SOMERVILLE

CASE STUDY

**Borough's Parking Flourishes with
Fully-Integrated Parking Management**

Borough of Somerville, NJ Case Study

The Borough of Somerville, New Jersey is a proud community that offers the best of both worlds: small town charm and easy access to metropolises like New York City and Philadelphia. The heart of Somerville is its Main Street, which offers over 45 diverse and independently-owned restaurants, as well as retail shops. The Borough has a full calendar of special events like its seasonal classic car show, Somerville Cruise Nights. As a result, Somerville's population of 12,000 can grow to nearly 50,000 at its peak. Strategic parking management in Somerville is required to ensure accessibility and a positive experience. "Parking is a business," says Mike Halperin, Project Manager for the Borough of Somerville. "We have to provide exceptional customer service."

The Problem:
A Disconnected Parking System

According to Halperin, the old parking meters were "...a very labor-intensive product that came with a cost." The Borough had coin-only single-space meters in its downtown business district, and coin and bill-only pay stations in nine off-street lots. The meters came from different suppliers, and lacked a back-end system to consolidate parking data, provide analytics or alerts in real time. Configurations had to be completed by the meter vendor, which could take weeks, severely limiting the Borough's ability to react to demand or introduce dynamic rates.

> "Parking is a business, we have to provide exceptional customer service."

The legacy system placed significant strain on the Borough's limited operational and personnel resources and failed to offer a positive parking experience. As a vital driver of economic growth, the Borough strived to provide a more convenient and frictionless parking experience through the introduction of additional payment options and greater meter uptime to ensure continued growth for the Borough's vital local and small businesses.

As they had limited resources, Somerville needed a modern, fully-integrated solution that could seamlessly scale up to additional features in the future, as well as intelligently manage all aspects of their parking in one place.

The Solution:
Fully-Integrated Parking Management

When deciding on the right solution, Somerville looked to neighboring communities in New Jersey such as New Brunswick. Inspired by their success with the IPS Fully-Integrated Parking Management Suite, Somerville followed suit, opting for IPS credit-card enabled M5™ single-space smart meters, and MS1™ multi-space pay stations. The meters offered enhanced payment options, an intuitive user interface, energy-efficient solar power, and modular components to streamline maintenance.

As an additional payment option, Somerville also deployed the IPS PARK SMARTER™ mobile payment application. The app is deeply integrated into the on-street meter system and can guide customers to available spaces. This feature

reduces the time spent looking for a parking space and can help mitigate carbon emissions. Once parked, the app sends real-time alerts when the parking session is due to expire and allows customers to extend their session directly from their phone. At the end of their session, motorists can view, download and print their parking receipts, or have their receipts automatically emailed to them via MyParkingReceipt.com offered by IPS.

Becoming a Data-Driven Operation

Somerville's entire parking meter network is now wirelessly connected to the IPS Next-Generation Data Management System (DMS), which provides consolidated parking data, analytics, comprehensive reporting, and remote configuration capabilities. With the DMS, the Borough has been able to apply intelligent management strategies that impact their downtown visitors.

"We just did not have the information before," says Beth Anne Macdonald, Executive Director, Downtown Somerville Alliance. "You can guess, and you can create stories, but until you have that information, you're really not making educated decisions. IPS has helped us to fill in our knowledge gaps and be smarter about our decisions, not only today, but thinking forward about how projects and development might affect our parking."

The accessibility to real-time financial, technical and administrative data from any web-enabled device has been helpful to Halperin, who as a one-man operation can stay informed from anywhere.

"With the IPS system, we have one integrated Data Management System where almost instantaneously I can log in and check for faults from my desk or from my mobile phone if I'm out in the field," says Halperin. "The IPS system has allowed us to go straight to the meter instead of walking the entire business district looking for a coin jam."

Support That Goes Above and Beyond

The IPS Parking Management Suite has helped Somerville be self-sufficient; however, when extra help is needed, Halperin has found the IPS Customer Support Team to always be available when he needs it.

"The IPS customer support team is absolutely wonderful," says Halperin. "Every single time I have contacted them, even if it's after hours, I receive a phone call soon after from my Customer Support Manager. The problem solving has been exceptional. I have yet to have any significant downtime because of the ability to send a technician or walk me through what may be the problem to a resolution."

A Smart Parking Program Designed To Succeed

The IPS system has had a positive impact on businesses, their customers, and visitors to Somerville. With a fully-integrated system that connects to the DMS, the Borough is able to make data-driven decisions and parking policies that increase turnover to ensure accessibility for customers, which in turn helps increase patronage for its downtown businesses.

"Our businesses have been very happy with the new program because it makes it easier for their customers," says Macdonald. "It allows them to focus on growing their business."

Looking to the future, Somerville aims to continually enhance the service it provides, such as offering local merchants the opportunity to better connect with their customers with the Visa Commerce Network through PARK SMARTER™ when the feature becomes available.

Smart Parking technology is not just for large cities. The scalability of the IPS Parking Management Suite offers smaller communities the opportunity to invest in technology that makes sense for their size, with the ability to upgrade, and scale up to additional applications as their needs evolve. To achieve their goals, Somerville needed one trusted vendor to upgrade to a fully-integrated, modernized parking solution, and that vendor was IPS Group.

> "Our businesses have been very happy with the new program because it makes it easier for their customers."

Highlights

- PARK SMARTER™ enhances downtown parking experience
- Fully-integrated DMS enables data-driven strategies
- Over 40% of parking transactions now made via credit/debit cards
- Uptime increases to over 99%

ABOUT IPS GROUP

IPS Group, Inc., headquartered in San Diego, Calif., with offices across North America and Europe, is a design, engineering, and manufacturing company focused on low-power wireless telecommunications, payment processing systems, intelligent data management and SaaS technologies. IPS takes IoT and Smart City concepts and turns them into reality.

For over 20 years, IPS has delivered world-class solutions through its Fully-Integrated Parking Management Suite comprised of smart single-space meters, multi-space pay stations, pay station upgrade kits, vehicle detection sensors, smart cash collection systems, mobile applications, enforcement and permitting solutions, hosted data management software with advanced data analytics, and more.

Call for an on-site demo: 877 630 6638 | **ipsgroup.com**