



**Meeting
Notes**

Attendees: Jack Piepei, Middletown, Planning & Zoning
James Fortuna, Middletown, Planning & Zoning
Carl Bolz, Middletown, Planning & Zoning
Barbara Plum, Chair Middletown Planning & Zoning
Vincent Amato, Downtown,
Mayor Giuliano, City of Middletown
Joe Bebis, Middletown,
Grady Faulkner, Common Council, Middletown
David Bauer, Middletown
Earle Roberts, Middletown Councilman
Gerry Daley, Middletown Common Council
Bob Santangelo, Middletown Common Council
Bill Warner, Middletown Planning Dept.
Richard Kearney, Middletown Planning Dept.
Neil Patel, Department of Transportation
John Mullin, Mullin Associates
Les Adams, Middletown, Planning & Zoning
Bill Cranshaw, VHB
Matt Blume, VHB
Ryan Malloy, VHB

Date/ April 23, 2007
Time: 6:00 PM

Project No.: VHB: 41290
State: 82-297

Place: Municipal Building Room 208
245 deKoven Drive
Middletown, CT 06457

Re: Mayor and Common
Council Stakeholder
Meeting

Notes taken by: MCB/RM

A Stakeholder Meeting was held for the Middletown Parking and Traffic Study for the CBD on April 23, 2007 at 6:00 PM in the Common Council Chambers of the Middletown City Hall. The purpose of this meeting was to describe the project to the stakeholders, discuss current deficiencies and anticipated needs, and to brainstorm potential solutions. The stakeholders at this meeting represented City Commissions and included the Planning and Zoning Commission and Common Council.

VHB opened the meeting by described the project, project area, and federal funding available to construct improvements from three separate and distinct pools of money. Mullen Associates then described the first Economic Development meeting as a dream meeting to get people to think about Middletown macroscopically, and the upcoming public process will be utilized to narrow ideas. Tonight's meeting is to think about the "art of the possible" thinking about things through a 20 year timeframe. The following highlights the discussion that took place:

- Bulbouts would benefit both pedestrians and vehicular traffic but could they be installed at grade? "Traffic calming" is currently not well received in the City.
- Will Middletown need additional transit in the future with the current gas price trends? Will transit demand increase with gas >\$4.00 a gallon, will there be more of a need for park-and-ride system. It was suggested that the downtown can't handle any more traffic.
- Bicycle accommodations in the downtown area were discussed. There currently are no bike racks in the downtown area. It is also very difficult to ride on-street with the angle parking, and it is illegal to ride on the sidewalk. It was also noted that bikes can't be ridden 12 months a year, so mass transit needs to be attractive in downtown.
- There needs to be a long-term emphasis on Mass-transit/multimodal transportation. Need to be better at moving people. Good inventory of downtown parking.
- There are impressions within the City that there is too much talking and planning, with no action. The short term action plan which will result from this study was described, and the attendees were reminded that there is funding associated with this study to implement changes.
- It is perceived that the two multi-level garages are underutilized. If they are underutilized, why are they? Some are hesitant about multi-level facilities due to the current experience. Some like the idea of smaller pocket parking on the surface combined with trolley/circulators. It was suggested to obtain MAT ridership information. Is there anything that can be done to boost ridership? Is a circulator feasible?
- Workers parking in prime downtown spots. Would there be a willingness to increase parking fines to discourage all-day parking?
- Employers need to encourage employees to park elsewhere. Four hour limit parking may not work.
- Kid City Museum and Odd Fellows are located on a busy side street. Safety in that area needs to be looked at.
- How do we deal with zoning for new businesses downtown? What ordinances need to be enacted or revised?
- It was suggested that Middletown has one of the nicest downtowns in the state. Need to tell people where to park. It was suggested that the State should improve Route 9 and Route 66. Need to keep promoting downtown and improve way finding.
- More parking is needed close to Main Street. The Arcade is under utilized, should it be rebuilt? Satellite parking throughout downtown needs to be promoted better. Small-scale pocket parking was suggested to add 20 to 30 spaces "here and there".
- The Parking Authority has lost its power and the Police have taken it over. When the parking authority was stand alone it helped to promote aggressive fining. There is also no capital improvement plan.
- Prices for parking should be based on the cost to run the parking infrastructure and should not be subsidized.
- The bank lots in the downtown core are utilized in evening by others. The banks are fine with this. This is the type of parking people want, and it benefits the downtown to have shared parking. People do not feel safe at Arcade lower level.
- Some believe that it is important to have a line of site to where one is going from where they park.

