

Mt. Agamenticus Parking and Traffic Flow Needs Study



Prepared by Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission for
The Town of York Parks and Recreation Department

November 7, 2016



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A. Introduction

Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC) was contracted by the Town of York Parks and Recreation Department in the summer and fall of 2016 to collect data for a parking and traffic flow needs study at the Mount Agamenticus Park. SMPDC placed out traffic data counters on the access road, and also placed cameras at both the summit and base to view parking patterns during two separate weekends:

- Labor Day weekend (September 3rd, 4th and 5th)
- Columbus Day weekend (October 8th, 9th and 10th)

B. Existing Conditions

Mount Agamenticus has two primary parking areas – one at the summit, and one at the base located adjacent to the summit access road. Both sites are gravel surfaced, with no striping or guidance for drivers on where or how to park. There are also two very small parking areas located along the summit access road.

Summary of Parking Areas

Location	Approximate Number of Spaces*	Approximate Size
Summit Primary Lot (s)	36	152 x 26 feet & 187 x 47 feet
Summit Overflow Lot	48	300 x 66 feet
Base Lot	10 to 12	110 x 40 feet
Summit Access Road/Ring Trail Crossing	2 or 3	25x 30 feet
Summit Access Road/Ring Trail Access	5 or 6	22 x 45 feet

*Numbers are approximate because there are no marked spaces, and visitors park in varying configurations based on conditions and where other vehicles are already parked.

The main parking areas are depicted on Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Overview of Mt. Agamenticus Parking Areas



Summit Parking area:

The summit has the largest area available for public parking at the mountain, with approximately 36 spaces. It is separated into 2 general locations (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 – Summit Parking Areas



One location at the summit has approximately 12 spaces and is located near the west side of the access road. It is bordered by a split-rail fence, and drivers typically park “head-in” along the fence facing west. The rough dimensions of the available parking area here is 152 by 26 feet.

Summit Parking Area – West Side



The main parking section has approximately 24 spaces and is adjacent to the information kiosk and walk ways to the summit building. Drivers usually form two long rows on both the north and south sides of the parking area (about 12 spaces in each row). The area measures approximately 187 by 47 feet. The two parking areas are separated by a travel way that is approximately 16 feet wide.

There are no designated handicapped parking spaces at the summit.

Main Summit Parking Area



There is also an overflow parking area near the small barn on the west side of the summit, which staff opens if parking in the other two areas becomes full. This area is also used for bus parking when needed. The area is usually blocked off with a cable, and there is a sign located at the entrance which reads “No Parking, Overflow Only”. The size of the overflow parking area is approximately 300 by 66 feet.

Overflow Parking Area



School Bus Parking in Overflow Lot



Base Parking area:

The base parking area is located to the right (east) of the summit access road, and has room for approximately 10-12 vehicles. There is no designated handicapped-accessible parking at the base parking area.



Parking areas along the summit access road:

There are also two small parking areas along the summit access road. One is located where the Ring Trail crosses the road on the west side, and can accommodate about 3 vehicles. The other is located further up the summit road on the east side, where there is additional access to the Ring Trail. This area is slightly larger, but still can only accommodate 5 or 6 vehicles.

Small Area at Ring Trail Crossing



Small Parking Area Near Ring Trail Access



Parking along Mountain Road:

Although not sanctioned or promoted by Mount Agamenticus, visitors frequently parallel park on both sides of Mountain road – both east and west of the summit access road. This is particularly the case on busy weekend days and holidays, and also on weekdays when there are a large number of school groups visiting the mountain. Drivers attempt to get as far off the pavement as possible, but they do encroach onto both travel lanes of Mountain Road. It is common for Mt. Agamenticus Staff and the patrol officer to count up to 30 vehicles along the road. On busy weekends, this number is typically between 50 and 60 vehicles. There are no signs prohibiting parking on Mountain Road.

