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Manhasset Park District Report

Use of CARPORT ENGINEERING In Downtown Manhasset

The lack of parking throughout downtown Manhasset has been a long-standing problem for the Manhasset Business District. Not only is there not enough adequate parking for the current demand, but nearly a dozen stores in the downtown area are empty, and the main reason renters are dissuaded from paying the high rental costs is the inability for their customers as well as their own employees to obtain sufficient parking for their business. This is particularly true for restaurants.

Manhasset needs more parking for storeowners and employees, as well as local visiting shoppers and residents.

The two most recent options for the Manhasset Park District is to negotiate limited spaces from private lots to provide additional parking for Manhasset merchants and Employees. But to date, the MPD has been unable to create additional parking for residents and shoppers. In addition, renting parking spaces by either the MPD or TONH is a temporary fix at best, and the demand far exceeds the numbers either entity has access to.

While the concept of “satellite parking lots” for employees, and the creation of a large above ground parking facility have been repeatedly proposed, the MPD feels both of these plans are either untenable or unnecessary for the town’s needs.

When the discussion of multi-level parking is addressed it is most often building “up” or building down” on a site. Rarely is the third option discussed “building “sideways, or, into an existing ***inclined*** property.

Thus the concept of dual level **Car Port Parking** is a solution best suited for downtown Manhasset. The MPD feels **CPP** can best resolve all current and future demands of the surrounding community. **CPP** is not a new or untested concept. It is used through out Europe by communities that want to maintain green space and camouflage automobile lot parking, to create a more “village like environment. What makes it different from traditional above ground parking facilities is that rather than rising above the property it is on, it is built into it, taking advantage of the land’s topography. The “rolling hills” of Manhasset is an ideal area, topographically speaking, to create cart ports, on *existing car lots*, which can double their current vehicle capacity.

Some detractors of this concept may counter this proposal with “If this is such a good solution, why has no one come up with it before?” The reason is simple: The parking issue has always been approached as solvable by one “grand plan”, something that does not work due to the towns’ unique challenges. Consulting firms prefer larger, more expensive projects, as financially it is the most profitable solution for them, thus they generally avoid solutions such as this..

BENEFITS OF CARPORT STRUCTURES IN MANHASSET

These structures can be built on existing properties throughout the downtown Manhasset area. There is no need to purchase additional properties for parking expansion. As they are spaced equally throughout the downtown area, this allows for a balance of merchant/employee and resident/shopper parking.

Building of these structure scan be measured by weeks, not months, and could easily be completed during the summer months, where parking demand is lower. It is recommended that no more than one carport be built at once, to avoid creating an extensive parking shortage during construction.

Four can be built throughout the community. Many times a single, centralized Parking structure is ignored by employees and shoppers who simply want to get as close to their desired store as possible. Thus a very expensive, larger structure will remain at half capacity even at peak times.

As each floor of the carport is designed to be on “ground level” of the hills they are built into, there is no need for costly elevators to be installed, as both ground levels are “handicapped accessible,” and follow all federal rules that concern it.

AS **CPP**'s are designed to be no higher than the highest point of the inclined property, they can be concealed by trees, hedges and other foliage, so the exterior actually presents an appearance of a garden, rather than multi level parking.

Rain catching cisterns can be installed throughout the structure to be used to directly water the foliage planted about the **CPP**. An additional benefit is water runoff remains the same amount as the original lot, thus there is no need for costly drainage systems. Rainwater follows it's original, approved, run-off egress.

Depending on total car capacity, the cost of a **CPP** can be half to a third of what a traditional above ground or underground parking garage of the same capacity.

As a Google Earth map reveals, downtown Manhasset has more visible pavement for parking than Great Neck or Port Washington. This is the most striking visual that highlights a massive loss of green space in the center of Manhasset, and also results in a higher ground level temperature due to concrete heating up during peak daylight hours. Vegetation enhanced carports increase shade and tree coverage creating additional green space for the Manhasset residents, shoppers and visitors AND solve the chronic issues of parking downtown.

By creating these simple yet very efficient carport lots, both goals are fully met without the need of additional land acquiring or destruction of open space, community parks or buildings.

POTENTIAL LOCATIONS FOR MANHASSET CARPORTS

Five areas, already existing parking lots, have been identified as ideal locations for car port structures, two currently on MPD properties and two on TONH properties. The fifth lot is a combination of three different private lots, which is why it is the last one listed; it has several different conditions and challenges.

1. LOCUST AVENUE AND COLONIAL PARKWAY (MPD)

From the top of the lot to its base is a 9-foot natural incline. Entrance to the Colonial ground floor will be on Colonial Avenue. Locust Avenue entrance would be at the southwestern base of the property on Locust Street.

