



Staff Report

City of Manhattan Beach

TO: Honorable Mayor Cohen and Members of the City Council

THROUGH: Geoff Dolan, City Manager

FROM: Bruce Moe, Finance Director
Richard Thompson, Community Development Director
Jim Arndt, Public Works Director

DATE: November 3, 2009

SUBJECT: Consideration of Installation of New Technology Parking Meters in the Upper and Lower Pier Parking Lots for an Eight Month Trial Period (Approximate Cost of \$12,000)

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the installation of new technology parking meters from Duncan Industries and IPS Group in the Pier parking lots (upper and lower) for an eight month trial period, beginning in January 2010.

FISCAL IMPLICATION:

The FY 2009-2010 budget includes \$600,000 for the acquisition and installation of new technology parking meters in the Pier parking lots. The eight month trial period is designed to allow us to evaluate the technology before actually selecting one or more solutions and committing funds for the Pier lots. The trial also provides information for future replacement of meters in other parking lots and street meters as funding becomes available.

During the trial period, the vendors have agreed to not charge for their basic devices and to charge only for any material upgrades (stainless steel), minimal operational costs such as credit card transaction fees, wireless network fees and parking sensors. We have estimated the cost of the trial at \$12,000 (this also includes the cost of signage and other incidental expenses). Depending upon the permanent solution selected, the cost of outfitting the Pier lots is estimated between \$90,000 and \$120,000. There will also be on-going costs for the wireless network, credit card transaction fees, licensing, and other related fees.

BACKGROUND:

The City Council approved the issuance of a Request for Proposal (RFP) on August 4, 2009. The purpose was to solicit proposals for parking meter technology that would be more convenient for users in terms of payment options. The RFP requested information on both single space meter solutions (such as we currently utilize), as well as multi-space meters (one meter for several spaces).

The City has approximately 1,700 parking meters citywide. These include:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Spaces</u>	<u>Per Hour Charge</u>
Streets	414	\$.75
City Parking Lots	883	\$.75
State Pier Parking Lots	118	\$1.50
County Parking Lots	296	\$1.50

Currently, there are only two payment methods available with the meters: coins and the “cash key¹.” This requires drivers to have sufficient coins, obtain change from area merchants or have the cash key in their possession in order to feed the meters. Feedback from various merchants (and from their customers) indicates that there is demand for alternative payment methods for increased convenience. As a result, funds were budgeted in the FY 2009-2010 State Pier and Parking Fund to perform a trial program of available newer technologies. The Pier parking lots were selected for this pilot project because: 1) the Pier Fund has sufficient money for such a project, and 2) the location will be an excellent test environment due to the harsh coastal conditions the metering solutions will be subjected to during the pilot project.

DISCUSSION:

As a result of the RFP, six proposals were received. An evaluation committee was formed consisting of members of Finance, Information Systems, Police/Parking Enforcement, Public Works and the City’s Traffic Engineer. The proposals were reviewed, and interviews were held with the three firms which the team identified as having viable solutions for our parking metering needs. After the interviews were conducted, two firms were selected for the trial period: Duncan Industries, who offers a multi-space metering solution, and IPS Group which serves the single meter market. The following is a discussion of each firm’s capabilities:

Duncan Industries

Duncan offers a multi-space meter solution whereby one meter can be used for several parking spaces. This type of solution is often used in parking lots, and placed near points of ingress and egress for driver convenience. It may be used for on-street meters as well, however, it may require a lower meter-to-space ratio to maintain driver convenience.

Advantages of this solution include:

- Fewer coin collection points for staff
- Ability for drivers to pay for space from any similar device even if several blocks away (if installed elsewhere in the City in the future)
- Possibly more cost effective in parking lots where one station may cover many multiples of spaces
- Integration with existing technologies (including the parking citation system recently purchased, and the existing Duncan Cash Keys)

¹ The cash key is a device in which the buyer may pre-load a set amount of money on the key, which is then inserted into any of the City’s parking meters to add time to the meter while reducing the available balance on the cash key.

Disadvantages of the multi-space meter approach include:

- Less convenient for drivers who must identify space number, locate pay station, input space number and pay
- Some maintenance issues for space number identification since the spaces may need to be marked on both the sidewalk location (for drivers) and street-side (for enforcement purposes)
- Malfunctioning devices impact more spaces than individual meters
- May have limited capacity for coinage (\$450), although capacity warnings may be issued electronically to alert the need for servicing
- May require increased signage directing drivers to pay station meters, and for space number identification

IPS Group

IPS offers a single space meter solution. This type of solution may be utilized in both lot and street parking configurations. The unit offers built-in solar power to recharge the battery (battery life is much shorter in parking structures where solar light may not be available).

