

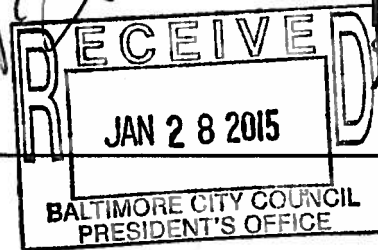
# TRANSMITTAL MEMO



**PARKING**  
OF BALTIMORE CITY  
**AUTHORITY**

**TO:** Council President Bernard "Jack" Young  
**FROM:** Peter Little, Executive Director  
**DATE:** January 26, 2014  
**RE:** Council Bill 15-0200R

*Peter Little*



I am herein reporting on City Council Bill 15-00200R introduced by Council President Young and Councilmembers Kraft, Middleton, Costello, Curran, Henry, Spector, Branch, Welch, Reisinger, Scott, Stokes, and Mosby.

The purpose of this bill is to call on representatives from the Departments of Finance and Transportation, and the Parking Authority of Baltimore City, the BMZA, and the Baltimore City Police Department to appear before the Council to report on the implementation of the valet parking program created by ordinance in 2013, as well as revenue generated thus far as a result of this law, including but not limited to, application fees, licensing fees, and citations issued for businesses that are not in compliance.

The Parking Authority of Baltimore City (PABC) is proud of its accomplishments in administering the valet parking regulations. We welcome this opportunity to present our accomplishments, to detail current action items, and to outline future goals of the valet regulations program.

## HISTORY OF THE LEGISLATION

First, it is important to understand the history of valet parking regulation in Baltimore City.

Prior to enactment of the Valet Parking Bill, there was absolutely no regulation of valet parking operations. Over the years, we received dozens of complaints about valet parking from valet customers, residents, community associations, and from valet companies themselves that were concerned about the bad practices of "rogue" valet operators. The concerns included: valet operators that were not properly insured in the event that they damaged a customer's vehicle; customers who had their vehicles stolen by someone posing as a valet; valets speeding, running red lights or stop signs, or driving the wrong way down one-way streets; valets blocking traffic on neighborhood streets; and valets parking cars on-street and not in off-street parking facilities. There was little to nothing that we could do about those concerns because there was no law, regulation or rule to regulate valet operators and valet operations.

The Parking Authority could have ignored concerns, but we did not. The PABC understood that well managed valet parking operations are essential to the City because they help to better utilize off-street parking supply, particularly in areas where on-street parking is in high demand. Valet

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can and should be a parking solution – marrying parking demand at its source with parking supply that may be several blocks away.

We met as a team and asked ourselves, “What can we do about this situation? How can the City regulate valet operations to prevent abuses while allowing valet to continue to provide another parking solution?”. In 2005 and 2006, we researched what other municipalities had done or were doing to regulate valet operations. We met with valet operators, restaurants and hotels that relied on valet to meet the parking needs of their customers, community associations, merchants associations, and other City agencies that had dealings with valet operators. We put together an outline of a program that we thought could work to address the valet parking concerns, without undue burden on valet operators and venues that needed valet parking, that would cause them to abandon valet operations.

Based on that outline, the Parking Authority, with the assistance of Legislative Reference, drafted legislation to regulate valet parking in Baltimore City. The legislation, Bill 07-0803, was introduced at City Council through the Administration in 2007. Although we lobbied hard for it, the bill did not gain traction with City Council.

The Parking Authority showed its perseverance. After tweaking the legislation some, it was reintroduced at City Council as Bill 08-0193 in 2008. But, there was still not enough support from Councilmembers to realize passage. Over the next four years, the Parking Authority did not lose hope that an effective valet regulation bill could be passed. We continued to hone the bill. We established a budget for the administration of the program. We developed the Rules & Regulations for the program. We determined a fee structure that would cover the costs of administering the program. And, we continued to work to get the bill reintroduced.

Finally, in 2012, we garnered the support of Councilman Cole and Councilman Kraft in reintroducing valet regulation legislation for a third time. The bill was again tweaked through Council hearings, work sessions, and the amendment process. The bill was passed by City Council and enacted in late 2013.

