



COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee Members

FROM: Rickelle Williams, Interim City Manager

DATE: April 19, 2024

SUBJECT: **DISCUSS A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE CITY'S PARKING ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS**

HISTORY:

On January 31, 2024, at the request of Commissioner Joseph Magazine, the Mayor and City Commission referred item C4 X to the Finance and Economic Resiliency (FERC) to discuss a comprehensive review of the City's parking enforcement efforts. The review was to include License Plate Recognition (LPR) vehicles and equipment, freight and commercial loading zones, alley loading and residential parking permit zones. The referral further requested data be submitted to the FERC in advance of the Committee meeting showing parking violations over a one (1), three (3), five (5), and (ten) 10-year time period.

ANALYSIS:

License Plate Recognition (LPR) vehicles:

The Parking Department has three (3) vehicles with mounted mobile LPR equipment. Two (2) of the LPR systems became inoperative and the just before the COVID-19 pandemic. Department inquired on repairs and was advised by the manufacturer that the equipment is obsolete and could not be repaired and had to be replaced. Replacement per unit was quoted at \$40,000.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted parking activity throughout the City, with a loss of approximately 90% of revenues. Revenue loss of this magnitude would devastate any organization. As an enterprise fund, the impact threatened the Department's credit ratings, potentially impacting bond covenants and the future of the Parking Department. Drastic measures were taken to minimize the financial damage; purchases were deferred and staffing, particularly enforcement staff, was reduced by over 70%.

The Department's finances are currently strong, surpassing pre-pandemic levels. Staffing levels have been restored and improvement projects are funded, as are equipment needs. The Department is seeking to replace the damaged LPR units, first looking at replacing with equipment by the same manufacturer. However, technology has evolved since the original purchase and a procurement process may be required. The Parking Department is working with Procurement Department staff to expedite purchase of the replacement units.

Enforcement hardware and software:

The County has traditionally provided municipalities with the handheld device (Autocite) used to issue parking citations. The City utilized a separate device to scan tags for valid payment. When the County upgraded their system to 5G technology, they contracted with CivicSmart, Inc. to develop the software for the new system and incorporate both the tag scanning (payment validation) and citation issuance functions into one handheld unit. Each municipality was charged \$1.25 per citation to repay the County for the equipment. Regrettably, the new software would not meet the City's operational needs because our permit system allows parking zone overlap as a convenience to customers. For example, a citywide permit or a motorcycle permit overlaps with other permitted areas, such as residential zones. Another factor was payment portability. As a customer service feature, in the City, a payment made in one parking zone is valid in other zones with the same rate. The County software does not provide this functionality.

The most attractive feature of the County's new software system was the integration of two (2) functions into one (1) unit, no longer necessitating carrying two (2) separate units for scanning and citation issuance. The County's vendor quoted a \$17,000 development charge and a \$4,500 monthly maintenance fee to develop additional upgrades to the software with the functionality the City requires. However, the City, through the Information Technology (IT) Department, already developed an iPhone Operating System (IOS) software application for various enforcement tasks. The software was, unfortunately, not compatible with the County's android-based equipment.

The City's Parking Enforcement Officers use iPad tablets for other enforcement duties. The use of City-issued tablets and the in-house software application made sense from a financial perspective (savings of \$71,000 the first year and \$54,000 per year henceforth) and from an ongoing maintenance perspective (IT support is available 24 hours per day). Thus, it was more efficient to use existing tablets for permit and payment enforcement. As time elapsed, we learned the County's provided software ultimately did not work for one of the largest local parking agencies, leading them to discontinue its use. The County has since advised they will no longer procure hardware and software systems for parking enforcement, placing that responsibility on individual municipalities/agencies. The Parking Department will evaluate alternatives, seeking a one (1)-unit solution.

Freight, commercial and alley loading:

The City designates areas for on-street loading and deliveries. For vehicles over 10,000 pounds, there are designated freight loading zones (FLZ) with a 30-minute restriction. Freight vehicles sometimes exceed this limit if making multiple deliveries. FLZ locations and size are routinely evaluated, taking into consideration input from delivery companies. An interactive map on the City's website allows companies to see size and location of FLZs. To allow for occasional deliveries, vehicles may pay meters in lieu of a permit, provided they meet delivery vehicle requirements. Alley permits are issued to smaller vehicles using alleys for deliveries. This has a 30-minute limit, and vehicles cannot block the alley. Finally, commercial loading zones are located primarily on-street and serve for quick deliveries with a 15 to 30-minute limit.

Enforcement of loading/delivery zones is crucial to the success of the program.

- There are currently 228 FLZ permits, and 52 alley permits.
- Fiscal Year 2023 FLZ permit revenue was \$75,250.
- Fiscal Year 2023 Alley permit revenue was \$13,850.
- Fiscal Year 2022 right-of-way (ROW) fines for FLZ violations amounted to \$129,900; Fiscal

Year 2023, ROW citation revenue was \$379,750. This increase is the result of enhanced enforcement, including the addition of tow trucks accompanying enforcement officers.

Residential parking permit zones:

A residential parking permit zone is an area of the city that is typically zoned for residential use and is established by boundaries.

- There are 20 residential permit parking zones in the city.
- There are approximately 7,440 residential permit customers.
- There are approximately 8,550 total permits issued (many households have multiple permits).
- An estimate of 5,700 citations were written for residential zone violations in Fiscal Year 2023.
- 5,180 vehicles were towed from residential zones in Fiscal Year 2023.

Parking violations at over a 1, 3, 5, and 10-year time-period:

Fiscal Year (FY)	Revenue	Citations	Budgeted Fulltime (FT)/ Part-time (PT) Staffing
FY 2013	\$3,519,248	325,488	28 FT/21 PT
FY 2018	\$2,596,982	273,272	33 FT/23 PT
FY 2020	\$2,661,733	120,567	28 FT/27 PT*
FY 2023	\$4,198,069	207,843	25 FT/25 PT

Important Factors:

- Fiscal Year 2020: Not reflected in staffing number is the reduction to nine (9) actual fulltime officers in mid-fiscal year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Citations and revenue were also impacted.
- Fiscal Year 2020 revenue is higher as compared to number of citations due to an increase in County citation fees in 2019.
- In 2014 the ParkMobile application was introduced resulting in an increase in payment compliance.

CONCLUSION:

As requested, provided herein is information on the Parking Department's enforcement operation. Overall, the Parking Enterprise Fund has recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic's devastating impact. With the return of parking demand and increased revenues, Department staffing levels, equipment acquisition and renewal and replacement projects are being restored to pre-pandemic levels and above. LPR mobile equipment and new enforcement tools are being evaluated for acquisition and implementation.

Applicable Area

Citywide

Is this a "Residents Right to Know" item, pursuant to City Code Section 2-14?

Yes

Does this item utilize G.O. Bond Funds?

No

Strategic Connection

Neighborhoods - Increase compliance with City code.

ATTACHMENTS:

Description	Type
 Referral Memo	Memo