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Media Advisory: Streamlining Parking in Northampton

As of March 13, 2023, Northampton has implemented long overdue reforms to the parking system.

The city is currently in a 'soft rollout' phase of implementing these changes, with the city's parking enforcement apparatus currently issuing warnings for violations related to the following changes. Full enforcement begins on March 27, 2023. Please take note of the following changes to parking in Northampton:

Why was this necessary?

The city is working to make it possible for visitors downtown to quickly find parking near where they want to go. Many people expressed frustration with various aspects of the current system.

Based on expert parking studies conducted in 2000, 2015, and 2022, and especially since some parking habits have changed due to the pandemic, it's clear that Northampton has enough parking, but that the city needs to manage the system better.

Some key issues:

- The hours of the parking system were not aligned with the times people actually park downtown. As a result, downtown visitors and many employees of downtown businesses were able to occupy spots for long periods of time in prime locations, making it less likely that people would find a parking spot near where they want to go.
- The cost of parking in the most desirable locations was too similar to parking in slightly farther locations, so there was no incentive to walk an extra block.
- Some visitors aren't aware of all of their parking options downtown.

What was the process for this decision?

In the spring of 2022, the city hired an expert firm to update the city's analysis of the parking system. As part of that study there was a public forum in June 2022 that everyone was invited to attend to go over the findings and recommendations of this latest study with the consultant. The next day there was another forum specifically for businesses with the Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Northampton Association and all downtown businesses invited to give input. The recommendations were received favorably by most at the forums. After a robust conversation, many businesses expressed interest in us moving forward with the proposed changes.

The Mayor submitted her proposed changes to the parking system to the City Council for approval in the fall of 2022. After detailed explorations at Legislative Matters and Transportation and Parking Commission, the City Council passed the changes on second reading at its January 5, 2023, meeting.

What is the logic at work here?

The city has now implemented the following recommendations from the 2022 parking study:

1. The city will use the laws of supply and demand to balance out how people use the entire parking system. Prices for parking are set on a block-by-block basis to improve parking space usage.
2. The city has removed time limits on metered parking. Instead of running out of time and getting a ticket, people will pay for parking on a set scale where the most desirable spots cost more.
3. Parking rates change depending upon the time of day and day of the week.

What should people do?

The most important thing people can do is to follow the directions on city signage about parking rules near the location where they park.

Even with all the changes, the bottom line is that things are simpler. There is no more worrying about fitting all your errands in under the two hour time limit. Pay for as much time as you need in any location. Signs, stickers, kiosks, and most importantly, the Parkmobile* app all reflect the new rules, and can guide users of the system.

**Parkmobile consolidated to only six zones so please make sure to check signs and stickers on pay kiosks and meters for new zone numbers.*

Here is a link to the most up to date [parking lots map](#).

See you downtown!

Here are the specific details about changes to the system:

Time Change

Enforcement hours now begin at 10am and end at 5pm, 7pm and 8pm depending on where you are parked. Please refer to the varying enforcement hours detailed below.

Main Street and Crafts Avenue

The two-hour limit on parking along Main Street and Crafts Avenue is eliminated. The fees will increase to \$1.50/hour between 10am and 5pm Monday through Friday and \$2.00/hour between 5pm and 8pm Monday through Friday. Saturdays between 10am and 8pm the rate is \$2.00/hour.

Parking Lots and Street Parking

The two-hour limit to park in the following areas is eliminated and the hourly rate is reduced to \$0.50/hour between 10am to 5pm Monday through Friday. The hourly rate will increase to \$1.00/hour between 5pm and 8pm Monday through Friday. Saturdays between 10am and 8pm the rate is \$1.00/hour.

- Bridge Street (Hawley Street to the Post Office)
- Center Street
- Gothic Street
- Green Street
- Hawley Street
- King Street (Main Street to Trumbull Road)
- Market Street (Bridge Street to Union Street)
- Masonic Street
- Merrick Lane
- Old South Street
- Pearl Street
- Pleasant Street (Main Street to Holyoke Street)
- Round House Lot (first aisle)
- State Street (Main Street to St. Michael's property)
- Strong Avenue (Main Street to Strong Ave Parking Lot)
- Strong Avenue Lot (except portion of lot facing rear of buildings)

The three-hour limit to park in the following parking lots is eliminated and the hourly rate is reduced to \$.50/hour between 10am and 8pm Monday through Saturday.

- Armory Street Lot
- Masonic Street Lot

The ten-hour limit to park in the following parking lots is eliminated and the hourly rate remains at \$0.25/hour between 10am and 7pm Monday through Saturday.

- Hampton Avenue Lot

- James House Lot
- Old South Street Lot (except the spaces in front of Maplewood Shops)
- Round House Lot (except first aisle)

The ten-hour limit to park in the following parking lots is eliminated and the hourly rate remains at \$.50/hour between 10am and 5pm Monday through Saturday.

- Strong Ave Lot (portion of lot facing rear of buildings)
- West Street Lot (no overnight parking)

E.J. Gare Parking Garage

- The rates for the E.J. Gare Parking Garage remains the same at \$0.75/hour with the first hour free. There is no limit on the time parked in the garage. There is a \$20 lost ticket fee.
- The monthly permit rate for the lower level of the E.J. Gare Parking Garage increased from \$90/month to \$110/month.

For more information, contact the Mayor's Office at 413-587-1249 or mayor@northamptonma.gov, or the Parking Office at 413-587-1025.