Parking along Mountain Road



C. Traffic Count Data

Labor Day Weekend - 2016:

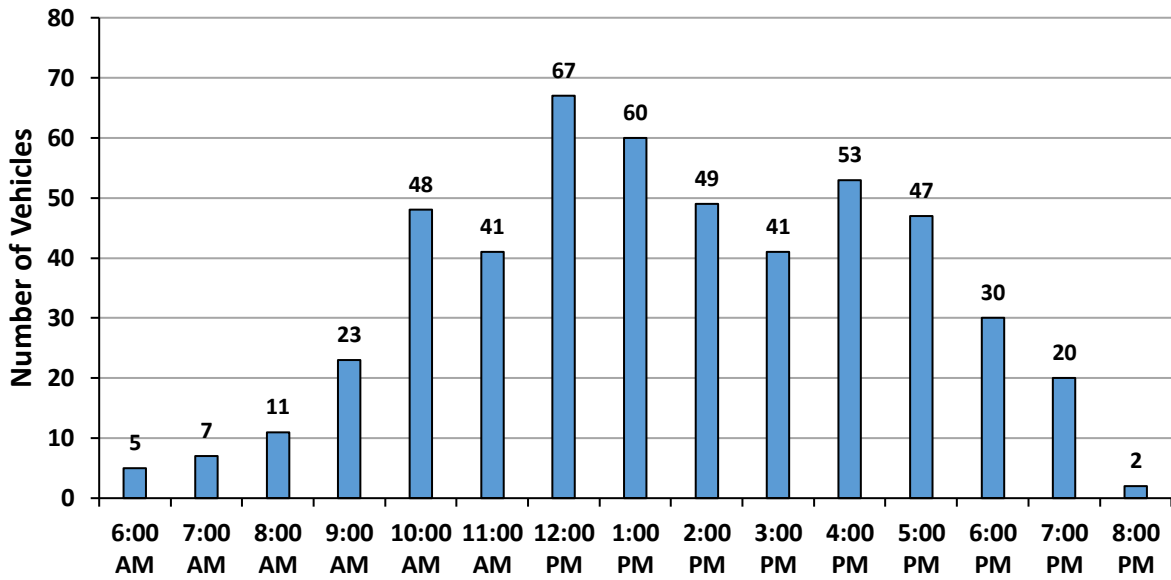
The busiest day during the Labor Day weekend was Sunday September 4th, with a total of 704 trips in both directions on the access road. The estimated total number of visitors traveling by vehicle to the summit that day was 350.

According to the traffic counting data, the busiest times of the day were:

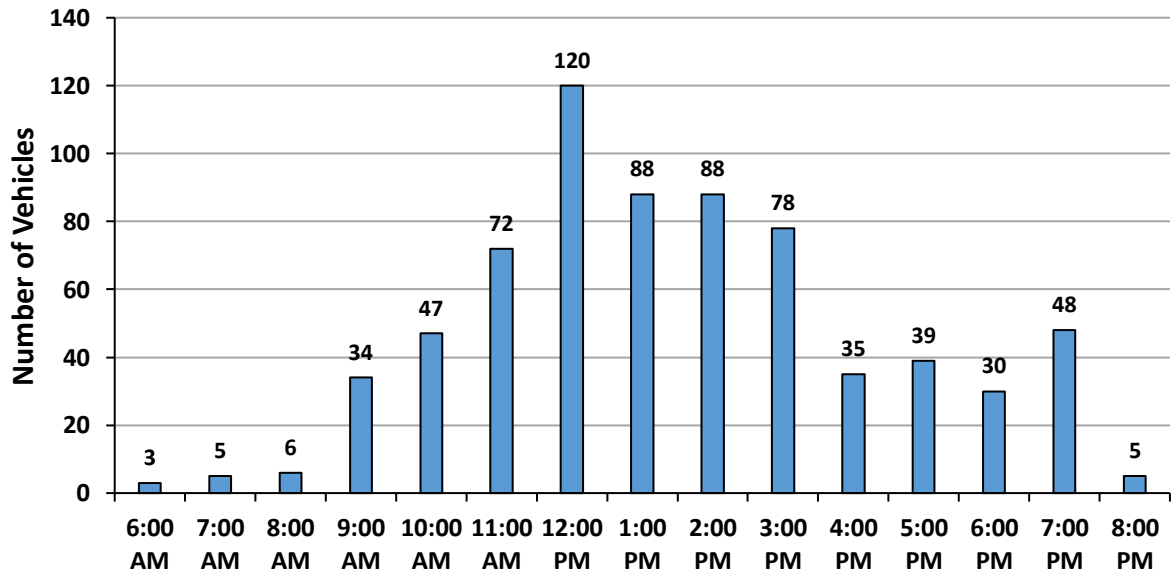
- Saturday, September 3, 2016: Between 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. (67 vehicles)
- Sunday, September 4, 2016: Between 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. (120 vehicles)
- Monday, September 5, 2016: Between 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. (72 vehicles)

