Recommendation - Parking Meter Policies

A. Replace arbitrary time limits at parking meters with progressive/tiered pricing.

B. Implement a "payment in/payment out" system at parking meters.

Guiding Principles

SP2. Our parking system should

- **(a) facilitate business, ease of transit and livability for residents, businesses and visitors**
- **(b) promote economic development and job creation**
- **(c) enhance the city's image and appeal to investors and tourists**

SP4. Our policies should encourage the most efficient use of parking, access, and mobility resources

SP7. The City should continuously pursue opportunities for innovative policy,regulations and technology

Goals:

1. **To manage current parking assets so that spaces are used but a few are still readily available.**
2. **To reduce the number of meter violations.**
3. **To prevent unnecessary traffic from motorists searching for parking.**

Introduction

More than 50% of parking citations issued in the City of Los Angeles are for meter and street-sweeping violations, divided roughly equally at 25% each. In fiscal year 2013-2014, more than 600,000 citations were issued for meter violations, i.e. expired meter or overstaying time limits. The stated goal of enforcement of time limits and meter payment is to regulate parking and encourage turnover. However, arbitrary time limits are a "one size fits all" approach which often does not facilitate commerce and which leads to unnecessary violations. Further, requiring motorists to determine in advance how much time they need to complete their business and return to their vehicle is an antiquated system which frequently leads to underpayment of meter fees and the risk of being issued a citation.

We strongly believe that it is possible to significantly reduce meter violations while more accurately managing parking supply at meters. The recommendations would also have the added benefit of potentially increasing meter revenue since motorists would pay for the total time they are parked and not get a "free ride" when the meter runs out but they do not receive a citation.

Recommendations

A. Replace Time Limits with Progressive/Tiered Pricing

Rather than set arbitrary time limits at parking meters, the city should implement "tiered pricing" to allow motorists to individually determine how long they need to park. The goal of turnover is maintained as the cost of "overstaying" becomes progressively higher the longer someone chooses to remain in the parking spot. This system of using market forces to regulate parking has worked well in Albany, NY. and would be an adjunct to the current L.A. Express Park program.

The experience in Albany with such a system can be instructive as a model for L.A. In the fall of 2011, Albany Parking Authority replaced their two hour meter time limits with a tiered pricing structure in their downtown Capitol area. There was no rate increase or price change from the $1.25 per hour rate for the first two hours of parking. The cost for additional hours of parking progressively increases based on $.25 increments. Rather than having to vacate the parking spot after an arbitrary two hour limit, customers now have a new alternative to buy a third hour for $1.50, purchase parking for all day for $21.50, or buy anything in between. Peak demand at many block faces places occupancy at 80 to 95 percent, with overall occupancy at 63 percent. This matches well with the stated goals of L.A. Express Park which is to achieve a 10% to 30% availability of parking spaces.[1]

According to Michael Klein, executive director of the Albany Parking Authority, "22 percent of patrons are long-stay customers who generate 59 percent of the revenue with suitable lengths of stay, turnover, and occupancy. The progressive rate structure allows customers to satisfy their access needs without creating occupancy issues, and does so while substantially improving revenue per space".

The city should test the replacement of time limits with tiered pricing concurrently in multiple pilot areas and, if this policy proves successful in achieving the desired occupancy/ vacancy rate, the City should implement the new policy citywide within one year. Additionally, local stakeholders should have input into how and where this new policy is implemented.

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[1] *Klein, Michael "Market to Market - How one municipality is using market-based pricing for on-street parking with great results." International Parking Institute, May 2013 <http://www.parkalbany.com/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=1QNuPIosa5A%3D&tabid=384>*

B. Implement a "payment in/payment out" system at parking meters.

"Payment in/payment out" systems allow motorists to pay just for the amount of time they have been parked. This is similar to the system used in parking structures where patrons are charged for the time used upon exit rather than upon entering.

