2016 Del Ray Parking Study Summary Report
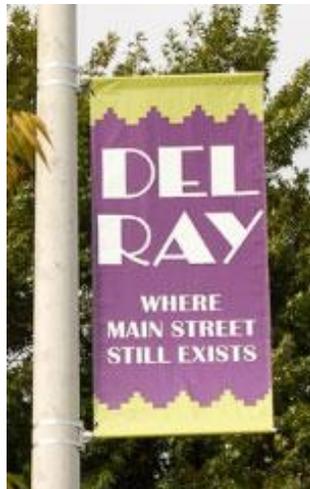
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2016 Del Ray Parking Study

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Over the years, the mixed use neighborhood of Del Ray has become increasingly attractive for both residents and businesses. Mount Vernon Avenue is the neighborhood's main street, which is home to a variety of retail, restaurant, and office uses. The surrounding side streets are primarily residential. While the mix of commercial and residential uses creates a vibrant and desirable neighborhood, this also creates challenges for parking. More recently, the businesses and neighborhood events have expanded to attract people from outside of the neighborhood, which creates an additional burden on the parking demand.

Since the early 2000's, the City has monitored parking conditions in Del Ray through several parking studies and surveys of parking occupancies. Prior to the most recent data collection conducted in spring 2016, parking conditions were last surveyed in 2010. From that data, a summary report and set of recommendations was prepared in 2012. Since this data is now six years old, the City conducted new surveys of the parking conditions in May 2016. From this data, staff has prepared this summary report to summarize the results of the 2016 data collection and compare these results with the 2010 parking conditions. A list of potential recommendations is also included to address key parking challenges in the neighborhood.

SUMMARY OF 2016 DATA COLLECTION

Updated parking data was collected during the first two weeks in May 2016. Surveys were conducted during the following periods:
- Wednesday Afternoon – 12 PM to 2 PM
- Wednesday Evening – 6 PM to 8 PM
- Saturday Afternoon – 11 AM to 1 PM
- Saturday Evening – 7 PM to 9 PM

These survey days and times were similar to the days and times in the previous data collection effort in 2010.

The 2010 study area consisted of Mount Vernon Avenue from Commonwealth Avenue/Clifford Avenue to Glendale Avenue and the side streets one block to the east and west. The study area for the 2016 data collection effort was expanded beyond the original study area to include a number of other locations in the neighborhood that had been identified as having existing parking issues or a potential for parking issues in the future due to new development. *Figure 1-1* identifies the expanded study area. Specifically, the new study area included:
- Clyde Avenue/Price Street
- Dewitt Avenue
- Streets adjacent to the Oakville Triangle development (Raymond Avenue to Windsor Avenue between Dewitt Avenue and Route 1)

- Streets adjacent to South Potomac Yard (Monroe Avenue to Glendale Avenue between Dewitt Avenue and Leslie Avenue/Main Line Boulevard)

As with the previous study, parking occupancy data was collected for on-street and off-street parking locations within the expanded study area during the time periods noted above. *Table 1-1* summarizes the number of spaces on each block and provides a comparison with the 2010 figures. The number of spaces from the expanded study area is also separated from the total to understand the changes from the previous study and the size of the expanded area. The overall number of spaces on the streets comprising the original study area decreased by 53 spaces, from 1,099 spaces to 1,046 spaces. Some of this decrease can be attributed to different measurement assumptions by the 2010 and 2016 consultants, although some do represent a loss of parking since 2010 due to the addition of bikeshare stations or bike racks located on the street or new loading zones. The additional streets in the expanded area of the 2016 study provide 1,279 spaces. In total, the entire study area has over 2,300 spaces.

The majority of on-street parking along Mount Vernon Avenue is general parking with a 2 hour time limit. Where a time limit exists, the restrictions typically extend from 9 AM to 5 PM, Monday through Saturday. With the exception of three blocks in Residential Parking District 6, the residential side streets are general parking with no time limits. *Figure 1-2* depicts the parking restrictions on each of these blocks.

