

**BOROUGH OF SOMERVILLE**

**OPERATIONS REPORT**

**DRAFT REPORT**

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**RECEIVED BY**

**BOROUGH OF SOMERVILLE  
TRAFFIC & PARKING COMMITTEE  
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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Borough of Somerville has retained Bier Associates to provide consulting services to review the Borough of Somerville's parking operations, and to make recommendations to enhance and improve on-street and off-street parking operations. Bier Associates has met with members of the Parking Committee to secure input. Borough employees whose job responsibilities include parking operation functions, have been interviewed. Borough off-street parking facilities have been visited by Bier Associates and visually inspected. Bier Associates has read the report entitled Borough of Somerville Parking Conditions & Management Report prepared by Uribtran Associates, Inc. dated March 2002.

## **2. EXISTING CONDITIONS**

### **2.0 Organization & Management of Parking Operations**

The Borough of Somerville's parking operations, organization and management is currently decentralized. No one person is responsible for or has the authority to manage parking operations.

Presently the fire department has responsibility for collecting and repairing meters. The police department directs the enforcement of on and off-street meter regulations as well as general parking ordinances and state statutes.

Parking fee income, after it is deposited in the bank, is tracked and accounted for by the finance department. The borough administrator's office issues parking meter smart cards and deposits the parking fees. The engineering department has the general responsibility of responding to parking issues but not the authority to direct fire or police department personnel tasked to enforce, collect or repair meters

## **2.1 Parking Enforcement**

Parking Enforcement is conducted by one (1) Parking Enforcement Officer (PEO) employed by the Police Department (PD). The existing PEO is a long time employee of the police department. The PD/PEO is motivated and self manages his parking enforcement time efficiently, subject to police department daily direction and needs.

Parking regulations are enforced Monday thru Friday from 8 AM to 4 PM. There are no set on or off-street enforcement zones or enforcement routes. The PEO circulates through the borough parking system approximately four (4) times per day to enforce parking regulations and expired meters.

The current parking enforcement philosophy is to encourage parking meter turn over on Main Street, to make parking available for shoppers and customers. On-street parkers have their tires chalked to monitor meter feedings, to dissuade merchant and employee long term parking at short term meters. Off-street parking lots are not as strictly enforced as on-street parking meters.

PEO parking summons issuance is between 800 and 1,000 per month. This level of enforcement activity results in 40 to 50 summonses per day, based upon a 20 day work month. Most summonses are issued for on-street meter overtime parking and meter feeding.

Saturday parking enforcement is only in response to merchant or resident complaints about lack of turn over at on-street meters. Expired meter violations, are not enforced on the weekends and after 4 PM weekdays.

## **2.2 Meter Collection**

There are approximately 350 on-street and 350 off-street parking meters in the Somerville parking system which require parking fee collection.

Meter collection is conducted by the superintendent and assistant superintendent of the fire department on Mondays. Main Street meters are collected every Monday. Off-street parking lots and side streets are alternated and collected every other Monday. The Pay and Display (PAD) multispace parking meters in Lot 7 and Court House Square (DeSapio) Parking Deck are collected on the same day as the other parking lots.

Somerville has an “Open Vault” parking meter collection system. Deposited coins are stored in the meter’s locked vault. When the parking meters vault is unlocked the deposited coins spill out down a chute into larger open industrial cans, held by the meter collectors. When the industrial can is full, the coin is then transferred to an open canvas coin bag, which is kept on the seat of the collection vehicle. When the bank coin deposit bag is full, the canvas bag is sealed with a numbered crimping seal provided by the bank.

Meter collection is conducted by both meter collectors working together and takes approximately 2 hours each Monday morning. At the end of the meter collection process, the coin bags are taken to the bank for deposit. The bank deposit slip notes the number of coin bags received. The deposited coin amount is undetermined and subject to coin counting by the bank.

Coin counting is not conducted on-site by the bank. The coin bags are transported by the bank to another facility for counting. Consequently, the Somerville meter collectors do not observe the counting of coin. After coin counting, the bank forwards a completed deposit slip with the value of the coin received by the bank to the boroughs CMFO for recording and accounting purposes.

### **2.3 Meter Repairs**

Meter maintenance and repair is also conducted by the superintendent and assistant superintendent of the fire department.

Broken meter reports are accepted from the public by both the police and engineering department. The engineering department forwards repair requests to the meter maintenance personnel on a

daily basis via email or cell phone communications. The police department prepares a weekly repair list based on public reports and the PEO's field observations.

Meter maintenance personnel advised Bier Associates that meter repair is conducted daily, based upon receipt of a report of a broken meter or observation of a malfunctioning meter by the meter repairman while in the field. Additionally, every Monday prior to collecting the meters, the meter collectors go to the police department to receive a copy of the "The Meter List" which contains all broken meters reported to or observed by the police or the PEO while in the field. Parking meters on the Police Department Meter List are repaired on Mondays during the meter collection process.

Meter malfunctions, as reported by the meter repairman are comprised of: jammed coins, dead batteries and electronic meter "failure mode." The meter failure mode is repaired by pushing a reset button to reboot the electronic meter mechanism. To date, there have been no failures of the electronic meter mechanisms that have required them to be returned to the manufacturer for servicing.

Dead battery changes are more frequent than the one (1) time per year manufacturer's specification. The Borough purchases Eveready brand batteries as opposed to the Duracell brand, which is recommended by the meter manufacturer. The Eveready brand is a less expensive battery, \$.38 per unit, but does not provide one (1) year of battery power for the electronic meter, as does the Duracell.

Based upon their repair experience and present product reliability, maintenance personnel do not carry spare electronic meter mechanism in the field with them, when making daily or Monday Meter List repairs. However, an inventory of 30-40 spare electronic meter mechanisms are maintained at the fire department, should meter mechanism replacement be required.

Other repairs performed by meter maintenance personnel includes: meter lens replacement and meter pole straightening. Meter lenses are replaced when they become; broken, cracked, cloudy or are graffitied with magic marker or stickers. A case of replacement lenses and 4 or 5 dozen parking meter rate cards are kept in the meter repair supply inventory. The fire department's maintenance vehicle has a winch, which is used to straighten meter poles.

