



TRENTON DOWNTOWN PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN



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OVERVIEW

The Downtown Trenton Parking Management Plan (PMP) summarizes recommendations developed during the Downtown Parking Study, which was completed over the course of a year, in coordination with the City's department of Housing and Economic Development. The PMP is organized into three sections that reflect the scope of the study.

1. Demand Management – Principles and practices for making the most of existing downtown resources, maintaining consistent access/availability to these resources, and addressing evolving needs in support of growth and development.
2. Organizational Structure – Options for organizing parking management activities and responsibilities to optimize the effectiveness of management strategies.
3. Supportive Policies and Practices – Support, expand upon, and complement the management plan, to further its goals and objectives.

DEMAND MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

ADOPT A PARKING BENEFIT DISTRICT FUNDING MODEL

Figure 1 Promoting a Parking Benefit District Approach



Establishing a Parking Benefit District (PBD) is an important management strategy for ensuring that that parking activity generates funding to support parking maintenance and management, and possibly general area improvements to make the downtown environment more attractive. Spending this revenue on conspicuous enhancement of the downtown experience is therefore recommended. Enhancements typical of a successful PBD include the following.

- Streetscape, lighting, benches, and other pedestrian enhancements
- Multimodal mobility improvements to ensure that downtown can be safely and effectively accessed via walking, cycling, and transit
- Downtown ambassadors to provide parking and general downtown information and to improve perceptions of safety
- Investments in new parking technologies and other amenities to improve the customer experience
- Signage, wayfinding, and information investments to extend the effectiveness of existing public parking options

MAINTAIN CONSISTENT SHORT-TERM AVAILABILITY

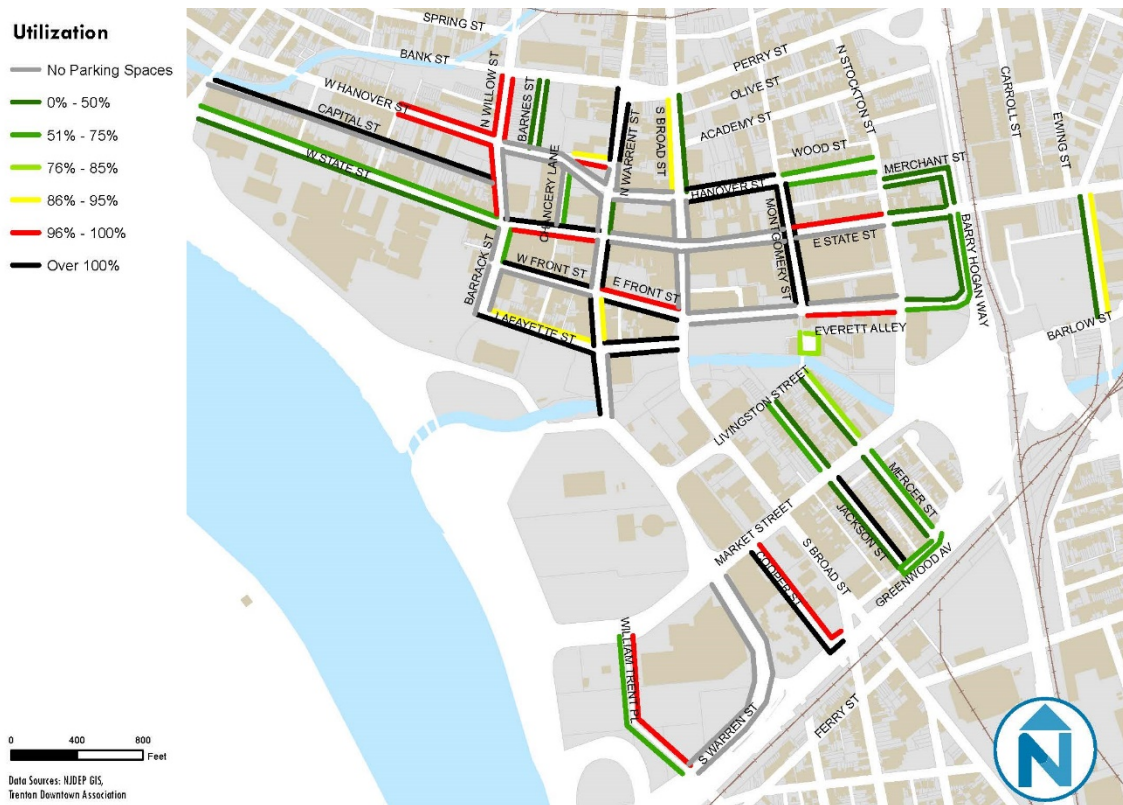
Manage for the Peaks, Focus on Prime Locations

Downtown parking studies consistently reveal a strong preference among all stakeholder groups for “convenience” in choosing where to park. Convenience is determined by destination, and the general concentration of destinations within downtown districts tends to lead to a small subset of available parking options being highly coveted by most drivers. This, in turn, can create a strong impression that “there is nowhere to park downtown”, even when plenty of less-convenient spaces sit empty.

On-street spaces along primary commercial streets are the most likely to generate exceptional levels of demand. Unless actively managed, these spaces will lack availability during high-demand periods. As a result, it is common to find these spaces actively regulated through pricing and/or limits on duration. The most commonly cited objective of this active management is “turnover” — increasing the number of cars that can be accommodated by reducing average parking duration, and “turning over” the same spaces consistently throughout the day.

