

# The City of Marietta, where parking is more than a lot.

Case study

Just 20 miles northwest of Atlanta, Georgia is the city of Marietta—so-named after Mary, the wife of 1820s U.S. Senator and Superior Court judge Thomas Willis Cobb. With a population of roughly 61,000, Marietta is the largest city in Cobb County, it holds the county seat, and it's also one of the largest suburban cities in the Atlanta metro area.

This is a story about a lot. A parking lot, we mean. And how getting facts about one of them is paving the way for how the others will be managed.

Like many attractive residential and visitor destinations, the city of Marietta is only getting denser. Which means higher demand and expectations for adequate and easy parking.

By taking a proactive approach toward the city's ever expanding businesses and attractions like new, premiere shopping and dining destinations, and on-location film shoots from the TV and movie industry, one of the ways Marietta is staying ahead of the digital curve is through an effective parking optimization platform.

First of all, what is parking optimization and why is it so important? In a nutshell, it's the ability to know and act upon what kind and where available parking is in a city, as well as understanding various analytics like occupancy rates, violations, over-crowded or underutilized lots, etc.

When 30% of traffic<sup>1</sup> congestion is a result of cars looking for parking, the importance of an effective parking optimization solution<sup>2</sup> are obvious, as are the pain points of not having one.

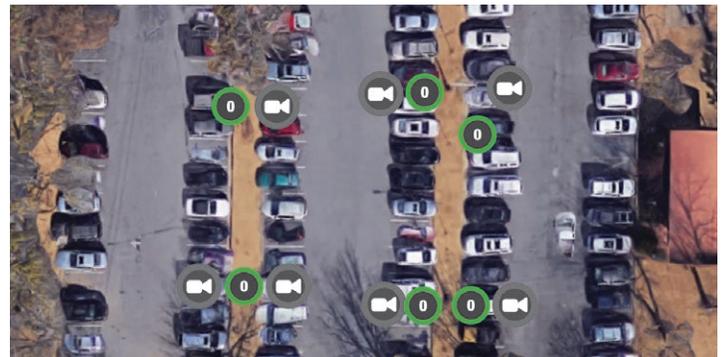
"My wife and I went to a neighboring city to eat dinner on a Friday night," begins Bruce Bishop, Deputy Director of IT for the City of Marietta, "and there was no parking. After 20 minutes of driving around, I got so frustrated I finally told my wife I just wanted to go home... That's what we're trying to avoid in our city."

Additionally, Marietta feels strongly about showing their citizens that their city is installing smart solutions to address their pain points, which goes a long way toward engendering a community's good will. Already, every intersection in the city of Marietta is equipped with the ability to convey traffic light and other information via an app that citizens can download to their phones.

## Installed equipment and solutions

Currently, the city of Marietta has deployed the following Verizon smart city equipment and solutions:

- Solution: Parking optimization and lighting
- Equipment: Multiple dual-camera video nodes and energy efficient core node LEDs
- Coverage area: Parking lot with 84 spots
- Current revenue structure: 2 hours of free parking; thereafter citation
- Goal: Prove occupancy rates for future revenue policy and current infrastructure planning
- Additional City/County Info: Out of all available parking in Marietta, the city only owns 432 spots; the county owns the rest



Aerial of Marietta lot with camera and light locations

## Backstory

Long story short, the city of Marietta originally partnered with several companies, all of whom had unique and innovative solutions that used several technologies to gather various analytics, such as indoor population density, outdoor in-ground sensor information, and street-light mounted video cameras. The latter technology—street-light-based cameras—proved to be the most useful for Marietta's needs in determining parking occupancy rates. However, when things didn't work as expected, Marietta soon ran into an issue where, one by one, the original vendors took a step back, one not wanting to take responsibility for the other. About this time, Verizon took over

Dashboard example of dual-camera view of lot from one video node.

#### Current Image – N02c01230



Camera 0 image [Download](#)



Camera 1 image [Download](#)

managing the equipment at the Marietta site and took on the responsibility of delivering a solution that met their needs.