Advantages include:

- Intuitive to use
- Maximum convenience for driver (no need to walk to a centralized meter)
- If malfunctioning, only one space is affected minimizing revenue impact

Disadvantages of single space meters include:

- More coin collection points for City staff
- Visual pollution
- More devices to maintain and service
- Does not accept Duncan Cash Key

With the IPS solution it is very easy to upgrade existing parking meter housings to the new format. It is as simple as opening the meter, sliding the mechanism out, and sliding in a replacement unit. While the units do not accept the Duncan Cash Key, they do accept smart card technology, as do the Duncan meters (compatibility of the smart cards is being researched and evaluated since we do not want to have two different card solutions depending upon the meter).

Both solutions provide the following features:

- Alternative payment methods such as credit cards, debit cards, smart cards, cell phone payments, etc.
- Wireless software-based solutions which permit remote access to meters for:
 - upgrades
 - rate setting
 - coin box monitoring
 - out-of-order/battery level status
- Ability to have time-of-day or special event parking prices which are set in advance for specific hours or days
- Integration with parking sensors that detect the presence of a vehicle in a parking stall, and:
 - capabilities to advise parking enforcement of an expired meter at an occupied stall
 - ability to monitor parking space utilization 24 hours per day
 - ability to “zero-out” remaining time on a meter upon the departure of the parked vehicle
- Solar powered options for operation of the unit, or for extended battery life
- Ability to display messages (e.g. curb your wheels or other information)
- Remotely rechargeable Smart Cards²
- Audit trail capabilities by meter

These features will greatly enhance the user friendliness and convenience of public parking in Manhattan Beach.

Trial Program

Selecting the appropriate metering solution is important. We need a solution that is reliable and that can withstand the harsh coastal elements, including sand, salt air, moisture, etc. We also need devices that are well accepted by the public in terms of user-friendliness and convenience. Staff believes the best way to determine the appropriate solution is to conduct a trial period with the proposed solutions.

To that end, the RFP was written to allow for an 8 month trial period (January 2009 through August 2010). The vendors offered to provide basic sample units free of charge during that period. We are responsible only for some minor operational costs, or any extras that we may want to test (such as parking sensor devices which monitor space usage). The trial testing and estimated cost after the

² During the trial period, staff does not recommend rolling out smart card technology because of the limited number of meters being tested, and the possibility that the cards issued may not be compatible if a different solution is selected for final installation.

trial period are listed below (Pier lots only):

<u>Vendor</u>	<u>Trial Period Est. Cost</u>	<u>Final Est. Cost</u>
Duncan	\$5,800	\$114,100
IPS Group	\$ 400	\$ 83,200

The Duncan solution pricing includes two meters, ten parking space sensors, software upgrades to four of our existing handheld Duncan ticket writers for integration with the meters, and solar panels for each unit. The IPS costing includes the meters, licensing and ten space sensors (solar power is included). The final estimated cost above includes all costs associated with purchasing that supplier’s metering solution if it were to be exclusively installed for all four Pier lots.

During the trial period, the multi-space meters (Duncan) will be placed in the south Pier lots, both upper and lower sections. A total of two units will be deployed, one near the entrance area of each lot (see Attachment “A”). The individual metering solutions will be installed in the north Pier lots, upper and lower sections. This configuration was selected to allow for testing in both types of usage patterns (upper lots serving the businesses, lower lots serving the beach goers).

In addition to the signage necessary to direct drivers to the multi-space meters, we anticipate placing signs that inform drivers of the trial and provide a telephone number and/or website for them to provide feedback. At the conclusion of the trial period, Council will make a final determination of which solution will be installed in the State Pier Parking Lots. Ultimately, the same solutions may be rolled-out citywide when funding becomes available³.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the trial installation of new technology meters from Duncan Industries and IPS Group. The solutions will be monitored for performance, reliability, user-friendliness and acceptance, as well as the underlying technology. At the conclusion of the trial, staff will return to the Council with a recommendation on the solution for final, permanent installation, and an award of contract.

³ The City’s Parking Fund, which covers all parking operations other than the State and County Lots, does not have sufficient resources to implement new technology meters. Eventually, parking meter rates will need to be adjusted, particularly if the Council wishes to accommodate the purchase of new meters.

City of Manhattan Beach Parking Meter Solutions RFP # 786-10