The number of spaces provided in off-street lots is summarized in *Table 1-2* and identified on *Figure 1-3*. Similar to the inventory of on-street spaces, this table includes a comparison with the number of spaces surveyed in 2010. The overall number of spaces in the lots that were included in the 2010 survey is slightly more in 2016 than 2010 (744 versus 736). Of these, only 7% are owned by the City, and a smaller percentage are available for public parking, which is consistent with the 2010 conditions. Fifteen additional parking lots were included with this recent survey, for an additional 281 spaces. All of these spaces are private lots.

Finally, this survey also included a turnover analysis for the four blocks on Mount Vernon Avenue that were included in 2010 (Howell to Windsor, Windsor to Custis, Del Ray to Oxford, and Oxford to Uhler). The 2016 survey also included a turnover analysis for the public lot used for the Del Ray Farmer's Market.

RESULTS

On-Street Parking
Table 1-3 summarizes the results of the 2016 parking surveys by block for each time period. Instances where parking conditions exceeded 85% occupancy (the percentage occupancy when parking conditions are typically considered full) are identified with red text. *Figures 1-4* through *1-11* in the attachments section depict the results for each of the eight time periods surveyed. Blocks with high parking occupancies are shown in red and orange. Blocks with low occupancy are shown in green.

Table 1-5 summarizes the on-street parking utilization in 2016 for the entire expanded study area, original 2010 study area, the additional streets, Mount Vernon Avenue blocks, and side streets one block off Mount Vernon Avenue. The peak parking period occurs on Saturday afternoon. In general, during most of the surveyed time periods there is excess parking capacity for the overall neighborhood. However, Mount Vernon Avenue does exceed the 85% threshold during one survey period (Saturday 12 to 1pm).

Looking at the parking conditions for the blocks near the majority of the Del Ray businesses illustrates a different situation. *Table 1-5* also provides a summary for the blocks near the core portion of the neighborhood (between Raymond Avenue to Bellefonte Avenue). The side streets include those one block east and west of Mount Vernon Avenue. As shown in the table, parking in this area is essentially at capacity during most of the time periods surveyed.

Off-Street Parking
Table 1-4 summarizes the results of the parking surveys for each off-street parking lot for each time period. As with the on-street occupancy table, instances where parking conditions exceeded 85% occupancy are flagged with red text. *Figures 1-4* through *1-11* in the attachments section also depict the results for the off-street lots for each of the eight time periods surveyed. Again, lots with high parking occupancies are shown in red and orange and lots with low occupancy are shown in green.

Table 1-5 summarizes the off-street parking utilization for the entire expanded study area, the original study area, the new lots in the expanded study area, and lots on city properties. Overall, off-street parking lots are fairly underutilized, averaging about 50% occupied. Peak parking for off-street lots seems to occur during the weekday afternoons, although many lots are still not full during this period. There are only a total of 70 parking spaces on property owned by the City, which represents less than 7% of the overall supply for the area. Of these 70 spaces, only 20 spaces are open to the general public at all times of the day. The rest are associated with the fire station, library, and school.

Table 1-4A below highlights the occupancies for the City's lot and five other lots that might be possibilities for shared parking. The observed occupancy of the Farmer's Market lot shows this lot is full during all time periods surveyed (with the exception of Saturday afternoon when the farmer's market occurs). Since this is the only public off-street lot, this may lead to the perception that there is no available off-street parking in the area. However, as shown below, a number of private lots do have excess capacity, in particular during Saturday afternoon when on-street parking is at the highest demand. The lots in the table below were selected since they offer larger amounts of parking and are strategically located throughout the study area. The Recommendations section below provides more information related to shared parking.

