

Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council

**Village of Pawling
Parking Utilization Survey**

July 2003

I. Background

This study originated from a request from the Village of Pawling to the County for assistance in evaluating current parking conditions in the downtown area. The major stimulus for this study involved the award and subsequent preliminary designing efforts of a Transportation Enhancement Project for the downtown area. This Village Green project, which is in the vicinity of the Metro-North train station, will improve the pedestrian infrastructure in the Village, while also reconfiguring existing vehicle parking spaces. Ultimately, the project will better define the central business district of the Village and enhance the flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic; results that will create a climate conducive to maintaining the economic vitality of the Village.

An important consideration in the development of the Village Green was whether the loss of some parking spaces would create a capacity problem. To assist the Village in answering these questions, staff from the Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council (PDCTC) and the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development conducted a parking utilization survey of the Village downtown in early May 2003.

The purpose of this parking survey is to provide the Village of Pawling Planning Commission with the necessary data to make an informed decision about downtown parking. The survey will also make some suggestions to better utilize existing parking areas.

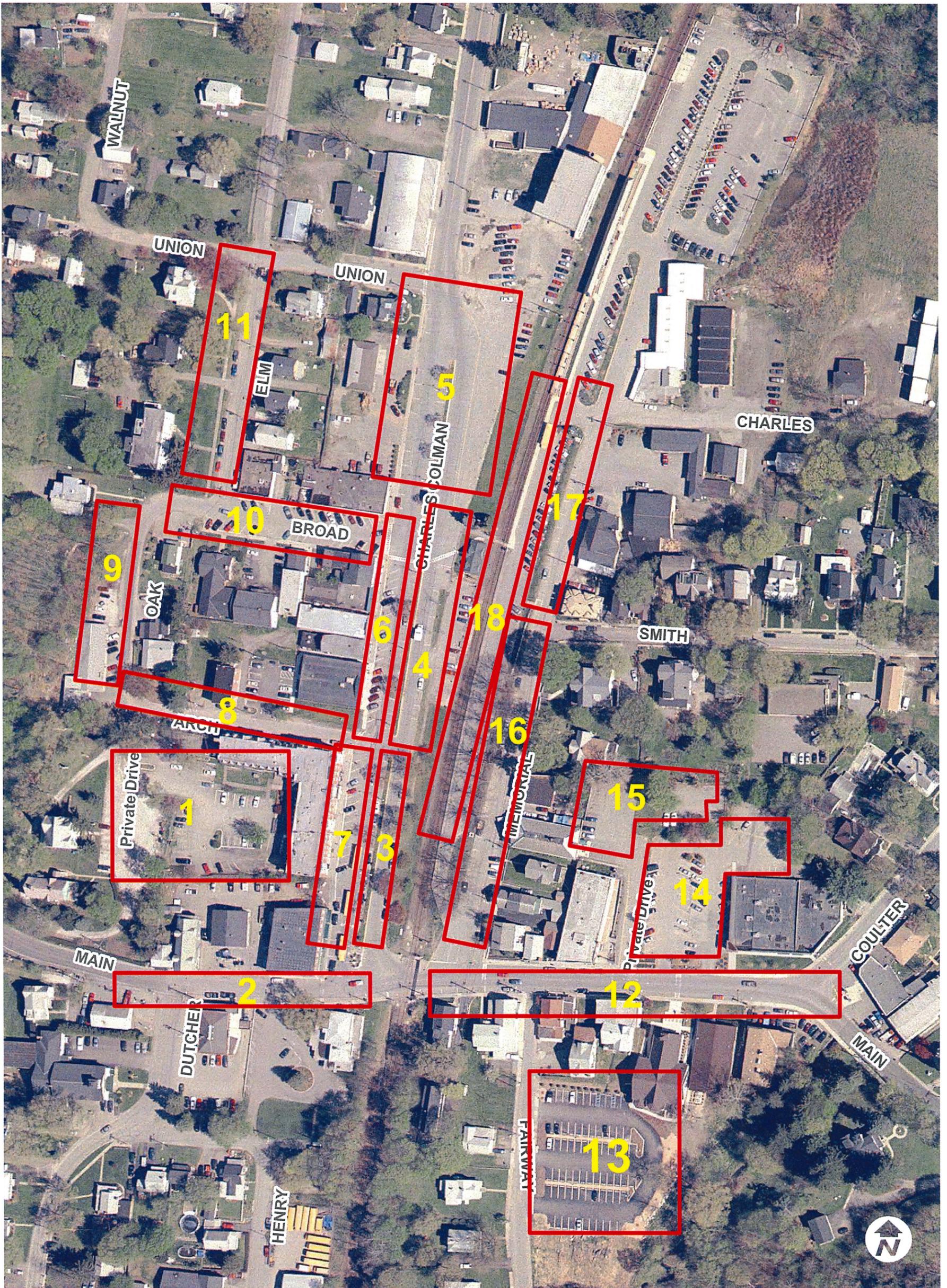
II. Methodology

Before starting the survey, the planning staff needed to define the study area. This was accomplished first by using an aerial map of the Village and then by a site visit. It was during this initial site visit that the staff determined which parking areas and streets to evaluate. The site visit looked at a variety of parking areas to include: on-street public parking, large private lots (e.g. Dutcher Building, CVS Pharmacy), some of the Metro-North permit parking areas, and the Village Hall municipal lot. The staff also took street and parking measurements during the visit.

Having established the geographic scope of the survey, the staff then determined how best to evaluate parking usage. The method chosen involved dividing the area into 18 study blocks. See Fig. 1 (Study Area Map). The study blocks typically covered a one block street section or a large, single parking lot.

At the request of the Village, the planning staff conducted the survey on two separate days: once on a weekday (Thursday, May 1st) and once a weekend (Saturday, May 3rd). The survey was conducted between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. on both days; the Village representatives cited these hours as the busiest for the central business district. During the three-hour study periods, each study block was surveyed at thirty-minute intervals. This resulted in six vehicular counts for each location.

**Fig. 1. Parking Utilization Survey Areas
Village of Pawling**



0 130 260 520 Feet

 **Study Areas**

Map produced by the Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council, May 2003.
Aerial map prepared by Dutchess County Department of Planning & Development, 2000.
This is a graphical representation of the relevant data available from various sources at the time of publication and is not for site specific work.
This department makes no claim as to content accuracy or omission.

In addition to counting the number of parked cars, the staff also inventoried the total number of possible parking spaces in each study block and noted any parking restrictions, which are discussed in the next section. Please note that the usage survey did not study how long a specific vehicle occupied a certain parking space, but only noted if a vehicle was using a space or not.

The counts were recorded onto spreadsheets for each of the study blocks and an occupancy rate and availability rate were calculated for each time interval. The rates, shown as percentages, were calculated by dividing the number of occupied or available spaces by the total number of possible parking spaces. The spreadsheets further calculated an overall, average occupancy rate for each study block and noted the maximum occupancy rate surveyed by the staff. The detail sheets are included in the Appendix.

