February 16, 2021

Rapid City Common Council
300 Sixth Street
Rapid City, South Dakota 57701

Dear Council Members:

During the Summer of 2019 we implemented Rapid City’s new downtown parking plan. The past 18+ months have allowed us to realize the goals of this plan are being met.

Our parking philosophy has changed from free downtown parking to metered and permitted parking. This approach is far more consistent with industry and other cities best practices. Further, in my opinion it makes much more sense to charge for premium parking spaces rather than give them away.

Additionally, in the past, downtown parking spaces were scarce, due in large part to the fact that downtown employees were occupying a large percentage of them. This created frustration among potential shoppers and I believe it is fair to say our downtown business was hampered due to the parking situation. The 2019 change has created available parking spaces, as the employees and those willing to walk, find spaces on the outskirts of downtown or use monthly leased parking options. Much of the feedback has been positive both from merchants and customers alike, even though there are those who vow to punish downtown merchants because of the parking meters. Although this has been and is still a learning experience, I believe our first year and a half has been successful.

Parking revenue has increased, as predicted. In 2018, the total revenue from parking was $590k. In 2020 – the program’s first full year, the revenue increased to $1.3 million.

The parking advisory board started out slow, but I believe has been a good addition to this plan. Like other boards, there is sometimes difficulty recruiting members or accomplishing a quorum. The board’s ability to make relatively minor changes to the system provides a quick response, preventing the need for unnecessary city ordinances to be passed.

The purpose of this letter is to bring to your attention a weak link in parking management generally.

Currently, our parking lots and systems are managed approximately 20% by City Finance, 20% by Public Works, and 60% by the Rapid City Police Department, which is not sustainable. This is highly inefficient and expensive to the general fund, as the management partners are not being reimbursed from the parking lot and area fund, plus the above departments are unable to utilize the involved employees for their originally intended duties.
After much consideration, we are proposing the addition of a parking operations manager. This employee would be paid directly from the Parking Lot and Area Fund, and would assume all duties related to parking management.

The parking Lot and Area Fund, is an enterprise fund, which receives its revenue from parking leases, meter fees and fines. Likewise, expenditures for parking-related operations and maintenance are taken from this fund. No general fund revenue is used for this fund.

The benefit to city operations should be obvious, due to the aforementioned scattered approach to parking management. Much, if not all the parking management duties could be alleviated by this position. An important and a larger benefit in my opinion is to change the primary management emphasis from short-term operations and enforcement to a mid and long-term planning approach.

There are many important elements of parking management that we are currently unable or under-equipped to address:

- Future construction and use of parking structures.
- Parking accommodations in a growing central business and residential district.
- Routine maintenance, upgrades, planned construction of parking lots or facilities.
- The use of flat parking lots versus parking structures, including strategic location, property acquisition etc.

A full-time parking operations manager, housed under Community Development is the answer.

The attached job description explains the primary duties of the parking operations manager. The position is graded as a mid-management position with pay ranging from $61,163 to $89,895. Workspace was constructed for this position during the recent City Hall remodel, on the first floor of City Hall, on the east end of the building near the parking meter enforcement employees. The new employee will report to the Community Development director.

Now to the point: I'm looking for your support of this important position. I will add the proposal to an upcoming agenda for your consideration and approval.

Attached, are the job description and the letter I wrote to City Council in May 2019.

If you have any questions, or require further information, please contact me so we can discuss.

Sincerely,

Steve Allender
Mayor
City of Rapid City

Job Description

<table>
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<th>Parking Operations Manager</th>
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General Summary: This position is responsible for supervising and managing the operation and maintenance of the City revenue-supported parking program and parking enforcement activities.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

The intent of this job description is to provide a representative summary of the major duties and responsibilities performed by incumbents of this job. Incumbents may be requested to perform job-related tasks other than those specifically presented in this description.

