

Downtown Middlebury Parking Study: Existing Conditions Report

Introduction

Downtown Middlebury has become a vibrant destination. Its unique culture and local businesses attract a significant amount of residents and visitors. There's not a day that goes by that you don't see foot traffic and have to search or park a block away from your destination. These are great challenges to have, but are ones that the Town want to address to continue the vibrancy of the downtown. The daily parking experiences for the downtown businesses and their customers, and residents have emerged as challenges, unique for a town, with many different users having to compete for parking throughout the day. As Middlebury continues to grow and thrive, it is imperative that a detailed review of the parking conditions be done to ensure parking supports the growing community.



The Town of Middlebury initiated the idea that a parking study is needed because businesses are growing with an increasing customer base, with little to no vacancies in the downtown, and customers often have to search to find a parking space. The Town selected the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG) to conduct the parking study of the downtown. The Downtown Middlebury Parking Study is intended to accomplish the following goals: ensure downtown is conducive for growth, supports existing and future businesses, its residents, and enhances the experience and safety for users.

This Study supports a data-driven process to spatially show where people are parking and highlight the parking deficiencies to systematically document the key challenges and needs of the users in downtown Middlebury. A final report will be produced to provide the Town with a comprehensive demand analysis and recommendations to support decisions on parking management, the location of additional parking, and the appropriate size of new parking facilities.

This Existing Conditions Report will inform the Town of the current parking conditions, and presents the collection and evaluation of the following data sets:

- A baseline inventory of the parking supply for both of the public and private lots and on-street spaces.
- An observation on the utilized parking performed during a range of morning, afternoon, and evening times to record the actual number of spaces occupied for on-street and off-street parking and to determine the peak demand.



Study Area

The study area, determined by the Town, shown in the red outline in **Figure 1**, is comprised of the commercial and residential areas within a two-mile radius of the central business district. The study area was divided into a 16-block area consisting of a mix of land uses including civic, government, professional offices, retail, restaurants, banking, and other service businesses.

A blocks' boundaries were defined by using the centerline of the road system to accurately assign on-street parking to its adjoining block. Each block was assigned a number to assist with tracking data, displaying a summation of on-street and off-street parking, identifying areas that experience surpluses or deficits of parking spaces, and the impact on parking conditions.

Figure 1: Downtown Middlebury Study Area



Parking System

Below is an overview of the existing parking system and parking activity characteristics for downtown Middlebury. The information was collected through several field observations by MACOG between October and December in 2024, with a follow-up observation in April 2025 to see if adjustments were warranted.

PARKING INVENTORY

MACOG conducted a detailed inventory of the parking supply in the study area. The supply of parking consists of publicly available lots, privately owned lots restricted to customers and employees, and on-street parking. In general, on-street parking is not restricted by a time limit. The initial inventory of spaces used recent aerial photography to map the total number of available spaces and then verified by staff during field observations to denote the type of parking facility and if any restrictions were present. There are a total of 1,011 parking spaces in the study area. The following sections detail the distribution of the supply of parking.

ON-STREET

The existing on-street parking spaces were inventoried and assigned their corresponding block number. The available on-street parking was not observed to have a time restriction and are available for first come, first served basis. **Table 1** shows the breakdown of the type of restriction and the available number of spaces for on-street and off-street parking in the study area.

While the majority of the available on-street spaces in the central business district are marked, the markings show signs of fading and need to be remarked. There are a couple of streets, south of Warren Street, that allow on-street parking but are unmarked spaces. Additionally, the on-street parking is not signed. Outside of the central business district are residential areas that allow on-street parking but are unmarked spaces. To determine the number of available spaces on the streets with unmarked spaces, MACOG used the method from the, “*Parking Management Made Easy: A Guide to Taming the Downtown Parking Beast.*” This guide provides an estimate based on the total distance measured along the curb excluding driveways. As shown in **Table 1**, MACOG identified 241 available on-street parking spaces in the study area.

