

# **Brandeis University Parking Advisory Committee**

## **I. Executive Summary**

The Brandeis University Parking Advisory Committee was tasked with evaluating the current parking system, assessing upcoming infrastructure impacts, reviewing best practices, and recommending structural changes to improve efficiency, equity, and sustainability. The Committee reviewed internal data, conducted a university-wide survey, and examined peer institution models.

In addition to physical infrastructure changes, the broader nature of work and campus life has undergone significant shifts since the COVID-19 pandemic. Remote and hybrid work models, staggered schedules, and shifting commuter behaviors have all contributed to a decline in daily on-campus vehicle demand for certain employee populations. These evolving patterns have prompted institutions across higher education to rethink how parking is allocated, managed, and enforced. At Brandeis, these changes further support a flexible, inclusive, and data-informed approach to parking management.

### **Major Parking Challenges:**

- Projected permanent loss of over 340 parking spaces due to campus construction
- Fragmented and confusing lot restrictions
- Inequitable access across faculty, staff, and student groups
- Limited ADA and proximity-based accommodations
- Outdated signage and inconsistent enforcement

### **Key Recommendations:**

- Maintain free parking for employees and retain the current student permit fee structure
- Adopt new lot access designations for simplicity and fairness
- Expand after-hours and weekend access
- Implement contractor/vendor permit fees
- Improve ADA accommodations and standardize signage
- Adopt a \$25 replacement fee for lost or stolen permits
- Eliminate legacy sticker programs and transition to hangtags
- Remove individualized space signage for departments, units, or titles
- Open Bernstein-Marcus Lot and retain limited visitor/reserved spaces
- Open Loop Road between North Lot and Skyline in both directions to improve traffic flow
- Remove underutilized "carpool" spaces and convert them to commuter student use
- Restrict department chair reserved spaces from 11 to 5 to increase shared access

## **II. Background and Context**

Brandeis University faces a critical inflection point in managing its parking resources. The upcoming annual parking permit renewal cycle for faculty and staff, aligned with the construction of a new residence hall, presents an ideal opportunity to evaluate and modernize campus parking policy. As new stickers are issued for the 2025–2026 academic year, Brandeis can simultaneously roll out updated parking assignments, revised access zones, and streamlined permit categories. Aligning these changes

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with the natural renewal cycle minimizes confusion, reinforces consistent communication, and allows Public Safety and Parking Services to update internal records and lot access rules without disruption.

The timing also supports a broader conversation about access, equity, and operational efficiency. The construction of a new residence hall will permanently remove over 200 spaces from the South Residence Lot, and the partial loss of the Theater Lot adds further urgency. These physical changes, combined with long-standing concerns about clarity and fairness, reinforce the need for a data-informed, community-responsive parking plan.

As part of this modernization, the Committee recommends the removal of all parking designations tied to employee tenure, including the "25-Year Employee" gold sticker. While once symbolic of service recognition, the continuation of this sticker system undermines broader efforts to create fair and consistent access for all employees. Eliminating this legacy benefit aligns with the proposed shared-use model and treats all community members equitably, regardless of time served.

Additionally, the Committee recommends transitioning away from adhesive window stickers in favor of hangtags. These hangtags would be transferable between up to two registered vehicles per employee, reduce exploitation or misrepresentation of permits, and offer a degree of privacy for employees who may not want their Brandeis affiliation publicly visible for personal or safety reasons.

Further, the Committee recommends eliminating designated signage that reserves parking spaces for specific departments, units, or employee titles (e.g., "Reserved for Rose Art Staff," "DCL Staff Only," or "Department Chair Only"). Beginning in Summer 2025, these signs will be removed across campus. Moving forward, only university vehicles or service-specific spaces—such as loading zones or essential operations—will have designated signage. This shift ensures equity, avoids confusion, and reinforces the university's movement toward a modern, unified parking strategy.

As part of this change, the Bernstein-Marcus lot will be opened to all faculty and staff, with the exception of the President's reserved space and two 30-minute visitor spots. Similarly, the Admissions Lot will retain its designated visitor spaces to support prospective students and families.

