

MEDIA BOROUGH PARKING COMMITTEE

2006 RECOMMENDATION REPORT



**BOROUGH OF MEDIA
RECOMMENDATION REPORT
OF THE
PARKING COMMITTEE**

October 2006

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Peter Alyanakian	Media Borough Council
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1.0 MISSION OF THE COMMITTEE

The goal of the Media Borough Parking Committee Task Force was to assess and make recommendations on all facets of parking in the Borough of Media, based upon and updating the Recommendation Report published by the Parking Committee in May 2002. A diverse group of individuals representing Borough Council, the Planning Commission, the Media Business Authority, residents and businesses made up this Committee. Listed on the first page of this report are the names of the 14 members and their affiliation. The Committee met on a monthly basis from May 2006 through November 2006.

The Committee focused their recommendations on the themes of public education, encouraging public transportation, and addressing the needs of residents who live in commercially-zoned areas of the Borough. They asserted that many of the parking issues addressed in this report are the result of low usage of public transportation options in the area, a problem plaguing municipalities across the nation. In particular, vehicles containing only one passenger (the driver) often place burdens on roadways and parking facilities while public transportation options remain underutilized. Media has the advantage of providing public transportation to the surrounding area. The Committee made recommendations that supported the education of the public on both public transportation and parking policies.

2.0 STUDY AREA DESCRIPTION

It was determined there are 2,700 total parking spaces available in the study area, which encompasses Lemon Street to Radnor Street from Front Street to Baltimore Avenue and includes Front Street from Orange Street to Edgemont Street and 2nd and 3rd Streets from Olive Street to Monroe Street.

3.0 OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY OF TOPICS

The Committee initiated their discussions based on the recommendations of the Parking Committee Report, published May, 2002. They focused on the recommendations that had been implemented within the Borough as well as those that had not since the last meeting of the Committee and the effects of those changes. The following emerged as the most important goals to focus on in the future:

1. Encourage the use of public transportation to lessen parking demands.
2. Educate the public on both public transportation and parking options.
3. Address impacts of parking practices on residents living in commercial areas.
4. Effectively regulate and enforce parking ordinances.
5. Manage congestion, particularly in the Courthouse and Downtown areas.
6. Continue to work with businesses, residents, and public transportation users to encourage positive behaviors and discourage violations of parking regulations.

To achieve these goals, the Parking Committee recommended several actions that, with the cooperation of employers, residents, and visitors to the Borough, will not only alleviate parking problems, but improve the overall atmosphere of Media. The topics reviewed by the Committee are discussed in the following section.

4.0 DETAILED INFORMATION ON DISCUSSION TOPICS

4.1 Encouragement of Public Transportation

It was the consensus of the Committee that Media serves as a public transportation hub for the surrounding communities but that public transportation services are underutilized. This underutilization leads to increased burdens on the parking facilities located within the Borough.

Recommendation: An assertive public transportation education and encouragement program should be implemented to lessen parking demands and reap other benefits, including environmental ones. The Committee recommends promoting the Delaware County Transportation Management Association Transit Check Program as well as other incentive programs to promote the use of public transit options. A High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) parking permit program should also be implemented to decrease the number of vehicles demanding parking on a daily basis.

4.2 Residential Parking Needs in Commercial Zones

The district known as the “residential parking program area (RPPA)” in the Borough of Media is summarized in Chapter 211 of the Code of the Borough of Media and is in effect from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily, excluding Saturday, Sunday and holidays. Fines for violations of residential parking regulations are also discussed in Chapter 211.

Because of the intermixing of land uses within the Borough, many residents live in commercial or office-zoned areas. These residents often need to compete with employees and customers of local businesses for on-street parking spaces close to their homes.

Recommendation: Parking meters should be placed in all areas of the commercial and office zoning districts. To offset the effects of these meters on residents who do not have access to off-street parking, a resident parking sticker should be made available at a discounted rate. This sticker should only be available to those who meet residency requirements and do not have access to off-street parking spaces. The program would apply to all parking lots and on-street parking spaces in the Borough with the exception of Zone 1.