Upon arrival at a parking meter, customers would pre-authorize payment using a credit card, prepaid card, or phone payment and upon leaving the parking space, would then be charged the appropriate fee for the time parked. According to LADOT, our current parking meters already have the ability to be modified to use this system. Those patrons who still wish to pay using cash would have the option to do so, but they would have to pay in full upon arrival as they do now. Although some challenges exist with current meter technology, any inherent problems can likely be overcome.

If current technological restrictions make a pre-authorization system impractical, the city should investigate implementing a "payment in/refund out" system where, upon arrival, drivers pre-pay for the time needed using a credit card, prepaid card, or phone payment and are then credited back for unused time when they leave the parking space. This system is currently being deployed in San Diego with great success.

To enhance the effectiveness of this program, it is recommended that LADOT expand, throughout the City, the deployment of advanced parking meter technology such as those which would allow multiple payment options including the option to pay remotely using a smartphone app with the option to receive text alerts on the time remaining. It is also recommended that the city implement a prepaid payment card option (similar to TAP card) at all parking meters, pay stations, and city owned parking lots.

Benefits

Implementing these customer friendly improvements would likely significantly reduce the number of violations at parking meters. The public also benefits as they no longer have to guess in advance how much meter time to purchase or move their vehicles before their tasks are completed and businesses prosper thanks to improved customer access. Additional public benefits include reduced fuel consumption, traffic congestion, and air pollution. Although ticket revenue may decrease as people are able to pay for and receive the service they desire rather than being penalized for parking past their allotted time, this will likely be more than offset by increased payments for services rendered and reduced costs for enforcement and adjudication of citations. Higher compliance at meters also allows Traffic Officers to focus on other parking enforcement needs and traffic control duties.

2. Parking Meter Policies

Recommendations

LA Express Park™
save time, park smarter.™

1. Expand performance based pricing (LA Express Park)
   a) variable time-of-day and/or progressive pricing
   b) Eliminate Arbitrary Time Limits

2. Implement a “payment in/payment out” system
   a) Motorists pay for the amount of time they have been parked.

3. Expand the deployment of advanced parking meter technology
   a) Pay remotely using a smartphone app
   b) Receive text alerts on the time remaining
   c) Remotely add additional time

4. Implement a prepaid payment card option at all parking meters, pay stations, and city owned parking lots (similar to TAP card).

Parking Meter Policies - cont.

Benefits

1. Prices reflect Market Demands
2. Encourages Turnover
3. Less Guesswork for Public
4. Fewer Violations
5. **MORE Revenue**
6. Lower Enforcement & Adjudication Costs
7. Greater Public Acceptance

Next Actions

Ask for report back from LADOT on logistics and economic benefits and possible pilot program.

Recommendation - Revise Parking Fines

A. Adopt a tiered fine schedule for non-safety related violations with the lowest fine set at $23 for a first offense.
B. Adopt a warning notice system for marginal violations.

Guiding Principles

MA5. a. Parking Citations are only to be used to encourage compliance.
MA5. b. It is not the purpose of fines to raise revenue.
MA5. c. The amount of the fine should not unduly burden the lowest income residents
MA5. d. The amount of the fine should not unfairly penalize infrequent offenders
MA5. e. The amount of the fine should be sufficient to prevent willful scofflaw behavior/multiple offenses
MA5. f. The amount of the fine should be proportionate to the seriousness of the violation and no higher.

Introduction

Parking fines can be a huge burden on our lowest income residents. For many, the fine for violating street sweeping regulations or staying overtime at a parking meter can amount to almost a full day's wages, especially after any late penalties are imposed. Further, if a citizen wishes to contest their ticket they must pay the full fine in advance to exercise their right to a hearing. Often, those ticketed do not have any disposable income and must choose between paying the parking fine or paying rent or purchasing food for their families. When a vehicle is impounded, the fines and fees can often be more than the vehicle is worth or more than the person is able to pay. They may then lose their vehicle, which can prevent them from earning a living, keeping them and their families in poverty.