- Oversees daily parking operations including the collection of meter revenues, the inspection, maintenance, repair, and replacement of parking meters.
- Collects and interprets data on the public parking system; develops and implements operational plans, reports, and internal control procedures; and assists with the design and configuration of the lots and ramps.
- Supervises and coordinates the operations of the public parking system including all parking lots and ramps and all related enforcement activities. Supervises all employees of the Parking Division.
- Monitors the parking facilities and equipment for repair and maintenance needs. Vandalism, security, and parking usage; direct activities and personnel as needed to provide safe and secure environments for the public.
- Prepares and presents plans, reports, and studies; makes oral presentations and participates in meetings with the Parking Advisory Board, City Council, public bodies, and citizen groups.
- Prepares, reviews, and monitors agreements for the parking system including parking consultants, hearing officers, and building and service contractors.
- Reviews billings and collections, audit lot tickets with deposits, and maintains record of parking operation and parking enforcement.
- Responds to public questions and concerns relative to the department activities including parking operations, enforcement, and parking lot snow complaints.
- Monitors and supervises the parking usage and needs of the public. Administers and maintains automated records of lease parking program.
- Prepares all bid specifications and supporting documents for service contracts and supports equipment procurements.
- Prepares and provides reports to leadership with information relative to the operations of the parking facilities including the revenue and expense and the percentage of available parking for lease.
- Orders equipment and supplies and arranges for scheduled equipment maintenance and repairs.
- Prepares the annual budget. Manages the Parking Lots and Area fund. Creates purchase orders and processes invoices.
- Coordinates quarterly Parking Advisory Board meetings including agenda and facilitation of meetings.
- Makes recommendations to leadership regarding rates, leases, and hours of operations.
- Represents the City in matters relating to public parking facilities.
- Reviews parking citation appeals and makes determination on the validity of the appeal.
- Coordinates with Long Range Planning on parking district boundaries and any needed amendments to the Downtown Parking Plan.
Qualifications:

**Education and/or Experience:**

Graduation from an accredited college or university with a bachelor’s degree in business administration or related field and four (4) years’ progressively responsible experience in facilities, staffing/supervision, or public/customer service functions; or any such combination of education, experience, and training as may be acceptable to the hiring authority.

**Certificates, Licenses, Registrations:**

Must possess or be able to obtain prior to hire a valid driver’s license.

**Working Conditions:**

*The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.*

While performing the duties of this job, the employee may be exposed to outside weather conditions. The employee is frequently exposed to moving mechanical parts and various cleaning and repair chemicals. The noise level in the work environment is usually loud.

**Physical Demands:**

*The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.*

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to stand; walk for extended periods of time, continually stepping on and off curbs; reach with hands and arms and talk or hear. The employee is occasionally required to sit; use hand to finger, handle or feel and stoop, kneel, crouch, or crawl. The employee must occasionally lift and/or move up to 50 pounds.
May 1, 2019

Rapid City Common Council
300 Sixth Street
Rapid City, South Dakota 57701

Re: City Ordinance Nos. 6321 and 6324

Dear Council Members:

In advance of the May 2nd public input session and the May 6th second reading of City Ordinance Nos. 6321 and 6324, I wanted to connect with you regarding these items.

History

For 40+ years, our City Council has made the parking rules and procedures. Elected officials were routinely lobbied by various business owners which eventually led to divisiveness and ineffective parking practices; for example: free parking in the downtown core and paid parking on the perimeter has led to employees and residents taking a substantial portion of existing store-front spots. Employees and residents only have to move their car once or twice per day to avoid a parking ticket. Some parking ramp permit-holders park on the street because it’s closer to their work, thus, taking up two spots. The downtown businesses have been fighting about this in one form or another for decades. Businesses want more parking closer to their store, but it’s being taken up by someone else’s employees or residents.

Birth of a New Plan

The City Council agreed more than a year ago to relinquish their hold on the process and allow the hiring of a consultant. The consultant’s work reflects hundreds of cities’ best practices, trends, most effective strategies, as well as Rapid City’s parking inventory, future development plans, growth trends etc. The result: Our current parking plan is inconsistent with capturing current and future optimum downtown development opportunities. After a year and a half of study, public input and the careful and considerate work of professional City employees, we have the proposed parking plan.
Parking Ramps?

Today, parking ramps cost between $25 thousand to $30 thousand per space to construct, and our region will support monthly parking costs of $30- $50 per month. We can support hourly rates of $1 and daily rates of about $8 to $10. For government to fund a project such as a parking ramp, knowing the revenue can't pay the debt service would be bad business. In fact, to do so knowing we have yet to efficiently utilize our flat-lot and street parking would be malfeasance. Parking ramps aren't being ruled out, but they are not the best option today and into the short and mid-terms.

