



CITY OF RAPID CITY

RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA 57701-5035

Community Development

Department

300 Sixth Street

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MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Sarah Hanzel, Long Range Planner III *SH*

DATE: March 13, 2018

RE: Downtown Area Parking Study

The Downtown Area Master Plan (2016) identified Parking Management as a key component to continuing the success of downtown and recommended an update to the 2007 Parking Study. To carry out this goal, the City contracted with Walker, Inc. a firm specializing in Strategic Parking Planning. Walker Inc. worked with City staff, a parking advisory committee, and downtown stakeholders through a public engagement process to form the recommendations in this Plan. This Study focuses on ways to improve overall parking management, pricing, enforcement, and technologies.

City staff has reviewed the recommendations and seeks to begin implementation. The following is an overview of the Parking Study results. The attached copy of the full Parking Study report also includes an executive summary.

Findings (the problems)

- The City's current parking regulations are a direct cause of many of the perceived issues with parking in downtown.
- Free parking for the on-street spaces with the highest demand results in underutilization of our existing off-street leased parking.
- Our revenue model is backwards. We charge for less desirable parking and make the most desirable parking free. Our revenue structure should support operational expenses, maintenance, and future growth.
- Free parking encourages employee usage of high demand on-street areas, plus low utilization of existing options for employees.
- Lack of parking options for employees and residents.



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- Many different time limit and meter combinations creates confusion and frustration for the users of the system.

Recommendations (the solutions)

- Implement credit card enabled smart meters with no time limits in downtown's highest demand areas (including off-street public parking assets).
- Remove existing coin operated meters in peripheral areas. Establish a universal two hour time limit in peripheral areas.
- Develop an employee and resident parking permit program on peripheral streets.
- Increase oversell of public monthly parking and monitor regularly.

Please Keep in Mind

- Any discussion of additional parking infrastructure is irrelevant until we fix the market imbalances in our current system.
- Our existing off-street parking will continue to be underutilized so long as it is more affordable and more convenient to park on the street.
- Parking is never free, the only question is who pays for it.
- Though increasing the presence of metered parking has been challenged in the past, there is mounting agreement (even among the business community) that change is needed.
- The proposed plan builds in flexibility for longer stay customers because credit card meters will not have time limits.
- Validation is an option (at business/employer expense).
- We recognize that any plan will need to take into consideration ways to minimize any potential negative impact of these recommendations on downtown businesses.

Next Steps

- Parking Study Open House/Information Session occurring on 3/15 at the Dahl Arts Center
- As a near term next step (3/19) Council should
 - Acknowledge the Study's Recommendations and establish a permanent parking advisory committee to bolster public outreach and implement/monitor parking system changes.
 - Direct staff to build on the action plan and identify unknowns. Questions not yet answered:
 - Type of meters, pricing, vendor bids, funding source, validations options
 - Impact to parking system revenue/debt streams
 - Prices, quantities, and locations for permit system
 - Public Parking lot/structure sell levels
 - Compile ordinance changes
 - Develop a Public Information Plan

Recommendation: Approve Staff's Request to Acknowledge the Downtown Parking Study Recommendations, Establish a Parking Advisory Committee, and Direct Staff to Develop a Parking Implementation Strategy