

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 20, 2019

TO: Kevin Livingston, Executive Director
Bethlehem Parking Authority

FROM: Timothy Tracy

RE: **Benchmark Analysis & Parking Violation Fine Recommendations**

Parking Enforcement is generally provided as a customer service for those who have purchased parking. Parking citations are a means of communication to inform users of the public parking system when their vehicles are not parked in accordance with the Traffic Code of the City of Bethlehem. Parking citations and fines are a method to make parking as equitable as possible for those that following the parking regulations and those that do not. It provides the Authority with the opportunity to monitor public parking and ensure the availability of parking and the safety of those using it. The Authority has a responsibility to provide reliable services to the general public and parking enforcement is one of the many management tools it has to achieve this obligation.

The purpose of this memo is to review and evaluate the City of Bethlehem's parking violation fines in comparison to peer cities. These cities have been selected by DESMAN and the Parking Authority because they share some similarity to Bethlehem either in geographic location, size and demographics of the population, parking system size, or several of these elements. This analysis is presented to give the Authority a better idea of how its parking system compares with other towns in the region and to provide a guide for developing future parking violation fines and policies.

Bethlehem provides residents and visitors with a variety of parking options, with approximately 1,300 on-street metered spaces, 13 surface lots, 5 garages, and a significant number of on-street areas designated for resident permit parking. The Authority enforces parking regulations at on-street meters, in metered off-street facilities and in the resident permit parking areas, issuing violations to those parkers who break the rules. In order to ensure that transient parkers using the meters pay for the time they are parked and only residents with valid permits park in the residential permit parking areas, the fines for violating the rules should be set high enough to discourage illegal parking behaviors.

Parking industry standards suggest that the fine for non-payment of a parking meter or other parking meter violations be priced at least 10-15 times the hourly parking rate. The fine for illegally parking in a residential permit parking zone should be priced at least as high as that for a parking meter violation, in order to ensure that non-residents who should be parking at meters do not, instead, park in residential areas. Finally, certain violations that create dangerous traffic situations or take spaces from drivers with disabilities, such as parking too close to a corner or illegally parking in an ADA space, respectively, should carry higher fines, commensurate with the severity of the offense.

The disparity in the rates versus fines appears to be confirmed given the number of tickets the Parking Authority issues on an annual basis. This would also suggest that current fine schedule is not penal enough to encourage motorists to simply pay for parking instead of breaking the law. The Authority issued approximately 22,940 tickets in 2014, 39,900 in 2015, 64,400 in 2016, 65,200 in 2017 and 78,000 in 2018. The number of parking violation tickets issued over the past five years has increased by more than 300% by the end of 2018.

Table 1 presents a summary of the population and parking system characteristics of the 13 cities examined, as well as the fines and late payment penalties associated with several different types of parking violations in each city.