In addition, the Committee supports opening up Loop Road between the North Lot and Skyline in two directions. This change would allow vehicles parked in the North Lot to exit campus more directly, using Skyline as a secondary egress. By creating a two-way circulation pattern in this section of Loop Road, the university can reduce vehicle-pedestrian interactions in the upper campus core and improve traffic flow, particularly during peak hours. This infrastructure adjustment is intended to enhance safety, minimize congestion, and support the broader goal of improved mobility across campus.

### **III. Parking Data Summary & Findings**

As part of its charge, the Parking Advisory Committee conducted a thorough review of current campus parking data, relying heavily on the June 2024 Brandeis University Parking Study prepared by Walker Consultants and an October 2024 follow-up occupancy analysis. These data points provided critical insight into campus-wide usage trends, capacity, and the anticipated impact of upcoming infrastructure changes. In addition, the committee distributed a campus-wide parking survey to gather direct input from

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faculty, staff, and students, and conducted site visits to evaluate several of the university's most challenging lots. This combination of quantitative analysis and on-the-ground review helped shape the committee's understanding of operational realities and informed its final recommendations.

### Total Current Supply

As of Fall 2024, Brandeis University has a total of **2,420 parking spaces** across 39 locations. This includes:

- **2,207 off-street spaces** located in 27 university-managed lots
- **213 on-street spaces**, including City-owned areas such as Old South Street

This supply currently accommodates the parking needs of students, faculty, staff, vendors, and visitors, though with notable inefficiencies in allocation and access.

### Projected Loss of Capacity

Significant and permanent reductions in parking supply are projected between 2025 and 2027 as a result of campus construction projects and long-term land use changes. These include:

- Elimination of the South Residence Lot (#24): -211 spaces
- Partial reduction of Theater Lot (#23): -131 spaces

### May/June 2025 Campus Parking Survey Results

Brandeis Parking Survey Summary: Major Themes and Insights

1. Dissatisfaction with Current Parking Access
2. Broad Support for More Flexible and Equitable Parking Rules
3. Prioritization of Accessible Parking and Proximity-Based Assignments Due to Mobility Needs.
4. Mixed Views on Creative Parking Solutions
5. Conditional Support for Inclusive Policies that Promote Success
6. Recommendations from Open-Ended Responses

## IV. Lot Reassignments and Status Changes

As part of the Parking Advisory Committee's goal to simplify and modernize Brandeis University's parking system, a comprehensive review of all campus parking lots was conducted to identify outdated, underutilized, or overly restrictive designations. The result is a shift away from color-coded and lot-specific access rules toward a more flexible, shared-use model that promotes equity, efficiency, and clarity.

The committee recommends eliminating most individual lot restrictions, particularly those that segment parking by employee type, seniority, or academic division, and instead designating lots by broader access categories such as: faculty/staff, commuter student, resident student, or shared use. This approach is

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supported by parking occupancy data, which reveals that many lots have significant unused capacity while others routinely exceed 85% utilization.

Lot Name	Lot #	Current Restriction	Proposed Designation
Tower Lot	#1	Staff/Faculty Only (Blue/Gold)	Shared Use: Faculty/Staff/Commuter Students Unrestricted: 5pm-5am/Weekends
Tower Annex (Outside Gates)	#2	Staff Only	Shared Use: Faculty/Staff Unrestricted: 5pm-5am/Weekends
North Quad Parking Lot	#3	Faculty/Staff (Blue Permit)	Shared Use: Faculty/Staff/Grad Commuter Unrestricted: 5pm-5am/Weekends
Library Lot	#4	Faculty/Staff	Shared Use: Faculty/Staff Unrestricted: 5pm-5am/Weekends
Kutz Lot	#5	Faculty/Staff	Shared Use: Faculty/Staff Unrestricted: 5pm-5am//Weekends
Schneider Lot	#6	Faculty/Staff	Shared Use: Faculty/Staff/General
East Lot	#8	Staff/Overflow/Harvest Table	Shared Use: Visitors/Contractors/Harvest Table Unrestricted: 5pm-5am/Weekends
Hassenfeld Lot	#9	Faculty/Staff	Shared Use: Faculty/Staff/General/Reserved: Harvest Table Mgmt./UE Truck Unrestricted: 5pm-5am//Weekends
Upper Science Lot	#13	Faculty/Staff (Red Permit) Provost-assigned / High-Need Faculty/Staff	Restricted Access: AP/Service Spaces/Provost/Temp-Visitor/  Reduced Deans to 5 Increased HPx1 Increased APx1 Unrestricted: 5pm-5am/Weekends
Lower Visitor Lot	#12	Faculty/Staff (Purple)	Shared Use: Faculty/Staff Unrestricted: 5pm-5am//Weekends
Stoneman Lot	#14	Public Safety	Public Safety/Visitors
Admissions Lot	#16	Visitors / Admissions Staff	Admissions Visitors/AP access Create 4 VP Reserved Unrestricted: 5pm-5am//Weekends