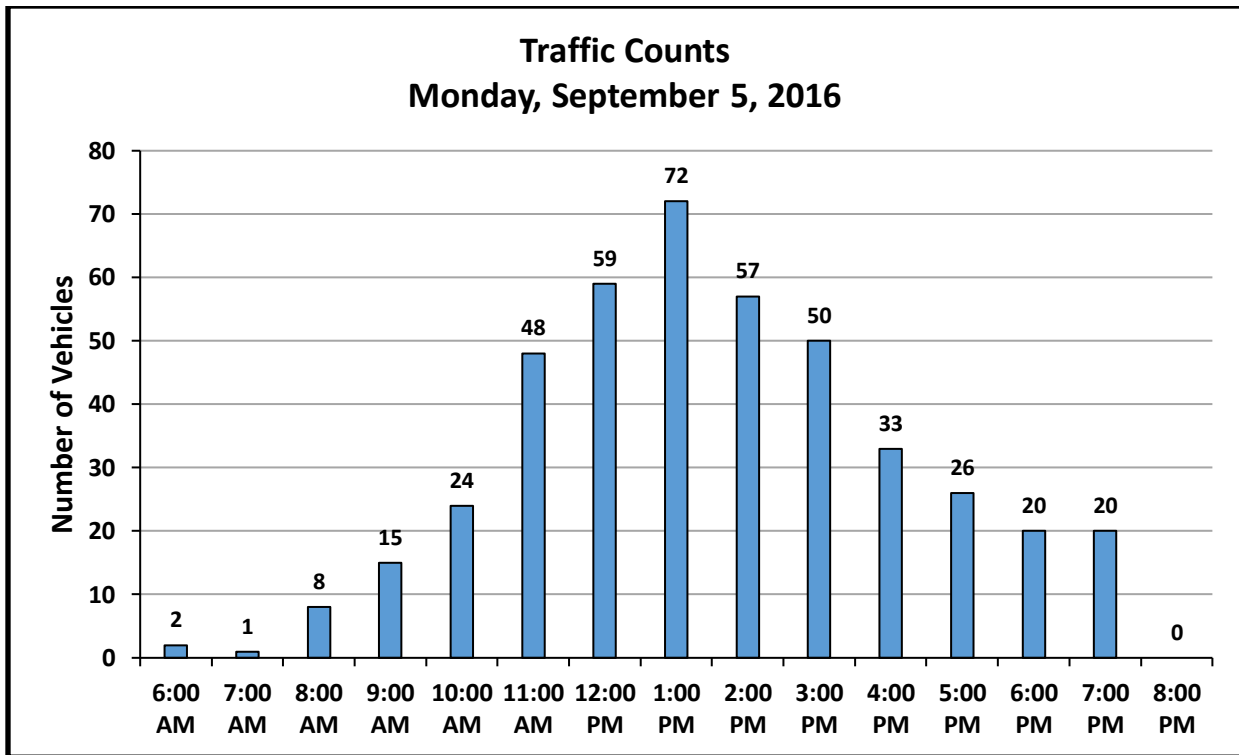
Traffic count information for each of the three days is shown in the following graphs.