OFF-STREET

The existing off-street parking lots were inventoried and assigned their corresponding block number. MACOG identified 770 off-street parking spaces in the study area, see **Table 1** for the breakdown. Of the available off-street parking supply, approximately 164 spaces are publicly accessible and 606 spaces are privately-owned and reserved for employees or customers. Public off-street parking is provided by the Town of Middlebury and the Middlebury Public Library. There are 6 public parking lots in the study area, 5 are available by the Town and 1 by the Library.



On-Street Parking
on Warren St.

Table 1: Downtown Parking Restrictions

Restriction Type	On-Street Parking	Off-Street Parking
No Restriction	241	164
Reserved Restriction	-	606
Timed Restriction	-	-
Total	241	770

PUBLIC & PRIVATE PARKING SUPPLY

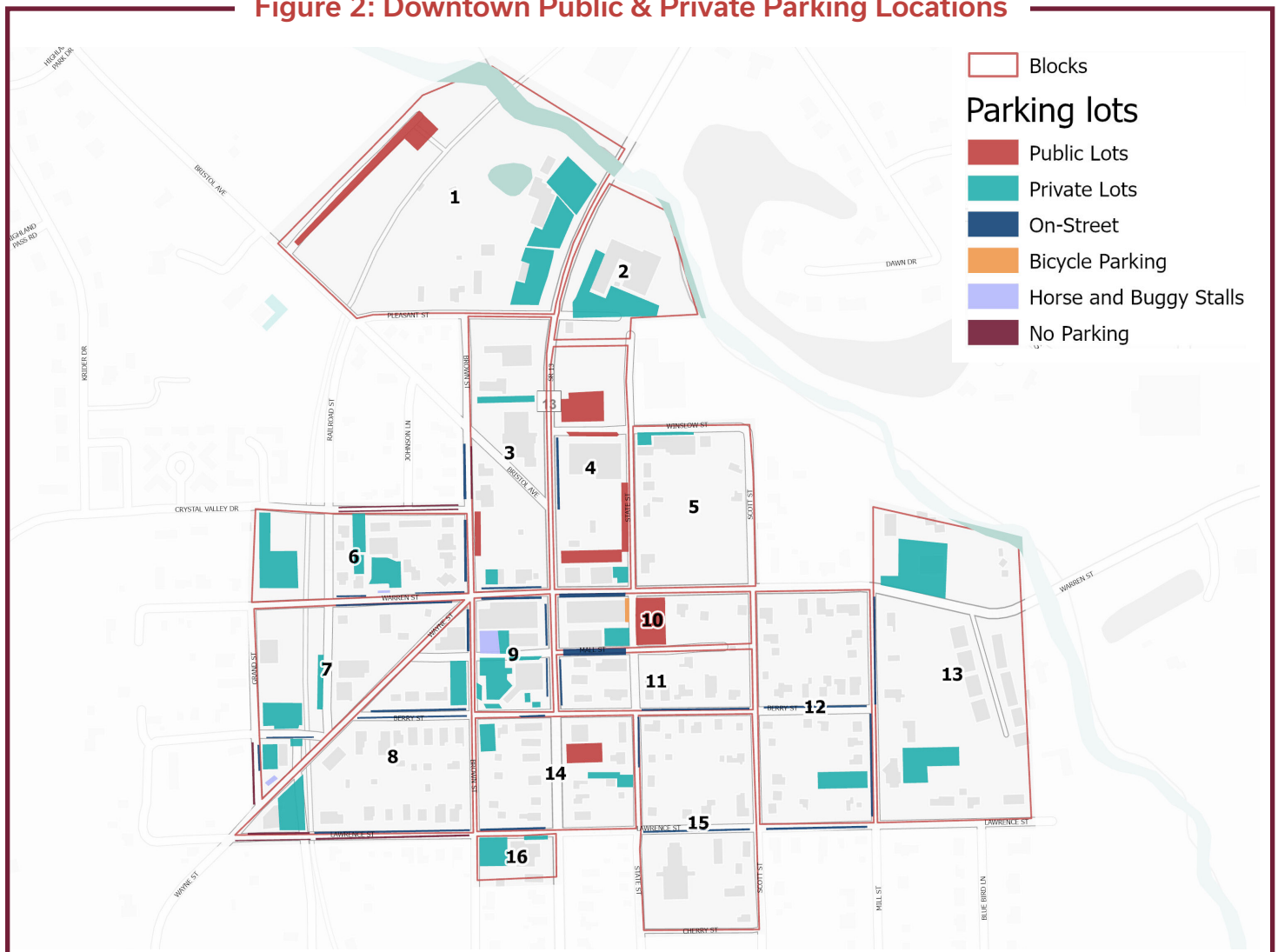
Figure 2, on the next page, depicts the location of the on-street parking and the public and private parking lots. There are a total of 356 parking spaces in the central business district, with 97 as on-street spaces and 259 as off-street parking lots. Of the 356 available spaces, approximately 243 spaces (on-street and off-street parking) or 68 percent are public and 113 or 32 percent are private spaces in off-street lots.