Table 1-4A: Off-Street Parking Utilization at City Lots and Potential Shared Parking Lots

Location	Total spaces	Weekday				Saturday			
		12 to 1 pm	1 to 2 pm	6 to 7pm	7 to 8pm	11 to 12pm	12 to 1pm	7 to 8pm	8 to 9pm
City Farmer's Market Lot	13	85%	92%	100%	92%	n/a	n/a	85%	85%
Sun Trust	81	49%	49%	41%	42%	62%	74%	44%	42%
DHS Lot	72	83%	88%	58%	61%	81%	69%	32%	32%
AGA	49	73%	84%	41%	35%	49%	49%	12%	8%
Salvation Army	34	44%	82%	26%	24%	24%	24%	18%	21%
Walgreens	43	21%	30%	23%	21%	40%	42%	12%	16%

Turnover
Table 1-6 in the attachments section summarizes the results of the turnover study done for the specific locations identified earlier in this report. While there were certainly instances where vehicles were parked for longer than the two hour parking restrictions (if applicable at the time of the survey), on average vehicles parked for a little less than one hour. Additionally, as might be expected, the surveys also indicated that vehicles parked for slightly longer durations during the evening hours given that time restrictions typically end at 5 PM.
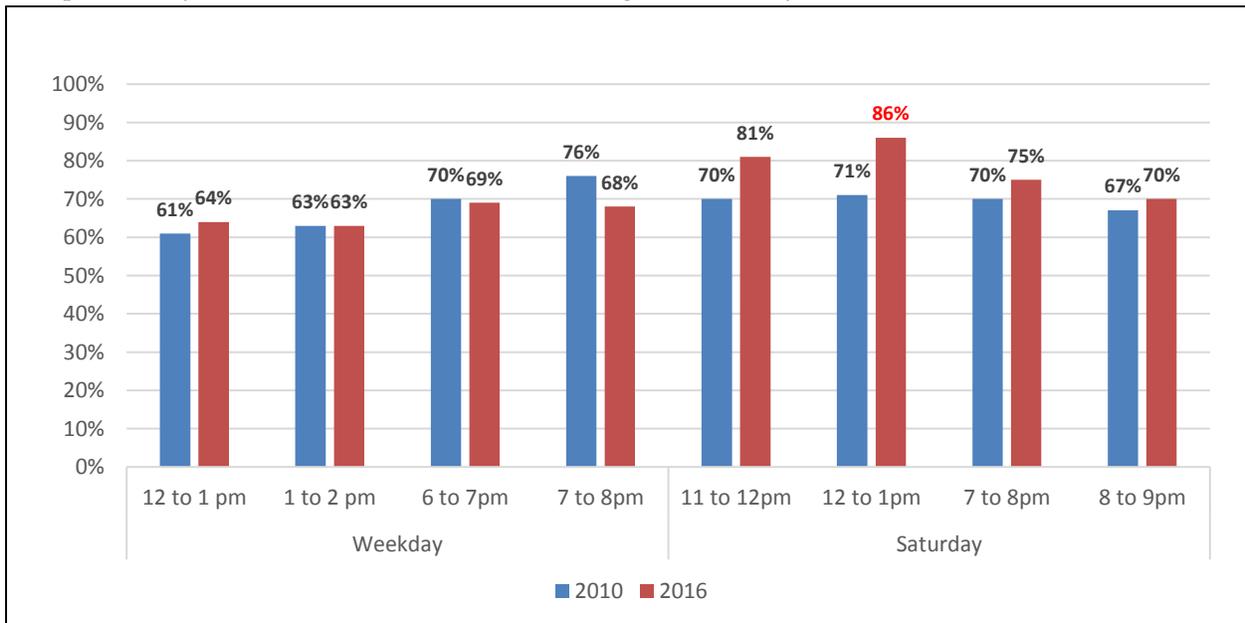

COMPARISON WITH 2010 CONDITIONS

The results of the 2016 data collection indicate that parking demand in Del Ray has increased in the last six years. *Table 1-7* and the charts below compares the on-street parking utilization that was observed in 2010 with this recent survey. The percentage occupancy has increased for all time periods surveyed, some more significantly than others. While the overall figures show there is capacity within the entire study area, the increase across the board indicates a growing pressure for parking.

