

Visualizing Change in a Downtown: Parking

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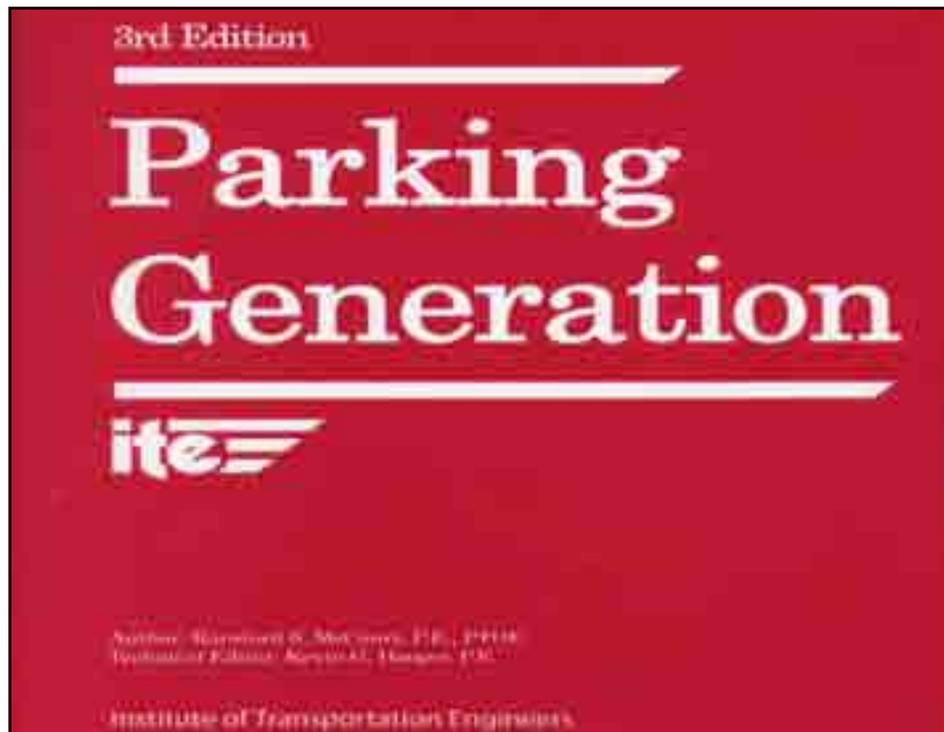
Downtown Revitalization Institute Workshop
Connecticut Main Street Center
April 27, 2007

