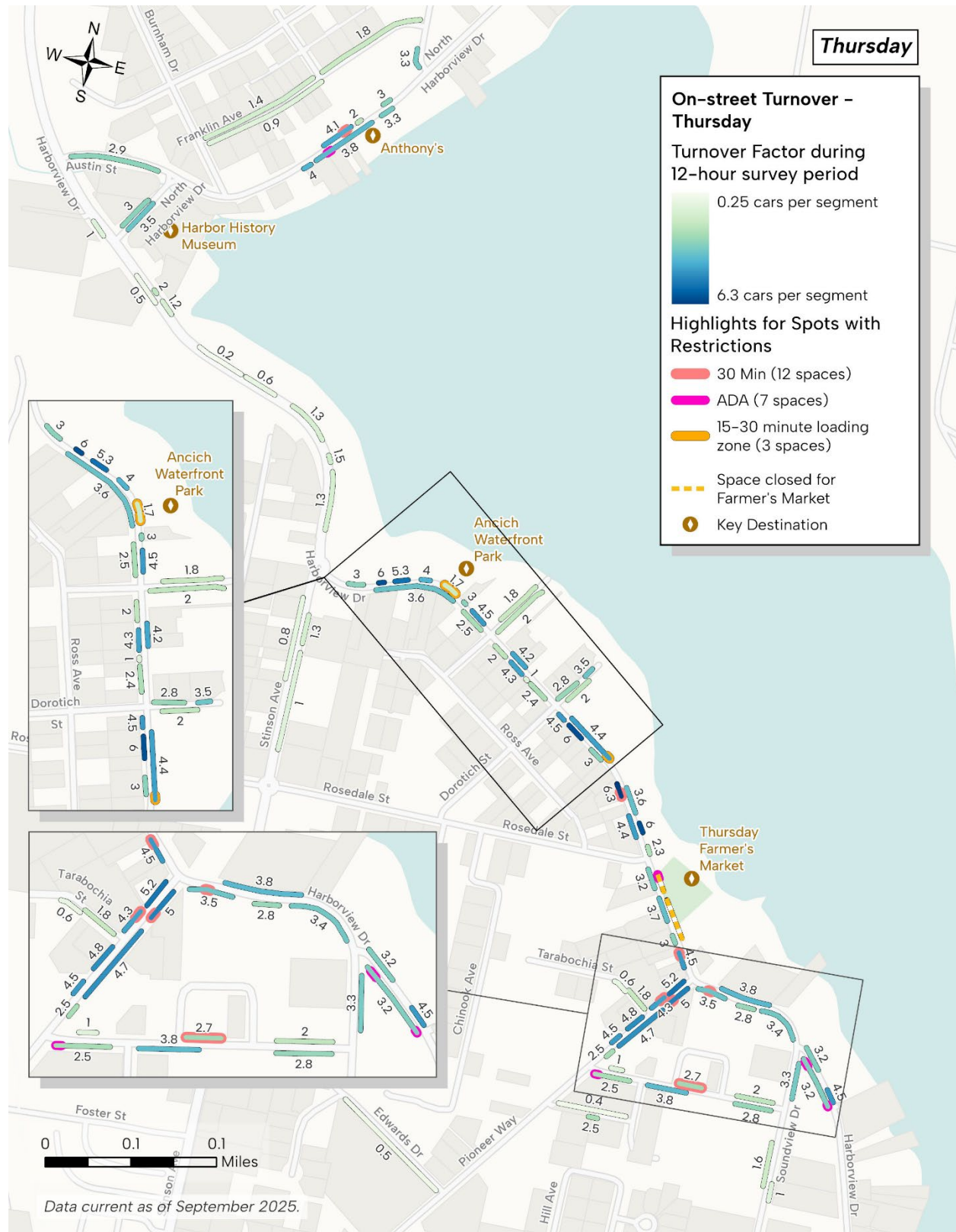
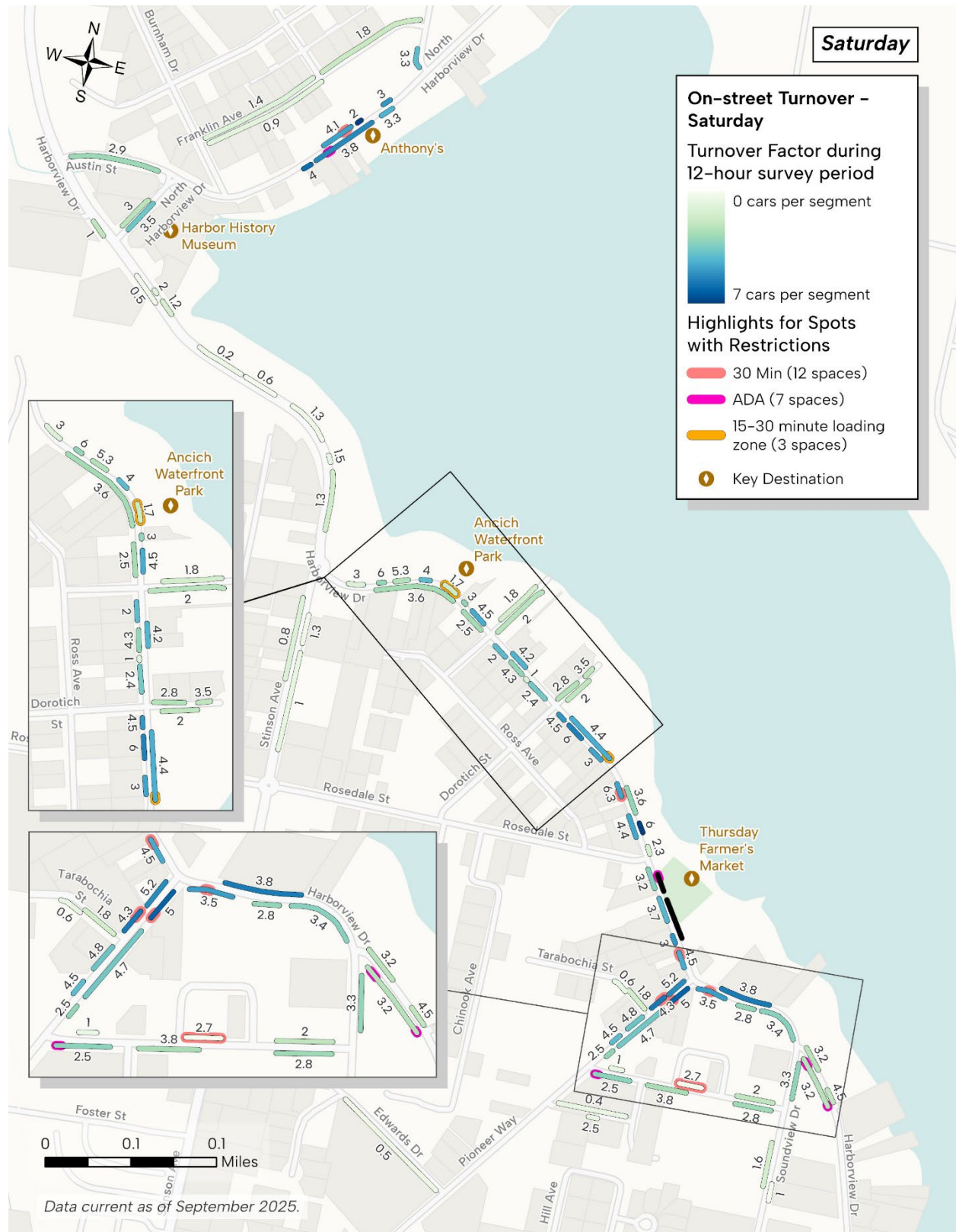


Figure 31: On-Street Parking Turnover Rate – Saturday



6. Parking Management Interventions

The simple response to a perceived lack of parking by residents and visitors would be to build more parking. However, such a step would lead to more driving, cost a lot of money to buy land and build parking, and worsen the overall experience of exploring the commercial area of a city.