Traffic Counts Saturday, September 3, 2016



Traffic Counts Sunday, September 4, 2016





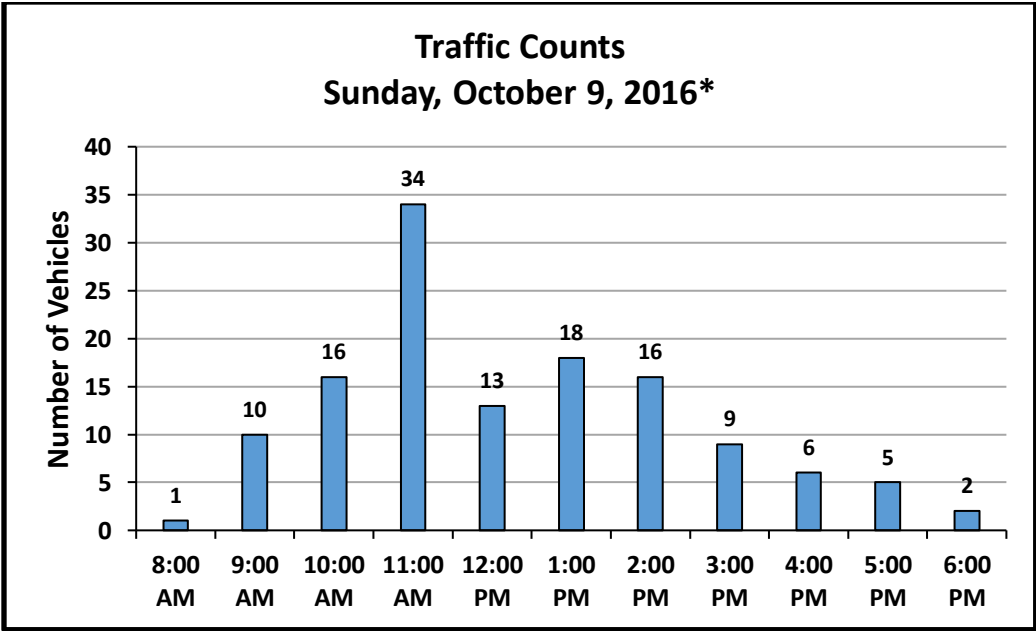
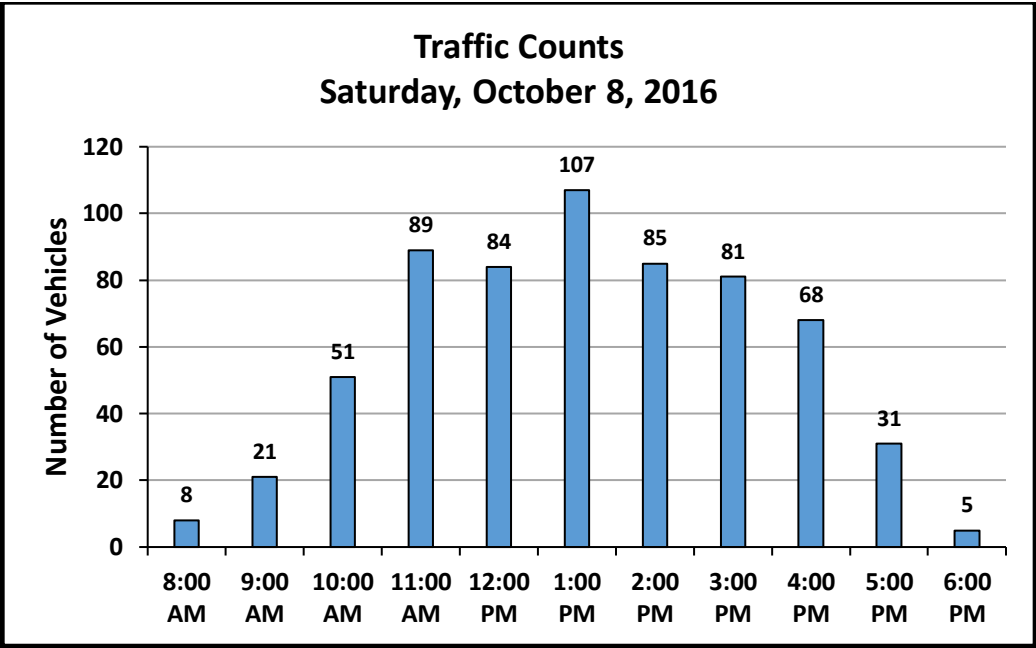
Columbus Day Weekend:

Monday, October 10th was the busiest day for vehicle traffic during this weekend. Total traffic for the day was 816 in both directions, or about 408 visitors who drove to the summit.