III. Current Parking Restrictions

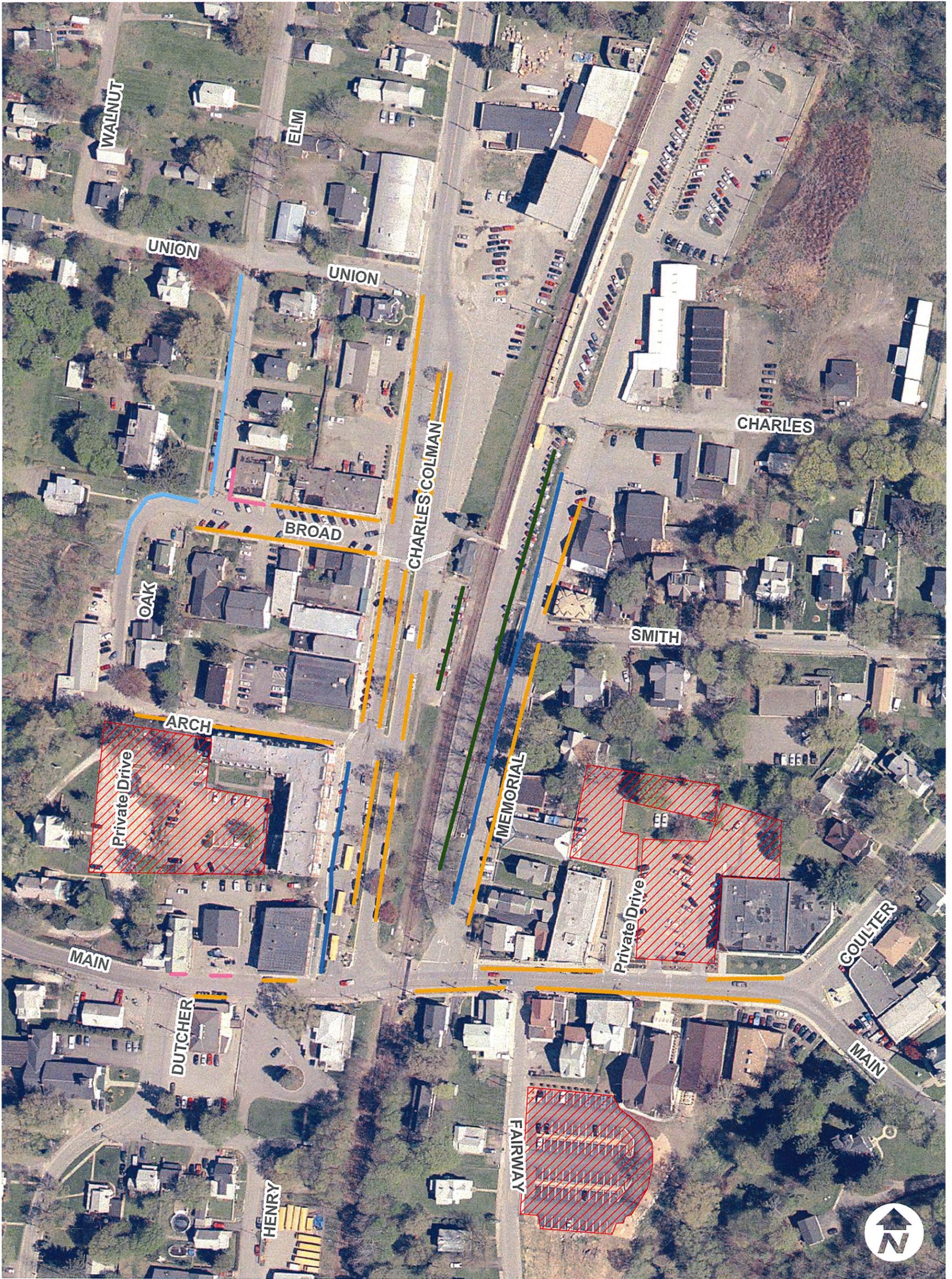
The staff noted current parking restrictions posted in the central business district. The most common restriction, found on the majority of the public streets, limits parking to one or two hours between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. except for Sundays and Holidays. Some parking spaces have 15 minute parking, most notably in the vicinity of the Post Office and along Main Street. A number of lots require parking permits, including the Metro-North parking area and the Chamber of Commerce lot. Though, the Metro-North parking area is unrestricted on weekends and holidays. All of the private lots restrict parking either to tenants (Dutcher Building) or parishioners (Church). The Village Hall lot restricts parking for official business only. Two areas have no posted parking restrictions: Oak Street and the CVS Pharmacy lot. See Fig. 2 (Parking Restriction Map).

While conducting the survey, the staff did observe some instances of illegal parking. These included vehicles that were parked in no parking zones, most notably in front of the Chamber of Commerce building and along Main Street. In addition, some vehicles exceeded timed parking restrictions; though the staff did not specifically time how long vehicles were parked, they did notice that some vehicles had obviously exceeded posted restrictions (usually by 15 minutes). The staff agreed that there was an apparent lack of enforcement of parking restrictions in the Village.

IV. Findings

This report will first discuss some general parking trends present for the entire central business district of the Village. It will then focus on specific aspects about parking in the Village, identifying trends seen on public streets, municipal lots, and private lots. Both discussions will highlight the more significant aspects of the data.