Background

According to data received from city staff, the City of Los Angeles has some of the highest parking fines in LA County. For the most common violations, fines in the City of Los Angeles are between 14% to 63% higher than the average for surrounding cities. For example, fines for the two violations that make up more than 50% of the tickets issued annually in the city, expired meters and street sweeping are 21% and 29% higher than the average. Additionally, the $73.00 that Los Angeles charges for a street sweeping ticket is 109% higher than the fine charged in Hawthorne for this violation ($35.00). For an expired meter, the $63.00 charged by LA is 58% higher than the $40.00 charged in Inglewood. (See Exhibit 1 in Appendix)

With a base fine of $63 for a meter violation, at a minimum, meter violation tickets cost the public over $45 million per year. Likewise, the $73 charged for a street sweeping violation costs the public over $47 million annually. This is often a financial hardship which disproportionately affects the working poor who live and work in dense urban areas and can significantly impact the local economy. The Federal Reserve calculates the "velocity of money"

at about 6.5, meaning $1 spent in a local area will circulate about 6.5 times in one year to produce about $6.50 in total economic activity. Therefore, the $92 million in tickets issued, just for these two violation categories, might represent a loss of about $600 million to the local economy.

Additionally, most drivers are not repeat scofflaws and don't receive multiple tickets, mainly because their violation is often due to some inadvertent error. Excessive fines such as those imposed in Los Angeles are unduly harsh on those generally law abiding citizens that only make a mistake now and then.

One solution to the above problems is to create a graduated fine structure, possibly in conjunction with a warning notice system for very minor violations. A number of jurisdictions employ this approach with much success. Conversations with those responsible for parking policy in Fort Collins, CO and the City and County of Butte-Silver Bow, MT, both of which use warning tickets and graduated fines, indicated that this approach was well received by the public and did not result in an increase in violations. Claremont, CA, has a system where the first ticket for overtime parking in a calendar year is $35, the second $70, and the third $105.

Recommendations

A. Adopt a Tiered Fine Schedule

The city should adopt a tiered fine schedule under which fines for non-safety related violations get progressively higher with each additional violation within the same violation category within the same year. The year should be calculated on the basis of a "rolling year" where the oldest violation drops off after a period of 1 year. The initial fine amount should be no higher than the current median hourly wage for the City of Los Angeles as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (currently $23). There should be a maximum of 4 tiers. The initial fine amount and the fine amounts for higher tiers for additional violations within the same year should be adjusted according to this statistic no more often than every two years. Fines should be indexed to the following schedule for non-safety related infractions. Fines that are safety-related would be determined in conference with the Department of Transportation for possible adjustment where appropriate.

Suggested Fine Schedule

Fine Number	Amount
1st	$23
2nd	$33
3rd	$48
4th	$68

B. Adopt a Warning Notice System

The city should also adopt a warning notice system under which a Traffic Officer may issue a warning notice through their hand-held device for marginal violations. This would allow Traffic Officers to notify motorists when they have parked in a manner that is inconsistent with the letter of the law but which does not necessarily warrant a citation. Issuing warning notices provides good customer relations and prevents citizens from feeling they have been caught in a "gotcha" situation. It also allows Traffic Officers to document their work. Since the warning notice would be issued using the officer's hand-held device, the city can track the issuance of these tickets to ensure that an individual vehicle owner is held accountable and not issued multiple warnings for the same potential violation.

Some examples of when a warning notice might be useful are when a motorist returns to their vehicle before the officer completes the ticket or when the violation is extremely minor such as a vehicle parked slightly outside the lines of the parking space or with the car's bumper slightly into the red zone between parking spaces.

Benefits

Implementing a tiered fine structure encourages compliance but does not unduly penalize the vast majority of otherwise law abiding motorists who periodically make a minor error. However, those motorists who commit multiple violations would still be penalized appropriately. Additionally, the city may see increased payment of fines without the cost of adjudication as more motorists ticketed at the lower tiers would be able to afford the reduced fine and be encouraged to simply pay as soon as possible and not adjudicate their citation. The current fine structure is a huge burden on our lowest income citizens and should be modified.