At one time meter maintenance personnel dug the holes and set the poles for parking meter installation and replacement. These functions are now sometimes performed by the Borough Department of Public Works (DPW). The DPW has a maintenance truck set up with a hydraulic pole straightener and pole drive, which is used to set and repair street sign poles. This equipment was previously operated by the meter maintenance personnel. Meter maintenance personnel have reported that their fire department equipment maintenance and other duties, no longer allows them the time to perform meter pole installations.

The engineering department reports that DPW's response time to requests for meter pole installation and repair is less than ideal. Consequently, the engineering department often out sources its meter pole installation, removal and repair to a private contractor.

## **2.4 Parking Revenues**

Parking Revenues collected by the Borough of Somerville are generated from two sources: parking meter fees and parking violation fees. Parking meters as previously noted are collected by fire department personnel acting as meter collectors. Parking meter fees when collected are deposited with Commerce Bank and the finance department assumes responsibility for tracking meter deposits and providing accounting reports.

Parking violation fines are collected by the municipal court. Parking fines for local parking ordinance violations, such as overtime parking and meter feeding are retained by the municipality. However, \$11.50 for enhanced penalties or statutory assessments are deducted from each parking summons collected by the municipal court, and is paid to the State of New Jersey. The \$54.00

parking fine collected by the Court for Title 39 prohibited parking violations also has \$11.50 per summons deducted and the balance of the fine is split between the municipality, county and state.

Parking meter revenue is not presently broken out and tracked by off-street parking lots, parking deck and on-street parking meter locations/zones. On-street CBD parking meters are \$.50 per hour. Off-street parking lots are \$.25 per hour and \$1.00 for 10 hours. Parking revenue from parking meter fees and the sale of parking meter smart cards are as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>
<b>Parking Revenue</b>	\$107,345	\$114,872	\$191,117

Parking violation annual fine revenue collected by the municipal court is estimated to be \$360,000 gross and \$200,000 net, after payment of the \$11.50 per summons fees to the state and Title 39 fine revenue split.

## **2.5 Parking Expenses**

As the present time the Borough of Somerville does not prepare a consolidated budget for parking operations. However, certain line items in the municipal budget are attributed to parking expenses as follows:

<b>Expense</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>
Salary/Wage	\$42,900	\$49,400
Operating Expense	\$3,920	\$4,000
Deck County Maintenance	\$20,000	\$20,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$67,820</b>	<b>\$73,400</b>

The entire salary of the Assistant Superintendent of the Fire Department (\$48,773/yr 2005) is allocated in the municipal budget to parking operations.

The following chart lists the actual borough personnel attributed to parking operations, their total salary and hypothetical allocations for their time spent actually providing parking related services.

<b>Title</b>	<b>2005 Salary</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>50%</b>
PEO	\$37,101	---	---	---	\$18,550
Meter Tech.	\$58,438	\$5,844	\$8,766	\$17,532	---
Meter Tech.	\$48,773	\$4,877	\$7,316	\$14,632	---
Asst. Engineer	\$62,000	\$6,200	\$9,300	\$12,400	---

Minimal operating expenses are presently budgeted for parking operation. The 2005 budget included \$4,000 for operating expenses including battery purchases and meter lens replacements.

The Borough has an on-going agreement with the County, for the County to provide maintenance services at the Court House Square (DeSapio) Parking Deck for \$20,000 per year. The Borough is responsible for the maintenance and repair of the Pay By Space multispace parking meter, that regulates the public parking spaces in the deck.

## **2.6 Parking Meter Rates**

On-street parking meters located in the Central Business District (CBD) on Main, Davenport and Division Street and Doughty Avenue are \$.50 cents per hour. On-street parking meters located on the edge of the CBD on High Street are \$.25cents per hour. Long term parking meters on Veterans Memorial Drive are \$1.00 dollar for 12 hours.

All off-street parking lot meters are \$.25 cents per hour up to 3 hours. Long term off-street parking lot meters are \$1.00 for 12 hours.

The parking meters for the Court House Square (DeSapio) Parking Deck are \$.50 cents per hour; maximum \$4.00 per day. Parking deck permits are \$50.00 per month and \$130.00 per quarter.

Parking meter “Smart Cards” are sold to residents at a 20% discount. Somerville residents receive a \$10 credit on their parking meter smart cards for every \$8.00 cash payment made.

## **2.7 Parking Fines**

The Borough of Somerville has only three (3) local ordinance parking violations; overtime parking, meter feeding and general prohibited. The fine for municipal overtime and meter feeding parking violations is \$18.00 per violation. The fine for general prohibited parking is \$23.00.

# **3. PARKING SYSTEM VS. PROVIDING PARKING SERVICES**

## **3.0 Benefits of a Parking System**

Virtually all municipalities recognize the importance of providing on and off-street parking for residents, visitors, shoppers and persons employed within their cities. However, not every municipality realizes the importance of integrating all aspects of providing public parking within the framework of a “parking system”. In many municipalities, as in Somerville, the elements of a parking system are decentralized and essential parking functions are performed by individual departments within the local government. In the Borough of Somerville, parking enforcement is the responsibility of the police department (PD), meter maintenance and repair is handled by fire department (FD), meter revenue and parking fees are accounted for by the finance department, smart cards are issued by the city administrators office, meter placement, parking fees and rates are set by the governing body of the municipality, and parking issues in general are referred to the engineering department.

When parking functions are divided between multiple city departments, no single person is responsible for planning, managing, operating or delivering municipal parking services to residents and the public. Parking revenues, though collected, deposited and accounted for by the municipal finance department, are not allocated to specific collection zones or off-street parking lots. Consequently, if parking revenues decrease it is difficult to pinpoint the reason for the decline. Conversely, if the reason for a decline in parking revenue can be attributed to parking meters in need of repair or a lack of enforcement in a particular meter zone or parking facility, the engineering department does not have the authority to correct the problem, but must coordinate and request assistance from the FD or PD.

