



MEMO

To: Maplewood Township Committee Members - Mayor Nancy Adams, Deputy Mayor Malia Herman, Dean Dafis, Victor DeLuca, and Deborah Engel

From: The Maplewood Village Alliance (MVA) Strategic Planning & Parking Committee - Jenifer Steig Strugger (co-chair), Daniella LaRocco (co-chair and MVA Vice President), Amy Howlett (MVA President), Dean Dafis (TC liaison), Karen Pisciotta (Planning Board liaison), Julie Pauly (merchant board member), Abiola Amusan (merchant board member), and ErinRose Baldry (MVA Executive Director)

Date: 17 September, 2025

Subject: Proposal to Implement a Paid Parking Pilot Program in Maplewood Village

Introduction

The MVA, through its *Strategic Planning & Parking Committee*, respectfully submits this proposal recommending the implementation of a paid parking pilot program in Maplewood Village. This initiative is proposed in direct response to long-standing parking and circulation challenges that negatively impact business access, traffic flow, and community satisfaction.

By adopting a technology-supported paid parking system, accompanied by improved wayfinding, public outreach, and consistent enforcement, the Township can significantly enhance the Village's accessibility, generate substantial revenue, and better serve the needs of merchants, residents, and visitors alike.

Background & Rationale

Despite multiple planning efforts and expert recommendations over the last 25 years, Maplewood Village continues to suffer from low turnover of parking spaces and inconsistent enforcement, and congestion.

Key documents and experts supporting paid parking include:

- *2005 - Economist Donald Shoup's* extensive and renowned research (author of *The High Cost of Free Parking*): Confirms paid parking's role in improving parking access, turnover, and local business activity.
- *2012 - Maser Consulting Parking Study*: Recommended paid parking, improved enforcement, and license plate recognition (LPR) technology.
- *2018 - International Downtown Association Study*: Concludes that effectively managed paid

parking leads to approximately four times more turnover of parking spaces per day.

- *2019 - Maplewood Village Vision Implementation Plan*: Emphasizes need for parking enhancement measures including paid parking
- *2023 - Maplewood Master Plan*: Formally recommends the implementation of paid parking in the Village.

The MVA has also received clear majority support from the merchant community for the introduction of a paid parking pilot. A recent survey conducted by the MVA showed that the majority of merchants and property owners are in favor of implementing paid parking as a means to increase turnover and improve access to customer and merchant parking. This feedback demonstrates a shared recognition that strategic parking management can positively impact the vitality of Maplewood. In addition to merchant input, the MVA Board has formally expressed its support for the pilot program, recognizing its potential to address long-standing parking challenges and contribute to a more efficient and user-friendly experience.

Maplewood is one of the few NJ towns without paid parking, falling behind peers such as Millburn, South Orange, Montclair, Summit, Livingston, Chatham, Madison, and Newark. These towns benefit from reduced congestion and dedicated revenue streams that fund business districts and township improvements.

Goals of the Paid Parking Pilot

- Encourage Parking Turnover
- Increase Parking Availability for Visitors and Shoppers
- Ensure Consistent, Equitable Enforcement
- Gather Data for Smarter Parking Management
- Reduce Congestion and Improve Traffic Circulation
- Provide traffic calming effects
- Enhance Merchant and Employee Parking Systems
- Encourage walking, biking, and riding
- Generate Revenue to Support Maplewood Township

Proposed Pilot Details

To clarify, the MVA is asking the Township to open a discussion on paid parking. We are not proposing the details of the pilot, as those should be worked out by the Township, in collaboration with the MVA and parking experts. Here are some general suggestions: Maplewood Village has 356 available public parking spaces. The MVA recommends introducing the pilot in these public parking spaces for at least 1 year.

- Introduce paid parking at municipal lots and curbside spaces in the Village.
- Suggested Hours of Enforcement: 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM (Monday through Saturday)
- Rate Structure: select spaces limited to 15 minutes only (e.g., 1 on each block of Maplewood Ave); other spaces flat rates to start, 1 hr – \$2.00, 2 hrs – \$4.00, +2 hrs – +\$1.00 per additional hour (where permitted)
- Payment Technology: smart meters, mobile apps (e.g., ParkMobile), and license plate readers (LPR) for digital enforcement and data tracking
- Duration 12 months