A more precise objective, that many cities are starting to embrace, however, is “availability” — the presence of empty spaces at any given time. The map below, based on utilization data from 2012, depicts a very common result of applying the same price to all on-street options: demand concentrates within central areas, and along prime commercial streets, constraining availability among these spaces despite ample availability on nearby blocks.

Figure 2 Weekday Morning Demand Patterns Along Downtown Blocks



Ideally, one or two spaces will remain empty/available, even during demand peaks, along all blocks. If this availability can be maintained, turnover and parking duration do not need to be

actively managed. This is a significant advantage, as these measures are much more difficult to document, enforce, and influence through management and regulation. By contrast, relative levels of availability can be measured through regular observation, and undesirable levels of availability can be addressed by adjusting pricing or more effective enforcement.

Identify Short-Term Curbside Management Approach

Until compliance with existing curbside rules and regulations can be significantly improved, there is little value in overly assessing the efficacy of current short-term parking regulations. Nonetheless, formalizing a basic management approach for managing short-term parking will establish expectations for when enforcement and compliance conditions improve. The following elements are recommended for such an approach.

1. Identify availability as the primary performance measure
2. Seek a performance target of roughly 15% availability, in aggregate and at the block level
3. Create tiered meter rates to reflect relative levels of demand in different areas of the city
4. Monitor availability levels, and adjust rates to attain/maintain targeted levels
5. Use revenue from parking meters to improve area parking, streetscape, pedestrian, and bicycle conditions — often branded and marketed as a Parking Benefit District, so that drivers can connect their meter payments with visible improvements to the area.

Figure 3 Promoting a Parking Benefit District Approach



Apply Tiered Meter Rates

Downtown Trenton can be made significantly more accessible simply by charging more for its most-used, and less for its least-favored, on-street spaces. Typically, areas of highest and lowest demand are discernible from utilization maps as distinct geographic patterns. Applying tiered parking rates to coincide with these patterns can tilt the demand balance, to create more-consistent availability among the most obvious and convenient spaces, while encouraging more consistent use of Downtown's full parking supply.

Consider Incremental Meter Rates

Incremental rates incentivize shorter parking stays in high demand locations, by adjusting hourly rates based on duration. Computerized meters can vary parking rates, applying a base rate to short stays, and applying premium rates to longer stays. This allows pricing to reduce demand specifically among drivers whose parking needs are better accommodated off-street, creating more availability at no added cost to most customers.

Adjust Rates to Keep Availability Consistent

Parking demand is not a static measure. It is governed by numerous, constantly changing conditions. For rates to be effective in prioritizing access to limited parking resources, they must rise and fall in response to demand conditions. Change is never easy. Having a management plan that clarifies the role of meter rates in keeping short-term parking available will make necessary change easier.

USE VARIABLE PROGRAMMING TO REDUCE ADA PLACARD ABUSE

Most blocks currently managed to prioritize short-term parking are, in fact, largely used for daylong parking, either through the misuse of ADA placard privileges or through taking advantage of broken meters and/or reduced enforcement capacity. The 2008 Parking and Sidewalk Study recommended disallowing curbside parking before 10AM to address the issue of ADA-placard misuse, and its impacts on short-term parking availability during weekdays. The logic behind this recommendation is sound.

- The general sense is that most of those misusing these placards actually have, free, off-street parking options, but prefer the convenience of curbside parking.
- If this option is not available until 10AM, most of these drivers will have to park somewhere before the curbside spaces became an option.
- No Parking regulations are much easier to enforce than time limits or even meter payment requirements; as is demonstrated by the effective enforcement of parking restrictions linked to street cleaning.
- Thus a normative level of compliance with the proposed early morning parking restrictions should be expected, successfully shifting would-be long-term parking activity into off-street locations

This recommendation, however, could be improved by using Variable Programming to create loading zones along all commercial blocks during these early-AM parking restrictions, disallowing parking by non-commercial vehicles until 10AM. Meters that include a 15-minute free parking button could be used to allow for very short-term parking, and private-vehicle loading/unloading at these times. Shifting between early-morning loading zones, and midday-through-evening metered parking is becoming a curbside management best practice, with the City of Philadelphia providing an example of an early and successful adopter. In Trenton, this approach offers the potential to recapture significant short-term parking capacity from ADA-placard misuse.

CASE STUDY: EARLY MORNING LOADING ZONES

Philadelphia, PA

The City has taken several measures to address parking and congestion problems related to commercial vehicle deliveries. The City's Parking Authority (PPA) created block-long commercial loading zones on key commercial streets from 6AM to 10AM. This provides a uniquely high level of access and convenience for deliveries at times when short-term parking demand is modest, and can be accommodated on side streets. After 10 AM, when short-term parking demand begins to peak, these regulations are reversed – the high-capacity/high-convenience blocks are reserved for short-term parking, and loading zones are shifted to side streets.

