

Institutional Parking Committee Report 2011

Chairman Emory Underwood, Vice-Chairman Mary Standaert, Martha Campbell, Richard Sills, Al Edwards, Ron Nalley (Town Staff), David Currie (Town Staff)

Recommendations and Strategies as detailed in the parking studies of 1984, 1996, 2003 and the 2008 Montreat Comprehensive Plan: Updated 2011.

Recommendation and Strategy 1. Reconfigure existing parking areas for improved efficiency. Conduct a study that will evaluate existing parking areas and redesign them to achieve a higher number of parking spaces.

Strategy1. Parking surveys were conducted in 1984, 1996, 2003, and 2008. Richard Sills and Al Edwards provided data on parking at the college and conference center. Much was the same data as in the previous studies.

Findings : Consensus of the committee was that the combined total number of parking spaces is "reasonably" adequate but is not well utilized especially during the conference season, and particularly with respect to oversized vehicles. However, that said, if enrollment at the college were to increase and/or if the conference center programming and occupancy rate were to increase appreciably parking problems will arise.

Action Plan (1): Al Edwards and Richard Sills have agreed to meet and prepare maps which list specific lots that will accommodate oversized vehicles and will also list parking lots which are owned by the college but are available for use by summer conferees. If approved by the respective entities, these maps would then be distributed to groups attending Montreat Conferences.

(2) Committee also recommends that the conference center prepare mobile/semi-permanent signs that can be used during peak conference weeks directing conferees to less obvious parking lots, e.g. behind the L. Nelson Bell Library.

Recommendations and Strategies 2 and 3. (2) Encourage joint ventures between public and private entities to build additional parking facilities. (3) Permit and encourage "table-top" parking where feasible to take advantage of topography.

Findings: If the College or the Conference Center add or expand (to increase occupancy) facilities, additional parking spaces will need to be considered as part of the construction project. It is the consensus of the committee that a professional

traffic engineer would be needed to conduct a survey of the integrated needs of the Conference Center, College, Heritage Center, and Town. How this will be funded was not determined.

Action Plan (1). As practicable, when resurfacing existing lots, the institutions should stripe the lots to maximize parking spaces-addressing issues of compact cars, oversized vehicles and handicapped parking, as practicable.

(2) The committee toured the college, conference and town areas and identified two locations which should be recognized as potential sites for parking facilities including "table-top" parking due to the sloping topography of these locations. Site #1 is behind the Kirk Allen Building and adjacent to Anderson Auditorium (owned by Montreat College). Site #2 is the former location of Geneva Hall (owned by the Mountain Retreat Association, subject to certain easements.)

Recommendation 4. Create a satellite parking system with shuttle service.

Findings: A systemized shuttle service does not appear to be either feasible or required at this time. Future discussions, especially with respect to the college, should consider a vehicle free zone.

The committee does recommend that short term off-site parking for over-sized vehicles such as travel buses be found. The committee has also identified a need for a location for staging and regulation of construction vehicles and supplies, moving vans, campers, commercial vehicles, but the specifics of where have not been determined due to the fact that such sites are largely owned by the Conference Center and the College. The Town also owns property near the gate which could be used.

Possible Action: These issues should be addressed by the individual governing bodies of the institutions and also by the Planning and Zoning Commission of the Town of Montreat. Specifically, P&Z may need to consider the need for permits and/ordinances regulating such issues as time and size limits for the above.

Recommendation 5. Require adequate off-street parking in residential areas.

Outside the scope of this committee.

Recommendation 6. Consider parking permits and parking fees to offset street maintenance costs.

Findings: Do not recommend parking permits for residents or daily/weekly visitors.

Possible Action: Suggest that the college consider parking fees be assessed for college students with cars on campus and that these fees be remitted to the town.

Recommendation 7 and 8. (7) Improve access between parking areas and destinations.
(8) Provide better signage to direct visitors to parking locations.

Findings: Sidewalks and paths connecting major buildings and parks within the institutional zones are sufficient but are not well identified and are often difficult to find (such as the path from Anderson Auditorium to Robert Lake Park).

Possible Action: Better directional signage and signs identifying specific buildings and places are needed. Work on a sign ordinance was initiated some 3-4 years ago in Planning and Zoning.

Recommendations 9. Update parking ordinances.

Finding: Review of existing ordinances by Planning and Zoning needed.

Action: Specific Ordinances were prepared by the Town Administrator and Building Inspector and reviewed by the Institutional Parking Committee. These will be sent to the Town Council for further action.

Recommendation 10. Promote public transportation opportunities.

Possible Action: Promote the use of Mountain Mobility and walking within the community in publications of the Conference Center, the College, and the Town with listings of schedules and rates.

Possible Action: Encourage installation of bike racks at Freeland Hall, Spence Hall, the Montreat Town Office, the Montreat post office, Moore Center and other key locations in Montreat. These could be furnished by the institutions themselves or by interested groups such as the Cottagers Association or by individual donations.