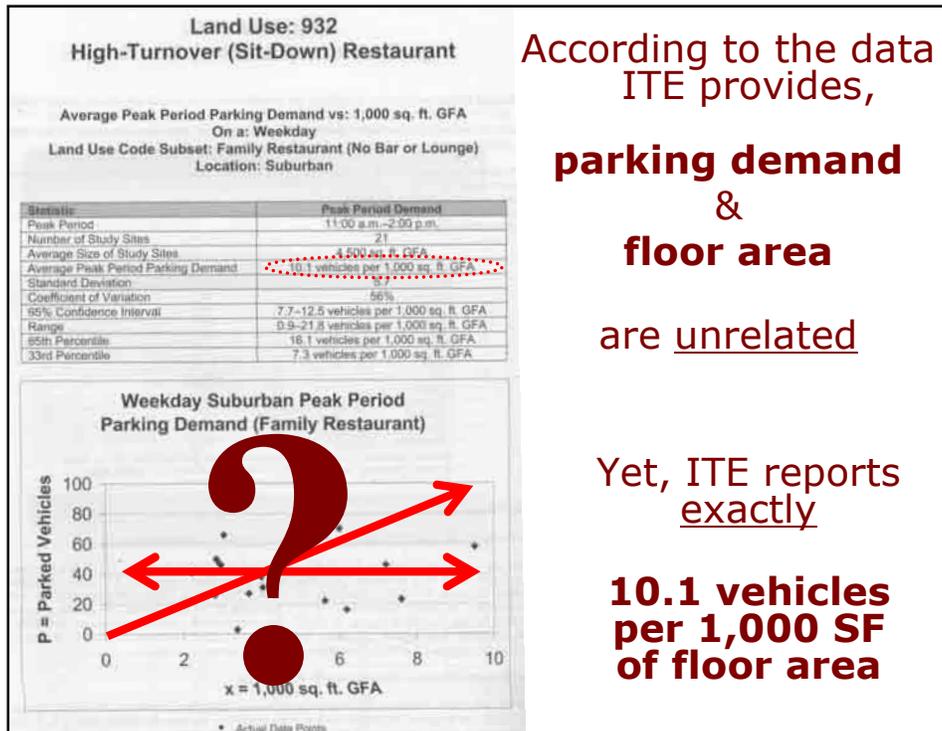


Wherever cars go, they need parking

- ◆ The average car is parked for over 23 hours a day
- ◆ Almost 40% of the land in a typical town center is consumed by parking

As a result, a car at rest would seem just as important as a car in motion





According to the data
ITE provides,

**parking demand
&
floor area**

are unrelated

Yet, ITE reports
exactly

**10.1 vehicles
per 1,000 SF
of floor area**

- ◆ Even if this data did establish some correlation between **square footage & parking demand...**
 - We are still making a **faulty assumption** that getting parking right is as simple as figuring out demand & supplying the right number of spaces

Conventional Attitudes

- ◆ Towns want to ensure that:
 - Shoppers are not discouraged by a lack of parking
 - Neighborhoods are not inundated by spillover demand
- ◆ Businesses:
 - Want to provide cheap and convenient parking
 - Don't want to lose shoppers due to a lack of free parking

Conventional Attitudes

Being "conservative" meant providing more parking than necessary...

New Urbanist Attitudes

We can start by
redefining
our parking problem



In 2003, we began a
study of parking at
six town centers
around New England...

Parking at Mixed-Use Centers in Small Cities

Mixed-Use Sites:

- West Hartford Center
- Northampton, MA
- Brattleboro, VT

Conventional Sites:

- Avon Center
- Glastonbury Center
- Somerset Square
in Glastonbury, CT



Overall, the mixed-use sites:

1. Provide less parking
2. Use less parking
3. Use what parking they do have more efficiently

Providing Less Parking

Providing Less Parking



West Hartford Center & Avon Center



Providing Less Parking

- ◆ Surprisingly, both the mixed-use sites & conventional sites mandate about the same level of parking in their zoning regulations

**~5.5 spaces per
1,000 SF Bldg. Space**

**Using
Less Parking**

Using Less Parking

Mixed-Use Sites

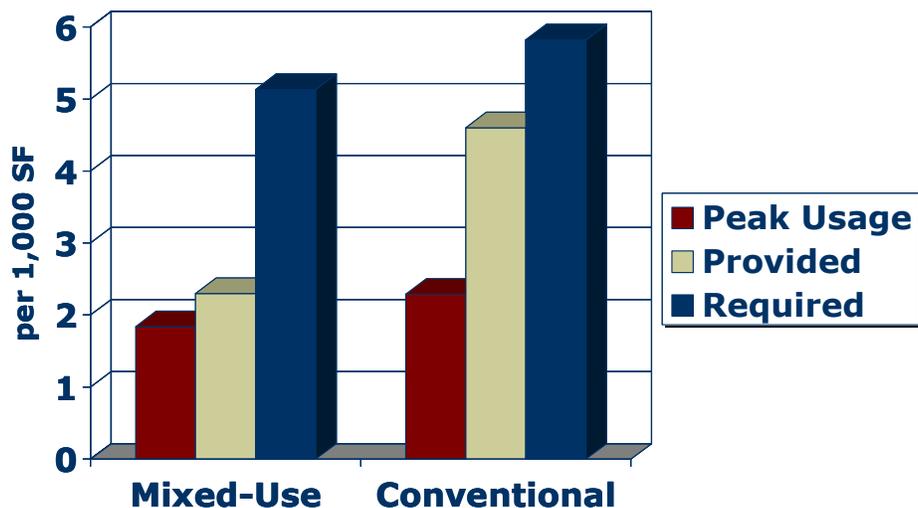
**Peak Usage:
1.8 Spaces per 1,000 SF**

Vs.

