

January 20, 2021

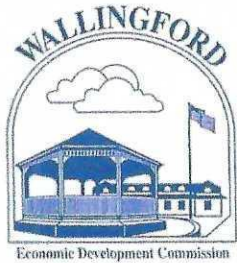
To: Wallingford Town Council

Fr: Merchants Located in the Center of Town District

We the undersigned, staunchly support the proposal put before the Town Council that outlines improvements to the three parking lots in the uptown area of Wallingford. We wish to stress our belief that this project not only improves our entire center of town area and not just those merchants whose businesses are located in the uptown area. The COVID-19 pandemic and the government restrictions has been devastating to us all. This improvement project is sorely needed to restore traffic to our town center as a catalyst to recovery as the pandemic hopefully recedes.

Name	Business	Signature
1. <u>Vanessa Gibbs</u>	<u>Crescent Moon Shoppe</u>	<u>Vanessa Gibbs</u>
2. <u>Linda Pelli</u>	<u>Body & Soul Day Spa</u>	<u>Linda Pelli</u>
3. <u>Shula DelMunoz</u>	<u>Hair On Demand</u>	<u>Shula DelMunoz</u>
4. <u>Ramona Eldridge</u>	<u>Design House Interiors</u>	<u>Ramona Eldridge</u>
5. <u>Laura Jafferis</u>	<u>Pearce Real Estate</u>	<u>Laura Jafferis</u>
6. <u>Christine Smith</u>	<u>Gaetano's Tavern</u>	<u>Christine Smith</u>
7. <u>STEFANO PANO</u>	<u>HOT WOOD PIZZERIA</u>	<u>Stefano Pano</u>
8. <u>Samantha Lora</u>	<u>Mir D's</u>	<u>Samantha B.</u>
9. <u>Michael Wolff</u>	<u>The Library BISTRO</u>	<u>Michael Wolff</u>
10. <u>Paul Norton</u>	<u>Archie Moore's</u>	<u>Paul Norton</u>
11. <u>M. Puz</u>	<u>Craig Jewelers</u>	<u>Mark Puz</u>
12. <u>Amanda Fontempe</u>	<u>Sarah Nathaniel</u>	<u>Amanda Fontempe</u>
13. <u>Chris Ovi</u>	<u>Hidden Gem Outfitters</u>	<u>Chris Ovi</u>

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Town of Wallingford
Economic Development Commission
45 South Main Street, Room 311
Wallingford, CT 06492

January 21, 2021

Wallingford Town Council
45 South Main Street
Wallingford, Connecticut 06492

ATTN: Vincent Cervoni, Chair

Dear Council Members:

I'm writing on behalf of your Economic Development Commission to express our unanimous support for the proposed Town Center parking project that includes the lot behind Simpson Court and the two lots on Wallace Avenue. We all share a collective pride in the vibrancy that exists in our upper Town Center. In fact, Wallingford's "uptown" has become a destination for dining, attracting people from many surrounding towns. Our local property owners have invested heavily in their facilities to create the experience that has become the attraction. Whether it be the extensive renovation of the previously decrepit former Wallingford Public Library or the complete reinvention of what is now the Center Street Brewing Company, personal investments (and risks) are being taken...public investments have been minimal to none. The private investment model is the preferable path to fostering economic development but, on occasion, public/private partnerships are the means to improving and controlling optimal outcomes. We see the parking lot behind Simpson Court as a textbook example of such a partnership.

Town centers throughout Connecticut and beyond are struggling to be relevant to their customers, given ever-changing market dynamics. We know that communities with town centers comparable to Wallingford's are envious of our successes and you don't have to look far to see what the undeveloped alternatives look like. That said, improving the quality of our parking will improve the customer experience, a sustainable component to strengthening Wallingford's brand.

We've dealt with the deterioration of the Center Street parking lot for well over a decade. Poor lighting, ankle deep potholes and fragmented traffic flows (given the cement blocks dividing the lot) create unpleasant scenarios for visitors and are all too often the basis for inquiry when out-of-town diners enter their restaurant of choice. We have before you the optimal opportunity to correct this awful situation and improve the overall experience for all Town Center patrons. We understand that public/private relationships can, at times, appear to be inequitable but would strongly suggest that engaging in such a partnership in this case is for the betterment of our entire community. CT Main Street Center, a quasi-public organization whose sole mission is the betterment of town centers throughout our state, has released reports that illustrate that vibrant town centers drive business development throughout communities. As the profiles of today's and future C Suite leaders skew younger, the community experience town centers deliver are very attractive and are a consideration when companies look to expand or relocate.

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We further understand that the Simpson lot is legally a privately owned lot but add that, for all practical purposes, it is a public parking lot. As such, our rehabilitation and future maintenance of it allows for a level of control we feel is necessary to protect our mutual interests in improving our Town Center. Wallingford's POCD, adopted in 2016, states clearly on page 34 (attached) that *"poorly designed and coordinated public and private parking poses a challenge: although parking inventories have shown an adequate quantity of parking in the Town Center to meet current needs, much of this parking is in poor condition, and many residents have trouble identifying what lots are available for public use or where to park near their destination"*. The POCD goes on to state, *"The existing parking lots to the rear of Simpson Court are a high priority for reconfiguration"*.

