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## Parking - a complicated topic to tackle

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Late 2016, Main Street Gettysburg's (MSG) Community Economic Development Advisory Committee identified parking as a top priority to support the economic health of this community. The spectrum of ideas for "fixing" the problem was widespread, ranging from improving signage and marketing of existing parking to eliminating meters. When the borough Manager Charles Gable presented that the borough receives \$700,257 net revenue annually from parking, participants reconsidered removing meters. There was a new appreciation of how parking revenues reduce their taxes.

During budget season, the borough council discussed parking fees and asked the borough staff to analyze and develop fee options to enhance revenues. This has become more of an issue since some public lots have been purchased by private owners and the availability of public parking continues to dwindle.

There are various teams working on improving parking in downtown that include the borough's staff, borough and county planning and MSG. MSG's role is to seek community input. As part of that role, it was important to learn more about the topic of downtown parking. A presentation at the National Main Street Conference in Pittsburgh, given by Benjamin Syden and John Scavo from Laberge Group, titled "Downtown Parking Myths, Realities, and Solutions" was insightful. Due to limited space, I will only highlight a few points presented:



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Myth, people do not like to walk. Most motorists do not mind parking a block or two away from their destination if there is a dedicated and inviting parking area and a reason to stop. For example, the current Baltimore Street community is incorporating a centralized parking strategy that encourages people to walk and patronize their businesses.

Myth, all parking must be in front. People will park where parking is provided. Communities must use proper design such as effective signage, lighting and access. Effectively communicating where our parking lots are located is something that Gettysburg needs to address. Gettysburg is also landlocked due to the surrounding national military park. This demands every inch of land be used wisely and that a more urban approach to parking be taken.

Myth, parking should be equally available to everyone. To ensure your town is economically sound, customers and shoppers are the highest priority. They generate the greatest financial benefit for the highest turnover and the lowest cost. Every space entails a cost for developers, owners, tenants and tax payers. Employees and owners should park the furthest away. At the same time, assessing the availability of parking, usage, pricing and goals of the town, are important when developing an effective parking strategies.

Currently borough parking teams involved in various projects are gathering important information before recommending solutions. Is there enough parking? Is the parking being used efficiently? What will be the future need for parking based on future development? What parking management strategies should the municipality pursue, including pricing?

MSG welcomes your thoughts about how to improve the parking situation in downtown Gettysburg. You can email Deb Adamik, [adamik@mainstreetgettysburg.org](mailto:adamik@mainstreetgettysburg.org). Please include whether you are a resident, business owner, property owner or visitor, the parking issue and how you would solve it. Thank you for helping us address this complicated issue and seek solutions for meeting the community-wide parking needs.

Deb Adamik works for Main Street Gettysburg.