Conventional Sites

**Peak Usage:
2.3 Spaces per 1,000 SF**

Parking Used, Provided & Required



Bang for the Buck

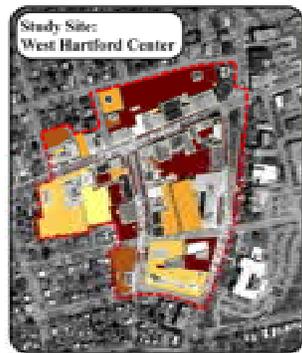
- ◆ Even though the mixed-use sites provided and used less parking...

Each one of them was much more **vibrant** in terms of activity

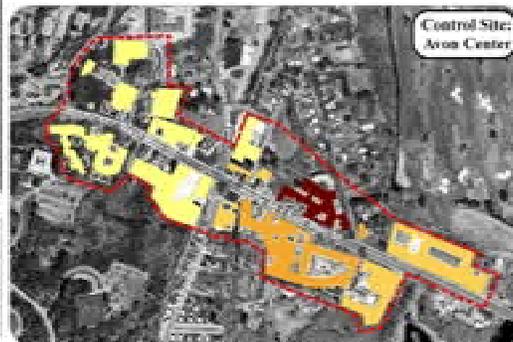


Using Parking More Efficiently

Using Parking More Efficiently

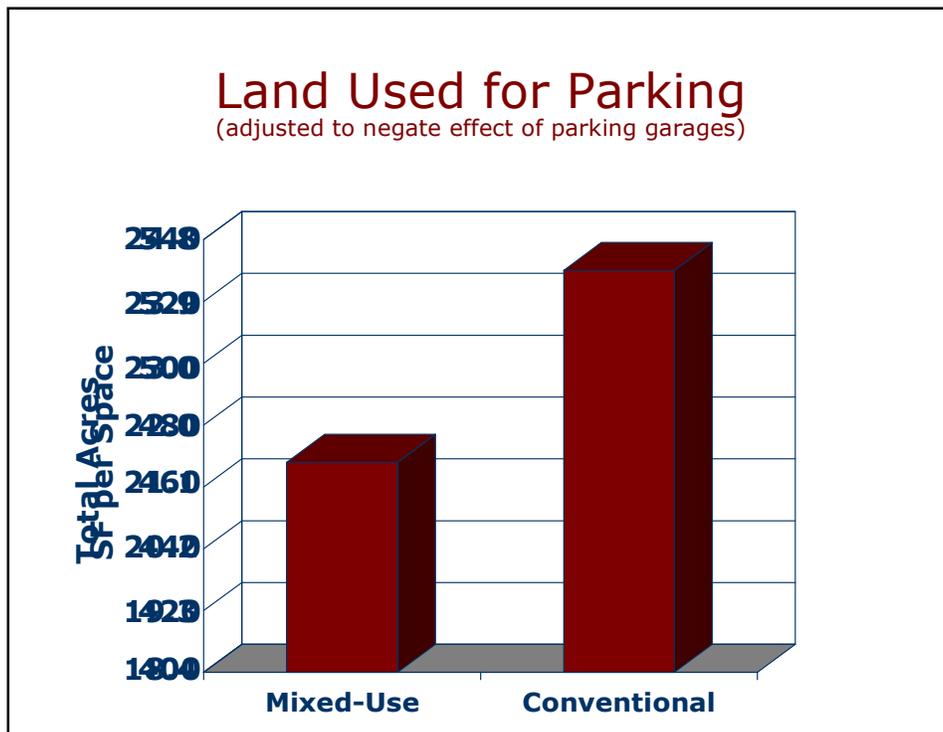


Peak Usage Percent Occupied by Lot



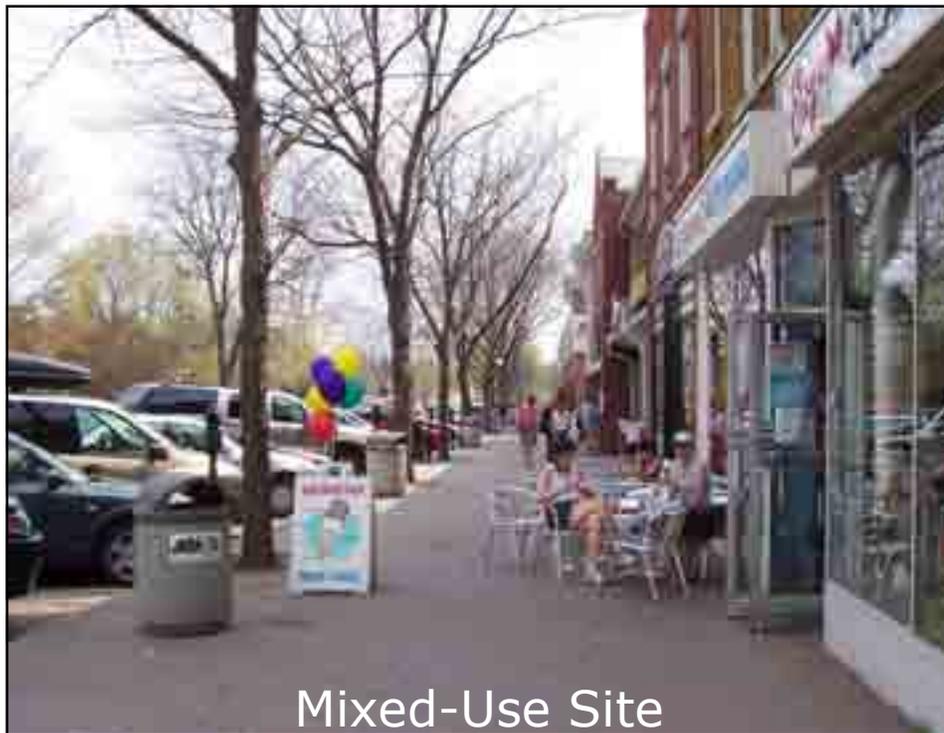
Using Parking More Efficiently

Land Used for Parking





Conventional Site



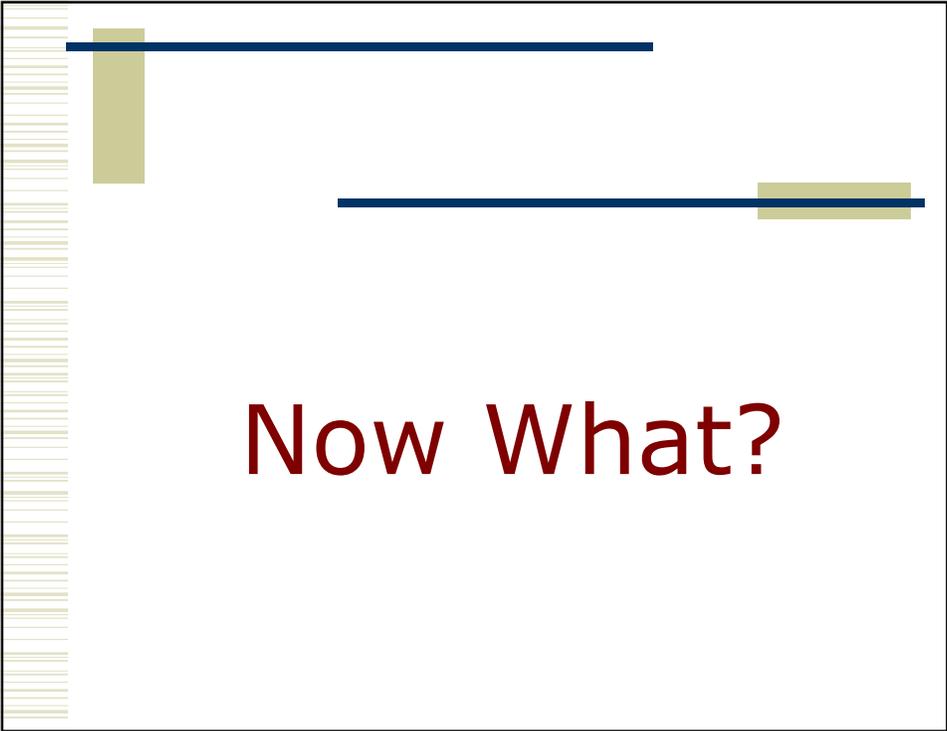
Mixed-Use Site

Land Used for Parking

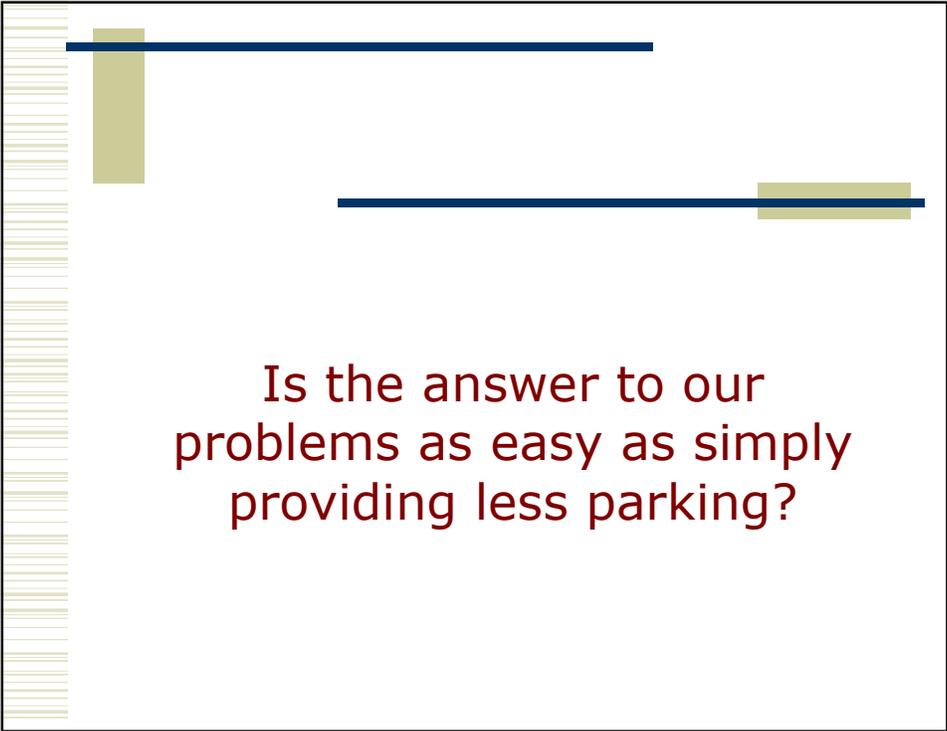
For an average town center,