4.3 Directional and Wayfinding Signage

The Parking Committee discussed the implementation of directional parking and wayfinding signage, which would direct vehicles to garage and/or surface lots within

the Borough of Media. The signage will be particularly important for the volume of visitors the Borough receives on a daily basis.

Update: New directional signage has been implemented, though more is needed. Further replacement and the addition of signage throughout the Borough will more clearly identify parking options as well as other significant locations within the Borough.

Recommendation: Banners should be placed at the Parking Garage that define the uses permitted in the garage and enforcement hours of parking meters. Banners should also be developed for placement in the Borough's surface lots, identifying them as long-term parking lots.

4.4 Incentives to Park in Municipal Lots or Long-Term Parking

It was the general belief of all committee members that the Media Municipal Parking Garage does not get utilized to the fullest extent. Visitors tend to travel around the downtown area in search of prime on-street parking spaces and do not necessarily choose to park in the garage initially. Additionally, the parking garage is underutilized by employees of downtown businesses and residents. These individuals often use the prime parking spaces available in the downtown area, leaving few spaces for customers.

Recommendation: Use of the Municipal Parking Garage should be encouraged to all individuals who have purchased color-coded permits. Resident, HOV, and general parking permits should be allowed on all floors of the structure. The Committee also suggests the exploration of ways to phase out the mechanical parking meters in place in the garage and replace them with multi-space meters/boxes.

Additionally, the Media Business Authority (MBA) will work with employers to develop incentive programs such as the HOV parking sticker program to encourage employees and customers to utilize public transportation options as well as long-term parking options including the Municipal Parking Garage. The possibility of offering some type of shuttle service for special occasions or on a more regular basis should also be explored.

4.5 Digital Parking Meters

There are approximately 1,500 digital meters in the Borough, including on-street and municipal parking lots. All parking meters are enforceable Monday through Saturday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Zones 1 and 3 – A twenty-five cent (\$0.25) coin shall permit a vehicle at a quick-stop meter for 15 minutes only; at all other meters, the rate shall be \$0.10 for each 10 minutes, \$0.20 for each 20 minutes and \$0.50 for each 60 minutes at all parking meters in Parking Meter Zones 1 and 3.

Zone 2 – A twenty-five cent (\$0.25) coin shall be the rate for each one hour of parking, with no time limitation.

Recommendation: The feasibility of replacing single and double-space parking meters with multi-space meters or entrance gates at municipal parking lots should be explored.

The Committee recommends that parking meters be added to Front, 2nd, and 3rd Streets beginning at Monroe Street and ending at Olive Street.

Additionally, parking debit cards will be introduced in November, 2006. These cards should be encouraged as a way to limit the need for drivers to carry change or to feed meters with coins. To make the use of coins easier for Borough visitors, the feasibility of change machines at locations such as the Courthouse should be explored.

4.6 Parking Permits & Meter Fees

In an effort to understand the current parking meter fees, the parking fees and zones within the Borough must be explained.

The current parking permit fees are as follows:

- Monthly: \$30
- Quarterly: \$75
- Annual: \$225

Permits are valid for parking in all municipal lots and metered areas with the exception of Zone 1 and Zone 4.

Parking Zones

Zone 1 (short-term parking): the north and south sides of State Street between Lemon Street and Monroe Street; the east and west sides of Veterans Square between Baker Street and State Street; the east and west sides of Olive Street from Baker Street to Jasper Street; the east and west sides of Jackson Street from Baker Street to Jackson Street; the north and east sides of Baker Street from Veterans Square to Church Street; the east and west sides of Orange Street between Baker and Jasper Street; the east and west sides of Lemon Street between Jasper Street and Baker Street; the east and west sides of Church Street between State Street and Baker Street; the municipal parking lot within the block encompassed by State Street, Church Street, Baker Street and Monroe Street.

Zone 2: the parking lots owned by the Borough of Media and which are improved for off street parking of motor vehicles located at Baltimore Avenue and Olive Street, Front Street and Olive Street, Front Street and Jasper Street (beside the Media Firehouse), Gayley Street and State Street, and Baltimore Avenue and Orange Street.

