

City Set to Revamp Parking Enforcement

Starting Jan. 1, Lancaster Parking Authority is taking over parking enforcement duties from the city police. On the same day, higher fines take effect for certain violations.

A few days before that, in late December, the authority is switching to “pay-by-plate.” People who park at metered spots will input their license plate instead of a space number to register and pay at the city’s parking kiosks.

The authority plans to do all of its enforcement by license plate. That includes the city’s Residential Parking Program, which up to now has issued windshield stickers to permit holders.

Meanwhile, on Dec. 27, the authority will open in new quarters at 30 W. Orange St., which Community First Fund is vacating.

So what does this mean for people who drive and park in Lancaster? LNP sat down with authority Executive Director Larry Cohen to find out.

Q&A: Lancaster Parking Authority Director Cohen

Why is the authority taking over parking enforcement?

The city and Lancaster Parking Authority believe the consolidation will eliminate a fragmented, confusing process of “who to go to for what.” Our goal is to provide a “one stop shop” for everything parking in Lancaster City.

What are the Major Changes?

Starting Jan. 1, Lancaster Parking Authority will enforce the city’s parking ordinances, including metered and unmetered parking, no parking during street sweeping, and the Residential Permit Program.

What doesn’t Change?

Unpaid tickets will still be handled through the district justices, as required by state law. City police will still handle booting and towing.

We’ll administer the Residential Permit Program, but neighborhoods that want to be included will still submit their petition to City Hall.

You’re going to enforce parking by license plate. How does that work?

Enforcement officers will use handheld devices to scan license plates and check them against parking records. When they issue a parking ticket, there will be a picture of the violation and we can post additional pictures online.

How will people pay in metered areas?

You can pay at a kiosk with cash or credit card, or use the Lancaster Parking Authority’s Pay by Phone app. It’s the same as before, except you enter your license plate instead

of a space number. Include all the letters and numbers on your plate, whether it’s a standard one or a vanity or specialty plate. Conversion to pay-by-plate will begin during the city’s free parking week, Dec. 19-24, and will be in effect starting Dec. 26.

Will I have to remember my license plate number?

To make it easy, we’ll have parking authority key tags at our office and the kiosks so you can write down your plate number. You can also take a picture of your license plate with your cell phone or store it in the Pay by Phone app.

What if I make a mistake entering the number?

Use the kiosk’s backspace key or cancel by pressing the red “X” button and start over.

Does pay-by-plate affect garage parking?

No.

Is the authority making more money by taking over enforcement?

The authority is an independent municipal authority whose mission is to support the economic growth and vitality of the city. We take a small percentage of the revenue we collect, plus a management fee, to cover our expenses. The rest is transferred to the city treasurer.



Larry Cohen

PARKING IN LANCASTER CITY

Metered Parking : 25 cents per 10 minutes (unchanged from 2016)

Meter enforcement times: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday

Garage parking rates: \$2 for the first hour; \$2 for the second hour; then \$1 per additional hour or partial hour up to a maximum of \$15 a day. \$5 after 5 p.m. on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings.

ABOUT THE LANCASTER PARKING AUTHORITY

Address: 30 W. Orange St., Lancaster (starting Dec. 27)

Phone: (717) 299-0907

Website: www.lancasterparkingauthority.com

Annual budget: \$5.8 million

Employees: 45 to 48. Thirteen are new hires, brought on for the authority’s assumption of parking enforcement duties.

Capacity: Owns or manages 4,600 spaces in seven garages and four parking lots. Starting next year, it will enforce parking at 1,100 metered spaces.

PARKING FINES

Meter Violation

\$20

Overtime Parking - Unmetered Space

\$20

No Parking - Loading Zone

\$20

Parking During Street Sweeping

\$25

No Parking 2 to 6 a.m.

\$25

All the above fines are increases from 2016. Other parking fines range from \$20 to \$200.

Permit Programs Move from Stickers to Plates

Lancaster has a permit program to give residents priority in areas where parking is limited. A block can be included if 75 percent of its residents request it and the Traffic Commission approves.

Starting Jan. 1, the Lancaster Parking Authority will enforce the program and will do so by checking license plates. Stickers will no longer be required. License plates also will be used to track temporary permits and guests permits used throughout the program. The program's rules are staying the same.

The authority said it is mailing information on the changes to all program participants later this month.

Participants will now pay their annual renewal fees to the authority instead of the city treasurer. The authority can't begin accepting payments until January, but participants will have until the end of that month to pay, authority Executive Director Larry Cohen said. Payment online is preferred, but residents also can pay in person at the authority office during business hours or by using its dropbox.

- Lancaster Newspaper, December 9, 2016. Article written by Tim Stuhldreher

