

Allentown City Council Template for Authorities, Boards, and Commissions Annual Report of Accomplishments, Challenges, Opportunities, and Recommendations

Name of Entity: The Allentown Parking Authority

The following observations present your view of current and future conditions that may affect outcomes associated with mission and purpose. They are only to assist City Council, the Mayor, and other organizations with identifying potential opportunities or concerns as plans develop over time. Whatever insights you can make as a group will prove very helpful. Precision is less important than intuition, insight, and familiarity with the key topics.

Current Year: 2025

Accomplishments:

- The APA purchased a lot and acquired a second lot on the 400 Block of Ridge Avenue for development to expand surface parking in an area of extreme need.
- The APA was able to remove 132 abandoned vehicles from city streets.
- Through cooperation with the City Traffic and Engineering dept., the APA was able to create sixty-six parking spaces in areas where spaces did not previously exist.
- The APA worked with the Lehigh County Auto Theft Task Force to identify eight stolen vehicles for recovery.
- The APA Dispatch line answered 17,866 calls for enforcement requests.
- Through renewed focus on the handicap space program, a review identified 92 spaces that were no longer needed and were returned to public use.
- The APA project manager is nearing completion of a mapping detail that will identify the number of parking spaces that exist on public streets in Allentown.
- The APA launched a new payment plan option for individuals to use who have received parking tickets.
- The APA worked with various individuals in the Arts community and Senator Miller's office to commission a mural on the South face of the Spiral deck. The mural installation will begin on April 1, 2026.
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Challenges

- Modernization. The city ordinances that govern parking need an exhaustive overhaul. Many ordinances need to be amended to be relatable to today's standards. (RPP, Meter parking, Valet parking, Loading zones and others).
- Technology development is lagging. Many of the APA's systems are up to current standards, however there are many others that are antiquated. Investment in technology will greatly improve data collection, enforcement and aid decision making.
- Financial challenges. The APA made strides with bringing certain fine amounts and price points up to standard. These changes allowed the Authority to come back to a point where the organization is financially above water.
- Aging decks. Many APA decks are in need of maintenance. Decks are not unsafe but have lacked appropriate maintenance over the years. Maintaining parking structures is very costly and there is much ground to recover in this effort.

1 Year in the Future

Opportunities

- The APA is continuing to work on acquiring property in neighborhoods to develop more off-street parking options. There are many opportunities for this type of development around the city in densely populated neighborhoods.
- Development of the 10th & Hamilton Art Museum should begin in 2026. This includes the sale of the APA's "D Lot" which will interject some cash into the organization helping to overcome financial challenges from the recent past.
- The APA is excitedly awaiting submissions to an RFP for the North Lot. The hope is to bring an exciting development to downtown that will attract patrons/visitors to the City. The idea is to bring more people here to experience all that downtown Allentown has to offer.
- The APA will participate in a committee dedicated to modernizing city ordinances with regards to parking. To begin Q1/Q2.

- Embracing technology. The APA looks to take advantage of technology that will help our efforts to deliver an efficient parking system that aids economic growth and serves the citizenry and public.

Challenges

- Financial. The APA's finances have recovered to a degree. There is still a lot of ground to recover from a multi-year decline.
- Aging structures in need of maintenance and remediation at a high cost are still significant challenges for the Authority.
- Antiquated residential parking permit system. It's not effective and must be addressed.

Recommendations

- Begin to build a capital maintenance reserve to support ongoing maintenance to parking structures and lots.
- Look to implement current technology to assist with curb management (potential recommendation from the meter study).
- Begin to formulate a new approach to residential parking permit program.

Long Term Goals and Scenarios

Opportunities

- Continue to look for options to expand off-street parking in densely populated neighborhoods.
- Bring maintenance standards up to date with all decks and lots.

Challenges

- Financial for the foreseeable future.
- Moving Allentown's parking vision into the next digital and technology drive period.

Recommendations

- Consider adapting to dynamic pricing at the curb to use choice of parking, rather than enforcement, to encourage long term parking in decks and lots.

What support/suggestions do you have for City Council to help enable your entity to better carry out your mission?

- As data and experience will show, there are many parking issues in town. Lack of spaces particularly in neighborhoods. Learned behavior from citizens regarding illegal parking.
- Looking for support from council when addressing these issues.
- Better communication and relationships with city councilors. Not bad, just looking to build on it!!