

MEMORANDUM

PARKING STUDY QUESTIONS



WALKER
PARKING CONSULTANTS

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6602 East 75th Street, Suite 210
Indianapolis, IN 46250

DATE: February 27, 2015
TO: City of Appleton – Paula Vandehey
HARD COPY: No
FROM: Phil Baron; Zack Harmeyer
PROJECT NAME: City of Appleton Downtown Parking Study
SUBJECT: Parking Study Questions

Office: 317.842.6890
Fax: 317.577.6500
www.walkerparking.com

1) Before the parking study there was a brief conversation about the possibility of removing meters downtown and going to two-hour unmetered parking with a vehicle equipped for virtual tire chalking. Was that option considered as part of this study?

Yes. However, the Consultant believed that the meters still provide the best mechanism for both turn-over of parking spaces and revenue generation.

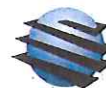
2) I understand and appreciate the rationale for moving the end of enforcement from 9 pm to 6, but was any consideration given to changing the start time? I see neither a consideration of other start times or a rationale for keeping the existing. **Yes. The rationale for keeping the 9:00 am start time is that meter usage earlier in the day did not warrant any changes. While there are localized areas near Lawrence University that do experience a temporary surge in on-street parking before the 9:00 am hour on weekdays, the overall early morning on-street demand in the study area is low. The Consultant concluded that the current start time was appropriate for the local market.**

3) How did we determine the area defined as "downtown" for the purpose of this study? At the northeast, northwest and southwest corners of the map on page 2 of the study we seem to have a few blocks that stretch the definition a bit. **The "Study Area" and the map used on page two are both consistent with the "Study Area" provided in the Request For Proposals. The area was meant to capture the outer boundaries of what might be considered future downtown growth, the stakeholders (County, Lawrence University, etc.) and all on-street metered parking areas. It was concluded that too big of an area was better than too small of a study area.**

4) On page 5 of the Executive Summary we have an estimate for the useful life of the Blue Ramp, but no such estimates for the life of the Yellow, Red or Green ramps. Do we have any kind of feel for how much longer we expect those facilities to remain in operation? At what point does a ramp make the transition from "good" to "fair" condition? **Yes. The City hires a structural consultant every 3 years to review the condition of existing parking ramps. The Red Ramp is believed to have 15 – 25 years of useful life and the Green and Yellow Ramps have 30 – 35 years of useful life. The useful life of the ramps will depend on appropriate maintenance which is why the Consultant is recommending we create a sinking fund for structural repairs and maintenance.**

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5) The entirety of the study's usage observation appears to have occurred on three Wednesdays in October. Are we comfortable making long-term assumptions based on this sample size? Do we know how or if demand and usage change on a hot day, a cold day or during or after a snowfall? **Yes, the City is comfortable with the Consultant's observations. The Study purposefully looked at a typical day. The Consultant's observation results were also compared to information from City parking staff, some of whom have worked for the Department of Public Works – Parking Utility for over 35 years. As a result, many on the parking staff have intimate knowledge of parking system utilization, and indicated that demand fluctuates greatly following a large snow event, very cold winter days, etc.**

6) On page 7 of the executive summary we see four scenarios, one of which includes both the library moving and city hall moving into the library space. None of the scenarios include the library relocating but city hall not moving. Should there be a scenario 3.5 that includes a new library but involves the current library being sold or used in a different way? **Additional scenarios were not believed to be necessary. In reality there are an unlimited number of scenarios that could be reviewed. It is likely that, whether City Hall moved to the Library or the Library was back-filled with a different user, the results would be similar.**

7) One of the stated goals of the study was to simplify the rate structure to make parking downtown easy to understand, but page 10 of the executive summary calls for parking ramp rates to change during overnight hours. Would variable rates create more confusion than they're worth? **The Consultant believes a variable rate is easy to understand and that simplification is attained through a clear communication strategy that addresses parking rates, policy, and enforcement.**

