

Parking authority, city to launch second phase of ProjectSPACE

By: Daily Record Staff August 22, 2016

The Parking Authority of Baltimore City, in partnership with the Mayor's Office on Disabilities, announced Monday that Phase 2 of ProjectSPACE, the parking program aimed at combatting the abuse of disability placards and creating more accessible on-street parking options for people with disabilities, will launch Sept. 27.

Phase 2 of ProjectSPACE will go into effect in Baltimore's Fells Point and Harbor East neighborhoods and will require all people parking on-street to pay the parking meter, including vehicles displaying disability placards or tags.

"We spoke with several citizens including one woman with a disability who had never been to Fells Point because she could never find a parking space close enough to her destination," said Peter Little, executive director of the Mayor's Commission on Disabilities. "With ProjectSPACE, she and many others will have a greater chance of finding an available parking space on-street."

As part of ProjectSPACE, Phase 2 reserves approximately 70 on-street parking spaces for vehicles displaying disability placards or tags. Each space is equipped with a single-space parking meter that meets the newest Americans With Disabilities Act guidelines. Additionally, the access points of approximately 95 multi-space EZ Park meters throughout Fells Point and Harbor East have been lowered to meet the most-current ADA standards, which allow people with disabilities to have accessible on-street parking anywhere within ProjectSPACE.

Payment will be required after Sept. 27 at both types of meters. The cost to park using a disability placard or tags will be consistent with the cost to park without a disability placard or tags. All time limits for on-street parking spaces within ProjectSPACE will increase to four hours to give people with disabilities additional time to get to and from their destination.

ProjectSPACE is part of an ongoing, long-term solution to a major parking problem in Baltimore. Current policy in all areas of the city except for the Central Business District (ProjectSPACE Phase 1) allows individuals displaying a disability placard or license plates to park on-street at meters free of charge, often resulting in illegal use by motorists parking for long periods of time and theft of disability placards. Disability placards were the number one item stolen out of motor vehicles before ProjectSPACE Phase 1. By removing the financial incentive to park on-street all day and free of charge in Fells Point and Harbor East, PABC anticipates increased parking turnover similar to the effect Phase 1 has had on parking in the Central Business District. Ultimately, ProjectSPACE makes it easier for everyone to find an available parking space in Baltimore.

Each phase of ProjectSPACE introduces highly accessible parking meters to a designated area of the city. The new single-space meters and retrofitted multi-space EZ Park meters utilize technology to make it easier for those with disabilities to use, unlike the city's old crank-turn meters which are inaccessible as determined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. While ProjectSPACE Phase 2 is launching in Fells Point and Harbor East — an area approximately defined as the streets bounded by Eastern Avenue, Wolfe Street, Thames Street and Inner Harbor water near Pier Six — it will continue to expand in phases to Federal Hill, Mount Vernon and beyond. ProjectSPACE Phase 1 is an area defined as the streets bounded by Franklin Street, President Street, Key Highway and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

The Parking Authority of Baltimore City is a quasi-governmental agency of Baltimore and a registered 501c3 with a mission to find, or create, and implement parking solutions for Baltimore and to be the resource on all things "parking" in Baltimore. PABC oversees the management of 17 parking garages, numerous lots, more than 800 EZ Park Meters, more than 1,500 reserved residential handicap parking spaces, and 46 residential permit parking areas.

The Mayor's Commission on Disabilities was created by the City of Baltimore Ordinance #93-237 to promote equal rights and opportunities for people with disabilities. The Commission assists the City in assessing the accessibility of city facilities, programs and services for citizens with disabilities; providing information and education programs to city government, businesses and industries concerning issues relevant to citizens with disabilities; and complying with the ADA.

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