Another issue associated with the delivery of parking functions and services by multiple city departments is that the municipality often does not know the actual cost of providing public parking or the net revenue derived from parking fees. When parking services are decentralized and provided by multiple city departments, no department head or city official ever prepares a unified parking budget to determine how much manpower, salary and wages, equipment, supplies, vehicles, gas, maintenance costs, insurance, utilities, snow removal, salt and sand, and outside contractor expenses are actually attributed to providing parking services. Consequently, if a municipality does not know the actual cost for operating, maintaining, repairing, enforcing and collecting from its parking facilities, it can not know the net revenue derived from parking fees, or whether its parking fee structure is appropriate.

The most efficient and effective way to provide parking services to municipal residents and the public at large is via a parking system. In this context the term “parking system” means the delivery of municipal parking services to the public by a single government entity charged with the responsibility of managing, planning and operating all individual aspects or functions (enforcement, collection and repair) of on and off-street parking services.

There are three types of government entities that manage and operate parking systems within the state of New Jersey; Parking Authorities, Parking Utilities and Parking Department/Bureaus. Each of these entities has its strengths and weaknesses.

### **3.1 Parking Authority**

The Legislature of the State of New Jersey in 1948 adopted N.J.S.A. 40:11A et. seq. commonly known as the “Parking Authority Law”, which authorized municipal governments to create an independent parking authority. A parking authority has the same geographic boundaries as the city which created it, but is “a public body corporate and politic and a political subdivision of the State (of New Jersey)”. A NJ parking authority has 5 commissioners who are appointed by the governing body of the municipality (city council or city commissioners) for staggered five (5) year terms, or 7 parking commissioners with two (2) mayoral appointments and five (5) governing body appointments. A parking authority may employ an executive director, attorney, engineer,

accountant and any other professionals and staff necessary to manage and deliver parking services to the city's residents and the general public.

New Jersey parking authorities have extraordinary statutory authority. N.J.S.A. 40:11A-6 grants parking authorities the powers necessary to carry out and effectuate essential government purposes. Furthermore, parking authorities may: buy, sell and/or lease property as a lessee or lessor; construct multiuse projects and parking facilities; borrow money; issue bonds; mortgage or otherwise encumber its assets; enter into contracts; and retain earnings.

Because parking authorities fund their operations from revenue derived from parking user fees, rather than through real estate taxation, and board commissioners traditionally are appointed from the business community, parking authorities tend to be operated like a business. Parking authorities are conscious of the fact that annual expenses should not exceed parking revenue. Surplus annual revenue is retained to pay for renewal and replacement repairs at existing parking facilities and to purchase real estate or build new facilities.

The strength of a parking authority is its independence. The parking authority's commissioners are appointed not elected public officials. Consequently, a parking authority board of commissioners can make difficult planning decisions, such as: raising parking rates; installing parking meters; increasing parking enforcement; acquiring property by eminent domain; or selecting a location to construct a parking facility without regard to its immediate political consequence. A parking authority provides a measure of political cover in that the authority's decisions are the result of the actions of the authority's board rather than the city's elected officials.

Other advantages of a parking authority are: its debt is outside the municipalities bonding (Cap) limit; its sole purpose and function is to construct, maintain and operate public parking; it can retain earnings and accumulate surplus revenue for capital projects; and it can develop income producing mixed use projects exempt from real estate taxes, which are intended to subsidize the cost of providing public parking.

The negatives of a parking authority are the reverse side of its strength. Parking authorities are independent and on occasion choose to raise parking fees or pursue goals, objectives or projects that are not supported by a majority of the municipal governing body. Parking authorities are not directly controlled by the local governing body, although the city council has the power to appoint or reappoint one authority commissioner per year, to the authority's board. Parking authorities traditionally have generated revenue surpluses at year end or have accumulated financial reserves through retained earnings. A conflict between the parking authority and local municipal governments sometimes occurs when the City desires to utilize parking revenues for taxpayer relief or have funds transferred to the municipality's general fund to off-set the city's operating expenses.

### **3.2 Parking Utilities**

A municipality, as an alternative to a parking authority, may create a parking utility. A parking utility has a number of the strengths of a parking authority: director; operating budget and debt service separate from the municipality; ability to generate annual surplus revenue and retain earnings; limited ability to set its own rates and fees; and the utility's function is strictly limited to providing public parking.

A parking utility has limited independence. The director usually reports through the city administrator/manager or CFO. The local governing body retains jurisdiction over rates, fees, capital projects, operating budget and personnel. Parking revenues in excess of annual operating expenses generally are turned over to the city's general fund. Consequently, the municipal governing body maintains virtual control of the parking utility.

The hands on control exercised by the municipal governing body does place aspects of parking planning and decision making within the political process. In municipal environments where control of the mayor's office and governing body are continually contested, parking can become a political rather than a planning issue, which may affect a parking utility's ability to aggressively pursue public parking improvements and objectives.

There are at least six (6) parking utilities within the state of New Jersey; Hoboken, East Brunswick, Red Bank, Trenton, Summit and Princeton.

### **3.3 Parking Department/Bureau**

Parking departments and bureaus are the least independent government entity for managing and operating municipal parking resources. A parking department/bureau can stand alone and be on par with other municipal departments; Engineering, DPW, Clerk's Office, Tax Collector, etc. Alternatively, it can be a subsidiary of a large department such as; Engineering, DPW, Police, Administration or Finance.

A parking department/bureau is under the direct control of the Mayor as the chief executive officer of the municipality. All parking fees and revenues, absent a bond agreement to the contrary, are deposited into the city's general fund and are available for any and all municipal expenses.

The disadvantages of a parking department/bureau is that the parking entity competes with all other municipal departments for budget approval and operating funds. The parking department, although it generates income, may not retain annual excess parking revenue in a capital account. Any indebtedness incurred by the municipality to fund parking improvement are counted towards the city's debt Cap ceiling. Increases of parking fees and rates must be approved by resolution or ordinance of the municipal governing body.

### **3.4 Parking System Entity Recommendations**

At the present time the recommendation is for the Borough of Somerville to create a parking authority, utility, department or bureau. There are a number of small municipalities with parking authorities, such as, Bloomfield, Long Branch, Metuchen Dunellen and South Plainfield. Other small towns such as Summit, Princeton and Red Bank have created parking utilities..

