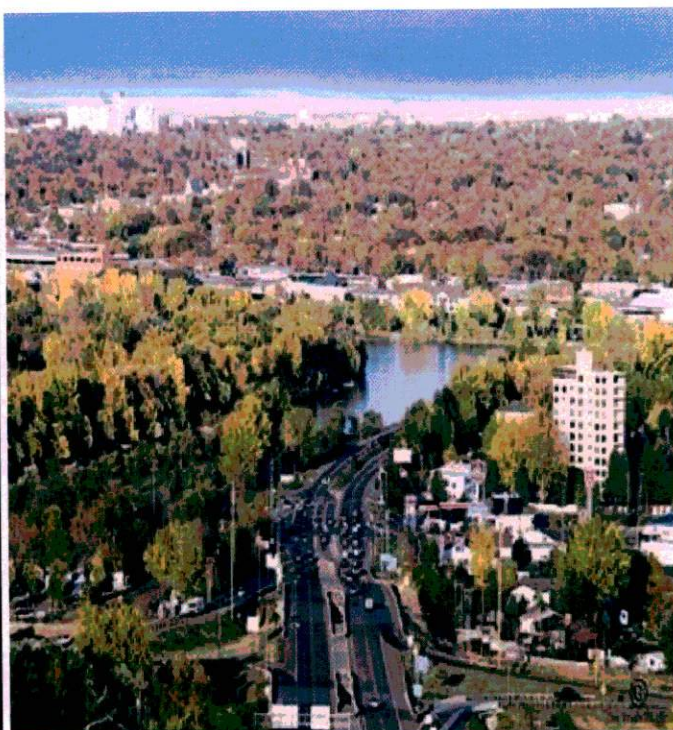
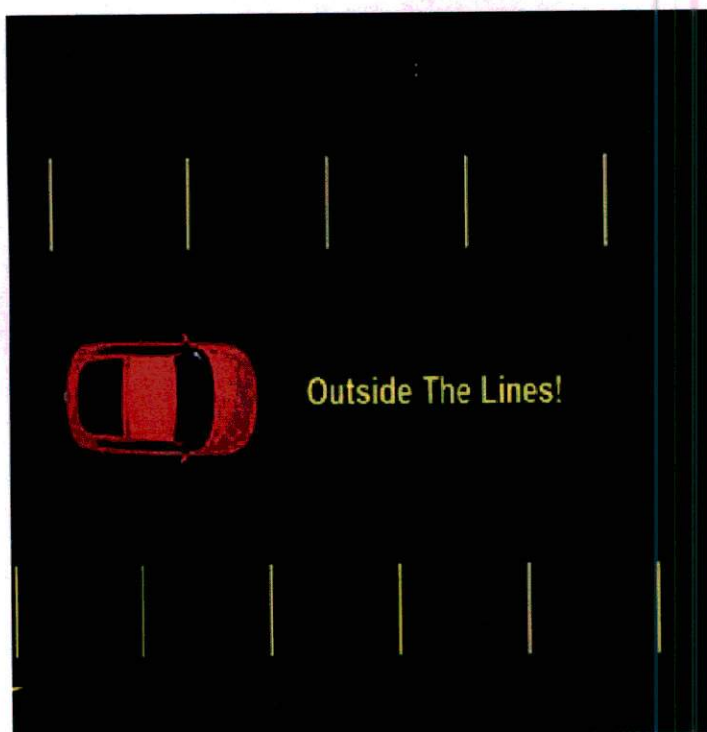


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## Parking Study / Update

City of Great Falls,  
Montana



*Submitted to:*

**Craig Raymond**  
Director of Community Development



**May 5, 2016**

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May 5, 2016

Mr. Craig Raymond  
Director of Planning & Community Development  
City of Great Falls  
P.O. Box 5021  
Great Falls, MT 59403



Re: Updated Parking Study

Dear Mr. Raymond:

**SP+** is pleased to submit the following (draft) update of the Parking Study previously completed for the City of Great Falls, Downtown Access, Circulation. The purpose of this document is to identify best practices and make recommendations to improve the downtown parking system.

Findings and recommendations included in this document are based on our current operations and assessment of the downtown parking system.

It's important to highlight that some of the recommendations were included in the previous study. Implementation of recommendations is critical to ensure the highest level of service is provided to the residence and visitors of the community.