A general rule of thumb is public parking should account for at least 50 percent of the total parking supply in the central business district.

*During the field observations, MACOG noted that First State Bank was under construction of adding a new administrative building with a private lot of approximately 36 spaces and two hitching posts for horse and buggy. However, this was not included in the total private parking supply.



Figure 2: Downtown Public & Private Parking Locations



PARKING UTILIZATION

An effective plan to manage parking should respond to parking conditions observed during typical days, not during special events, and during business peak hours of operation. To assess the current peak parking conditions, MACOG conducted parking occupancy surveys to determine how many vehicles are utilizing the on-street and off-street parking facilities. Staff conducted the occupancy surveys on four separate weekdays in October and November in 2024, with one survey on a Saturday in October. Given the surveys were done late in the season, MACOG did one follow-up survey on a Wednesday in April 2025, to note any adjustments in the maximum occupancy. The parking occupancy surveys were conducted during the following days and times:

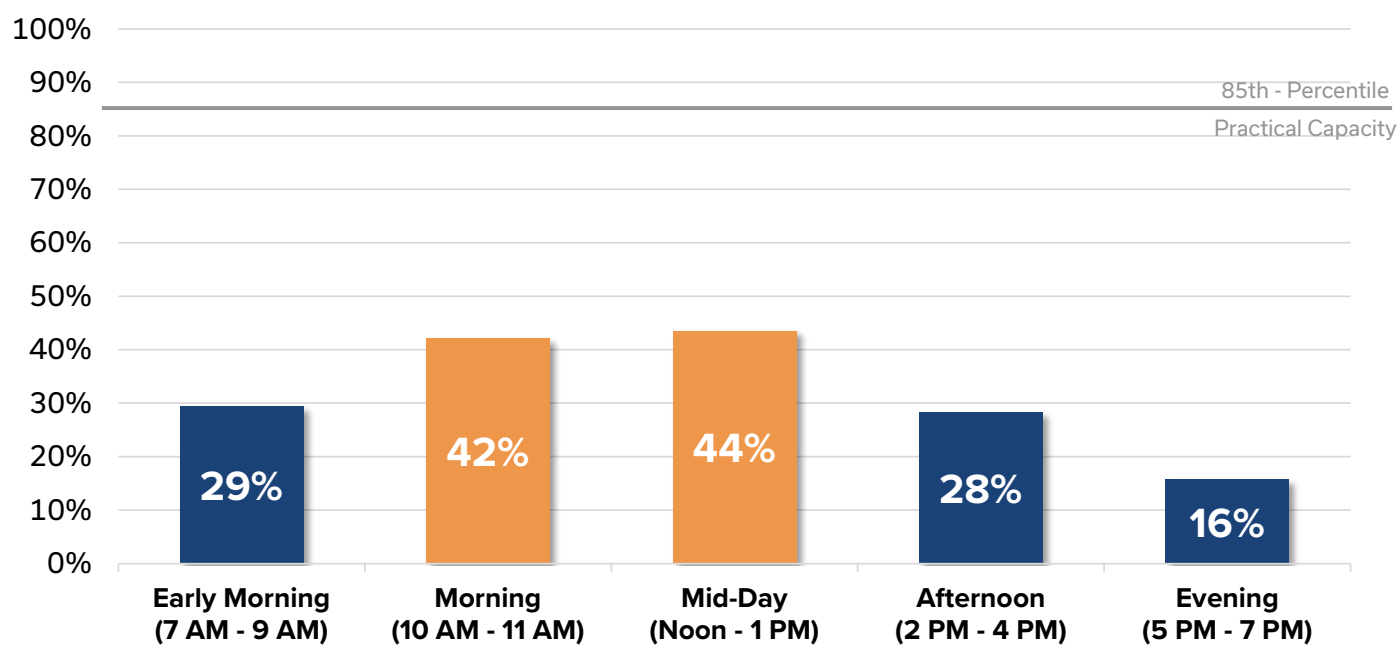
- Wednesday, October 23, 2024 - 7 AM to 9 AM; 9 AM to 11 AM; and 11 AM to 1 PM.
- Saturday, October 26, 2024 - 7 AM to 9 AM; 9 AM to 11 AM; and 11 AM to 1 PM.
- Tuesday, October 29, 2024 - 11 AM to 1 PM and 2 PM to 4 PM.
- Monday, November 4, 2024 - 7 AM to 9 AM and 9 AM to 11 AM.
- Thursday, November 7, 2024 - 5 PM to 7 PM.
- Wednesday, April 30, 2025 - 7 AM to 9 AM; 9 AM to 11 AM; 11 AM to 1 PM; and 2 PM to 4 PM.

