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To: Allentown City Council
From: Allentown Parking Authority
Date: April 3, 2024
Subject: Parking Violation Consideration

Issue at hand:

The Allentown Parking Authority is aware that the current parking violations fines are out of sync with current times. As such, the violation fines no longer serve as an effective deterrent to illegal parking and are not, in most cases, encouraging compliance with the established parking ordinances. The result is an increasing danger to the safety of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the city. The parking fines are bearable to the public such that motorists choose to illegally park for convenience and incur an affordably low fine.

Background:

The Allentown Parking Authority Board has reviewed data collected from the region and State pertaining to parking violation fines. There are many common parking violations across varying cities and authorities throughout the State. Those data sets show that Allentown's current fine structure is far below the average of fines when compared to other cities and authorities of similar or lesser size.

Facts to consider:

- The Parking Authority compared thirty-one (31) violations that were common to five (5) cities within our region of lesser size.
- Of the violations compared, Allentown's parking violation fines ranked below the average on **ALL** but two of the violation fines (Double Parking, Unhitched Trailer).
- Allentown is the third largest city in the State of Pennsylvania.
- Parking violations have increased steadily with little noticeable impact on reducing illegal parking including safety violations.
- Except for a handful of isolated adjustments, the majority of ticket penalties have not been adjusted in over 20 years.

Resolution:

The Allentown Parking Authority would like to submit the following parking violation fine adjustment for each violation currently enacted by ordinance. The proposed increase for all but one violation would bring the violation fine amounts in line with the regional average.

The Allentown Parking Authority is under tremendous strain with providing for the parking needs of a very rapidly growing and developing city. While the Authority has been able to keep pace up to now, our resources are such that we must seek other options should development continue to grow. The Allentown Parking Authority believes that development and growth will continue in the city and our intention, with this request, is as follows:

1. By raising the fine amounts and making it less affordable to illegally park, the higher fines will encourage compliance and foster safer vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the city. The imbalance between penalty rates and deck and street rates prevent effective administration of parking in the City. Current parking penalties, even for safety violations, range from \$10 to \$15, resulting in people choosing to take a ticket as opposed to parking in a deck because it could actually cost them less money.
2. The penalty rates have not kept up with the cost of living and paying APA employees a living wage with health benefits. This creates a budget shortfall and will prevent APA from considering parking relief programs as follows:
 - a. Small retail business discounts for deck parking cannot be considered.
 - b. Residential parking permit study and revised rates will now need to be conducted and higher rates recommended.
 - c. Investment in neighborhood lots is neutralized.
 - d. Further investment in larger projects which have the effect of increasing development and thereby increasing the tax base for the benefit of all citizens of Allentown are marginalized.
3. The funds from the increased fine amounts will allow the Allentown Parking Authority to look into providing more surface lot parking options for neighborhood areas. An area of particular focus is the first and sixth wards where our current neighborhood lots are at capacity with many on lengthy waiting lists.
4. The proposed increase does not include tickets for double parking, for which Allentown is already the highest in the State.

As Allentown continues to grow and change the Allentown Parking Authority has pivoted its operation to meet the challenges of a growing city. Our organization has taken on many new functions that were not in existence just a few short years ago. A fully functioning dispatch center, assisting with curb painting in the city and managing signage for city events are but a few of the increased responsibilities the Allentown Parking Authority has taken on. Keeping our operation functioning at its best is the hope of our organization, and we believe this request is a necessary one to keep the city's residents safe, serve our businesses with available parking and keep Allentown attractive to development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jonathan Haney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jonathan Haney
Deputy Director
Allentown Parking Authority