Figure 4 Variable Regulations Incentivize AM Loading in Philadelphia

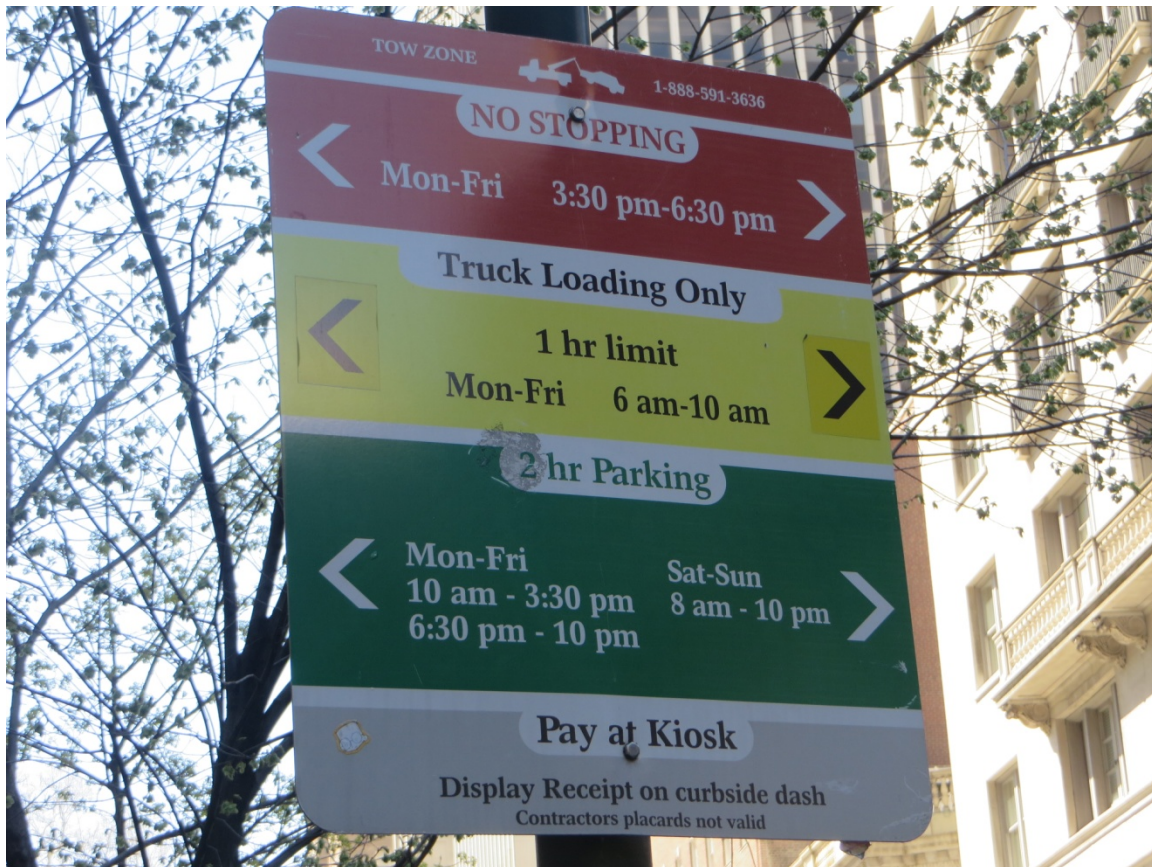


Photo: <http://thephiladelphiacitizen.com/>

The primary objective of this strategy was to decrease congestion by encouraging more deliveries to be made before the midday traffic peak. According to PPA representatives, the program has achieved significant success in this. The City's implementation strategy including significant outreach to stakeholders to identify the benefit of sacrificing some hours of short-term parking for much more efficient and timely goods delivery.

EXPAND CURBSIDE CAPACITY WITH PUBLIC VALET

Unlike other valet programs that serve individual businesses, public valet helps manage parking demand on a district scale. Because public valet actively manages curbside access, it could directly protect customer parking access to key blocks by preventing occupancy by those misusing ADA permits.

A valet station can greatly expand the effective capacity of curbside parking in the heart of the neighborhood commercial center, by continually “turning over” the curbside spaces it uses for pickup and drop-off. Public valet can also facilitate shared parking arrangements with otherwise reluctant lot owners, by managing access to the shared facility and assuming responsibility for all associated risks.

This can open up access to TPA and private parking facilities that might otherwise remain significantly underutilized during peak-demand times. Even if the City and/or the TPA and/or a consortium of businesses had to pay the operating costs, to reduce the cost of using the valet so it is well-used, the positive impact on local businesses should offset this expense. From the long-term perspective, regaining control of curbsides for customer parking is essential to Downtown economic development.

EXPAND CURBSIDE CAPACITY WITH ADDITIONAL ONSTREET METERED LOCATIONS

The Division of Traffic and Transportation should recommend locations where additional on street parking can be added in downtown Trenton, transforming currently illegal spots to legal spots whenever possible and then, subsequently, take the necessary measures to make them legal including altering city ordinances and altering curbside parking signage.

Freeing up these spots will have an immediate impact on the availability of parking and, when the new parking managers are chosen, these spots will be immediately available to them.

INVEST IN NEW METER TECHNOLOGY

Frequently, when drivers complain about pricing parking, it is not so much the direct cost that they object to as it is the hassle of having to pay in coins, having to guess how much time they need, and, finally, the fear of forgetting when the meter will expire. Invariably, the cost of getting a ticket for staying beyond the time purchased dwarfs the cost of paying for several hours of parking. Further, the experience of getting a ticket is one that many find extremely frustrating, even beyond the attached financial penalty.

DOWNTOWN PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN
City of Trenton, New Jersey

Figure 5 Modern Meters Eliminate Need to Carry Change



DOWNTOWN PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN

City of Trenton, New Jersey

Fortunately, most modern, "smart" meters offer high-tech features that can help avoid these problems, increase payment compliance, and reduce overall ticket volumes; making paying for parking much more customer-friendly.