8) Do we know how many student vehicles we'd displace if we created the residential parking zones on page 12 of the executive summary? Would creating an extra 50 spaces at the Chapel be enough to alleviate that? **Lawrence University conducted their own review of their parking needs. Their findings were similar to the Consultants. The additional 50 stalls at the Chapel and residential parking zones are a part of how they want to address their student parking challenges. Their report should be available soon.**

The Consultant met with representatives of Lawrence University to discuss their parking needs, operating policies, challenges and future plans. The University's Consultant identified about 140 cars, believed to be associated with the University, parking on-street in the surrounding residential neighborhoods. The Consultant and the University agree that adding supply near the Chapel and improving access to existing campus supply can material improve the overall parking conditions around the campus.

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9) Aside from one complaint about the pay station at Solders Square in the collected focus group comments, I'm not seeing the rationale behind using single space digital smart meters instead of pay stations. Do we feel like the Soldiers Square pay station isn't working? **Not having the credit card feature has hindered the success of the pay stations at Soldier Square. The Consultant is recommending the individual smart meters in lieu of pay stations from a customer convenience and enforcement perspective.**

10) Exhibits 7 and 8 (pages 9-10 of the study) show identical parking demand maps, despite a reported 300 cars having left downtown. How is it possible that about 5% of all parked cars left downtown, yet demand remained the same on all 56 blocks? **The block colors (green, yellow, orange and red) each represent a range of parking occupancy during the observation period. Green is 59% or less, yellow is 60% to 69%, orange is 70% to 84%, and red is 85% or greater. The number of parked cars on a block can decrease without a corresponding change to the heat map. The analysis indicates the general allocation of parking demand remains similar from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm, but the total number of parked cars decreases within the 56-block study area.**

11) Aside from a brief mention of issuing more warnings and slightly fewer citations, I didn't see any mention of our citation structure in this policy. Is it the consultant's recommendation that we make no changes to our parking fine structure? **Correct. The Consultant supports a tiered citation approach and concludes that the citation rate schedule is in line with similar communities and industry standards. Additionally, the Consultant communicated that the purpose for enforcement and issuing citations is to modify behavior and ensure public access to supply. The Consultant did not see a need to modify the citation rates, nor was it concluded that the fine schedule was excessive.**

12) I'd like to see more on the decision to recommend single-space meters over pay stations. The consultant mentioned that single-space meters are more cost-effective for simpler rate structures like ours - I'd be interested in seeing the math on that. **The higher cost for multi-space meters is driven, in part, by the additional software features like the ability to handle more complex rates. Additionally, per meter cost is also higher due to hardware options like keypads, displays, and (most importantly) internal cash/note payment components. Single-space space meters may (or may not) be more cost-effective over their life-span. Due to sheer volume, connectivity fees, collection times, and maintenance costs may be higher for single-space meters contradicting the lower up-front costs. A full cost-analysis depends on many factors that are not known at this time, for example: space to machine ratios, type and brand of devices, warranty and service modeling, etc. After considering both the cost implications, Appleton's experience with meters, and the overall usability, the Consultant has determined that single-space meters are the best fit for the City.**

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13) Regarding the 6 pm proposed end for meter enforcement: Do we have any feel for how this will impact parking on show nights at the PAC? It seems like people coming in for a 7 or 7:30 show would flood all available on-street parking instead of flowing largely into the ramp as they do now. **Yes. PAC events will occasionally increase the demand for on-street parking in blocks 2, 3, 9, 10, 17 and 18, putting stress on the ~77 on-street spaces along College Avenue. However, combined, these same blocks have over 1,500 total parking spaces and were below 50% demand throughout the day and evening observations. It is the Consultant's opinion that the total available current supply is more than enough to satisfy the areas need, PAC events included. At this time, the cost for evening enforcement is not supported by the occasional demand fluctuations within this small portion of the study area.**