Zone 3: all other areas within the Borough where parking meters are located.

Zone 4 (quick stop): In parking meter zones within a distance of seventy-five (75) feet from the intersection of all streets, the Council may designate the parking spaces closest to the corner on each street and on both sides of each street as a quick-stop parking space, and when the same is done, the meter installed shall be of a red color, and thereafter, parking shall no be longer than fifteen (15) minutes during the hours specified in 291-27 of the Borough of Media Code.

Meter fees for the above reference zones are as follows:

Parking is permitted for a maximum of three (3) hours in Zone 1, except at Quick Stop meters where the time limitation is 15 minutes. In Zone 2 and Zone 3, there is no time limitation.

Parking Meter Zone 1 and Zone 3

- \$0.10 (ten cents) for each 10 minutes.
- \$0.20 (twenty cents) for each 20 minutes.
- \$0.50 (fifty cents) for each 60 minutes.

All meter fees shall be payable and enforceable between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Parking Meter Zone 2 - Municipal Parking Lots

- \$0.25 (twenty-five cents) for each one hour of parking.

All meter fees shall be payable and enforceable between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Parking Meter Zone 4 - Short-term Parking (Quick Stop)

- \$0.25 (twenty-five cents) for 15 minutes only.

All meter fees shall be payable and enforceable between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Recommendation: The Committee made several recommendations regarding the parking permit structure, the definition of parking meter zones and the fees charged in those zones, and the hours in which parking meter fees should be enforced. Those recommendations are as follows:

4.6a Parking Permit Structure

The Committee recommends that the issuance of parking permits be restructured. Three categories of parking permits should be created, and each permit type would have an identifying (color-coded) permit sticker.

A. Resident Permit: Residents living in a commercial or office zoning district should have the option of purchasing a discounted parking permit if they are able to prove that they do not have adequate off-street parking. These stickers would be valid in all municipal lots and on-street parking spaces, with the exception of Zone 1 parking spaces.

B. High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Permit: To decrease the parking demands on the Borough, HOV permits should be issued to drivers that can show that one or more passengers will be commuting with them on a daily basis. These permits should also be issued at a discounted rate. HOV stickers would be valid in all long-term lots.

C. General Permit: A general parking permit would continue to exist for other individuals wishing to purchase one. This permit would continue to be valid in all municipal lots and parking spaces with the exception of Parking Zones 1 and 4.

D. Parking Permit Fees: The Committee recommended the following restructuring of parking permit fees:

	Monthly	Quarterly	Annually
➤ Resident:	\$10	\$30	\$100
➤ HOV:	\$20	\$50	\$150
➤ General:	\$40	\$100	\$300

4.6b Parking Zone Definition and Fees

The Committee recommends that the fee to park for one (1) hour in Zone 2 be raised from \$0.25 to \$0.50 to equal the hourly charge in Zones 1 and 3. With this increase, the hourly rates for all zones, with the exception of Zone 4, would be equal. Because of this change, legislation defining parking zones should be altered to define zones in terms of the permits allowed to park in them, instead of in terms of their parking fees.

Additionally, the Committee recommends that the hourly rate at meters on Front Street between Orange Street and Olive Street (in front of the Courthouse) be increased to \$0.75 per hour with a three (3) hour time limit. This would create a new parking zone, Zone 5.

4.6c Hours of Enforcement

The Committee expressed concerns that the hours in which fees were to be in effect were not adequately enforced. They recommend that meters be enforced in Zone 1 from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Enforcement in Zones 2 and 3, which would be defined as long-term parking under the recommended changes, should be from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. This would not be a change in published hours, but rather enforcement hours. In conjunction with the enforcement changes, signage should be created identifying free parking opportunities outside of Zone 1, opportunities that are currently in place but not fully taken advantage of.

The Police Department is considering hiring part-time parking meter enforcement officers to implement these enforcement recommendations.