"Smart" meters, whether multi-space kiosks, or single-space meters, provide several means by which these indirect "costs" can be avoided, so that parking rates can be even more effective in managing demand. Eliminating the need to carry coins, smart meters take credit cards and "smart" (pre-paid) cards, as well as currency. And, when connected to a smart-phone app, smart meters can actually send you an alert when your paid time is about to expire. In many cases, if adding more time is an option at that point, you can do so right from the phone app if a Pay by Phone system is in place.

The City is currently exploring options for a new meter purchase that would, regardless of vendor chosen, allow it to begin offering most of these conveniences to its on-street customers. To maximize and extend the added convenience these meters will bring, we recommend that a Pay by Phone option is added as well, as a payment option for all paid parking in the Town.

Include a Pay by Phone Option

Paying for parking with a cell phone allows parkers to pay without cash or even having to bother with a credit card. This eliminates the need for coins, provides text message notifications when paid time is near expiration, and facilitates remote-payment to add more time. Additionally, depending on the Pay by Phone system in place, drivers can be credited for unused, paid time when they leave. A phone-based-payment option can be added to all metered spaces, regardless of what type of physical meter is in use; and can even be used where no physical meters are present.

IMPLEMENT PERFORMANCE-FOCUSED ENFORCEMENT

Figure 6 Parking Enforcement is the "Face" of Parking Management for Most Drivers



Just as the function of parking pricing should be maintaining availability among limited parking resources, and not revenue, parking enforcement should likewise be focused on management objectives, rather than compliance for its own sake. The following recommendations present an opportunity to reframe parking enforcement as a management tool, and a performance-focused extension of the DDA parking approach.

Institute Incremental Fines

A fixed table of fines for parking violations may be expedient for processing violations and payments, but it is ill-suited to serve performance-focused parking management. Each fine under such a system has to be high enough to prevent the abuse of short-term spaces by those willing to pay dearly for the convenience they offer, without being overly punitive of innocent mistakes. This can be addressed by simply increasing the fine level for repeated violations, so that they quickly become too high to be ignored.

Include a First Time Forgiveness Policy

First-time violations should incur only a "courtesy" ticket (no fine), that includes detailed information on parking options, pricing, and regulations, as well as information on the escalating fine schedule for repeat violations. This emphasizes that parking enforcement is really about managing access to public resources. This also formally adds an information-providing role for parking enforcement officers (PEOs), altering their relationship with the parking public.

Combining this with incremental fines would look something like the following.

- The first ticket in any 12-month period does not incur a fine.
- The violator is provided essential parking information, and directed to City and TPA websites for more information.
- A second violation within 12 months would be fined at the current level.
- Subsequent violations would go up substantially, perhaps doubling each time.

Concentrate Enforcement Where it is Most Needed

PEOs should be trained to watch for key parking utilization conditions, which should help them determine where to focus their efforts to best achieve more consistent availability.

- Areas of consistently reduced availability — Areas where available spaces are consistently hard to find should become obvious to PEOs as they become more cognizant of their role in maintaining access to short-term spaces. Once recognized, these areas should receive priority attention throughout the day.
- Areas of reduced availability in the early mornings — This is an indication of business owners and/or employees parking or loading from these spaces, as visitor parking demand is rarely significant before Noon (except outside coffee shops or similar morning-rush oriented businesses). This is not a problem in itself, and none of these vehicles will be in violation until after 10AM. But, if enforcement is lax in these areas, many of these vehicles will begin to overstay time limits, reducing availability for customers. If availability does not improve by 10AM, such blocks should be targeted for time-limit enforcement.
- Areas of ample availability — Likewise, PEOs should become aware of areas where finding a space is rarely a problem, and de-prioritize these areas for enforcement. Consistently issuing tickets in low-demand environments sends the wrong signals about

which objectives enforcement is meant to serve. It also misallocates limited enforcement resources away from where they can provide the most benefit.

REDUCE COMMUTER PARKING DEMAND

Surface parking dedicated for employee use dominates much of the downtown environment. This has been cited by several past studies as both a critical issue – reducing densities and local walkability, discouraging transit commutes – and land-bank opportunity. Reducing employee parking demand, so that is more aligned with what might be expected in a highly transit-accessible downtown, will be critical to turning this long-standing liability into a revitalization asset.

Develop TDM Coordinator Position/Role

The mission of parking management should be expanded to promote all modes of mobility, to reduce current levels of auto-dependence, and to facilitate the redevelopment of surface parking throughout downtown.

Implement Recommendations from Previous Studies

2004 Transportation Master Plan

- Promote the adoption of new transit incentive programs by state government agencies. Develop citywide parking demand management programs that include new policies and pricing structures that encourage commuting by transit.
- Assist major employers with the development of new parking demand management programs.
- Consider the City parking program in the context of improving access by all modes.

2008 Parking and Sidewalk Study

- Convene regular meetings with State, and County officials to further investigate opportunities for programs to share parking, reduce parking demand through employee commute options programs and convert surface lots into redevelopment parcels with comparable parking in structured and/or alternate locations.

Develop a Partnership with GMTMA

The Greater Mercer Transportation Management Association (GMTMA), a non-profit public/private partnership, provides a variety of countywide commuter programs, services, and incentives for its members and their employees to help reduce dependence on single-occupancy automobile use, including ridesharing programs such as carpooling and vanpooling. Today, GMTMA's membership includes small and large businesses, local and regional governments, state agencies, and other public and private institutions.