Figure 3 below shows the comparisons of the observed parking occupancies during the six surveyed time-periods.

Early Morning & Morning Peak Occupancies

The early morning and morning survey times between 7 AM and 11 AM are indicative of the peak times for the majority of professional and service type businesses as businesses are open and most employees are at work. As Figure 3 shows below, the morning peak occupancy occurred between 10 AM and 11 AM with 427 parking spaces (on-street and off-street) occupied leaving 584 spaces unoccupied in the study area. Whereas there was a less of a demand between 7 AM and 9 AM as only 298 spaces were occupied leaving 713 spaces unoccupied in the study area.

Figure 3: Observed Peak Parking Occupancy



As previously mentioned, the total available parking supply in the study area is 1,011 on-street and off-street spaces.

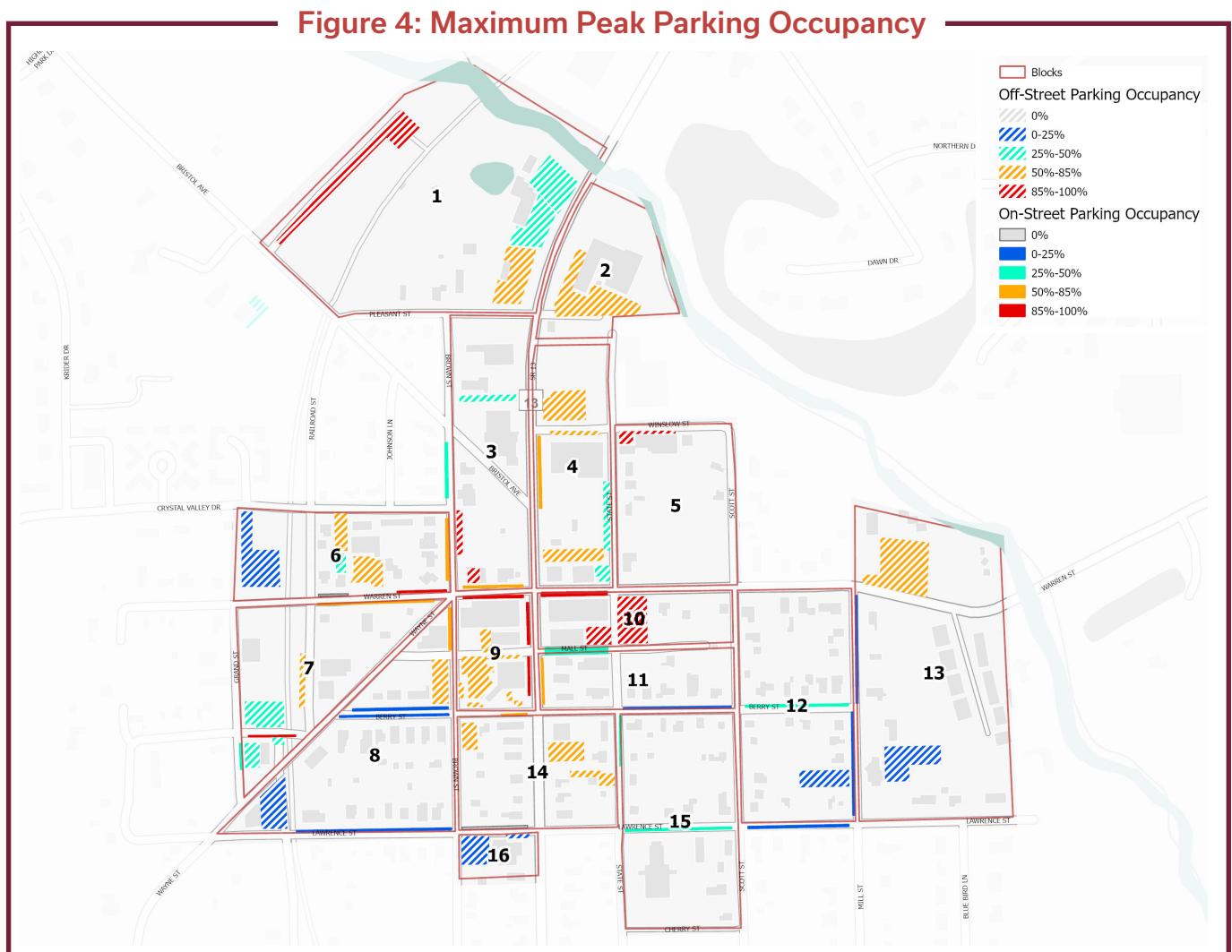
Mid-Day Peak Occupancy

The peak occupancy was found to occur during the mid-day lunch period between Noon and 1 PM, supporting the retail businesses and restaurants peak times of operation. As **Figure 3** shows on the previous page, approximately 44 percent of the on-street and off-street parking supply was occupied, or 440 spaces occupied leaving 571 unoccupied spaces.

Afternoon & Evening Peak Occupancies

The afternoon (2 PM to 4 PM) and the evening survey times (5 PM to 7 PM) are indicative that professional offices, banking, service, retail businesses, and restaurants are nearing the end of their times of operations. Only select businesses were open past 5 PM. As **Figure 3** shows on the previous