Sincerely,

John D. Conway  
Vice President – Airports West

## Credentials



SP Plus Corporation (Nasdaq: SP) provides professional parking, ground transportation, facility maintenance, security and event logistics services to property owners and managers in all markets of the real estate industry. **SP+** has nine operating groups, each of which focuses exclusively on the idiosyncrasies and specific needs of a single vertical market. The Company has more than 22,000 employees and is the

current Parking Management Company for the City of Great Falls.

Through our **SP+ Parking**, Standard Parking and Central Parking brands, we operate over 4,000 parking facilities and over 2.1 million parking spaces in hundreds of cities across North America, including parking-related and shuttle bus operations serving more than 75 airports. USA Parking System, a wholly-owned subsidiary, is one of the nation's premier valet operators, serving more four and five diamond luxury hotels and resorts than any other operator.

We're built on integrity and innovation, laser-focused on delivering the highest level of service to our customers and clients. We've set the industry standard in parking amenities and customer service programs, revenue control, financial reporting, expense containment, employee professionalism and pro-active management. Our operations maximize facility profitability while at the same time make the parking experience a first-class, enjoyable one for parking patrons.

Additional **SP+** service lines include **SP+ Transportation**, which annually transports over 41 million passengers; **SP+ Facility Maintenance**, which operates in dozens of U.S. cities; **SP+ Security**, which currently provides licensed security services in six U.S. states and Toronto, Canada; and **SP+ Event Logistics**, which provides a wide range of travel demand planning and management services.

Learn more about **SP+** at [www.spplus.com](http://www.spplus.com).

## Discussions

The purpose of the discussions was to set a framework for the evaluation of the operations and identify areas for improvement, so recommendations can be made to all stakeholders. Discussions pursued during the Parking Commission meeting with John Conway from SP+ Areas of concern related to:



- Efficiency and Budgetary issues (reducing expenses, increasing revenues)
- Quality and integrity of operation
- Customer service

- Reviewing existing policies
- On Street Meters – Benefits, hindrances, removal

## Observations

1. **North Garage:** The facility is a 6 level 496 parking garage that includes the parking operations office and meter shop for SP+.
  - This facility has a 38% occupancy rate with 180 monthly parkers @\$46.00 and an average of 10 transient vehicles per day.
  - The current daily staff hours are from 7:30 a.m. -6:00 p.m.
  - After 6 pm there is no staff, so the operation converts to an honor system for cars exiting.
  - Approximately 3 cars per night exit after 5pm @\$5 which represents 90% of the total issued.
  - Maintenance – Routine daily maintenance is within the industry standard. SP+ was not provided with any condition reports.
  - The rates are \$.50/hour and \$5.00 all day
2. **South Garage:** The facility is a 3 level 311 space parking garage.
  - The location is exclusively used by monthly parkers who are currently at a 147 leases. The number of leases has significantly declined due to the departure of the Asurion Company. The total number of lost parkers was approximately 145, which represented about \$6,600 per month or \$79,200 annually in lost revenue.
  - There is no transient revenue due lower demand and the cost of staffing. There are no daily rates which would change with the new equipment.
3. **Surface Lots:** The five (5) surface lots are used primarily for monthly leased parking with the exception of the Library lot which is the highest occupancy and highest revenue generating.
  - Lot 2 – 38 spaces of which 37 are leased @ \$30.00 per month. There is a Double Head Meter for two hourly spaces.



- Lot 4 – 139 spaces of which 72 are leased @ \$30.00 per month. There is a manual pay box which generates very little revenue.
  - Lot 6 – 26 spaces which is daily parking only and serves the library. There is a manual pay box for patrons to place money in slots which is checked by enforcement officers daily.
    - a) Average revenue \$30 per day
    - b) Lack of accountability and security do due nature of operation
    - c) Could use multi-space technology which is a machine that will service the entire lot. The advantages are:
      - Customer friendly & offers receipts
      - Accepts all form of payment (cash, credit card, etc)
      - Secure revenues and accountability
      - Web based reports
      - Increase in revenues of up to 50%
  - Lot 7 – 31 spaces of which 29 are leased @ \$30.00 per month.
  - Lot 8 – 59 spaces of which 49 are leased. There is a Manual pay box that generates very little revenue
  - The signage could be improved but was not critical to operations.
  - Enforcement is selective on Saturdays due to the current demand.
4. **Meter Operations:** There are approximately 1,039 single space meters on the street. Some are electronic and some are manual. In addition there are 27 courtesy spaces.
- Meters are located in the core CBD area and in the outlying areas as well.
  - Meters in the CBD are utilized more than in outlying areas which is typical in most cities
  - The collections are considered an “open system” with no locking mechanisms and very little accountability.
  - The staff adequately maintains the meters which are in reasonable condition considering the age. There are no audit features or occupancy reporting for this type of equipment.