**Fig. 2. Parking Restrictions
Village of Pawling**



Map produced by the Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council, May 2003.
Aerial map prepared by Dutchess County Department of Planning & Development, 2000.
This is a graphical representation of the relevant data available from various sources at the
time of publication and is not for site specific work.
This department makes no claim as to content accuracy or omission.

Restrictions		Private Lots
	2 hr.	
	15 min.	
	1 hr.	
	Permit	
	None	

General Findings

When looking at the data for the entire Village central business district, one trend stood out. More parked vehicles were observed on the weekday than the weekend. The average weekday occupancy rate for the central business district was 49 percent, compared to 41 percent for the weekend. In particular, the highest usage (peak period) was observed at 1:00 p.m. on the weekday count. At that time, the study area contained 280 parked vehicles out of a total of 548 available spaces. This represents a peak occupancy rate of 51 percent for the whole downtown. This peak period was closely followed by the weekday 12:00 p.m. and 12:30 p.m. counts. During those times, the staff counted 277 and 274 parked vehicles respectively in the entire central business district; these translate into occupancy rates of 51 and 50 percent.

Table 1 (Parking Usage Summary) summarizes the weekday and weekend usage counts for all 18 study blocks. The numbers indicate the actual number of parked vehicles counted by the planning staff. Fig. 3 (Weekday Rates) and Fig. 4 (Weekend Rates) use graphs to compare the maximum and average occupancy rates for each study location.

The survey found that the lowest count of parked vehicles occurred at the 1:30 p.m. time interval on the weekend. At that time, only 195 vehicles were parked in the study area, which came to an occupancy rate of 36 percent. The 1:00 p.m. weekend count was only higher by two vehicles. The highest weekend count took place at 11:00 a.m., when 256 parked vehicles were observed.

In general terms, parking capacity in the Village seems to meet current demand. The peak parking period utilizes just over half of the total available spaces in the central business district. However, this does not imply that a particular street or lot peaks at half capacity. The distribution of parked vehicles in the Village is certainly not even. The survey did find instances where a street was at full capacity and instances where streets or lots were relatively empty. Yet, when analyzing the study area in its entirety, there appeared to be adequate parking for those who needed it. One should also note that there was only a 15 percent difference between the highest and lowest gross occupancy rates for the entire survey (both days).

Detailed Findings

This section will highlight some of the significant findings for the 18 study blocks. As mentioned above, the distribution of parked vehicles in the Village was not even. Some streets and lots were at full capacity, while others were clearly not. For example, the highest occupancy rate for a single time interval (114%)¹ was found on Main Street between Dutcher Avenue. and Charles Colman Boulevard. Inversely, the lowest occupancy rate (7%) was found along the north and southbound portion of Charles Colman Boulevard between Union Street and Broad Street. Such extremes hint at the wide range of occupancy rates in the downtown. This points to the possibility that the perceived parking problem in the Village is not an issue of limited capacity, but maybe an issue of the distribution of parked vehicles.

¹ Please note that this count included an illegally parked vehicle.

Table 1. Village of Pawling - Parking Usage Survey

Summary: Thursday May 1, 2003

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Total
	Dutcher House Parking (Rear Lot)	Main St.: Dutcher to Charles Colman Blvd.	Charles Colman Blvd. (NB): Main to Arch	Charles Colman Blvd. (NB): Arch to Broad	Charles Colman Blvd. (SB): Union to Broad	Charles Colman Blvd. (SB): Broad to Arch	Charles Colman Blvd. (SB): Arch to Main	Arch St.: Oak to Elm	Oak St.: Arch to Elm	Broad St.: Elm to Charles Colman Blvd.	Elm St.: Broad to Union	Main St.: Memorial to Coulter	Church Parking Lot	CVS Pharmacy Lot	Village Hall Parking Lot	Memorial: Main to Smith	Memorial: Smith to Charles	Metro-North Lot: Charles to Main	Total Parked Vehicles
Time Counted																			
11:00 AM	27	5	7	16	0	16	25	9	5	22	8	3	15	27	13	19	6	32	255
11:30 AM	26	4	8	16	2	23	16	8	5	20	8	6	14	37	14	16	4	31	258
12:00 PM	23	3	8	14	1	25	31	9	5	23	8	8	12	40	11	17	8	31	277
12:30 PM	23	4	8	17	4	23	29	8	5	20	10	9	11	36	12	18	6	31	274
1:00 PM	26	2	8	15	4	26	28	8	7	23	8	6	13	37	17	15	6	31	280
1:30 PM	26	6	8	16	5	22	28	8	7	24	8	4	10	30	13	19	5	31	270

