

MEMORANDUM

To: Mr. Eric Anderson

From: Parking Management Advisory Task Force
Steph Farber, Co-Chair
Rollie Herman, Co-Chair
Chelsea Levy, Co-Chair

Date: November 8, 2010

Re: Parking Management Recommendations #5



The Parking Management Advisory Task Force [PMATF] continues to meet semi-monthly, including one meeting a month with a public comment period. Since the paystations have "gone live" on September 20th, we continue to get feedback about the system and ideas on tweaks to the system that different interest groups would like to see.

The PMATF was asked to focus on creating a system that would be consistent with the guiding principles of the previous stakeholder group. This means a system that:

- Prioritizes the customer/client/visitor as the desired on-street parker;
- Ensures 15 percent vacancy of on-street stalls (1 to 2 stalls per block); and
- Is easy to understand for visitors and others new to the system.

The resulting parking system is intended to be a dynamic system that can respond to changing circumstances in downtown Tacoma over the years. With this in mind, the system will be flexible so that adjustments can be made to the configuration to ensure a long-term focus on best serving customers, clients and visitors to Tacoma.

As the PMATF transitions out of the preparation phase and into the management role, City staff is taking on a larger role in day-to-day issues while the task force is reviewing larger policy questions. With this in mind, over the last few meetings, there have been few policy recommendations. These are as follows:

Exception Space Review – Begin 12/1/10

The PMATF has already received some interest in exception spaces. In order to get a better understanding of how the system is functioning before making a large number of changes, the PMATF has elected to hold off on review of these requests until December with the hopes of implementing some of these minor changes at the beginning of the new year.

Minor System Adjustments – Now

Based on feedback from staff and the public, the PMATF is recommending the City make minor changes to the system when requested by businesses. Obviously this requires staff to communicate the potential changes to neighboring businesses prior to implementing the change, but the PMATF felt this would help the system be more responsive to minor concerns raised throughout the process. Major changes or policy issues such as rates, new exceptions, or time limits need to be addressed by the task force. Specifically, minor changes may include:

- Moving or adding signage without changing the parking restrictions

- Adjusting location of existing exception stalls
- Adjusting the location of existing machines

Communications Options

Based on public feedback it is clear the City has done a great job informing people of the \$0.75 per hour rate. Unfortunately, many people have not realized that the minimum purchase is only \$0.25. To better inform users of this and potential other issues, like being able to purchase time the night before, the PMATF has asked the City to explore the use of temporary messaging options on or near the paystations. This could include decals, temporary signs, or other creative ideas.

City Council Parking – Off-Street on Market

Concerns were shared with the task force about the availability of free parking near City Hall on Tuesday afternoons during City Council meetings. The task force has suggested the City to move forward with increasing the allowed time to park in the lot opposite City Hall on Market Street. A shift to allow free parking in the lot from 4PM to 8PM should resolve any challenges faced by parkers looking for a free option during City Council meetings. At the same time, it would maintain the integrity of the on-street system by keeping it available for the shorter-term customers patronizing those businesses on Market and St. Helens Streets.

Pre-Purchase Time – 8PM

The PMATF initially recommended that the paystations stop accepting payment between the hours of 6PM and 10PM. After 10PM, time could be purchased for the next morning. The thought was to allow people who were out late the option to purchase time the night before. Based on resident feedback it is clear that 10PM is too late for some people. In order to allow greater use of this feature, the task force is recommending that the pre-purchase start time be moved to 8PM. This time is hopefully late enough to avoid any accidental purchases by new users but early enough to work for more residents.

Saturday Parking During the Holidays – No time limit; Buy 2-hrs, get 8 more free

The task force has received a great deal of feedback on Saturday parking. It is clear that Tacoma's downtown is used very differently on Saturdays than during the week. This necessitates a different approach to parking management.

The majority of complaints on Saturdays have been about the two-hour time limit. This has caused difficulty for residents who live downtown as well as visitors attending downtown events – many of which occur on the weekends. In addition, anecdotally, there are many areas of downtown with very low occupancies on Saturdays. Finally, it has been repeatedly noted that the City garages have historically not been open on the weekend due to the increased costs of management and the low utilization.

While the task force considered three different approaches to addressing these problems they settled on the following recommendation:

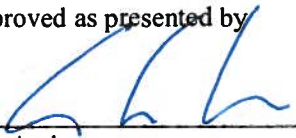
- No time limit
- \$0.75 per hour for first two hours
- Maximum charge for all day parking is \$1.50

While this system encourages all day parking, this seems to be more typical of Saturday users in downtown. By allowing all day parking on Saturdays it also does not require the City to consider opening off-street facilities to accommodate these users. In addition, it does not require the City to communicate a

new and different rate. This change would take up to 3 weeks to implement as it requires a programming change, the production of new signs, and a broadcast communication to the users.

Since the PMATF recognizes that this will impact different areas of downtown differently, we recommend establishing this as a trial period through the holiday season. The approach to Saturdays may need to be adjusted again based on how these changes affect the system.

Approved as presented by



Eric Anderson
City Manager
City of Tacoma

12-03-10
Date