- Meter rates are the same as the garage rates which are \$.50 per hour with a two hour maximum.
- Occupancy levels in the core areas were at 51% during peak demand
- 37% of all revenues are generated from the meters(\$20,000 per month)

5. **Enforcement** – Currently there are 4 employees used for enforcement purposes.

- Two (2) are dedicated for on street areas working 9am-5pm
- One (1) dedicated to check the lots & residential areas from 9am- 4:30pm
- Approximately 70-80 tickets per day are issued primarily in core
- Surveys indicate that approximately 1850 vehicles park per day
- Based on the number of vehicles parked per day (1,850) and a violation rate of 4% (75 tickets), the remaining vehicles (1,775) are in compliance and paying the meter which is validated by revenues generated of approximately \$1,000 per day. This equates to the \$.50 per hour charge at the meters.
- Residential Parking Permit Area
  - a) Enforcement was lax due to City's request
  - b) Numerous vehicles parked without permits

6. **Rates:** The entire rate structure for the garages and the on street meters are somewhat lower than other comparable size cities.

- The hourly rates for the garages and the on street meters are at \$.50 per hour
- Daily rates for garages are \$5.00 compared other cities which are \$5.00
- Based on the high occupancy levels in the garages, the monthly garage rates at \$46.
- The monthly rates for the surface lots could be higher in the high demand areas.
- The on street meter rates of \$.50 are considered considerably lower than other comparable cities which are typically at \$1.00 per hour.

## Recommendations



### Parking System

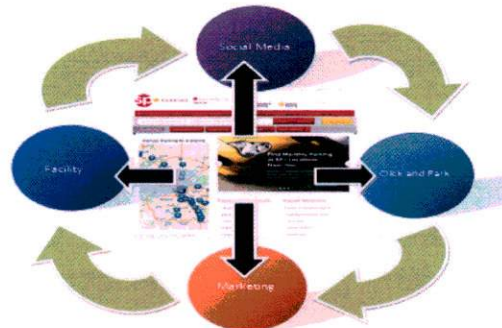
1. Implement an interactive marketing program that includes social media in order to drive on-line and mobile sales. **SP+** Has an extensive internal program that can be presented to the group in a separate presentation.

### INTERACTIVE MARKETING PLAN

The **SP+** team is excited to offer a variety of interactive marketing avenues dedicated to creating an online presence, driving on-line sales and enhancing customer service and location awareness. Whether in the form of search engine advertising, digital marketing, or technology integration, we have the products and services necessary to enhance the locations online presence. The dedicated marketing professionals at **SP+** will modify or create a new program in order to enhance the on-line presence. The **SP+** marketing team has utilized social media in conjunction with robust (SEO) Search Engine Optimization campaigns that have significantly elevated the on-line presence of our clients. It's important to highlight the following statistics:



- 64% of American adults and 85% of young adults now own a smartphone
- 52% of online adults use two or more social media sites
- 56% of adults aged 65 and older use Facebook
- 80% of all Americans use the internet



### North Garage:

1. Automate the garage with Parkonect bar code readers which will allow people to pay utilizing their mobile devise and computer. \$4,200 per reader - \$16,800



2. The rates of \$.50/hour and \$5.00 all day is lower than other comparable cities; however at this time we would not recommend a rate increase in the garages unless major repairs and equipment upgrades require more funding to maintain these facilities.



### South Garage:

1. Automate the garage with Parkonect bar code readers which will allow people to pay utilizing their mobile device and computer. \$4,200 per reader -\$16,800
2. Lighting – Install energy efficient LED lighting.

