

## **Senior Center Parking Study**

The Senior Center is responding to requests for improved parking options from residents who drive to the Center. Over two years ago seniors from South Brookline requested improved parking options when they drive to the Senior Center. These residents are displeased with the two-hour parking limits on the streets near the Center. They would like to be able to drive to the Center, park on a street near the center, and stay as long as they like at the Center without having to worry about the two-hour limit on parking. Volunteers at the Center have expressed similar concerns. The Center provides off-street parking for employees but not for volunteers. Six parking places are informally reserved for Senior Center users at the Fuller Street lot, but users have to feed the meters and are limited in the time that parking is allowed in the lot.

Parking was an issue when the Senior Center was proposed for its Winchester Street location more than a decade ago. Neighborhood residents complained about the anticipated impact on traffic and parking. The Town provided assurances that most users would use other transportation options. The Town also made arrangements for staff to park off the street.

To help come up with options to address the recent requests for more parking options, BrooklineCAN's Livable Community Advocacy committee conducted a study for the Senior Center in 2012. The study had a number of components: surveys of Senior Center users about their mode of transportation when they visit the center, observations of the mode of transportation used by visitors when they arrived at the Center on selected days, and surveys of available parking spots on streets surrounding the Center on selected days during hours of peak activity at the Center. The findings of the study are summarized here.

### **Senior Center Transportation Study Highlights**

#### **Data collection strategies**

1. Monitoring of front-door arrivals on 7 dates in summer and fall of 2012 to determine time of arrival and the extent of drop offs (number of arrivals = 575)
2. Counting of vacant parking places on streets near the Senior Center between 10 AM and 3 PM on 4 selected dates in summer and fall of 2012
3. Survey of participants in a special Senior Center event on August 15, 2012 (number of respondents = 108)
4. Questionnaire distributed with Senior Center Newsletter in September 2012 (number of respondents = 143)

## Major findings

Among Senior Center users, half live more than a mile from the Center; three quarters live more than half a mile from the Center.

Heaviest use of the Center is between 10 AM and 3 PM.

According to the Transportation survey, over a third of users drive to the center in their own automobile. Among those who live more than a mile from the Center, half regularly drive to the Center.

One quarter use specialized transportation (Senior Center bus or van or MBTA Ride). Less than 5% most often ride with a friend.

Drop offs account for 30% of arrivals.

Among those who attended the August 15 event, nearly two-thirds planned to stay more than 2 hours. Over 80% planned to stay less than 3 hours. Among those who drove to the event, more than half planned to stay for more than 2 hours.

Among the August 15 attendees who drove to the Center, one third would come to the Center more often if they could park on the street for more than 2 hours. Among respondents to the Transportation survey who most often drive when they visit the Center, over 40% would attend more frequently if they could park on the street for more than 2 hours.

During the hours of peak Senior Center use (10 AM to 3 PM), few vacant parking places are available on the streets closest to the Center. However, parking can consistently be found on:

Winchester between Coolidge and Thorndike	up to 6 spaces
Coolidge between Winchester and Harvard	up to 10 spaces
Thorndike between Winchester and Harvard	up to 14 spaces
Atherton Road	up to 10 spaces
Fuller Street parking lot	6 dedicated spaces

Of those who most often drive to the Center, 90% can walk at least a block without discomfort.

## **Conclusions**

Parking options would be improved by a sticker program allowing older drivers to park for 3 hours on weekdays between 10 AM and 3 PM on:

- Winchester Street north of Coolidge Street

- Coolidge Street between Winchester Street and Harvard Street

- Thorndike Street between Winchester Street and Harvard Street

- Atherton Road

- Fuller Street parking lot

The willingness of drivers to walk between the Senior Center and the proposed locations for extended parking is currently unknown and should be explored.

Because the demand for three-hour parking in the outer perimeter of the Senior Center is likely to be light, impact on parking availability for neighborhood residents will be modest.

Greater use of the Fuller Street lot by Senior Center visitors should also be encouraged through other measures.

Greater ride-sharing should be encouraged among Senior Center users.