



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, November 03, 2009

Study Session

Item -2

Discussion Concerning Downtown Metered Parking Program

Staff Contact: Steve Lamken

Council Agenda Memo

From: Steven Lamken, Police Chief
Meeting: November 3, 2009 Study Session
Subject: Metered Parking Program
Item #'s: 2
Presenter(s): Steven Lamken, Police Chief

Background

The Police Department does not believe there is a demonstrated need for metered parking monitoring in downtown Grand Island. The Police Department is recommending that the Council discontinue the Metered Parking Program.

The purpose of metered parking is to turn over the availability of parking stalls for customers of businesses. This is statutorily based upon parking congestion; or the lack of available parking. The City has ordinances that have established metered parking on streets in the downtown area and in one City owned parking lot called the Chamber of Commerce lot. The City does issue some people permits to park in the Chamber lot over the two hour limit.

The current metered parking program is a parking stall rental program and regulation is conducted by monitoring. A primary function of the Police Department is law enforcement. The Police Department is not managing a parking enforcement program with metered parking. We are managing a parking rental system.

The need for metered parking was more critical when downtown was the primary retail shopping area in the City. The current retail base in downtown tends to be specialized businesses that do not draw large numbers of customers at one time. Congestion of retail customer parking in the Downtown area is not a problem based upon the Police Department's study of parking in the area.

Discussion

Study

The Department reviewed 26 days of metered parking monitoring that was conducted from September of 2008 into January of 2009. The majority of the days were in November and December of 2008. In addition, the Police Department staff conducted visual parking audits of the Downtown parking for a two month period. The following is a summary of the data and visual observations.

- The turnover of employer/employee parking appears to be a bigger problem than customer parking. Parking monitoring is conducted in a targeted manner often at locations where employers or employees of downtown businesses chose to use two hour metered parking for their own parking.
- There is adequate on street parking capacity.

The monitoring reports did not show any block in downtown that did not have vacant parking stalls available. No block was used at 100% capacity. Staff observations correlate to the monitoring reports.

The monitoring reports and observations by staff show that it is a small percentage of the time, 12.2% where over 50% of the parking stalls are occupied in any given block.

Blocks that have higher customer parking needs such as 3rd Street from Wheeler to Walnut do not have high parking rental violation counts. This indicates that customers in the downtown area are not creating major problems with violation of metered parking. Staff observations also show a turnover of vehicles parked on this block. The Police Department does not receive complaints of inadequate customer parking. Customer use of parking is turning over.

The Department reviewed rental violations issued during the twenty six days. The following summary provides information regarding the violations.

A significant percentage of rental violations are employers or employees of businesses using metered parking. This is an issue of self discipline and employer policy and control as to where they and employees park. Private businesses with their own parking regulate employer/employee parking in their lots through workplace policy. The same can be done in downtown. There are ample parking places in City parking lots for employer/employees that

would require no more walking than many employees and customers do now in retail business parking lots.

- Violation Summary

On Street Parking

223 - Number of violations issued over the 26 days

32 - Number of extended parking violations (More than one rental violation issued to the same vehicle parked in the same stall for extended time)

18 - Number of vehicles receiving multiple rental violations on separate days.

61 - Number of rental violations issued to the above 18 vehicles. (A high of 10 violations on one vehicle)

27% - Percent of total rental violations being issued to 18 vehicles.

Chamber Lot

30 - Number of times monitor checked the lot over the 26 days

49 - Number of rental violations issued over the 26 days

9 - Number of rental violations that were for extended parking (More than one rental violation issued to the same vehicle parked in the same stall for extended time)

- Long Term Parking Lots

The City provides numerous long term off street parking lots in the downtown area. These lots are located within one and one half blocks of most businesses in the downtown area.

Observations show that there is ample unused capacity in these lots. No long term lot was observed to be full during the observation period.

There was unused capacity in the two hour time limit Chamber of Commerce lot during all monitor enforcement and staff observations.

- The metered parking program requires costs and resources in the Police Department that could be used by the City more efficiently in other areas of service that are higher priority.

Issues

Downtown business employers/employees may not exercise the necessary controls and self discipline to regulate their use of on street parking thus perhaps negatively affecting their neighboring businesses.

The business dynamics of downtown may change and create higher customer parking demands and a need for customer parking turnover. Such dynamics do not now exist.

Conclusion

This item is presented to the City Council in a Study Session to allow for any questions to be answered and to create a greater understanding of the issue at hand.

It is the intent of City Administration to bring this issue to a future council meeting.



Parking District

First number = number of time the block was checked during the 26 days.

Second number () = number of citations issued.

Number of times there were more than 50% of the parking stalls available.

Number of time there were less than 50% of the parking stalls available