### **HISTORY OF IMPLEMENTATION**

Once enacted, we had much more work to do. We began by hiring the team to administer this new law. It took some time to find the right people and, in fact, the initial program manager did not work out. We then transferred a very effective manager from another section of the PABC to the valet regulations section in order to move the program forward more quickly. We set up office space and purchased and installed furniture. We purchased computers, equipment and supplies for the section. None of that work happens overnight or without significant effort. And, we learned from our efforts in 2007 and 2008 that creating the section before the law was enacted was premature and ambitious because there was the distinct possibility of wasting time and money.

We established an aggressive timeline for implementation of the program in ten geographic phases across the City. Our approach to implementation in each phase has been as follows:

- Inventory valet operators and valet parking operations in the phase area

- Notify valet operators and valet parking venues in the phase area of the new law, the rules & regulations of the program, and the applications process
- Accept applications and application fees for Valet Operator Licenses and Valet Parking Zone Permits in the phase area
- Carefully review the applications and attend hearings on applications
- Recommend to the Baltimore City Department of Transportation (BCDOT) award or denial of licenses and permits
- Assess use of right-of-way fees to applicants awarded valet parking zone permits

We set up and implemented the full program City-wide in about one year – an impressive achievement I attribute to the hard work and intellect of the team members in that section and the strong support of other team members at the PABC who helped with the program’s establishment and who continue to aid in its administration.

We began administering the program as expeditiously as practicably possible. We assessed fees as we took in applications in each phase area - not throughout the City immediately after enactment of the law, because of practicality and fairness. Assessing fees immediately upon enactment of the law was not possible because we did not know who all of the valet operators were throughout the City, nor did we know all of the valet parking operations throughout the City, because we didn’t yet have the staff in the valet regulations section to conduct that inventory of valet operators and valet operations. Furthermore, assessing fees immediately upon enactment of the law would not have been fair because we would have only levied those fees on the valet operators and operations that had stepped forward and identified themselves before enactment of the law, and those that had not done so would only have been assessed the fees later. So, in essence, we would have punished those operators and operations who had done the right thing by identifying themselves before enactment of the law by assessing fees earlier.

### **TRANSPARENCY**

We have been and will continue to be transparent in our work in valet regulation. We have a full page on our website dedicated to the valet regulation program. On it are links to lists of current and pending valet operators’ licenses and current and pending valet parking zone permits. All four lists are updated twice per week. We also have downloadable applications for valet operators’ licenses and valet parking zone permits to make it easy for valet operators and valet venues to apply. The rules and regulations for the program are also available through a download on the website. If anyone has a complaint about a valet operator or a valet operation, they can submit their complaint directly through the website as well.

### **ENFORCEMENT**

Because the PABC is a quasi-governmental agency and our team members are not City employees, we cannot legally issue citations under the valet regulations code. The PABC has been working diligently and persistently with several City agencies (i.e. Baltimore City Department of Transportation; Housing Code Enforcement; and Baltimore City Finance Department) to identify who has the authority and the capacity to issue the citations. We are close to finalizing an agreement with the City’s Finance Department that would designate hours for their code enforcement officers to issue the valet regulation violation citations.

## **GOALS**

Our goals for the valet regulation program remain as follow:

- To effectively regulate valet operations throughout the City so as to prevent abuses
- To advise valet operators and venues offering valet parking on the valet application process and the effective and safe management of valet operations
- To take concerns about valet operators and operations from valet customers, residents, other businesses, or anyone else; to investigate those concerns; to discuss those concerns with valet operators; and to work with the City's Department of Finance and the City's Department of Transportation to cite violations

Despite certain vocal critics, we know we have developed, implemented, and are now administering an effective, common sense, and fair process for regulating valet parking while allowing valet services to continue to be part of the parking solution here in Baltimore City. We know that without the hundreds of hours of hard work and the perseverance of the PABC over the past several years, there would still be absolutely no valet regulation. We will continue to tweak the valet program to make it increasingly effective for all constituents, but we are confident in our strong team and established foundation already.