Although fully integrated parking departments/bureaus are not the norm in New Jersey, it is common practice in Florida. In Florida, only the Miami Parking Authority is an independent authority, created by a special act of the State Legislature. All other Florida city parking entities, such as Ft. Lauderdale, Hollywood, Miami Beach, Orlando, etc., are integrated parking

departments.

## **4. PARKING SYSTEM ORGANIZATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.0 Staff Recommendations**

A review of the current parking functions and tasks performed by Borough personnel results in the following staff recommendations for the new parking entity.

Director/Supervisor of Parking Operations

Secretary/Bookkeeper

Peo/Meter Collector/Meter Repair/Maintenance

#### **4.0.1 Parking Director/Supervisor**

The Director/Supervisor of Parking Operations would be the administrator of the Borough's parking system. He or she would be responsible for the delivery of parking services to the public and management of the parking entity's staff. The job would include the following responsibilities:

- Supervise office operation and cover office in absence of office personnel
- Schedule work for office, enforcement, operations and maintenance personnel
- Maintain work schedules and employment records of staff
- Monitor time sheets of staff
- Interact with the public
- PEO/Meter Collection/Meter Repair/ Maintenance field supervision
- Responsible for monitoring the radio, clocking in and out of staff for breaks and lunch
- Monitors continuity of enforcement in all meter zones
- Responsible for mediating PEO disputes with parking public
- Supervise random coin collection and coin bank delivery.
- Review PEO daily reports for "down time".
- Review enforcement zone and the number of summons issued, by officer.
- Review monthly summary of PEO summons activities.
- Roving field supervision of staff.

The logical candidate for selection as the part time Director/Supervisor of Parking Operations is Brendan Nally who serves as the Assistant Supervisor of Public Works and the Assistant Borough Engineer. He is already tasked generally with coordinating parking services for the Borough, and outsourcing of parking lot paving, meter pole installation and fencing. He is fully familiar with parking operations.

#### **4.0.2 Secretary/Bookkeeper**

The Secretary/Bookkeeper would be responsible for supporting the administrative functions of the Director/Supervisor of Parking Operations, with clerical and light bookkeeping functions. This person would answer the phones, take messages, and convey general parking information to the public. The Secretary/Bookkeeper would issue parking permits and smart cards. The Secretary/Bookkeeper would also maintain the weekly parking revenue records and statistics for the parking entity. The position at present would be part-time. It is recommended that Mr. Nally's secretary assume these responsibilities.

#### **4.0.3 PEO/Meter Collector/Meter Repairer/Maintenance**

It is common place for parking entity field personnel in small towns to be cross trained. Rahway and Perth Amboy Parking Authority field staff are cross trained to perform PEO, Meter Collection, Meter Repair and Maintenance functions.

It is recommended that one (1) fulltime person be hired to staff the position of PEO/Meter Collector/Meter Repairer/Maintenance. The person selected for this position would collect meter revenues and repair meters on Mondays. The remainder o the week the person would enforce meters and repair meters as observed in the field. Parking Lot maintenance, litter patrol and lot housekeeping duties would be assigned by the Director/Supervisor of Parking Operations in his discretion.

#### 4.1 Staff Salaries

The payment of the new parking entity's staff salaries can be accomplished with a modest increase of the \$49,400 allocated in the 2005 budget for parking salary and wage. It is recommended that the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of the Fire Department no longer perform meter collection and repair duties. These highly skilled and compensated Borough employees are using no more than 10% to 15% of their work week to perform meter collections and repair.

The following salary and wages are recommended for parking operations staff:

Director/Supervisor of Parking Operations	\$25,000.00	Part-Time
PEO/Meter Collector/Meter Repair/Maintenance	\$25,000.00	Full-Time
Secretary/Bookkeeper	\$ 7,500.00	Part-Time
<b>Total Salary and Wages</b>	<b>\$57,500.00</b>	

#### 4.2 Parking Operation Offices

If the recommendations to select the Assistant Supervisor of Public Works to also serve as the part-time Director/Supervisor of Parking Operations is accepted, the set up of the parking entity's office is simplified. Mr. Nally already has an office in Borough Hall with secretarial support. The engineering department secretary's job description would be amended to include parking operation duties. Office equipment, personal computers, telephone, etc are already in place. The only additional office expense may be additional file cabinets and stationary supplies for parking operations.

#### 4.3 Job Description

The Borough needs to ensure that each employee is working in a clearly defined job. To accomplish this objective, it is suggested that the Borough establish job descriptions that are uniform and consistent and describe the essential functions and responsibilities of each job title. Employees should be responsible for being thoroughly familiar with their job description, including; job performance, accountability, basic skills required, and the essential functions of

their job.

Sample Job specifications for the following employment titles have been included in the Appendix

Parking Operations Director/ Supervisor

Meter Collection/Repairer

Meter Collector/Repairer/PEO

Parking Enforcement Officer

Meter Collector/PEO

Secretary/Bookkeeper

#### **4.4 Standard Operating Procedures**

Not only is it necessary to clearly inform employees of their job functions by providing them with a detailed job description, it is equally important to advise employees how the Authority expects those job functions to be carried out. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) or Job Manuals allow the Authority to provide its employees with clearly stated policies, procedures, and instructions for the work tasks expected of the employees. SOP's provide measurable work standards for evaluating employee job performance and promote quality control by establishing uniform work rules.

An SOP or Job Manual can be created for each job function: parking enforcement, meter collection, meter repair, residential permit issuance, etc. by analyzing the employee's daily job functions and breaking them down into individual job tasks. Once you have identified specific job tasks, you can further break the tasks down into their essential individual elements.