Comparison of 2010 and 2016 On-Street Parking Utilization for Original Study Area
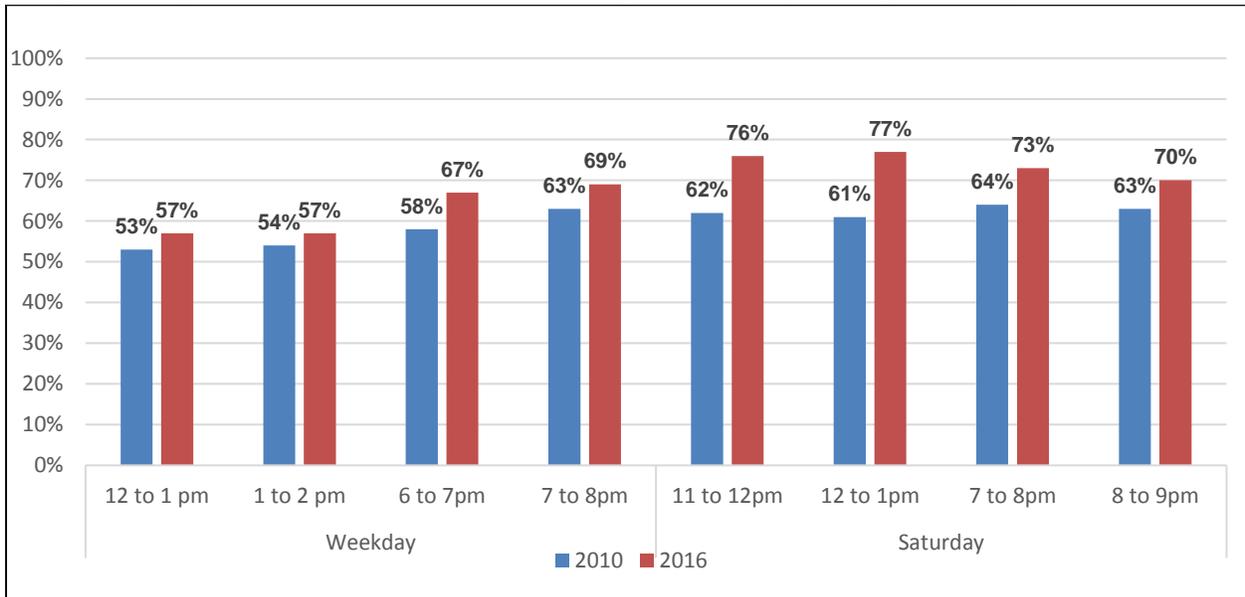
Comparison of 2010 and 2016 On-Street Parking Utilization for Mount Vernon Ave

Comparison of 2010 and 2016 On-Street Parking Utilization for Side Streets
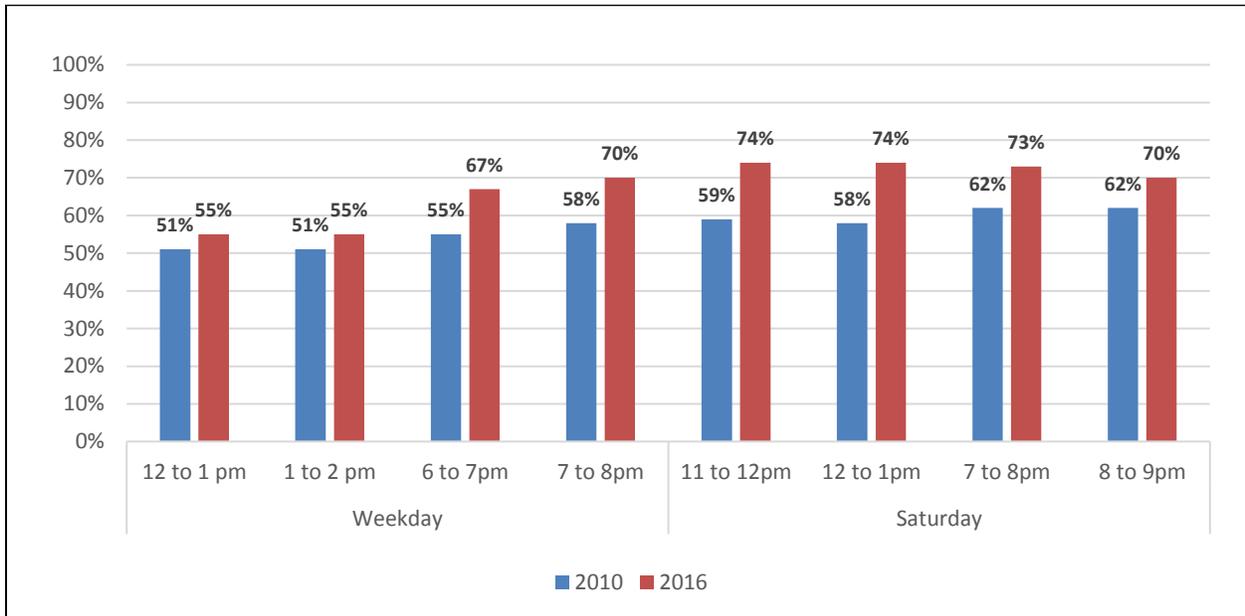