this saves
over **3½ acres** of land
from life as a parking lot

Too Much Parking...

- ◆ Wastes land that could be put to a more productive use
- ◆ Is environmentally unsound
- ◆ Creates dead zones that discourage human activity & the vibrancy of a town center
- ◆ Results in an unwalkable & unlivable downtown



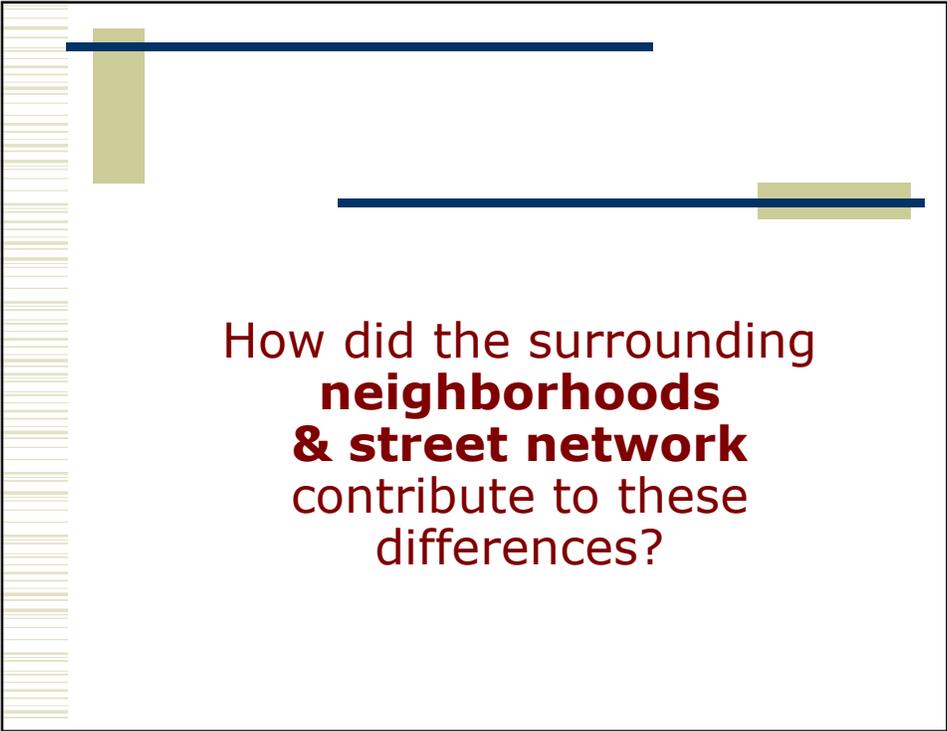
Now What?