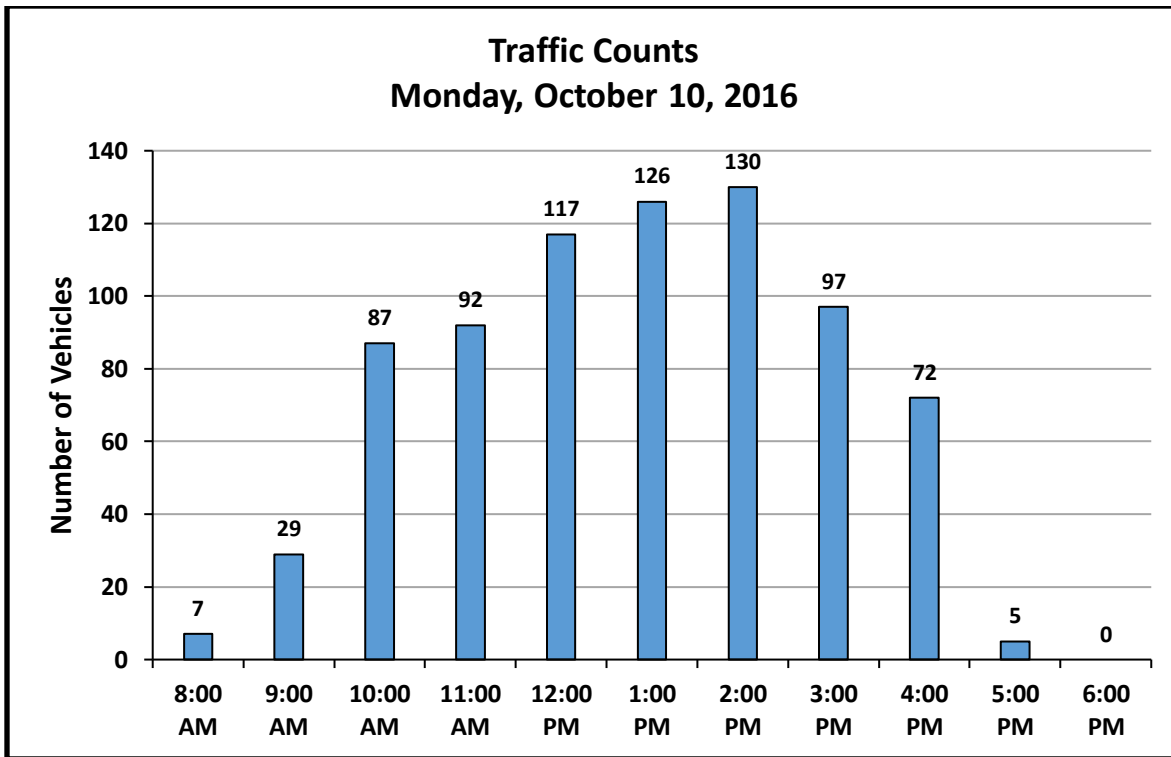
According to the traffic counting data, the busiest times of the day were:

- Saturday, October 8, 2016: Between 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. (107 vehicles)
- Sunday, October 9, 2016: Between 11:00 – 12:00 p.m. (27 vehicles)
- Monday, October 10, 2016: Between 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. (130 vehicles)

Traffic count information for each of the three days is shown in the graphs on the following pages.