Therefore, the more appropriate step would be to comprehensively manage existing parking and optimize the parking supply. The previous sections highlighted the high demand for public on-street parking meanwhile there is abundance of available private off-street parking. This section presents various “interventions” that could optimize public parking and potential unlock parking supply in off-street lots to better serve the needs of the Downtown and Finholm districts.

6.1.1. Suggested Interventions from Previous Studies

The annual parking survey conducted by the City and a volunteer group also made key suggestions based on primary data and on-ground observations. These were:

1. Explore employee parking without affecting customer and visitor needs.
 - a. Understand employee parking demand.
 - b. Explore employee parking in private lots.
2. Explore “off-hour” usage of private lots to supplement public parking supply to meet peak demand on weekends.
3. Improve signage and provide maps or apps for wayfinding.
4. Improve merchant and public awareness of parking availability & needs.
5. Limit new parking in Downtown and encourage walking.

Many of the interventions suggested below are in line with the ones already discussed previously. The goal of the following subsections, then, is to provide structure back the interventions with examples and other considerations.

6.1.2. The Three Categories of Interventions

The parking management interventions are grouped into three categories:



Provided below is a detailed summary of interventions found suitable to explore under each of these three categories.

6.1.3. Parking Supply Enhancement

This set of interventions increases the effective availability of parking without adding new spaces by improving the efficiency of the existing supply. Rather than expanding capacity, it focuses on better management and utilization—enhancing access and reliability while avoiding the costs and impacts of new construction.

Table 11: Supply Enhancement Interventions

Intervention	Description	Expected effect
Time limits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add 15-min, 30-min, 2-hour parking spots throughout the area, especially next to high activity spots. • Maintain consistency in their locations on every block for predictability for drivers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More parking availability and turnover on the busiest blocks. • Long-term parking needs addressed by spaces further away from high activity areas and which need more walking.
Enforcement	Restrictions on time and type of parking (ADA, loading zones etc.), and pricing will need enforcement that should be consistent, not necessarily strict.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement is key to success of parking management interventions. • Consistency will enable trust-building with residents.
Shared parking with churches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches experience high occupancy mostly on weekends. • Two church lots in the study area are within 5-minute walking distance of Harborview Dr, and can be invited for a shared parking agreement. 	After implementation of on-street restrictions, church lots that are a few minutes walking distance from the waterfront streets can meet parking needs for able-bodied customers and employees.
Shared parking among neighboring businesses	<p>Similar to the above, shared parking between businesses which have complementary activity periods can be used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All visitors (offered as public parking) • Employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better utilization of privately owned and underused off-street parking. • Free up on-street parking, otherwise currently being used for daily parking by employees of businesses.
On-street parking permits	(In conjunction with Parking benefit districts in next section) Restrict parking on nearby residential streets to only holders of permits – residents of those streets and waterfront area employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent spillover parking caused by on-street time limits and pricing in the waterfront area. • If there is no nearby off-street lot, this can be a structured way to meet the needs for employee parking.

6.1.4. Demand Reduction

These interventions serve as the counterpart to supply enhancement, focusing on managing and reducing the demand for parking. Rather than accommodating additional vehicle trips, they aim to influence travel behavior by encouraging walking, biking, and transit as substitutes for car use. By shaping the everyday choices of residents and visitors, these interventions support long-term system management, helping align travel demand with available infrastructure while advancing broader mobility and sustainability goals.

Table 12: Demand Reduction Interventions

Intervention	Description	Expected effect
Paid parking	Charge for on- and off-street public parking. Starting value for pricing should recoup implementation and enforcement costs. Pricing can be dynamic by location and/or time, using the following logic:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City recoups the true cost of providing parking on valuable public space. • Parking demand is redistributed to less busy areas.

Intervention	Description	Expected effect
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher in high activity areas where parking demand is greater Higher during peak hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City is able to reinvest surplus revenue into transportation improvements using a Parking Benefit District.
Parking benefit district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In neighborhoods surrounding the waterfront, price on-street parking for residents and waterfront employers. Introduce a permit-based system for households and businesses and limit permits per entity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevent spillover parking demand caused by on-street time limits and pricing. Reinvest revenues into maintenance, upgrades, and improvements for parking and transportation in the area.
More bike racks	Greater availability of racks on sidewalks and in parking lots to support biking from closer locations within the city.	Incentivize active mobility and reduce the need for parking from those who choose to bike instead.
Public bike sharing system	Explore a pilot and then a complete launch of public e-bike sharing service for travel within and between waterfront areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support biking needs for visitors. Support parking needs further away from the waterfront.
Increase Route 100 service	Advocate for increasing the <u>frequency</u> and <u>hours</u> of the Pierce Transit Route 100 bus service, which runs along Harborview Dr.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce car trips for visitors and residents. Support the usage of parking spaces that are further away for visitors and employees.

6.1.5. Parking Experience Enhancement

The effectiveness of capacity-enhancing and demand-reducing measures depends on delivering a smooth and intuitive parking experience. **The interventions in this category are intended to support, rather than hinder, access to the waterfront and to serve as a catalyst for the success of waterfront businesses.**

Table 13: Parking Experience Enhancement Interventions

Intervention	Description	Expected effect
Wayfinding	With cohesive visual language, add signages throughout study area to indicate locations and distances of parking options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the mental burden of finding parking for visitors. Redistribute parking demand towards less-used areas. Reduce chances of parking spillover.
Parking maps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain current physical and online maps for on- and off-street parking with time restrictions and pricing details. Show locations for bike racks, bus stops, shuttle service etc. 	Enable visitors to make informed decisions about where to park, reduce confusion and driving.
Introduce digital payments	Implement paid parking through website and app for digital payments (on top of kiosks).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less capital intensive solution for dynamic parking management. Visitors can extend parking hours through app.

Intervention	Description	Expected effect
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees can purchase permits through portal.
Parking management system and personnel	Invest in parking-specific software, enforcement equipment, and personnel.	Oversee parking enforcement, recommend rate adjustments, and manage finances – including re-investment of parking revenues.
ADA parking	Add and more evenly distribute ADA spots throughout N Harborview Dr.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equitable provision of parking after adding time-restricted spots in busy areas. • Meet federal and state recommendations on accessibility.
Loading zones	Provide at least one spot per block area to support delivery vehicles (UPS, food delivery, etc.).	Reduced friction for delivery workers, businesses.

Delivery trucks frequently struggle to find parking in Gig Harbor’s commercial areas, delivery trucks are compelled to use regular parking spaces instead, as shown in the figure here. Drivers often circulate multiple times around the block in search of a spot convenient for loading and delivery of packages.