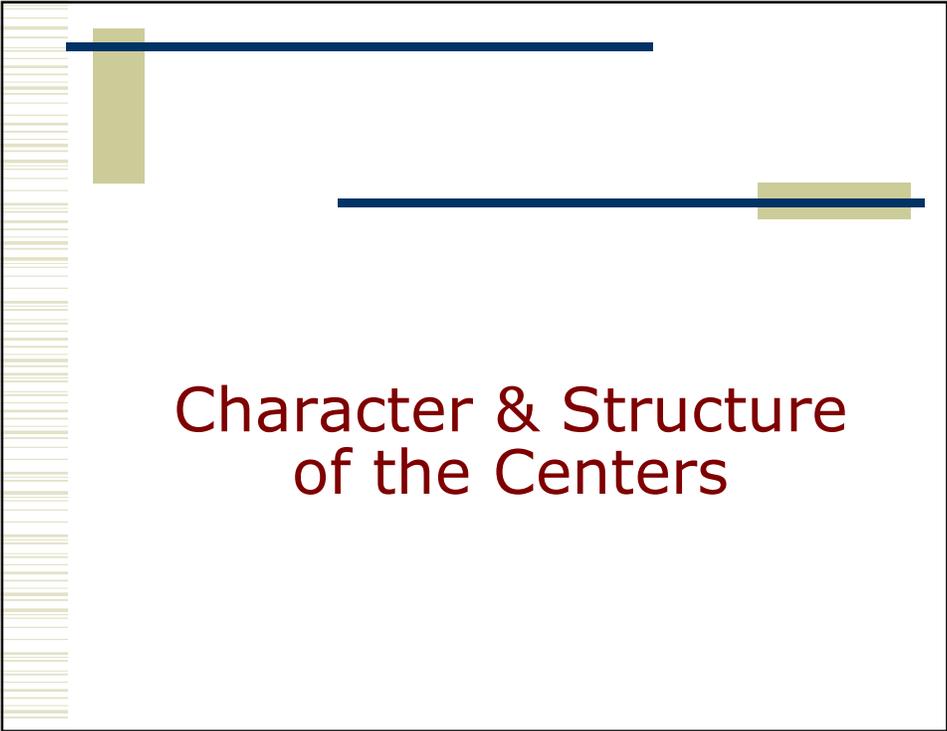
Is the answer to our
problems as easy as simply
providing less parking?



What about the
character & structure
of the centers led to
these differences in
parking performance?



How did the surrounding
**neighborhoods
& street network**
contribute to these
differences?



Character & Structure of the Centers



Typical Sidewalks



Conventional Site



Mixed-Use Site

Character & Structure of the Centers

Management & Organization of Parking

Managed & Organized Parking



Shared Parking at the Mixed-Use Sites



Shared Parking at the Mixed-Use Sites



So what does all this mean for parking?

It allows for more
density
within the Centers

Density *within* the Centers

Mixed-Use Sites

58% Greater Building Density
176% Greater FAR

**This equated to almost
90% more leasable
building space
within each town center**

Density *within* the Centers



So what does all this mean for parking?

Basic Advantages...

- Shared municipal parking
- Good pedestrian facilities
- Compact, dense centers

So what does all this mean for parking?