4.7 Parking Fines

It is the duty of the parking meter enforcement officers within the Police Department to report the number of each parking meter, which indicates the vehicle that is in violation of the code, the date and hour of each violation, the license number/state of each vehicle and any other circumstances surrounding each violation.

Each parking enforcement officer shall place on such vehicle parked in violation of time allowed for parking, a notice to the owner or operator thereof that such vehicle has been parked in violation. This notice shall indicate the time of violation and instruct the owner or operator that they may report to the police headquarters in person within one (1) hour of such violation to pay his penalty for and in full consideration of such violation the sum of \$2; within 24 hours of such violation, to pay his penalty for and in full consideration of such violation the sum of \$5; in person or by mail within 72 hours of such violation, to pay his penalty for and in full consideration of such violation the sum of \$5; and prior to the issuance of a citation of such violation, to pay his penalty for and in full consideration of such violation the sum of \$15. Violations for parking in excess of three (3) hours in Parking Meter Zone 1 shall bear a penalty of \$15 for and in full consideration of such violation in all cases. Additionally, if a ticket is issued while a vehicle is in Zone 4, it will be deemed a \$15 ticket automatically with no grace period.

Recommendation: The Committee recommends removing the option of paying a parking fine within the first hour for a discounted rate. They also recommend that parking fines be increased as follows: \$5 within the first 24 hours of receiving the ticket, \$10 between 24 and 72 hours after receiving the ticket, and \$15 thereafter. Illegal parking fines should be increased to \$25 throughout the Borough, with the exception of the fine for illegally parking in a handicapped space, which should be increased to \$50.

4.8 Short-Term versus Long-term Parking

It is important to have ample short-term parking available in areas such as the courthouse to allow access to retrieve a passport, etc. Likewise, short-term parking is necessary in the downtown area to pick up dry cleaning, food, etc.

Recommendation: The Committee recommends the implementation of three (3) hour short-term parking with digital meters in front of the Court House, on Front Street from Orange to Olive Street.

4.9 Determination of Need for Additional Parking Facilities

The overall belief of the Parking Committee is that the true need for parking solutions and the feasibility of additional parking facilities should be explored. Though the current perception is that additional parking facilities are needed, it is not know whether this is a real or perceived need.

Recommendation: The Borough, in partnership with the County, the MBA, the Delaware County Transportation Management Association, and other appropriate entities, should undertake a study of commuting characteristics and parking needs. This study would first analyze the commuting characteristics of employees who work in the Borough, specifically home address, mode of travel, work site, and work hours. Second, the study would describe demand reduction (parking management) strategies that reduce parking facility needs (transit use, ridesharing, bicycling, walking, telecommuting, flextime, compressed work weeks, etc.) and necessary employer incentives, and estimate the number of work trips made by car that these strategies would eliminate. Third, the study would estimate the number of employee car trips that would still be made and add it to the number of spaces needed for visitors (shoppers, diners, theater-goers, etc.), compare it with the number of existing parking spaces, and quantify the number of new spaces needed, if any.

4.10 Zoning Requirements

The primary purpose of zoning requirements is to adequately provide for the parking needs of all uses in the Borough, reduce traffic congestion on public streets by moving parking off streets to allow faster emergency access. Other purposes include: minimizing development problems with neighboring uses, providing for special parking needs of handicapped drivers and providing flexibility in meeting the Borough's parking problems and needs by methods such as shared parking arrangements.

Recommendation: Parking ratios, parking in residentially-zoned areas, and other zoning issues should be examined through the implementation of a parking survey.

4.11 Daytime versus Nighttime Parking

A notable difference in population shifts from daytime to nighttime in the Borough of Media has been witnessed. Although the full-time population of the Borough is approximately 6,000, it is estimated that 25,000 individuals come into Media on a daily basis due to the Borough serving as the seat of Delaware County. Since the 2002 Report, lighting has been installed at municipal parking lots as well as on many streets throughout the Borough.

It is also the observation of the Committee that there is a perception of overly-aggressive enforcement of public drunkenness and driving under the influence (DUI) laws in Media. Though it is believed to be a perceived problem, it should nonetheless be addressed.