Figure 32: Delivery truck parked in regular parking spot on Harborview Dr

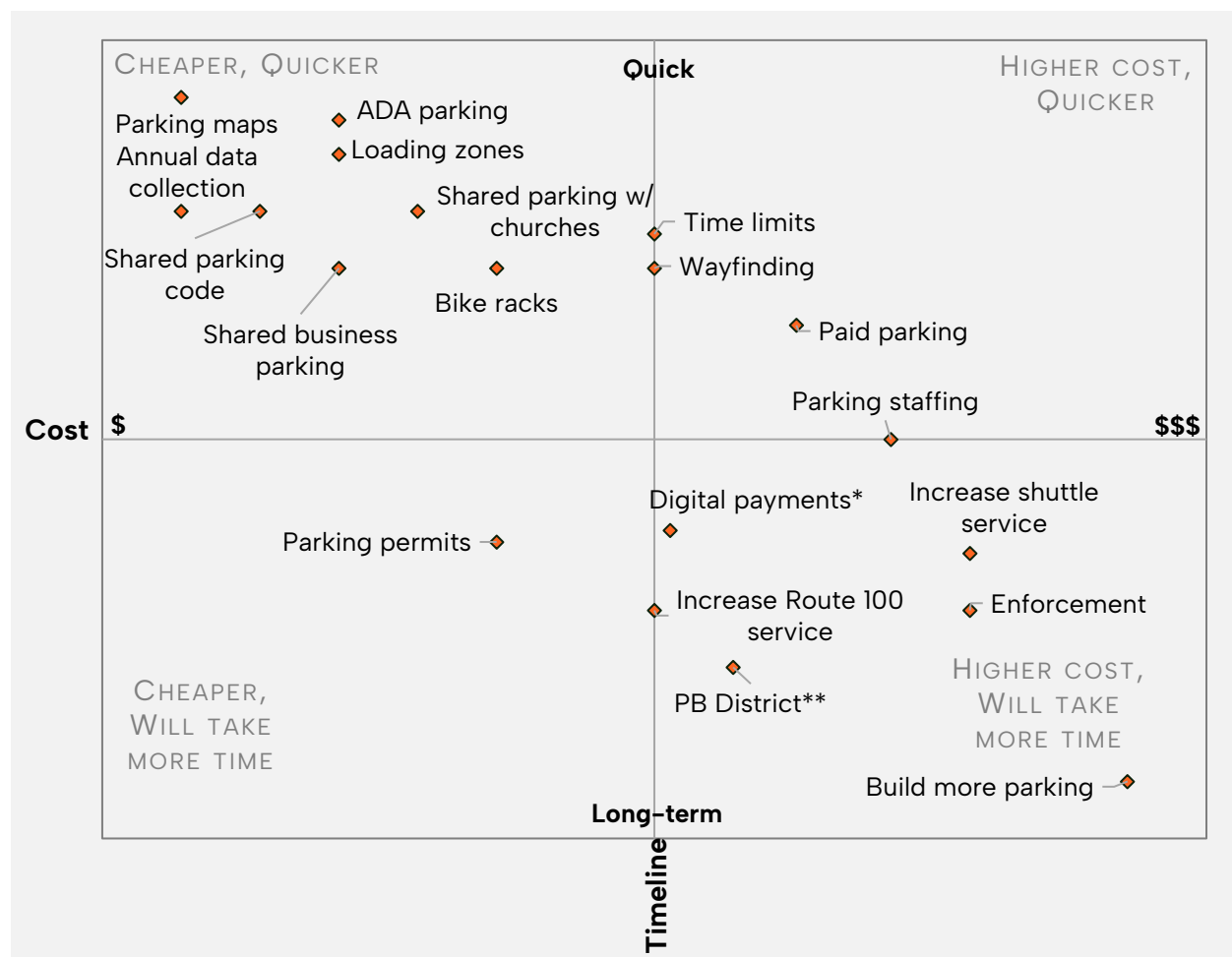


6.2. Evaluation of suggested parking management interventions

The interventions suggested for Gig Harbor in the previous subsection vastly vary in their expected ease of implementation, as measured in terms of cost and the time it would take to introduce them. **Figure 33** below presents one way to structure that approach.

By grading the interventions in relation to each other – based on cost of implementation and maintenance along the X-axis, and on timeline of implementation along the Y-axis, **there are four categories of implementation – Cheaper, Quicker (top left), Higher cost, Quicker (top right), Higher cost, Will take more time (bottom right), and Cheaper, Will take more time (bottom left)**. For comparison, “build more parking” is shown as the costliest and most time-intensive solution, though it is not a recommended intervention in this report. It must be noted that these gradings are not based on exact and quantified values; rather, they are provided to enable decision-makers to structure their approach to parking management by addressing the low-hanging, quick fixes like adding loading spaces and collaborating with nearby churches, and then thinking more strategically about long-term tools like paid parking and parking benefit districts.

Figure 33: Evaluation Chart for Parking Management Interventions



*Implementation of “Digital payments” to be done in conjunction with paid parking. **Parking benefit district.

6.3. A Deep Dive into Select Interventions

After presenting the above interventions, City staff and other project stakeholders identified seven interventions for a deeper dive to reflect their priorities and experiences from earlier parking-related needs and conversations. These interventions are explored below.

6.3.1. Shared Parking – Businesses

Shared parking is a parking management strategy that allows adjacent or nearby land uses to share a common pool of parking spaces rather than providing separate parking supplies for each use. This approach is most effective when parking demand varies by time of day, day of week, or season, such as between office, retail, and restaurant uses, so that the same spaces can serve multiple users without conflict. For example, when one entity primarily generates weekday demand and another peaks on weekends, overlap is minimized, reducing conflicts among parking-dependent visitors and lowering the likelihood of peak-period constraints.⁸ **Table 14** shows different land uses categorized into the peak parking periods they typically experience.

Table 14: Typical peak parking periods for different land uses

Weekday daytime peak demand	Evening peak demand	Weekend daytime peak demand
Banks and Offices Clinics Professional services	Bars Restaurants Theaters	Religious places Parks Shops and malls

Source: *Shared Parking*, Victoria Transport Policy Institute, <https://www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm89.htm>

By matching complementary demand patterns, shared parking can be an effective tool to reduce the total number of spaces required, improve usage of existing facilities, and support a more efficient and walkable waterfront environment. To allow shared parking for two or more uses, the City’s zoning code must be updated. Since zoning codes set minimum parking requirements, a detailed study is usually required to document parking demand and justify overriding those requirements.

Shared parking arrangements generally require a formal agreement between two or more parties seeking to share parking and may involve fees paid to the owner of excess parking spaces. Shared off-street parking can be used to provide employee and customer parking during certain hours or days. This approach leads to more efficient use of surplus parking spaces and helps make more on-street parking available during peak demand periods.

The Case for Gig Harbor

To implement shared parking in the Downtown and Finholm Districts, a parking demand study can be conducted to identify opportunities where excess parking supply exists at certain times. This analysis typically involves collecting occupancy data across different times of the day and days of the week for representative land uses (see **Figure 11** for a map of land uses in the study area), either through field observations or existing data sources. By comparing observed peak demand for each use, the study can identify periods when one business has underused parking that could be made available to an adjacent business experiencing higher demand.