It allows the mixed-use centers to become
'Park Once & Walk'
districts

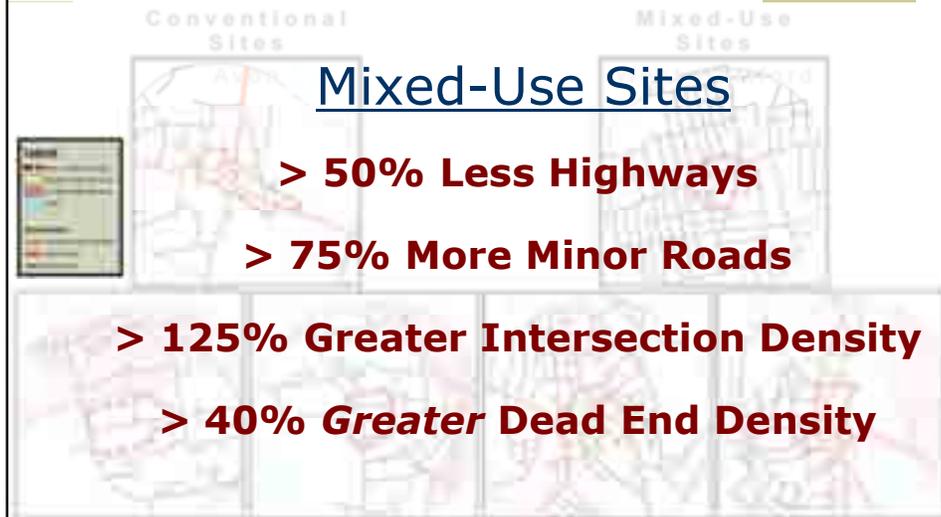
Park Once & Walk

- The ability to park once & walk to multiple errands is a huge advantage
- It markedly reduces the number of parking spaces needed to serve the same number of people

