

May 21, 2002

Angie Carrier  
Town of Dandridge  
P.O. Box 249  
Dandridge, Tennessee 37725

Dear Angie,

You have asked about the pros and cons of using parking meters in order to control hours of downtown parking. The other option is the use of police officers to monitor parking, usually by “chalking” tires and returning later to enforce time limits.

I have talked with a number of our consultants about this. I have also called other Managers and Public Works Directors. Almost all have said the same thing, that parking meters are very unpopular and don’t save that much money. The cost to purchase and install the meters, as well as the on-going cost of maintaining the meters and collecting funds are all expenditures which you don’t have with the other option. However on the flip side, they do generate revenue.

The cost of enforcing parking limits is about the same for both options, but slightly higher for the “chalking” option. In both cases the officer must patrol the area for violations and write tickets accordingly. But under the “chalking” option the officer has to leave the vehicle and chalk the tires, returning later to issue tickets.

So all in all there are positive and negative approaches to both. But again, nearly everyone I talked with mentioned the unpopularity of parking meters.

I hope this simple discussion adds information to your file on these alternatives. You may want to try the “chalking” option first and move to meters only if it does not work. Anyway, please let me know if I can research this in further detail.

Sincerely,

Patrick Hardy  
Municipal Management Consultant