⁸ *Shared Parking*, Victoria Transport Policy Institute, <https://www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm89.htm>

Applying methods such as those outlined by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and Urban Land Institute (ULI) Shared Parking, the City can quantify potential reductions in parking supply and establish shared parking agreements that ensure availability, access, and management. This approach would allow Gig Harbor to optimize existing parking resources, reduce the need for new parking construction, and support the continued vitality of its downtown and waterfront districts.

Examples from Peer Communities

Several Washington communities explicitly allow and encourage shared parking arrangements for adjacent businesses. For example, the City of Issaquah allows shared parking among adjacent uses as part of its Flexible parking tools (18.604.160). Provided below are key components of the code as provided under 18.604.160.E of the Issaquah Municipal Code:

- Shared parking is allowed when prime hours don't overlap (or less than 30-minute overlap); prohibited if they do.
- Parking required is equal to the highest single use, not combined total.
- Up to 40% reduction in overall parking requirements is allowed with TDM study and supporting data.
- The land uses sharing parking must be within 800 feet, visible, and connected by safe pedestrian access.
- A shared parking reduction requires Director approval for existing uses existing or site plan review for proposed new uses.
- Requires a recorded shared parking contract (hours, maintenance, overflow, enforcement). Changes or termination to this contract require City review and approval.

Other examples of cities which allow shared parking include Lynwood, Burlington, and Olympia.

Potential Challenges

- In a Downtown setting, many uses actually do overlap more than expected, so there could be a limited eligibility.
- Property owners may hesitate to share spaces they don't fully control
- Legal contracts can be time-consuming to negotiate, record, and enforce
- Businesses worry about parking shortages during busy periods
- Managing who can park where (and when) can be difficult
- Customers prefer clearly assigned, nearby parking rather than shared arrangements

6.3.2. Shared Parking – Churches

As noted above, shared parking arrangements are most effective when participating entities have complementary demand patterns. Churches are great candidates for shared parking when the surrounding land use types are businesses and retail. They typically have large surface lots which see occupancy mostly during daytime on Saturdays and Sundays. Businesses and retail, on the other hand, are less busy on weekends (see **Table 14**).

The case for Gig Harbor

There are four church parking lots in the study area with a total of 518 parking spaces, as shown in **Figure 34** below. The Nazarene Church has only 23 spaces and was not included as a candidate for shared parking consideration. For the remaining three lots, occupancy during the peak hour of the

survey period, 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, was only 13 percent, or 66 spaces. As shown on the map, these lots are within walking distance of Harborview Drive. The LDS and St. Nicholas Churches are approximately a five-minute walk, while the United Methodist Church is about ten minutes away. Walk time estimates are taken from Google Maps.

Thus, the City can request the relevant organizations to lease a fixed number of parking spaces on all days except Sundays. If and when the City starts charging for parking on the commercial streets, providing the church lots as a cheaper option that involves more walking may be successful with long-term (2+ hours) visitors.

Currently, the seasonal Thursday Waterfront Farmer’s Market provides a shuttle service, in which people can park at either the LDS or the Methodist Church and take the shuttle to the market. The City can explore expanding this service to cover more hours, days, and number of stops throughout the year to benefit all types of visitors and employees in the waterfront area.

Figure 34: Parking at Church Lots



Timeline and expected costs

Since this intervention does not involve any capital expenditure (apart from signages and painting), the City can implement this quickly upon reaching an agreement with the churches. However, success, as measured in parking occupancy, would be dependent on spreading information through a variety of channels about the availability of parking at church lots and a supportive wayfinding plan to guide drivers towards these lots.

Potential challenges

- Implementing this program would add hundreds of public parking spaces to the waterfront area. On one hand, it's an efficient solution that does not build more surface lots. On the other hand, more parking incentivizes more driving. Ideally, the City should pair parking capacity enhancements with interventions that reduce parking demand, like pricing and encouraging use of other modes of travel.
- Upon implementation, it will be the City's responsibility to enforce the hours designated at the church lots for public parking.

6.3.3. Time limits

Introducing and enforcing time limits is perhaps the simplest way to control on-street parking usage. On commercial streets, a City can use time limits to encourage turnover of parking spaces and enable more patrons to visit businesses and restaurants. Time limits are also useful on residential streets, where they can restrict parking usage by employees of nearby businesses. However, coupling time limits with permit-based parking (see Section 6.3.5) can allow for creating exceptions for residents and businesses interested in paying for parking permits for their employees.

- Create a mix of 15 min, 30-minute, 1-hour, 2-hour parking spaces. Typically, the time limit period can increase further away from activity centers to encourage higher activity nearby and long-term parking further away.
- Consider time periods within which time limits will not be enforced.
- Maintain similar locations on blocks for predictability for drivers.

The case for Gig Harbor

Currently, only 12 of the 538 on-street spaces have any type of time limit – 30 minutes (**Figure 35** shows an example of a 30-min space in the waterfront area). Furthermore, as explored previously, parking occupancy was high in on-street spots in Downtown, Judson, and Millville. On the other hand, fewer parking spaces were occupied along the segment of Harborview Drive, north of Stinson Avenue, and Edwards Drive further down in Judson, likely because there were very few destinations in those areas.

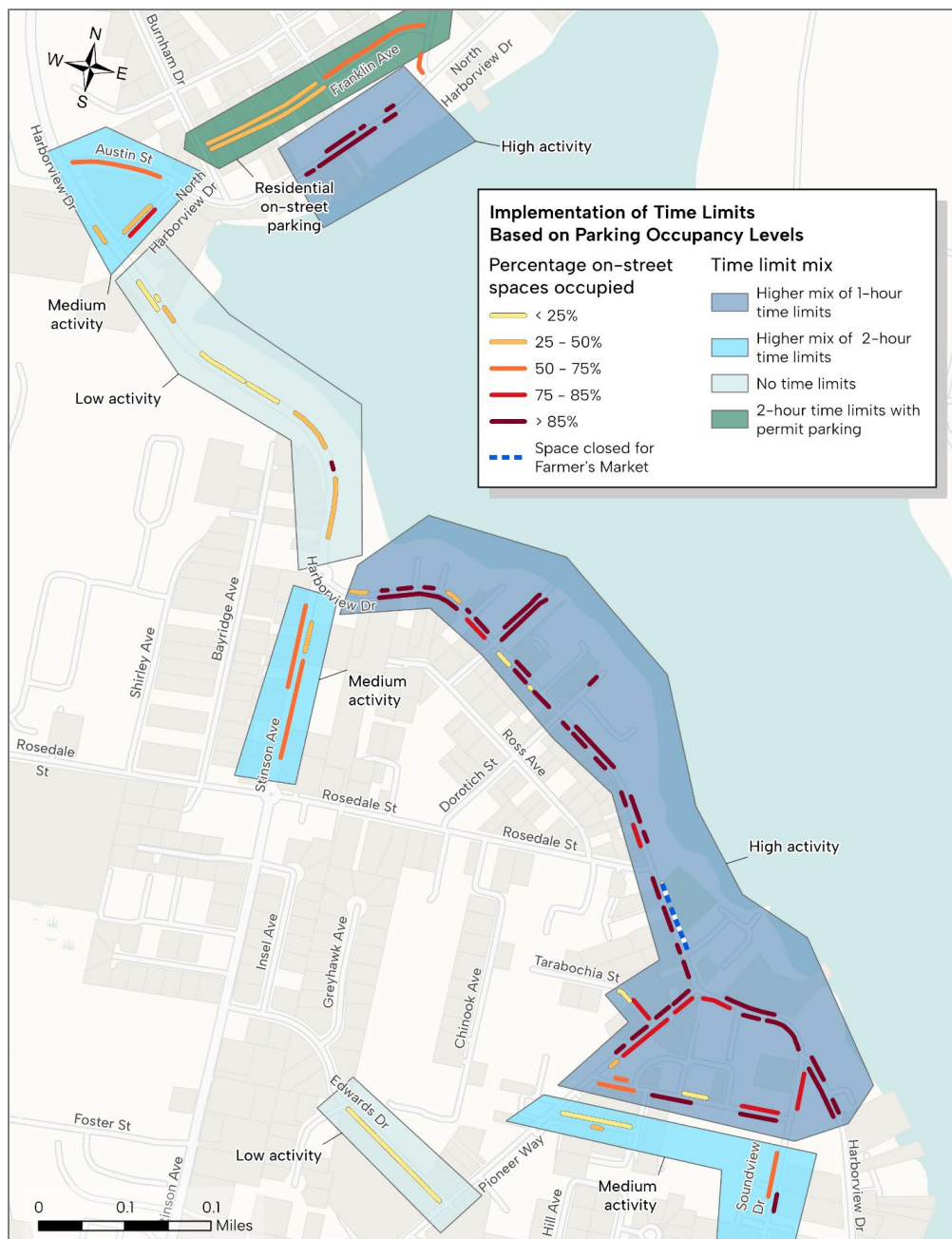
Figure 35: A 30-min restricted parking space along N Harborview Dr, marked by a traffic cone