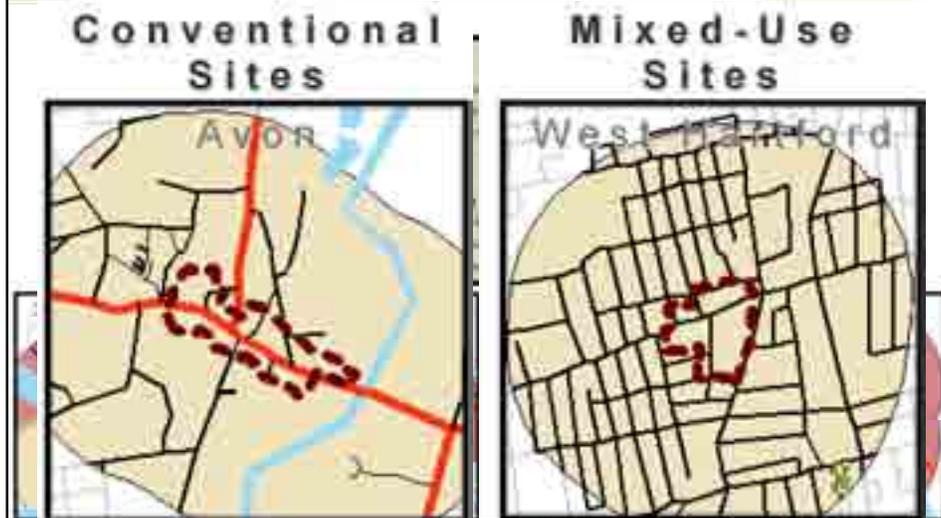


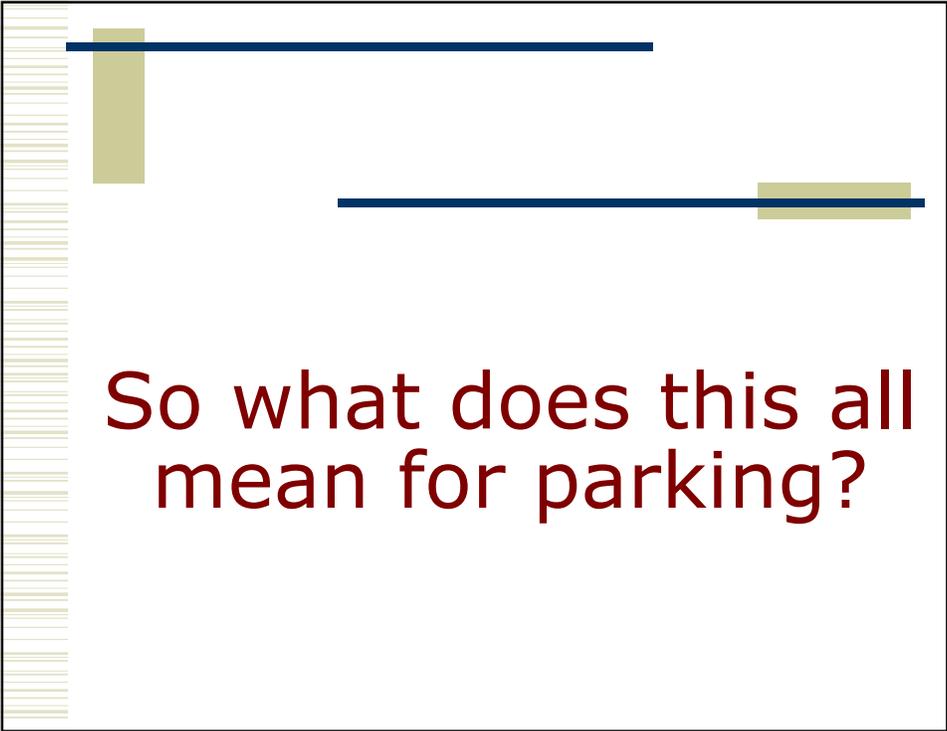
The Neighborhoods &
Street Network
of the Surrounding Areas

Character of the Walkable Zone



Character of the Walkable Zone





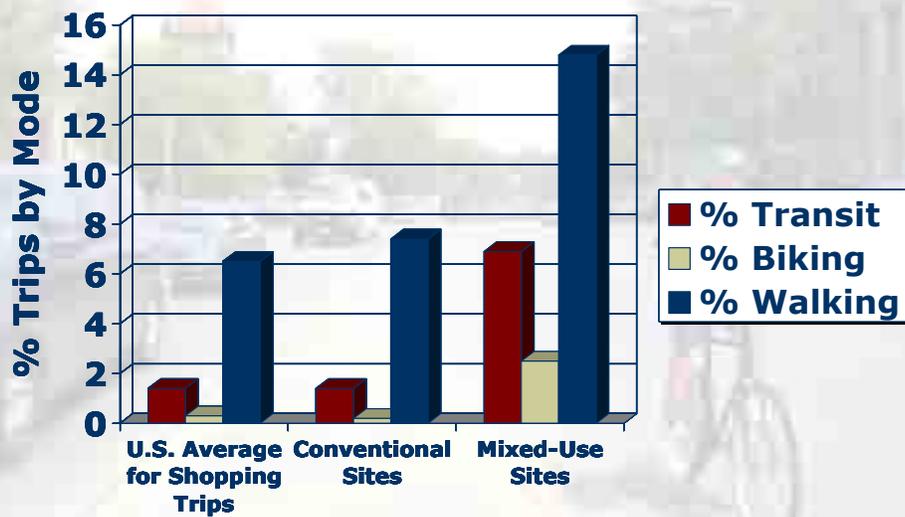
So what does this all
mean for parking?



Mode choice
in the mixed-use centers
was strikingly different



Mode Choice



Alternative Modes

- ◆ With an extra **15%** of people reaching the town centers by means other than a car
 - This equates to **300** unused parking spaces in a typical 2,000-space town center

For an averaged-sized town center, this saves **over 3½ acres** of land from life as a parking lot

Alternative Modes

- ◆ In order to reduce the parking needed by increasing more sustainable modes:
 - Create a connected & pleasant walking experience
 - Minimize major impediments to walking and biking such as highways & major roads

Alternative Modes

- ◆ In order to reduce the parking needed by increasing more sustainable modes:
 - Increase density of road network and residential areas
 - Provide furnishings such as benches and bicycle racks

Just giving people the option to walk or bike plays a huge role in the perception of the place, and in turn, the parking...



Downtown Parking

Good parking requires a comprehensive approach that considers:

- Shared Parking
- Walkability
- Managed Parking
- The Context
- The Place
- Street Design
- On-Street Parking
- Street Network
- Street Connectivity