Registering with GMTMA's ride-match database is free to all employees of member companies/organizations. Registered carpoolers are eligible for benefits that include an online shopping discount, and use of the "Home Free" program which provides a free ride home on days when circumstances prevent use of the carpool at its regularly scheduled time. Registered vanpoolers receive these same benefits plus a \$175 per month incentive to rent a vehicle from a third party provider, and an empty-seat subsidy that pays the share of a lost rider for up to three months. Vanpool users are also eligible for the commuter tax benefit.

The City should lead by example by becoming an active GMTMA member, and tracking the impact of its participation on its employees' commute choices. A longer-term strategy should be to work with the State and Mercer County to develop a similar commitment to reduce their employee parking demand in downtown. The long-term reduction of employee parking demand, by reducing barriers to greater transit use, ridesharing, and active-mode commuting, is critical for the long-term recapture of downtown real estate and the reduction of the overwhelming presence of surface parking throughout the district.

Explore Shared-Fleet Solutions

Car-share companies like ZipCar have developed fleet-share programs that offer reduced costs and improved performance compared to traditional fleet operations. In doing so, such programs reduce fleet-vehicle parking needs, improve and expand access to shared vehicles for workday trips, and increase the number of shared vehicles available to public members during evenings and weekends. This can reduce employer impacts on downtown parking demand, make non-drive-alone commuting more viable for employees who drive in the course of their work, and reduce resident parking demand by expanding the pool of shared cars available for evening/weekend use.

Develop a Live Near Your Work Program

Several cities and employers are now offering what is known as "Live Near Your Work" incentive programs, which encourage people to purchase homes close enough to their place of work to make transit, cycling, or even walking to work viable. Typically, this is done through matching grants or loans to reduce the upfront costs of purchasing a home. These programs encourage urban revitalization, employee tenure, and "complete neighborhood" in which most trips are completed outside a car.

CASE STUDY: LIVE NEAR YOUR WORK

New Haven, CT

The City of New Haven initiated the Re: New Haven program, which provides up to \$80,000 in incentives for new homeowners within the city. This includes: up to \$10,000 in interest-free down-payment assistance for first-time homebuyers, forgivable for those who remain in the purchased home for five years; up to \$30,000 in energy-saving renovations/upgrades, also forgivable after 10 years of residing in the renovated home; and free tuition to in-state college for students who graduate in good-standing from a New Haven public school.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

VERTICALLY INTEGRATING DOWNTOWN PARKING MANAGEMENT

The City of Trenton initiated the current parking study, in part, to explore options for redesigning its parking management organization and operations. A more cohesive management structure and more effective operations have been recognized as a critical component to achieving several of the transportation, growth, and quality of life measures outlined in Trenton 250. There is a general sense that reorganization is necessary, but steps to implement this have suffered from a lack of “vision” for what the new organization/structure would look like, and how future operations would be managed on a day-to-day basis.

Recent parking policy recommendations

To help frame the context within which parking district development or reorganization should be considered, the following are examples of parking related recommendations developed as part of Trenton’s recent downtown transportation planning or strategic planning initiatives:

- City policy should reflect the difference between short-term and long-term parking
- Provide better information and wayfinding in advance of entering downtown to enhance the parking experience
- Establish a parking management group to better coordinate the entire parking system
- Promote structured parking as part of new downtown development
- Promote centralized and shared parking
- Add new meters to unmetered areas as parking demand exceeds a 50% utilization threshold
- Establish and staff a parking management group
- Develop parking management incentives and strategies to offer to owners and operators
- Develop and require consistent parking operations requirements
- Develop an electronic, real-time parking guidance and availability system
- Price on-street parking above off-street parking
- Implement a more convenient meter type that provides multiple payment options
- Adjust hours of enforcement to 9:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M.
- Implement a strong marketing program and distribute maps
- Enhance the universal validation system or consider a “first hour free” program in off-street public parking facilities
- Survey public perception of parking on a regular basis
- Continue to expand the number of short-term parking facilities
- Re-evaluate parking requirements in the downtown code
- Modify parking meter rates in concert with off-street parking and the economy
- Evaluate market response to long term market needs
- Evaluate short-term parking adequacy
- Recognize changes in modal split and traffic congestion – evaluate parking strategies to reflect changes

- Support the implementation of a Downtown Parking and Transportation Plan
- Educate the public about parking in the downtown
- Coordinate public and private interests
- Address long-term transportation needs
- Maximize the use of existing parking resources

While the above list includes many useful recommendations which would improve operations and effectiveness of the existing parking system, the ultimate message is that the system requires a fundamental review of how it is organized and operated, to allow good ideas to be implemented. The following sections present a summary of best practices for parking organizational and operating models. A full description of these models can be found in the Appendix.

Best Practice Organizational Model Options

As the parking profession has evolved, several very effective parking system organizational models have emerged. Each of these models has its own strengths and weaknesses depending on several factors including the parking system's size, degree of development, programs offered, political landscape, community goals, and other factors.

Parking management best practices center on the concept of a "vertical integration" of parking functions. This is in contrast to the typical "horizontally fragmented" organizational structures that tend to evolve naturally in many municipal parking organizations across the U.S.

Horizontally fragmented systems are defined by the compartmentalization of parking functions and responsibilities, such as on-street parking, enforcement, and parking structures, among multiple, disparate departments or entities. The police, facilities management, and accounting departments all may play a role, yet no singular entity has responsibility for, perspective on, or understanding of all of the interrelated functional areas that comprise a parking system. In this scenario, there is no overall accountability for parking. Or put another way, parking is everyone's part-time job, but no one's full-time responsibility.

