



MEMO

TO: Municipal Services Committee

FROM: Paula Vandehey, Director of Public Works *PAV*

DATE: March 3, 2021

SUBJECT: **Approve installation of standard parking meters in Soldier Square along with Passport pay-by-phone payment option.**

The existing parking pay stations that service 34 parking stalls in Soldier Square were at the end of their useful life and therefore, were removed at the end of January, 2021. Before we spent significant funds to install parking meters, we conducted a pilot program to see if our Passport pay-by-phone app only would work in this location. The advantages of the pay-by-phone app include:

- Paying without coins
- No meter malfunctions
- Extending parking for up to the time limit without going back to the vehicle
- Provides a text message when the parking session is expiring
- Customer doesn't pay for parking prior to the hours of enforcement

The City values the use of a pilot program because it is a great way to get our customers involved by trying something new and providing us honest feedback. Through this feedback, the Municipal Services Committee, and ultimately the full City Council, will be able to make the best decision possible based on all of the information.

Feedback themes are highlighted below along with additional pertinent information:

Theme 1: The City is trying to eliminate all parking meters.

Response: City staff does not have a goal to eliminate all meters. However, meters are expensive to purchase, maintain and operate, so if there are any isolated locations that would work with a pay option other than parking meters, we would like to explore those opportunities. This specific pilot is for 34 parking stalls (we have an additional 714 stalls with parking meters).

Theme 2: Some people do not have a smart phone.

Response: Customers can also call a dedicated phone number to pay instead of using the app. This method is not used very often, but Passport records show an Appleton customer did pay that way since we implemented the Passport pay-by-phone program.

Theme 3: Some people do not wish to provide credit card information via a phone app.

Response: Customers could use the call in option instead of the app. However, this option still requires credit card information to be provided as method of payment.

Theme 4: The Passport app is only available in English.

Response: If the phone device settings are enabled in another language, the app will automatically translate to that device's language (English, Spanish and French are currently available with Passport).

Theme 5: The City requires a minimum 1 hour parking session when paying via the phone app.

Response: Because the City's hourly rates are so low, a one-hour increment is the smallest we can go to generate any revenue.

Theme 6: Meters with credit cards should be installed.

Response: The City does not plan to install meters that accept credit cards due to their high initial cost and high on-going fees. In order to provide a credit card feature at on-street meters, the meter rates would need to at least triple.

Theme 7: To be as inclusive as possible, options of both pay-by-phone and meters should be made available.

Response: Having multiple pay options is ideal.

Based on the feedback we received during our pilot program, we recommend that standard parking meters be installed in Soldier Square for an estimated cost of \$13,000.