Table 1 Benchmark Analysis

	State	Population	Number of Metered Spaces	Number of Lots	Number of Garages	Rates					On-Street Hours of Operation	Overtime Meter Violation Fee	Late Payment Fee	Duration prior to Late Payment Fee
						Off-Street (Hourly)	Off-Street (Daily Max)	Garage (Monthly)	Surface Lot (Monthly)	On-Street (Hourly)				
Allentown	Pennsylvania	121,207	1,400	25	7	\$1.00	\$8.00	\$75.00	\$25.00-60.00	\$1.00-2.00	Monday through Saturday 8:00AM - 10:00PM	\$10.00	\$25.00	10 days
Easton	Pennsylvania	26,800	700	4	2	\$2.00 -3.00	\$16.00	\$60.00	\$45.00	\$1.00	Monday through Saturday 9:00AM - 8:00PM; Sunday 12:00PM - 6:00PM	\$25.00	\$20.00	8 days
Harrisburg	Pennsylvania	49,081	1,300	3	9	\$5.00	\$30.00	\$210.00-285.00	\$30.00-130.00	\$1.50-3.00	Monday through Saturday 8:00AM - 7:00PM	\$30.00	\$20.00	4 days
Lancaster	Pennsylvania	59,339	1,052	3	6	\$2.00	\$5.00-15.00	\$70.00	\$70.00	\$1.50	Monday through Saturday 8:00AM - 6:00PM	\$30.00	\$35.00	15 days
Montclair	New Jersey	37,669	1,257	18	4	\$2.00	\$24.00	\$65.00-120.00	\$65.00-120.00	\$0.75	Monday through Saturday 8:00AM - 7:00PM	\$30.00	\$10.00	7 days
Morristown	New Jersey	19,037	700	11	4	\$1.00	\$16.00	\$75.00-100.00	\$10.00-85.00	\$0.50	Monday through Saturday 8:00AM - 8:00PM	\$25.00	\$10.00	30 days
Newark	Delaware	33,673	457	5	0	\$1.00	\$8.00	-	\$85.00	\$1.25	Monday through Saturday 8:00AM - 1:00AM; Sunday 1:00pm - 1:00am	\$15.00	\$15.00	30 days
New Brunswick	New Jersey	57,073	1,000	10	2	\$3.00	\$23.00	\$160.00-175.00	-	\$2.00	Monday through Saturday 8:00AM - 9:00PM	\$27.00	\$10.00	14 days
Reading	Pennsylvania	89,839	900	5	9	\$2.00	\$11.00	\$82.00-90.00	\$30.00-69.00	\$1.50	Monday through Friday 8:00AM - 6:00PM	\$20.00	\$35.00	10 days
Scranton	Pennsylvania	78,118	1,500	0	6	\$3.50	\$12.00	\$90.00-120.00	-	\$1.50	Monday through Friday 8:00AM - 5:00PM	\$20.00	\$25.00	14 days
State College	Pennsylvania	41,992	420	3	4	\$1.00	\$18.00	\$100.00-115.00	\$85.00	\$1.25	Monday through Saturday 10:00AM to 10:00PM	\$6.00	\$9.00	3 days
Summit	New Jersey	22,016	939	12	3	\$1.00	\$4.00	\$80.00	\$40.00	\$0.50	Monday through Saturday 8:00AM - 6:00PM	\$20.00	\$10.00	14 days
Wilmington	Delaware	71,106	1,000	4	7	\$2.00-3.00	\$10.00-12.00	\$115.00-185.00	\$95.00-135.00	\$1.00	Monday through Friday 8:00AM - 6:00PM	\$20.00	\$20.00	21 days
Bethlehem	Pennsylvania	76,892	1,300	12	5	\$1.00	\$10.00	\$65.00	\$40.00-55.00	\$1.50	Monday through Saturday 8:00AM - 9:00PM	\$10.00	\$20.00	14 Days

Source: Municipal codes of the various municipalities.

As shown in the table, in Bethlehem, the fine for parking at an expired meter and the fine for parking in excess of the posted time limit in non-metered spaces (such as in residential permit parking areas) is less than half of the average of the cities examined. In addition, the \$50 fine for unauthorized parking in a handicapped space in Bethlehem is almost one third of the \$146 average fine in the examined municipalities.

In order to encourage additional compliance with existing parking regulations and to ensure that, as metered parking rates increase in the future, the proper ratio of hourly parking rate-to-fine is maintained, DESMAN is recommending a series of increases to the current fine amounts associated with the various parking violations in Bethlehem. **Table 2** presents a summary of the various parking violations for which DESMAN is proposing a fine increase, along with the current fine associated with each type of violation.

Table 2 Proposed Schedule of Fines for Parking Violations versus Current Fine Amounts