A system of time limits that considers these inputs by introducing shorter time limits in locations of higher occupancy, and vice versa, can help redistribute parking throughout the study area and reduce the need for visitors to drive around and look for parking.

Figure 36 below shows one way the City can implement time limits. By categorizing areas into “activity” levels based on peak-hour on-street parking occupancy, the City can then choose the right mix of time limits. For example, more than 85% of the spaces were occupied along N Harborview Drive in Finholm, which would make it an appropriate candidate for a higher mix of short-term parking spaces. On the other hand, the spaces between Downtown and Finholm districts were mostly less than 25% occupied; allowing people to park here without time limits would encourage higher occupancy and redistribute parking demand across the study area.

Figure 36: Example Implementation of Parking Time Limits



Timeline and expected costs

- Time restrictions on parking spaces can be introduced through a short-term pilot, allowing the City to test hours, time limits, and user response with minimal risk. Based on pilot results, the program can be refined and rolled out as a medium-term, full implementation, potentially integrated with residential or business parking permits to manage access and reduce spillover impacts.
- Capital costs are relatively low and largely one-time, consisting primarily of signage, curb paint, updates to parking maps, and revisions to visitor information and wayfinding materials. Ongoing costs are driven by operations, particularly enforcement. While enforcement does not need to be overly strict, it should be consistent and predictable to ensure compliance and maintain user confidence. As a result, operational costs may range from medium to high depending on coverage, staffing, and coordination with existing parking management efforts. Since Gig Harbor experiences higher activity in summer months with tourists, a policy choice for the City would be between year-round enforcement or only during summer season when parking demand is higher. It is the recommendation of this report to choose year-round consistency and predictability over seasonal savings to encourage habit-forming behaviors within the community.

Potential challenges

- Spillover effect on neighboring streets if complementary interventions – permit parking, paid parking – are not also implemented.
- Confusion among drivers about limits if signages are not clear.
- High cost of enforcement, especially if not recouped through parking pricing.
- Crucial to clearly showcase to curbside businesses the benefit in terms of more patronage. For residential streets, win-win situation of controlled employee parking.

Example from Peer Cities

1. City of Bainbridge Island⁹ recently updated its downtown on-street parking regulations in the Winslow area to address congestion caused by ferry commuters, tourists, and local business activity. Prior to the changes, many on-street spaces were occupied for long durations resulting in limited availability for short-term visitors and reducing turnover needed to support retail. In 2024, the city implemented consistent time limits, generally reducing the time limit to 3 hours across key downtown streets, along with clearer signage and enforcement. The changes were paired with strategies like employee parking permits and encouragement of off-street parking to shift long-term users away from prime on-street parking spaces. The goal was to balance convenience for visitors with access for businesses while reducing all-day parking in high-demand areas.
2. City of Port Townsend¹⁰ implemented primarily 2-hour on-street parking limits in its historic downtown to manage heavy tourism demand and ensure turnover for local businesses, with recent efforts to strengthen enforcement and explore additional parking strategies.
3. City of Poulsbo¹¹ applied 2–3 hour on-street parking limits in its waterfront downtown core to balance visitor access and retail turnover, helping prevent long-term parking from occupying high-demand street spaces.

⁹ <https://www.bainbridgewa.gov/937/Downtown-Parking-Study>

¹⁰ <https://cityofpt.us/engagept/page/downtown-parking-pilot-study>

¹¹ <https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/planning/zoning/parking-regulations>

6.3.4. Paid Parking

Figure 37: Example of a Combination of Time Limit and Paid Parking Signage



Source: Wikimedia Commons

Parking at on-street spots and inside off-street lots can be programmed to implement different parking pricing by hours of the day and by day of the week, depending upon demand and the need to distribute parking demand to lesser-used parking locations.

In recent years, cities have implemented **performance-based pricing**, where the parking rate is adjusted to achieve a target occupancy level of 85% on every on-street block. For blocks with higher occupancy, the hourly parking rate can be increased for specific hours every day, or days of the week. Vice versa, the cost can be lower for locations with less than 85% occupancy. The current technology and available equipment make it easy to implement this method.

The case for Gig Harbor

Currently, on-street parking in the study area is completely free, while 95% of the spaces have no time restrictions. The study showed that this choice has resulted in high occupancy at on-street spaces during peak hours, even as a majority of parking spaces in off-street locations remain empty. While spatially tiered time limits (see Section 6.3.3) will encourage drivers to park in underused spaces and to not overstay, the success of this intervention will be dependent on cost-intensive parking enforcement. Charging for parking directly plugs this gap, while acknowledging that on-street parking, which takes up valuable public space, should contribute its fair share. Furthermore, surplus parking revenue can be funneled back into projects that improve mobility and access in the same neighborhoods.

To ensure the effectiveness of performance-based pricing, Gig Harbor should continue its once-a-year parking data survey and use the data to:

- Annually adjust the parking rates for different blocks to achieve the 85% benchmark,
- Identify if rate adjustments helped reduce parking demand or shift it to underused locations.

Ideally, the City should set a minimum hourly parking rate that covers enforcement costs. Many cities begin at approximately \$1 per hour and adjust rates over time to achieve the 85 percent occupancy benchmark. Similar to the spatial tiering shown for time limits in **Figure 36**, the City can charge more for parking in busier areas and less (or no charge) in underused areas. However, a proper implementation of such a program should be based on a complete analysis of parking data, costs, use of revenue, and with public input.