Parking ramps require strategically located real estate, and significant funding for construction and maintenance. The National League of Cities urges efficient use of all flat lot and street parking before building ramps. I've personally spoken to dozens of mayors, city managers and council members from across the country who all suggest the parking ramp has the least return on investment of any city infrastructure.

Two Hour Limits

The parking time limits of the outer perimeter are a recommendation of the parking and planning professionals who have created this plan. Who are we to claim the superior knowledge needed to override these recommendations prior to the plan even being implemented? The plan's goals include creating parking turnover, so if two hours is not sufficient, then unlimited parking can be purchased in the downtown core or free parking can be found on the outskirts.

$25 Fine

The proposed $25 fine is admittedly a shock to most. Contemplate this for a moment: Suppose speeding tickets only resulted in a $10 fine. Would people speed more or less? Anyone who's ever received a $5 speeding ticket in Montana can testify it did not change their driving behavior. The typical speeding ticket today is well over $100 and that can hurt most of us living on a strict budget. $100 for speeding is a significant deterrent compared to Montana's $5 ticket.

The proposed parking plan can only work properly with compliance from the people being regulated. We can ask for compliance on the honor system, but when it comes to government regulations, voluntary compliance is not the strong suit of western South Dakotans. A $10 fine for over-parking is not a deterrent, it is an inconvenience. $25 is more of a deterrent and although it seems to some, like too much of an increase from $10, the low fine is not working. Additionally, the goal of the parking plan is to achieve compliance, not issue tickets. Even though compliance is important, immediate compromise was sought and will apparently be part of the start-up plan. The $25 fine will be proposed at $15. A ten dollar difference.
Parking Availability

I believe the parking plan will serve visitors better than the current plan. There is scarce parking, due in part to employees and residents using it all day. We have grossly mismanaged parking for decades, but we never really needed better parking until the last 10 years or so. Now, it's time to manage what we have and plan into the future.

Plan Implementation and Protest

There have been numerous opportunities to interact with the parking planning process over the last year or so. The street parking is City infrastructure, paid for by 100% of Rapid City's residents and visitors. No one owns a greater share than any other person.

It is completely reasonable that people are nervous or apprehensive about the parking change. It is not reasonable that a dozen different business owners can predict the failure of downtown without the level of data and understanding we have come to acquire in the last year and a half. Also unreasonable is the belief that similar parking plans can work elsewhere, but won't work in Rapid City. We have a wonderful downtown area, visited by hundreds of thousands of people each year. But the landscape of downtown is destined to change. More residential building will occur. More businesses selling consumable goods will be needed. Grocery, pharmacy and houseware goods are today, not in appropriate supply for a residential neighborhood.

Change is inevitable and what the City is proposing is a plan that will position us — as a community — in the best possible way for that change. Insisting we keep everything the same or insisting we go backward, will only delay change and will have economic consequences for all.

The goal of the parking plan is to generate turnover in core area parking spaces and to encourage parking and walking or purchasing permits. It is not to pad the pockets of the City on the backs of the merchants; however, additional revenue collected today will help sustain our ability to maintain and build parking in the future.

Parking Advisory Board

In my opinion, the parking plan is full of minutia not appropriate for City Council-level involvement every time a change needs to be made. Small, real-time adjustments will likely need to be made in order for successful implementation and ongoing administration of this plan. Who better to recommend these changes than the people being regulated under this plan? The Parking Advisory Board will be made up of (7) seven members, (4) four of which are business owners in the downtown business improvement district and the other (3) three must be Rapid City residents.

The advisory board will meet as often as needed to administer the plan and will advise and make policy recommendations to City staff and City Council on all aspects of public parking within the City.
The purpose of the board is to provide citizen property owner input into the policy decisions for the City, related to all aspects of public parking, including on-street parking, parking meters, parking garages, parking lots, and parking fees. The board is also responsible for hearing and deciding any administrative appeal from people assessed additional fees for parking in violation of the code.

I am encouraging you to allow this advisory board to do its job in conjunction with City staff, in managing the health and welfare of parking in Rapid City. Letting go of authority is sometimes difficult, but putting that authority in the hands of people who are better equipped to utilize it is a very rewarding and effective experience.

Upon your approval of these two ordinances, I will advertise for members immediately and make selections as soon as practical. I will present my selections to the Council for approval at the next available Council meeting.

Please let me know if you have questions or would like further information.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Steve Allender, Mayor
Rapid City, South Dakota