For example, a Parking Enforcement Manual could start with an introduction to the employee generally explaining the role the Borough parking operation has in enforcing the City Ordinances and Title 39 parking regulations. The function of a PEO within that framework would also be discussed. The manual could then be broken down into the following types of subjects or tasks:

Reporting to Work	Vehicle Towing
PEO Uniform Requirements	Official Vehicles
Reporting to Enforcement Zone	Commercial Vehicles
Enforcement Standards	Utility Vehicles
Common Parking Offenses	Loading Zones
Issuance of Parking Summons	Residential Parking Zones
Location of Enforcement Zones	Inclimate Weather
PEO Training Program	Radio Call Procedures

#### **4.5 Meter Collection Procedures**

There is no question regarding the personal integrity of the persons currently collecting and depositing meter revenue on behalf of the Borough. If the Borough chooses to reorganize and integrate all parking functions within a single parking entity, new personnel will be assigned to meter revenue collection. The current parking meter collection system is not a sealed system and relies upon employee honesty and integrity, while handling cash without any audit controls.

It is recommended that the Borough convert the existing open vault meter collection system to a seal coin canister system, which utilizes a keyed collection cart. It is further recommended that each parking lot be designated as a separate collection zone. Parking fees collected from each lot should be segregated and separately deposited and accounted for. On-street parking meter should also be separated into collection zones for which parking fees are separately deposited and collected.

Meter collection carts should be purchased and kept under the exclusive control of the Director/Supervisor of Parking Operations. Meter collection carts should be locked and crimped every Monday prior to beginning meter coin collection. Collection carts should be inspected by bank personnel to determine that the cart crimped seal is intact before opening the cart at the bank to bag collected coin. Each bag of coin should be weighted at the bank and the weight noted on the deposit slip, in order to approximate coin value. Collection cart lock keys should be placed in a

lock bag, the key to which is kept by a bank supervisor. The lock bag with the collection cart lock keys and the broken collection cart crimp seals, are to be locked in the collection cart and returned to the Director/Supervisor.

The following recommendations are for the improvement of the Authority's parking meter operations:

- (1) New locks for the meter vaults.
- (2) New coin collection carts and new collection cart locks.
- (3) Seal coin canisters for meter vaults.
- (4) Place keys under the control of the Executive Director. Institute sign out and logbook procedures for meter vault keys.
- (5) Crimp seal all collection carts as an additional security feature.
- (6) Randomly monitor parking meter coin collection process.
- (7) Collection carts filled with coin returned to Administrative office prior to bank deposit.
- (8) Collection carts to be stored in administrative office not van, when not being used for meter coin collection.
- (9) Collection cart key under the control of Director/Supervisor

#### **4.6 Fees and Fines**

Bier Associates conducted a survey of parking fees and fines in similar small towns and county seats for comparison with those charged by the Borough of Somerville as follows:

<b>Town</b>	<b>O/T</b>	<b>Meter Feeding</b>	<b>General Prohibited</b>	<b>1/Hr. CBD On-Street</b>	<b>1/Hr. Off-Street</b>
<b>Somerville</b>	<b>\$18.00</b>	<b>\$18.00</b>	<b>\$23.00-Local \$54.00-State</b>	<b>CBD \$0.50</b>	<b>\$0.25/Hr. \$1.00/Hr.</b>
New Brunswick	\$25.00	\$30.00	\$40.00	\$0.50	\$1.00
Rahway	\$24.00	\$24.00	\$45.00	\$0.25	\$0.25
Metuchen	\$19.00	\$19.00	\$29.00	\$0.20	\$0.25-1/Hr. \$2.50-10/Hr.
Morristown	\$25.00	\$35.00	\$47.00	\$0.50	\$0.50
Princeton	\$33.00	\$33.00	\$33.00	CBD \$1.00	\$1.00/Hr.
Red Bank	\$38.00	\$38.00	\$48.00	\$0.50 Max 4/Hr.	\$0.50-1/Hr. Max 4/Hr.
<b>Average</b>	<b>\$26.00</b>	<b>\$28.00</b>	<b>\$38.00</b>	<b>\$0.50</b>	<b>\$0.50</b>
<b>Mean</b>	<b>\$25.00</b>	<b>\$30.00</b>	<b>\$40.00</b>	<b>\$0.50</b>	<b>\$0.50</b>

#### **4.6.1 Parking Meter Fees**

Somerville CBD on-street meter rates of \$0.50 per hour are comparable to those charged by the other municipalities. Only Princeton had an on-street parking meter rates in the CBD ranging from \$0.50 to \$1.00 per hour. Somerville’s off-street meter rates of \$0.25 per hour and \$1.00 for 10 hours are low. Only Metuchen and Rahway have \$0.25 per hour off-street meter rates. However, neither town’s off-street 10 hours meter is discounted to \$1.00. It is recommended that the 10 hour off-street parking rate be adjusted to \$2.00.

#### **4.6.2 Local Ordinance Parking Fines**

Somerville’s local ordinance parking fines are significantly lower than all towns surveyed except Metuchen. Presently, Somerville is giving \$11.50 or 64% of its \$18.00 overtime and meter feeding summons and 50% of the \$23.00 general prohibited parking ordinance revenues to the state.

It is recommended that the Borough revise its local ordinance parking fees to equal the mean fines charged for the town that were surveyed. Specifically, the recommended parking fines as follows:

<b>Parking Ordinance</b>	<b>Current Fine</b>	<b>Recommended Fine</b>
Overtime Parking	\$18.00	\$25.00
Meter Feeding	\$18.00	\$30.00
General Prohibited	\$23.00	\$40.00

The above recommended adjustments to the existing Somerville parking fine schedule is projected to result in an additional \$200,000.00 of net parking revenue to the Borough, which would fund all parking system salary/wage, operating expenses and capital expenditures, recommended in the Report.

**4.7 Parking System Revenue Accounting**

As has been previously noted the Borough does not break down its gross parking income into separate revenue sources or individual project centers. On-street meter revenue is not collected or tracked by meter collections zone. No weekly or monthly parking revenue financial analysis is conducted to identify and explain deviations from current year budget, prior year(s) experience, and current year/prior month revenues.

It is recommended that the following parking system revenue accounting procedures be put in place.

- All off-street parking facility revenue should be collected, deposited and accounted for separately.
- On-street parking meters should be broken down into 2 to 4 meter collection zones for revenue tracking purposes.
- On-street parking collection zone revenues should be collect, deposited and accounted for separately.
- Revenues from all parking sources should be tracked on a weekly basis with monthly revenue summary reports.

