



BETHLEHEM PARKING AUTHORITY

85 W. North Street
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Bethlehem Parking Authority (BPA) announced today that it's launching a Smart Loading Zone program with Automotus. The pilot project aims to increase short-term parking efficiency, relieve congestion, and make the streets safer by applying automated progressive payments and data management in existing loading zones. The city will designate Loading Zones in the most congested sections of the city as "Smart Loading Zones."

Automotus, an automated curb management solutions company, selected Bethlehem to receive up to \$100,000 in support to launch a Smart Loading Zone Pilot program. Bethlehem is in good company, as the cities of Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, CA, and Omaha, NE have been past recipients.

Over the past 24 months, the parking and transportation industries have significantly changed as more people opt for delivery and pick-up methods. Increased demand for delivered goods means more commercial deliveries and rideshare drivers are on the road, and congestion in city streets is further exacerbated by the increased competition for curbside parking.

"Loading Zone abuse causes drivers to find other places to park. Unfortunately, we see those other places as double parking in travel lanes or crosswalks," said Ken Jones, Enforcement Manager. "It's our goal to make the streets safer for all visitors and residents of Bethlehem," he added.

The BPA is also working with the city to identify short-term parking spaces, called Pick Up and Delivery Zones. "Pick-Up/Delivery Zones and parking meters could be used for shorter-term parkers, saving the Smart Loading Zones for deliveries.," said Dick Lynn, Facilities Manager. "These options will create the turnover needed for a more efficient and safer parking system," he added.

"We've seen different user groups competing for parking in Bethlehem, so we need to think beyond our curbs as just places where vehicles park for long periods. We're going to continue to apply forward-thinking parking practices and develop strategies that allow all user groups to access our curbs safely and efficiently," said Steven Fernstrom, Executive Director.

Through the pilot, the BPA will contribute revenue generated from the Smart Loading Zones to the Downtown Bethlehem Association and Southside Arts District. "We're fortunate to have been selected to receive this support which made it possible to roll this out at no cost, and we're happy that this new temporary funding source can be used to enhance our downtowns," Fernstrom added.

"The Downtown Bethlehem Association has a positive partnership with the Bethlehem Parking Authority and is encouraged by BPA's action to find new ways to relieve traffic congestion and to provide continued parking solutions for all who visit the Historic District," states Neville Gardner, President, Downtown Bethlehem Association.



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“We’re excited to work with a forward-thinking organization like the Bethlehem Parking Authority and the City of Bethlehem on the Smart Loading Zones program,” said Jordan Justus, CEO of Automotus. “Cities of all sizes can benefit from better managed streets that result in increased parking turnover that drives more business to local stores, safer streets through the reduction of double parking, and less congestion to make our trips through the city a lot less frustrating.”

Automotus has been operating a similar program in partnership with the Pittsburgh Department of Mobility and Infrastructure and the Pittsburgh Parking Authority since April 2022 and has seen a 20% reduction in average park duration and a 42% reduction in double parking. Pittsburgh City Council recently approved the extension of the Smart Loading Zones program for another two years and expansion of up to 200 loading zones.

The Bethlehem Smart Loading Zone Pilot Project will launch in January 2023 and last for approximately three years.

Individual drivers and fleets will be able to register one time by providing license plate and payment information. The zones will be fully automated and completely hands-off for drivers once they register and will be charged by the minute only for the time the vehicle is parked. Details on signing up will be published prior to the launch at <https://app.automotus.io/bethlehem>.

Individuals eager to learn more about the Smart Loading Zone pilot program are encouraged to attend an introductory Town Hall meeting that will be held on Thursday, January 19, at 6 pm at the Bethlehem Parking Authority Main Offices at 85 W. North Street.

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