Table 1-8 and the chart below provide a comparison of the off-street utilization in 2010 and 2016. Similar to 2016, the 2010 conditions showed the off-street lots were significantly underutilized. While there are slight increases in occupancy for some of the time periods surveyed, the off-street occupancy conditions have not drastically increased over the last six years.

Comparison of 2010 and 2016 Off-Street Parking Utilization
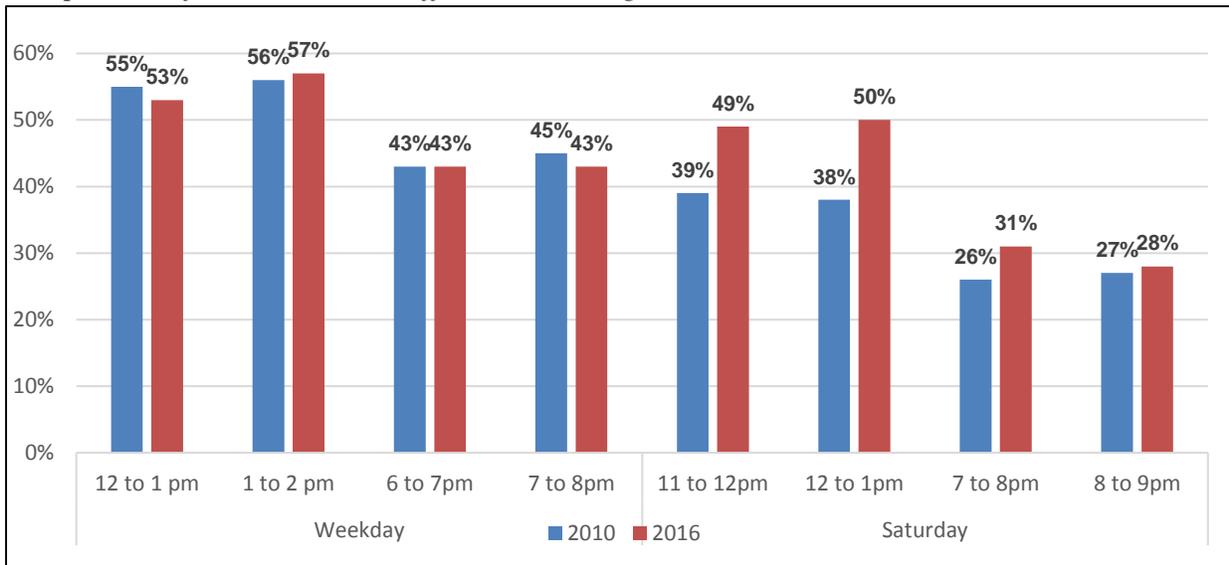
RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are potential recommendations for improving parking conditions in Del Ray. Several of these were recommendations discussed in the 2012 report and are still applicable. Staff will review the results of the 2016 data collection with the community in the fall of 2016 and ask for feedback on the prioritization of the recommendations. Staff will then prepare a memo to the Council outlining the next steps and work plan for implementing the proposed recommendations. Implementation of the recommendations could begin early 2017.