Summary: Saturday May 3, 2003

	Dutcher House Parking (Rear Lot)	Main St.: Dutcher to Charles Colman Blvd.	Charles Colman Blvd. (NB): Main to Arch	Charles Colman Blvd. (NB): Arch to Broad	Charles Colman Blvd. (SB): Union to Broad	Charles Colman Blvd. (SB): Broad to Arch	Charles Colman Blvd. (SB): Arch to Main	Arch St.: Oak to Elm	Oak St.: Arch to Elm	Broad St.: Elm to Charles Colman Blvd.	Elm St.: Broad to Union	Main St.: Memorial to Coulter	Church Parking Lot	CVS Pharmacy Lot	Village Hall Parking Lot	Memorial: Main to Smith	Memorial: Smith to Charles	Metro-North Lot: Charles to Main	Total Parked Vehicles
Time Counted																			
11:00 AM	34	8	7	10	2	21	28	7	2	28	11	8	17	36	7	20	6	4	256
11:30 AM	31	5	8	8	1	25	29	6	1	24	9	7	19	38	6	22	4	4	247
12:00 PM	31	2	6	9	2	19	29	6	1	18	7	12	27	40	7	21	3	4	244
12:30 PM	29	4	9	10	1	15	24	5	1	16	3	8	12	44	9	17	4	3	214
1:00 PM	30	2	6	10	1	17	25	5	1	15	3	9	9	34	6	19	2	3	197
1:30 PM	28	3	7	11	1	16	26	5	1	11	4	7	9	36	5	19	3	3	195

