City of Culver City, California

City Council Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: 10/13/08	Item Number: A-3
AGENDA ITEM: Discussion of Parking Meter Operation Enhancements, Including Potential Pilot Program Implementing "Pay by Space" Kiosks, and Direction to Staff as Deemed Appropriate.	
Contact Person/Dept.: Eric Mirzaian-Public Works	Phone Number: (310) 253-6410
Fiscal Impact: Yes [X] No []	General Fund: Yes [X] No []
Public Hearing: [] Action Item: [X]	Attachments: []
Public Notification: Master E-Mail Notification List (10/08/08)	
Department Approval: Charles D. Herbertson (10/03/08)	City Attorney Approval: Carol Schwab (by H. Baker) (10/06/08)
Chief Financial Officer Approval: Jeff Muir (10/08/08)	City Manager Approval: Jerry B. Fulwood (10/08/08)

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council receive and file the report on options to enhance parking meter operations in Culver City, including a potential pilot program implementing "Pay by Space" kiosks, and direct staff as deemed appropriate.

BACKGROUND:

Currently, there are approximately 1,649 parking meters located throughout Culver City. All of these meters are "cash key" models which utilize both coins and cash keys that can be obtained from the Public Works-Engineering Division. These meters have proven to be very durable and employ simple mechanisms while operating on a single 9-volt battery. However, the major issue surrounding these types of meters is vandalism. Most commonly, the City's Parking Meter Technician is correcting problems of intentional jamming of the coin slot mechanism by foreign objects, which prevents coins from being inserted into the meter.

The Public Works Department currently employs one full-time Parking Meter Technician to perform maintenance on all 1,649 meters. In a 2001 survey of 32 municipalities nationwide conducted by the cities of San Antonio, TX and Las Vegas, NV, the average number of meters per technician was determined to be approximately 795. Other parking meter operation duties handled by City Staff include coin collection by the Police Department and revenue tracking by the Finance Department.

DISCUSSION:

Over the past several months, Staff from the Public Works-Maintenance Operations Division has visited several cities to evaluate new parking technologies used by other municipalities. Pay by Space kiosks allow motorists to purchase parking time at centrally located kiosks without returning to their vehicles since a paper ticket or receipt is not required. Motorists simply identify the space number in which they parked and enter that space number, along with payment, into the kiosk. Information on time left for each parking space is stored on the kiosk's central processing unit, which can be monitored by parking enforcement personnel. The kiosk can then be used by parking enforcement personnel to determine which spaces have expired parking times and the exact time left on any space.

Recent studies have indicated Pay by Space kiosks have increased parking meter revenue for municipalities by as much as 30-40% in the initial year exclusive of parking meter rate increases and have an average payback period of approximately one to two years depending on the size of the municipality. With traditional meters, people paying into the meter are limited by the amount of readily available coins that they have in their possession. With the option to pay by credit card, people generally tend to purchase the maximum time allowed. Additionally, these kiosks have proven to reduce maintenance costs. Revenue increase and maintenance cost reductions are achieved in the following ways:

Convenience & Flexibility
Pay by Space kiosks provide multiple convenient payment options including cash (bills and coins), credit/debit cards both at the kiosk and remotely via cell phone. The convenient payment options allow motorists to add time (subject to maximum parking time allowed for a particular location) for their parking space via cell phones. Other enhanced options of these kiosks allow parking times to reset once a vehicle has left a particular parking space via sensors placed on the street surface at each parking space. For instance, when a vehicle leaves a spot that has time remaining, the time is reset so that the motorist of the next vehicle parking in that space will have to pay for their parking time.

Enhanced Parking Enforcement
Pay by Space kiosks require fewer resources for municipalities to enforce, as parking enforcement staff would not have to look at every single space meter to determine if they are expired. Enforcement personnel can simply obtain information regarding expired parking spaces by walking up to the kiosk and directly downloading the information from the kiosk via wireless handheld devices and cite only vehicles parked in expired spaces.

Reduced Maintenance Cost & Revenue Loss
Maintenance and collection costs are reduced due to the need of maintaining one Pay by Space kiosk that covers an area that was previously serviced by multiple single/dual space meters. In addition, collection is simplified due to a reduction in the need to collect and process coins. Pay by Space kiosks immediately alert Staff when repairs are needed. This feature significantly increases the efficiency of parking meter maintenance. With our current single/double space meters, malfunctions can only be identified either visually while the Parking Meter Technician is in the field or if reported by the public. Thus, parking meters can go unrepaired for extended periods of time. This in turn can result in significant lost revenue.

Pay by Space kiosks will also immediately alert Staff when vandalism and tampering is occurring, thus reducing downtime and maintenance costs as well. These kiosks have generally been found to be more difficult to vandalize compared to traditional parking meters. Vandalized or broken meters become unavailable for parking and therefore impact local businesses and parking meter revenues.

Enhanced Data Collection
Pay by Space kiosks will allow City Staff to remotely obtain real time information on the amount of currency in the kiosk at any given time, as well as, revenue generation from a particular kiosk for any specified period of time. Enhanced revenue reporting will provide more efficient parking analysis for future parking needs throughout the City.

Pilot Program
Based on the information outlined above, Staff is recommending implementation of a pilot program to determine the desirability of these kiosks for widespread use in Culver City.

Public Works Staff conducted site visits at various locations throughout Downtown Culver City and determined that an ideal location for a pilot program would be Main Street due to the street's high volume of motorists, numerous businesses and close proximity to major thoroughfares like Venice and Culver Boulevards. An additional benefit of using these meters on Main Street would be that they could be programmed to inform motorist that parking is not available during the Farmer's Market. Should the pilot program prove to be successful, Staff will examine and report back on the feasibility of installing more kiosks throughout other areas of the City.

The average price of one Pay by Space kiosk is approximately $4,700 plus additional costs for spare parts, accessories, signage and monthly service fees. The installation of Pay by Space kiosks generally requires one kiosk for every ten street

parking spaces; and approximately three to four kiosks at parking structures depending on size. As a comparison, it costs approximately $4,500 in equipment and labor to install ten single space meters ($3,000 for equipment and $1,500 for labor).

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

The pilot program discussed above would require approximately $22,000 to implement on Main Street (cost includes, kiosks, accessories, installation, training, handheld devices for enforcement personnel and signage but does not include annual monitoring fees). The current fiscal year budget does not include any funding for a pilot project, so a budget amendment would be required if it was decided to implement the pilot project this fiscal year. The capital costs associated with the proposed pilot parking program may be funded using the Parking Improvement capital fund (fund 421), which has a sufficient fund balance available for parking and parking meter related improvements. Alternatively, this item could be considered during FY 2009/10 budget preparation and discussion.

It should be noted the cost estimates above are based on broad research of various pay by space kiosk models. If Council's direction is to implement a pilot program, staff will obtain more exact cost estimates of the capital costs and ongoing maintenance and monitoring costs for budgetary purposes. A budget amendment will be considered at that time.

ATTACHMENTS:

None

MOTION:

That the City Council:

1. Receive and file this report and direct Staff as deemed appropriate; and,

2A. Direct Staff to implement a pilot program during Fiscal Year 2008/09.

OR

2B. Direct Staff to implement a pilot program during Fiscal Year 2009/10.