Timeline and expected costs

- Paid parking is typically introduced through a short-term pilot in targeted, high-demand areas to test pricing levels, technology, and public response. Based on pilot outcomes, the program can be refined and expanded in the medium term into other areas within the district. To avoid spill-over parking, the City could also choose to implement the paid-parking in all intended areas in

phases with the Downtown district as Phase 1 and then follow up with a Phase 2 implementation in the Finholm district.

- Initial capital costs can range from low to moderate, depending on the technology selected, and may include parking meters or pay-by-app systems, signage, curb markings, and system setup. Ongoing costs are primarily operational and may be moderate to high, covering enforcement, customer service, system maintenance, data management, and program administration. Over time, parking revenue can offset these costs and provide a dedicated funding source for parking and mobility investments in the districts.

Potential challenges

- Businesses may push back on paid parking if they perceive that the added cost for customers will reduce footfall. Thus, communicating the long-term benefits — investments from parking revenues into infrastructure, more available parking, greater sidewalk activity from people choosing to walk or bike — will be crucial for the City to build trust and buy-in from businesses, employees, and residents.
- Equity impacts of paid parking: On one hand, tiered pricing will efficiently distribute drivers based on the urgency of need. On the other hand, it can be inequitable for lower income people and those who cannot park further away because of physical limitations. The City can explore the creation of exemptions (see exemption for ADA parking in Section 6.3.6) of permits based on demographic needs.

Examples from other cities

1. An example of a city which has implemented paid on-street parking is Bellevue, which, while larger than Gig Harbor, has recently advanced a curb pricing program¹² that reflects approaches that could be used by relatively smaller cities such as Gig Harbor. The City first adopted a Curb Management Plan in year 2023, then conducted detailed studies in the next two years (2024–2025) showing that downtown on-street spaces were consistently 80–100% occupied, with many vehicles overstaying time limits and causing congestion. The City combined this data with extensive stakeholder outreach, including surveys showing most users struggled to find parking but were open to modest pricing if it improved access and availability. Based on these findings, Bellevue proposed implementing paid on-street parking with variable pricing, targeting an occupancy rate of approximately 80% (i.e., one or two open spaces per block), along with investments in enforcement, payment technology (pay stations and mobile apps), and reinvestment of revenue into transportation improvements. Employing a phased implementation approach, the City included a grace period with warnings, public education campaigns, and used “parking ambassadors” to help users adapt. The pricing strategy is designed to be flexible and performance-based, adjusting over time based on demand rather than remaining fixed. Importantly, the City framed paid parking not primarily as a revenue tool, but as a management strategy to improve turnover, reduce cruising, and support downtown businesses.
2. Redmond implemented paid on-street parking in its downtown core (Redmond Town Center area) as part of a broader curb management strategy to improve turnover and support growing commercial activity, using modern pay stations and mobile payment options.

¹² https://bellevuewa.gov/sites/default/files/media/pdf_document/2025/bellevue-curb-pricing-implementation-strategy_final.pdf

3. Olympia operates a long-standing paid on-street parking system downtown, with performance-based pricing and time limits designed to manage demand, reduce congestion, and maintain availability for visitors and businesses.

6.3.5. On-street parking permits

When residents and visitors cannot find parking within a short walk, permits for on-street parking are a tried-and-tested way to address the need efficiently. Furthermore, if time limits and paid parking are implemented on commercial streets, on-street parking permits play a crucial role in addressing spillover parking into neighboring residential streets.

A permit restricts parking on applicable streets for everyone except those who purchase the permit, like residents of that street and their visitors. A City decides the duration of the permit (usually annual) and the cost for each vehicle. A typical permit system is structured to charge more for each subsequent permit a housing unit purchases, along with a reduced cost for 1 or more permits for any visitors.

The case for Gig Harbor

As part of the suite of comprehensive parking management reforms in and near the waterfront area in Gig Harbor, it is expected that time limits and paid parking will help redistribute parking and reduce parking demand. However, these two policies may also cause spillover parking into residential streets over a longer timeline.

Furthermore, workers of waterfront businesses currently park on the main commercial streets and residential streets, like Franklin Avenue. After introducing parking management, their needs can be met by shared parking agreements between businesses (see Section 6.3.1) and parking permits. Led by the City, businesses can sell discounted permits to workers, allowing a fixed number to parking along residential streets. See **Figure 36** for example location of parking permits – Franklin St.

Ideally, the City should also combine a permit system with time limits on residential streets to accommodate short term needs for other visitors, like utility workers, bigger groups etc.

Timeline and expected costs

- An on-street parking permit program is typically implemented in phases. In the short term, the City can establish a pilot program in targeted residential areas most likely to experience spillover from waterfront parking management, allowing time to define permit boundaries, eligibility, pricing structure, and visitor provisions. In the medium term, the program can be refined and expanded alongside the rollout of time limits and paid parking on commercial streets, with adjustments based on observed spillover patterns, enforcement needs, and neighborhood feedback. Over time, the permit system can be fully integrated into the City's broader parking management framework and updated as conditions evolve.
- Capital costs for an on-street permit program are generally low, consisting primarily of signage, curb markings, permit materials, and updates to parking maps and communication tools. Ongoing costs are primarily operational and may range from low to moderate, including permit administration, customer service, enforcement, and program management. These costs can be partially or fully offset through permit fees, including tiered pricing for multiple employee permits coordinated with waterfront businesses for employee parking.

Potential challenges

- Residents may feel that they are being charged for something that was expected for free until that point. This will require the City to acknowledge the status quo, while showcasing the benefits of better parking management in the form of higher availability of parking, reduced driving, and safer streets. Furthermore, the City should highlight the contribution of parking revenue to multi-modal improvement projects in the same neighborhoods.
- To prevent the permit model from being inequitable, the City may need to introduce discounts for low-income residents and those with qualifying disabilities and other conditions. Furthermore, the City can also reward residents who forego permits by providing credits for other modes of travel, like transit and biking.

Examples from other cities

1. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) has a guide on implementing permits for small to medium cities:
<https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/TGM/Documents/ManagingResidentialParking.pdf>
2. An example of existing program, related FAQs, and fee structure from Costa Mesa, CA:
<https://www.costamesaca.gov/trending/residential-permit-parking-program>

6.3.6. ADA Parking

Out of the 538 on-street spaces in the waterfront study area, only 7 (1.3%) are designated ADA spaces. The Public Right-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG), provided by the federal agency Access Board, recommends at least 1 ADA spot per 25 overall spots along the on-street perimeter of a block¹³. The table below shows the recommended number of ADA spots for different number of parking spaces. A rough calculation from the table suggests that the waterfront area should have at least 21 (4%) ADA spots. With more than 30% of Gig Harbor’s residents older than 65 years, the need for accessible parking spaces is even higher in the city and will continue to increase every year.

