



Parking Technical Advisory Group

747 Market Street; Room 537

Meeting #69 – September 5th, 2013, Notes

4:10 Meeting called to order by Co-Chairs

Rollie Herman, one of the co-chairs, called the meeting to order. Advisory group members and guests introduced themselves.

The PTAG approved notes from the 8/15/13 meeting.

4:15 Paystation Performance Update

Eric Huseby, parking services manager for the City, gave an update on the paystations. Staff from Parkeon and Xerox also provided additional information on the issue.

On 8/27/13 communication issues started with the paystations. Some machines were connected via cell signal while others were not. Different machines would be unable to connect at different times. There was also no regularity in the location of the failing machines.

These failed machines were unable to process credit cards since they could not connect. Unfortunately, the machines did not have the correct software boxes checked allowing them to batch process transactions. According to Parkeon, during a previous software update the "hold and send" batch mode was not turned on as it should have been. This likely occurred 6-7 months ago, but hadn't been a problem until 8/27.

During this down time, enforcement moved to a 2-hr time limit enforcement without considering "no pay" infractions. The only way for users of the system to be aware of this shift was to call the "help line" on the outside of the machine or talk to a parking enforcement officer.

At first the failures were considered a one of a kind fluke occurrence. As it became clear that the machines were not coming back, the City began manually updating the software in each machine to allow for the "hold & send" mode. As of 9/5, all machines have the software update allowing them to use "hold & send" mode when they cannot connect.

The first user of the day will notice a delayed transaction time, but future users will not notice any change when using the machine. The transactions being held by the machine will not be transmitted until the machine is able to connect to the system. This means that confirmation of valid cards will not occur until that time, likely resulting in an increase of invalid cards – though

this is not considered to be substantial. It may also result in the transactions not being processed for a few days – impacting a user's tracking of card usage – though these delays should be relatively minimal once the hardware has been updated.

On 9/4/13, the paystation team identified a more permanent solution. Since it appears to be a communication issue with the AT&T cell provider, they are swapping hardware to now use T-Mobile. The City noted that Republic Parking staff pulled in staff to put in some extra hours getting the paystations to a functional level and should be commended for their efforts.

The team has done testing with each T-Mobile connection and the results have shown improvements in each connection. On a couple of paystations that had historically had occasional connection problems, this swap was made several months ago. Since that swap, those paystations have not had connection problems.

The advisory group had a number of questions regarding the communication of the problem, changed enforcement, and final fix. There was general recognition that problems will come up, but they need to be communicated and resolved promptly. The City said it is working on an improved communication plan for the next time there is a problem with one or more paystations.

4:50 Dock Street Time Stays

After receiving the occupancy data earlier this year, the advisory group discussed the lack of occupancies along Dock Street. At that time, the group generally felt that a 5-hr time stay could be appropriate. From the 1/3/13 notes:

“During Rick Williams presentation of the data last month, he pointed out the underparked area along Dock Street. His suggestion was to consider making a change to the length of time allowed to a 3-, 5-, or 10-hour time stay. After some discussion, the task force decided to explore a 5-hour time stay as part of it's changes.”

However the advisory group also wanted direct feedback from the owners in the area and asked the City to reach out.

After talking with several businesses and owners along Dock Street the City is recommending the advisory group move forward with extending the time stays in this stretch to 5-hours. Specifically, the recommendation is:

- Area: Dock Street and the handful of metered stalls near S. 15th Street. (~55 stalls)
- Old Time Limit:
 - M-F: 2hrs
 - Sat: Buy 2hrs, Get 10hrs
- Proposed Time Limit:
 - M-Sa: 5hrs (no Saturday special)
- Other restrictions to remain the same
 - 8AM-6PM enforcement
 - \$0.75/hr pricing

The advisory group discussed potential impacts to shorter term businesses but also recognized there was an abundance of off-street parking near these potential points of congestion.

There were some concerns about creating a third type of zone within the paystation area, but also recognized that Dock Street was separate enough that there should not be confusion about

overlapping zones. The group also wondered about abuse of extended time stays into the downtown core zones. This raises the potential for people to buy 5hrs on Dock and bring it into either the UWT area, where there are 90-min limits, or the core area, where there are 2-hr limits. The group agreed to not worry about this issue, but monitor it to see if it did become a problem. It was noted that keeping the pricing at \$0.75/hr would help discourage some of this behavior due to the pricing. Also noted was that a 9-5 long-term parker would have to go back to Dock Street for another paystation ticket if they were parking for the day – creating another barrier to abuse.