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Athletics Lot	#17	Commuter Students / Events	Faculty/Staff/Commuter Students / Overflow / Events
Joseph M. Linsey Sports Center Lot	#18	Athletics Staff	Shared Use after reconfiguration (Walker recommends +11)
Foster Residence Lot	#19	Resident Students (FR Permit)	Residents Students
Tennis Lot	#20	Overflow / Contractors	Contractors / Vendor Permits
MBTA Brandeis/Roberts Lot	#22	Commuter Students / Shared	Shared Use: Faculty/Staff/General/Commuters Unrestricted: 5pm-5am//Weekends
Theater Lot	#23	Faculty/Staff	Shared Use: Faculty/Staff/Commuters/General Unrestricted: 5pm-5am//Weekends
South Residence Lot	#24	Resident Students (SR Permit)	Eliminated – Residence Hall Construction
Epstein Lot	#25	Staff / Limited Use	Shared Use: Facilities/Faculty/Staff
Charles River Lot (Large)	#26	Resident Students (CR Permit)	Resident Student
Charles River J Lot (Small)	#27	Resident Students (CR Permit)	Resident Student

**\*General Use:** *This includes visitors, employees temporarily visiting a lot for access/meetings. Maximum limit of 1 hour.*

The **Upper Science Lot (#13)** was identified as the most challenging facility following a detailed site visit. The Committee found that 11 spaces were permanently reserved for department chairs, with 24/7 exclusivity. These spaces significantly restrict access for students, vendors, employees, and visitors, and the Committee determined that this level of reserved access for department chairs is not justified by operational need. In partnership with Facilities Management and an external consultant, the Committee identified opportunities to reconfigure the lot and create additional spaces for commuter students, vendors, accessibility needs, and HP-designated parking.

As part of the proposed reassignments, the Committee recommends:

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- Reducing dean-specific reserved spaces to a total of five, which will no longer be individually reserved but available on a first-come, first-served basis for any appointed dean.

### **VI. Accessibility Improvements and Signage Upgrades**

The committee reviewed the current availability, distribution, and visibility of ADA/handicap-accessible (HP) parking spaces across campus. While most facilities meet basic compliance standards, the committee identified several areas where accessibility could be significantly improved, both in terms of quantity and clarity.

#### **Key Recommendations:**

- **Standardize HP Signage and Markings:**  
The committee recommends a campus-wide unification of all HP space signage and pavement markings to ensure consistency, visibility, and ease of recognition for individuals with mobility needs and community members. Current variations in signage type, condition, and location reduce clarity and may unintentionally create barriers.
- **Add Additional Accommodation Spaces:**  
In consultation with the Office of Student Accessibility Support and Human Resources, the committee identified several high-traffic areas including academic buildings, administrative offices, and key residential zones where additional accommodation-based parking spaces should be designated. These spaces would support individuals with documented needs who may not meet the criteria for a formal HP placard but still require proximate parking. We recommend implementing these additional spaces after one full academic year of the new parking system, as the broader access improvements outlined in this report may reduce the volume of individual accommodation requests over time.
- **Review Accommodation Request Process:**  
The committee recommends a review of the current accommodations parking request process for employees and students, ensuring that it is accessible, well-publicized, and streamlined.

These improvements reflect the university's commitment to accessibility, equity, and universal design principles. They also align with best practices from peer institutions and address concerns raised during community feedback efforts.

### **VII. Contractor and Vendor Parking**

To streamline campus operations and minimize disruptions to faculty, staff, and student parking, the Parking Advisory Committee recommends the implementation of a structured parking program for contractors and vendors. This program aims to:

- Introduce an annual contractor/vendor permit system to regulate and monitor parking access.