page, both the afternoon and the evening peak occupancies were lower than the early morning, morning, and mid-day peak occupancies with 286 spaces occupied between 2 PM and 4 PM and 159 spaces occupied between 5 PM and 7 PM. That leaves 725 unoccupied spaces between 2 PM and 4 PM and 852 unoccupied spaces between 5 PM and 7 PM.

Figure 4 below graphically shows the overall parking occupancy for each block in the study area during the maximum peak observances.



HORSE & BUGGY PARKING PEAK OCCUPANCY

During the parking occupancy surveys, MACOG observed horse and buggy parking at various stalls and hitching posts. The locations of these stalls and hitching posts are shown in **Figure 2** on page 4, and their capacities were estimated. **Figure 5** below illustrates the peak percent occupancies for horse and buggy parking during the six surveyed periods. **Table 2** below shows a breakdown of the parking occupancy.

Within these three blocks, parking presents specific challenges.

- In Block 4, the horse and buggy hitching posts near the Public Library have a capacity of 4 spots. During a survey conducted in the afternoon, it was noted that this area was at full capacity, with 100 percent occupancy.
- In Block 7, the hitching post area for the Hilltop Restaurant has a capacity of 3 spots; however, during a morning survey, 8 horse and buggies were occupying the space.
- In Block 10, the horse and buggy hitching posts located in the public lot at the corner of Warren Street and State Street have a capacity of 12 spots. During a morning survey, it was observed that 14 horse and buggies were utilizing these spaces.

