



News Releases

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND



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Leggett Announces Installation of “Smart” Parking Meters in Bethesda that Accept Credit Card Payment

Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett announced that, starting today, the 840 on-street parking meters in Bethesda will be replaced with new “smart” parking meter heads that expand payment options. The new meters will accept Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover credit cards in addition to coins or pay-by-cell phone. The changeover is expected to take about a week, weather permitting.

“Smart parking meters will expand the payment options for parking at Bethesda’s on-street meters, providing even more convenience for our parking customers,” said Leggett. “Pay-by-cell phone was a great innovation and now smart meters make it even easier to pay for parking. I commend the Department of Transportation for their ongoing efforts to use advances in technology to continually improve the parking experience of residents, employees and visitors.”

The changeover to new meters reuses existing meter poles and the lower part of the meter head. The display portion of the meter and its internal workings will be replaced with the new technology.

“Parking is a critical component to accessing all the fantastic things that Bethesda has to offer,” said Montgomery County Councilmember Roger Berliner (D-1), chair of the Council’s Transportation and Environment Committee. “That is why I am pleased that the County is installing over 800 new smart meters in Bethesda. These meters will provide greater payment options for those individuals seeking to find parking downtown. It is yet another step in the right direction that will keep the Bethesda community a vibrant place in which to dine, shop and do business.”

The parking meters use a solar-powered battery system with a highly visible expiration time indicator. The meters have real-time communication capabilities, which allow web-based identification of broken meters and instant processing of credit card transactions that use the highest level of security. Information in the meter window displays parking rates, hours and days when payment is required, and notes parking restrictions.

Another benefit of the smart meters will become available later this year when in-pavement sensors will be installed so customers can use an app to find unoccupied, on-street parking spaces in Bethesda.

Cash keys will no longer be accepted by the smart meters, but will continue to be an option in parking lots and garages that currently accept them. Residents who will no longer need cash keys will receive in trade a special value card equivalent to the cash key’s loaded value plus original deposit. The value cards can be used like a credit card in the smart meters until their value is zeroed out. Beginning today, customers can exchange their cash key for the value card at the Bethesda Parking Store located at 4720 Cheltenham Drive.

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) Division of Parking expects to eventually replace all on-street meters in the County’s three other parking districts in Silver Spring, Wheaton and Montgomery Hills. MCDOT is also assessing the best options for upgrading meters in lots and parking garages.

MCDOT conducted a pilot project using 41 smart meters to assess how well they work, their accuracy and features and obtain feedback from customers through an online survey. The overwhelming response to the meters was extremely positive.

The meters will be provided by IPS Group. More information about parking in Montgomery County is available on the [Division of Parking’s website](#).

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Media Contact: Esther Bowring 240-777-6507

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