Fig. 3

Weekday Parking Occupancy Rates

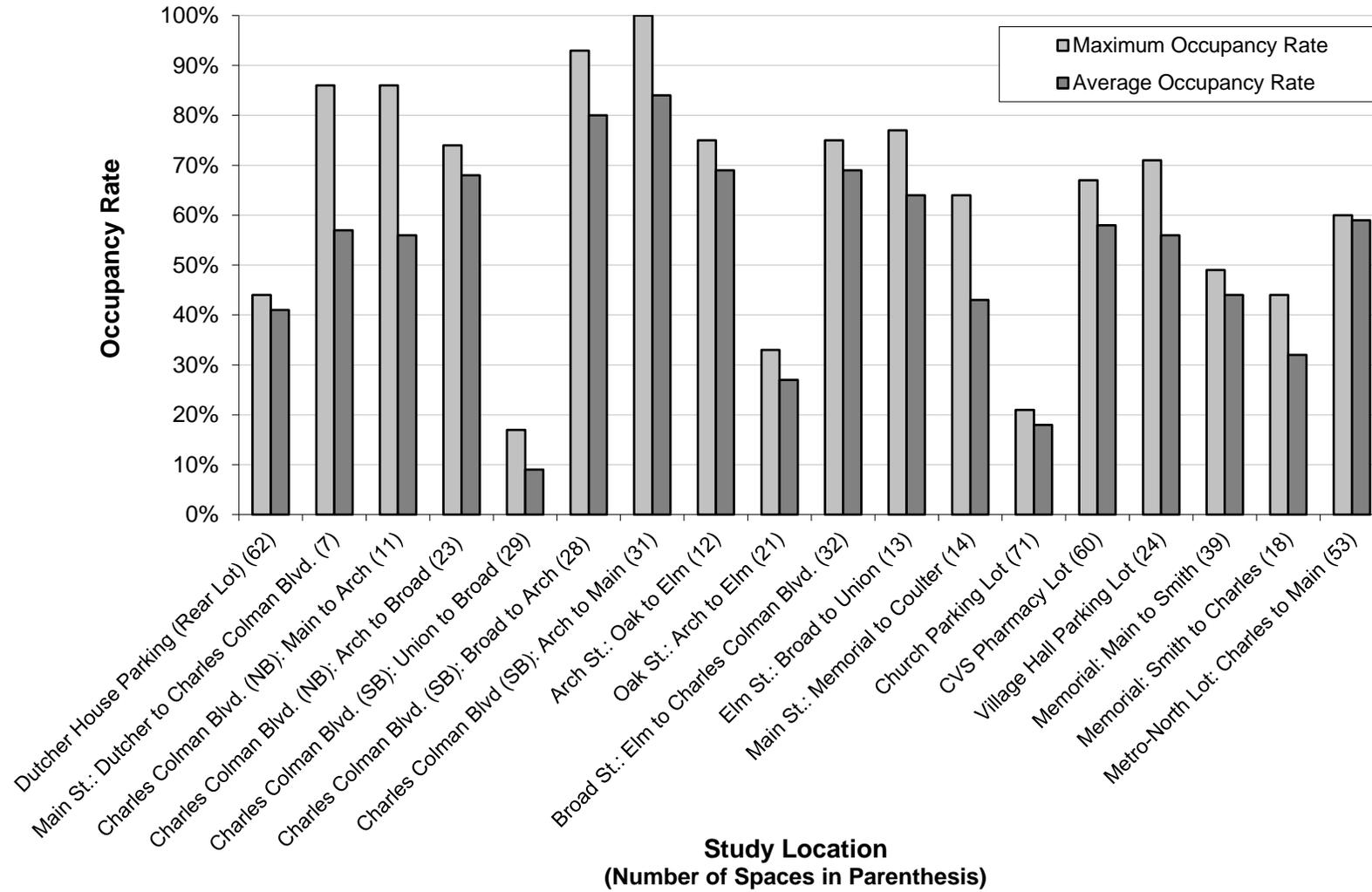