## **4.8 Parking Enforcement**

The Borough presently employs a PEO through the police department who devotes 50% of his time to parking enforcement. The PEO issues approximately 10-12,000 parking summonses per year. It is recommended that the existing PEO continue to work for the police department and fulfill his police responsibilities and on-street parking enforcement duties.

The multipurpose parking operations employee, will report to the Director/Supervisor and be tasked with parking enforcement. The new PEO will concentrate on off-street parking facilities and cover on-street meters, when the police department PEO is otherwise occupied. Assuming that the new PEO only issues 600 summons per month (30 per day/7,200 per year), \$50,000.00 per year of net summons revenue based on the current parking fine schedule and over \$90,000 per year based on the recommended five adjustments. Consequently, additional fine revenue generated by the new employee will pay for his/her total cost of salary, health benefits, pension, etc.

## **4.9 Off-Street Parking Facility Management**

### **4.9.1 Parking Permits**

In 2002 the Borough issued parking permits for off-street parking lots. The practice of issuing/selling parking permits was discontinued when the new electronic parking meters were installed. Parking Smart Cards (debit cards) were substituted for parking permits. Some of the reasons for switching from parking permits to Smart Cards were:

- Administrative time spent issuing parking permits
- Ease of duplicating/counterfeiting permits
- Visual verification of permit required for enforcement

The perceived value of substituting Smart Cards for permits was:

- Patrons only pay for parking when needed
- Parking meter time indicator is easier to read than to visually verify parking permit

It is recommended that the Borough reinstate parking permits in all off-street parking lots. The rationale is as follows:

- Creation of Borough Parking Entity creates a one stop location for all parking needs.
- Parking Administrative Office can sell and track parking permits and Smart Cards
- Low cost parking management software is available to issue parking permits and track parking fees
- New parking permit technology allows enforcement without visual confirmation utilizing radio frequency (RF) permits.
- Low cost conventional commercial tag hang permits are difficult to counterfeit
- Parking permits can be issued on a quarterly basis

The advantages of issuing parking permits are:

- Number of parking meters that require coin collection are reduced
- Issuance of parking permits allows for “over sell” of parking spaces and increases parking revenue
- Time remaining on a vacated parking meter can not be used by another parker
- Number of metered parking spaces requiring repair, maintenance and battery replacement reduced
- Allows Parking Director/Supervisor to develop statistical information about types of parking lot users

#### **4.9.2 Pay By Space Multi Space Meters**

The Borough presently utilizes Pay By Space (PBS) Multispace Meters in Municipal Lot 7 and the Parking Deck.

##### **4.9.2.1 Lot 7**

It is recommended that the PBS meter in Municipal Lot 7 should be relocated to the W. High Street entrance from its present location in the center of the parking lot. The vast majority of persons

parking in Lot 7 are walking to the Somerset County Administration Building or Courts. While on foot all parkers use the W. High Street driveway to go to and from the county buildings.

#### **4.9.2.2 Parking Deck**

The PBS meter in the Parking Deck is properly located near the main entrance, stairwells and the elevator. However, the public parking spaces are severely underutilized. A factor contributing to the lack of utilization of the public parking spaces is that the parking garage has no access gate control system. The public parking spaces are not segregated from the private permit parking spaces. Additionally, the police department PEO does not monitor the permit parking spaces in the parking deck. Consequently, no one is verifying whether daily visitor and transient parkers that should be paying for public parking are parking in monthly permit parking spaces for free.

It is recommended that an access gate and access pass card system be installed in the parking deck to separate the public parking spaces from the monthly permit spaces.

#### **4.10 Signage: Wayfinding, Identification, MAP**

The existing Borough signage identifying public parking lots and the parking deck and assisting the public in “wayfinding” to parking facilities and other destinations are inadequate.

##### **4.10.1 Wayfinding**

It is recommended that the Borough invest in wayfinding totem signs on the out skirts of town with additional sign placements moving inward to the town CBD directing motorists to the County Administration/Court Complex, Main Street CBD, Police Station, Train Station, Post Office and Municipal Building. Once motorists have reached the core of the CBD [High Street, Main Street, Veterans Memorial Drive] parking pole banners should be installed at all intersections directing the motorist to the entrances of the parking lots.

Municipal Lots 4, 6 and 7 are difficult to find for persons unfamiliar with the town. The entrance to Municipal Lot 2 from Doughty Avenue and Municipal Lot 1 from Davenport Street are also

difficult to recognize as entrances to public parking lots. The parking deck has inadequate wayfinding and identification signage.

#### **4.10.2 Identification Signage**

It is recommended that large easily read identification signage be installed at all off-street parking facilities, identifying the facility as public parking, the parking lot number and a Borough phone number for further parking information.

#### **4.10.3 Parking Maps**

The Borough produced a parking information handout to explain the use of the meter Smart Cards. Included in the handout is a map prepared by the Courier News indicating the location of the municipal parking lots. It is recommended that the handout be revised to include a more detailed street map of the CBD to show the actual location of all parking lots, parking deck and identify the main destinations in the CBD, County Administration Building & Courts, Police Station, Post Office, City Hall and Municipal Court.

### **4.11 Parking Facilities Maintenance & Repair & Upgrades**

At the present time it is unclear whether a formal maintenance, repair and resurfacing program is in effect for the municipal public parking lots. The following actions are recommended:

- (1) Inspect all lots.
- (2) List repairs and have municipal engineer prepare estimated budget for each improvement.
- (3) Establish an order of magnitude and priority for each repair.
- (4) Establish an annual repaving and restripping program for surface parking lots.
- (5) Determine how much revenue can be devoted annually to improvements and create a five year capital budget.