Table 15: Recommended on-street parking spaces¹⁴

Total number of metered or designated parking spaces	Min. required number of ADA spaces	Total number of metered or designated parking spaces	Min. required number of ADA spaces
1 to 25	1	101 to 150	5
26 to 50	2	151 to 200	6
51 to 75	3	201 and over	4% of total
76 to 100	4		

Furthermore, with the parking reforms explored in the previous sub-sections, the City will need to carefully consider the impact of those measures on ADA spaces and carve out exceptions. For example, the Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington (MSRC) points out that “drivers with special permits typically do not have to observe parking time limits, even if they do not park in specific ADA-designated spaces”. MSRC points to specific RCW codes, RCW 46.19.050¹⁵ and RCW 46.61.582¹⁶ that specify exceptions to time limits and parking meters.

¹³ <https://www.access-board.gov/prowag/technical.html#r310-on-street-parking-spaces>

¹⁴ <https://www.access-board.gov/prowag/scoping.html#r211-on-street-parking-spaces>

¹⁵ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=46.19.050>

¹⁶ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=46.61.582>

The recommended action for the City to take in the study area would be to:

1. Add at least one ADA parking space for every 25 on-street spaces.
2. Maintain consistency of locations on along block to make it predictable for visitors to find these parking spaces.

6.3.7. Wayfinding

Wayfinding improvements encompass all visual and informational tools a City can use to guide visitors to the option that suits their parking needs and educate visitors and residents alike about how parking works in an area. The tools include:

1. **Physical interventions:**
 - a. Curb striping (red for no parking, yellow for loading etc.) for on-street parking restrictions
 - b. Signage poles for on-street parking restrictions
 - c. Wayfinding signages to direct people to more parking options, like on-street options that are further away and church lots.
2. **Mapping:**
 - a. Regularly updated online maps showing parking locations, applicable time limits and costs, and walking time to key destinations.
 - b. Printed foldable maps for distribution at stores, the chamber of commerce, events, and other locations of initial visits by outsiders.
3. **Branding:** A combination of dedicated logo for public parking and distinctive colors to make it easier for both visitors and residents to find and understand parking options.

Examples from other cities

1. Many cities including Spokane, Bremerton and University Place have recently updated their wayfinding plan for the downtown districts to include parking wayfinding in addition to pedestrian/bicyclist scale signs.
2. Chapter 3 of the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD)'s *Jump Start Guide to Parking Management* covers components and typical costs of wayfinding tools, supported with case studies from smaller cities in the state.¹⁷
3. One example of branding is provided by the City of Grants Pass, OR, which uniquely uses the names of regionally relevant birds and animals for parking lots to help drivers more easily identify and remember the name of public parking lots (See **Figure 39**).¹⁸

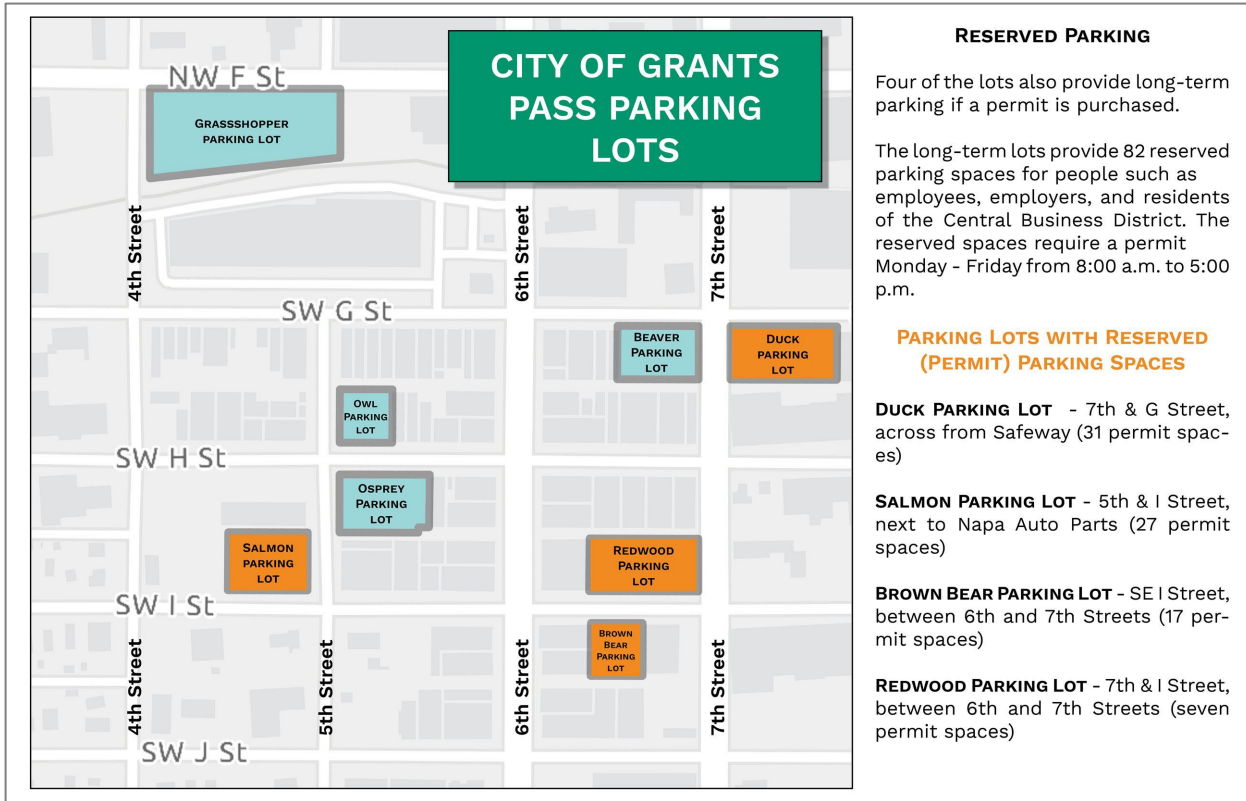
Figure 38: Example of Existing Wayfinding Signage in Gig Harbor



¹⁷ <https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/TGM/Documents/ParkingManagementJumpStartGuideScreens.pdf>

¹⁸ <https://www.grantspassoregon.gov/208/Downtown-Parking>

Figure 39: Map of Public Parking Lots with Naming Scheme in Grants Pass, OR



Source: Downtown Parking, City of Grants Pass, <https://www.grantspassoregon.gov/208/Downtown-Parking>