Figure 5: Observed Horse & Buggy Peak Percent Occupancy

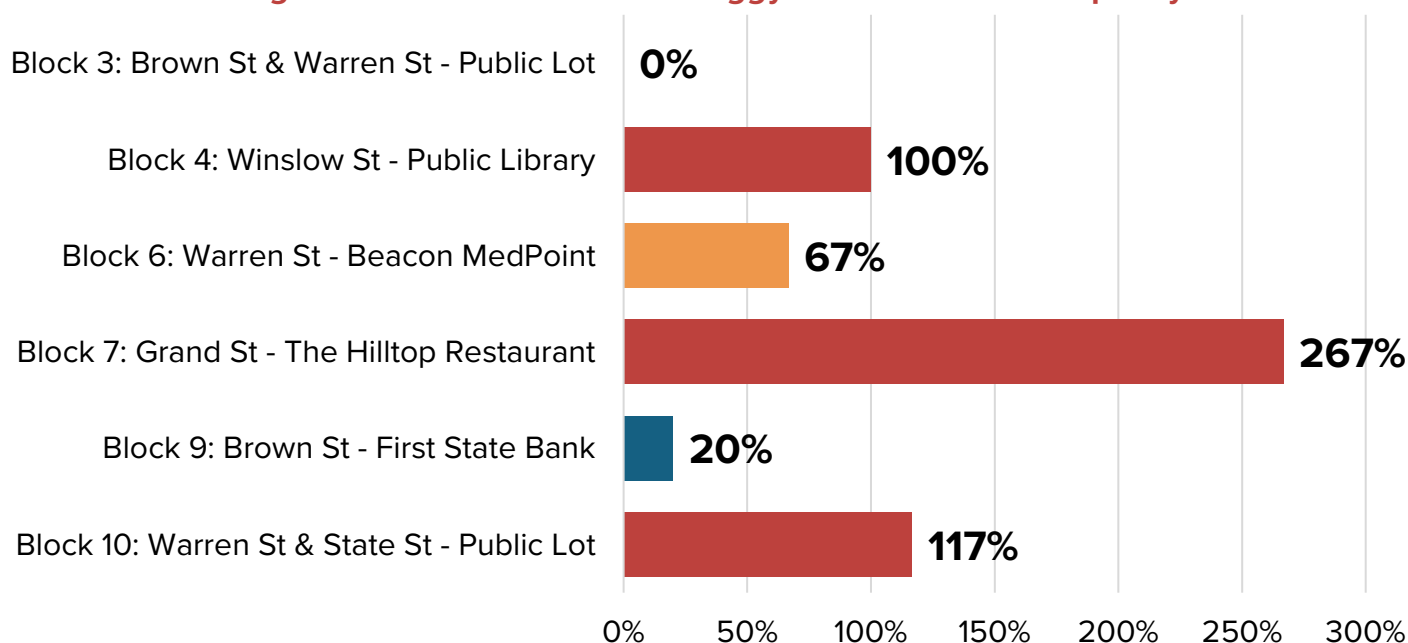


Table 2: Horse & Buggy Parking Occupancy

Location	Available Capacity	Maximum Occupancy	Percent Occupied	Surplus/Deficit
Block 3: Brown St & Warren St - Public Lot	4	0	0%	4
Block 4: Winslow St - Public Library	4	4	100%	0
Block 6: Warren St - Beacon MedPoint	6	4	67%	2
Block 7: Grand St - The Hilltop Restaurant	3	8	267%	-5
Block 9: Brown St - First State Bank	15	3	20%	12
Block 10: Warren St & State St - Public Lot	12	14	117%	-2

PUBLIC PARKING PEAK OCCUPANCY

While the analysis does show an abundance of parking spaces available in the study area at any given time even during the peak demand times of the day, that is factoring the supply of public and private parking facilities in the study area. As previously indicated, the peak overall parking demand occurs during the mid-day lunch period between Noon and 1 PM. It is around this timeframe that parking available to the general public becomes difficult to find. **Figure 6** below displays the breakdown of the observed peak occupancy for the public on-street and off-street parking supply. The challenge of finding a parking spot during this time is evident in blocks 3, 4, 9, and 10.

Within these four blocks it is particularly a challenge.