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- Designate contractor-only zones in underutilized peripheral lots to prevent encroachment on central campus parking.
- Implement a standardized enforcement mechanism, including a credit card requirement for permit issuance and citation payments.

Currently, Brandeis lacks a consistent fee structure for external contractors and vendors using campus lots. To address this, the Committee benchmarked peer institutions such as the University of Rhode Island, Tufts University, and Boston University.

**Recommended Permit Structure and Pricing:** Based on this benchmarking, the Committee proposes the following tiered system:

- **Annual Contractor/Vendor Permit:** \$300 per year. This rate aligns with peer institutions and is intended for long-term vendors who are regularly on campus.
- **Monthly Permit:** \$60 per month. This option supports short-term projects or vendors with intermittent campus access.
- **Daily Pass:** \$10 per day. Designed for one-time visits or infrequent service providers.

Implementing this permit structure ensures fairness and consistency in how external vehicles are managed, while generating modest but meaningful revenue to support campus parking operations. Designated contractor zones in outer lots will help preserve central campus availability for faculty, staff, and students. This approach also brings Brandeis into alignment with common practices in higher education and promotes clear expectations for all campus users.

After review and discussion, the Committee formally supports and approves this recommendation.

### VII. Admissions and Visitor Parking

Recognizing the importance of a strong first impression for prospective students and families, the Committee affirms the need to prioritize convenient and clearly designated parking for Admissions visitors. To support the university's enrollment goals and enhance the campus visit experience, the Committee recommends maintaining reserved parking in the Admissions Lot specifically for guests of the Office of Undergraduate Admissions.

These reserved spaces should remain visibly marked and consistently enforced to ensure availability for prospective students and their families. The Committee views this prioritization as an essential component of Brandeis's commitment to growing enrollment and improving campus accessibility for new visitors.

### VIII. Employee Parking and Fee Structure

#### Employee-Paid Parking: Committee Review and Recommendation

The Parking Advisory Committee held thoughtful and extended discussions about the potential introduction of employee-paid parking at Brandeis University. This idea was considered carefully and

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with full awareness of the current hiring challenges, the university’s recent investments in staff compensation, and the long-standing role of free parking as a recruitment and retention incentive.

## Historical Context and Benchmarking

Brandeis has historically offered free parking to all employees—a benefit that is becoming increasingly rare in higher education and among regional peer institutions. Committee members acknowledged that many employees view free parking as part of their total compensation package. Any shift in this benefit would need to be implemented transparently, equitably, and with a demonstrated reinvestment of funds back into the parking system.

## Union Considerations and Stakeholder Engagement

Committee members emphasized the importance of proactively coordinating with union-represented employees. While implementing a parking fee is not prohibited, doing so may constitute a change in working conditions for bargaining unit members, triggering the need for formal discussion or negotiation. The committee recommends that Human Resources and Labor Relations be engaged early in any future planning process. It also recommends allowing sufficient time to notify and engage union partners, ensuring their feedback is incorporated.

In addition, the committee noted that different employee populations may have different needs. Faculty, essential services, and administrative staff may require varying levels of flexibility. If a paid model is pursued in the future, the university should consider offering income-based accommodations, hardship waivers, or exemptions for overnight and shift-based workers.

As part of its discussion, the committee reviewed a proposed three-year phased fee structure:

Year	Annual Employee Fee	Estimated General Revenue	Designated Space Revenue (15 x \$500)	Total Estimated Revenue
1	\$20	\$36,000	\$7,500	\$43,500
2	\$25	\$45,000	\$7,500	\$52,500
3	\$30	\$54,000	\$7,500	\$61,500

Reserved, department-assigned parking spaces were proposed to be charged at \$500 annually, generating an additional \$7,500 per year.

## Parking Enterprise Fund: Use of Revenue

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To promote transparency and build community trust, the committee supported the idea of a dedicated Parking Enterprise Fund, where all parking revenue would be reinvested directly into improving the parking system. Suggested uses included:

- Upgraded signage and campus-wide wayfinding
- Line striping and surface maintenance
- Additional accommodation parking spots for community members with mobility needs
- Support for two part-time parking enforcement officers

This approach ensures that any future cost to employees results in visible and measurable improvements to the parking experience.