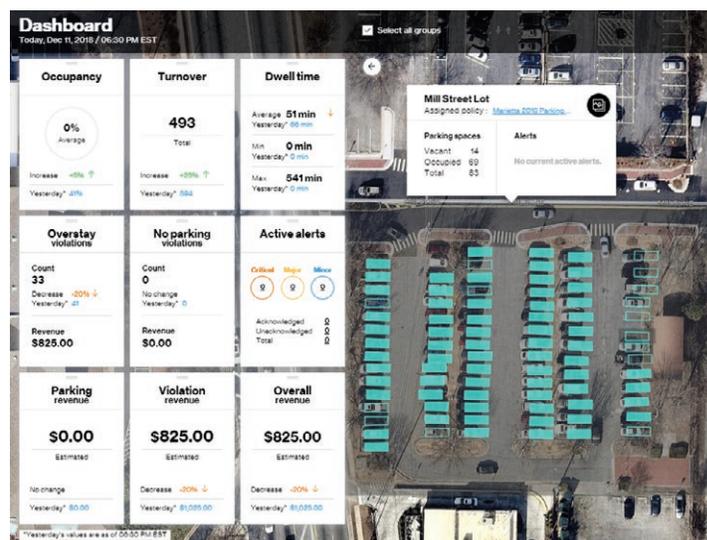
The challenge was that Marietta needed to demonstrate parking occupancy rates. There still existed a disconnect between the perception that parking had become increasingly difficult to find and the fact that several free lots still had multiple spots available. As such, it became even more important that the extrapolated information from the existing hardware be accurate, as that data would be used to inform policy. Specifically, what Marietta needed was to be able to demonstrate how many cars were parking in the free lot at a given time, how long those cars were staying, and whether and how often the cars were overstaying their 2-hour limits.

### Conjecture vs. analytics

The city of Marietta was surprised at the actual results. The beauty of analytics is that facts neutralize any areas of conjecture. And when the facts are known, what were once insurmountable problems become easier to overcome. Marietta needed accurate metrics for the remaining city-sponsored lots in the area.

Some facts that came to light when Marietta began to gather analytics:

- People were parking their cars longer than the two-hour limit due to geographical challenges of parking enforcement unable to visit every space within a two-hour window
- Contrary to popular belief, there were times when parking was not as scarce as perceived
- In the mornings, parking occupancy was higher in the corner of the lot closest to Starbucks



NetSense parking optimization UI for Marietta site

### In it for the long haul

As Ronnie Barrett, Director of IT for the City of Marietta says, “As soon as Verizon got involved... and once they realized for themselves what the prior vendor’s user interface issues were, it took them less than two weeks to deploy the next generation of the UI, which resolved 95% of the issues we were having.”

“I didn’t think it would work with Verizon,” Bishop says. “I’m generally an optimist, but in this case I was pessimistic about Verizon taking over. They were so big, why should they care about us, this little project in Marietta? But I was pleasantly surprised at how quickly everything got up and running, and not just that, but as Verizon continued to monitor the site they caught and fixed problems before we even knew about them.”

**“One of the things that we hope to convey to our customers is that we’re in it for the long haul. We don’t want to be the kind of company that drops tech in the middle of a city and flies away as soon as problems arise.”**

– Lani Ingram, VP of Verizon Smart Communities.

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## Next steps

Based on the analytics Marietta obtained from the original pilot program of their parking lot, their next steps entail expanding parking optimization using Verizon's new 4K wide-view video nodes for additional parking locations that will support their new marketplace due to open in the Spring of 2019, as well as required lighting needs that promote citizen safety.

We're looking forward to seeing what the city of Marietta will do next in order to improve the lives of their citizens, and Verizon will be there to help.

## Learn more

Find out how Smart Communities solutions can help you create better places for people to live, work and play.

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## Solution overviews

### Pave the way for a smarter city.

Verizon Smart Communities solutions can help municipalities and organizations like yours quickly and cost-effectively support initiatives for managing roadways, utilities and transportation systems.

- **Intelligent Traffic Management** provides tools and analytics to help you see into your infrastructure and optimize the flow of traffic.
- **Traffic Data Services** delivers near real-time insights and historical analysis about traffic flow to help planners minimize congestion, plan future multimodal transportation and improve land use.
- **Intersection Safety Analytics** provides 24x7 data and analytics that give insights into how cities and transportation leaders can improve the safety of citizens traveling on the roads.
- **Parking Optimization** is a cloud based, managed service solution that uses computer vision analytics to optimize revenue and create better parking experiences.
- **Intelligent Lighting** helps you control costs and save energy by regulating light levels based on the surrounding environment.
- **Intelligent Video** with edge analytics makes it possible to get eyes on remote property and assets without investing time and resources on streaming footage.
- **Digital Kiosk** is a specially designed information kiosk that helps improve community engagement by providing information about neighborhoods, services, safety, and access to emergency assistance, as well as Wi-Fi calling and connectivity.
- **Real Time Response System** is a decision-support solution that integrates and compiles data from multiple sources, such as computer-aided dispatch, video sensors, record management systems, and third-party databases, providing a consolidated, accurate and near real-time view of the city.