



City Council

Parking Pay Station Replacement Process - Status Report

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Agenda Item:

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Issue:

Briefing to Council on the project to replace the parking pay stations with single-space, credit card capable meters.

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager's Recommendation:

Concur with the public involvement and replacement processes outlined by staff.

Staff Contact:

Keith Stahley, Community Planning and Development Director, 360.753.8227

Presenters:

Karen Kenneson, Business Manager, Community Planning and Development
Keith Stahley, Community Planning and Development Director

Background and Analysis:

In July of 2010 the City installed multi-space pay and display parking pay stations in the downtown core of Olympia moving to two-hour paid parking in areas that were previously regulated with 90-minute timed free parking. Over this 2 and 1/2 year period the pay stations have proven that they are not the right choice for managing parking in Olympia. Customers have found them to be inconvenient and difficult to use, they have not been reliable, and they have high maintenance and operating costs compared to single-space meters. The pay stations were chosen, in part, to provide customer payment options with credit or debit cards in addition to coins, remote programming, and electronic usage and data analysis. Single-space credit card capable parking meters have become more mainstream and have been tested and in use nationwide by many large cities. Advances in technology have made these meters more commonplace, reliable and affordable with the type of payment and data options we were seeking.

In summer 2012, the City was approached by IPS Meters to do a free trial of single-space credit card capable parking meters. We installed 36 of these meters in various 3-hour meter locations. We received overwhelmingly positive feedback from customers regarding the convenience of paying by credit or debit

card and ease of using the new meters. Other benefits include ability to program rates, hours of operation and custom messages such as “free holiday parking” remotely by staff to all meters at once without having to go out in the field and individually program each meter. These meters can also be pre-paid before business hours with paid parking time not starting to countdown until 8:00 a.m., another convenience for customers.

During the four month trial, staff spent a total of 24 minutes on maintenance activities on the test meters, compared to an average of 16 hours per week on maintenance activities on parking pay stations. The test meters held up well in winter weather, quickly completed wireless credit card transactions, and successfully displayed a free parking message on a holiday. We had few reports during the trial period of meter malfunctions, duplicate credit card charges, difficulty connecting and completing a transaction, or meters not reading a credit card; all of which have been the case with pay stations. The trial proved that single-space credit card capable parking meters are a viable option for replacement of pay stations in downtown Olympia.

At the City Council meeting on November 20, 2012, the Council directed Community Planning and Development to move forward with a project to replace the pay stations with single-space credit card meters (Attachment #5 - Minutes Excerpt). Since that time, staff has been working to develop a Request for Proposals for new equipment and is prepared to move forward with the project based on the outcome of discussion by Council at this meeting.

The construction project will involve coring holes for meter poles; installing meter poles, housings and new meters; removal of all 50 pay stations; removal of pay station bases; and repairing the sidewalk where the bases were removed. The project will take place with as little impact to downtown parking as possible but there will be short periods of time when parking is temporarily unavailable. Signs will be put out in advance of any parking closures and the City’s website and Twitter will be used to communicate parking impacts.

Project Guidelines and Expected Outcomes:

Given what we learned from the pay stations and our pilot project, staff proposes the following Guidelines and Expected Outcomes for the replacement project. Also, attached is the proposed public involvement plan.

Guidelines:

- The project will be completed within the proposed budget.
- The City will seek some type of reuse, recycle or resale of the pay stations, not landfill disposal.
- Individuals representing parking users and downtown businesses will be involved in developing the replacement recommendations, with Council making the final decision.
- Depending on cost / benefit analysis, all or part of the existing parking pay station system will be replaced with single space meters - with an emphasis on the downtown core and high parking use areas.

Outcomes:

Replacement of pay stations with single space meters, that (are):

- Easy to use and understand
- Accept credit / debit card and coin payments.
- Reliable, easy and affordable to maintain and program by City staff.
- Provide convenient and understandable data for usage and trend analysis.

Project Timeline:

Staff proposes to run the RFP process and the construction contract process concurrently.

RFP Process:

January/February - Develop RFP
February/March - RFP open
March - Review and selection
April - Field demonstration
May - Selection and contract; order equipment

Construction Contract:

February/March - Engineering design
April/May - Construction bid/ad/award process
June - Construction begins
August - Project completion

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Any change to the parking system is expected to draw interest from the citizens of Olympia. Staff feels the Council's choice to move forward with replacing the pay stations with single-space credit card meters will generate primarily positive response. An extensive public involvement plan will be a major part of this project, including involvement of key stakeholders in the equipment selection process, partnering with business owners to make construction go smoothly with as little impact to downtown businesses and parking as possible, and using web and social media to provide timely updates to the community about project status and availability of parking.

Options:

Advise staff on moving forward with the project and provide guidance and direction to the process.

Financial Impact:

Planning level project estimate is \$693,000. Funding for this project will come from the Parking Management Account.