

Dear Mayor and Village Trustees:

The Scarsdale Forum's Downtown Revitalization and Municipal Service Committees understand the magnitude and complexity of the Freightway redevelopment project. We stand ready to assist in moving this essential discussion forward. While public discussion of development concepts will be challenging and time-consuming, one of the basic tenets of that redevelopment is that the existing parking capacity would be "right-sized" but fundamentally retained. But what does that mean? We believe that understanding parking demand and pricing is an important and largely non-controversial preliminary step. We also believe that this step should not only address the overall Freightway site but also relate to the broader question of commuter parking needs, taking into consideration the use of the Christie Place garage as well as the Eastchester Gray Rock Road commuter lot to the south. To start that process, we present the following:

Current Parking at the Freightway Redevelopment Site

In the process of preparing its Freightway report, the Forum's Freightway Working Group requested parking data for the site from the Village. We were told that due to a corrupted file, no data was available. As parking demand is a critical piece of the Freightway development equation, Forum volunteers undertook a physical parking count beginning March 28, 2024. The counts occurred mostly Monday through Friday but were not conducted every day. Holiday Mondays and July 4th were also excluded. The counts occurred generally at the same time each day, approximately 11:00 AM.

Below is a summary of the survey results as of September 27, 2024, covering a six-month period. The count included the Freightway garage, the adjacent open lot to the north, the adjacent metered parking to the west, and the spaces across the MTA tracks at the Scarsdale Avenue lot. Performed by volunteers on a consistent but not comprehensive basis, these statistics should not be taken as absolute, but rather reasonably accurate numbers given the vagaries of the inherently transient nature of open public parking. We believe they provide useful insights into parking requirements for redevelopment planning.

Findings

In total, parking usage for the six-month period was roughly and consistently approximately 50-60% of the 688 "official" spaces. This included a generally consistent 92-95 cars per day on the 83-space open lot, dropping to 72 cars in August. This exceeded the striped spaces but with valet parking was easily accommodated. It also included typically 250 cars per day in the garage (55-59% of capacity), almost entirely located on floors 1-3. Again, August was the slowest month with only 230 cars. The Beatty lot was consistently under-utilized with typically three cars out of 49 spaces. In terms of days of the week, numbers typically peaked on Wednesdays, flanked by Tuesdays and Thursdays, and trailing on Mondays and Fridays. Weekends were substantially less.

As noted, valet parking allowed the open lot to exceed its "striped capacity" by upwards of 25%, exclusively during the work week and most common on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

Over the six-month period, the open lot exceeded striped capacity roughly half the time. The maximum count was 120. The count was 100+ on 45 days (34%).

The garage generally maintained a fairly consistent 50-60% usage, though significantly dropping off on the weekends. During the week, typically floors 1-3 of the garage were filled, with the third floor essentially serving as “overflow.” The fourth floor appears to be primarily “storage” cars, with typically 20-30 cars parked daily even on Saturdays and Sundays when the lower floors had many open spaces. The fifth floor typically has 3-5 cars.

As noted, the Beatty lot was consistently under-utilized with more cars on the weekends.

Usage by Month – Monday-Friday

	Open Lot		Garage		Beatty		Total	
April	92 cars	112%	253 cars	53%	4 cars	9%	382 cars	56%
May	93 cars	112%	258 cars	54%	6 cars	12%	391 cars	57%
June	95 cars	115%	279 cars	59%	6 cars	13%	418 cars	61%
July	85 cars	103%	242 cars	51%	2 cars	4%	360 cars	52%
August	74 cars	90%	230 cars	49%	3 cars	6%	338 cars	49%
September	92 cars	111%	252 cars	53%	3 cars	6%	382 cars	56%

Usage by Day of Week – April-September 2024

	Open Lot		Garage		Beatty Lot		Total	
Monday	88 cars	97%	254 cars	49%	3 cars	6%	368 cars	49%
Tuesday	102 cars	124%	277 cars	59%	6 cars	12%	421 cars	61%
Wednesday	97 cars	116%	262 cars	55%	4 cars	8%	402 cars	59%
Thursday	96 cars	116%	263 cars	57%	4 cars	7%	377 cars	58%
Friday	48 cars	58 %	171 cars	36%	2 cars	5%	236 cars	34%
Saturday	30 cars	24%	101 cars	21%	10 cars	21%	148 cars	22%
Sunday	13 cars	16%	69 cars	15%	6 cars	13%	100 cars	15%

Caveats and Clarifying Questions

Below are both caveats to the survey, identifying its limitations, but also questions that arose in the course of reviewing the data.

1. The survey was not completed every day and specifically Saturdays and Sundays were often skipped. The survey was completed on 118 of the 130 weekdays in the period.
2. The open lot is available for monthly, daily, and hourly parking. Our counts for the open lot do not distinguish among these.
3. Charging stations and ADA parking spots were not included in the counts.

4. The garage has permits not only for Scarsdale residents, but also for Scarsdale and Garth Road business owners and employees. It is also open to non-residents. Our counts for the garage did not distinguish among these.
5. Additionally, particularly at the east side of the first floor, parking appears to be by ProPark permits. These were included in the count.
6. During the weekdays, an auto detailing enterprise operates at the Freightway garage. It is unclear how this impacts parking.

Additional Research Recommended

Our effort here was limited to the Freightway site. To effectively develop a “right-size” strategy, answers to several ancillary questions are worth exploring:

1. What is the usage of the Christie Place garage? Located adjacent to the train station to the east, it is comparable to the Freightway garage and any efforts to “right-size” should integrate this resource into the overall analysis.
2. What percentage of the monthly parking permits (both for the Village and ProPark) are for non-residents with no connection to the Village Center? In “right-sizing” the new garage, it may be worth considering a smaller garage but one that eliminates parking for non-Village residents, except for employees of Village businesses (with the objective of keeping their cars out of metered spaces in the Village Center).
3. As mentioned, the garage includes vehicles that appear to be termed “storage parking” (guestimated at 20 vehicles) and some commercial limousine parking (guestimated at 1-3). Both of these uses theoretically could be relocated off the Freightway site, again allowing a smaller garage.
4. In addition to considering limits on non-Village resident permits to allow a smaller garage, there is also the question of pricing which also can impact demand. Studies have suggested that for every 10% increase in parking fees, demand is reduced by 1-2%.¹
5. Lastly, anticipating congestion pricing in Manhattan, the impact on the Freightway site parking should be considered and modeled as it may increase demand.

We hope you will find this information useful. We would be pleased to assist this endeavor as you may see fit.

Sincerely,
The Scarsdale Forum

¹ Nagwa Khordagui, “Parking prices and the decision to drive to work: Evidence from California,” Transportation Research Part A: Policy and Practice, December 2019, pp. 479-495.

Susan Douglass, Chair, Downtown Revitalization Committee
Madeline Eppenstein, Chair, Municipal Services Committee