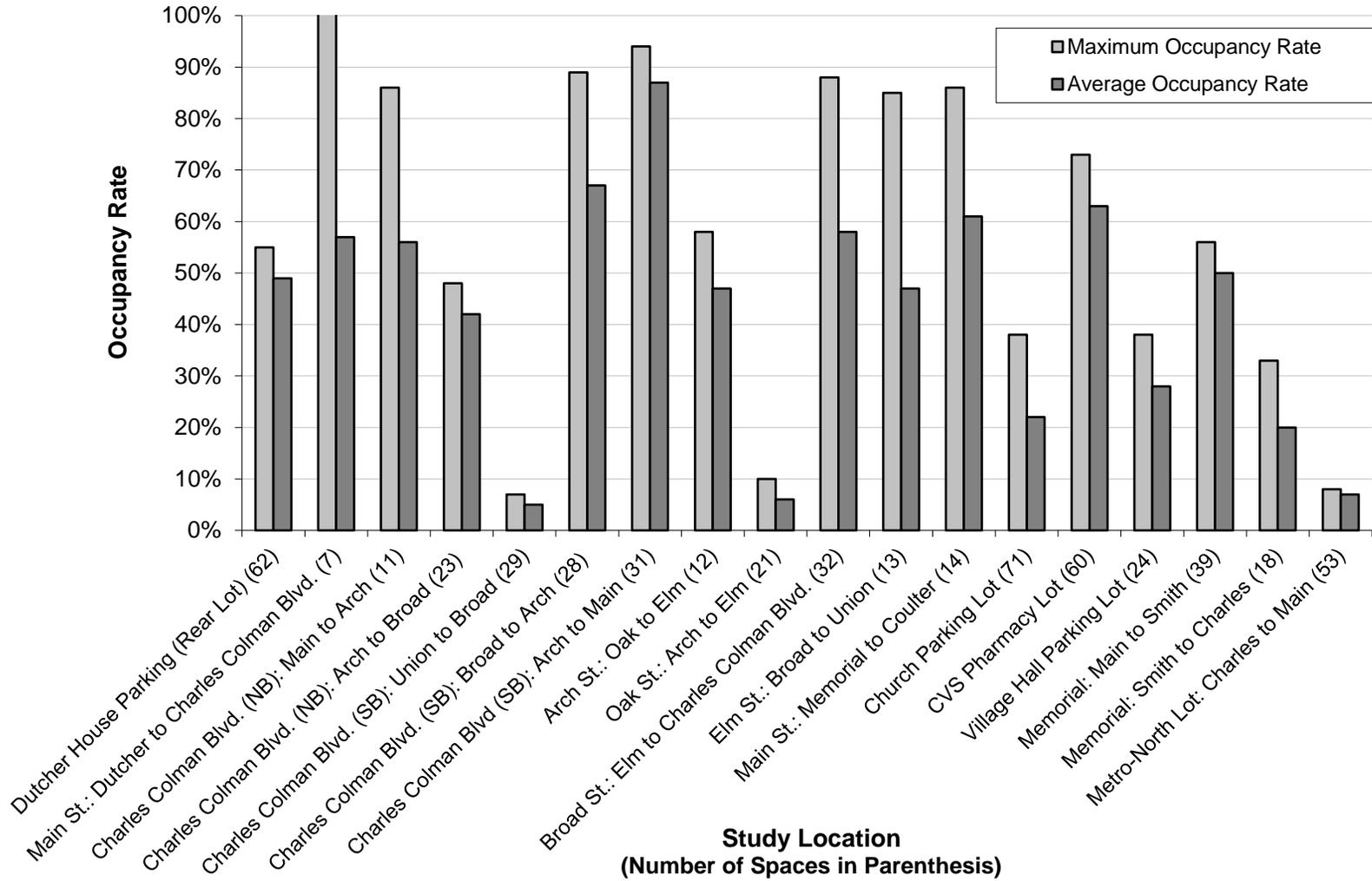