While there are several variations and hybrids of organizational models, the four primary alternatives commonly seen across the country are described below (and in Figure 7).

Consolidated Department Model

Vertical integration within a City department

The consolidated or "vertically integrated" city department model is characterized by a department head with complete responsibility for the management of all parking-related program elements. Primary elements include off-street parking facilities, on-street parking resources, overall program financial performance, parking system planning, and enforcement.

Parking Authority or Commission Model

All functions integrated within a parking-focused public authority

In the parking authority model, a detailed management agreement and defined mission and vision guide all aspects of parking operations. In most cases, a small staff led by a president or executive director engages a private parking operator to manage day-to-day operations. This model places all of the major stakeholders at the same table via a parking authority board or commission, which often results in all parties gaining a deeper understanding of the complexities of parking and the often competing interest of various constituent groups.

Contract or Business District Model

All functions assumed as an additional area of focus by a public authority or business district

In an increasing number of communities around the country, downtown business improvement districts or downtown development authorities have taken over operational responsibility for parking. Parking is governed by a well-defined operating agreement that sets specific expectations and guidelines for the management of parking assets. These contracts or operating agreements are typically reauthorized every three to five years based on whether the defined contract goals were achieved. If reauthorized, it is not uncommon for new goals and program objectives to be set for the next contract period.

Parking District Model

All functions integrated within a defined geographic boundary

A parking district's geographic boundaries and responsibility for district improvements (parking, transportation demand management, clean and safe programs, events/programming, etc.) generally are managed by the district to better promote downtown vitality and activation. Parking thus becomes a tool for economic development, place making and other larger district goals. A Parking District could be a newly created, standalone organization or overlaid with an existing Business District for an amalgam of options #3 and 4.

Alternative Organizational Options

In addition to the four primary organizational models, several newer variations have emerged in recent years. These may have less applicability for Trenton and are provided more as reference.

- The “Professional Services Model” is a leaner City department type option that outsources most functions but elevates the functions that do remain to more of a professional services level focused on the essential administrative services such as overall program management, contract administration, special projects, accounting and auditing, etc.
- For communities that have decided to promote environmental sustainability as a primary goal, the “EcoDistrict” Model integrates sustainability as a defining element of the parking and transportation organizational framework. The EcoDistrict model recognizes that parking management can advance community-scale sustainability performance goals through strategies including energy and water management, use of alternative modes of transportation (e.g., bicycles and pedestrians), and development of trip reduction and car-sharing programs. Parking revenue can also be invested in a variety of sustainability initiatives, such as the use of permeable pavement and other low-impact development techniques in municipal parking lots. The Eco-District model can be either a standalone model or “an approach” overlaid onto other models.

DOWNTOWN PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN
City of Trenton, New Jersey

Figure 7 Organizational Model Options

	Consolidated Department	Parking Authority/Commission	Contract/Business District	Parking District
Defining Characteristics	All primary parking functions under one functional department.	Parking management responsibilities managed by an executive director and a community-based board.	Leverages an existing strong and effective business district or development authority.	Defined geographic area and may include other funding sources such as special assessments, in-lieu-fees, impact fees, etc.
Organizational Structure	Vertically integrated department within the city structure.	An authority or commission structure created by city council with defined responsibilities and objectives. Typically led by a community-based board of directors and an executive director.	An existing organization that has proven its effectiveness is given responsibility to manage parking via a well-defined management agreement.	A district-based board is created to manage parking within a defined area leveraging district-based funds to meet parking and transportation needs.
Critical Elements	The common and critical element of all these options is the “vertical integration” of all aspects of parking management under a single operational entity (compared to the typical municipal fragmentation of various functions such as: enforcement, operations, on-street, off-street, finance/accounting, planning, etc.) Managing all program components in a comprehensive and integrated manner allows for improved synergies, policy coordination and enhanced program performance organized around a holistic program vision and mission.			
Primary Advantages	City retains maximum control and is generally easiest to achieve politically.	Provides a degree of separation from politics. Engages key stakeholders in a meaningful way.	Leverages strong and existing agencies that have a vested interest in seeing parking and transportation issues effectively addressed.	Creates a geographically based entity that is focused on leveraging district-based revenues to create specific district-based solutions.
Primary Disadvantages	Parking may not be a core competency, may require investments in staff and resources. City remains the focus of parking concerns which can lead to undesirable political issues	Some relinquishment of City control. Can create “yet another board” that already invested community members may not have the bandwidth to accept.	Some relinquishment of City control. It is important that the BID critically assess its capacity to take on this complex venture and that their board is fully informed and on-board. Can lead to taking the agency “off-mission” if not done well.	Addresses only a limited area and therefore may have limited resources.
Bonding Capacity	Yes (via municipality)	Varies	Not through contractee, though yes through contracting municipality	Varies
Example	City of Fort Collins, CO	Philadelphia Parking Authority, Pittsburgh Parking Authority	Ann Arbor DDA, Capital City Development Corporation – Boise, ID	Boulder (CO) Downtown and University Hill Management District

Best Practice Operational Model Options

While every parking program operates a little differently, most can be categorized into one of three primary approaches for operating parking programs (more fully described in

Figure 8):

1. **Self-Operation:** The organization manages the parking program itself. For example, a downtown parking authority could hire the necessary staff to internally operate the parking system.
2. **Outsourced Management Contract:** A private parking management firm is hired to handle day-to-day operations and maintenance through a management contract. Through the management contract, the private parking management firm is paid a fixed management fee and/or a percentage of gross revenues and is reimbursed by the owner for all costs incurred in the operation.
3. **Outsourced Concession Agreement:** A parking management firm is hired to assume full responsibility for all aspects of the operation, including expenses, and the parking management firm pays the owner a guaranteed amount and/or a percentage of gross revenues (or a combination).