Benefits to the Township and Village

- **Parking Efficiency & Turnover**
 - Improves access to parking near high-demand areas by encouraging short-term use.
 - Reduces “cruising” for free spots, which causes congestion.
- **Enhanced Customer Access**
 - Increased parking availability encourages customer visits to local merchants.
 - Tiered time limits and pricing support short errands as well as longer visits.
- **Reduced Congestion & Pollution**
 - Less time spent searching for free parking = reduced emissions and calmer traffic.
 - Encourages alternative transportation (walking, biking) for local visitors.
- **Support for Merchants**
 - Designated merchant parking spaces will be protected and enforced.
 - Paid parking will encourage employees to use merchant parking areas instead of customer spaces.
 - The system allows for a true audit of merchant parking needs.
- **Consistent, Data-Driven Enforcement**
 - License Plate Recognition (LPR) and mobile apps enable accurate, consistent enforcement.
 - Reduces human error, ensures fairness, and increases compliance.
 - Tracks overuse and repeat violations in real time.
- **Revenue Generation & Reinvestment**
 - Conservative estimate: \$1 million annually (based on \$2/hr over 350 spaces for 250 days per year - excludes Sundays and Holiday season).
 - 2024 ticketing revenue: \$38,700 (from 858 tickets). With uniform enforcement alone, estimated revenue would increase by up to 50%+ to \$60,000+.

Enforcement & Technology

License Plate Recognition (LPR) is an advanced camera-based technology that scans and records the license plate numbers of vehicles. LPR systems automatically read, process, and store vehicle license plate information in real time, allowing municipalities to manage and enforce parking regulations more efficiently and accurately. LPR systems can be:

- Mounted on enforcement vehicles, scanning plates as they drive through parking zones
- Fixed to infrastructure such as poles or streetlamps, continuously monitoring specific zones
- Integrated with mobile parking apps and payment platforms, linking plate numbers to digital payment records

As part of the paid parking pilot, we recommend LPR systems will be deployed to:

- Enforce payment compliance across all proposed parking spaces
- Detect and flag overstayed vehicles, even in free or time-limited zones
- Monitor merchant-designated or resident-restricted zones
- Streamline ticket issuance, reduce enforcement personnel needs, and improve accuracy

The system will integrate with ParkMobile used by drivers, allowing enforcement officers to check in real time whether a license plate has an active, valid parking session. Benefits include:

- Fair, transparent, and consistent enforcement. All users are treated equally under a system that logs every vehicle's presence. This reduces resident concerns about selective enforcement or arbitrary ticketing.
- Supports Time-Limited and Free Zones, in areas where parking is free (15 min spots), LPR can verify how long a vehicle has been parked and issue tickets only when time limits are exceeded.
- Provides an enforcement solution without needing to install meters in all locations.
- Reduces abuse of free high-demand spaces and residential spaces
- Encourages compliance with merchant permit zones, making business-district parking more functional.

LPR technology has already been budgeted by the Township. The upfront investment in this system is critical to maximizing the effectiveness of paid parking, ensuring both enforcement and efficiency. It is an essential part of a modern, data-driven parking strategy. It will maximize revenue from both parking fees and violations, allow the Township to design future infrastructure, pricing, and zoning strategies around usage patterns, and most importantly — *it will create a smarter, more responsive, and user-friendly parking ecosystem in Maplewood.*

Proposed Uses of Revenue from Paid Parking

Revenue generated from the paid parking pilot, estimated to be at least \$800,000 annually based on conservative assumptions (and parking revenue of neighboring towns of a similar size)¹, represents a significant opportunity to reinvest directly into the Township in ways that enhance it, support local business vitality, and improve the community. Examples include:

- Enhanced Parking Infrastructure & Technology town wide -
 - Additional LPR units for enforcement and analytics town-wide
 - Smart meter maintenance and upgrades town-wide
 - Dynamic pricing systems to optimize parking availability in real time
 - Data dashboards for transparency and performance tracking
 - Enhanced wayfinding and signs updated in real time with parking space availability
 - Cameras to enhance enforcement
- Business District Operations & MVA Support - a portion of revenue should be allocated to strengthen the operations of the MVA
 - Reducing reliance on general Township funds by providing a dedicated stream for MVA, by dedicating new revenue to MVA improvements rather than taxation
 - Funding marketing and branding efforts to attract shoppers and visitors
 - Supporting small business initiatives, merchant coordination, and customer outreach
 - Examples of revenue uses -
 - Open space enhancements (e.g., Ricalton Square upgrades)
 - Community events, public art, and beautification efforts
 - Parking infrastructure improvements
 - Increased jitney service and multimodal transit support

The revenue from paid parking will not be treated as a general-purpose tax, but rather as a targeted reinvestment in Maplewood Township. This strategy mirrors successful models in other peer communities, where parking programs fund high-impact local improvements that directly benefit the

¹ Millburn and Montclair parking revenue are each in excess of \$1mill per annum based on publicly available data.

residents, visitors, and businesses. The Township can demonstrate clear community value, build public support, and ensure that parking management is part of a broader vision for a thriving Maplewood, town wide.