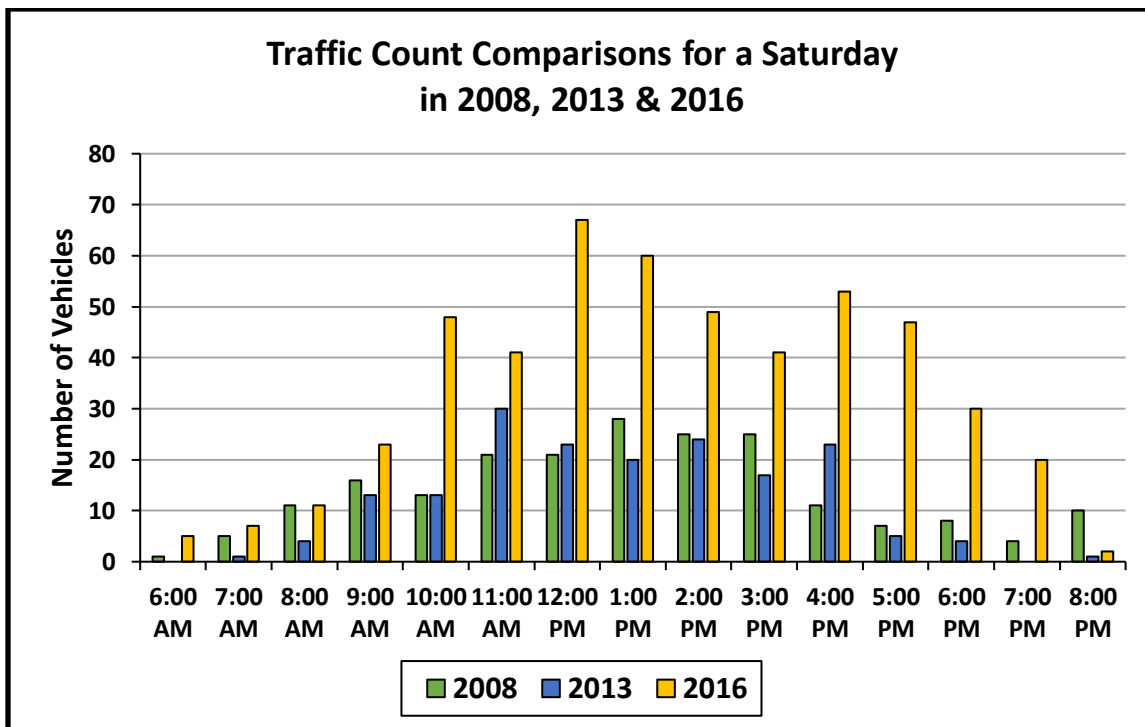


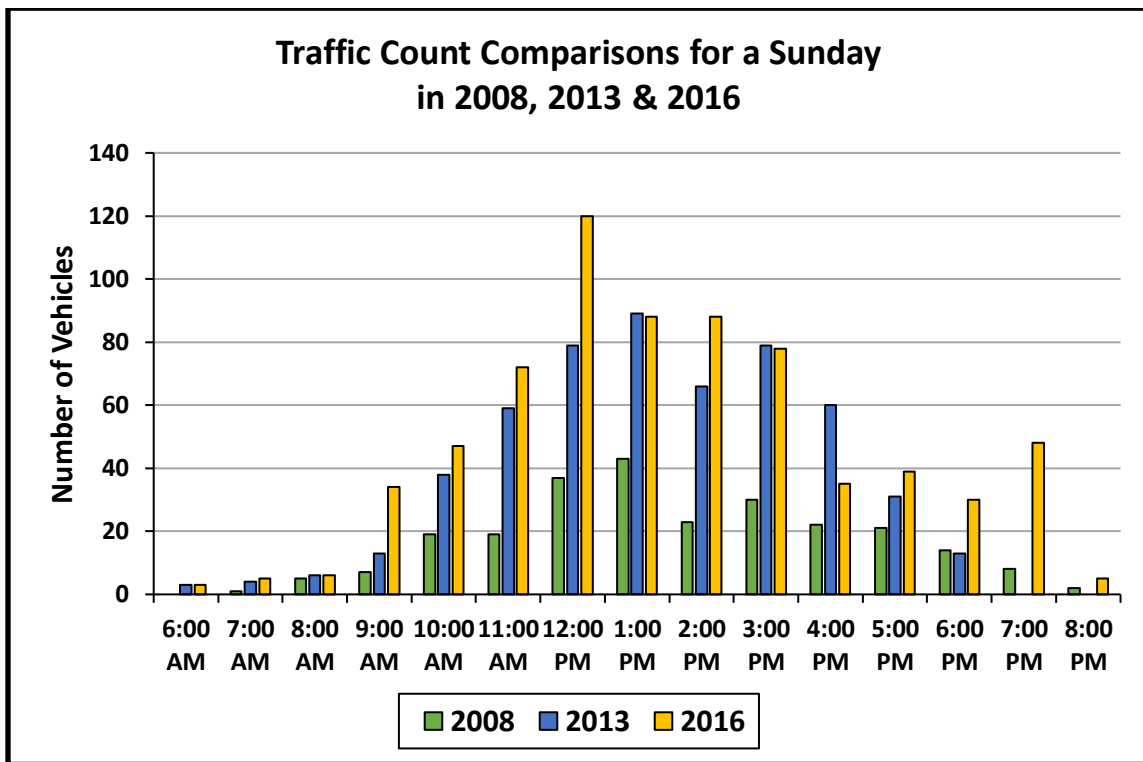
***Please Note:** It rained heavily all day on Sunday, October 9, 2016. This likely impacted the amount of people that visited Mount Agamenticus on this day.