After a comprehensive review and extended discussion, the Parking Advisory Committee ultimately voted not to recommend implementation of employee-paid parking at this time. While the committee agreed there is merit in exploring this model in the future, particularly as a means to support infrastructure improvements, ongoing maintenance, or sustainability goals, it was determined that the timing is not appropriate given the current climate.

However, the committee does recommend adopting a \$25 replacement fee for lost or stolen parking permits, effective immediately or in conjunction with the next permit cycle. This measure promotes accountability, helps offset administrative costs, and is a standard practice across peer institutions.

All materials, discussion points, and proposed structures have been documented in this report to support future decision-making should the university choose to revisit the question of employee-paid parking.

The decision reflects a combination of factors: the university's recent investments in compensation, current recruitment and retention challenges, the potential impact on union-represented staff, and a desire to avoid added financial burdens on employees.

However, the committee has documented the discussion points and framework outlined above for future consideration. These materials can serve as a foundation should Brandeis decide to revisit the idea of employee-paid parking in future years.

### IX. Student Parking Recommendations

The Parking Advisory Committee recommends the following changes and clarifications related to student parking:

- **Maintain Current Fee Structure:** Retain the existing parking permit fees for both resident and commuter students to avoid creating additional financial burdens while other system improvements are implemented.
- **Expand Access Based on Lot Designations:** Adjust lot assignments to expand access for commuter students—both undergraduate and graduate—by reassigning underutilized inner

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campus lots during the day, previously restricted to resident students. This shift would move resident vehicles to outer lots and increase availability where it is needed most.

- **After-Hours and Weekend Access:** Expand parking access for all permitted students to additional lots from **5:00 PM to 5:00 AM Monday through Friday**, and allow full access **from Friday at 5:00 PM through Monday at 5:00 AM**, streamlining and simplifying after-hours and weekend use.
- **Senior and Graduate Student Access:** Maintain lot access privileges for seniors and graduate students, with updated lot designations to reflect current availability and usage trends.
- **Accommodation and Hardship Process:** Establish a formal accommodations process through the Parking Office to review individual hardship requests. This provides flexibility for students with compelling personal or logistical needs without altering the overall structure of the lot assignments.

These student-focused changes aim to increase fairness, reduce confusion, and maximize space efficiency while maintaining affordability and access for those who rely on vehicles to participate fully in university life.

## VIII. Public Comment Period

To support transparency and allow for final community input before implementation, the Committee recommends a formal public comment period. The full draft of this report will be made available to the campus community, with a feedback form provided at the following link:

Feedback Form: [Public Comment Form](#)

All faculty, staff, and students will be invited to review the proposed recommendations and submit comments or concerns. Feedback received during this period will be reviewed and, where appropriate, used to refine the final version of the report and inform implementation steps.

## XI. Implementation Timeline

- Summer 2025: Begin construction closures, Loop Road conversion, and signage updates
- Fall 2025: Launch fee phase-in (Year 1), implement new assignments
- 2026: Monitor usage, conduct mid-cycle survey
- 2027: Residence Hall opens – reevaluate parking and access
- 2028–2029: Continue fee rollout and evaluate enterprise fund impact

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## XII. Appendices

- A: Walker Consultants Parking Study (June 2024)
- B: October 2024 Occupancy Update
- C: Community Parking Survey Results

## XI. Committee Action and Approval

The Parking Advisory Committee presents this report and its recommendations for review. The following chart summarizes each recommendation, the committee's vote, and space for approval decisions:

#	Recommendation	Committee Vote	Accept	Reject
1	Maintain free parking for employees	Majority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Retain the current student permit fee structure	Majority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Adopt a simplified lot access designation	Majority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Expand after-hours and weekend access	Majority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Implement contractor/vendor parking fees	Majority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Improve ADA accommodations and signage	Majority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Adopt \$25 fee for lost permits	Majority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Eliminate legacy sticker programs	Majority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Transition to hangtags	Majority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Remove reserved space signage by role or unit	Majority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Reassign underutilized carpool spaces	Majority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Reduce “Department Chair” signs by 1/2	Majority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	Do not pursue employee-paid parking at this time	Majority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