## **5. CAPITAL EXPENSES & IMPROVEMENTS**

Bier Associates recommends the following Capital Expense and Improvement Expenditures to put into effect the recommendations contained in the Report for the Borough of Somerville Parking System:

<b>CAPITAL ITEM</b>	<b>EXPENSE</b>
Re-key (600) Meter Vaults	\$9,000
(4) Collection Carts	\$2,000
(600) Coin Canisters	\$18,000
(150) Single Vault Housing	\$18,750
Utility Vehicle/Pickup	\$25,000
Snow Plow Package	\$2,500
Deck Access Control System	\$25,000
Parking Locator Map-Copy & Print	\$2,500
(12) Pole Banners & Brackets	\$4,500
(10) Lot Identification Signs	\$5,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$112,250</b>

The above capital improvements are only recommendations, and the Borough is encouraged to add or delete projects or capital improvements to the list.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The Borough of Somerville parking operations need to be consolidated into a single parking entity to create a parking system. Administrative areas that need to be improved involve formalizing existing policy and procedures into written form such as; Job Descriptions, Standard Operating Procedures and PEO Daily Performance Reporting. Financial areas that could be improved include identifying annual and 5 year capital improvements for budgeting and implementation. Cash security and handling procedures which can be improved requires; re-keying all meter vault locks, replacing collection carts locks, tighter control of meter vault and collection cart keys, and random monitoring of parking meter coin collection procedures. Parking facility utilization can be improved by; installing way finding signage to direct motorist to off-street lots, installing large public parking identification signs to each parking facility, and producing a parking locator map

for distribution to merchants, residents and shoppers. Parking meter fees and fines need to be adjusted so that they are comparable to similar communities.

Bier Associates is pleased to have had the opportunity to provide this Report to the Borough of Somerville. Bier Associates remains available to submit proposals to assist the Parking Authority in all aspect of the implementation of this Report including: strategic planning, project development planning, project implementation and other consulting services.

Respectfully Submitted

Leonard T Bier, CAPP, J.D.  
President, Bier Associates

## **APPENDIX**

### **PARKING AUTHORITY SUPERVISOR OF OPERATIONS**

#### **General Description**

Under the direction of the Executive Director or the Chairperson of the Board in the absence of an Executive Director, the Supervisor of Operations is responsible for the operation and maintenance of all Bloomfield Parking Authority Facilities and equipment in accordance with the policies and procedures determined by the Board of Commissioners.

#### **Responsibilities**

1. Supervision
  - a. Schedule work for office enforcement, operations and maintenance personnel and community service workers.
  - b. Supervise office operation and cover office during absence of office personnel.
  - c. Maintain work schedules and employment records. Monitor payroll timesheets.
  - d. Train new employees.
  - e. Annually evaluate all employees under his/her jurisdiction.
  - f. Monitor adherence to parking authority policies and procedures.
2. Monitor safety and services to all facilities operated by the Authority.
  - a. Submit accident and loss reports to Director / Chairperson.
  - b. Maintain physical appearance of parking lots: i.e.: cleanliness, painting, signage, etc.
3. Maintain maintenance records of all parking facilities and equipment.
4. Supervise collection of all monies from meters, permits and resident stickers and deposit funds in bank. Check all receipts and turn all deposit slips into authority's accountant.
5. Maintain and repair all parking meters and components.
6. Responsible for enforcement of parking regulations.
  - a. Supervise enforcement personnel.
7. Responsible for calling-in and supervising snow removal contractor as required.
  - a. Responsible for removal of snow from Parking Authority lots and sidewalks and the sanding / salting of sidewalks and lots as required.

8. Interact with the public as required with a professional and positive attitude and promote and encourage a positive image of the Parking Authority, the City of Bloomfield and the Central Business District.
9. Perform all related work as required.

### **Physical Demands**

Capable of walking long distances and working under unfavorable weather conditions.

### **Contacts**

Internal – supervise office, maintenance and operational staff

External – extensive with the general public, board of commissioners, City of Bloomfield elected officials and municipal employees

### **Aptitudes**

Ability to organize scheduling and maintain personnel records.

Ability to supervise all employees under his/her jurisdiction.

Ability to utilize various types of electronic and/or manual; financial (i.e.: Quicken, QuickBooks); recording systems.

Ability to utilize electronic or manual summons issuance and parking management systems used by the authority.

Ability to communicate effectively in oral and written forms.

Ability to use a personal computer (PC) and be proficient in basic word processing and spreadsheet (MS Word / Excel) tasks, (i.e.: letter and memo writing and budget spreadsheets).

### **Education, Knowledge and Training**

High school diploma or equivalent is required. Technical School Certification, Associates or Bachelor's Degree a plus.

Appointees will be required to possess and maintain a driver's license valid in the State of New Jersey, as well as a sound driving record. New Jersey residency is also a requirement.

Appointee must be eligible for Certification as a Parking Enforcement Officer.

**Experience**

Minimum two (2) years experience in a comparable supervisory role required. Parking industry supervisory experience a plus. Parking Enforcement Officer Certification a plus.

**Salary Range**

\$30,000.00 – \$40,000.00

**Supervised by:**

Executive Director or the Chairperson of the Board in the absence of an Executive Director

**Supervises:**

Parking Authority Operational, Maintenance and Office Personnel

## **PARKING METER COLLECTOR & PARKING ENFORCEMENT OFFICER**

### **General Description Meter Collection**

Under direction, performs work involved in collecting, counting, recording, and depositing monies from parking meters; does other related duties as required.

### **General Description Parking Enforcement**

Under direction, patrols designated areas and issues summonses to motor vehicles for violation of state, county, or municipal statutes, resolutions, and ordinances for regulations related to the parking of motor vehicles within the municipality; other related duties as required.

### **Responsibilities Parking Meter Collection**

1. Counts and records all monies collected from parking meters.
2. Reseals coin parking meter vaults for next collection.
3. Prepares daily parking meter collection receipts, balances same.
4. Return funds collected to administrative office and or makes bank deposit.
5. Reports damaged or inaccurate parking meters.
6. Maintains meter and parking lot revenue collection records, reports, and files.
7. Will be required to learn to utilize various types of electronic and/or manual financial recording and information systems used by the parking authority.

### **Responsibilities Parking Enforcement**

1. Issues summonses for motor vehicles that are parked unlawfully or parked overtime at a meter in an assigned area
2. Checks the condition of parking meters and informs those responsible for the repair of meters or any malfunctions.
3. Makes checkmark on tires of vehicles parked in unmetered time restricted areas, records time, and returns at specified intervals to issue summonses to vehicles remaining in area in violation of time limitations.
4. Gives testimony in court pertaining to summonses issued.