Traffic Counting Data Comparisons, 2008 / 2013 / 2016

SMPDC has conducted other traffic counts along the summit access road – in 2008 and again in 2013. Those counts and the most recent counts are shown in the following graphs.





Please Note: These traffic count comparisons were not taken from the same weekends in 2008, 2013, and 2016. Counts could have been affected by adverse weather, as well.

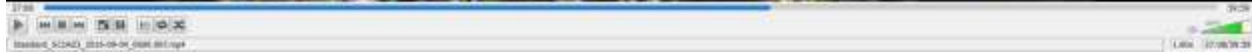
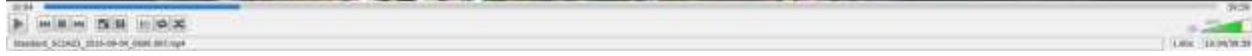
D. Parking Video

SMPDC staff utilized two MioVision video recording units to film both the base and summit parking areas, and video was recorded during the 2016 Labor Day and Columbus Day weekends. During the Labor Day weekend, video was recorded between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. On Columbus Day weekend, video was recorded between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Video recording times were presented to and approved by Mt. Agamenticus staff based on the volume of visitors, and also based on the fact that the access road gate is opened and closed at dawn/dusk each day.

E. Parking Observations

Summit Parking area:

Generally speaking, most drivers tend to park in the appropriate areas at the summit lot. In the larger parking area, people usually form two rows of parking as depicted in the following two photos.



However, the width for the largest section of the lot is technically not wide enough for two rows of head-in parking. This causes people in some cases to parallel park on the right side of the parking area, instead of making another row of head-in parking (see the following photos). This results in a lower number of spaces being available, since only about 4 or 5 vehicles can park on the right side of the lot.



The parallel parking also results in people parking along the side at the top of the access road as seen in the following two photos:





The constraints of the current lot design results in some people continuing to the end of the parking area, and then they have a very difficult time turning around. This occurs even when the overflow parking area is open, as it was in the early afternoon of Columbus Day:



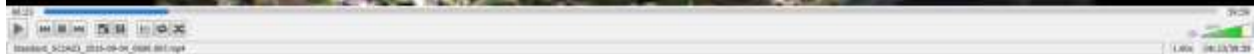
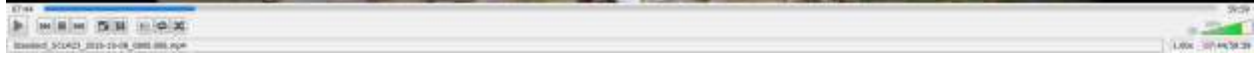
The other situation that occurs is that people are forced to back out of the parking area after not being able to find a spot, and conflict with other drivers entering the area from the access road, as the maroon van is attempting in the photo below:



Another result of the confined space is conflicts between multiple vehicle movements at the same time. In the photo below, several cars are entering via the access road while two vehicles are attempting to leave, and another vehicle is backing out of a space.



Many of the spaces on the west side of the lot do not provide the proper distance for backing, especially for larger vehicles. Below is an example of a larger vehicle attempting to back out of the space and maneuver to leave. This situation is made more difficult when people park along the side of the lot, directly behind the other vehicles – such as the motorcycles below or the black pickup truck in the photos below.