Peter MacDonald, with Xerox the paystation management company, pulled some data on usage along Dock Street regarding the Saturday purchases for 2hrs or more.

On a busy Saturday in August there were 178 purchases made, 138 of which were for 2hrs or more (77%). While on the surface this might imply high all day usage, for only 55 stalls, this means the stalls turned over more than three times during the day for an average stay of 3hrs assuming they were fully parked from 8AM to 6PM. If occupancies were less than 100% during these hours, the average time stay would drop further.

On a slow Saturday in March there were 84 purchases made, 48 of which were for 2hrs or more (57%). Again, assuming the area was fully parked from 8AM to 6PM this results in an average stay of about 6hrs. However, [PMD] and advisory group members noted that there were very few purchases before 10AM or even 12PM. Anecdotally, the advisory group also felt that the area north of S. 15th Street did not see many parkers at all on slow Saturdays. If the area was reduced to 75% of the full 55 stalls and was parked fully from 10AM to 6PM this would mean the average stay is less than 5hrs.

This was also compared to time stays at the Museum of Glass where per hour purchases are in effect every day. [EH] shared that 85% of Museum garage time stays are 3hrs or less and 95% are 4hrs or less. This suggests that 5hr time stay on-street would accommodate the nearly all users.

The advisory group decided to tentatively recommend moving all stalls along Dock Street to a 5-hr time stay M-Sa, 8AM-6PM.

5:30 Public Comment

Nobody present provided public comment.

5:30 County-City Building Area Review

David Schroedel, a consultant, revisited some initial recommendations about dividing the area around the County-City Building into discrete sections. After some discussion with the task force, the area to be considered for system changes was defined as the area within:

- North Boundary: South side of S. 9th from existing paystation boundary at the east end to Yakima at the west end.
- East Boundary: The east side of Yakima starting at S. 9th St. running south to Brazill St. Then moving to the west side of Yakima running south to S. 13th St.
- Southeast Boundary: The south side of S. 13th St. running from Yakima to Tacoma Ave. Then turning south along the west side of Tacoma Ave until S. 15th St. Finally, heading down the south side of S. 15th St. eastward back to the existing paystation boundary.

[DS] then proposed dividing this area of interest into an area with short-term stays and an area with long-term stays. The northern part of this area is designated for shorter stays and the southern part for longer stays. This dividing line running from west to east:

- Starting at Yakima and S. 11th St.
- Heading east down the middle of S. 11th to Altheimer.
- Continuing east, but including the south side of 11th in the shorter stay area.
- Turning south down the middle of Court F until S. 12th St.
- Turning east down the middle of Court F until Tacoma Avenue.
- Turning south, including the west side of Tacoma Avenue in the shorter stay area.
- Continuing south along Tacoma Ave. to S. 14th St. where it crosses to include the other side of Tacoma Ave before heading north back to S. 13th St.
- Turning east on S. 13th St. including both sides of 13th in the shorter stay area.
- Finally turning S. on Market St. including the west side in the shorter stay area until leaving the area of interest at S. 15th St.

The advisory group had some discussion about the details of this division including the rationale about the “stub” of Tacoma Avenue shorter term stays between 13th & 14th. The sense was that the divisions made sense, but the group needed some more time to think about. The stub made people a little uncomfortable but noted that it occurred at a natural break with 14th coming to a “T” at that location.

[DS] also noted that based on the data provided there were several blocks of Tacoma Avenue (& one on Fawcett) that were showing shorter term stays but were staying above 85% occupied for more than 4hrs of the day. He recommended the advisory group consider paystations on these block faces to free up stalls.

This issue was to be revisited at the next meeting. The advisory group wanted to make sure to discuss the following options in detail:

- Hours of operation (Is 8AM-4PM more appropriate based on use patterns?)
- Length of allowed time stay in both short & long-term areas.
- Should paystations be incorporated?
- How will the unregulated areas in the existing buffer be impacted?
- Defining the users around the County-City Building.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10PM with the next meeting on September 19th to discuss recommendations to the County-City Building Area.