Current capacity 68 vehicles Carport capacity 105-110 vehicles

2. HILLSIDE AVENUE PARKING TRIANGLE (MPD)

From the top of lot to the lot's base, is a five to six-foot incline. Hillside ground floor entrance and exit will be at the top (eastern end) of lot. Secondary ground entrance would be on Southeastern corner of Myrtle Street. Because of the limited incline, the top level would require a ramp to a raised level, in order to accommodate the Myrtle Street level entrance. Septic tanks, closer to the buildings would remain unaffected by excavation.

Current capacity 40 vehicles Carport capacity 70-75 vehicles

3. GEORGE STREET LOT (TONH)

IF a CPP was constructed at the Northeastern corner of the lot, this would be off of a 7-8 foot natural incline. Ground floor entrance would be off of George Street. 2nd ground floor would be from the Southern end of the existing lot. A slight incline would be required for the secondary ground level lot.

Current capacity 48 Vehicles Carport capacity 80-85 vehicles

4. TONH EMPLOYEE PARKING LOT (TONH)

This area is unique, as an imminent domain action would have to take place on Willow Place for carport access. There is a 14 foot drop in elevation from the TONH lot to Willow Place, currently private property of BANK OF AMERICA, but widely abused as an illegal cut thru between Willow Place and Plandome Road. Creating a ground floor Willow Place entrance for the TONH Carport would require obtaining the last 16-20 feet of land at the rear of BOA.

Current Capacity 90 Carport capacity 160-165 vehicles

Should this Willow Place access seem an insurmountable objective, this property should still be considered for a traditional 2-story garage, the 1st floor being subterranean in nature, rather than building a second floor on George Street.

POTENTIAL LOCATIONS FOR MANHASSET CARPORTS

5. ORCHARD STREET/MAPLE PLACE TRIANGLE

Although this location is ideal, with a sixteen-foot incline and the ability to have two entrances on Maple Avenue and two exits onto Orchard Street, the complication of the current lots being owned by three different private entities makes creating this carport structure more challenging. Thus, at this time it would not be possible or practical to exactly estimate how many additional spaces would be added, but it would be close to two hundred spots.

As in the case of George Street, septic tanks are close to the buildings and should not be affected.

The simplest and best solution would be to buy all three lots from current owners.

Another option would be, in exchange for allowing the construction of the carport, Current lot owners would retain their ground level lot following completion of the carport structure, the TONH would retain the lower level for merchant parking. TONH would be responsible for all lots maintenance as an extra caveat for those property owners.

ADDRESSING LOCAL OPPOSITION TO CARPORT STRUCTURES

In the case of any new construction, there will be those individuals or groups who will challenge or seek to halt any type of construction, particularly town or village projects. Below are answers to various challenges that may be presented:

IT WILL BE UNSIGHTLY

Just the opposite. As it is already at ground level, most, if not all exteriors will be hidden behind vegetation. In the case of the Colonial Avenue/Locust Street Carport, the view south from Colonial Avenue will be exactly the same, the exception being most of the lot will be hidden *behind* a row of hedges.

IT WILL AFFECT PROPERTY VALUES ON ADJACENT/NEARBY PROPERTIES

This is true, value of the properties will increase. No longer will the homeowners directly adjacent to the lots need to deal with headlights shining through their windows. The concrete structure, with the added insulation of trees and hedges will mask much of common lot noises: engines, slamming of doors, commuter conversations, (be it cell phone or with other individuals.)

Real Estate agents will tell you, a home with a direct view of commercial properties and parking lots is a negative point in selling a home. The carports adjacent "wall of green" would be a positive selling point.

MANHASSET RESIDENTS CANNOT AFFORD THE COSTLY CONSTRUCTION

Nor should they be required to pay for these structures. Remember, land in Manhasset is some of the most expensive real estate on Long Island. No money is needed to purchase property, as it is already owned by the MPD and TONH.

In the case of the George Street Carport, the structure is primarily for TONH employees, thus Federal and State monies can be used to assist construction. There are also Federal grants specifically designed for towns that redesign their downtown areas for "regreening" and restoring for commercial improvement reasons. In respects to the Park District, it has already proceeded with a feasibility report and cost for a carport structure on their owned lots, and because of the low cost of such a structure, it has the money to pay for at least one, without the need for a bond or additional taxes.

DOES THE TOWN NEED FOUR CARPORTS?

Yes. Not only for current demands, but to provide parking for the many stores currently empty on Plandome Road. The true benefit of building one structure at a time will assist the TONH and MPD to learn how to cut costs and avoid problems with subsequent carports, and not be locked into a single contract with one contractor which has the potential to have problems in one form or another that cannot be rectified easily, adding to unforeseen delays or over running of allocated funds.