Update: The MBA continues to work on educational information that highlights daytime versus nighttime parking in Media.

Recommendation: The feasibility of a Free Ride Home program, possibly offered by the Media Business Authority in conjunction with the Restaurant Association, should be explored. The program would offer rides home to restaurant and bar patrons and alleviate any perceived or real driving hazards.

4.12 Parking Maps and Other Public Education Tools

The creation of parking maps depicting public and private parking areas was discussed. These maps should be placed on kiosks and strategically placed within the Media Municipal Garage and surface lots throughout the Borough.

Update: The MBA has created maps and continues to work on map development and other public education tools.

Recommendation: Public education efforts should continue to focus on identifying parking information, but should also focus on the benefits and availability of public transportation options in the area, such as the trolley and public transit system. In addition, it will be necessary for public education efforts to focus on proposed changes in parking zones and the parking permit program.

4.13 Perception of Distance to Walk from Vehicle to Downtown

The Committee believes there is a definite varying perception in regards to the actual walking distance from their parked vehicle to the downtown area.

Update: With the completion of the Streetscape project and other business and façade improvements, businesses continue to develop attractive window displays, etc. to attract pedestrian attention.

Recommendation: Emphasis should be placed on attracting pedestrians to the Plum Street Mall area between State Street and the Municipal Parking Garage. Increased pedestrian movement in this area may lead to increased utilization of the parking garage.

4.14 Loading and Unloading Zones

Current loading and unloading regulations are as follows:

- A. Areas for loading and unloading of delivery trucks and service vehicles shall be provided. Such areas shall be adequate in size and shall be so arranged that they may be used without blockage or interference with the use of accessways or automobile parking facilities.

- B. Except in the I-Industrial District, all loading and unloading activity shall be at the rear of the building or use.
- C. Off-street loading areas shall be located completely on the site.
- D. In the event that off-street loading area are located adjacent to residential districts, such areas shall be effectively screened from view.
- E. Off-street loading areas shall be designed and used in such a manner as to at no time constitute a nuisance or hazard.

Recommendation: Loading in the rear of businesses has been implemented on Baker and Jasper Streets. It is recommended that more loading zones be designated on side streets.

4.15 Bagging of Parking Meters

The Committee believes that the establishment of more short-term parking options (e.g. 15 minute meters) has relieved the problem of establishments bagging parking meters.

4.16 Remote Parking

No remote lot parking, accessory to any commercial use, shall be permitted in any residential district, as explained in the Borough's Zoning Code.

4.17 Parking Improvement Districts

Parking Improvement Districts have been utilized in other communities throughout the country as a way to funnel parking meter funds from a designated area back into the community. Implementing competitive parking meter fees may also help to eliminate the traffic congestion caused when drivers circle an area in search of on-street parking. These funds have been used to fund streetscape improvements, increased security measures, and improvements that promote walking and public transportation use.

Recommendation: The Committee recommends that the feasibility of implementing Parking Improvement Districts in various areas of the Borough be considered to best utilize parking meter revenue.

4.18 Partnerships for Additional Parking Facilities

There are currently no partnerships formed with the Borough of Media and local businesses or the County with regards to shared parking initiations. Many employers, particularly the County, employ large numbers of individuals whose parking needs must be addressed. Shared concepts could save the Borough money. These concepts may also alleviate parking pressures that are perceived to exist within the Borough.

Recommendation: If the study described in Section 4.9 determines that a new parking garage is needed, the Borough should explore the feasibility of partnerships with private businesses and the County to construct a new parking garage. As part of this exploration, the feasibility of securing RFPs from private entities for air rights to build a parking garage should be explored. In addition to other areas throughout the Borough, focused study should be placed on the parking congestion problems in the Church Street area near Trader Joe's and the Armory.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The recommendations contained in this report require a comprehensive review by Media Borough Council, who will examine the implementation of the recommendations.

Many of the recommendations contained in this report are inter-related and therefore dependent upon each other for ensuring an effective overall approach to addressing the parking needs of the Borough.

Some of the recommendations will need a reasonable amount of implementation lead time.