Since there is no way for people to know whether spaces are available, drivers queue up near the top of the access road. Below is a good example, where several vehicles are entering the parking lot area, but both areas are already full.



Base Parking area:

There are approximately 12-15 spaces at the base parking area, depending on the size of vehicles and how close together people park. There are a lot of people who come to Mt. Agamenticus to hike from the base to the summit, so demand is high. The result is that at busy times during weekday and weekend days, people park along both sides of Mountain Road. Examples are shown in the photos that follow.



The most obvious result of the parking situation on Mountain Road is that the available travel way can only accommodate one vehicle at a time, as seen below:



Bus and Large Vehicle Parking:

During the week, several school groups often visit the mountain. Some of the buses park in the overflow parking area at the summit, but many buses also park along Mountain Road at the base while waiting for students. When it is time to load, buses typically pull up behind parked vehicles at the base parking lot to pick up student groups. The amount of space available at the base area for large vehicles to park and maneuver is very limited.

Groups of younger children are generally kept well organized while they are waiting to get on their bus. However, staff observed older students wandering around the base parking area and along Mountain Road. On one day, there was a small touch football game occurring in the roadway.

Also, due to the fact that the buses prefer to load students from the area behind parked cars, many need to turn around using the access road entrance. The following photos show the Mountain Road parking situation on a busy Friday, with several school groups visiting Mt. Agamenticus.

School Groups Loading at Base Parking Area



Bus and Vehicle Parking Along Mountain Road Near Base Lot



F. Recommendations

Summit Parking areas:

- Change language of sign at the entrance to the overflow lot. Currently, the sign reads “No Parking. Overflow Only”, which could be confusing to drivers even if the cable across the entrance is removed. It could simply say “Additional Parking”, since they would not be able to otherwise enter the lot if it is closed by staff.
- Consider opening the overflow parking area for longer periods of time. Paired with changing the sign here to “Additional Parking”, this would provide visitors with additional parking options and essentially double the possible spaces available in the short term.
- Provide adequate space for at least 2 full-size school buses at the summit.
- Install “No Parking” signs along both sides of the summit access road.
- Install “No Parking” signs adjacent to the path leading to the lodge area. It is very difficult for visitors to back out of parking spaces when others are parked behind them in this area.
- Consider creating a one-way loop between the main parking area and the overflow parking lot. This would allow for better traffic flow, particularly during busy times when drivers frequently have to back up through the parking area when no parking spots are available. There is currently a gravel access road in place for maintenance vehicles connecting the two areas.
- Consider widening the main summit parking area to better accommodate two full rows of head-in parking. The current size of the area does not meet the usual dimensions that are desired for this type of parking.
- Provide additional space at the east end of the main parking area for vehicles to turn around. This would help with the current problem when visitors have to back out of the parking area if they cannot find an available space
- Pave and stripe the two primary parking areas, including pedestrian crossings at appropriate locations. This would essentially increase the number of spaces available and improve the parking efficiency of visitors. Alternatively, consider designating and paving only handicapped parking spaces.
- If paving is not considered, pursue other options for guiding visitors to park more efficiently. These could include additional signage or flexible guides/poles.
- Work to accommodate handicapped parking and accessibility in future parking improvements or changes. Mt. Agamenticus recently celebrated the opening of the Big A universal access design trail. However, there is no adequate handicapped parking.

Base Parking area:

- The primary recommendation is to find a way to expand the amount of parking available at or near the entrance. The current area is very small, and does not provide safe or adequate accommodations for larger vehicles or school buses.
 - Based on data, video and information from Mt. Agamenticus Staff, the area should be large enough to accommodate an additional 75 vehicles.
 - The area should also provide separate/striped parking for at least 4 full-size school buses, along with adequate space for loading and unloading students and enough room for buses to turn around safely within the parking area.

- Pave and stripe the parking area. This would essentially increase the number of spaces available and the parking efficiency of visitors.
- Work to accommodate handicapped parking and accessibility in future parking improvements or changes.
- Once a new parking area has been established, install “No Parking” signs along Mountain Road.