Ladies and gentleman of the Council, your support of the parking lot project, both Simpson and Wallace, benefits everyone in Wallingford. The engagement and subsequent project support from the Town Engineer, Public Works, Electric Division, Law, Town Planner, Economic Development Specialist, the Mayor and the professional development firm that produced our POCD, illustrate the breadth of effort and commitment to seeing this project come to fruition. We recognize that this decision, like many you're faced with, requires a small leap of faith in your professional staff. We further understand your stewardship role and fiduciary responsibilities under consideration when formulating your positions. A vote of support fulfills both and, as such, we ask for your approval on what we feel is a very important Town Center improvement opportunity.

Respectfully,



Joseph E. Mirra, Chair
Wallingford Economic Development Commission

Attachment

c: Mayor Dickinson
Town Council

ec: Town Council (via Town Clerk)
EDC
Kathleen Lilley, Exec. Dir., WCI

Public Parking Lots (Simpson Court/Center Street)

Poorly designed and coordinated public and private parking poses a challenge: although parking inventories have shown an adequate quantity of parking in the Town Center to meet current needs, much of this parking is in poor condition, and many residents have trouble identifying what lots are available for public use or where to park near their destination.

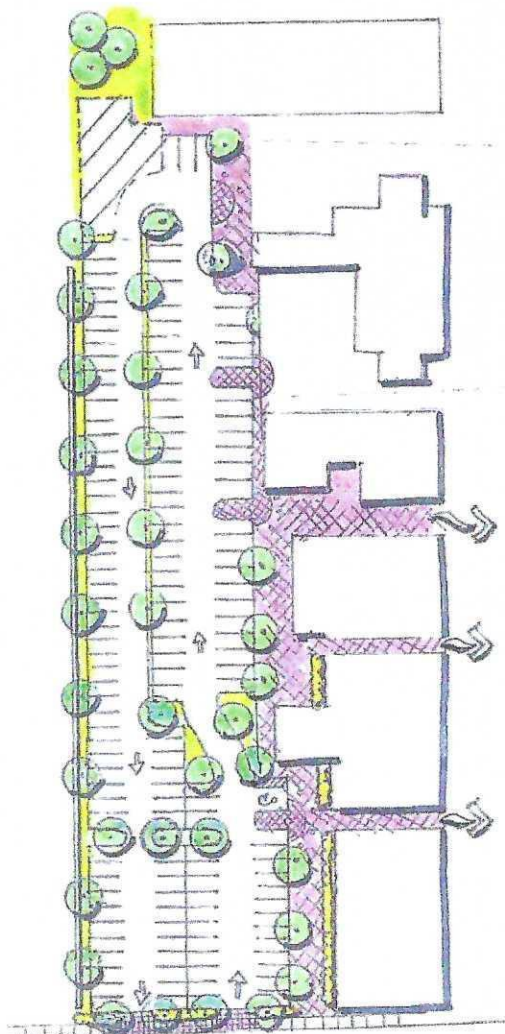
- Difficulties finding public parking have created a widespread perception that the Town Center needs more parking
- Business owners who responded to the Town Center survey mentioned parking most frequently as a challenge to doing business in the Town Center
- Measures to make existing parking more attractive, visible, and accessible to patrons and visitors is a high priority

The existing parking lots to the rear of Simpson Court (accessible via Center, North Main, and Church Streets) are a high priority for reconfiguration.

- Existing public parking is constrained by physical barriers, grade changes, and uncoordinated circulation
- Landscaping, maintenance, and layout is not consistent across properties, detracting from the appearance of the parking area and creating uncertainty on which areas are available for public use.

The conceptual design shown at right for enhancing and rationalizing this area would:

- Provide for one-way circulation through the parking area
- Eliminate unnecessary barriers
- Create approx. 16 added parking spaces
- Enhance the access corridors between buildings to Simpson Court and North Main Street with lighting, landscaping, art, and signage.



Above: conceptual layout of parking lot behind Simpson Court
Below: conceptual access improvements from parking to Simpson Court/North Main Street



January 21, 2021

Wallingford Town Council
45 South Main Street
Wallingford Town Hall
Wallingford, CT 06492

Dear Council Members:

On behalf of the board of Wallingford Center, Inc., I am writing to express our unanimous support for the proposed Town Center parking project, which includes the two lots on Wallace Avenue and the lot behind Simpson Court. Wallingford Town Center is truly the center of it all! Residents and non-residents come to our town center for dining, shopping, meeting friends and often just for a nice, safe place to take a walk. It has become a destination! Something every town envies and wants.

