



Parking Management

Greenburgh Parking Management Workshop

July 10, 2006

NYMTC's first Parking Management Workshop was held in Westchester County on July 10, 2006, at Greenburgh Town Hall. The workshop was sponsored by NYMTC and was the first in a series of pilot workshops that are being held in the NYMTC region in order to deal with the issue of parking both at a local and a regional level. Michael R. Kodama, a parking expert from Los Angeles, led the workshop and facilitated discussion.

Kodama quickly explained that "there are no miracles in parking." This wasn't news to members of the audience, who mainly consisted of planners and city officials from towns all over Westchester County, and who have experienced their fair share of parking problems within their communities. Most attendees agreed that a principle problem was not enough parking in local downtown business districts. In this situation, Kodama said, the local businesses must agree on who gets first priority for the limited parking spots available. Oftentimes, businesses and employees take most of the available parking, limiting the amount of parking that remains for the customer and ultimately having a negative impact on the bottom line of businesses. If businesses are educated about the financial impact of parking, Kodama said, most businesses can find creative ways to reduce the amount of parking they use, including the parking "cash-out" system, encouraging more employee transit use and carpooling.

Another parking issue that attendees raised concerned the reuse of historic buildings and the parking requirements that are still in effect. Because the cost of adding parking is so prohibitive, many older buildings are less attractive targets for redevelopment. Kodama related several strategies employed by other cities. Some have "grandfathered in" older buildings, exempting them from the parking requirement. Portland instituted a maximum parking requirement and then allowed new developments to buy "parking rights" from older buildings while agreeing to provide them with parking. While Portland's approach may not be right for everyone, it's just one example of how creative strategies can alleviate parking problems.

At the end of the workshop, participants voiced a desire for a later workshop where local parking strategies learned in this first workshop could be evaluated. Also, participants said it would be helpful to select one particular community for a walking evaluation tour.