MVA Recommendations

- The Township moves forward on implementation, in collaboration with MVA.
- A robust public outreach campaign prior to launch, including signage, website updates, FAQs, merchant and public forum briefings, and online guides.
- Adapt LPR technology as part of uniform enforcement
- Pilot phase monitoring with ongoing feedback from residents and merchants.
- Post-pilot evaluation and review with potential for program modification or expansion based on performance metrics and community input.

The MVA respectfully urges the Township Committee to consider the implementation of a pilot paid parking program in Maplewood Village. This initiative represents a strategic, data-driven solution to the persistent parking and congestion issues that hinder our community's growth. With clearly defined goals, modern enforcement technology, and a focus on reinvestment, the program is poised to generate substantial community benefit.

We appreciate the Town Committee's consideration regarding the MVA proposal to introduce a paid parking pilot in Maplewood Village. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this proposal further and appreciate your thoughtful consideration.

Submitted by the MVA Strategic Planning & Parking Committee

September 2025

Appendix: Questions & Answers

Financial & Revenue

Q: What are the projected revenues from the pilot?

A: Based on peer municipalities:

- South Orange: ~\$400,000 annually
- Millburn & Montclair: ~\$1,000,000 annually
- Maplewood (2024): ~\$35,000 in ticket revenue alone

MVA projects a conservative \$800k–\$1M in gross annual revenue, based on \$2/hour across 350 spaces for 250 days (excluding Sundays and holidays).

Q: What are the anticipated net revenues after costs?

A: LPR technology has already been budgeted. Parking app providers typically retain a small transaction fee, but Maplewood will keep the majority of revenue. Enforcement will be handled by existing staff. Net revenues will remain close to the gross projection.

Q: How will revenues be used?

A: MVA suggests 50% of revenue to be reinvested in the community through:

- Beautification (landscaping, lighting, trees, planters)
- Public art and cultural initiatives
- Public space enhancements (benches, gathering areas)
- Wayfinding and signage improvements
- Community programming and events

Implementation & Operations

Q: Will Maplewood need to create a Parking Authority?

A: No. Current enforcement staff, supported by LPR technology and app data, can manage operations. A new authority is unnecessary.

Q: What about set-up costs?

A: LPR cameras are already included in the Township budget. Parking apps require no upfront costs and operate on a per-transaction model.

Community Impact

Q: Will paid parking discourage shoppers?

A: Experience in other towns shows paid parking increases turnover, ensuring spaces are available for customers and reducing time wasted circling for parking.

Q: How will employee and merchant parking be handled?

A: Designated employee zones or discounted permits will be considered to keep prime spaces open for customers.

Q: What about residents living in the Village?

A: Resident permits or designated zones will be evaluated to maintain fair access.

Q: Will Sundays, holidays, or special events remain free?

A: Yes. Sundays and holiday shopping periods will remain free, with flexibility built in for community events.

Enforcement & Technology

Q: How accurate is LPR?

A: LPR is highly accurate and widely used in New Jersey. Errors (e.g., mistyped plate numbers in apps) can be addressed through the standard appeals process.

Q: How will disputes be handled?

A: Current ticket appeal processes will remain in place.

Q: What about privacy and data security?

A: LPR data is encrypted, securely stored, and governed by strict retention policies. Data is only used for enforcement.

Merchant & Public Support

Q: Do merchants support this pilot?

A: Yes. A recent MVA survey the majority of responding merchants in support of paid parking to improve turnover and customer access. The MVA Board has also endorsed the pilot.

Q: How will the public be informed?

A: Through signage, digital communications, direct merchant outreach, and FAQs.

Q: How will success be measured?

A: Success will be tracked through:

- Occupancy and turnover data
- Merchant satisfaction surveys
- Customer access feedback
- Revenue reinvestment reports

Summary: The pilot has merchant and MVA Board backing, limited start-up costs, strong revenue potential, and a clear plan for reinvestment. With LPR support, Maplewood can modernize parking management while improving access and community amenities.