**Surface Lots:**

1. Launch Click and Park and Park Mobile
2. Install a Multi-Space machine in lot 6 to service library patrons
  - a) Customer friendly
  - b) Accepts all forms of payments
  - c) All monies secure and 100% accountability
  - d) Additional revenues will pay for machine in 1<sup>st</sup> year

**Meter Operations:****Parking meters:**

- Currently there are approximately 1,039 on street parking meters operated by coins only. (Approved pre-paid tokens can also be inserted into the coin slots).
- The current hourly rate is \$.50 which is substantially lower than most cities of comparable size and economic activity especially with a CBD area.
- There are also numerous “15 minutes free parking” spaces which are paid and reserved for specific businesses as an incentive to increase patronage.
- The City also issues monthly parking permits that allow for parking at a meter on specific streets



With increasing use of technology (such as pay by cell which is already in place) for on and off street parking the City of Great Falls, the City should consider adding new parking meters or multi-space equipment that can accept credit cards and smart cards as additional payment options for its citizens and visitors. To support an upgrade to the system the City must consider a rate increase which can be structured in such a way as to incentivize residents and businesses while at the same time establishing a system that support the investment in this newer technology. The following is a list of recommendations:

1. Phase in new meter technology along the highest demand areas of Central Avenue consisting of 4 blocks. There are 122 On-street meter spaces that will be affected. There are 2 options for meter equipment.

- a. Single/double space meters – These meters will replace the existing single space meters and can be installed on the existing poles. One meter can control 2 separate spaces where applicable supplemented by 1 meter controlling 1 space. These meters can accept coins, credit cards and pre-paid City Cards\*. Based on our counts we will use 54 meters that control 2 spaces and 14 meters that control 1 space. The estimated capital one time cost for these meters is \$52,000. In addition there is a monthly back office management fee for reporting and accounting which is \$865
  - b. Multi-space Machines – These meters control between 6-10 spaces and replace all of the single space meters. They can accept coins, bills, credit cards and smart cards. In addition these meters can be integrated with the T2 System for enforcement as well as Pay by Cell technology. We have estimated that we need 16 machines to cover these 122 spaces. The estimated capital one time cost is \$144,000. The monthly back office management fees for the 16 units will be about \$750.
2. Increase On-Street meter rates in these areas only until data supports and expansion.
    - a. We would recommend that on-street parking meter rates are increased to \$1.00 per hour in this expansion area and that those wishing to pay with a credit card must purchase at least 1 hour to cover the credit card fees. Again this rate increase would only affect these 122 spaces for the near future.
  3. Implement a resident/business City Card that can be sold at a reduced rate for use in the meters. Providing an option for our residents to receive a discounted parking rate using the latest technology.
    - a. We recommend selling a "City Card" which is a pre-loaded card that can be used in any of the new meters. These City Cards can be marketed and sold at a discounted rate to specific groups such as residents and businesses.
    - b. Those who used these cards would pre-pay for a card "loaded" with enough time for their purchase. For example if the City wanted to continue to charge residents \$.50 per hour a resident could purchase a card for \$10 minimum which would give them 20 hours of parking time. Each card can be re-charged.
    - c. These cards can be sold to others as well at any specified rate the city determined for a particular group.

4. Maintain the existing "15 minutes of Free Parking" for businesses that want to continue this. This would still allow the existing practice and people can still for the first minutes free of charge.
5. Maintain the monthly meter permit program for non-high demand areas. We could remove some of the meters in the non-high demand areas and designate it as an on-street monthly permit only area. This would reduce the collections and maintenance of the meters in this area.

## Conclusion

Investment Analysis for the new technology in conjunction with the rate increase:

### Technology Investment Analysis

Facility	Total	Rate Increase	Labor Savings	Pay Back
North Garage **	\$ 18,900.00	\$ 2,190.00	\$35,587	
South Garage **	\$ 18,900.00	\$10,950.00	0	
Surface Lots **	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 2,500.00	0	
Meter Operations	\$ 60,000.00	\$24,000.00	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 108,800.00</b>	<b>\$39,640.00</b>	<b>\$35,587</b>	<b>17.5 Months</b>

\*\*\*\*\*No Rate Increase; Represents night and weekend parkers \*\*\*\*\*

The operations have remained consistent since the last study; however there has been a significant decline in revenue due a major employer who has left the downtown area which caused a significant loss of monthly parker's in both the South & North Garages. There are adequate policies in place for the safety, security and accountability and integrity of the system. Staff members are knowledgeable competent and have a great handle on the operations. There are several suggested improvements that if implemented could significantly increase efficiencies while enhancing the service level to the community. **SP+** would consider making the investment for the new recommendations in return for a five year extended term of our current contract. The city would benefit by having an increased revenue stream while not having to go into pocket for investment.

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**John D. Conway**  
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