- In Block 3, the public lots next to East Memorial Park are at 100 percent occupancy and the on-street spaces across the street from Varns & Hoover had 59 percent occupancy.
- In Block 4, the public lots near the Marathon Gas Station and the Public Library had 54 percent occupancy.
- In Block 9, the on-street spaces are at 100 percent occupancy.
- In Block 10, the public lot at the corner of Warren Street and State Street had 91 percent occupancy and the on-street spaces had 67 percent occupancy.

Figure 6: Observed Peak Occupancy - Public Parking

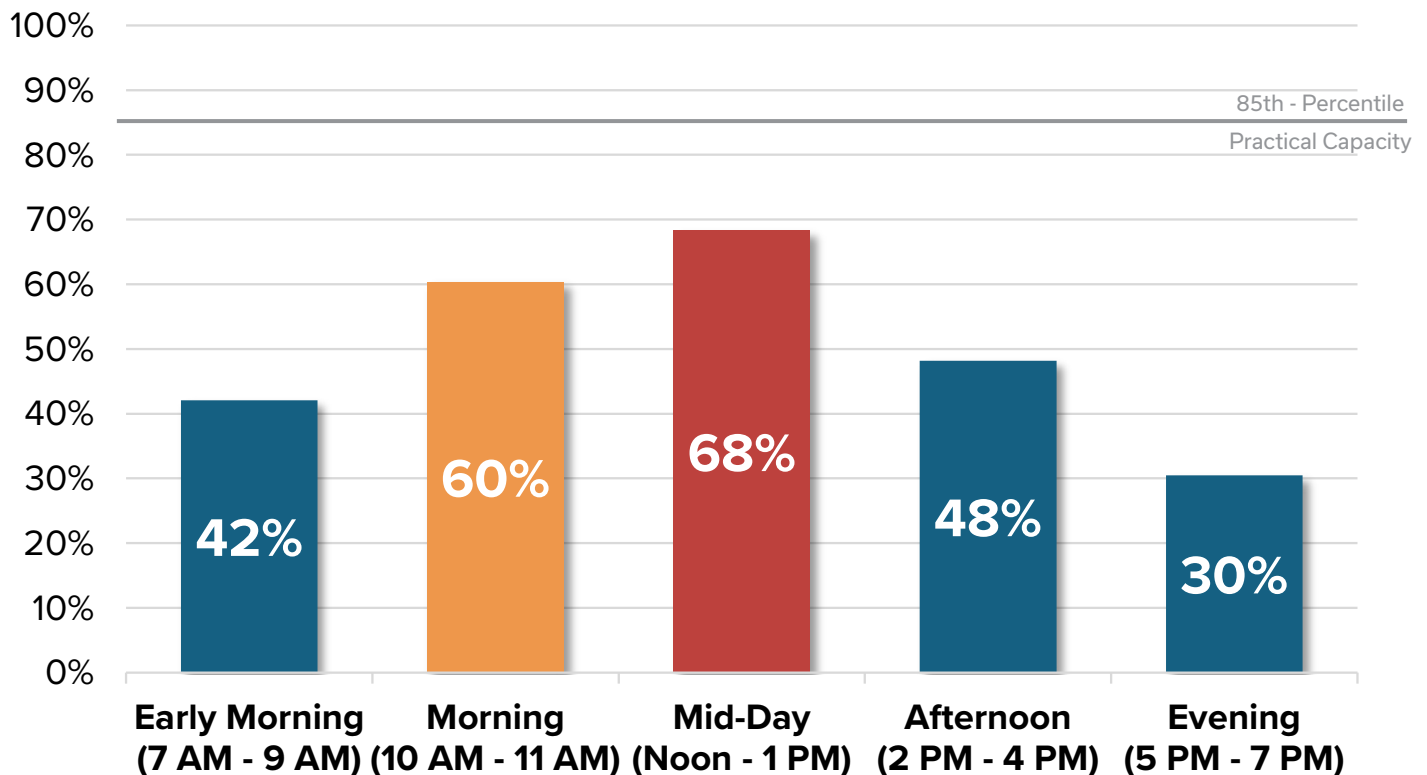




Figure 7 below displays the spatial breakdown of the observed peak occupancy for the public on-street and off-street parking supply in the central business district.

Figure 7: Observed Peak Occupancy - Public Parking