- It was suggested that a “traffic cop” is needed at Route 66 and Main Street to control signal. There used to be three police officers to direct traffic on Main Street, and now there are none.
- The waterfront needs to be considered – given the redevelopment potential.
- It was suggested that bump outs need to be tried as well as pocket parking. Satellite parking also needs to be looked at.
- The courthouse garage should be better utilized. Judges, attorneys and court personnel are the only ones to use the courthouse garage. Without Arcade garage, where would court people park? Why can’t the police department park there?
- It was again suggested that pocket parking is the way to go. A trolley during peak hours would be important to get employees to utilize remote lots. If public lots are metered, they should be able to use a credit card or other technology. Fine people who park all day. It was suggested that employees and merchants don’t pay their parking fines. Should boots be considered for these offenders?
- The discussion was recapped and the following highlighted the discussion:
 - Small lots;
 - Safety issues;
 - Trolley loop;
 - Parking Authority;
 - Pricing;
 - Different users-multiple public;
 - Waterfront connections.

Mayor Giuliano:

- It is not an option to charge people for coming downtown.
- People don’t use arcade because there is nothing around it. People need to use ramps or staircases to get to your destination. When you park, you’re alone. At Mellili Plaza, there are lots of people around. Business owners abuse on-street parking and then complain about lack of parking. Could use an “EZ Pass” and automatically charge fines. Need parking close to destinations. Need to easily move people around.
- Business owners neglect time restrictions for on-street meters that “whack” people for parking longer than restrictions allow.
- Best way to get here needs to be highlighted, it needs to be easy to park car, and easy to go where you need to go. We need to move people around the downtown more easily.
- An inventory of parking assets in Middletown needs to be done and the existing parking needs to be managed better. What does public like about coming here? Why is parking different in central business district than at a shopping mall?
- John Mullin spoke on Angle Parking:
 - There is no consistent voice in Middletown either for or against.
 - If goal is to maximize parking - angle parking is best.
 - Because a fewer people can park in a parallel park situation, businesses won’t like it. People no longer drive defensively which is why there are problems. The

Commission disagrees with the idea that there are a lot of crashes due to the angle parking.

- The hospital, police and fire are located along Main Street. Emergency vehicles need to be considered.
- The hospital should be forced to build their own parking system. Hospital refuses to build a garage. They don't want to lose surface lot. What can hospital do for the City? The Hospital is willing to pay for the use of garage space, and a garage on the hospital campus is not feasible.
- Employees should be moved to central lot. Employees won't want to lose time by parking far away. Employers may need to provide incentives to get employees to park in one centralized lot.
- Are large employers eligible for clean air credits? If businesses are eligible, can that be given to employees as an incentive?
- There is no parking for apartments on Main Street. An alternative needs to be found for these people.
- North End - many houses don't have off street parking, as they predate the automobile. The residents and their guests park illegally. There is no enforcement of parking in that area.
- Pedestrian count-down signal heads are a good idea and should be considered.

The Focus of the Public Meeting was discussed:

- What can the funds available be used for?
- An inventory of available parking in B-1 district should be completed for the meeting. Good inventory of public and private. There is parking that people don't effectively use. Need to encourage residential investment. Shared/coordinate parking.
- What are the realistic expectations and parameters for the project.
- What is the best for all the people involved? Reverse from that.
- Need to promote events well. Share statistics.
- There is fear of talking about pricing information which may change perspectives.
- Action plan to enhance downtown with a budget for both residential and retail areas.
- Propose plan of action to enhance Main Street and Residential.
- What projects can be completed quickly? Tell people where parking is available and mark parking areas.
- Enhance knowledge of existing parking.