Technological Considerations

In order to implement a warning ticket and graduated fine system, the hand-held devices used by traffic officers would have to be programed to interface with the city's citation database and indicate to the officers whether the vehicle has been issued a warning notice and/or previous ticket for specific violation codes. This technology is currently available through a number of vendors and in use in a number of cities throughout the US.

However, the city's current vendor, Xerox, has indicated that they are not set up to provide this service and that "this is not possible for high volume citations". Xerox's main objection is that in order to implement this system, the current registered owner information would be necessary since, "If [the] vehicle has a new owner, the repeat offense (and actual citation) will not apply to the new owner".

This objection could be overcome in a number of ways. First, many new owners opt to purchase new plates for the vehicle rather than use the previous owner's plates. Second, if the plates do remain with the vehicle, this problem would only exist until the fines "reset" after a year (or other reset period). In practice, it is unlikely that a vehicle would receive a citation and immediately be sold the next day so the problem would only exist for most vehicles for less than the time of the reset period. During this time, if a vehicle owner was issued a higher fine because the previous plate owner had been issued a ticket for the same violation code, the owner would be given the opportunity to request a reduction in the fine to the base amount by submitting proof of change in ownership.

Recommendation – Re-evaluate Street Cleaning Procedures

Guiding principles

SP 3. Enforcement should encourage compliance with regulations and the fulfillment of community objectives not the maximization of revenue.

Goals:

1. *Reduce the overall number of citations issued for street cleaning violations;*
2. *Better utilize technology to improve the operational efficiency of and coordination between city departments and residents;*
3. *Optimize the availability of street parking spaces during restrictions;*

Background

Street cleaning is one of the most cited parking violations in the city of L.A. From fiscal years 2008-12, more citations were issued for street cleaning than any other parking violation. More than 600,000 street cleaning citations were issued in FY 2012-13 alone, which accounted for 26% of all parking citations issued that FY. This equates to approximately one citation for every four registered drivers in the city of LA. The recommendations below are organized by those that can be implemented within 1 fiscal year and those that will need to be implemented on a longer timeline.

Recommendations

Short Term (within 1 fiscal year year)

Submit 2015-16 Budgeting Request to GPS Track All Street Sweeping Vehicles: *The Bureau of Street Services ("BoSS") has purchased two GPS tracked street cleaning vehicles and is in the process of purchasing GPS tracking devices for its street cleaning fleet. BoSS estimates that they may be able to GPS track the majority of its street cleaning fleet by the end of the upcoming fiscal year if it receives the additional funding necessary to do so.*

According to BoSS, the additional cost to procure the technology is marginal relative to its overall budget proposal. We encourage BoSS and the Mayor's office to include in its upcoming budget proposal funding to purchase the aforementioned technology. GPS

tracking BoSS' street cleaning vehicles is a critical first step that many of the subsequent recommendations depend on.

Conduct a Demonstration Project of the New Connected Vehicles: *LAPRWG recommends that the City conduct and document a demonstration of the new GPS-tracked street cleaning vehicles and how they will improve coordination and communication between the City and its residents. This demonstration will build public support needed to secure future funding for the following recommendations.*

Improve Quality Control Measures between BoSS and Enforcement: *Enforcement has put in place quality control measures, such as requiring its officers to review street cleaning reports prior to patrolling a particular route and during the adjudication process. These measures have significantly reduced the number of street cleaning citations issued when street cleaning has been canceled.*

Additional quality control measures should be adopted so that BoSS reports are automatically synced with Enforcement's handheld devices. Synchronized devices would prevent officers from issuing citations where street cleaning has been performed or canceled. Enforcement has already begun such conversations with Xerox and we recommend that they expedite this new capability within the next fiscal year.