1. **Shared Parking** – Given the low utilization of the existing off-street parking supply, brokering shared parking agreements with private property owners is still a valid recommendation that should be actively pursued. The parking lots identified in *Table 1-4B* are good options to start with since they are some of the larger lots in the study area and located near many of the uses that are generating a demand for parking. Shared parking could mean working with a property owner to make their spaces available to the public, similar to how the DHS lot operates. The City could partner to help promote those spaces through wayfinding signage. Shared parking could also mean a more involved relationship with the property owner for use of the spaces.

   Staff should identify key parking lots that are underutilized and are located close to areas with high on-street parking demand to discuss shared parking options. The Business Association would be helpful partners in this effort.

2. **Extend time restrictions on Mount Vernon Avenue** – Currently, the majority of parking restrictions along Mount Vernon Avenue are two hours and end at 5 PM. This means people parking in prime locations along Mount Vernon Avenue could legally park in a space from 3 PM to 8 AM the following day. *Table 1-3B* indicates that the evening hours for the Mount Vernon Avenue blocks in the core portion of Del Ray are essentially full. Encouraging turnover by not allowing people to park in a space for longer than two hours in the evening may help open up spaces near the restaurants and retail shops that rely on on-street parking at night. This would also limit employees from parking in these spaces which may be better used by multiple patrons.

   Staff should work with the community to extend the two hour parking restrictions until 9 PM for the blocks of Mount Vernon between Raymond Avenue and Bellefonte Avenue.

3. **Consider Parking Meters along Mount Vernon Avenue** – Another option to encourage parking turnover is to charge parkers for use of prime parking spaces. Parking best management practices often advocate the benefit of pricing on-street parking to ensure one or two spaces on each block are always available. Installing meters in the core portion of Mount Vernon would help ensure on-street spaces are available for those that are willing to pay for the benefit of parking near their destination. However, the change to a metered area would likely have implications for the nearby residential streets as many parkers will park on these streets to avoid paying the meters.

Staff should continue exploring the concept of meters on Mount Vernon Avenue, but not implement this until residential restrictions are in place on the adjacent residential blocks.

4. **Consider Expanding District 11 or Creating a New Residential Permit Parking District** – Any changes to Mount Vernon that could encourage parkers to look for free parking on side streets should be coupled with protection for the residents on adjacent side streets. *Table 1-3B* shows that many of these streets currently have parking challenges which may be caused by overflow from patrons and employees of the nearby businesses on Mount Vernon Avenue. Expanding the existing District 11 boundaries or creating a new district would allow for time restrictions on these blocks to discourage extended parking by non-residents.

   Staff should work with the community to identify the boundaries of a potential district and restrictions. This should be considered in tandem with meters along Mount Vernon Avenue. *Note: At this time, the City Code requires all requests for expanded or new districts be initiated by the residents. Staff will be reviewing opportunities to revise the Code to allow for an administrative option. Implementing a parking district in this area may benefit from waiting until this change to the Code.*

5. **Install Meters at the Farmer's Market Lot –** The surveys indicate that the spaces at the Farmer's Market lot are essentially at capacity at all times of the day and week. As discussed above, installing meters at this lot to accurately price the value of parking in this prime location, may result in ensuring one to two spaces are consistently available in the lot.

   Staff should work with the community to pursue the option of meters at this lot.

6. **Improved Wayfinding and Information** – As documented in both the 2010 and 2016 data collection, Del Ray actually has a lot of off-street parking. Some of these lots are already available for the public and more could become available as shared parking agreements are pursued. Providing consistent signage and information directing people to these lots and identifying these lots as open to the public is key to improving usage of these spaces.

   Staff should identify ways to bring the City's wayfinding signage program into Del Ray to direct people to available off-street lots and consistently brand off-street parking to make it easy for drivers to see. Staff should also work with existing and new businesses to promote off-street parking locations to their customers through information posted on their websites and inside their stores and restaurants.

ATTACHMENTS

Figures

Tables