7. Appendix

7.1. Occupancy at Off-street Parking Lots

Table 16: Off-street Parking Lots – Complete Data

Area	Name	Primary land use	Saturday status	Parking spaces	Thursday			Saturday		
					7 AM	1 PM	7 PM	7 AM	1 PM	7 PM
Downtown	Commencement Bank	Office / Professional services	Closed	18	0	7	2	0	4	5
Judson	Harbor Center	Commercial / Retail	Closed	28	0	7	2	0	7	3
Judson	Williams Flowers*	Commercial / Retail	Closed	4	1	4	1	1	1	3
Judson	Pioneer Village	Commercial / Retail	Closed	30	0	1	0	0	16	0
Judson	Real Estate Office	Office / Professional services	Closed	4	0	4	0	0	1	0
Downtown	Edward Jones/State Farm*	Office / Professional services	Closed	9	0	9	1	0	0	0
Judson	Ryan & Jorgenson	Office / Professional services	Closed	45	3	7	5	1	2	1
Judson	NAPA Auto*	Commercial / Retail	Open	13	3	13	1	1	5	2
Judson	Gig Harbor Professional Bldg	Office / Professional services	Closed	36	4	13	1	5	0	0
Judson	Better Fitness	Commercial / Retail	Open	24	12	16	0	5	10	0
Judson	Harbor Commons Bldg	Commercial / Retail	Unknown	28	1	10	2	1	2	1
Judson	Hop Pharm/Harbor Health	Commercial / Retail	Open	30	1	12	9	1	3	16
Judson	Peninsula Shopping Center	Commercial / Retail	Open	248	49	123	77	29	60	55
Judson	USPS	Office / Professional services	Open	54	30	34	40	37	33	40
Judson	Harbor Teak	Commercial / Retail	Open	8	0	4	0	0	1	0
Downtown	7 Seas Brewing	Restaurant / Hospitality	Open	26	1	20	21	1	21	19
Downtown	Soundview Consultants	Office / Professional services	Closed	22	2	14	8	5	7	5
Downtown	Tides Tavern*	Restaurant / Hospitality	Open	9		9	6	0	9	9
NA	Russell Family Foundation	NA	NA	NA	--	--	--	--	--	--
Downtown	Tickled Pink*	Commercial / Retail	Open	8	1	8	6	1	8	5
Downtown	Gig Harbor Real Estate	Office / Professional services	Open	4	0	3	1	0	3	3
Downtown	Village Green	--	Open	25	3	3	1	0	7	4
Downtown	Willis Building-3010	--	Closed	27	0	15	11	2	7	8
Judson	Ultralocks Salon*	Commercial / Retail	Open	9	0	9	0	0	1	0
Judson	Gig Harbor Audio	Commercial / Retail	Open	14	0	2	3	0	2	3
Judson	Tarabocia Offices (Misner)	Office / Professional services	Unknown	11	0	3	0	0	0	0
Judson	Il Lucano Ristorante Italiano	Restaurant / Hospitality	Open	8	0	2	8	0	3	7
Judson	Chamber of Commerce	Office / Professional services	Open	6	0	1	1	0	0	1
Judson	Dental/Architect Bldg-Rear	Commercial / Retail	Closed	26	5	3	7	1	5	9
Churches	Nazerine Church	Church	Open	23	0	19	8	0	14	11
Judson	Timberland Bank	Office / Professional services	Closed	22	0	20	3	0	2	5
Downtown	Gig Harbor Marina	Recreational	Closed	70	17	59	25	19	41	32
Downtown	Gig Harbor Fly Shop	Commercial / Retail	Open	6	0	1	2	1	3	1
Downtown	Gig Harbor Brewing	Restaurant / Hospitality	Open	2	0	1	1	0	0	1
Downtown	Frills	Commercial / Retail	Open	4	0	1	2	0	0	0
Downtown	RcMEDIA Photography	Commercial / Retail	Closed	9	0	5	1	0	1	0
Downtown	Java & Clay Cafe	Restaurant / Hospitality	Open	12	9	5	2	0	12	1
Downtown	Maritime Inn	Restaurant / Hospitality	Open	15	3	7	4	11	8	7
Downtown	Jerisich Dock	Recreational	Open	64	1	33	22	1	7	8
Downtown	Bayview Plaza Building	Office / Professional services	Open	58	0	35	2	0	3	1
Downtown	El Pueblito	Restaurant / Hospitality	Open	14	3	17	19	0	18	16
Downtown	Pleasure Craft House Boats	Commercial / Retail	Open	31	6	12	10	7	6	13
Downtown	Harborview Marina	Recreational	Open	20	0	12	9	6	11	16
Downtown	Paris Salon	Commercial / Retail	Open	11	0	8	6	0	5	6
Downtown	Local Whimsey	Commercial / Retail	Open	5	0	3	0	0	2	1
Downtown	Downtown Waterfront Alliance	Office / Professional services	Open	14	0	6	6	1	9	8
Downtown	Arabella's Landing Marina	Recreational	Open	62	15	22	40	17	32	24
Millville	Susanne's Bakery	Commercial / Retail	Open	5	0	4	2	0	5	0
Millville	Gig Harbor Yachts	Recreational	Closed	15	2	9	0	0	3	1

Area	Name	Primary land use	Saturday status	Parking spaces	Thursday			Saturday		
					7 AM	1 PM	7 PM	7 AM	1 PM	7 PM
Millville	Harbor Place Marina	Recreational	Open	13	4	7	4	7	5	8
Millville	Millville Marina	Recreational	Open	11	4	3	7	4	5	5
Millville	Lucas Landing Marina	Recreational	Open	14	0	1	5	1	7	2
Millville	Buijch Marina	Recreational	Open	5	4	2	2	4	5	4
Millville	Speedy Auto/New wave Marine	Office / Professional services	Closed	15	2	6	2	2	3	2
Millville	Gig Harbor Yacht Club	Recreational	Open	54	0	3	7	0	0	0
Museum	Eddon Boat Yard	Recreational	Open	7	0	3	0	0	4	0
Museum	West Shore Marina	Recreational	Open	45	12	13	13	12	28	18
Museum	Murphy's Landing Marina	Recreational	Open	68	2	14	22	16	32	23
Museum	Cross Country Mortgage	Office / Professional services	Closed	15	3	3	0	5	0	0
Museum	Beach Basket	Restaurant / Hospitality	Open	26	10	6	5	1	7	4
Museum	Gig Harbor Automotive Service*	Commercial / Retail	Closed	8	0	8	8	6	8	8
Museum	Anamarium	Restaurant / Hospitality	Open	5	0	1	4	0	2	2
Museum	Family Thai Hut	Restaurant / Hospitality	Open	8	0	1	3	0	2	3
Museum	The Gourmet Burger Shop	Restaurant / Hospitality	Open	8	0	3	3	0	5	2
Museum	Harbor History Museum	Recreational	Open	41	2	12	31	2	12	6
Finholm	Bucholtz Waterfront Parking	--	Closed	8	4	8	4	8	7	4
Finholm	Finholm's Market & Grocery	Commercial / Retail	Open	14	1	10	10	2	6	11
Finholm	Harbor Creative	Commercial / Retail	Closed	3	0	2	2	0	0	1
Finholm	Anthony's Guest Parking	Restaurant / Hospitality	Open	62	0	35	45	2	36	50
Finholm	Peninsula Yacht Bldg*	Recreational	Open	6	2	6	4	5	6	6
Finholm	Morso	Restaurant / Hospitality	Open	38	2	26	18	0	14	17
Finholm	House Edward Jones/ Law Office	Office / Professional services	Closed	22	1	10	9	10	13	13
Churches	Gig Harbor United Methodist	Church	Open	146	3	14	0	0	0	0
Churches	St Nicholas Church	Church	Open	222	10	20	0	0	2	0
Churches	LDS Church	Church	Open	127	0	32	1	2	2	0
Downtown	Maritime Pier Lot	Parking lot	Open	33	2	32	31	3	30	29
Museum	Eddon Boat Park Lot	Parking lot	Open	7	0	3	1	0	5	3
Judson	Adams Ave Lot	Parking lot	Open	19	2	19	14	0	14	10
Finholm	Harbor Center Lot	Parking lot	Open	16	0	14	13	3	11	11

Notes:

For locations with asterisk (*), occupancy by survey team was counted as higher than inventory, which could be because of the presence of more than one car in a parking spot or a data error. Occupancy has been changed to 100% in such instances.