City of Long Beach
Working Together to Serve

Suja Lowenthal
Councilmember, 2nd District

DRAFT

To: Mayor and City Council DATE

From: Suja Lowenthal, Second District

Subject: Downtown Multi-Space Parking Meters

REQUESTED ACTION:

Request the City Manager research and bring forward recommendations to the City Council in 30 days for the installation of multi-space parking meters along major corridors in Downtown Long Beach.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Currently, there are (X number) of single space parking meters in the downtown as defined by the boundaries of the Downtown Long Beach Associates (a recipient of parking meter revenues). There are also (X number) of multi-space parking meters on the street and (X number) in City-owned parking lots in the downtown.

Cities throughout the United States have installed multi-space parking meters as a means of reducing streetscape blight, improving parking enforcement efficiencies and increasing parking meter revenues. Multi-Space Parking meters are a technology developed and implemented in Europe during the 1970's that eventually made its way to the US.

The basic concept of Multi-Space meter is that it uses one meter to control more than one space. There are many advantages to utilizing Multi-Space Parking Meters:

1. Multi-space meters are single machines or "meters" that control revenue collection for multiple parking spaces.
2. Machines that are capable of accepting multiple types of payments, such as smart cards, credit cards (at the pay machine or by cell phone), city cards, 3rd party payment cards, debit cards (with or without PIN), validation coupons and validation PIN numbers, cash and coins.
3. The ability to run on multiple forms of power including hard-wired, solar, and battery, thus, giving the parking program options depending on their particular situation.
4. Multi-space meters give motorists a receipt, which is a benefit for businesspersons for record keeping as well as proof of payment.
5. With real time credit card processing, the parking program is assured that the credit card that is being used is a valid card, thus, ensuring payment.
6. By replacing several single space meters with a single multi-space meter the streetscape is less "cluttered" with devices. This helps clean up streetscapes and parking lots and improves the overall urban environment.

7. Due to the fewer number of meters on the street, maintenance needs are reduced resulting in reduced maintenance costs. There are typically less mechanical failures in a multi-space meter, also resulting in lower maintenance costs. Recently a controlled test that evaluated two trial on-street areas (one with single space meters and one with multi-space meters) tracked all costs associated with the units in both of the trial areas, confirmed the lower maintenance costs of multi-space meters.
8. When a meter is offline or non-operational, parkers can be directed to utilize other nearby multi-space meters within the same system to pay for parking. This eliminates temporary "non-revenue parking spaces" due to inoperable meters. Also an alarm can be sent to management and/or a repair technician resulting in a faster repair response.
9. There is a documented reduction in coin and cash payments due to the use of credit cards. This is beneficial because it reduces the frequency of collections and the volume of coins that must be counted and processed. Again, resulting in lower operating costs.
10. These features also allow programs to create "smart routes" for meter collections and maintenance rather than following standardized routes to check on each machine. This allows for better, more efficient use of the program's workforce, and could potentially result in lower operating costs.
11. Software systems control operations, giving improved management data and a clearer picture of operational trends and statistics. This information can be provided to management real time, on line. Rate changes can be performed easily and remotely.
12. Increased security, if vandalism is attempted an audible alarm can be sounded and an alarm message can be sent to local authorities.
13. In a pay and display environment a customer can avoid an expired meter, a software program will call the customer prior to the meter becoming expired and offer to bill the customer's credit card for additional time.

To better understand multi-space meters and how they can operate within a paid parking area, understanding of the basic operational methodologies are required. There are two primary operational models i.e.: Pay and Display (PAY-and-DISPLAY) and Pay-By-Space (Pay-By-Space).

Pay and Display (Pay-and-Display) Methodology

The customer parks, walks to a multi-space meter, pay for their parking, and receive a receipt for payment. The parking patron then returns to their vehicle and displays the receipt inside the vehicle as instructed. The displayed receipt proves to the enforcement staff that the space has indeed been paid for through the time printed on the displayed receipt. Thus, "Pay and Display."

Benefits of the Pay & Display Methodology:

1. Simple operation. No space numbers to assign to spaces, less street clutter, no maintenance required for space numbers.
2. Eliminates motorist confusion regarding space numbers.
3. All payment forms are available to Pay-and-Display operations, with the exception of Pay- by-Phone.
4. This method typically works best when used in a parking environment where a small number of Multi-Space Meters are used to monitor a large number of parking stalls, such as in a large parking lot.

Disadvantages of Pay & Display Methodology:

1. Motorists must return to the vehicle to display the printed receipt as proof of payment. If the customer does not understand this or displays the receipt face down, a parking citation may be issued.
2. Visual inspection of each displayed receipt is required by parking enforcement staff to determine if the

vehicle is in violation.

3. Pay-by-Phone is not compatible with Pay-and-Display operations as there are no space numbers to associate with the vehicle.
4. With Pay & Display the motorist cannot add to the amount of time paid for parking without having to return to their vehicle to purchase additional time, which then has to be displayed on their vehicle.

Pay by Space (Pay-By-Space) Methodology

The basic premise of the Pay-By-Space methodology is that the motorists' parks in a space, either on street or off street, notes the space number, and proceeds to the Multi-space meter located near their vehicle. In an on street application, there are usually one or two machines per block face. The motorist then chooses which machine is most convenient for them, enters their parking space number into the machine and pays for their parking.

Benefits of Pay-By-Space

1. The motorist does not need to return to their vehicle to display a receipt as proof of payment.
2. Enforcement can utilize handheld devices that allow the enforcement staff to remotely see which spaces are not paid for, this allows them to move in the direction of violations rather than "coming across" violations, making meter enforcement much more efficient.
3. If the Pay-By-Space system accepts payment at any Pay-By-Space machine for any space within the system, payment can be made anywhere within the system. The advantage being, the motorists can make original payment at any machine that is operational rather than just the machine near their vehicle.
4. Pay by cell phone. Pay-By-Space systems typically offer payment for parking by calling a phone number, which will require a first time setup, then allowing the motorist to pay for or add time to their space via the cell phone.
5. This method typically works best when one multi space meter is used to monitor 10 parking stalls or fewer, such as you would find in an on-street parking environment.

Disadvantages of Pay-By-Space

1. Motorists forget their space number and have to return to their vehicle to remind themselves of the space number.
2. Motorists enter the wrong space number in the machine and thus, they receive a violation even though they have paid for the parking.
3. Maintenance of the space numbers. Regardless of what type of numbering system the numbers are subject to tagging, wear, abuse, and errors and thus affects the system performance.
4. In very large cities, if the system is not initially numbered correctly, numbering systems can get confusing and difficult to manage as well as adding to the maintenance budget.

Multi-space meters are customer friendly, will enable city staff to collect very accurate data helpful in city planning and rate setting, and make the parking system more efficient. They help to reduce the number of fixtures in the streetscape that obstruct the pedestrian flow. Although, initially, poles from former single space meters will be used to direct parking customers to multi-space meters. Once customers are educated on the use of Multi-Space Meters most existing poles will no longer be necessary. Such an initiative could be combined with current efforts by Development Services to redesign the Pine Avenue streetscape. Multi-space meters will improve the visual experience throughout the downtown and position the City of Long Beach firmly in the future of user-friendly parking and streetscape treatments.