When this happens, parking lots fill up. That's a good thing. But when the lots are in disrepair, have poor lighting and potholes to step over, the visit to downtown Wallingford can become a less memorable experience. The residents and business owners in Wallingford Center have put up with this less than ideal parking situation for far too long. We owe it to them, and to future visitors, to improve the parking situation in our center. These businesses have chosen Wallingford Center as the location for their business, businesses that they have put their heart and soul into. We should invest in these businesses as well, and in them staying here, by investing in these parking lots. Studies show that a strong, vibrant downtown center leads to a strong town overall. Without good, viable and adequate parking, people will go elsewhere.

Wallingford Center property owners have made personal investments recently to improve their properties. Over the last 10 months, it was evident in Wallingford Center that people enjoy the improved spaces in downtown. The restaurants in Simpson Court, where the property owners improved the alley ways, were busy every night and there were lines at places like the new Center Street Brewing near the Wallace Avenue lots. Improving the quality of the parking lots they have to park in will improve their experience and keep them coming back.

We ask you, the members of our Town Council, to support this parking lot project with a vote in support of spending public funds to pave these "public" parking lots. These lots have been used for public parking for the residents of this town for over 60 years, and can continue serving this purpose for another 25 years. A vote of support will insure the vibrancy of Wallingford Center for our children and grandchildren for years to come.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Lilley
Executive Director
Wallingford Center, Inc.

Cc: Mayor Dickenson
Town Council(via Town Clerk)

Wallingford Center, Inc. , 128 Center Street, Wallingford, CT 06492, 203.284.1807



Patrick McMahon
CEO

January 21, 2021

Wallingford Town Council
Wallingford Town Hall
45 South Main Street
Wallingford, CT 06492

RE: Investment in Downtown Parking Facilities

Dear Chairman Cervoni and Members of the Town Council:

I write today to express the importance of investment in quality parking facilities to support downtown commerce. I am the CEO of the Connecticut Main Street Center, a statewide nonprofit, working to promote livable and economically sustainable downtowns. We provide educational programming, technical assistance, networking opportunities and advocacy for our members to build local capacity for downtown enhancement. We are pleased to have Wallingford as a member community through the participation of Wallingford Center, Inc.

I have gotten to explore your wonderful downtown. A couple of years ago we highlighted Wallingford Center as part of our Spotlight on Main Street series with attendees from across the state. I make a point to attend Celebrate Wallingford each year and have run in the YMCA road race. I frequently patronize your downtown restaurants and visit your library while my daughter trains at J.A. Gymnastics. You have done a tremendous job with the beautiful streetscape, banners, flags, benches, and planters that make it a welcoming and pleasant pedestrian environment. I also applaud the town's efforts during the pandemic to assist your restaurants with expanded outdoor dining which helped sustain them through this challenging time.

Across the state and nationwide, successful downtowns have well-maintained and convenient parking. The quality of the parking contributes to downtown vibrancy and the success of its businesses. The existence of shared parking lots behind your historic buildings is a market advantage for Wallingford Center and a significant benefit to your small businesses. Shared parking arrangements are more efficient than individual lots. Being able to park once and visit multiple businesses on the same trip is a great amenity for Wallingford Center. Parking lots, like any infrastructure, require capital investments to ensure a state of good repair. Upgrading the existing parking lots through improved drainage, paving, striping and landscaping will ensure safety and add to the visual quality of Wallingford Center. It is an investment that will pay dividends not only to the nearby businesses but to the entire community by strengthening the downtown as an economic catalyst and gathering place.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. McMahon, CEO

CC: Kathy Lilley, Executive Director, Wallingford Center, Inc.
Tim Ryan, Economic Development Specialist



January 21, 2021

Wallingford Town Council
C/O Mr. Timothy Ryan
Wallingford Town Hall
Wallingford, CT 06492

edc@wallingfordct.gov

Re: Wallingford Parking Lots

To Whom it May Concern:

I am a commercial real estate broker and have been selling and leasing commercial properties in Wallingford for over 30 years. One of my key sales tools when it comes to showing tenants or buyers space in Wallingford is the town itself. Even when showing industrial or office buildings in town, discussing and or stopping in the downtown area is usually part of my tour. The downtown area with its restaurants and charming houses close by are a definite selling point. Any business looking to move to town will want to know they can easily access services downtown quickly and safely. If you can't park easily you probably won't come back.

I suggest that having the town improve the parking lots on Simpson Court and Wallace Ave. would be prudent and have a positive influence on town businesses whether they are close by or miles away. I have seen other towns do this very effectively. Both Guilford and Madison have privately owned parking lots that the towns have spent money on to improve the area. It has been effective and provides a positive cohesive downtown shopping area.

I can be reached on my mobile at 203-494-6302 if you have any questions with regard to my letter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Frank Hird', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Frank Hird, SIOR
Vice President
(203) 643-1033

2 Summit Place • Branford, CT 06405 • Tel. (203) 488-1555 • Fax (203) 315-4046
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