Code	Description of Violation	Current Fine	Proposed Fine	Proposed Increase
1A	EXCEEDING PARKING METER LIMITS	\$10.00	\$15.00	(\$5.00)
1B	NOT PARKED WITHIN A METERED SPACE	\$10.00	\$15.00	(\$5.00)
1C	OCCUPIED SPACE IN EXCESS OF LAWFUL LIMIT (METER FEED)	\$10.00	\$15.00	(\$5.00)
2A	DOUBLE PARKED	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2B	ON A SIDEWALK	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2C	ON A BRIDGE OR IN A TUNNEL	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2D	ON A RAILROAD TRACK	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2E	ANGLE PARKED 2-WAY STREET	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2F	ANGLE PARKED 1-WAY STREET	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2G	AGAINST TRAFFIC 2- WAY ST	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2H	AGAINST TRAFFIC 1-WAY ST	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2HF	OVERTIME PARKING 1HR ZONE-SPECIAL EVENT	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2HG	OVERTIME PARKING 2 HR ZONE-SPECIAL EVENT	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2JA	UNATTENDED TRAILER	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2K	BLOCKING TRAFFIC OPPOSITE EXCAVATION	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2L	IN FRONT OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE DRIVEWAY	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2N	OFFICIAL SIGN NO PARKING	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2NA	NO PARKING PRIVATE PROPERTY	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2P	VEHICLE ON DISPLAY FOR SALE	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2Q	GREASING AND REPAIRING	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2R	OVERTIME PARKING	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2RA	OVERTIME PARKING IN 5 MINUTE ZONE	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2RB	OVERTIME PARKING IN 10 MINUTE ZONE	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2RC	OVERTIME PARKING IN 15 MINUTE ZONE	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2RD	OVERTIME PARKING IN 20 MINUTE ZONE	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2RE	OVERTIME PARKING IN 30 MINUTE ZONE	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2RF	OVERTIME PARKING IN 1 HOUR ZONE	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2RG	OVERTIME PARKING IN 2 HOUR ZONE	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2RH	OVERTIME PARKING IN 4 HOUR ZONE	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2RI	OVERTIME PARKING IN 3 HOUR ZONE	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2RJ	OVERTIME PARKING IN 12 MINUTE ZONE	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2S	WITHIN AN INTERSECTION	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2T	WITHIN 20' OF A CROSSWALK AT AN INTERSECTION	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2U	WITHIN 30' OF STOP SIGN OR SIGNAL	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2V	WITHIN 20' OF FIREHOUSE DRIVEWAY	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2W	50' OF RR CROSSING	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2X	WITHIN A SAFETY ZONE	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2Y	12" FROM CURB 2-WAY STREET	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
2Z	12" FROM CURB 1-WAY STREET	\$10.00	\$20.00	(\$10.00)
3A	PARKED IN CROSSWALK	\$15.00	\$20.00	(\$5.00)
3B	WITHIN 15' OF FIRE HYDRANT	\$15.00	\$20.00	(\$5.00)
3M	OFFICIAL SIGN: NO STANDING / STOPPING	\$15.00	\$20.00	(\$5.00)
3N	OFFICIAL SIGN: NO PARKING	\$15.00	\$20.00	(\$5.00)
3NA	NO PARKING PRIVATE PROPERTY	\$15.00	\$20.00	(\$5.00)
3NS	OFFICIAL SIGN: NO PARKING / STREET CLEANING	\$15.00	\$20.00	(\$5.00)
4A	RESERVED FOR HANDICAPPED	\$50.00	\$100.00	(\$50.00)
4AA	RESERVED FOR HANDICAP-RESIDENTIAL	\$50.00	\$100.00	(\$50.00)

As shown in the table, DESMAN is proposing that the fines associated with parking meter violations (Code 1A, 1B and 1C) be increased from \$10 to \$15. These increases will bring the fine amounts for parking meter violations in Bethlehem closer to those of the peer cities examined. In addition, should the hourly rate at the parking meters in Bethlehem be increased in the future, the proposed fine amounts will allow the City and Parking Authority to maintain the ideal ratio of fines that are 10-15 times the hourly parking rate.

Aside from the parking meter violations, nearly every other proposed increase is meant to bring the fine for a violation to \$20. These fine amounts should help discourage illegal parking behaviors, more so than the current fines of \$10 or \$15 for these violations.

Finally, DESMAN is proposing that the fines associated with unauthorized parking in handicapped parking spaces be doubled, from \$50 to \$100. The higher fines for these violations are intended to punish parkers who are fully physically capable from parking in the limited number of spaces that are available for handicapped parkers. Despite the proposed increases, these fine amounts are still well below the average of \$146 charged for similar parking violations in the peer cities we examined.

Additionally, the Bethlehem Parking Authority was established to acquire, construct, equip, and operate parking facilities under the provisions of the Parking Authority Law. The Authority is charge of the administration, supervision and enforcement of off-street and on-street parking in Bethlehem. The Authority is responsible to provide reliable services to the general public on a continuous basis and shall be financed by costs recovered primarily through user charges. As such, the Authority has the fiduciary responsibility to ensure its properties are properly maintained to generate necessary user fees to cover operational costs and debt service.

There is an expectation that with an increase in the fine amounts there will be a reduction in the number of tickets issued as motorists will be more motivated to comply with the parking regulations. As such we have developed initial forecasts for the potential reduction in the number of tickets issued by the Parking Authority. We are forecasting a 20% reduction in the total number of tickets issued and a 40% reduction in meter violations and 40% in overtime parking.

The net revenue effect to the Parking Authority will be a stabilized income/revenue from parking violations. We are forecasting parking violation revenues to be flat or slightly reduced in the first year the fines are increased. There will be an expected increase in the meter revenues from patrons that currently elect to not pay will now pay to avoid the higher parking fines. This could result in \$75,000-\$100,000 annually, roughly a 2-3% increase, in additional parking meter revenue.

DESMAN also recommends that the City/Parking Authority reassess the fines for parking violations every 3-5 years, to ensure that the fines are having the desired effect of discouraging illegal parking behavior and that they are keeping up with inflation.