CITY COUNCIL REPORT

DATE: April 12, 2018

TO: Mayor, Vice Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: John Portillo, Parking Manager

CC: Barbara Goodrich, Shane Dille, Kevin Treadway, David McIntire,
             Karl Eberhard, Heidi Hansen, and City Leadership Team

SUBJECT: ParkFlag Mid-Year Report

This is a mid-year report explaining the operational improvements being made to the ParkFlag program as well as a response to a citizen email expressing several concerns regarding ParkFlag operations.

DISCUSSION

At a work session in late May, ParkFlag will provide the City Council with a comprehensive mid-year update. In addition to highlighting operational improvements, the City Council will hear an update on implementation, customer services provided and customer, financial and enforcement statistics. In advance of that, below, we have selected some of the feedback we have heard and provided information on how this feedback is being addressed by ParkFlag.

Private Parking Lots: In response to the rollout of ParkFlag, several private property owners have engaged American Valet (Valet Parking Service) to restrict and manage their parking lots. This has caused some customer confusion whereby customers mistake these lots for parking managed by ParkFlag. Both ParkFlag and American Valet are clearing this up by working collaboratively on equipment and signage changes to clarify the distinction for the parking customer. American Valet has modified their kiosk screens and ParkFlag is in the process of modifying ours to make the distinction more clear. Both ParkFlag and American Valet are providing effective solutions in cases of confusion including the reversal of citations by ParkFlag and refunds from American Valet for booting fees.

Kiosk Lighting: As a Dark Sky City, the level of ambient lighting in certain peripheral areas can be insufficient for customers to see the kiosk keyboards and card readers. While our kiosk manufacturer makes lighted keyboards, they do not make lighted card readers. Given that limitation, we are purchasing lighted keyboards as our current keyboards break and are installing them at key locations. We are also looking at relocating some kiosks to more lighted

locations. Along with the Downtown Business Alliance (DBA), we continue to educate customers that they can use any kiosk to pay and our mobile app is a good alternative. The staff of ParkFlag see their role as ambassadors first and as enforcement staff second and so to address such issues they actively look for and assist customers having issues using the equipment – whether they are familiarity issues or technical issues. The DBA Clean Team also assists customers. And finally, we are researching adding light fixtures near the problem kiosks if our other alternatives do not prove successful.

Card Readers: From time to time a customer's credit card cannot be read or processed. The reasons for this may be damaged cards, insufficient funds, banking rules for fraud protection and other factors that are beyond our control.

Beyond that, these readers prompt the user to insert the card and leave it in, like a chip reader, instead of swiping the card. This aspect was the major cause of card reading issues during implementation. We have added instruction stickers on the kiosks with this information and the majority of this issue has been resolved. We are in process of modifying the on-screen instructions to provide further clarify for the user. Along with the DBA, we continue to educate customers about leaving the card in until the machine says to remove it. Both ParkFlag and DBA staff members are committed to actively seek out and assist struggling customers.

Cash Acceptance: The system was initially set up with cash acceptance in the lobby of City Hall, at the kiosk on the front steps, at the Visitor Center and at participating businesses. The number of participating businesses has been less than expected, so in response to customer feedback, we added a cash handling kiosk at the corner of Aspen Avenue and Leroux Street. We continue to monitor the feedback and the use of cash and if needed we will add more cash handling accepting kiosks.

Validation Codes: To further engage businesses and to replace the "Parking Angel" program where businesses have reimbursed customers for their parking expense, ParkFlag is rolling out the validation code feature sooner than planned. With this feature, a customer would be able to enter a code in the kiosk in lieu of using their credit card (or cash). Beyond that, customers without smart phones or without credit cards, and those not wishing to use theirs, would be able to purchase validation codes and use them instead of cash. This solution also simplifies the process the City, County and businesses would need to follow to pay for client parking. It will also reduce our overall credit card fees.

License Plate Numbers: A number of issues arise from incorrectly entering license plate numbers. To address this, the software has been modified to correct common mistakes such as entering dashes or spaces. The staff has procedures to address when a customer enters "O" as a part of their plate number (should be zeros). And finally, if a customer has paid for parking but made an entry mistake, or if the ParkFlag staff has made an entry mistake, the citation is reversed.

Permit Applications: Another feature being implemented at this time is the online permit application process. For all permits, this eliminates the need to fill out a form and submit it back to ParkFlag. Paper applications remain available and accepted.

Permit Renewals: As we were expecting to need a lottery system to address a high volume of employee permit requests, the system was initially set up to have annual permits that expire every June 30. The lottery has not been necessary and the system has been changed to automatically renew monthly permits. Many customers appreciate this reduction in "process" and it has improved our staff efficiency as well.

Auto Pay: Having changed away from the annual lottery mechanism, the ability to have an auto pay mechanism became possible. This is being implemented shortly as our customers desire payment strategies that are easier and don't require monthly attention.

RECOMMENDATION / CONCLUSION

On an ongoing basis, we will continue to make improvements using the following factors: customer input, magnitude; priority; and cost/benefit. Some suggested improvements affect fewer users while others affect several users which is why prioritizing the improvements has been necessary. An example is adding instruction stickers to the kiosks. This cost a few hundred dollars and has helped all users. At the same time, other suggestions we've received could cost tens of thousands of dollars and therefore are shared with our larger group to properly access the need and budget. Decisions made regarding magnitude, priority and cost/benefit continues to be aided by the Steering Committee and customer input is always shared with the group

As the first year of operations winds down (October) ParkFlag will have a formal review of all of the logged feedback, with oversight by the Steering Committee, and make additional system changes as warranted. This process will serve as a formal check of the magnitude, priority and cost/benefit of these operational change suggestions.

ParkFlag continues to strive to be responsive to customer concerns and feedback. To be more effective in improvements/adjustments we make to the system we document every item of feedback we receive on a log where we categorize and group similar comments and use that information to guide our steps. Some feedback has been more policy in nature (i.e. removing the system, changing the hours, costs, etc.). These comments are also being recorded, but no action will be taken in response until after the Steering Committee and ParkFlag staff have the benefit of the year-end report. If in fact policy changes are needed, staff will bring these forward to the City Council for consideration and possible action.

This report is for information only.