While any of the organizational models could utilize any of the operational models, most parking programs utilize the self-management or management agreement operating methodologies or some hybrid of the two.

Figure 8 Operational Model Options

	Self-Operation	Management Contract	Concession Agreement
Basic Idea (Defining Characteristics)	In-house management of parking assets.	Management contract approach to providing parking management expertise (City retains a fairly high level of control).	Concession style approach to providing parking management expertise (City retains less control – more hands off approach).
Primary Advantages	Highest level of control, however it requires more city investment. All parking revenues remain with the City.	Performance incentives reward achievement of defined performance metrics.	Lowest level of City control. This option is generally utilized for specific facilities such as airports or convention centers.
Primary Disadvantages	Requires a true commitment to staff hiring, training, and development. Requires significant investment in facilities management and maintenance.	Still requires some City staff to oversee contract, facilities, and provide overall program management. A management fee must be paid.	Requires confidence in the vendor who is responsible for all operations. Concession payments typically higher than management agreement.
Example	Missoula Parking Commission	City of Oakland, CA	San Francisco Airport

MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION WORKSHOP

A workshop was held on May 26, 2016 to assess options for reorganizing the City's downtown parking management activity and responsibilities. Preparatory materials were provided to workshop participants, to both ensure a common understanding of the objectives of the workshop and the potential benefits of effective organization, and to allow the workshop to focus on addressing the current challenges and opportunities for realizing change in Trenton.

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

Following introductory comments and an overview of the project goals, Dennis Burns led the group through a brief PowerPoint presentation on best practices from "high functioning" municipal parking systems. Several successful parking system organizational options were presented to the parking advisory group in advance in the form of a "parking system organizational primer" document. The original intent of the workshop was to review these options, answer any questions and ask the advisory group to rank their preference of the primary organizational options identified to date or to suggest any other feasible alternatives.

The options to be considered and evaluated were identified in advance of the workshop, as follows.

- Maintaining the status quo
- Pursuing Vertical Integration: all or most functions are managed by the same party, via one of the following options.
 - Consolidating all downtown parking functions under the Trenton Parking Authority (TPA)
 - Creating a "partnership model" involving the City, the TPA and the Trenton Downtown Association (TDA)
 - Developing a "contract management model" with oversight from the City or TPA
 - An alternative or hybrid model based on workshop-attendee feedback

OUTCOME SUMMARY

Evaluation of Reorganizational Options

Maintaining the Status Quo

Maintaining the status quo was not supported as a preferable option by any party at the table.

Vertical Integration

This option was favored in abstract, based on the efficiencies and synergies such a reorganization would provide. The promise of these benefits, in fact, was the impetus for the study, and remains a top priority for the City and the TPA. However, the current state of the City's parking meters,

the majority of which were found in 2015 to be inoperable, proved to be an insurmountable obstacle to arrive at any consensus on how to achieve it.

It was made clear that, until the City could replace the meters, it would be impossible to fairly assess their value to the parking system, and equally impossible to assess the merits of consolidating parking operations under the TPA or the City's Parking Utility (TPU).

Recommendations

In light of this, the consultant team recommends the following steps for pursuing an acceptable path toward Vertical Integration within the next three years.

Year One

Given the immediate concerns regarding on-street meter/enforcement functions, it is recommended that this short-term need be addressed as the priority and that potential organizational restructuring options be considered a longer-term issue.

- Identify the location for additional on street parking in the Downtown in prime locations.
- Replace Parking Meters – Procurement options include the following.
 - The City tenders an RFP to procure the new meters/software management programs through a revenue sharing agreement (no initial capital outlay by the City)
 - The City provides the upfront capital for a needed systems (saving the City the revenue that would be lost as part of a revenue sharing arrangement)
 - The City leases the meters (if the capital needed to fund an outright purchase is not available) with the potential option to buy out the leases (lease/purchase option)
 - The City tenders an RFP for a NO COST pilot to test new meters over a period of 3-6 months (this option reduces long-term revenue potential, but removes all short-term cost risk).
- As the new meter procurement is proceeding, use this time to also conduct a review of current parking enforcement program policies and procedures
 - See specific recommendation and tools in the following section of this report.
- Engage a professional parking management firm experienced in new meter system implementation/roll out to ensure a smooth transition to the new meters.
 - The new meter system must be rolled out efficiently, smoothly and effectively or the change could actually do more harm than good (from a PR/political perspective).
 - Part of this contract should include providing the City with staffing and skillset requirements for the TPU to take over full management of the system, once this engagement is completed.
 - This engagement could be completed separate from meter vendor selection, or included as a requirement in the meter-purchase, or free pilot, RFP.

Year Two

- Reassess the financial status, strengths and liabilities, of the TPA and the TPU, based on a now-functioning on-street metering system.