If the recommendations fail to achieve goals of reducing the overall number of citations and optimizing the availability of street parking spaces, BoSS and Enforcement should consider alternate approaches. One alternative could be to harmonize enforcement and street sweeping operations so that officers are co-located or assigned to street-sweeping vehicles,

Begin a Parallel Process to Create a Digital Street Cleaning Notification System for Subscribers: *Street sweeping restrictions often prohibit vehicles from parking on a particular street during a two or three hour window. However, it typically only takes BoSS a few minutes to clean a street. This leads to an underutilization of scarce parking spaces. The City has tried to resolve this inefficiency by listing on its website the street cleaning routes that have been canceled on a particular day. While this is a step in the right direction, the City should be more proactive in how it notifies users of street cleaning and red flag days.*

We recommend that the city establish an online notification system that would email and/or text residents in real time when a street has been cleaned or a route canceled. Residents would then be able to park their cars on a street even though a parking restriction may still be in place. This will help optimize the availability of street parking across the city and make it easier for residents to be aware of when they can and cannot park on a particular street. The City currently utilizes similar notification systems

(e.g., LAPD, LADWP, etc.) and should leverage those existing systems for this service, if possible.

We understand that creating such a system, beta testing it, publicly releasing it, etc. will depend on GPS tracking BoSS vehicles, mapping routes, and securing funding for this type of capability. However, this process should start as soon as possible to ensure that when the GPS technology and mapping capability is available, the City can launch the notification system soon after. It is important that the City also promote this new option to its residents. We recommend that BoSS include in its budget proposal funding to market the notification system to residents. Enforcement should include information about the notification system on its citations.

Longer-Term (2-3 fiscal years)

Map and Catalog All Routes: *The City currently does not a have a comprehensive map of its street cleaning routes and schedules. Tracking vehicles via GPS will help provide the data needed to map and optimize routes. Once tracked, maps and schedules could be added to the City's online notification system to provide residents with a better sense of when their street is typically cleaned. Performance metrics could also be created and synched with the Mayor's and Controller's open data initiatives to track how well the City is doing with its street cleaning services.*

Increase Driver Awareness of Existing Parking Restrictions Before and After Citations are Issued: *Often drivers are unaware of a street cleaning parking restriction due to confusing or poorly maintained signage. Experimental signage being developed by LADOT could help mitigate this issue and should be rolled out in neighborhoods with high concentrations of street and meter parking violations.*

LADOT should also consider incorporating a QR-like code on future signs that can translate the restrictions into multiple languages. Information about or reference to the online notification system should also be included on citations to encourage future compliance. Replacing signage is a costly endeavor for the City, so we acknowledge that replacing street cleaning signs will require additional resources and a longer implementation timeline.

- **Reevaluate street cleaning schedules to reduce time restrictions**: *As stated previously, street sweeping restrictions often prohibit vehicles from parking during a two or three hour window but it typically only takes BoSS a few minutes to clean a street. This leads to an underutilization of scarce parking spaces and extreme hardship for residents and visitors in areas with high on-street parking demand and few alternative off-street options. Essentially, half the parking spaces in an area scheduled for regular street sweeping are removed from use for two or three hours twice a week.*

The city should explore the possibility of reducing the time restrictions for street cleaning to a maximum of one hour or preferably one-half hour where possible, especially in high density residential areas where residents do not have access to alternative off-street parking options. While this would likely result in some streets being skipped over periodically when an operator gets off schedule, we believe that this is an acceptable trade-off for the increased access residents would have to scarce parking spaces and the reduced citations that would be incurred.

Reevaluate street cleaning schedules so that start and stop times do not conflict with peak demand: *30% of all street cleaning citations are issued between 8-9a, 50% are issued between 8-10a. Oftentimes, streets are required to be vacant at times that conflict with the typical work schedule (i.e., 9a-to-5p). Limiting street cleaning start times in residential areas to 9a would increase the number of street parking spaces available during peak demand and significantly reduce the number of parking citations issued.*

We understand that pushing back the start time of parking restrictions would require new signage and may lead to a reduction in the number of streets cleaned. However, we believe that this issue is worth studying as a longer-term policy change. Data gathered from GPS tracking vehicles may also provide valuable insight as to how an initiative like this could be implemented with minimal impact on the city's budget.

The City should also consider peak commercial activity patterns for a district, and if possible avoid scheduling street sweeping during these hours of peak commercial activity. This may include night-time or early-morning street sweeping.