

DRIVING BUSINESS ~ The Ambassador Approach

On-street parking management has become a very important component of a successful downtown. A well designed on-street parking program is a key factor in promoting downtown business.

Roanoke's new parking ambassadors are visible on city streets and available to assist you with directions, answer questions, and more. Ambassadors regulate on street parking because without this program, curbside spaces for short-term visitors and deliveries during daylight hours would not be there. What else goes on in the ambassador's world? Let's find out.

What is the role of an Ambassador? It's more than writing parking citations-

- Ambassadors who are on foot or in low speed vehicles can provide assistance to downtown visitors needing help
- Ambassadors carry maps of the area and can give directions to most major destinations
- Ambassadors dress in easily recognizable uniforms to increase their visibility
- Ambassadors issue parking citations and can alert the police to other code violations
- Ambassadors add extra visibility to the public, carry cell phones and can report issues to the city for prompt action
- Ambassadors develop working relationships with the police and the public which helps them identify something amiss on a given route
- Ambassadors are capable of identifying scofflaws (parkers who have multiple unpaid parking citations) for vehicle towing or booting
- Ambassadors ensure that the parking public receives a fair and equitable share of available parking spaces
- Ambassadors provide a friendly face, working hard each day to promote good traffic flow and help you find a convenient parking space

What do Ambassadors have to say about their roles? Here is a quick sampling:

What is the best thing about being a Parking Ambassador?

"Having the opportunity to meet and help people every day. Giving directions, helping someone find an office so they can make an appointment on time, and showing someone where they can park so they do not receive a citation (it may just be the matter of moving the car a few feet), says one ambassador. I feel like my job is beneficial to the city because it is important to keep the on-street parking turning over so everyone who needs to do business, shop or dine can find a place to park downtown. I feel like I am really helping people."

What is the hardest thing about being a Parking Ambassador?

"When people are not courteous, states another ambassador. This means courtesy to each other, when driving, and especially when parking. We all have our jobs to do and ours is to enforce the signs and parking laws."

What is the most misunderstood parking regulation?

"No Parking - it is never ok to park in a No Parking zone, even for a minute." These areas are marked as No Parking due to safety concerns such as sight clearance for pedestrians and drivers, or turning radius for other vehicles, buses or trucks. No Parking zones are also implemented due to the proximity to crosswalks and intersections. Even if a driver or passenger is sitting in the vehicle in a No Parking zone, the vehicle is still deemed to be parked in the zone and may receive a citation.

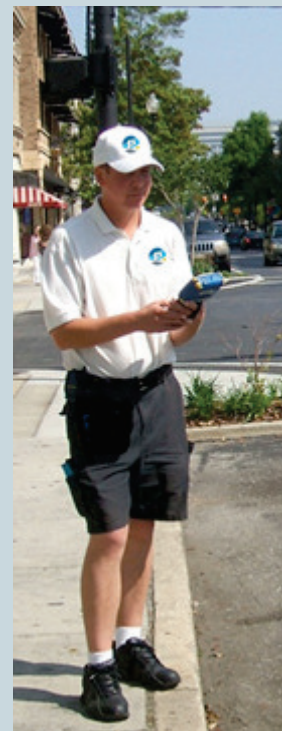
What is the one thing you would like to tell people to help them avoid a citation?

"Pay attention and read the signs" states our ambassadors. As a general rule, if a green arrow is pointing at your vehicle, then it's ok to park there for the time limit reflected on the sign. If a red arrow is pointing towards your vehicle, then you are not allowed to park there. The PARK Roanoke website offers a *Guide to Understanding Parking Signs* or you can pick up a brochure in our office located at 117 Church Avenue, SW.

Anything else people need to know?

"Many people don't know it is **not** allowed to roll or move a vehicle back and forth in the same timed zone in order to try and avoid a citation for overtime parking, states our ambassador. The vehicle must exit the timed zone by moving around the block before returning to the same zone. Don't tell yourself I'll only be gone a minute...many people do this and then forget to move their vehicle, later to find a citation displayed on their windshield."

You hopefully now have a better sense of the Ambassador Approach. We want everyone to enjoy their time in the City of Roanoke. We know these few simple truths from on-street etiquette will go a long way to keep you, the driver, focused on a great experience.



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Remember - Don't Park....

- In front of No Parking signs
- Within 15 feet of either side of a fire hydrant
- Within 5 feet of either side of a driveway
- Within 20 feet of an intersection
- In a Loading Zone designated for trucks (unless you are driving a truck!)
- In a Loading Zone for more than 20 minutes if you are loading or unloading items from your vehicle
- In a space reserved for people with disabilities
- On a sidewalk, crosswalk or any space blocking an intersection or pedestrian access

Remember - When Parking....

- Read and obey the parking signs
- Park within 12 inches of the curb
- Display your disabled "hangtag" from the rear view mirror, not on the dash
- Park in the same direction as the traffic is headed
- Only signs marked DT-1 allow extended timed parking for downtown residents with a valid residential decal
- Time limits are enforced on the Columbus Day and Veterans Day holidays
- For more information, please visit www.PARKRoanoke.com

This article was submitted by Dana Long of PARK Roanoke.

Featured BizLink ~ from the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service <http://www.coopercenter.org/demographics/childhood-poverty-in-Virginia>

Because children are dependent on those who raise them, strategies to address child poverty typically begin with families. In particular, the marital status of parents has been identified and emphasized as significant in ameliorating childhood poverty. This report examines how parent marital status and poverty intersect, and finds:

- More than 60% of children in single-parent families and 50% of children in cohabiting-parent families live in or near poverty;*
- By comparison, only 20% of children in married-parent families live in or near poverty;*
- While children in single- and cohabiting-parent families make up one-half of all children in and near poverty, the other one-half of all poor and near-poor children live with married parents.*

In light of these figures, initiatives aimed at providing a secure financial foundation for all children should include strategies that would benefit children in all forms of family structures.

The 2012 child poverty rate (under age 18) in the City of Roanoke was 30.3 percent. For more information, visit this Featured Biz Link.



What do you love about Roanoke?

"As a newcomer to Roanoke (one year), I love the scenery, especially on my drive into work. With the recent change in seasons, the snow-capped mountains are very attractive. I also love the many outdoor activities offered in Roanoke."

**Lance D. Greene, Esq.
Chief Deputy Clerk
Roanoke City Circuit Court**

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