Fig. 4

Weekend Parking Occupancy Rates



Attachment 1 (Study Block Count Sheets) provides the detailed weekday and weekend usage counts for each specific study block.

A review of the maximum occupancy rates for each study block revealed four locations that occasionally experienced high rates of parking: Arch Street, Broad Street and Elm Street by the Post Office, Charles Colman Boulevard from Main Street to Broad Street, and Main Street between Charles Colman Boulevard and Coulter Street. At least once during the survey, these four areas experienced maximum occupancy rates over 75 percent. A number of these areas came close to full capacity. At 12:00 p.m. during the weekday, the portion of Charles Colman Boulevard between Arch Street and Main Street had a maximum occupancy rate of 100 percent, while another portion of Charles Colman Boulevard between Arch Street and Broad Street once saw a maximum rate of 93 percent on the weekday. The popularity of these areas seems to stem from their proximity to the commercial uses along Charles Colman Boulevard, and in the case of Broad Street, the Village Post Office.

Though the above areas did have high, maximum occupancy rates. Their average occupancy rates were slightly lower. For instance, Charles Colman Boulevard between Arch Street and Main Street had an average occupancy rate of 84 percent, while between Broad Street and Arch Street it ran at 80 percent. The average occupancy rates for Charles Colman Boulevard were much lower between Union Street and Broad Street, where the weekday rate was 9 percent and the weekend rate was 5 percent. This translates into parking availability rates of 91 percent and 95 percent respectively. Overall, the average weekday occupancy rate for all of Charles Colman Boulevard was 59 percent, with the weekend rate even lower at 51 percent. In surveying Charles Colman Boulevard (southbound), the staff observed that the most popular parking area between Arch Street and Main Street had a two-hour parking restriction, whereas the least popular section between Union Street and Broad Street had a one-hour restriction.

The survey did note that some parking areas were under utilized; these included the Church parking lot, Memorial Avenue between Main Street and Charles Street, and the portion of the Metro-North lot included in the survey. The two-day, average occupancy rates for these areas came to 20 percent for the Church, 37 percent for Memorial Avenue, and 33 percent for the Metro-North lot.

V. Conclusion

The data obtained through the survey indicates that some parking areas in the central business district experience periods of heavy usage. Yet, there seems to be adequate parking capacity elsewhere in the Village to handle potential overflows. The major issue involves the distribution of parked vehicles; a more even distribution of parked vehicles will alleviate potential problems with capacity. To achieve this, the Village should consider more consistent enforcement, better information about available parking, and the potential to develop agreements with private lots to make some spaces available to the public. The Village would further benefit from improved pedestrian infrastructure, which would encourage downtown visitors to walk greater distances to their destinations.