5. Prepares reports of work activities.
6. When directed checks for vehicles that are listed stolen by police and reports them for recovery.
7. May operate a motorcycle, motorized scooter, or other motor vehicle in connection with this work.
8. May follow or precede motorized street sweeper to issue summons to motor vehicles illegally blocking passage of the sweeper.
9. May arrange for the towing away of any vehicle parked, stored, or abandoned in the municipality in violation of a statute, resolution, ordinance, or regulation from the scene of the violation.
10. Will be required to learn and utilize various types of electronic and/ or manual summons issuance and computerized information systems used by the parking authority.

### **Physical Demands**

Capable of walking long distances and working under unfavorable weather conditions.

### **Contacts**

Internal – moderate with office staff, transfer meter funds to administrative staff, reporting vehicles in need of towing and reporting meters that are out of order.

External – moderate with the general public.

### **Aptitudes**

Knowledge procedures and methods involved in keeping accurate records of cash receipts after a period of training.

Ability to organize assigned work and to keep accurate records of monies collected from parking meters.

Ability to make necessary mathematical calculations.

Ability to keep records and files.

Ability to utilize various types of electronic and/ or manual financial recording, summons issuance and information systems used by the agency, office, or related units.

Ability to understand, remember and carry out oral and written directions and to analyze routine parking problems. Maintain a calm and a pleasant demeanor with the public.

**Education, Knowledge and Training**

Appointees will be required to possess a driver's license valid in New Jersey only if operation of a vehicle, rather than employee mobility, is necessary to perform essential duties of the position.

High school diploma or equivalent is required. Possession of a valid New Jersey State Driver's license and a sound driving record is required. New Jersey residency is also a requirement. Must be able to read, write and speak the English language intelligibly.

**Experience**

Previous employment as special police officer or parking enforcement officer helpful, but not essential.

**Salary Range:**

\$20,000-\$30,000

**Supervised By:**

Operation Supervisor  
Executive Director

**Supervises:**

Not Applicable

## **GENERAL MAINTENANCE & METER COLLECTION**

### **General Description**

Daily maintenance of the on-street and off-street parking meters and off street parking lots. To make scheduled meter collections and return funds collected to the authority's administrative offices and or designated depository.

### **Responsibilities General Maintenance**

- Daily maintenance of on-street and off-street parking meters.
- Daily Maintenance and housekeeping of off-street parking lots.
- Make scheduled meter collections.
- Maintain repair shop area and parking authority equipment and space parts for parking meter and facility maintenance and repairs.
- Removal of snow or ice from parking meters to ensure public accessibility.
- General maintenance of all authority property and equipment.
- Snow removal from all parking facilities and sidewalks. Sanding and Salting
- Maintaining landscaping and grounds, keeping of parking facility lawn areas.
- Painting of traffic lines and parking stalls
- Performs any and all activities which may be requested by the Operations Supervisor or Executive Director.

### **Responsibilities Parking Meter Collection**

- Counts and records all monies collected from parking meters.
- Reseals coin parking meter vaults for next collection.
- Prepares daily parking meter collection receipts, balances same.
- Return funds collected to administrative office and or makes bank deposit.
- Reports damaged or inaccurate parking meters.

- Maintains meter and parking lot revenue collection records, reports, and files.
- Will be required to learn to utilize various types of electronic and/or manual financial recording and information systems used by the parking authority.

### **Physical Demands**

Employee must be able to work in all weather conditions. Overtime hours may be required.

### **Contacts**

Internal – regular contract with office dispatcher and other office personnel.

External – moderate dealings with the general public.

### **Aptitudes**

Verbal ability – must be able to communicate clearly with authority staff and other city departments and give a good public impression.

Manual dexterity – must have ability and agility to work around town as required. Ability to repair any meter problem that might arise.

### **Education, Knowledge and Training**

High school diploma or equivalent is required. Possession of a valid New Jersey State Driver's license and a sound driving record is required. New Jersey residency is also a requirement.

### **Experience**

Light mechanical background

### **Salary Range:**

\$20,000 - \$30,000

### **Supervised By:**

Operations Supervisor

Executive Director

## **PARKING ENFORCEMENT OFFICER**

### **General Description**

Under direction, patrols designated areas and issues summonses to motor vehicles for violations of state, county, or municipal statutes, resolutions, and ordinances for regulations related to the parking of motor vehicles within the municipality; does other related duties as required.

### **Responsibilities**

- Issues summonses for motor vehicles that are parked unlawfully or parked overtime at a meter in an assigned area
- Checks the condition of parking meters and informs those responsible for the repair of meters or any malfunctions.
- Makes checkmark on tires of vehicles parked in unmetered time restricted areas, records time, and returns at specified intervals to issue summonses to vehicles remaining in area in violation of time limitations.
- Gives testimony in court pertaining to summonses issued.
- Prepares reports of work activities.
- Checks for vehicles that are listed stolen by police and reports them for recovery.
- May operate a motorcycle, motorized scooter, or other motor vehicle in connection with this work.
- May follow or precede motorized street sweeper to issue summons to motor vehicles illegally blocking passage of the sweeper.
- May arrange for the booting or towing away of any vehicle parked, stored, or abandoned in the municipality in violation of a statute, resolution, ordinance, or regulation from the scene of the violation.

Will be required to learn and utilize various types of electronic and/ or manual recoding and computerized information systems used the agency, office, or related units.

### **Physical Demands**

Capable of waking long distances and working under unfavorable weather conditions.

### **Contacts**

Internal – moderate with office staff reporting vehicles in need of towing and reporting meters that are out of order.

External – heavy with the general public.

### **Aptitudes**

Ability to understand, remember and carry out oral and written directions and to analyze routine parking problems.

### **Education, Knowledge and Training**

High school diploma or equivalent is required. Possession of a valid New Jersey State Driver's license and a sound driving record is required. New Jersey residency is also a requirement.

### **Experience**

Previous employment as special police officer or parking enforcement officer helpful, but not essential.

### **Salary Range:**

\$20,000-\$30,000

### **Supervised By:**

Operations Supervisor  
Executive Director

### **Supervises:**

Not Applicable