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- Review staffing and skillset recommendations from management/implementation consultants, and the capacity for the TPU, TPA, or other party to fully implement them.
- Include these factors as part of a broader assessment of which party is best suited to achieve the full set of benefits offered by effective Vertical Integration, or if a “third option” has emerged as a preferred alternative.
- Develop branding and naming strategies that will help announce a “reset” for parking management in downtown.

Year Three

- Secure City Council approval for preferred alternative.
- Begin transition of management operations.

MANAGEMENT-SUPPORTIVE POLICIES

EXPAND SHARED PARKING SUPPLIES/CAPACITIES

Seek Joint Development Opportunities

Engage developers currently exploring development/redevelopment investments, in order to highlight mutually-beneficial joint-development opportunities in which the City/TPA develops parking to support both the land uses at the new project and in the surrounding area. Joint development can provide an opportunity to attract investments in new land uses, sharing in the cost of meeting their parking needs. This same cost-sharing can also reduce the cost of expanding public parking supplies to support further downtown growth.

The optimal outcome of a resulting joint-development engagement would include the following.

- New parking sufficient to meet the needs of project and provide additional capacity for nearby land uses and trip generators
- Active land uses along all street-fronts
- Parking that is setback, or otherwise visually obscured from the street, and accessed via side streets
- Joint financing to reduce each party's construction costs
- Public management of all/most on-site parking

Coordinate with State of New Jersey

Formalize a relationship between the City and the State of New Jersey, and other large employers, to ensure predictable access to employee parking lots and garages during off-peak evenings and weekends.

Focus on In Lieu Fee

Ensure that the standing In Lieu Fee option is attractive to developers, while also ensuring that the fee charged is sufficient to facilitate effective investments in public parking and/or mobility improvements.

PROMOTE MOBILITY IMPROVEMENTS

Implement Recommendations from Previous Studies

2008 Parking and Sidewalk Study

- Pedestrian enhancement projects should be reviewed to assess priority based on the following elements.
 - Locations of existing high pedestrian travel volume

- Proximity to transit locations
- Locations where pedestrian safety is at issue
- Points of high pedestrian and vehicle friction; such as the path of pedestrians from the DMV building to the visitor parking area across Stockton Street, and at other locations where vehicle-pedestrian crashes occur
- Locations where more direct routing is needed

Expand Bike Parking

Strategic provision of short- and long-term bike parking amenities can improve non-driving mobility options for Trenton commuters and residents.

Commuters

Placing bike lockers at the Trenton Transit Center would allow transit commuters to complete commutes to Trenton jobs via their own bicycles. On-site, or site-adjacent, lockers would ensure safe, weather-protected storage of bicycles overnight, as well as convenient pickup and return access at the beginning and end of each work day. To make such investments more broadly useful, the City can encourage Trenton employers to provide convenient, secure, indoor bike parking.

Residents

One standard metered parking space can accommodate 8-10 securely parked bicycles. Where there is demand for bike mobility, this can greatly expand access to local goods and services, particularly if metered parking spaces have proven ineffective in maintaining short-term, auto parking availability. The scale and topography of Trenton support broad bicycle mobility for its residents. Bike racks at or near common destinations can complement these characteristics and greatly expand the viability of bike travel for short, home-based shopping, errand-running, and recreational trips. Perhaps most importantly, this can reduce auto dependency among Trenton residents, reduce parking demand, and increase residents' level of access to all that Trenton has to offer.

Foster & Promote New Mobility Resources

Seek collaborative partnerships with developers and providers of new mobility resources, including but not limited to the following.

- **Car-share** –A particularly important opportunity is presented by the expansion of “one-way” car-share providers, which now includes Ford1 as well as pioneers car2go, and “peer to peer” systems.2
- **Bike-share** – As bike-sharing grows in popularity, and implementation costs and logistical challenges are reduced, sponsors for a downtown program should be sought. Among other benefits, such a program could provide vital links between the Trenton Train Station and downtown, and incentivize bike commuting between downtown jobs and surrounding neighborhoods.

¹ <https://media.ford.com/content/fordmedia/fna/us/en/news/2015/05/26/ford-brings-dynamic-car-sharing-experiment-to-london--first-serv.html>

² <https://turo.com/how-turo-works>

- **Sourced-Ride Services** – Uber and Lyft are familiar mobility resources that can help promote car-independent living in and around downtown.

Refine Parking Enforcement Program

It is always a good practice to step back and critically assess current operations on a periodic basis. As the City begins the process implementing new on-street meter technology, this is also a good time to review parking enforcement practices and tools.

To assist with this recommendation, two valuable tools are provided as appendices to this PMP. The first is a sample parking enforcement officer manual or handbook. The second is an “audit checklist” for parking enforcement programs.

- **Enforcement Office Handbook** – This sample parking enforcement operations manual & officer handbook is being provided to the City of Trenton as a tool to assist in the recommended review of the current parking enforcement program. While the City may already have version of this document, this document was developed after reviewing the rules and regulations from a number of highly effective parking enforcement programs from around the country and may offer some new features that the City of Trenton may choose to adopt or modify as appropriate.
- **Enforcement Program Audit Checklist** – This document can serve two purposes for the City of Trenton. Initially, this checklist can be used by program managers as a tool for the refinement of the current parking enforcement program. This document was originally designed to be used as a checklist to support the auditing of various aspects of a municipal parking enforcement program. For each audit standard, auditors can note whether or not the program complies, or if the result is unclear, and can also add comments or observations supporting their conclusion. Since this document was created based on several communities, it is recommended that this tool be customized to the City of Trenton parking enforcement program and used on an on-going basis.