



Land Use & Environment Committee

Status Report on Pay Station Replacement Project and Parking Makeover

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Agenda Item:

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Issue:

Briefing to the Land Use and Environment Committee on the status of the pay station replacement project.
Discussion of ideas for a Parking Makeover.

Committee Recommendation:

Briefing and discussion only.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter:

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Background and Analysis:

1. Pay Station Replacement Project

The Project to replace the multi-space parking pay stations with single-space, credit card capable parking meters is underway. The City is completing a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to choose an equipment vendor. The City received 4 proposals in response to the RFP, which closed March 28. The Selection Committee has been reviewing and scoring the proposals and will meet April 12, 2013, to discuss the results and select the top two respondents to move to the next step in the process, which is a field demonstration.

The field demonstration will test ten meters from the two selected respondents on Olympia streets. Staff will gather feedback on usability and reliability of the meters from customers and businesses via direct contact and web survey. Staff will rate meters on programmability, ease of maintenance, and capabilities of accompanying web-based software system. At the conclusion of the field demonstration, survey data will be compiled and provided to the Selection Committee who will then make a final recommendation. City Council will approve the final decision.

Public Works will run the bid/ad/award process to obtain a contractor to perform the sidewalk work necessary to install new meters and remove the pay stations in May/June. Construction is tentatively scheduled for July/August and is dependent on the lead time for ordering new meters. Construction

involves coring holes in the sidewalk for the new meter poles, installing poles and meter housings, removing the pay stations and bases, and repairing the sidewalk. It is considered a minor construction project and impacts to parking will be minimal. Parking closures will be communicated in advance via signage, website and Twitter updates.

The RFP contained an additive for a trade in value on the pay stations. The Selection Committee is still reviewing the proposals and so it is unknown at this time what trade in proposal, if any, will be accepted.

2. *Parking Makeover*

This project provides an opportunity to give Parking Services a makeover at the same time, with two main goals: To change the perception of Parking Services as being primarily an enforcement-oriented program, and to inform the public about our purpose, programs and services.

Actions we have already done:

- Created an OlyParking Twitter account to instantaneously communicate parking impacts, accomplishments, programs and special free days.
- Began a monthly group permit billing system for 9-hour permits and leased lot permits where agencies or businesses receive permit placards good for the whole year and go on monthly billing which eliminates their need to come in to City Hall every month to renew their permits.
- Twelve days of free holiday parking.
Free parking for attendees of the annual ODA sponsored Girls Night Out event.

Future ideas include:

- Change name Parking Services Field Representatives to Parking Ambassadors or Advocates.
- Staff walkabout - Parking Ambassadors go out in twos to visit businesses to talk about parking, get feedback, answer questions and hand out materials.
- New look - Change the color of staff uniform shirts and jackets as funding allows.
- Have staff carry Parking Ambassador business cards with key parking messages on the back to increase the human element and offer a more personal touch.
- Increase customer service training for staff.
- Explore incentives such as half-price ticket if paid within 24 hours.
- Explore a courtesy notice program.
- Explore programs such as first ticket free, or one free every 3 years, or similar.
- Bring suggested parking ordinance improvements/cleanup to Council to correct inaccuracies and provide clearer definition of the parking ordinances.
- Institute a token program where parking credits are issued to improve customer service in tough complaint situations.
- Hold quarterly Parking “town hall” public meetings where staff does an educational piece on a parking topic and then an open forum where people can voice their opinions and ideas.
- Improve signage in leased lots, making them more easily identifiable and publicize free nights and weekends.
- Coordinate with the PBIA and ODA on downtown marketing efforts.

Public Involvement and Outreach:

- Parking staff will continue to work with the LUEC, the PBIA and other stakeholders to refine this makeover by testing these approaches and gathering feedback about other approaches over the course of the spring and summer of 2013.
- Following this outreach work develop and implement an action plan in the late summer or early fall of 2013.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Public involvement will continue to be a priority as the pay station replacement project moves forward.

What has been done so far with the pay station replacement project:

- Briefing to the PBIA on February 21, 2013
- Briefing to the ODA on March 6, 2013
- OlyParking Twitter account created and kicked off with first tweet
- News release issued to herald the opening of the RFP
- Made contact with 171 businesses in the downtown core
- Project FAQs sent out with the ODA's *This Week in Downtown* newsletter
- Equipment selection committee formed with PBIA, ODA and Council representation
- Project information page created on the City's website

In addition, staff will give a project briefing at ODA's Downtown Academy on April 26, 2013. We will issue a news release in advance of the field demonstration, encouraging the public to try out the test meters and give their feedback. Customers and businesses will be surveyed via direct contact during the field demonstration and a link to a web survey will be placed on the project website. Staff will revisit downtown core businesses prior to construction to alert them of the construction schedule in advance. An informational card will go into parking citation envelopes issued in the pay station zones, alerting customers that new meters are coming soon. Construction updates and parking impacts will be communicated via signage, the project website and up to the minute Twitter updates.

Options:

N/A

Financial Impact:

The pay station replacement project is being funded from the Parking Management Account (parking revenues in excess of expenditures and a General Fund transfer.) There is no special funding set aside for the Parking Makeover items. They will be funded from the Parking Services operating budget and Parking Management Account as funds are available.